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A Meditation for Whitsuntide

"The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." - Galatians 5:22.

DURING the closing days of our Lord's earthly life he gave his disciples assurance that after his departure they would not be left desolate. "I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper, . . . the spirit of truth, which . . . abides with you, and will be in you" (John 14:16, 17, *Diaglott*).

This gracious promise was confirmed to them during the forty days in which he was seen of them after his passion. "John, indeed, immersed in water, but you will be immersed in holy spirit, after a few days" (Acts 1:5, *Diaglott*).

For the fulfillment of this promise they were to "wait" at Jerusalem. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8). They had not long to wait. When ten days had passed as soon as "the day of Pentecost had fully come," the promise of the Father was fulfilled (Acts 2:1).

WAITING FOR THE PROMISE

Elsewhere we have considered in some detail the typical significance of Pentecost. Here we content ourselves with observing that Pentecost had long pointed to the time when, in the Father's great plan of redemption, the offering of the Church as "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" would be made and God's acceptance thereof manifested (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). And now that time had come, and to these early followers of the Master was to be given the privilege of representing the whole Church in its anointing experience. The antitypical Passover Lamb (Christ Jesus) had been sacrificed; the true Feast of Unleavened Bread could now be kept. Already Christ Jesus, as prefigured in the Omer Sheaf, had been "raised from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). They had conversed with him during the space of forty days following his resurrection and had watched him ascend to heaven (Acts 1:3, 9). What yet remained ere they, too, though in lesser measure, would be endued with that "power from on high" which had possessed him so completely and had operated in him so mightily? What must

have been their thoughts and emotions as in obedience to his word they had waited at Jerusalem? This we can only surmise. Their days and evenings, we know, had been passed in "the" upper room in which they had last communed with him (Acts 1:13). Certain it is that such a company of sincere-hearted ones, meeting together thus, with "one accord," could not but have been blessed (Acts 2:1). By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving they had sought to prepare themselves to receive the "promise" (Acts 1:14). First, perhaps, they would earnestly plead for its fulfillment. Next, perhaps, they would recall some of the Master's teachings, the grace of his countenance, his habit of thanks at mealtimes. Doubtless there would come at times a keen sense of shame and regret at some of their own past conduct. Following quickly upon this mood would come the happy memory of his grace in forgiving, and they would be relieved of their compunctions. Then, perhaps, would follow a sense of feebleness, of utter helplessness without the Lord -- as sheep, indeed, without a shepherd (Zech. 13:7). As day after day followed without event or sign, perhaps they would give way to a sense of disappointment at God's delay; possibly, (since they were men and women of like passions and frailties with us) to a feeling of doubt that the promise would ever be fulfilled. Shame at their doubt and disappointment would follow, and then - a willingness to wait God's own time and to accept God's own way. Perhaps, as God's time drew near, there may have arisen in the hearts of some of them the thought: "The Feast of Pentecost draws near; can it be that the Father will fulfill his promise then?"

THE SPIRIT DISPENSATION

The day came at last; they were as earthen vessels cleansed by prayer, emptied and waiting for the outpouring of the spirit, when "suddenly" it came. Just as at his baptism the holy spirit descended upon the Lord Jesus, so now it descended upon all them that were his, and they were all filled with it (Acts 2:1-4).

In the case of our Lord the descent of the spirit upon him was manifested by an outward sign. To the Baptist it seemed "like a dove" (note: not a dove, but the appearance of one) (John 1:32-34). So also, at Pentecost, the outpouring of the spirit on the waiting Church was accompanied by outward manifestations. A sound like a rushing mighty wind filled the place where they were sitting (note: not a wind, but a sound like wind). Tongues, not of fire, but "like as of fire" sat upon them. Evidently these manifestations, as also the "gift of tongues" (which seems to have been bestowed on the whole company), were for signs. The appearance of a dove on the occasion of our Lord's baptism gave the Baptist the confirmation he needed in identifying and heralding Jesus as the long-promised Messiah. The "sound," the "tongues of fire," and the gift of "speaking with tongues," likewise served to call the attention of all to the great change of dispensation then being inaugurated. Doubtless, too, when at the close of the seventy weeks of Jewish special favor (three and a half years after Pentecost) the holy spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his associates, some similar gift was granted them as a sign, an evidence, that Gentiles, too, were now to be privileged to share in the high calling of God extended to consecrated believers of every nation during this Gospel Age (Dan. 9:25-27; Acts 10:45-48; Acts 11:15-17; Acts 15:8, 9).

How eminently suitable these signs were for the purposes intended! The dove, the emblem of peace and purity, fitly represented the fullness of Jehovah's spirit of love in Jesus; as the tongues of fire, fitly represented the mission of the Apostles to be, under the holy spirit, that of testifying as "witnesses."

Nor was the "gift of tongues" without its special meaning. It may well be understood as a sign, we think, that the confusions of Babel are to be reduced to order, that the separations induced by the various languages of men are to be healed, as gradually men are drawn, some in the Gospel Age and others in the Millennial Age, into the Kingdom and fellowship of Christ. On the plain of

Shinar, thinking to raise themselves above the reach of divine judgment, to build a tower which no flood could drown, men had been smitten with a divine judgment; their one language was broken into many dialects; they were divided and scattered over the whole earth. This curse is to be conquered by the powerful influence of the holy spirit poured out at Pentecost, which spirit is yet to be poured out on all flesh. In the perfection of the Kingdom none is to be unintelligible to his brother, or separated from him; the whole earth is to be of one mind and heart (Zeph. 3:9; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16).

"They were all filled with the holy spirit and began to speak in other tongues" "the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:4, 11). Ah! gracious omen! when will it be wholly fulfilled? For let us not forget that just as the Omer presented on the morrow after the Passover, setting forth Christ Jesus as "the firstfruits of them that slept" was a pledge and earnest of the two loaves presented on Pentecost, which prefigured the Church in its elective character as the firstfruits from among men, so also the second firstfruits are themselves a prophecy and a pledge of the fuller harvest yet to be gathered in the coming Age, of which, in the Scriptures, all God's holy Prophets have spoken since the world began (Acts 3:19).

