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Pentecost

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come then were all with one accord in one place" - Acts 2:1

THE ORIGINAL national festivals established by the Mosaic law were three in number "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee." (Deut. 16:16, 17.) The same three festivals are elsewhere prescribed. (See Exod. 23:14-17; 34:18, 22, 23; Lev. 23.) And although other festivals were added in later times, it is to the deep religious character of these three that we attribute the salutary influence which fostered the spirit of unity amongst the Hebrew people.

The second of these great national festivals was that known to us by the name of the feast of Pentecost. In the law of Moses it is called "the feast of the harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors"; also "the **feast of weeks**"; that is, the feast celebrated the day after the completion of seven weeks from the second day of the Passover, when the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest was presented before the Lord (Lev. 23:15); in other words, the feast occurring fifty days after the second day of the Passover. Hence its later Hebrew name, day of **fifty**, which becomes in Greek, day of the **Pentecost** (Greek, "**pentekoste**," fifty). - See Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31; Deut. 16:9-12.

The day of Pentecost was properly the celebration of the close of the harvest of wheat and barley. As a sheaf of the ripening harvest had been presented at the sanctuary on the second day of the Passover, as an acknowledgment that it was God's gift, and as such belonged to Him, so now two wave-loaves of fine flour, made from the gathered harvest and baked with leaven, were presented before Jehovah. This was the distinguishing rite of the feast. The loaves were made with leaven because they were not intended for the altar, but were a thanksgiving offering for God's bounty in furnishing food for His people. At the same time the priests were commanded to offer seven lambs of the first year, one bullock, and two rams, as a burnt-offering, with the customary meat and drink offerings also one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year as a peace-offering. On the same day was a holy convocation, and all servile labor was forbidden. It was a joyous festival to the Lord, every one being enjoined to bring with him a free-will offering,

according as God had blessed him, and to eat it at the sanctuary with his children, his servants, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

The Jews also called it "the feast of the joy of the law," as occurring, according to their tradition, on the very day when the law was given from Mount Sinai, the fiftieth of the Exodus, from the night of the first Passover. It must be acknowledged, however, that this cannot be clearly made out from the sacred record, nor is there any reference to such coincidence in the Old Testament. God, however, honored the day in a preeminent manner by choosing it as the time for the gift of the holy spirit, and thus for the inauguration of the Christian dispensation. The Jewish tradition, nevertheless, does beautifully cause the feast of Pentecost to associate the old dispensation of the law with the new dispensation of the Gospel; the organization of the Old Testament church under Moses with a partial ministry of the spirit, with its reorganization under the apostles with the fulness of the holy spirit.

Waiting for the Promise

It was on this day that we find the disciples, in the words of our text, gathered "with one accord in one place," and thus included probably not only the apostles but also the one hundred and twenty mentioned in Acts 1:15. Ten days before, the apostles had witnessed the ascension of Him whom they loved. During the forty days since His resurrection, through His various manifestations, they had gradually realized His change from human to the divine nature. He was raised from the dead a life-giving spirit-being (1 Cor. 15:45) and was no longer a man, of the earth, earthy. He was no longer human in any sense or degree, but the full implications of His change were as yet unperceived by the disciples, as we note from their question recorded in Acts 1:6. True, He had already breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the holy spirit." (John 20:22.) We may not speak with certainty as to the meaning of this, but the relationship was incomplete according to the plan and purpose of God, for He soon "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me." (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49.) The "promise of the Father" was of the spirit, but evidently concerning that yet unexperienced ministry of the spirit coming "upon" them for power. With this parting instruction, the Son of God was received from their sight, nevermore to be seen until that happy day, "face-to-face in all His glory."

And now for ten days they had "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,"- awaiting that they knew not what.

The Spirit's Descent

While thus gathered, having given themselves entirely to the business of devotion, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:2-4)

It burst upon them at once. Though they were waiting for the descent of the spirit, yet it is not probable that they expected it in this manner. As this was an important event, and one on which the welfare of the Church depended, it was proper that the gift of the holy spirit should take place in some **striking** manner, one which even their physical senses, such as sight or hearing, could attest so as to convince their own minds that the promise was fulfilled, and so as deeply to impress others with the greatness and importance of the event. The sound appeared to rush down from the sky. It was fitted, therefore, to attract their attention no less from the direction from

which it came than on account of its suddenness and violence. Wind in the sacred Scriptures is often put as an emblem of a divine influence. It is invisible, yet mighty. In this place the sound as -of a gale was emblematic of the mighty power of the spirit, and of the great effects which its coming would accomplish among men. It does not appear that there was any actual wind; all might have been still; but the sudden sound was **like** such a sweeping tempest. It was the **sound**, and not the **wind**, that filled the house. And it is this which makes the miracle really far more striking than the common supposition makes it to have been. A tempest might have been terrific. A mighty wind might have alarmed them. But there would have been nothing unusual or remarkable in it. Such things often occurred; and the thoughts would have been directed, of course, to the storm as an ordinary, though perhaps alarming occurrence. But when all was still, when there was no storm, no wind, no rain, no thunder, such a rushing sound must have arrested their attention, and directed all minds to so unusual and unaccountable an occurrence.

Possibly the "cloven tongues like as of fire" were first seen by them in the room before they rested on the heads of the disciples. Perhaps the fire appeared at first as scintillations of flame, of slender and pointed appearance, moving irregularly around the room until it became fixed on their heads. The word "tongue" occurs often in the Scriptures to denote the member which is the instrument of taste and speech, and also to denote language or speech itself. The common opinion is that these tongues, or flames, were, each -one of them, split, or forked, or cloven. But this is not the sense of the expression. It means that they were separated or divided one from another; not one great flame, but broken up, or cloven into many parts; and probably moving without order in the room. In the Syriac it is: "And there appeared unto them tongues which divided themselves, like fire, and sat upon each of them." The old Ethiopic version reads it: "And fire, as it were, appeared to them, and sat on them." The fire, in the form of a gentle flame, rested upon the head of each one. This evinced that the prodigy was directed to **them**, and was a very significant emblem of the promised descent of the holy spirit. After the rushing sound, and the appearance of the flames, they could not doubt that here was some remarkable interposition of God. The appearance of fire, or flame, has always been regarded as a most striking emblem of the Divinity, and was thus used on several occasions, as recorded in the Old Testament. And now to the disciples, the tongues would be emblematic of: first, God's presence and power; and second, of the diversity of languages which they were about to be able to speak.

"They Were Filled with the Holy Spirit"

To be filled with any thing is a phrase denoting that all the faculties are pervaded by it, engaged in it, or under its influence. Acts 3:10, "were filled with wonder and amazement"; Acts 5:17, "filled with indignation"; Acts 13:45, "filled with envy"; verse 52, "filled with joy and the holy spirit." The disciples were entirely under the sacred influence of the power of God, which revealed itself in the miraculous ability to speak languages which they had not before learned. No such outpouring of the divine spirit had ever occurred before as respects the children of Ad-am. Indeed, no such new "begetting on God's part was possible until first the sin-offering had been made and accepted. The phenomenon itself witnessed the acceptance of the merit of the great antitypical High Priest, who ten days before had ascended into the antitypical Most Holy. (See Heb. 9:24.) It is probable that this great work is referred to in Revelation 8:1-5.

