

*A Christian Science lecture entitled:*

# HOW GOD'S PROMISES ARE FULFILLED

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One of the really important elements in our lives is hope. Yet as we look around us, doesn't there seem to be a lack of hope in so many areas? People are concerned about inflation, national leadership, resources, world tensions. We can think of people whose health has failed or who face a job or relationship where *there seems to be no hope.*

It's important to restore our hope. But isn't it much more important to fulfill our hope. The Bible is loaded with promises that our hopes will be fulfilled. These promises cover every area of human life.

*Tonight I want to show you that through Christian Science, you can experience a greater fulfillment of the wonderful promises found in the Bible. We'll be discussing what the promises are and what we must do to have them fulfilled. We'll examine how our needs are really spiritual and how God meets them by giving us a clearer view of our true identity and substance. As we bring our lives into accord with God's nature, this clearer view becomes more and more apparent. We'll also see that Christian Science is not simply blind optimism, where people hope for some ideal that can't be realized and then ignore the human problems they're faced with.*

## Promise of Supply

*Let me give some of the promises first, and then we'll get back*

to how these promises are fulfilled and what our obligation is, what we must do to have these promises fulfilled. Let's take two major areas of promise in the Bible that people find especially important. The first is the promise that God will supply all our needs. This promise isn't made just once but over and over again. If I were to ask you what is possibly the most familiar and most loved verse in the whole Bible, what would you say? You might say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."<sup>1</sup>

Paul stated pretty much the same promise when he wrote to the Philippians, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, God promised the patriarch Abraham, "All the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."<sup>3</sup> Spiritual vision was required here—seeing as God sees, *not limited* to material seeing. Abraham's great-grandson Joseph experienced God's promise of supply. Through divine guidance, he stocked huge warehouses with food during seven years of plenty, and was able then to feed an entire land during the following seven years of famine. Moses and the children of Israel felt the effect of God's promise when they were sustained for forty years in the wilderness and at times were fed with manna and quail. The prophet Elijah helped a widow woman and her son experience God's provision when their small amount of oil and meal

lasted until the end of a long famine. Jesus fed five thousand people on two occasions with a few loaves and fishes. He paid his taxes with a coin from a fish's mouth, and he told the people not to be fearful about their daily needs because, as he assured them, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."<sup>4</sup>

So in the Bible, God does promise to meet all our needs as we yield to the totality of His love and align ourselves with His law.

## Promise of Healing

In the same way, God promises to heal all our diseases. The book of Exodus early tells us, "I am the Lord that healeth thee."<sup>5</sup> Job experienced a magnificent healing of his disease when he believed the assurance, "He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him."<sup>6</sup> Elijah raised the son of the widow woman I just mentioned after the boy became sick and died. The Psalmist David sang of God "who healeth all thy diseases."<sup>7</sup>

The greatest exponent of God's healing power was Jesus. In accord with God's promise, he healed blindness, deafness, dumbness, epilepsy, insanity, lameness, paralysis, congenital deformity, leprosy. He restored a severed ear, and even raised three people from the dead as well as rising from the grave himself. He explained, "With God all things are possible."<sup>8</sup> He didn't confine this promise of God's healing power just

to himself either. He charged his disciples, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils."<sup>9</sup> He included you and me in this charge too when he said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also."<sup>10</sup>

Jesus' disciples Peter and John instantly healed a man who had been crippled from birth. Peter restored one of the early Christian workers to life after she had died.<sup>11</sup>

The apostle Paul helped fulfill this promise of healing when he revived the young man Eutychus, who to all appearances had died in a fall. He showed God's healing power in his own life when he overcame the physical effects of eight beatings, one stoning, three shipwrecks, and a night and a day in the sea. He was unharmed when a poisonous viper fastened itself on his hand.<sup>12</sup>

God promises that He will heal all our diseases. God's grace establishes us forever as His precious creation, and we experience this healing as we awaken to our selfhood as God created it, accept it, and express it.

