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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

OUTSTANDING amongst the holy days enumerated in Leviticus 23 were three, as elsewhere we read: "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.)

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 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. Our Lord "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." For ten days they had "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," awaiting that they knew not.

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.

This outpouring of the holy spirit on the waiting Church had been preceded by its descent upon our Lord at the time of His consecration at baptism in Jordan. He there received the holy spirit in the same sense. Fifty days prior to Pentecost, 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 at Pentecost, 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 this 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.

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*

"I Know That My Redeemer Liveth"

(Continued from last issue)

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, ... whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." - Job 19:25-27.

IN OUR previous study of this affirmation of job the effort was made to show the desirability of reaching this assured testimony in the matter of our own relation to the Lord. To this end attention was given to the fact that our risen Savior in giving those "many infallible proofs" of his resurrection to his immediate disciples, was at the same time furnishing us with indubitable proof on which we too could say with confidence, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." In his manifestations to Mary in the quietness of the garden alone, and to Peter in some unnamed place apart, we saw how in like manner, though invisible, Jesus still comes to us speaking words by which we may certainly know he lives, and loves, and cares for us also.

We propose now to follow on in the same way in considering others of these post-resurrection appearances, taking them in the order in which they seem to have taken place. In each of these we shall find unquestionable proof that *our* Redeemer lives, and that he is fulfilling to each one of us the selfsame promise, "I will love him, and will *manifest myself to him*" (John 14:21). Just because he is the "same Jesus" yesterday, and today, and forever, we too may share with those "chosen eyewitnesses" of long ago the evidences whereby every doubt may be shattered, and every responsive fiber of our being greatly quickened with hope, enabling us also to return to our appointed tasks "with great joy," even as it is said of those favored ones who saw their Savior, and ours, ascend from them at Bethany. - Luke 24:50-53.

Two disciples, one unnamed, are the next to be favored with an experience whereby they can affirm with assurance that their Redeemer lives again.

HEARTS BURN AS HE EXPOUNDED SCRIPTURES CONCERNING HIMSELF

The story of the evening walk to Emmaus is full of lessons of which our hearts should never tire. The name of only one of these two disciples is given us. Why not the other? Is the omission of the other's name in any way suggestive that we may think of that one as ourself? Are the identification marks not clear enough to most of us for thinking of ourselves as needing and receiving some similar corrections because so slow to learn all that the Scriptures should teach us. Let us note a few of these. But first let us note that these two brethren were occupied with a theme well calculated to bring Jesus to them. It was because they were absorbed in the strange nature of his death, and so perplexed with regard to its significance that such words as these could be written concerning them: "Jesus Himself drew near, *and went with them.*" No occupation of mind will ever bring the Savior so near to one's spirit as that which has to do with the meaning to oneself of his death. And no one can make the meaning of that sacrifice so clear, so heart-satisfying and precious as he, who, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, expounded to them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning himself.*"

How like Jesus it was to come to these two discouraged followers on the very day of his triumph over death. To him it was a delight to walk with them on that Sabbath day journey, and by revealing himself to them, cause their hearts to burn with his unfolding of Scripture, and revive their hope by the simple but significant act of *breaking bread* with them. Out of similar experiences of shattered hopes and unexpected trials, how many of us have been led to know

"what a Friend we have in Jesus." When through fiery trials our pathway has lain, what encouragement has come to us as we have heard him say, "It is I; be not afraid." When made to feel the loneliness of the way, when none seem able to understand us, have we not known Jesus to draw near and go with us, and in recollecting his own lonely hours of earthly life we are given fresh courage, and led to find in him and his words a satisfying heart's-ease. Have *we* not found it true, as a writer of note has said:

"It was in the character, not of reproof, but of a sympathizing friend that he spoke to these disciples, so let me think of him as ready to sympathize with and comfort me, when I walk sad. It often does my sore heart no good to tell its sorrow to any earthly friend. To talk over all the incidents, all the hopes, all the disappointments, all the 'might-have-beens' connected with it, only deepens the gloom. I need a wiser friend than any just like myself can be, a friend who understands what perplexes me, a friend who himself sees and can show me 'the bright light that is within the cloud,' a friend who has not merely the love to sympathize with me, but the power to help. Just such a friend is this great Christ, who sometimes seems a stranger, but, coming to me and chasing my gloom away, reveals himself as the very Lord who said, 'Ye shall weep and lament while the world rejoices, but I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy!'