The only thing corresponding to this descent of the holy spirit was that upon our Lord at the time of His consecration at baptism in Jordan. He there received the holy spirit in the same sense but "without measure," He being perfect; those who received this holy spirit at Pentecost received it by measure, that is, in limited degree. (John 3:34.) Although they were all "filled" with the spirit, yet, because of weakness and imperfections of their organisms, they could only receive limited measures-these differing one from the other according to natural temperaments, etc. Fifty days

previously, the resurrection of Jesus, which revealed His acceptableness to God, occurred on the same day as the offering of the barley sheaf of firstfruits, which typified Christ our Lord, as "the first fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. 15:20.) And now God manifests His acceptance of the Church, the body of Christ, by this remarkable manifestation of divine approval, by the outpouring of His holy spirit upon the waiting disciples who represented the Church collectively. And this on the very day that the two wave-loaves were offered in the temple, picturing the presenting of the Church before God, "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18), and its acceptance through the merit of the great High Priest.

Various Manifestations of the Spirit

God's holy spirit had indeed been manifested in various ways previously, but all of them differed from this manifestation. For instance, it was the holy power of God which moved upon the waters in connection with the world's creation. (Gen. 1:2.) Again, as the Apostle Peter declares, "holy men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the holy spirit"; mechanically. (2 Pet. 1:21.) He further explains that what they spoke and wrote they did not comprehend, because their utterances and writings were not for themselves but for us of the Gospel Age. We are, therefore, to recognize the fact that the spirit-dispensation had its beginning in Jesus, when He was thirty years of age; but so far as others were concerned, its beginning was in the sanctified ones at Pentecost, as recorded in this lesson. Neither are we to think that this Pentecostal outpouring requires a repetition, for the holy spirit thus once poured upon the Church was to abide, to continue, with the Church, not to be withdrawn and poured out afresh repeatedly. A collective anointing was here indicated, and its authority extends to the last called one of this Gospel Age even "like precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." - Psa. 133:2.

It was appropriate, that the giving of the holy spirit should be with a certain outward demonstration and manifestation; not merely to impress and convince the apostles and the early Church, but also for the benefit of those who should subsequently come into relationship with the Church. Faith must have a ground to rest upon, an assurance that there was at the beginning such a direct recognition of the Savior's sacrifice and of the divine acceptance of the consecrated ones who trusted in Him. The reality and certainty of this miracle of tongues is strongly attested by the early triumphs of the Gospel. That the Gospel was early spread over all the world, and that, too, by the apostles of Jesus Christ, by men of Galilee, is the clear testimony of history. They preached it in Arabia, Greece, Syria, Asia, Persia, Africa, and Rome. Yet how could this have been affected without a miraculous power of speaking the languages used in all those places? It requires the toil of many years to speak in foreign languages; and the recorded success of the Gospel is one of the most striking attestations to the fact of the miracle that could be conceived.

Under the influence of this remarkable power from God, we find Peter, who in fear had denied his Master, now powerfully moved, in the very city of Christ's crucifixion and in the presence of his enemies, to boldly proclaim the Word of truth. Here it was that he used one of the two "keys" entrusted to him (the second at Cornelius' conversion, three and one-half years later, the first of Gentile believers) and moved thousands to acknowledge Christ. And ever since, from its "birthday" at Pentecost, the true Church has continued to manifest God's power and glory. Some have concluded that there were times when the holy spirit was not in the world at all, but this was because they were looking for it in a wrong direction or under wrong conditions. At times the nominal church of outward professors has been so overgrown with the "tare" element that the true "wheat" could not readily be "discerned, yet we are confident that the Lord never left Himself without a witness, and that even in the darkest hour of the Dark Ages there were some of God's true people in the world; some representatives of the body of Christ; some, therefore, possessing the holy spirit; some who therefore constituted the salt of the earth and the lights of the world, even though the darkness was great around them and its influence so powerful that no record of the true Church is to be found, but only the records of the apostasy.

Fruits Superior to Gifts

The fact that the holy spirit upon the disciples was accompanied by miraculous manifestations or gifts, tongues, etc., does not imply any greater favor of God toward the primitive Church, which had those gifts, than toward the Lord's people of a later day, after those gifts had ceased; for, as

the apostle points out, it was possible for some to have those gifts without having much of the real spirit of the Lord. He says, "Though I speak with the tongues 'of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am **nothing**." (1 Cor. 13:1, 2.) We are, therefore, to esteem love for the Lord and for the brethren and for the neighbor-active love, which does, as well as wishes and says-to be the best evidence of an acceptable condition with the, Lord, the best evidence of a filling with **His holy spirit**, a far better evidence than the possession, of the "gifts" described. Far greater, far more precious gifts of the spirit. then, are the gifts which the spirit develops in us -- the fruits of the spirit -- joy, peace, faith, love, etc.

Jesus has ascended to His Father, but this other "paraklete" (comforter) has come to dwell in His people forever. The holy spirit's work is threefold. First, with reference to Christ's immediate disciples, it was the **revealer-Jesus** had instructed and opened truth to their minds, but their minds were weak, their memories treacherous. The holy spirit comes to bring to mind Jesus' works, to strengthen memory, to fill them with the, truth thus spoken in all its vividness and power, and open the true meaning of what was obscure and dark. Nor is this all. There were many things Jesus had for them, which they could not bear, were not able to receive, before His departure. These the spirit should make known to them; these things to come it should unfold to them. This promise is the foundation on which; the, whole New Testament rests as the inspired truth of God. They spoke, they wrote the things pertaining to Christ and His Kingdom, as they were moved by the holy spirit.

The second office is that of the **convictor and** regenerator. It is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment; and as it convinces and convicts, it is to renew and lead them to Jesus. On the day of Pentecost this power was demonstrated; thousands were pricked in their hearts: thousands believed in Jesus. Ever since, its presence has been revealed in conviction and conversion. Religion advances; Jesus is received; the Gospel is victorious only as the holy spirit brings the truth home to the hearts of men. And this tremendous power will be recognized in the glorious time near at hand when God shall pour out His spirit upon all flesh, in the times of restitution long promised.

The third office is that of **quickener, guide, and comforter**. To the soul penitent and believing, this blessed spirit comes and quickens it to see and feel the fulness, and richness, and power of the truth as it is in Jesus; stimulates it to sacrifice and labor; excites to prayer; strengthens against temptation; supports and comforts amid .trial, sorrow, and death. Jesus sends this divine spirit, in fulfillment of His promise to work in His Church and thus completes the cycle of redemption.

"Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed
With us to dwell.

"And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness
Are His alone."

- W. J. Siekman

The Kingdom of God

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." - Matt. 6:10, R.S.V.