These biblical promises play an all-important role in Christian Science. They illustrate our conviction that God is all-loving, that He cares for us in every way. This is summed up in one of the most comforting and familiar statements by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science. The statement is a promise, and it's found in the Christian Science textbook,

*Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures.* In fact, it's inscribed on the walls of many Christian Science churches. "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need."<sup>13</sup>

### People Doubt Biblical Promises

The difficulty today is that too many people feel the Bible promises have not been fulfilled. So rather than looking to God for fulfillment, they rest their hope mainly in people and material technology.

To care for daily needs, they put their trust entirely in human methods. And while many of these methods are practical and intelligent, they don't go deep enough. For truly dependable answers, we need to look to the eternal, spiritual source of our well-being, God.

In the area of health needs, people turn from the Bible promise of spiritual healing to medical methods. Flip on the TV set, and you see the enormous emphasis on drugs to bring relief.

I hope we'll see in this lecture that it's not impractical to trust God for the fulfillment of these wonderful promises and that therefore Christian Science is not outmoded but more needed than ever. It shows us what we have to do to find a greater fulfillment of God's promises.

### How God Fulfills His Promise of Supply

But before we can understand how God's promises are fulfilled, we have to understand more clearly what these promises are. For instance, take the first promise we discussed—that God meets all our needs. What do we mean when we say God promises to meet our needs? Do we mean that a God on high hands us material things in much the same way our human parents might have done? No. If we think it does, we've made God over in our image and likeness. We've made God man-like instead of understanding His spiritual nature and how He supplies our need.

God doesn't hand us material things. Since God is Spirit, as the Bible says, He meets our needs by giving us spiritual ideas. These ideas then result in our needs being met.

This is the way Jesus explained it. He told us not to be fearful about our human requirements because our Father knows that we have need of these things. Not that God as Spirit knows about matter, but He does supply every need. This is why Jesus counselled, "... seek ... the

kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>14</sup>

So the question becomes: How do these ideas from God result in the things being added unto us, in our needs being met?

The answer is that God's spiritual ideas, already perfect and complete, replace limited, incomplete, material concepts, and in the process our human needs are met.

Here's the way it works. The fact is that reality is made up of spiritual ideas, regardless of how much it may appear to be made up of material things. These ideas express God's nature. Now even before we understand fully what God's nature is, we can trust that this nature is expressed throughout God's creation. After all, what else would be expressed in true creation except the nature of its creator?

If God is the only creator, and if He is unlimited in power and in love, then His creation must be unlimited, and it must be good. This is the basis for setting aside lack.

I can remember one point in my life where I was really helped by realizing this. My resources were, shall we say, a little low. As I was praying for a clear spiritual sense of supply, I saw that I could trust the allness of God's goodness. This gave me a *feeling* of being fully supplied with all I needed.

This feeling wasn't mere human autosuggestion. I was aligning myself with the eternal facts of reality in accord with the Psalmist's assurance, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

I was convinced that just this trust in God's unlimited goodness and the completeness of all He made would result in my human needs being met in a tangible way.

But I didn't stop with just trusting God's goodness and the unlimited completeness of His creation. I thought further about this creation and really desired to understand what it is. I saw that what God creates is an expression of Himself, of Love and of Spirit. This expression is man—you and me in our real being. Since God is unlimited in His impartation of Himself, man has to be unlimited, fully nourished and sustained by God. I saw that in taking this spiritual view, I wasn't trying to use spiritual means to gain material ends, but to see spiritual reality right where the material picture seemed to be. This is seeking the kingdom of God first, as Jesus said we should. And I found that Jesus' promise "all these things shall be added unto you" was fulfilled in my own experience. My own needs were more fully met from that time on.

Let me show you how this same promise can be fulfilled in running a business. In a business you have products, employees, customers, systems. If we look at these as material, the products are subject to flaws, the employees and customers are subject to mistakes and misunderstandings, the systems are subject to outside influences or bad planning. All of this jeopardizes efficiency and income—limits supply.

Now let's consider God as Principle. This is a term for God implied in the Bible that Christian Scientists use to describe Him as unvarying Cause, the source of law. As Principle, God produces ideas that are orderly because order is the nature of Principle. As you yield to this fact, you begin to see that your business, instead of consisting of material elements, is actually made up of divine ideas operating in an orderly fashion. This realization is the truth. It comes to us through the activity of the Christ, penetrating beyond what the material senses say and uplifting the material view. You can feel the presence of divine Principle and witness the law of God's order if you're the owner, or an employee, or a customer, or just interested in uplifting the general level of business.