"It is just his love to me that brings him to my side. He comes unrecognized at first; for to me, as to these sorrowing ones, he wears 'another form' than that in which I have known him before. My eyes, like theirs, sealed with grief, are so 'holden' that I cannot recognize him in this new form to be the same as ever. He walks beside me, and talks with me, and makes my heart 'burn within me,' and yet, for a time, there is no 'lifting up,' till, in a moment, somehow, the scales fall from my eyes; I know him; and ere he goes, he leaves with me his own deep, wonderful, satisfying, and unending peace. I am sure many of my darkest hours have been the birthplace of my highest songs. It is often just when the water in my bottle was completely spent, and, Hagar-like, I felt that I could only lay myself down to die, that my eyes were opened to see the flowing spring that had been close, beside me all the time, although I knew it not. When I go mourning without the sun, a few words from the risen Lord can easily put everything right; but I often need the darkness in order to appreciate the light."

And then it is that like one whose ears have heard the joyful sound, our hearts exclaim, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

HE LIVES TO BRING HIS PEACE INTO OUR HEARTS

The next appearance of Jesus seems to have been in the upper room where most of the eleven were gathered behind locked doors. How significant his first words to them, "Peace be unto you." He had not said these words to the women whom he met at the grave. They had not deserted him in his hour of trial and crucifixion and therefore needed no word suggestive of forgiveness for unfaithfulness to him. But how different it was with most of those he found gathered in that upper room. Yet there was no rebuke, nothing to call to mind their shameful desertion, not even a suggestive pause as he appeared in their midst, but "Peace be unto you," immediately spoken. He had only his loving interest in them to speak. God had "brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep," and the first thing he did was to comfort his flock with his word of peace.

What a wealth of meaning, of comfort and strength, is bound up in this promise of Jesus, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace*" (John 16:33). In bequeathing his peace to us Jesus surely meant this legacy to be one of our best witnesses of his abiding presence with us, and those who enjoy it can testify not of a personal experience, "In thy presence is

fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psa. 16:11). What peace we may enjoy when we take him at his word. But with us, as with those disciples in the upper room, there is often a need that he should say to us -- yes, even after his word of peace has been spoken in our ears -- "*Why are ye troubled?* and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Why are we so slow to take him at his word?

"How often has he said to trembling and dispirited ones just what he said in the upper room, '*Why are ye troubled?* and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?' All down the age his voice has been heard *speaking* peace, and his presence *bestowing* it. Have I not myself had experiences of his grace I cannot dispute, experiences I would not part with for a thousand worlds? I recognize his words of old in the very tone in which he has spoken to my own heart many a time. To me the Christ of history and the Christ of experience are one -- 'that same Jesus'; and I see that instead of its being difficult for me to trust this Christ whom I have never seen, because his earthly life now lies so far back in the past, it is becoming every day easier to do it. He stands before me now in a glory he never had before, a Savior *whose grace has been tested and experienced.*" Therefore, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

"MY LORD, AND MY GOD"