ANY who have not carefully examined this subject, with concordance and Bible in hand, will be surprised, on doing so, to find its prominence in the Scriptures. The Old Testament abounds with promises and prophecies in which the Kingdom of God and its King, Messiah, figure as the very center. It was the hope of every Israelite (Luke 3:15) that as a people God would exalt their nation under Messiah; and when the Lord came to them, it was as their King, to establish the long promised Kingdom of God upon the earth.

In the parables of our Lord, the Church is frequently called the kingdom; and the Apostle speaks of it as the kingdom over which Christ now reigns, saying that God hath translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. We who accept of Christ now recognize his purchased right of dominion, and render him grateful and voluntary obedience before he forcibly establishes it in the world. We recognize the difference between the laws of righteousness, which he will enforce, and the kingdom of darkness supported by the usurper, at present the prince of this world. Faith in God's promises thus changes our allegiance, and we reckon ourselves subjects of the new prince, and, by his favor, joint-heirs with him in that kingdom yet to be set up in power and great glory.

But this fact by no means disannuls the promises that ultimately Christ's kingdom shall be "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72:8); that all nations shall serve and obey him; and that unto him every knee shall bow, of things both in heaven and on earth (Dan. 7:27; Phil. 2:10). Rather, on the contrary, the selection now of the "little flock" confirms those promises.

When the parables of our Lord are carefully examined, it will be found that they clearly teach that the coming or setting up of the Kingdom of God in power is future; and, as a matter of course, not until the King comes. Thus the parable of the young noble man going into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return, etc. (Luke 19:11-15), clearly locates the establishment of the Kingdom at the return of Christ. And the message sent by the Lord to the Church long years afterward was, "Be thou faithful unto death, and *I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. 2:10). From this it is evident that the kings who will reign with him will not be crowned nor reign as kings in *this* life.

The Church at present, therefore, is not the Kingdom of God set up in power and glory, but in its incipient, embryo condition. And so, indeed, all the expressions of the New Testament with reference to it teach. The kingdom of heaven now suffers violence at the hands of the world; the King was maltreated and crucified; and whosoever will follow in his footsteps shall suffer persecution and violence in some form. This, it will be observed, is true only of the *real* Church, and not of the nominal one. But the promise is held out that if now we (the Church, the embryo kingdom) suffer with Christ, we also, in due time, when he takes to himself his great power and reigns, shall be glorified and shall reign with him.

With the early Church, the promises of kingdom honor and jointheirship with the Master were strong incentives to faithfulness under present trials and persecutions, which they had been forewarned to expect; and in all the words of comfort and encouragement in the Apocalypse, given to the seven churches, none shine out more clearly and forcibly than those which declare, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne"; and, "To him that overcometh will I. give power over the nations."

These are promises which could not reasonably be misconstrued to apply to a present work of grace in the heart, nor yet to a reign over the nations in the present life; since they who would overcome must do so by *death* in the service, and thus gain the kingdom honors (Rev. 20:6).

But, after a great deal of persecution had been faithfully endured by the early Church, theories began to spread to the effect that the mission of the Church was to conquer the world, establish the kingdom of heaven on earth and reign over the nations *before* the Lord's second advent. This laid the foundation for worldly intrigue, pomp and pride, ostentatious show and ceremony in the Church, which was designed to impress, captivate and overawe the world, and which led step by step to the great claims of Papacy that as God's kingdom on earth it had a right to command the respect and obedience to its laws and officers of every kindred, nation, and people. Under this false claim (and they seemingly deceived themselves as well as others) Papacy for a time crowned and uncrowned the kings of Europe, and still claims the authority which it is now unable to enforce.

The same idea through Papacy has come down to Protestantism, which also claims, though more vaguely, that somehow the *reign* of the Church is in progress. Thus it has come to pass that the merely nominal members of the Church—those not really converted, not really wheat, but tares, mere imitations of the wheat—far outnumber the true disciples of Christ. And these are much opposed to every real sacrifice and self-denial, do not suffer persecution for righteousness' [truth's] sake, and at most hold to only a form of fastings, etc., instead. They are really reigning with the world and are not in the line of preparation for sharing in the real kingdom which is to be set up by our Lord at his second presence.

To any careful observer, there is a manifest incongruity between this view and the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. They taught that there can be no kingdom until the King comes (Rev. 20:6; 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:12). Consequently, the kingdom of heaven must suffer violence *until* that time, when it shall be set up in glory and power.

TWO PHASES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

While it is true, as stated by our Lord, that the Kingdom of God *cometh* not -- does not make its first appearance -- with outward show, in due time it is to be made manifest to all by outward, visible, and unmistakable signs. When fully set up, the Kingdom of God will be of two parts, a spiritual or heavenly phase and an earthly or human phase. The spiritual will always be invisible to men, as those composing it will be of the divine, spiritual nature, which no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18); yet its presence and power will be mightily manifested, chiefly through its human representatives, who will constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God.

Those who will constitute the spiritual phase of the kingdom are the overcoming saints of the Gospel age -- the Christ, head and body -- glorified. Their resurrection and exaltation to power precedes that of all others, because through this class all others are to be blessed (Heb. 11:39, 40). Theirs is the *first resurrection* (Rev. 20:5). The great work before this glorious anointed company—the Christ -- necessitates their exaltation to the divine nature: no other than divine power could accomplish it. Theirs is a work pertaining not only to this world, but to all things *in heaven and in earth* -- among spiritual as well as among human beings (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:20; Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:10; 1 Cor. 6:3).

The work of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God will be confined to this world and to humanity. And those so highly honored as to have a share in it will be the most exalted and honored of God among men. These are the class whose judgment day was previous to the Gospel age. Having been tried and found faithful, in the awakening they will not be brought forth to judgment again, but will at once receive the reward of their faithfulness -- an instantaneous resurrection to perfection as *men*. (Others than these and the spiritual class will be *gradually* raised to perfection during that Millennial age.) Thus this class will be ready at once for the great work before it as the human agents of the Christ in restoring and blessing the remainder of mankind. As the spiritual nature is necessary to the accomplishment of the work of Christ, so perfect human nature is appropriate for the future accomplishment of the work to be done among men. These will minister among and be seen of men,

while the glory of their perfection will be a constant example and an incentive to other men to strive to attain the same perfection. And that these ancient worthies will be in the human phase of the kingdom and seen of mankind is fully attested by Jesus' words to the unbelieving Jews who were rejecting him. He said, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God." It should be noticed also that the Master does not mention that he or the apostles will be visible with Abraham. As a matter of fact, men will see and mingle with the earthly phase of the kingdom, but not with the spiritual; and some will, no doubt, be sorely vexed to find that they rejected so great an honor.