Thank God, though this glorious vision tarry, it will come; it will not fail of fulfillment (Hab. 2:3). True -- we must "wait out" *this* promise of the Father; but we may wait in the strength and patience of hope.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Meantime, while waiting the Lord's time and way, we are not to be idle, but to occupy ourselves with those things which pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Our chief occupation is to be the cultivation of the fruit of the spirit. Valuable though they were, the miraculous gifts vouchsafed to the early Church were but transient. The gift of tongues, along with the rest, was destined to pass away, as St. Paul plainly indicates (1 Cor. 13:9). Even when bestowed, it needed to be supplemented by another gift, that of "interpretation" before it could be exercised with profit and to edification. In discussing this gift of tongues, St. Paul affirms that many could speak in a tongue who could not interpret, and declares that for himself he would rather speak five words with the understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue. Its chief importance, he says, was as a sign, "not to them that believe but to them that believe not." The brethren were not to despise any of these miraculously bestowed gifts; on the contrary they were to esteem them. Nevertheless there was a more excellent way - expounded by St. Paul in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians - the way of love. Love (as the Apostle observes, in the text quoted at the head of this article), with its component elements, is the fruit of the spirit. While doubtless the gift of God, its very nature precluded the possibility of its being miraculously bestowed; in every case it must be developed personally by the individual who would possess it. Moreover this gift, unlike those miraculously bestowed, is not destined to pass away. It is to abide (John 14:16; 15:10; 1 Cor. 13:8, 13). We may, therefore, well esteem it to be "more excellent" and earnestly cultivate it in our hearts and lives.

"FRUIT" NOT "FRUITS"

How shall we do this? The Apostle points the way in our text (Gal. 5:22). There he enumerates nine elements of the fruit of the spirit, namely "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness,* meekness, selfrestraint."

*That the Revised Version "faithfulness" rather than "faith" is to be preferred here is clear, we think, from the context, where relative duties rather than faith in its theological sense are plainly in evidence. Compare also Titus 2:10.

It is to be noted that the Apostle speaks not of "fruits" (plural) but of "fruit" (singular), thus drawing our attention to the fact that the nine graces mentioned (the list is not exhaustive) are not to be separately cultivated, "love" in one Christian, "joy" in another, etc., but that all are to be developed together in the character of each consecrated follower of the Master. We may compare this passage with the Beatitudes (Matt. 5) where our Lord (in declaring the blessedness of those who are poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers) is surely not describing various persons, but one person, namely his truly consecrated follower, from many points of view.

We may also compare the wellknown passage, 2 Peter 1:5-8, where the one who "has obtained precious faith" is exhorted to give all diligence to furnish in his faith fortitude, and in fortitude knowledge, etc., and thus to develop, not a one-sided, but a wellbalanced Christian character.

This passage from St. Peter, moreover, should caution us against a disproportionate inference from the imagery of "fruit" suggested by St. Paul in Galatians 5:22 and by our Lord in the parable of the Vine (John 15). The ideas suggested by "fruit" and "fruitbearing" are not those of effort and care in the fruitbearing branches; effort and care are the cultivator's part. But St. Peter's exhortation reminds us that the analogy between the impersonal fruit-tree and the personal believer cannot be in all respects complete. In the conscious and responsible man there is a place for "all diligence."

But when this is said, by way of balance and clearness, then without reserve we may give our thankful attention to the blessed suggestions and significance of the word "fruit." What does it tell us? It tells us, the branches of the true Vine, that in us, but not of us, there is a mighty, fructifying principle. It tells us that the Christian character is not something to be worked up by weary efforts out of the material of self. Rather it is the result of *growth*. It is not something to be *manufactured*. Nor is it to be acquired from our surroundings; it is produced in the midst of them, not because of them, but often in spite of them.

"Contrast," says our Lord, "the glory of Solomon with that of the lily of the field." Why was it that Solomon's glory could not be compared with but only contrasted with that of the lily? Because the *lily grew*, and all the colors of the lily came from *within*, while all the glorious raiment worn by Solomon was a glory not his own, put on him from *without*.

THE THREE TRIADS

Commentators, generally, have suggested that the nine elements of fruit mentioned in St. Paul's inspired analysis may be taken in three triads, or sets of three, corresponding to three sides of the much diversified Christian experience. The first three, Love, Joy, and Peace, find their sphere of operation in the inner life of fellowship with God, which is known only to God and to the individual Christian's own consciousness; Long-suffering, Gentleness, and Goodness describe the Christian's character in his relationship with men; Faithfulness, Meekness, and Self-control manifest themselves in the personal character, which interprets itself in words and deeds, yes, even in face and manner. In those who possess it, and (if we may use the expression) are themselves possessed of it, the spirit of Christ bears fruit in every region of human life.

The essence, then, of the life and character of one producing the fruit of the spirit is Love, Joy, and Peace. These cannot be called *duties*; they should not be thought of as *virtues*, even; they are simply the result of communion or fellowship with God -- the *fruit* of the spirit. The *love* of God

has been shed abroad in the Christian's heart by the holy spirit (Rom. 5:5). The exalted Head of the Church was anointed with the oil of *gladness* and this anointing flows down upon the members of the Body as righteousness, *peace*, and *joy*, in the holy spirit (Rom. 14:17). These three elements of the fruit are in the private, inner life which God alone beholds. Nevertheless when *Love* and *Joy* and *Peace* are within, they cannot but find outward expression, and make their possessor *loving*, *joyful*, and *peaceful*; *loving* towards God, the brethren and all men; *joyful* with a calm but contagious and beneficent happiness; *peaceful*, with a sense of rest which cannot but diffuse itself in the direction of those with whom he comes in touch.

Again, in his relationships with the brethren and with all men, the fruit bearing Christian is seen to be Longsuffering, Gentle, and Good. "Longsuffering," it has been observed, "is the capacity to present the same calm surface today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, in spite of anything and everything." It is long temper, as contrasted with short temper; the ability to "bear all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). "Gentleness" is to touch others lightly, and then only with a healing touch; to manifest a disposition at all times to be tender in one's treatment of others -tender even in one's just reproofs. "Goodness" in this connection, is to be good *to others*; to pronounce benediction upon them; to be benevolent to them, to see that they benefit from their association with us.

Finally, the true Christian character, as it develops, results in a practical, alert, circumspect outward life. Bright with a secret happiness, longsuffering with an infinite forbearance, the fruit of the spirit will be seen in Faithfulness, Meekness, and Self-control. The truly spiritual man will be *faithful* in every duty, loyal to every promise. He will be dependable in business. His friends will receive faithful and careful counsel. His employers will get a service out of him in which their just interests will be as his own. His employees will find him watchfully equitable, considerate, courteous. He will take great care to owe no one anything. The local ecclesia will be well and truly served by him, be it ever so large, or small, or unresponsive. He will be known to be one who will take trouble for others, and who is glad to be their servant indeed for Christ's sake. He will be *meek*, avoiding a manner and habit of self-assertion among his brethren in matters of opinion or of work. And with and over it all he will be *self-controlled*. He will, for the glory of the Master, *his* Master, and that he may be truly serviceable in his ministry to others, watch and pray over his own acts and habits; over bed, and board, and literature, and companionship, and recreation, and imagination, and tongue -- over thought, word, and deed.