What effect will this have? This spiritual view won't make the various elements of the business disappear, but it will help to lessen the blatant material characteristics called disorder, lost motion, chaos. To this degree, you will be counteracting the belief in matter as substance and gaining a clearer sense of supply.

Didn't Joseph have to penetrate beyond the material evidence of seven years' famine and see that there was an order to creation—an order established by God that he could follow in solving this problem of lack?

Notice here that Joseph had to do something. He had to take action. This requires energy. Energy is a spiritual idea that God imparts from His nature as Spirit. Mrs. Eddy puts it, "Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, bringing us into newness of Life and recognizing no mortal nor material power as able to destroy."<sup>15</sup> Energy is an impartation from God as Spirit that helps us eliminate apathy and weariness. It's an important factor in supply.

We could take other synonyms or names for God to illustrate how God's ideas constitute our real supply. Suppose you're a teacher. You can conclude that God as divine Mind imparts ideas that are always intelligent. This will enhance your teaching ability and enhance your pupils' learning

ability. I'm not speaking here of some mental trick, where you say a few words and, presto—everything's changed. As you accept God as divine Mind, the source of all ideas, you find that you're reshaping your life more and more in accord with God. You're fulfilling the deep Christian commitment of regeneration and growth in character. Paul states it, you "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."<sup>16</sup> You find the true substance of supply in your profession—expressing God's nature and helping others after Jesus' teaching and example. The human rewards are "added unto" in accord with God's law of justice.

Just one more example. God's supply of ideas to meet our needs isn't meager and it's not lacking beauty and graciousness either. For instance, people give a lot of attention to their home and its furnishing. If we think of God as Soul, the source of beauty and graciousness, and if we meet the demands of Soul upon us to be Christlike, wouldn't this rebirth of thought and motive also affect our surroundings and how we live? Wouldn't we find ourselves supplied by Soul with the sensitivity and creativity to uplift our surroundings to more nearly reflect Soul's harmonious nature? And wouldn't we be able to help others do the same?

These are just a few examples of how the material view can be replaced with the spiritual view.

### The Spiritual View of Reality is Revealed by the Christ

What is the power that enables us to exchange the material view for the spiritual view, to feel our oneness with God, to purify our motives, to uplift our character? It's the Christ. The Christ is the true idea of God and man. It reveals the forever fact of true being. And it has a corrective action on everything that would limit or deny the nature of God. Jesus exemplified the Christ so completely that he's forever identified with it as Christ Jesus. He taught us how we could express the Christ in his Sermon on the Mount and in his statement of the two great commandments. He showed us what the Christ could do when, for example, he healed the man with the withered hand. This is why we love Jesus and are so grateful to him.

Occasionally people underestimate how central Jesus Christ is in Christian Science. Christian Scientists see him as the cornerstone of Christianity. They see him as the fulfillment of God's

promise in the plan of salvation, saving us not only from lack but from every phase of mortality.

Jesus certainly exemplified the Christ when he fed the multitude and got the coin from the fish's mouth to pay his taxes. He realized the presence of divine ideas so clearly that he threw off conventional beliefs of limitation and met the human need in ways that to others would seem incredible.

### God's Promise of Supply Experienced

Let me tell you how a store owner exemplified the Christ and experienced God's promise of supply when she found herself short of money to pay her taxes. The store had done an outstanding business during December, but all her receipts had gone to pay the suppliers. She had to pay a tax on her gross receipts during this period, and for her the amount was enormous.

She knew that she could go to the bank and probably borrow the money. But she felt that in this instance, she didn't want to do that. She sensed a great fear in herself regarding this tax money, and she realized she had to overcome her fear.

The day the tax was due, they were taking inventory in the store, and she was very much needed there. But she stayed at home that morning studying and praying to get a clearer sense of God and His provision. She was seeking the kingdom of God first. She thought of Jesus' statement, "Give and it shall be given unto you."<sup>17</sup> This had been her motivation in the store and in her life—to give, to be of service to others. So Jesus' words reinforced the rightness of what she'd been doing.