We are not given explicit information as to the exact manner in which these two phases of the heavenly kingdom will harmoniously operate; but we have an illustration of the manner in which they *may* operate, in God's dealings with Israel through their representatives, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, the prophets, etc. -- though the coming manifestations of divine power will far exceed those of that typical age; for the work of the coming age comprises the awakening of all the dead and the restoration of *the obedient* to perfection. This work will necessitate the establishment of a perfect government among men, with perfect men in positions of control, that they may rightly order the affairs of state. It will necessitate the appointment of proper educational facilities of every character, as well as philanthropic measures of various kinds. And this noble work of thus elevating the race by sure and steady steps (under the direction of the unseen spiritual members of the same kingdom) is the high honor to which the ancient worthies are appointed, and for which they will come forth prepared soon after the final wreck of the kingdoms of this world and the binding of Satan, their prince. And as the divinely honored representatives of the heavenly kingdom, they will soon receive the honor and cooperation of all men.

To gain a place in the earthly phase of the kingdom of God will be to find the gratification of every desire and ambition of the perfect human heart. It will be a glorious and satisfying portion from the first entrance into it, and yet the glory will accumulate as time advances and the blessed work progresses. And when, at the end of a thousand years, the great work of restitution is accomplished by the Christ (in great measure through the agency of these noble human coworkers); when the whole human race (except the incorrigible - Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:9) stands approved, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, in the judgment of Jehovah, these who were instrumental in the work will shine among their fellowmen and before God and Christ and the angels, as "the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). Their work and labor of love will never be forgotten by their grateful fellowmen. They will be held in "everlasting remembrance" (Psa. 112:6).

But great as will be the accumulating, glory of those perfect men who will constitute the earthly phase of the kingdom, the glory of the heavenly will be the glory that excelleth. While the former will shine as the stars forever, the latter will shine as the brightness of the firmament -- as the sun (Dan. 12:3). The honors of heaven as well as of earth shall be laid at the feet of the Christ. The human mind can approximate, but cannot clearly conceive, the glory to be revealed in the Christ through the countless ages of eternity (Rom. 8:18; Eph. 2:7-12).

It is through these two phases of the kingdom that the promise to Abraham is to be verified -- "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "Thy seed shall be as the sand of the sea, *and* as the stars of heaven" -- an earthly and a heavenly seed, both God's instruments of blessing to the world. Both phases of the promises were clearly seen and intended by God from the beginning, but only the earthly was seen by Abraham. And though God selected from the natural seed the chief of the spiritual class (the apostles and others), and proffered the chief blessing, the spiritual, to all of that nation living in the due time for that heavenly call, this was just so much beyond what Abraham ever saw in the covenant -- favor upon favor.

The promise made to Abraham, to which Stephen refers (Acts 7:5), and in which Israel trusted, was earthly: it related to the *land*. God "promised that he would give it to him for a possession," said

Stephen. And God said to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. 13-14:17). Stephen shows that this promise *must yet* be fulfilled; for he declares that God gave Abraham "none inheritance in it [in the land], no, not so much as to set his foot on."

The Apostle, writing of this same class of ancient worthies -- Abraham among others -- agrees with Stephen's statement that the promise to Abraham has not yet been fulfilled; and he goes further and shows that those earthly promises cannot and will not be fulfilled until the still higher heavenly promises concerning the Christ (Head and body) are fulfilled. He says of them: "These all died in faith, not *[i. e., without]* having received [the fulfillment of] the promise . . . God having provided some better thing for us [the Christ], that *they* without *us* should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11: 13, 39, 40). Thus is shown again that the Redeemer and Restorer is spiritual, having given up the human a ransom for all, and that from this highly exalted spiritual class all blessings must proceed, whoever may be honored as its instruments or agents.

The earthly phase of the kingdom is thus seen to be Israelitish; and around this fact cluster those many prophecies which relate to the prominence of that nation in God's plan for the future blessing of the world, when their tabernacle, fallen in the dust, shall be restored, and Jerusalem shall be a praise in the whole earth. We find statements by both prophets and apostles which clearly indicate that in the times of restitution Israel as a nation will be the first among the nations to come into harmony with the new order of things; that the earthly Jerusalem will be rebuilt upon her old heaps; and that their polity will be restored as in the beginning under princes or judges (Isa. 1: 26; Psa. 45:16; Jer. 30:18). And what could be more reasonably expected than that Israel should first of all rejoice to recognize the prophets and patriarchs? and that their acquaintance with and long discipline under the law should have prepared them for tractability and obedience under the authority of the kingdom? And while Israel will be the first of the nations to be recognized and blessed, it is written also of Israel that "The Lord shall save the tents of Judah first."

As Jerusalem was the seat of empire under the typical Kingdom of God, it will again occupy the same position, and be "the city of the Great King" (Psa. 48:2; Matt. 5:35). A city is a symbol of a kingdom or dominion, and so God's Kingdom is symbolized by the New Jerusalem, the new dominion coming from heaven to earth. At first it will consist of only the spiritual class, the Bride of Christ, which, as seen by John, will gradually come down to earth; that is, it will gradually come into power as the present empires break in pieces, during the Day of the Lord. In due time, however, the earthly phase of this city or government will be established, parts or members of which will be the ancient worthies. There will not be two cities (governments), but one city, one heavenly government, the one for which Abraham looked, "a city which hath foundations" -- a government established in righteousness, being founded upon the sure rock foundation of the righteousness of Christ the Redeemer, the value of man's ransom which he gave, and the firmness of divine justice, which can no more condemn the redeemed than it could previously excuse the guilty (Rom. 8:31-34; 1 Cor. 3:11).

Glorious City of Peace! whose walls signify salvation, protection, and blessing to all who enter it, whose foundations laid in justice can never be moved, and whose builder and designer is God! It is in the light which will shine from this glorious city (kingdom) of God that the nations (people) will walk on the highway of holiness, up to perfection and to full harmony with God (Rev. 21:24).

Concerning the future glory of the earthly phase of the kingdom as represented in Jerusalem, the prophets speak in glowing terms, saying: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, . . . that

ye may . . . be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it." "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion [the spiritual phase] shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [the earthly phase]" (Isa. 52:9; 65:18; 66:10-12; Jer. 3:17; Isa. 2:3).

When considering the many precious promises of future blessing made to Israel, and expecting an accurate fulfillment of them to that people, it is proper that we should remember that as a people they are typical, as well as actual. In one aspect they are typical of the whole world of mankind; and their Law Covenant, of obedience and life, was typical of the New Covenant to be established with the world during the Millennial and future ages.

The blood of atonement under their typical covenant, and the priesthood which applied it to that nation, typified the blood of the New Covenant and the Royal Priesthood which will, during the Millennium, apply its cleansings and blessings to the whole world. Thus their priesthood typified the Christ, and that nation typified all for whom the real sacrifice was made, and to whom the real blessings will come -- "every man," "the whole world."