Will he progress thus, to perfection? No - not in this life. Indeed, as though to caution against such a thought the Apostle immediately presents the case of a brother overtaken in a fault, urging all, as they seek to restore the erring one, to do so in the spirit of meekness, lest they also should be tempted (Gal. 6:1). No - perfection in this life is not present to the Apostle's mind, here or elsewhere, for them or himself. In Philippians 3:13, he emphatically declares: "I count not myself to have apprehended."

"THIS ONE THING I DO"

But he did not stop with that confession. His further words show that he had an objective which reached beyond the present life. "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

Let us follow him as he followed Christ. As the Apostle Peter declares: "If ye **do** these things ye shall never fall."

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Christians Chastened and Scourged

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth evens son whom He receiveth." - Heb. 12:6.

CARELESS WRITERS may pile up words without any addition to the thought; but those who wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit were not so wasteful.. (Prov. 18:9.) There are, however, in the Scriptures many passages which upon a surface examination might lead us to suppose the writers had thus erred. The text under consideration is one of this kind. Many, interpreting it, make no difference between the two clauses, which teach two distinct and important truths. This difference is indicated both in the words "chasten" and "scourge," and in the words "loveth" and "receiveth." Chastening and scourging do *feel* much alike, but, according to the Greek words as well as the English, the cause and intent are quite different. Scourging indicates wrong-doing for which punishment is being meted out; chastening is educational, and implies need, not necessarily wrong-doing. The synonyms of the Standard College Dictionary make this distinction regarding the English. Having defined "scourge" as "to punish," it continues: "*Punish* is distinctly retributive in sense; *chasten*, wholly corrective and merciful in intent and result." "Chasten" is defined as "1. To discipline by pain or trial. 2. To moderate; soften. 3. To refine, purify. 4. (archaic) To chastise." "Discipline" is defined: "1. To train to obedience or subjection. 2. To drill, educate. 3. To punish or chastise." It is understood that words are used in their first meaning by discerning writers unless they place something in the context to indicate otherwise. On examination of the Greek words we find the definitions given above are good translations of the original.

George Ricker Berry defines (1) *paideuo* (translated in the King James Version, chasten) "To train a child; hence, (1) to instruct, (2) to correct, to chasten." Strong's definition is: "To train up a child, i.e., educate, or (by implication) discipline (by punishment)." Thayer gives the following: "(1) As in classic Greek properly to train children. Passive, to be instructed or taught, to learn: followed by an infinitive; to cause one to learn. (2) To chastise or castigate with words, to correct. To chastise with blows, to"scourge." As an illustration excusing this last definition, "to scourge," which would fit no where else in the New: Testament nor in Classic literature, Thayer cites the passage which we are considering and Luke 23:16, 22, where Pilate said, "I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him, and again, "I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go." In these verses Thayer evidently overlooked the fact that Pilate has just said, "I have found no fault in this man." The reason for Pilate's choosing the mild word which has no thought of punishment in it in classic Greek -- and in the New Testament so far as we have been able to discover -- is manifest. The classic definition as given by Liddell and Scott, is:

"(1) To bring up, rear a child; (2) to train and teach, educate . . . (3) To chasten, discipline. **In** this entire passage (Heb. 12:5-7) Young in his "Concise Critical Comments on the Bible" uses the word "instruct" and its derivatives instead of "chastise," etc.

For the other word, *mastigoo*, we find the following definitions: Berry: "To scourge." Strong: "To flog." Thayer: "To scourge. Metaphorically, of God as a father chastising and training men as children by afflictions." Liddell and Scott: "To whip, to flog."

The difference in the intent of the rest of the two clauses in which we find these words, chasten and scourge, is just as apparent. "Whom the Lord loveth He rears as children," includes all His creatures from the Logos down through the ranks of the angelic host and the lowliest of the human family; but the other clause, "and scourgeth every son *whom He receiveth*," has one very important omission. The Logos was His only begotten Son, therefore not "received" as were we of a later begetting, selected for that purpose from an alien family. Nor did He ever deserve any scourging. When Jesus came to John the Baptist to receive immersion at his hands, His cousin, not knowing of any baptism other than for the remission of sins, and knowing that Jesus was righteous, would have turned Him away had not

Jesus insisted. (Matt. 3:13-15.) His insistence was not because He had any sins of which to repent, but because He did always those things that pleased the Father (John 8:29); His meat, was to do the will of Him that sent Him. - John 4:34.

As to the other word, *paideuo*, though He had far less to-learn than we, yet, strange as it sounds to us, *Jesus "learned obedience [Thayer gives as the "proper and primary significance listening"] by the things which He suffered.*" (Heb. 5:8.) Under the difficult conditions of this earthly existence, He learned to listen for the heavenly Father's voice when every circumstance was contrary to all the conditions of the many millenniums of His previous existence, and as He never could have learned in the sacred courts of heaven. When He was thus "completed" (literal Greek, ver. 9), "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Through our frequent waywardness we learn what it is to have earthly clouds come between us and the Father's face. He who knew no sin, obedient unto death, even the death of the lowest of sinners, through the fulfilment of Psalm 22:1, completed His lessons in "attentive hearkening" (Strong's). (Phil. 2:8.) The sad story of one man's disobedience by which we were all made sinners, is at last" on the cross counterbalanced by the complete obedience of One through whom the many shall be constituted righteous. - Rom. 5:19, Diaglott.

Jesus came down from heaven, "not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him" into conditions under which He could be tested (and trained) in all points. (John 6:38; 5:30.) In the verses following this statement is recorded His assurance that it is the Father's will that of all which He had given Him He should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. Evidently they, too, must have a faith that will manifest itself in obedience (verse 40.): "For this is My Father's will, that every one who *fixes his gaze* on the Son of God and believes in Him (literal: into Him) shall have the life of the Ages, and I will raise him to life on the last day." (Weymouth.) Thus the requirement for the Church is the same as for her Lord -- they, too, must learn attentive hearkening by the things which they suffer; they must be "strangers and pilgrims," must conduct themselves honestly, honorably, as true citizens of the heavenly Kingdom, though their walk is among heathen (1 Pet. 2:12) whose heathenish schemes and practices are a continual test of their faithfulness to the laws of the heavenly government. Here criticizing, judging, hating, jealousies, backbitings, slander, and all the rest of the evil progeny of Satan are made easy, and only in the power of His might can their onslaughts be defeated, and devoted to the purpose for which our all wise Instructor has permitted them -- for our training, the chastisement of Hebrews 12:6. The resultant character will', be chaste and beautiful, not because of the size or quality of the individual's brain; but because of the skill of our Teacher, and of our having faithfully kept ourselves in submission to His instructions, gratefully accepting His corrections.