But Jesus' words about giving took on additional meaning. She saw she could give her allegiance to God, her devotion, her loyalty, her trust. As she did this, she in turn would be given a feeling of closeness to God and great confidence in His orderly control of everything. These spiritual ideas were just what she needed. Her fear of lack vanished.

It rained heavily that entire day. The store had just three customers. Two came in to pay large bills. One, who in fact ran a small branch of the store some miles away, said, "I don't know why I came in this horrible weather. I just felt I shouldn't wait another day to settle up." The third customer made purchases totaling the largest single sale they had ever had in any January. These receipts exactly covered the tax bill.

It may not have been finding a

coin in a fish's mouth but divine ideas controlled this situation, meeting the human need and giving this store owner a better understanding of God and an additional building block of confidence in God's provision.

God's promise of supply is fulfilled when we follow Jesus' counsel to seek the kingdom of God, seek the spiritual concept of reality, the only true concept, and then we find that all these right things are added unto us.

### How God Fulfills His Promise of Healing

Now what about the second promise—God's promise to heal all our diseases? We'll find Christian Science provides a better basis for the fulfillment of this promise as well.

Sometimes people think this Science is effective only in taking care of emotional problems or minor things like headaches, especially if they're brought about by something like mental stress. Christian Science is effective in these areas, but it definitely extends God's healing promise to the handling of serious types of diseases too.

In *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy records the fulfillment of God's promise in her own healing practice. She refers to cases of both acute and chronic diseases in their severest form. She writes, "Secretions have been changed, the structure has been renewed, shortened limbs have been elongated, ankylosed joints have been made supple, and carious bones have been restored to healthy conditions."<sup>18</sup> She mentions specific healings of cancer, tuberculosis, digestive problems, heart disease, broken bones. Her biographers record many more, including blindness, crippled deformity, insanity, and at least one instance of restoration to life after death had occurred. During the past 100 years of Christian Science history, there have been countless similar healings, as well as healings of other severe disorders—all thoroughly authenticated.

How did Mrs. Eddy perceive that God's promise of spiritual healing was true for our present time when practically the whole world rejected this concept and worked toward developing further medical methods?

From her earliest years in the Congregational church, Mrs. Eddy had been deeply devoted to God and to helping others. As her own health declined over the years, she turned her attention more and more to finding answers to this whole question of physical healing. Gradually the perception

of God's nature as Love and Spirit became so clear that not only did she find healing of her own long-standing health problems but she was able consistently to heal others. Most important, these healings and other evidences of God's care confirmed for her the precious spiritual truth, clearly implied in the Bible, that God is All and therefore the only reality. She saw man as His offspring, expressing His nature exactly. In the words of the Bible: His image and likeness.

Now these descriptions had long been known to Bible readers, yet their profound implication was simply not being recognized. To Mrs. Eddy, the logic was absolutely compelling. God, who is Love, couldn't possibly permit imperfection or suffering. Infinite good couldn't possibly create man capable of sinning. Either a perfect God and a perfect man had to be true, or an imperfect God and an imperfect man, in accord with the material appearance, had to be true. One denied the other. Mrs. Eddy proved through her own healing practice that man's being is spiritually mental, is God-like, and that disease is a lie, a false mental projection to be cured permanently, scientifically, only through the correct view of God and man.

This logic wasn't the reasoning of the human mind. It was the revelation of divine Spirit. It had to be revelation because the truth of perfect God and perfect man that Mrs. Eddy saw transcended the physical sense evidence, and it transcended reasoning based on premises drawn from this evidence. Mrs. Eddy says of this experience, "The revelation of Truth in the understanding came to me gradually and apparently through divine power."<sup>19</sup>

During the past 100 years, the authenticity of this revelation has been proved in the healing and redemption of thousands of people throughout the world—making Mrs. Eddy one of the most influential women in all of human history. This is not to deify her but to see the service she has performed for humanity in presenting the Bible and the work of Jesus in such marvelously clear light.