The Apostle Paul calls our attention specially to the sureness of God's promises to Israel in the future, and shows what favors they lost by unbelief, and what favors are still sure. He says that it was because of pride, hardness of heart and unbelief that Israel as a people had *not obtained* that for which they sought -- the chief place in divine favor and service. Paul's reference here is not to all the generations of Israel, from Abraham down, but to those generations living at the time of the first advent; and his words would apply to all their generations which have lived during the Gospel age, the age wherein the chief favor has been offered -- the high calling to the divine nature and joint-heirship with Jesus. This favor Israel as a people has failed to recognize and lay hold of. And though God visited the Gentiles and called many of them through the Gospel, they, like fleshly Israel, will fail to obtain the heavenly prize. Nevertheless, a class, a remnant, a little flock from among all the called ones, heeds the call, and, by obedience and self-sacrifice, makes its calling and election sure. Thus what Israel as a people failed to obtain, and what the nominal Christian Church also fails to obtain, is given to the elect or selected class, the faithful "body of Christ" -- elect or chosen (according to the foreknowledge of God) through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2).

Moreover, Paul argues that though Israel lost the chief blessing, "which he seeketh for," the chief place in God's kingdom, yet it remains that great promises are still due to be fulfilled toward that people; for, he reasons, God's gifts, callings, covenants, and promises are not to be turned aside unfulfilled.. God knew the end from the beginning; he knew that Israel would reject Messiah; and his unequivocal promises to them in view of this knowledge give us assurance that Israel is yet to be used of the Lord in service, as his agency in blessing the world, though "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for" -- the chief favor. Paul then proceeds to show that God's covenant promises to Israel were of such a nature as to leave it open and indefinite whether as a people they would be the heavenly or the earthly seed-whether they would inherit and fulfill the higher or the lower service mentioned in the promises. God kept secret the higher spiritual favor until due time, and the promises made to them mentioned the earthly favor only, though he favored them by the first offer of the spiritual favors also, and so offered them more than he had ever promised. In a word, the heavenly promises were hidden in the earthly. These promises, says Paul, cannot fail, and the offering of the hidden favor first, and Israel's blind rejection of it, in no way invalidates or disannuls the other feature of the promise. Hence he declares that though Israel as a nation is cast off from favor during the time the Bride of Christ is being selected from both Jews and Gentiles, yet the time will come when, the Deliverer (Christ, Head and body) being complete, divine favor will return to fleshly Israel, and the

glorious Deliverer will turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel will be saved [recovered to favor], as it is written by the prophet. The Apostle's words are: --

"Brethren, that you may not be conceited with yourselves, I wish you not to be ignorant of this secret, that hardness in some measure has happened to Israel *until* the fulness of the Gentiles may come in [until the full number selected from the Gentiles has been completed]. And then all Israel will be saved, as it has been written, 'The Deliverer [Christ, Head and body] shall come out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' And 'This is the covenant with them from me, when I shall take away their sins.' In relation to the GLAD TIDINGS, indeed, they are enemies on your account; but in regard to the election they are [still] beloved on account of the fathers, because the gracious gifts and calling of God are not things to be repented of. Besides, as you [Gentiles] were once disobedient to God, but have now obtained mercy by their disobedience; so also, now, these have disobeyed so that they may obtain mercy through *your* mercy [at the hands of the glorified Church]. For God shut up together all, for disobedience, that he might have mercy on all. [Compare Rom. 5:17-19.] O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom. 11:25-33).

- C. T. Russell

Afterward

"Look up, O Earth; no storm can last
Beyond the limits God hath set.
When its appointed work is past,
In joy thou shalt thy grief forget.
Where sorrow's plowshare hath swept through,

Thy fairest flowers of life shall spring,
For God shall grant thee life anew,
And all thy wastes shall laugh and sing.
Hope thou in him; his plan for thee
Shall end in triumph and release.
Fear not, for thou shalt surely see
His afterward of peace."

The Second Advent its nature and purpose

"Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: ... he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; . . . the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: . . . for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." - Psa. 96:10-13.

The unrestrained note of pure joy which pervades those words is an indication of the true nature of the Second Advent. The promise of our Lord to his disciples, that although going away from them he would one day come again, has always been in the forefront of Christian expectation and every generation has occupied itself to greater or lesser degree with the hope and anticipation of his appearing. In past times a certain atmosphere of gloom and apprehension was allowed to gather around the subject, some confusion between the Second Advent and the Last judgment, the purpose of the Lord's Return thought to be solely the gathering to heaven of the faithful, and the immediate condemnation of all others. Medieval theology combined the Second Advent and the Last Judgment into one event, constrained within the bounds of a single twenty-four-hour day, and made it more of a time of terror and destruction than one of gladness and rejoicing like that pictured by the Psalmist.

Today it is time that saner views prevail. The Second Advent has to be seen as a definite phase in the outworking of the Divine purpose, playing a vital part in the progress of mankind towards the Divine ideal and the Divine image. When the Psalmist in that noble poem devoted to the work of the Second Advent said, *"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth"* (Psa. 72:6, 7), he was certainly not picturing a time of condemnation and destruction; rather one of benevolence and construction. Judgment upon evil things, and their elimination, is only one aspect of the work of the Second Advent; there is also that tremendous evangelical work of the Messianic Age which has as its object the reconciliation to God of "whosoever will." Only too often is the Advent thought of in terms of the moment of arrival of our Lord from the "right hand of the Majesty on high" to take for himself his great power and commence his reign. The duration of that reign, his presence with men during the whole period of the Messianic Age, and all the wonders that Age will reveal, is equally a part of the Advent, and the Last Judgment which comes at the close of that Age is part of the Advent also.

PURPOSE OF HUMAN CREATION

The necessity -- and the certainty -- of the Second Advent stems from the purpose of human creation, that man shall eventually take his destined place in the Divine scheme of things. The age-old prayer of the faithful, *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10), is an expression of this truth. The Second Advent is the necessary and logical sequel to the First Advent. The two thousand years interval between the two Advents has allowed the seed of the Gospel to take root in the world and bring forth fruitage in the development of the Christian Church, that assembly of dedicated believers which will direct the evangelical work of the next Age. It has also seen a growth and development of thought which has led to the understanding that enduring life can only come to man through Christ, involving intelligent acceptance of the fact and full acquiescence in the Will of God and the principles upon which he has founded creation. But the entrenched power and influence of evil in the world has precluded the majority from coming to this knowledge, and for the greater part from even hearing anything about it, so that a catastrophic judgment upon such powers and influences must come, a clearing of the world

stage for a new scene in which Heaven's powers of righteousness will prevail to afford all men that full knowledge of God's ways, and opportunity to believe in Christ, which, measurably, they have so far been denied. That is why, speaking of this Advent in which this condition will obtain, God says through the prophet, *"then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent"* (Zeph. 3:9).