Failure to bear in mind that "every son whom He receiveth" must have not only scourgings, but, as one "whom the Lord loveth" will also have trying experiences, is often a cause of needless discouragement "Our heavenly Father designs that various kinds of trouble shall come upon us, that these may develope and prove our characters. It is a part of the divine plan to permit us to have experiences of affliction. (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75; 34:19, 20.) . . . We are each to demonstrate our willingness to suffer according to His will, and often to suffer unjustly. Our Lord set us an example of cheerful, patient submission to God's will. We are to walk in His footsteps. And we have the example of the Apostles, when trials and difficulties and persecutions came up on them; and the example of other saints all down the Age.

"Trouble is not necessarily a sign of the disfavor of God. On the contrary, we know that many are the afflictions of the righteous and that *All* that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution.' The truth will cost them something. *Faithfulness to the Lord* will cost them much. As the Apostle says, 'If ye be without chastisement [discipline, training], then are ye bastards and not sons.' (Heb.. 12:8.) If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a Refuge which none but

His only can know. No harm can reach us within this shelter; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. 'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose.' (Rom. 8:28.) And as Job's after blessings far outweighed his brief trials, so it will be with the Lord's saints today."

Inspired by the faithfulness of the Ancient Worthies listed in the eleventh chapter of this Epistle, "We must put away our own grossness, as athletes rid themselves by severe training of all superfluous flesh. Then we must also put away from us the sin that surrounds us, that quite besets us, on all sides, whether in the world or in the Church, as runners must have the course cleared and the crowd of onlookers that press around removed far enough to give them the sense of breathing freely and running unimpeded in a large space." (Expositor's Bible.) Faith alone will deliver us from the overwhelming pressure of the world's sin. Ours is a "furlong race," with the Judge in sight at the end of the course. On Him the contestant must fix his gaze that his course may be a straight one, for He is our goal. We must not only win to gain the crown, but must be worthy to wear it. when He bestows it. There can be no winning if the race is run uncertainly (1 Cor. 9:26); no worthiness if anything less than His. perfection is our goal. "Wherefore lift up your listless hands, strengthen your feeble knees; make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather healed." - Heb. 12:13, Centenary Translation.

"O blows that smite, O wounds that pierce
This shrinking heart of mine!
What are ye but the Master's tools,
Performing work Divine!
How blest that all these seeming ills
That draw my heart to Thee
Are each a proof that Thou hast set
Thy seal of love on me!"

- P. E. Thomson.

Things Coming to Pass

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." "And none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." - Luke 21:35; Daniel 12:10; Luke 21:31.

FROM time to time, under this article heading, we have considered some aspect of current world events in its relation to that most important of all events, the establishment of God's Kingdom. The Biblical evidences for its proximity have been examined from many viewpoints, but there is still another "sign," and one often overlooked, which we now desire to consider, and that is the "sign" of *unawareness*. To emphasize this we have grouped the Scripture texts above, which, while removed from their context, are nevertheless in complete harmony in testifying to a paradox of paradoxes. For the world's ignorance of the "day of their visitation" is paradoxical, inasmuch as "these things are not being done in a corner." For how is it possible for men witnessing the significant events of history's greatest crisis to be so astonishingly unaware of their true implication - that the Kingdom of God is near, "even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33)? Have not millions of Bibles circulated the earth, each witnessing clearly and explicitly to the signs of the times? What is the cause of the mental blindness which has come upon the present generation - a blindness unperceived in the face of intellectual attainments that are the marvel of our day?

"DARKNESS COVERS THE EARTH: GROSS DARKNESS THE PEOPLE"

It is becoming evident to thinking men that the roots of the present world distress have their beginnings in deeper soil than is generally recognized. We are witnessing the breakdown of a civilization based on a materialistic liberalism that had its inception in the dissolution of the medieval culture of the feudal civilization which ushered in two great movements, the Renaissance and the Reformation. Both these movements, allied in some respects, and diametrically opposed in others, contributed jointly to the freedom and individualism of modern civilization. Both represented great advances; the one in social, political, and economic reforms which culminated eventually in the industrial revolution of the past century, and the other in a freedom from the fetters of religious authority and the corruptions of religious superstition. Both begat great hopes and promises. Both brought great confidence that the "emancipated" mind would disclose the secrets of nature; penetrate into all the ultimate mysteries of life; exploit the buried treasures of the natural world and make them available for man; explore the complexities of human society and eliminate the social maladjustments that ignorance had perpetuated, and finally free man himself of the sorrows and pains, the frustrations and lusts by which he made himself and his fellows miserable. And in a measure this has come to pass.

But unfortunately in the process of realizing these great dreams, political and economic action was thoroughly secularized and authentic Christian social ideals were neglected. Human dignity, human personality, and human solidarity were forgotten. With the vast material progress there have arisen new problems, and the fabulous productivity of the modern machine has created crises and unemployment rather than security and abundance. The dreams of economic harmony and of individual happiness have been cruelly disappointed. Far- from attaining that individual liberty, the "right" of democratic man, today in large sections of the world man has sunk to the position of a creature of the State, that new juggernaut. Great totalitarian systems have sprung up and humanity finds itself in the midst of an unparalleled worldwide conflict between the forces of freedom and slavery. The injustice, the unhappiness, the brutality so rife, oppress and darken men's minds and they see no way out. In Matthew Arnold's words:

"The world which seems
To lie before us, like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Poor groaning creation! How accurately did our Master predict the mental state of men of our day. "Upon the earth distress of nations in *perplexity* at the roar of the sea and rolling waves, men ready to die through fear and expectation of what is coming on the habitable earth" (Luke 21:26, *Darby*).

Just what has caused society to move toward catastrophe rather than triumph? Why have not the enormous achievements of man during the past century resulted in a stable and beneficent order for his welfare? Why the present disillusionment and shattering of hopes?

"Individual profit, which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided the motive force for the economic system, has failed us, and we have not yet discovered any moral substitute for it other than war. Nothing but war seems sufficiently worthwhile. The economic crisis is in essence a moral crisis. It cannot be explained - and much less solved - in constitutional or even in economic terms. The fundamental issue is moral."

Thus wrote pessimistic Professor Carr, in "Conditions of Peace:" And here we have a partial answer to our question. Who cannot recognize a great decadence in moral and ethical values throughout the earth? What has become of the absolute distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, of the sanctity of agreements, of the sacredness of one's word? What promise can be trusted, what firm agreement can ever be made again, in a world where millions have been educated to believe that if it seems in their interest to violate it, no pact or pledge, however solemnly drawn up, need be regarded by "realistic" minds, or "cold statesmanship," as more than a "scrap of paper"? And what of the imperatives of conscience, that God within the breast? "Conscience," said Hitler, "is a Jewish invention."