It was imperative that Mrs. Eddy state clearly this concept of perfect God and perfect man, but she also spells out in detail the lies that people accept as real. She deals with specific forms of disease, specific forms of sin, fears that people have, and areas of ignorance that need to be corrected.

In no way could it be said that Christian Science ignores evil! In

fact, if anything, it deals with evil more extensively because it reveals more to be corrected, working as it does from the standpoint of perfect God and perfect man. And when this Science does deal with evil, it's always on the basis of exposing its unreality and putting what is true and Godlike in its place. So this religion brings true safety from the dangers facing mankind.

### Christian Science Treatment Described

It does this through what we call metaphysical treatment. What I'd like to do now is describe treatment and show its application in an actual healing. This will also show that we're not passive in regard to disease but go after the obstacles to healing and remove them intelligently and permanently.

What are some of these obstacles? Mrs. Eddy indicates three general areas where they can be found. She says, "The procuring cause and foundation of all sickness is fear, ignorance, or sin."<sup>20</sup> She tells us how to remove the obstacles. She writes, "The counter fact relative to any disease is required to cure it."<sup>21</sup> The counter fact is what's really going on right where the disease seems to be going on. It's the spiritual reality in place of the material appearance. We perceive the counter fact through humility, through faith, through honesty, through purity, through our love for God and man.

After identifying the counter fact, we need to stick with it. As Mrs. Eddy states it, "Realize the presence of health and the fact of harmonious being, until the body corresponds with the normal conditions of health and harmony."<sup>22</sup>

"The fact of harmonious being" is the totally spiritual, perfect status of man. We stick with this fact because it's the truth about man as God's expression. But we also stick with it because the true idea of God and man, or the Christ, must continue to act in our lives. It corrects and purifies until it has regenerated the entire false concept of character and identity.

### A Woman is Healed

Now let's see how Christian Science treatment is applied in healing. The case I have in mind is that of a woman who had been sick for some months with a recurrence of lung disease. She'd tried to apply Christian Science but had grown steadily worse. Then she developed an infected jaw.

Over the next few weeks the

condition became alarming. The pain was intense. Her throat swelled almost completely closed. Other serious symptoms developed, and it looked like death was close at hand.

What were the obstacles that separated her from the promise of God's healing? Remember, Mrs. Eddy identified three elements that underlie sickness: Fear, ignorance, and sin.

Certainly in this case fear played a major role in separating her from the promise. The fear actually began some years earlier when she had to go back to work as a medical laboratory technologist, since no other job was available. She didn't know whether she'd succeed after a 14-year interval. Also, she was concerned that this work, focusing on a physical view of man, would hinder her spiritual progress.

Then her husband lost the job he'd held for ten years. He went to another city for further training. There he developed a problem with his knee and decided to have medical care. So her fear grew even stronger as she worried not only about her own physical condition but also about her husband as well.

Finally, when her own symptoms grew much worse, she literally feared for her life.

Fear was the dominant obstacle, but there were significant elements of ignorance in this case too. Initially, it took the form of thinking she had to go back into the medical technology because she had no other choice. The major element of ignorance, though, was her belief that the infection, swelling, and signs of impending death could impose themselves on her and that in spite of her prayers, she was a helpless victim of them.

Fear and ignorance played the largest roles. However, sin was a factor too. Her morals were of the highest order, but certain attitudes contrary to the divine nature were definite obstacles between her and God's promise. Foremost was her unhappiness about her job and the place where they lived. Then there was discouragement and depression because she hadn't been healed.

At the point where the situation seemed most desperate, the woman had called a Christian Science practitioner to help her with the treatment. He immediately saw the major obstacle, the woman's overwhelming fear, and proceeded to realize the spiritual counter fact. He reassured her that she was loved and protected by God and that nothing could separate her from this love and protection. He was convinced that the absolute acceptance of her divine relation-

ship to God would destroy any obstacle of fear separating her from God's promise of healing.

Next he dealt with the obstacle of ignorance. The woman was agreeing with the general unenlightened world belief that she was merely flesh and bones and therefore vulnerable to disease and death. The practitioner mentally corrected this view with the truth that her real being was forever spiritual, consisting of perfect ideas operating harmoniously under the government of God. He perceived that since God is the only Mind, the only real source of ideas, she must be aware of this truth.