Again we come to the same upper room. Thomas, not being present when Jesus appeared here before, and having declared the only condition on which he could believe that Jesus was alive again, is now to have the proof he had demanded. There is no need for believing that Thomas critically tested the evidence he had asked for, but rather that he spontaneously exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God." All his doubts had vanished now, and he is satisfied that the "same Jesus" is alive for evermore. In thinking of Thomas demanding this evidence before he could believe, we have become accustomed to speak of him as the "doubting Thomas," and to think of him only in that manner. But from another viewpoint his insisting on seeing the *evidence by* which he could know that *the crucified Jesus* was risen again, has much in it that we may well consider. What he beheld drew from him a statement which embodied both assurance and complete dedication. "My Lord, and my God." And "this same Jesus" who "once to loving doubt showed hands, and feet, and riven side," and thereby gave permanence to a disciple's faith, continues to do the same today. And in what way can he more effectively produce in our hearts an abiding faith in his being our *personal*, living Redeemer, than by opening our vision to see him *crucified for us*? What vision will cause us to cry, "O Lamb of God, my sacrifice," like a clear, unclouded view of the wounds he bore for us? We turn to the Gospels and read the story of the buffeting and the mocking, of his long-lingering agonies on the cross; or perchance we turn to something like Dean Farrar's *Life of Christ*, and with tears reread a vivid account of the horrors of his death by crucifixion, and from our deepest powers of response we say, "He bore, he bore it all for me!" "*My Lord, and my God!*" The tie by which we are bound to him never seems stronger than when we meditate on the fact that "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." That sacrifice is the answer to all our doubts concerning his acceptance of us, and we cling to him in the assurance that

"If I ask him to receive me,
Will he say me nay?
Not till earth and not till heaven
Pass away!"

Let us, then, be not faithless but believing. "If while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," now that we have been accepted in the Beloved One, and he stands in God's presence for us, is it not ours to rejoice in a love that will not let us go? Only let ours be the complete assurance and

dedication so well expressed in the words of Thomas, and our testimony will then be one of blessed conviction, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

HE CARETH FOR ALL HIS OWN

Our next appearance is a seashore morning meal prepared by the hand of Jesus. His disciples had been toiling all night without results. How very often in after days, indeed, how often through all the days of the Church's toiling, it has seemed as though they had "caught nothing." Times innumerable it has seemed an utterly fruitless toiling, or one of very meager results. But perhaps when many a weary toiler has reached "the shining shore," a watching Savior will astonish him with a far greater measure of success than was ever dreamed of. Meanwhile, this appearance on the seashore has its encouraging lesson for us. In it we may find other proofs that ours is indeed a living Savior, One whose constant care is always assured us. Had he not taught these men that the God who cared for the sparrow, would likewise care for them? In how many ways he had illustrated his intimate care for all their needs, and given them his word of promise that they would never be forsaken. And now he comes to them in a time of their need, filling their net to gladden their spirits, and inviting them to a prepared feast with his gracious, "Come and dine."

Having promised that he would come to us and *manifest himself* to us, can we not say of a truth, "And so we walk together, my Lord and I"? Surely one of the lessons he wanted to teach in this seashore appearance is that he cares for us in all that concerns us. "His loving thoughtfulness shows him to be my brotherly Christ, who is deeply interested in the common business of my life, and who sits down beside me as I eat what his own bounty has provided, and what his presence sanctifies and cheers. That fire on the coals and that abundant haul must have seemed to these disciples to *say-and they say it to me*-'With Me to care for you, you will never want: be sure henceforth, that when you go forth to serve me, I will look after the supplies.' His interposition often comes just when human effort has completely failed. Indeed, he lets the failure become absolutely disheartening, on very purpose to prepare the way for manifesting his power. His ways of grace have the same inscription as his ways in Providence, 'past finding out.'"

Have we thus learned to know Jesus? Can we not by looking back over the years of his faithfulness bear testimony to this peculiar personal care and guidance? Then once again it is our blessed privilege to affirm, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

FAITH CHANGED TO SIGHT

The last manifestation of the risen Jesus to be witnessed by his disciples is more fully reported by Luke than by the other Gospel writers. Both in his Gospel narrative and in the first chapter of Acts, Luke has given us some details we may well prize very highly. And Luke is the one who preserved these heart-cheering words for us, "*This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus left his beloved followers looking "steadfastly toward heaven" as he departed from them, and he it is who has told us that he wishes to find us with the upward look in the day of his return. Speaking of the things we see about us today, he said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then *look up*, and *lift up* your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). This was no intimation that his waiting ones would be looking up into the sky overhead, but rather that theirs would be the spirit of abounding joy as the evidences of their near deliverance increased. And everywhere in Scripture this attitude of heart is urged as being, the only consistent reaction in keeping with a prospect so glorious. If early disciples returned from the mount of ascension "with great joy" to take up their appointed tasks, that of carrying the message of salvation into all the world, what an overflow of joy should characterize us today, when all the evidence provided us in

prophetic fulfillments seems to clearly show that soon, yes, very soon, "Reapers and sowers will together come" in the glad Harvest Home above.