**"CURSED BE THE MAN . . . WHOSE
HEART DEPARTETH FROM THE LORD."**

Alas, in his emphasis on material prosperity, man has gradually lost those fundamental values which make for morality and true freedom, and which constitute the individual superior to his own creations. This central value of Christianity, the value of the individual, has been corrupted in modern political thought to demand a subordination of the individual to the State (or indeed to any organization or society of which he is a member), the implications of which tragic fallacy are but now being realized by thinking men. Thoreau uttered a profound truth when he said: "There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived."

This has well been called the lost key to the whole problem of modern government. We are all witnesses to the enslavement of hundreds of millions under the tyranny of totalitarian powers. Never in human history has the individual counted for *so* little, and never has human life been so cheap. The attempt to comprehend the sum total of human suffering leaves the mind numb with

horror. Thank God for the assurance that under the beneficent rule of Christ's Kingdom man shall regain his original state, a creature in the likeness of his God. For God shall

"Give back the upward looking and the light,
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes."

Thus speaks the Lord:

"Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. *I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir*" (Isa. 13:13, 11, 12).

But what has happened to the world's spiritual guides? Are there not thousands of church edifices, with tens of thousands dedicated to preaching Him whom these buildings monumentalize? Are there not countless multitudes of church adherents and millions upon millions of Bibles? What is lacking?

Hear the words of Jawaharlal Nehru: "The old days were days of faith, blind unquestioning faith. The wonderful temples and mosques and cathedrals of past centuries could never have been built but for the overpowering faith of the architects and builders and people generally. The very stones that they reverently put one on top of the other, or carved into beautiful designs, tell us of this faith. The old temple spire, the mosque with its slender minarets, the Gothic cathedral -- all of them pointing upward with an amazing intensity of devotion, as if offering a prayer in stone or marble to the sky above -- thrill us even now, though we may be lacking in that faith of old of which they are the embodiments. But the days of that faith are gone, and gone with them is that magic touch in stone. Thousands of temples and mosques and cathedrals continue to be built, but they lack the spirit that made them live during the middle ages. There is little difference between them and the commercial offices which are so representative of our age. Our age is a different one; it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning. We can no longer accept many of the ancient beliefs and customs; we have no more faith in them, in Asia, or in Europe, or in America. So we search for new ways, new aspects of truth more in harmony with our environment. And we question each other and debate and quarrel and evolve any number of 'isms' and philosophies. As in the days of Socrates, we live in an age of questioning, but that questioning is not confined to a city like Athens; it is world-wide."

In this candid statement we have the full explanation for the present unawareness of the implication of world events. The world has lost its sense of spiritual values -- has lost its faith in revealed religion. A spirit of irreligiousness has spread abroad. Men have become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. We live in a generation which can refer contemptuously to the Bible as a "collection of Hebrew myths," and stigmatize religion as an "opiate for the inferior-minded" - a time when a prominent man of letters can write a friend that "Rabelais was nearer God than Christ," and a famous writer can say that no man who regards Christ as an ideal is worth working with. This is the day of the cynic; of the pseudo-intellectual, of the spirit of shallow cynicism and of mockery which has destroyed in large measure the old simplicity and integrity based upon the great Christian principles of the Word of God. Yes, a generation which questions the existence of its God. One is reminded of Milton's lines so applicable to our day:

"Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
Rarely be found. So shall the World go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just
And vengeance to the wicked."

Yes, the world has reached a condition of disbelief that augurs ill for the immediate future, and though we still hear of "Christian principles," it is too often in circumstances which, as ex-President Hoover has said, make the very phrase sound like a "Gargantuan joke."

**"A FAMINE IN THE LAND ...
NOT FOR BREAD,
BUT FOR THE WORD OF THE LORD."**

But what of the spiritual guides of "Christendom"? Have they no message from the Word for questioning humanity? Men seek a positive answer, a definite "thus saith the Lord." Alas, though thousands of sermons are preached weekly, seldom is the voice of assurance and enlightenment heard. Instead only echoes of doubt and perplexity, of struggles to find one's bearings, of pious moralism, of psychological therapeutics - truly "stones for bread"; man seeking strength from within himself.

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr has well written:

"Some of the most stubborn and sentimental illusions about the possibilities of a simple and easy peace between the competing elements in human society have been fostered by modern churches. In America they contributed more possibly than any other influence to political and moral illusions, for they aggravated false estimates of man and history by compounding them with classical and pious conceptions. The errors and illusions of our culture, which have made an estimate of the crisis of our civilization difficult if not impossible, are, almost without exception, various versions of a single error. *They are all expressions of too great an optimism about the goodness of human nature*; they all therefore underestimate the difficulties of relating life to life, will to will, interest to interest, in a harmonious social life. They regard the achievement of justice and social peace in human society as a comparatively easy task. It is, as a matter of fact, a very difficult task, which can be accomplished with tolerable success only if its difficulties are fully recognized."

This fact concerning the weakness of human nature is a fundamental teaching of the Bible, and is the basis for the Divine Plan of regeneration through the Kingdom of Christ. Other salvation there is none. The hope for man resides in the promised Millennial reign upon earth, "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). This is the message of God to all men. Why is it not proclaimed from every pulpit?

The answer to this question goes back to two great scientific theories. The first was the theory of Copernicus which destroyed the old comfortable assumption that the earth was the center of things, and dwarfed man by the mere size of the material universe. The other was the Darwinian theory, which subjected his inner world to an even more disintegrating scrutiny, and filled

mankind with doubts as to the values of human personality and the nature of its origin. The advancing flow of scientific thought, true or otherwise, plus the wave of Higher Criticism which originated in Germany and flowed out to all the ecclesiastical schools, resulted in the gradual breakdown of faith in the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God. The great foundation truths were slowly obscured, with the tragic result that people are now blind to the Bible's message revealing the stupendous significance of present momentous events. It is rare indeed today to find in some one a living faith in the Bible as God's revealed Word. True, there is still regard for the moral precepts of the Scriptures, but the vital substance has been lost. Men do not seek from the Bible the answers to their questions. Men do not bring God into their counsels. And so, as of old, to our day the Word of the Lord speaks:

"Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isa. 29:13, 14).

The Church Nominal gropes blindly on, all unwitting that the hopes of true Christians are soon to materialize. Though professing faith in the First Advent of Christ, the evidences for His Second Advent are disallowed, though there are ten times as many Scriptures for the latter as there were for the former. The glorious words of the 96th, 97th, 98th and 99th Psalms evoke no responsive chords. There stands One at the door and they know not. Christ's own judgment is recorded in Revelation 3:15, 16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The Church Nominal now brings forth no message for the times from the Lord. The voice of the Bridegroom and Bride is heard no more in her. There remains but blindness and barrenness. "Her prophets also find no vision from the Lord." "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Lam. 2:9; Prov. 29:18).