It is important to view the manner of our Lord's return in as accurate a fashion as the state of contemporary knowledge permits. Things having their basis in the spiritual world, lying outside the range of human senses, are viewed by us at present only *"as in a glass, darkly"* (1 Cor. 13:12), and to a great extent we have to visualize this great event in human history in the trappings of material things even though we know there must be factors we can neither conceive nor understand. It was even more difficult for the Early Church. The New Testament was written, and the words of Jesus and his apostles on the subject of his Advent were spoken, before men had any idea of the nature of the spiritual world. Those writings and those words had of necessity to be framed in terms of the cosmogony of the day to be intelligible at all. The prevailing idea pictured Heaven as a place situated on a globular sphere encircling the earth and not so many miles up at that. Heavenly beings were thought to be similar to human beings with perhaps the addition of wings to facilitate their descent to this earth, and their return. We today still believe in the spiritual world but realize that it lies outside our material creation -- separated from us not by distance but, as it were, on a different wavelength. While freely acknowledging the reality of that other world we have to admit that human bodies like our own, designed and adapted for life on this planet, can have no place in that order of things; that the celestials who stand around the throne of God must pursue the activities of their lives in bodies designed for and adapted to their own environment in that world.

That is why St. Paul insists that Christians who hope one day to be united with their Lord and *"see him as he is"* (1 John 3:2) must discard this present material body - which they do at death - and appear in that world in a new and celestial body (2 Cor. 5:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:37-53). Similarly we must not expect to behold our Lord returning at his Second Advent in the human body which was laid in the garden tomb, for he is now the Divine Lord from the right hand of God and he returns in the glory of his Divinity, not perceived by human senses. Moses in the mountain could not see God; he was granted a vision, a theophany which represented the presence of God. The disciples after the Resurrection could not see the resurrected Jesus although for forty days he was still present with them; only when he appeared in human form, as a gardener, a stranger, and so on, could their eyes and their ears establish a means of communication with their risen Lord.

SECOND ADVENT SIGNS

So it is at the Second Advent. There is nothing for the physical eyes to see, nothing for the ears to hear, when the Son of Man breaks again into human history. Whatever may be the spectacular manifestations of his glory later on, during his presence in the earth when the work of his Kingdom commences, there is no outward sign at the beginning. That is why he stressed the necessity of watchfulness on the part of those who would be apprised of the event when it was due to happen; why he likened his coming to that of a thief in the night, quietly, unostentatiously, known only to the watchers. *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.... in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"* (Matt. 24:42-44). *"The day of the Lord so cometh,"* says St. Paul, *"as a thief in the night ... but ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief"* (1 Thess. 5:2-4). The clear implication is that while the earnest believer, the "watcher," perceives the fact of the Advent in the "signs of the times" around him, the world in general is unimpressed and unaware. *"As the days of Noah were,"* said Jesus, *"so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying*

and giving in marriage, . . . And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-39). It will be literally true, as it was in the days preceding Jesus' revelation of himself at his First Advent, "there standeth one among you whom ye know not."

Our Lord's principal objective in this initial stage of his Advent is the raising of his own Church from the dead, and the "change" of those still living to be with him. It is obvious that since his Church, the assembly of faithful Christians of all ages, is to be associated with him in the Messianic work of the next Age, this resurrection must take place prior to his taking his power as King and assuming control of the earth. *"The saints shall judge the world," says St. Paul. "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," rejoins St. John. Jesus himself taught that "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit. . . , judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 20:4; Matt. 19:28). Writing to the Thessalonians on this subject, the Apostle Paul declared that those living at the actual time of the Advent would not precede their departed brethren into the Lord's presence. "The dead in Christ," he says, "shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up ... and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). "We shall not all sleep," he asserts in another place, "but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: . . . for the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). Those who "sleep" are synonymous with the "dead in Christ," believers who have "finished the course" and like St. Paul in 2 Tim. 4:8 have laid themselves down in death to await the day of the Lord and the promised crown of life. Following the resurrection of these to immortal life in heaven there comes the "change" or being "caught up" -- the expressions *imply* the same thing -- of those still living at the time of the Advent. They do not sleep in death; their change is an instantaneous one from earthly to heavenly conditions and as they close their eyes at the death of the human body they awaken immediately to conscious realization of heavenly life.*

More or less simultaneously with these events there comes the fulfillment of the Divine promise to Israel. Long millenniums ago it was foretold that a converted and purified Israel is to be the earthly instrument of Divine administration in the earth during the Day of the Lord; that Israel is to be a light to the nations, proclaiming God's salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6). There are many indications in the Scriptures that a period of regathering into the Holy Land and preparation for this destiny is a feature of the Advent before the returned Lord declares himself to the nations, and there can be no doubt that for many decades past such a regathering has been taking place. The process is by no means complete, for the necessary national conversion to God has not yet become a reality, but the fact that after two thousand years Israel is once again a nation among the nations is a telling point and another evidence that the days in which we live are the early days of the Advent.

THE SECOND PHASE

The second phase of the Advent has to do with judgment. Evil and evil institutions have flourished throughout human history and now in the end of the Age have come to the full. In the day of their fullness they are to be overpowered and destroyed that they oppress men no longer, and the way be opened for the incoming righteous administration of the Lord Christ, whose kingdom is to be established *"in justice and judgment and even for ever"* (Isa. 9:7). The Scriptures which describe this destruction of evil do so in highly metaphorical language designed to convey the idea of a complete and utter overthrow of all that would oppose the incoming kingdom. Thus the prophet Daniel witnessed a kind of heavenly assize in which the Great Judge, the Ancient of Days, takes his seat upon a judicial throne before which burns a consuming fire. The evil powers of earth in the *guise* of rampaging wild beasts are brought before him and condemned to be devoured by the all-consuming flames. One easily recognized to be the Lord Christ comes before him and is awarded the Kingship of all the earth; that kingdom is pronounced an everlasting kingdom which shall never pass away (Dan. 7:1-28). Under a rather more warlike metaphor John in the book of Revelation describes the kings of the earth and all their armies drawn up to do battle with a Rider on a white horse, one whose name is

The Word of God, coming forth from the heavens accompanied by his armies. The outcome is the same; the kings of the earth are overcome and utterly routed (Rev. 19:11-21). More definite is the language of St. Paul; *"the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God"* (2 Thess. 1:7, 8) and of St. Peter, *"the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"* (2 Pet. 3:10).

The progressive dissolution of human institutions and man's increasing disability to avert these happenings will eventually lead men more and more to accept the fact that the powers of Heaven are taking control. *"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven,"* said Jesus, speaking of this time, *"and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"* (Matt. 24:30). Far more convincing than any ocular apparition in the skies will be the logic of events; men will see the Son of man in the signs of the times and in the sense implied by Isaiah when, talking about the same event, he said, *"The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"* (Isa. 52:10) This is when upstanding, righteous men will come to the front, taking up the reins of government and of administration by sheer force of character and in the avowed power of God -and no man will be able to say them nay. Neither will such, in the main, wish so to do, for the benefits of their just and humane rule will become almost immediately obvious. *"It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation"* (Isa. 25:9).

By the time this stage is reached the fact of the Second Advent will be universally discerned and accepted. The whole world will know that Jesus is King and that his Kingdom is established in all the earth. Sin in the hearts of men will not have been eradicated -- it will take the whole of the new Age then beginning to do that -- and some there may be, at heart wedded to evil for evil's sake, who will within themselves be bitterly opposed to the new regime; but they will have to admit its existence and its power. From then onward the evangelical work of the Kingdom will commence and be particularly directed to the hearts of such.