We remember that Jesus told those early disciples that if they properly understood the reason why he should leave them, they would rejoice. They would be glad over the coming of the Spirit and the work it would do in preparing them for the place he said he went back to God to prepare for them. Are we then failing to rejoice consistently? Is there anything in our vision obscuring in some measure the joy-producing reactions we should be experiencing today? With what earnestness and devotion we should in all of our deportment be "looking for and *hastening unto* the coming of the Lord," even as the Apostle admonishes us, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." "How can I keep the longing back" should be our habitual attitude and spirit in times like these. Holding such a hope, consistently held and encouraged by -the very signs Jesus urged us to note, should be doing a marked work of purification in each expectant heart. Thus will God's spirit witness with our spirit a blessed assurance that when the silver cord of present life shall break, we shall then see face to face our blessed Lord, "in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Blessed possibility, since it is ours to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, ... whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

- J. J. Blackburn

The Unity of the Spirit

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they may be one." - John 17:20, 21.

THE prayer of Jesus for the unity of the church, has, to all outward appearances, never been answered; for the Church visible, which is 'the Church nominal, has seen within herself much contention and strife from its inception at Pentecost. Even as he uttered this prayer for oneness, Jesus was aware of the perils confronting his true disciples throughout the age; for he had cautioned against false prophets, false brethren, false professors, when he said "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord And again, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10:16; Matt. 7:1523). Just minutes before voicing this petition for unity Jesus had warned that "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). Thus was foreknown and revealed to the Apostles that the visible, professing Church would never know true unity in this age, as we read in Ephesians 4:1-3: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." As if to say that difficulty would be met in the effort to comply with this exhortation.

The tendency of the professing Church to line up under the headship of some leader, or some particular doctrines in the name of orthodoxy, was early manifested: "I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; I am of Cephas; I am of Christ"; *thus* creating sects, distinguished one from another by names, creeds, and emphasis placed upon some one or more scriptural teaching. We deplore this tendency of the past, but it still goes on.

The true unity of the Spirit as listed by Paul in Ephesians 4:1-6 is this: There is (a) one body, (b) one spirit, (c) one hope of our calling, (d) one Lord, (e) one faith, (f) one baptism, (g) one God and Father. This seems simple enough, and that to which we all give assent. But even though simple, we should not pass lightly over these several essentials of unity; rather we should give each one some careful consideration, having in mind the words of Jesus, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9, and that so often repeated admonition, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." - Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

(a) One Body

The Gospel contains many mysteries which are made known to the initiated, but not understood by the world in general. One is "the mystery of Christ," "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "that secret which has been concealed from the ages, by that God who created all things" (Diaglott translation); that "as the body is one, and bath many members, and all members of that one body being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 12:5). This is the mystery given to the Apostle Paul to unfold (Eph. 3:18). It is from the standpoint of this great secret that Paul wrote his several epistles which must be kept in mind when we read and meditate upon his writings. This, also, should be our underlying thought as we fellowship one with another: that God is taking out of both Jew and Gentile "to make in Christ one new man." For, "if any one be in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17), a body member of the new man -- Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10:32, the Apostle distinctly marks off this new creation as being a separate entity when he writes, "Give none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the church of God." Only those who firmly "hold the Head" are members of that mystical body (Col. 2:18, 19),

for the Apostle writes of some "not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