Yes, "as a snare" are these things coming on all mankind. Only the wise of God understand and rejoice in the evidence of the proximity of God's Kingdom. The world continues on into ever-increasing darkness, unheeding the few who point to the sure Word of Prophecy, until that glad day soon when upon the wreck of man's institutions, the human race, illuminated by the spirit of God, shall rebuild an earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"And while the earth with strife is riven,
And envious factions Truth do hide,
Lo! He, the Lord of earth and heaven,
Stands at the door and claims his Bride.

"He's come! Let all the earth adore him;
The path his human nature trod
Spreads to a royal realm before him,
The Life of Life, the Word of God!"

- *W. J. Siekman*

The Shiloh Prophecy

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." - Gen. 49:10.

Our readers are all well aware that the promise of the Seed to "bless all the families of the earth" is the great promise of Scripture; and that the germ seed of all promises is in the statement of God to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Losing sight of the fact that this promise of the Seed runs through all prophetic utterances, either directly or indirectly, and that all God's plans for the children of Adam are based upon that promise of the Seed, we are apt to have the wrong thing in view in interpreting this passage of Genesis 49:8-11. But having this original promise in mind, and also following its development down to the time of Jacob's blessing of his sons, this blessing is then seen to have a relationship to that promise and is a step in its development.

Let us see. Originally the hope set forth was vague and indefinite. Who and what was the seed? When would the seed appear? It was applicable to no one in particular, and might be applicable to many. But as the centuries rolled on, the promise was continually narrowed down as to whom it might apply. After the flood, Noah voiced these words: "Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem," thus indicating that Jehovah, the covenanting God, was henceforth to be in a special sense the God of Shem. Years later, the choice was further narrowed to Abraham and his seed; then Ishmael is excluded and Isaac designated; Esau set aside, and Jacob chosen. And then, when Jacob was ripe in years and his days were numbered, he "called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days."

We do not know, of course, as to just how much trust these twelve individuals had in the promises of God; yet the subsequent history shows that the promises were greatly respected by some of them, for these promises continued a vital force in their later national existence, a determining factor in many decisions.

Into Jacob's presence came first, Reuben, the eldest of the brothers. Will the promise continue through him? Hearken! "Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Thus is Reuben counted out of the chief blessing.

Next, of Simeon and Levi it was said: "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united. . . I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." They, too, are set aside.

Now comes Judah. Will he also be passed by? Not so; for distinctly is Judah pointed out as the tribe that is to furnish the Messiah: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be: Binding His foal unto the vine, and His ass's colt unto the choice vine; He washed His garments

in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and His teeth white with milk."

If we apply here the principle that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10), we are confronted with such testimony; for the several promises of the 8th verse of Genesis 49, are much more applicable to Jesus Christ than to the literal Judah -- either man or tribe: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee." This reminds us of the language of Psalm 72. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. . . Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him."

Yet primarily in this is set forth the coming royalty and conquering power of the tribe of Judah. Not yet was Judah so, for "Judah is [now but] a lion's whelp." But in the days of Joshua and during the period of the judges, it was the tribe of Judah which continued to grow, until, at the death of Saul, the prophecy came to a head in Judah being made the royal tribe, and David, king.

What we are particularly interested in, at this time, *is* the 10th verse: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."

Examining this word "sceptre," we find that it is a translation of the Hebrew word "shebet"; and it is the regular word for "tribe," and is so rendered in the 28th verse of this same chapter: "These are the twelve tribes ["shebet" - Hebrew] of Israel." This being so, and using the English word "tribe" to translate the Hebrew "shebet" of Genesis 49:10, we then read, "The *tribe* shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Obviously, this was intended to be a prophecy and promise of Judah's continuity as a separate and distinct tribe until the advent of Messiah, the Seed. All tribes were to share in the blessings of Abraham, but only Judah's tribal history was promised to continue unbroken until Shiloh should appear. And this was true only of Judah. All other tribes were broken up and removed, or assimilated into Judah; so that, at the time of the First Advent, all Israelites, of what tribe so ever, were commonly designated "Jews." The Apostle Paul, in his writings, on several occasions used this common designation. This prophecy was designed to be an encouragement, and a rallying point, in times when the visible sceptre did pass away. To us, who live 1900 years beyond the coining of Messiah, Christ, this is a fact of history. But remember, as these sons of Jacob gathered *around* their father to be blessed, the Seed that was to bruise the Serpent's head was a very vague personage, who existed only in promise. This prophecy, in the blessing of Judah, was an assurance to all Israel of God's unchanging purpose regarding the sending of the Messiah, and of the fulfilling of the promises to Abraham.

We find much that is of interest and instruction in the comment of the sacred historian as found in 1 Chronicles 5:1, 2, "Now the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel, (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's)." According to the custom of the times, which also was later incorporated into the law of Moses, a double portion of the Father's possessions fell to the first-born (see Deut. 21:17); but, Reuben, by his actions toward his father's concubine, forfeited this; and this particular blessing was transferred to Joseph, of whose *two* sons, adopted by Israel (Gen. 48:16, 22), Jacob said, "Let my name be named on them." "Moreover I have given to thee [Joseph] one portion above thy brethren," each son receiving an allotted portion, forming two distinct tribes in Israel. Also the right of dominion fell to the firstborn. This also, of course, was lost to Reuben by his foul deed; and Jacob

acknowledged that, when he said of Reuben, "Thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power." All this Reuben should have been, but, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Joseph, although receiving the birth right, or double portion, did not receive the superior honor of dominion, as this was conferred upon Judah -- not the man, but the tribe, as we note, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp," etc.

In 1 Chronicles 5:2 -- "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler," the Hebrew word "nagid," translated "chief ruler," refers back to the Shiloh of Genesis 49:10, and might have been translated "prince," and so is marginally. Leeser gives it as "prince." In Daniel 9:25 we read, "Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince," etc. The word translated "prince" is the same word "nagid" rendered "chief ruler" in 1 Chronicles 5:2. Thus we have these names, "Shiloh," "chief ruler," "Messiah," "Prince, all referring to the same individual. Daniel 9:25 is definitely a time prophecy pointing to the first advent of Christ -- to the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit at Jordan, when He became "Messiah the Prince,"

This phrase, "until Shiloh come," has been variously translated. We do not have a Septuagint translation, but one commentator states that the Septuagint renders it, "until He come to whom the rule belongs." If so, this compares favorably with the statement recorded in Ezekiel 21:27, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is." But most translators render Shiloh "peace," "rest"; thus one who brings peace, rest. This quality of peace and rest is in many places ascribed to Christ. In fact, it is one of the outstanding characteristics set forth of the Messiah, as we read in Isaiah 9:6, 7, "And His name shall be called the Prince of Peace." And in this connection we are reminded of the invitation and promise of Jesus as He spoke to those who followed Him, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." - Matt. 11:28, 29.