This is not the end of the Advent; it continues throughout what the book of Revelation calls "the thousand years," the entire duration of the Messianic era. During that blessed and very busy time the dead must be raised, as Jesus promised in John 5:28-29, that all may have opportunity for conversion and reconciliation. That is the meaning of the invitation to those who come in sight of the Holy City pictured in symbol in the book of Revelation, *"the Spirit and the bride say Come. . . . whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev. 22:17).

It is still true that those who will not thus come into willing acquiescence with God's way will never enter the celestial city. *"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, . . . worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"* (Rev. 21:27). The prophet Isaiah caught a glimpse of some such when he looked into that favored time and said, *"when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness,"* and went on to speak of some who *"will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord"* (Isa. 26:9, 10). So at the end of that Age there has to be a Last judgment, of individuals this time. With the passing of that final scene in the history of human probation the Second Advent comes to a close. Its object will have been achieved; all who can possibly be saved have been saved; our Lord Jesus will *"see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"* (Isa. 53:11). In the entry of the redeemed into the everlasting years of the future he will *"deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father . . . that God may be all in all"* (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

- A. O. Hudson, England

Christ's Glorious Reign

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
Jehovah's blessed Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captives free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

"He comes with succor speedy
To those who suffer wrong;
To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong;
To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turn to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Were precious in his sight.

"To him let praise unceasing
And daily vows ascend;
His kingdom, still increasing,
Shall be without an end:
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
No, it shall stand forever,
A pledge that God is love."

The Gospel

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." - Rom. 1:16.

AT ONE time it was the custom to preach discourses which foretold the worst of bad news for all except a very select few. These were called Gospel sermons. A consultation of any dictionary would have informed the preacher his topic was a misrepresentation, for "gospel" is defined as "good news," not just "good news for a few." Dictionaries are very useful, but a Bible student is still safer if he can find his definitions in the Bible.

The Bible tells us also the nature and the effects of that Gospel. See, for instance, Matthew 4:23, where we read that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of *the kingdom*." He was definitely preaching an entirely different kind of kingdom from the one with which they were familiar at the time, for otherwise it would not have been really good news. The Roman kingdom under which they were living was to them a kingdom of servitude, actually a curse visited upon them because of the unfaithfulness of their forefathers. The difference is made very apparent by Mark 1:14, which says that Jesus preached "the gospel of *the kingdom of God*." A God of love and peace could not but plan a universe where love and peace would abound (1 John 4:8; Phil. 4:9). Actually the Gospel is called in Romans 10:15 "the gospel of peace"; and that "kingdom of peace," we are assured by Isaiah (9:7) and Luke (1:33), will be eternal. How exceedingly "good" is such news.

Second Corinthians 4:4 informs us of Satan's hatred for the Gospel. Two very different ideas are given us by translators as to what Gospel it is that Satan hates. One makes it that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of *the glorious gospel of Christ* [Christ's Gospel] . . . should shine unto them." A modern translation reads: "lest the *gospel of the glory of Christ* [Christ's glory], should shine unto them." With either of these Paul's definition fits, as also does that by Webster.

Paul adds the thought that the Gospel is Good News regarding the bringing of God's favor to the subjects of the Kingdom he preached (Gal. 3:8). His zeal for it was so great that though the holy spirit witnessed in every city that bonds and afflictions awaited him, he permitted none of these things to move him, nor did he count his life dear unto himself, for he felt that otherwise he could not finish his course with joy or accomplish the service to which he was appointed, testifying "the gospel of *the grace of God*." Favor from "the God of *all grace*" cannot but be in very generous measure. Back of it is the power that created all things; for Paul writes, "I am not ashamed of *the gospel of Christ*: for it is *the power of God* unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Thus he associates with the Gospel another in whom we have full confidence as to his power and his faithfulness. The reason for this association is made clear by 1 Corinthians 1:24, in which Paul declares Christ is "the power of God." These verses are harmonized by St. Paul's further words where he says that "[the cross] is the power of *God*" (1 Cor. 1:18).

This whole ground is covered again in the thirteenth chapter of Acts, reporting Paul's discourse in a synagogue at Antioch. Acts 13:29-30 declare Jesus' death and resurrection, and on the basis of these things the verses that follow associate the Gospel with promises made to the Ancient Worthies, saying, "We declare unto *you glad tidings* [the Gospel], how that *the promise which was made unto the fathers*, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." A death as a substitute for Adam was an essential, but it was also

necessary that the One so dying should be "raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25) The Gospel is indeed "good news" *for all* in that we have not only a Savior that died, but one who was also raised that *all* may have life -- (1 Cor. 15: 22).

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

This subject is covered in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, which opens with, "Brethren, I declare unto you the *gospel ... by which ye are saved.*"

But the Apostle carries us a step further: "He [God] *called you by our gospel*" (2 Thess. 2:14). The discourses that were misnamed "Gospel" but proclaimed eternal suffering for the vast majority of mankind, repelled us if we had love for mankind in our hearts; but as soon as we heard the message which the inspired definition calls "Gospel," we were drawn, "called" by it.

Paul's definition is in Galatians 3:8: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*" That to us was really good news, a godlike Gospel. For most of us the response to the call was prompt when we understood that God's plan is for a blessing to all the families of the earth. Beyond our power of appraisal is a call such as this, for it is "To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." No one would dare to think such a call were meant for him unless there were some definite evidence given us that arrangement had been made whereby we could attain that call. It is Brother Paul who is permitted to inform us of that means, assuring us of one more step in the Lord's plan for us. In 1 Corinthians 4:15 he reveals that the power of *begetting* is in that Gospel. "I have begotten you through the gospel." And Peter adds two items of information regarding our begetting: "According to his great mercy he hath begotten us again" first, "unto a living hope"; second, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, is recommended as a trustworthy prophet, for of him it is written: "Zacharias was filled with the holy spirit, and prophesied, saying: ' . . . The Lord God of Israel . . . spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, . . . that we should be saved from our enemies . . . to perform the mercy promised to our fathers [the Ancient Worthies], and to remember *his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham*'" (Luke 1:67-73). Jesus, the chief heir of that promise (Gal. 3:16), nearing the horrors of the cross, drew not back, but "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). He knew well, from experience, that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). So he gave his life that all mankind might receive the gift of deliverance from the curse and a chance for life. He anticipated bestowing the blessings promised to come through Abraham's heir.