How great is the tendency to slip into holding fast to something other than Christ, our Head. This is seen in the letter to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7). The believers at Ephesus were characterized by their orthodoxy and their zeal. They are commended for their works and orthodoxy; but, alas, they had allowed these to usurp the place of Christ in their assembly, so that the rebuke was voiced, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Some have twisted this to mean that they had left their first zeal; but, ah, they were zealous, they had borne whatever of afflictions had come upon them; they had labored without becoming wearied and fainting, but with all that they were a fallen church! They were not "holding the Head"; they had left their first love [agape]. They were in love with their orthodoxy, in love with their zeal. How true the words of Jesus, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" On every hand we hear this, the calling attention to the activities of one's group, the claim that "we have the Bible only as our creed [but how diverse are the creeds], and surely the blessing of the Lord is with us as is evidenced by the success of our undertakings!" Always calling attention to themselves, but not unfolding the things of Christ, their proper calling. John 16:7-15.

(b) One Spirit.

These, the body members, are united in the one spirit, variously defined as the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, of truth, of holiness, of power, of sonship, of understanding, the spirit of God, etc. An invisible power animates and enlightens these as one. As the natural body responds to the instructions and will of the natural mind, so do these members of the mystical body of Christ respond to the instructions and will of their Head. Thus the Apostle writes, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." And what was the mind of Christ Jesus? Of his consecration it was written of him in relation to God, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is in my heart." - Psalm 40:6-9.

Jesus' life of devotion was always according to what was written; he refrained entirely from exercising his own will. "I can of mine own self do nothing ... I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). So with the prospective members of the Christ body; these -- though "children of wrath, even as others" when once they "walked according to the prince of the power of the air ... fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" -- these, receiving the "redemption which is in Christ Jesus," are now being "transformed by the renewing of the mind," and are proving (putting to the test) "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2). These, each individually subordinate in loving obedience to the will of God, are united in the oneness of spirit, the mind of Christ the Head, who delighted to do the will of God. - Psalm 40:8; 1 Cor. 2:16.

(c) One Hope

Hope has been defined as a complex emotion, a desire for something with every expectation of receiving it. The hope set before the church is based upon the immutable promise and oath of God, that he would raise up a seed to Abraham in which all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:16, 17; Heb. 6:13-19). Here we make a distinction between the hope for a Millennial kingdom, and the hope of the Church. This is touched upon in Romans where we read, "The expectation of creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"; but of the sons of

God, the Apostle writes, "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body." - Romans 8:18-25.

It is an evidence of a lack of spiritual discernment when some enlightened by the knowledge of the truth of God's plan of the ages, speak of their longing for the kingdom to be established, when they will be united with their loved ones, with no more pain, sorrow, or death, and when they will partake of its blessings of life and peace (Rev. 21:1-5). The kingdom surely will come, with Jerusalem as the regal city from which center will flow the blessings promised (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-4). But this is a Jewish hope, not, a Christian one. *Our* hope is to be partakers of eternal life (Tit. 1:1, 2; 3:7). As John also writes, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every one having *this hope* in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1, 2). This is a special hope and is applicable only to those of the faith of Abraham. Galatians 3:6-9, 26; "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs, according to the promise." This hope is called by Peter a "living hope" to those who have been "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." - 1 Peter 1:3-5, 22-25.

(d) One Lord

The Greek word "kurios," translated Lord, has the significance of one of supreme authority. We all recognize that Jesus is Lord; do we not often speak of him as the Lord Jesus? But what, then, does Paul mean when he writes, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the holy spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). He surely does not infer that no one can pronounce the words, but he does mean that only those who have been begotten again to a new life can acknowledge Jesus as Lord of that life.

Now a Lord is he to whom one owes allegiance, fealty, submission, obedience, and honor. And Jesus is Lord by right of purchase-the ransom and atoning sacrifice; "for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:9). How often it has been, though, that some strong minded individual has brought the assembly into subjection to himself by imposing on them his particular theology, his personality, his program of works. Diotrefes is an example of one "who loveth to have the preeminence ... " (3 John 9, 10). Others by subtle claims of being special representatives of Christ, deceived many. This was foretold by Jesus when he warned, "For many shall come *in my name* saying I am the anointed" (that is, I am anointed as a special representative of Christ) (Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8; Matt. 24:5; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets." Even in this day of so much enlightenment there are those who assume authority over others, setting forth what is to be believed, and what works are to be engaged in. But as a wife's first loyalty and submission is to her husband, so the Church's first loyalty and obedience is to Christ, her Lord.