And that this Shiloh prophecy was pointing forward to the First Advent is *conclusively shown* in the 5th chapter of Revelation. John had wept much because there was no one found worthy, in heaven or in earth, to open and read the scroll which he was seeing held forth in the vision. "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not, behold: the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And John turned, and instead of seeing a Lion he saw "a Lamb as it had been slain." And then a new song was sung; "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Of no one else is this true but of Jesus, the Christ, Messiah, the Prince -- the Shiloh of Genesis 49:10.

Still we have the statement that there would always be a law-giver in Judah "until Shiloh come." The Hebrew word "chaqag," translated "lawgiver," is in other places, variously translated "decree," "appoint," "portray," "set," "governor," "be printed," "law"; so the prophecy refers not to a line of rulers with authority to promulgate laws, but rather promises that not only would the children of Israel be held together, borne up, by the continuous existence of Judah as a tribe or kingdom, but, also, there would be prophets and seers to proclaim the law of God, which law was their only code. This was fulfilled in Moses' law being continued as their national code, both civil and religious, until the advent of Christ.

We must remember that God's idea of a kingdom in Israel was not political. God, Himself, gave them their laws at Sinai; they were not left to enact laws for themselves. In fact, the true

conception of a kingdom in Israel is theocratic, and any departure from the law of Jehovah was apostasy. See Isaiah 33:22: "For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; He will save us." And when the children of Israel desired a visible king to rule over them, as other nations had, and Samuel prayed unto the Lord about this, "The Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." - 1 Sam. 8:7.

Israel was to be a stiff-necked and backsliding people; yet in spite of this tendency, or should we rather say, foreknowing this tendency, God made promise in Jacob's blessing on Judah that He would not forsake them; that until the coming of Messiah, He would continue to send them prophets and seers to declare to them His word. To those immediate sons of Jacob this promise could mean little; it was to those of much later date that force and meaning could be found in it, a potent message for many a sad day, when Israel, having wandered from Jehovah and His Law, and experiencing the plagues and chastenings resulting from such a course, would have their consciences aroused and the law again declared to them by men of God's own sending.

In closing we briefly consider the 11th and 12th verses of Genesis 49, "Binding His foal unto the vine, and His ass's colt unto the choice vine; He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and His teeth white with milk" -- a picture of peace and plenty, after the gathering of the people (nations) to Shiloh. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." Yes, in His Kingdom, Christ shall set forth the truth in rich abundance, cleared of all dregs and sediments -- "purified seven times"; for "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." - Isa. 25:6-8.

- *F. A. Essler.*

The Program of Redemption

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." - Acts 15:16-17.

IT IS remarkable to observe that the first council of the Christian church ever convened should have outlined the whole scheme of redemption from Pentecost to the consummation of the ages. And whatever we may hold as to the binding authority of later councils, we must accept the deliverances of this at Jerusalem as final, since from the testimony of inspired scripture we know that the Spirit so truly presided and guided in the assembly that in publishing its decisions it was written, *"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us"* (Acts 15:28). Jesus Christ is the architect of the ages. Not only "all things were made by him" -- all worlds and systems of the material universe -- but all the dispensations were planned and predestined by him: "By whom also he made the ages" (Heb. 1:2). His church was not set upon her course until a complete program of her mission had been placed in her hands, the working plan by which all her operations were to be directed. *"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"* (Acts 15:18) is the significant declaration which accompanies the publication of this program. And, instead of being day laborers working in ignorance, God would have us, as laborers together with him, to understand the entire divine scheme by which our efforts are to be directed, that we may be saved from presumption and despair.

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). Here is the first act of the great program. Because of the citation from the Old Testament which immediately follows - "And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written: After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down" -- it has been inferred that this Gentile outgathering and the tabernacle upbuilding mean the same thing; in other words, that the rearing of the tabernacle of David is a figurative expression for the building of the church of Christ. By this superficial though not altogether unnatural explanation of the passage, the whole program has been reduced to a single act, and the inference drawn that the preaching of the Gospel in this dispensation is to issue in the conversion of "all the Gentiles."

A CLEAR PREDICTION OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

But it is only necessary to observe three things in order to correct this misapprehension: First, that the citation here made from the closing chapter of the Book of Amos is clearly a prediction of the literal restoration of literal Israel, and their reinhabitation of their land; for the words quoted are part of a passage which ends with this decisive language: *"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God"* (Amos 9:15). Observe again that in making this citation the Holy Spirit inserts the words, not found in the original text, *"After this I will return,"* and will build again, thus making the restoration of the Davidic tabernacle subsequent to the gathering out of the church from the Gentiles, and connecting it directly with the personal return of the Lord. And, lastly, we are to notice that in announcing this election from among the Gentiles, it is not added, "in this are fulfilled the words of the prophets," but "with this harmonize [Greek, *symphonize*] the words of the prophets."

It is but saying that the parts of the great oratorio of redemption perfectly accord, though centuries lie between its different measures; and then, to show *us how* they accord, the Holy Spirit sounds all the octaves thereof with a single sweep, and lets us listen to their grand unison. This, then, is the program of redemption by which we are to work in evangelizing the world:

"First, God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name, And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written:

"After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

"In order that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things."

The three great stages of redemption are thus outlined in their order.

ACT I

The gathering of the church is the first act, and this, having begun at Pentecost, is still going on. All the descriptions of it contained in scripture mark it as elective. From the word of Christ to his first disciples, "I have chosen you *out of* the world," to the triumph-song of the saved heard by the seer in Patmos, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood *out of* every kindred and tongue and people and nation," the Bride of Christ is always the *Ecclesia*, the called out. Nowhere is universal redemption predicted as the result of preaching the Gospel in this dispensation. If in the minds of those who are accustomed to speak of the world's conversion there is a violent revulsion from this saying, we remind them that we are simply affirming the truth of the doctrine of election, and its application to this entire age. After eighteen centuries of Christian conquest the vast proportion of the world still "lieth in the Wicked One," and Christ's true church is but a "little flock" in comparison. Only with pathetic sympathy for our fallen race in its ruin and helplessness can we contemplate this fact. And yet we must be reminded that all attempts to violate this decree by making the church a multitudinous collection, instead of a gracious election, have only issued in apostasy. Sacramentarianism would take the world into the church by instituting a baptized paganism instead of taking the church out of the world by preaching spiritual regeneration; and behold the result in a half-heathenized Christendom. Latitudinarianism would make the church coextensive with the world by preaching the gospel of universal salvation--all men by nature the sons of God -- and thus, by crowding the Lord's house with "the children of the Wicked One," turn it into "the synagogue of Satan." Though it be in mystery, and sorrow and tears, we had best work on, therefore, by the divine schedule, preaching the Gospel among all nations for a witness that we may gather out for Christ a chosen and sanctified people, calmly answering those who say that God's ways are partial, with his own words: "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

And yet, lest we should take too narrow a view of this theme, other considerations should not be overlooked. Christ is called "The Light of the World." The beams of sunlight both elect and irradiate; taking out here and there from muddy pool or acrid dead sea a pure, crystalline drop and lifting it heavenward; but also lighting and warming all the atmosphere by their radiance. So Christ, preached among the Gentiles, elects from them a holy flock, a regenerate church; but besides this, he changes the moral climate of the world so that such noxious growths as cannibalism, slavery, polygamy, and infanticide disappear. These two results inevitably attend the proclamation of the Gospel: regeneration saving some out of the world, and civilization putting

something of Christianity into the world; but by neither process as now going on is the Millennium destined to be ushered in.