"It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer [with him], we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:11, 12). "If ye be Christ's [suffering with him], then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise*" (Gal. 3:29) -the promise stated in the eighth verse, the promise of blessing all the families of the earth. Only unselfishness and an unconditional acceptance of the joy set before us can bring us to share with him the experiences of the cross, not only without complaint, but *with joy* (Gal. 2:20; Acts 20:24; 1 Pet. 4:13). "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" from many things, including the selfishness that would make him willing to keep this Gospel *to* himself, or as if just *for* himself. The unselfish, as far as there is opportunity, will share in carrying Paul's Gospel into all the world for a witness (Matt. 24: 14); but he will do so effectively only if he has "feet shod with the preparedness [Greek] of the Gospel of *peace.*" That one is not argumentative, quarrelsome, contentious. Nor should our Gospel be a mixture of human and divine wisdom. It should be clean as was Paul's -- "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Gal. 1:11). It was not a mixture of

Paul's, nor any one else's, and God's thoughts. It is "first pure, then peaceable" - not contentious or argumentative (1 John 3:3; James 3:17).

"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psalm 68:11), and they were "not slothful [witnesses] but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. When God made *promise to Abraham*, . . . he swore by himself, . . . willing more abundantly to shew unto *the heirs of promise* the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things.... we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon *the hope set before us*: which hope we have as an anchor"; and, note, that hope is *the promise made to Abraham*; and we are the heirs, joint heirs with Jesus of the precious promise of blessing "all the families of the earth" (Heb. 6:12-20).

"HIS SPIRIT BEARETH WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT"

The spirit of that promise is the spirit of the God who is Love, the one who gave his best that the Abrahamic Covenant might be effective -- a spirit that does not erect barriers, but accepts the Scriptural basis of fellowship, the ransom and consecration. Hebrews 3:8 warns us not to harden our hearts as did Israel in the wilderness, "fearing lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of us should *seem* to come short of it. For unto us was the *gospel* preached *as well as unto them*." No promise was more familiar to them than that all inclusive one made to Father Abraham, yet it failed to soften their hearts. This lost for them the privilege of a share with their Messiah in the work of blessing all the families of the earth. We fear the Scriptures indicate that the selfishness that excludes from the blessings of our fellowship any whom the Lord takes into his fellowship will mean for us loss of life itself. On the other hand, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35; 10:29). "Let us consider one another to encourage unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of *ourselves* together [all who have any claim to membership in the Master's. Body] . . . *for* if we sin willfully" -- then follows that very familiar threat of the second death. Amputated members of a body cannot be kept alive.

The urgency of the matter inspired the great Apostle to count but light afflictions the many trials he encountered in preaching that Gospel, that he might be "the minister [servant] of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the holy spirit," the spirit of love and sacrifice. "This is what the grammarians call the genitive of apposition. The Gentiles *are the offering* . . . a bloodless sacrifice" (*American Commentary*). Paul is not ignoring the necessity of justifying faith, but warning us not to overlook the necessity of the sanctified life that the bodies presented as a living sacrifice may be *daily* acceptable (Rom. 12:1, 2). The *Goodspeed* translation is especially clear, calling Paul "a minister of Jesus Christ among the heathen to act as a priest of God's Good News, to see that the heathen are an acceptable sacrifice." Only the transforming power of that spirit can open our minds to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God for us.

"He called you by our gospel to the *obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*." "Be thou a joint-sufferer of the gospel according to the power of God" - not according to our weakness, but his power to make us more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who strengtheneth us (Rom. 15:15, 16; 2 Thess. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:8).

What a wonderful Gospel these Scriptures have proved to be! - a Gospel saving us, calling us, begetting us, establishing us! Nothing more can be provided for our eternal welfare than this message to Abraham assures us. Truly, we can say with the Apostle: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

-P. E. Thomson

Notice of Annual Meeting

All should be aware of the fact that the affairs of our Institute are in the hands of seven brethren who are elected from its membership to serve for a period of one year or until their successors are elected.

Our Annual Meeting this year is scheduled to be held (D.V.) Saturday, September 28, at 10.00 a.m., in the Central Y.M.C.A., 1315 Pacific Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Membership in the Pastoral Bible Institute is, and always has been, open to any consecrated brother or sister who "is in full harmony with the purpose, spirit, and policy of the Institute," and who intends to support it "in all reasonable ways as he or she shall deem to be the Lord's will."

As stated in its charter, the purpose for which the Institute was formed is "the dissemination of Bible truths in various languages by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, papers, and other religious documents, and by the use of all other lawful means which its Board of Directors, duly constituted, shall deem expedient for the furtherance of the purposes stated."

The membership fee is five dollars (\$5.00) which should accompany the application. If an applicant lacks the membership fee, but is otherwise acceptable, the fee will be paid out of a special fund provided for that purpose.

In order to participate in the election of directors at the next annual meeting, anyone, not already a member, who desires to apply for membership should do so promptly as, according to our bylaws, "the registration of such membership must be made twenty days prior to the election."

Members of the Pastoral Bible Institute are hereby reminded of the privilege which is theirs of nominating in the pages of this journal the brethren they wish to elect as directors for the fiscal year 1968-69.

The brethren whose term of service will expire are: F. A. Essler, J. C. Jordan, A. L. Muir, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson.

We very much regret that Brother Thomson has requested his name be omitted as a candidate for directorship this year.

The brethren named above are pleased to report that a spirit of Christian love and harmony exists in their midst; and they have every reason to believe that the Lord has seen fit to bless their association in this ministry. They realize, however, that those carrying on any work may fail to see opportunities for improvement and expansion apparent to others not charged with such responsibilities, and that for this reason changes in office sometimes have beneficial effects. They therefore urge upon all the members of our Institute that they make this a special occasion for prayer, that our Father's will may be expressed in the vote of the members. If after prayerful meditation any are led of the Lord to nominate brethren, and will forward the names and addresses of such brethren so as to reach this office on or before August 10, 1968, such names will be published in the September-October issue of the "Herald," that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.

He Knows

"He knows the way I take, --
What matter then if dark it be,
Or rough, or hedged about, --
His staff shall comfort me.

"And should His love withhold
What seems so near, so dear, so sweet,
I'll humbly take this thing
And lay it at His feet.

"How sweet to *know* He knows,
And cares, and holds me by the hand, --
Will safely guide until
I reach the Heavenly Land!"

Entered Into Rest

Clara Bell, Seattle, Wash.
Beatrice Brownlee, Washington, Pa.
Lloyd L. Connor, Seattle, Wash.
Elizabeth Cooper, Seattle, Wash.
Mary Destro, Thompsonville, Conn.
Nellie Epperson, Mattoon, Ill.
Stella (Lanowick) Hill, Paradise, Cal.
Gilbert Hoskins, San Gabriel, Cal.
Albert V. Julian, Jacksonville, Fla.
Anna Kittel, Wausau, Wis.
Sophie Lanowick, Paradise, Cal.
Victoria Misiorowski, Chicago, Ill.
Fred Noeller, Hughson, Cal.
Clinton L. Olney, Seattle, Wash.
Calogera Provenzano, Feeding Hills, Mass.
Laura S. Rouse, Loxley, Ala.
Walter Tarkowski, Garden City, Mich.
Norman E. Taylor, Birmingham, Eng.
Kathe Weiss, Oxford, Eng.