(e) One Faith

Faith, such a simple word, and yet so greatly misunderstood. For instance, in making appeals for charitable donations for worthy causes, the expression is used, "give through your faith," meaning donate through the church organization with which one is affiliated. Faith, in this instance, is just another name for creedal fellowship, whether it be Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, or other. But the scriptural definition of faith is: "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). A portion of a footnote on Hebrews 11:3 (Diaglott) elucidates this: "Faith being defined in verse one as a 'basis of things hoped for, and a conviction of things unseen,' must necessarily have a connection with God's word of promise to be fulfilled at some future period of time, and therefore precludes the idea contained in verse 3 of the Common Version, that the

Apostle was referring to the past creation of the worlds, or the material universe. To understand the works of creation does not belong to faith. Faith in this place refers to what was to be developed in the future *aióones* (ages), in conformity to God's promises, and is amply illustrated in the remaining portion of the chapter."

With this explanation in mind, we consider the simple faith (belief) of the early church: the glad tidings ... through which you are being saved ... For I delivered unto you among the chief things, what also I received, that Christ died on behalf of our sins *according to the scriptures*; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day *according to the scriptures*." Following this Paul lists several occasions when Jesus was seen after the resurrection. The emphasis is on the fact that this was all in fulfillment of scriptures. On the testimony of these witnesses our faith is grounded. These testified not from out of themselves; they were witnesses of and for Jesus, the spirit thus doing its appointed work. - John 16:13, 14; 2 Cor. 11:4; 1 Cor. 15:1-8.

We call attention to the method of Jesus on the occasion of his walking with the two on the way to Emmaus. Engaging the disciples in conversation, Jesus opened up to their minds that the consistent testimony of scripture was that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer, and to enter into his glory (Luke 24:25-27); that all they knew about him, his life, his sufferings, his resurrection, was all "according to the scriptures." This was, also, the method of Paul in presenting the Gospel, as we read in Acts 17:1-3 (Diaglott): "Paul, according to his custom, went into the Synagogue, and on three Sabbaths reasoned with them *from the Scriptures*, opening and setting forth that the Messiah ought to suffer and to rise from the dead." Then, after having carefully shown the Scripture testimony concerning the Messiah, he clinched his presentation with the fact that all this was fulfilled in the person and career of Jesus: therefore that Jesus is the Messiah. This was the simple faith of the early Apostolic preaching. Although it was given to the Apostles to enlarge on these simple truths, yet it ever is the basis of faith to anyone drawing near to God (John 14:6). As we grow in grace and understanding, it is upon this simple Gospel that we depend, no matter how theological we may become. Any teaching that develops other themes is no gospel at all. - Gal. 1:6-9, Acts 4:12.

(f) One Baptism

There are several baptisms mentioned in the Scriptures: (1) "Baptism with the holy spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). (2) "... baptism for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). (3) "... baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2). (4) "I have a baptism to be baptized with ... " (Luke 12:50). In Ephesians 4:4 the Apostle, enlarging upon the unity of the spirit, says there is one baptism in this unity; so we ask, What is this baptism that is common to all members of the body of Christ?

The word baptize is a generic word, a general term. A generic word, for example, might be "eat," which of itself does not specify what is eaten, nor who eats, nor what, when, or how. So, also, baptism needs to be related to who is baptized, the mode of baptism, and the purpose of the baptism. In Romans 6:1-6, the Apostle writes, "Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried* with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life ... Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed," that is, rendered powerless.