Moreover, let us reflect that *an election is never an end in itself*; it is rather a means and preparation for some vastly larger accomplishment. The body of the elect is really Christ's army, gathered by a divine conscription from every kindred and people, that they may attend him as he goes forth to his final conquest of the world. "And they that are with him are called and elect and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). Of this, however, we shall speak later.

ACT II

The second act of the divine program now comes into view. *"After this I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down."* By Christ's personal coming in glory, the conversion and restoration of Israel are to be accomplished. The reader has only to compare this order with the redemption schedule drawn out in the eleventh chapter of Romans to see how perfectly they agree. St. Paul, indeed, begins with the Jewish election, as St. James does with the Gentile election. And we must remember that the choosing out that is going on in this dispensation touches both: "not out of the Jews only, but also out of the Gentiles" (Rom. 9:24). But each apostle takes up the same succession of events; first the Gentile outgathering, and then the Hebrew regathering. The hardening of the Jews which we now behold is declared by Paul to continue "until *the fulness of the Gentiles* be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:25, 26). By the "fulness of the Gentiles" we understand the predestined number, the elect company gathered through the entire period of this dispensation to form the Bride of Christ. When this number shall have been accomplished, then the conversion of Israel will occur and their national restoration to God's favor. The two parts of the aged Simeon's prophecy are strictly consecutive: *"A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel"* (Luke 2:31, 32). He will be the supreme glory of his people Israel, when he shall at last be owned as their

Messiah and reign in the midst of them as King.

ACT III

These two stages of redemption -- the Gentile election and the Hebrew restoration--are to be accomplished "in order" to a third, namely, "that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called."

Without enlarging upon the thought, what a profound hint of this does Paul give in Romans 11:12, 15 where, speaking concerning his rejected people, he says: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, *how much more their fulness . . . For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"*

"It is clear," says Lange, "that the apostle awaits a boundless effect of blessing on the world from the future conversion of Israel." Then shall the word of Joel concerning the effusion 'of the spirit have a complete fulfillment, as it had a partial and prefigurative accomplishment on the day of Pentecost. For if we turn to the prophet, we find it said: "And ye shall know that *I am in the midst of Israel*, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else. *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh"* (Joel 2:27, 28). And with this agree the words of Isaiah where he predicts the desolation of Zion as continuing *"till the spirit be poured upon us from on high"* (Isa. 32:15). When the Lord shall shed forth the holy spirit abundantly upon his

covenant people, through them will come unspeakable blessings to the Gentiles. The modern postmillennial interpretation completely deranges the program of prophecy at this point by making redemption terminate with its first scene. "The end of the age," brought in by the second coming of Christ, misleadingly translated "the end of the world" in our common version, is supposed by many to close the probation of the race, winding up the present earthly scene, and bringing in the final judgment and the eternal state, instead of opening into the triumphs of the age to come. Is it possible that the first Christians could have had this idea? If so, how could they have so ardently desired, and earnestly looked for, the speedy return of the Lord, since his coming would end the work of Gentile ingathering, while as yet only a handful had been saved? On the contrary, take the words of Peter to the Jewish rejecters of Christ, and observe how clearly they teach the very opposite: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things" (Acts 3:19-21, R.V.). Here we have, as constantly throughout the scripture, the repentance of Israel directly connected with the return of Christ from heaven, and their conversion and the Lord's appearing resulting, not in their cutting off from the presence of the Lord, but in times of "*refreshing from the presence of the Lord*"; not in the winding up of all things, but in the "*restoration of all things.*" Three acts of the divine program appear again in this declaration of Peter-the coming of Christ, the conversion of Israel, and worldwide redemption -- corresponding exactly with those revealed in the texts from James and Paul already considered.

CONCLUSION

It is thus seen that the redemption of the world comes at last, following (1) the glorification of the church at our Lord's return, and (2) the conversion and restoration of Israel. If it be said that this is a Jewish conception, borrowed from the Old Testament, we will answer: "Yes, and reiterated and more explicitly unfolded in the New Testament." For nowhere is the order of events so distinctly revealed as in the Acts and Epistles.

"Election, partial and opposed to worldwide redemption," has been the verdict of thousands who have replied against God, knowing little of the range of his eternal plan. "Election, gracious, and preparatory to worldwide redemption," is the discovery which a deep pondering of the holy scripture reveals. The elect church transfigured with her risen Savior, and the chosen nation, Israel, restored and made glorious on earth- - these are his appointed agents, trained by long discipline and trial for bringing all peoples and tribes into obedience to God. As to the Gentile election, so to the Hebrew restoration, objectors may be reconciled when it appears that this, too, is instrumental and preparatory to worldwide salvation. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," is the summons which the long captive daughter of Zion shall hear, and then the blessed result: "*And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising*" (Isa. 60:3).

- Condensed from *Ecce Venit (Behold He Cometh)*

- A. J. Gordon, Boston, Mass. 1889.

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 18, at 10:00 a.m., in the Central Y.M.C.A. Bldg., 1315 Pacific Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401.

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 1971-72.

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 J. B. Webster.

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, 1971, such names will be published in the September-October issue of the "Herald," that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.

Entered Into Rest

Ruth F. Allen, Worcester, Mass.
Hugo H. Bartel, Australia
Otto F. Bauerle, Philadelphia, Pa.
Hannah Beale, Ozone Park, N.Y.
Frank Carey, Scarsdale, N.Y.
Sis. M. Hastings, England
Mary E. Jeffords, Searsport, Me.
Wilmer Jones, Godley, Tex.
Barbara Kalinski, Chicago, Ill.
John Kupiec, Bayside, N.Y.
Robert A. Laidlaw, New Zealand
Norah B. Montague, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Roy Nesbit, Forest Hills, N.Y. Sis.
A. S. Noonan, Canada
Edward Oehmichen, Colby, Wis.
Frederick Orkney, Dedham, Mass.
William S. Rockfield, Thornville, Ohio
John A. Seymore, Bangor, Mich.
Evelina Stokes, Warwick, R.I.
Ramon E. Warren, Richmond, Va.
Lilia E. Woodworth, Rutherford, N.J.
Mabel L. Woolfolk, Richmond, Va.