The final obstacle was sin. The practitioner realized that this woman had already established in her life a firm moral basis for the healing. However, he did note that the destructive attitudes of discouragement and despair were trying to take over her character. He had the utmost compassion for her, but he also knew these tendencies could not be tolerated. The woman needed to be free from them and she deserved to be free from them. He reasoned that confidence and gratitude and rejoicing had to be God-derived realities of her character. What other response could she have to the perfection God bestows on His children?

As he clearly realized these counter facts, he was prepared to complete the treatment: To hold to these spiritual facts as the only reality.

The woman felt the effect of the practitioner's prayer. She said she gained an absolute faith in God's power to awaken her from the oblivion she was sinking into. She awoke the next day aware of a bright warm light and a wonderful freedom and harmony. It came to her clearly that God, Life, filled all space and that it was impossible for her to fall out of that Life, since there was no place beyond Life.

That was the starting point of the recovery. The swelling in the jaw opened and drained. In a few weeks, the condition was entirely normal. The problem with the lungs never returned.

There's a sequel to the story. The woman gained such confidence through this experience that even though she had to stay two years more at the same location, she was able to do so calmly; and at the end of that time, she and her husband moved to the city they preferred. They established an attractive home, and they both found excellent jobs where they worked successfully for more than fifteen years until retirement. Also the husband's knee problem, which had not been helped by surgery, was later healed com-

pletely through spiritual means alone.

This woman's healing was her own unique experience. It was an original, spontaneous awakening to what she really was. The power of the healing lay in the faith that she *felt*. It lay in the obedience to Christ that she demonstrated. Most of all, it lay in the fact that, as God's image, her real being must remain forever the same—perfect, timeless, incorporeal. She was healed as she accepted this fact and actually experienced her real being to such a degree that the disease lost its reality in her thought and in her life.

Christian Science treatment is an important key to achieving the second promise: God's healing of all of our diseases. It systematically makes us aware of reality. But we don't always have to go through a detailed process. Mrs. Eddy indicates that healing can occur through an instantaneous inspired awareness of the facts of reality. But whatever the approach, the fulfillment of the promise comes from our perception of the actual truth of God and man, from an understanding and an acceptance of the reality of our being.

#### Additional Bible Promises

Tonight we've seen how Christian Science helps us in the fulfillment of God's promises to meet our daily needs and heal our diseases. Of course, God's promises don't stop there. For instance, there's the promise of companionship. The Bible says, "God setteth the solitary in families."<sup>23</sup> And "None shall be alone in his appointed times."<sup>24</sup> There's the promise of comfort: "God shall wipe away all tears."<sup>25</sup> The promise of courage: "He shall strengthen your heart."<sup>26</sup> The promise of progress in one's work: "A man's gift maketh room for him."<sup>27</sup> The promise of world peace: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation."<sup>28</sup> The promise of effective leadership: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us."<sup>29</sup>

These are just a few of the promises, and every one of them is fulfilled because they're statements of eternal fact—fact which each one of us can realize.

You can resolve now to identify the obstacles that separate you or anyone else from God's promise. You can dispose of these obstacles with the counter fact of spiritual reality. And you can stick with the spiritual facts as the only reality. Then you will indeed find the fulfillment of all of God's promises.

1. Psalms 23:1
2. Philippians 4:19
3. Genesis 13:15
4. Luke 12:30
5. Exodus 15:26
6. Job 33:26
7. Psalms 103:3
8. Mark 10:27
9. Matthew 10:8
10. John 14:12
11. see Acts 3:1-8; 9:36-42
12. see II Corinthians 11:24, 25; see Acts 28:5
13. *Science and Health* 494:10
14. Luke 12:31
15. *Science and Health* 249:6
16. Colossians 3:10
17. Ibid. 6:38
18. *Science and Health* 162:19
19. Ibid. 109:22
20. Ibid. 411:20
21. Ibid. 233:28
22. Ibid. 412:24
23. Psalms 68:6
24. Isaiah 14:31
25. Revelation 21:4
26. Psalms 31:24
27. Proverbs 18:16
28. Isaiah 2:4
29. Ibid. 33:22