"Buried with him by baptism into death": a burial always implies a death, and what is buried is that which has died. In Romans 6:6 it is our "old man"; and the "old man" is the aggregate of the sinful lusts of the Adamic nature. In Scripture, baptism is never referred to as dying only, but as

dying to one thing and rising to another. Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him [Jesus] from the dead." The "old man" is crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, but the "old man" is not risen with him! It is a "new life" that is raised to "live with him." So, in this sense, baptism is an act of consecration, a dedication, and an initiation into a new life. "If ye then," exhorts Paul, "be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ... for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). Thus this baptism, this dying to the old life and rising to a new, implies new experiences of spiritual struggle against the evil forces of the old nature, and the spiritual powers which dominate this world system (Eph. 6:12-18). "Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new."-2 Cor. 5:17.

(g) One God and Father

In 1 Corinthians 8:4-7, Paul says: ". . . there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man this knowledge ... " The true God, our Father, is not the god of this world as presently constituted, as John says, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5); while of this world it is written, "The darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2). It is still true that "the whole world lies under the Evil one" (1 John 5:19, Diaglott). We must never forget, lest we become boastful, that we "in time past walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ... and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:13). But we who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord; and walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8) and "give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 2:12, 13, marginal reading). We "are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:26); and "God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." - Gal. 4:6, Diaglott.

Ours is such a high calling, and the hosts of wickedness are so numerous, that we do well to heed the exhortation: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3). God's divine purpose is to gather all creation, as one family, into harmony with himself; therefore that harmonious spirit should be manifested in us and among us who have been "adopted" as God's children. To properly conduct ourselves according to our high standing with God in Christ, we must always have in mind that there are varying degrees of spiritual discernment and character development among us. Nevertheless, "We are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." - Romans 12:5.

-F. A. Essler

God Knows Why

Through the furnace of affliction
God oft tests His children dear,
Tries them, proves them to the utmost,
And His ways so dark appear.

Should we question why, we dare not,
Though we are perplexed, distressed,
Well He knows just what is needed,
And God's ways are always best.

Ah! this stone is for the Temple,
God Himself hath so designed,
And it needs much heavy chiseling,
For the form must be outlined.

The rough edges must be smoother,
And the carving done with care,
For we know that God's own image
Soon will be reflected there.

All the tools the workman uses
Must most sharp and pointed be;
But no haste the King requireth,
Only perfect work wants He.

Years may pass, and still the workman
Noiselessly performs His task,
But some day 'twill reach completion,
Then the King for it will ask.

To the King each stone is precious,
Beautiful, peculiar, rare;
God designed them for His Temple,
Has a place prepared somewhere.

Murmur not, then at God's chidings,
We are precious in His sight;
In the future, the hereafter,
We shall know God's ways were right.

Israel Today

'In the latter years you [Gog, of the land of Magog - Ezek. 38:2] will go against the land that is restored from war, the land where people were gathered from many nations upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste; its people were brought out from the nations and now dwell securely, all of them. . . and you will devise an evil scheme and say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages; I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates'; to seize spoil and carry off plunder; to assail the waste places which are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have gotten cattle and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth.' - Ezekiel 38:8-12, R.S.V.

In the January-February 1969 issue of *The Herald*, we condensed some paragraphs from a recent issue of the *Bible Study Monthly*. Relying on the text at the head of this article, the author of those paragraphs stated that,

"The invasion of the Holy Land by the hosts of 'Gog and Magog' is the last great event of this Age. The overthrow of that great host is the signal for the establishment and announcement of the Kingdom of God upon earth. From that point of time Restitution processes will commence, and the work of world conversion, the restoration of the earth and rehabilitation of the human race, go forward. A clear understanding of the prophecy in the light both of Biblical lore and of contemporary knowledge is an essential for those who desire to keep abreast with the outworking of the Divine Plan.

"The central feature of the prophecy is the land and its people, and a question immediately arises, 'Where is the land and who are the people?' The old-time theology, inspired mainly by St. Augustine, declared that the whole passage is symbolic, that it depicts the final triumph of Christ and his Church over the forces of evil. Such explanation will not satisfy students of the Bible who understand and look for the coming of Christ's Kingdom upon earth. Quite clearly, this passage is directly related to the Divine destiny for the ideal Israel of the End Time and to the establishment of the Kingdom, and must therefore be understood in a dispensational sense and in an earthly setting. Putting it briefly, the time of the prophecy is at the end of this Age and the place of its fulfillment is upon this earth."

In a footnote to page 7, our Editorial Committee expressed the hope that this question might be discussed in more detail in a future issue of *The Herald*. This we propose to do now.

The subject, then, to be considered here is: "Where is the land to, which Ezekiel refers, and who are the people?"

There are several methods of interpretation adopted by commentators. One is that of so-called "spiritualizing" the prophecies -- making Israel and Zion to mean the Church, and The Land to signify Heaven. However, when we attempt to apply this system of interpretation its inconsistency becomes apparent. For example, in Jeremiah 30:3 we read: "*For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.*"

As far back as 1890, David Baron, a well-known Hebrew-Christian (who, for many years, edited *The Scattered Nation* remarked on this verse: "If Israel be the Church, who is Judah? If Judah be the Church, who is Israel? What is the 'captivity' the Church has endured? and where is 'the land'?

from which the Church has been driven out, and to which it will return? . . . If Israel does not mean Israel, and 'the land God gave to the fathers' does not mean Palestine, then I do not know what is meant."

Again, in Jeremiah 31:10 the announcement is: *"He that scattered Israel will gather him."*

Commentators are in general agreement that the "scattering" refers to literal Israel (a nation scattered and peeled, Isaiah 18:2); but when, *in the same sentence* (Jeremiah 31:10) a *gathering* of the *same people* is mentioned, *this*, we are told, must have reference to spiritual Israel!! Here, surely, is inconsistency.

Another method of dealing with these prophecies of a Restoration is to interpret them to mean a gathering of the Jews into the Church. But this interpretation, too, is untenable. The Jews will not be gathered, *nationally*, into the Church; for even in the New Testament we have the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, *as nations*, running parallel with, and continuing separate from, the Church, throughout all the period of its history on earth. Note how the Apostle Paul distinguishes them in 1 Corinthians 10:32: *"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God."*

"He that scattered Israel" -- From whence? from the Church, or from gospel blessings? Not so -- He scattered Israel from Palestine. "Will gather him" -- Where to? Why, surely, to the land which he gave to their fathers, from which Israel, on account of disobedience, was banished and scattered.

But a third, and perhaps the most plausible, way of explaining the prophecies of a Restoration is to represent them as having had their fulfillment at the restoration from Babylon.

Below we submit three of the reasons which compel us to reject this interpretation, also. To us it seems that any fulfillment of the prophecies at the restoration immediately following the Babylonish captivity must be considered, at most, as partial; quite inadequate to represent the complete fulfillment.

(1) THE RESTORATION PROMISED WAS TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE TWELVE TRIBES, REUNITED IN ONE KINGDOM

This is quite clearly predicted in Ezekiel 37:21, 22, as follows: *"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them [Judah and Israel - Eze. 37:15-19] one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."*

So also in that remarkable prophecy of Isaiah 11 (Isa. 11:12), which, on whatever system of interpretation, is admittedly future in its application: *"He shall . . . assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth:'*

These scriptures speak of a complete restoration of the entire nation. Such prophecies could not be said to have received their fulfillment in the (comparatively speaking) mere handful who returned from Babylon.

**(2) AFTER THE RESTORATION
PREDICTED, ISRAEL IS TO ENJOY, NOT
ONLY NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE
BUT, NATIONAL SUPREMACY**

Backsliding Israel, because he served not Jehovah with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, was to be taught a lesson by comparison; and was given over by God to be in servitude for a time to the Gentiles.

"Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck" (Deut. 28:48).

But this iron yoke of Gentile oppression was not to last forever. It was to be only until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, as Jesus stated in Luke 21:24.

We have already referred to Jeremiah 30:3. In Jer. 30:8 of that chapter, the Lord declares: *"I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him."*

However, this national independence did not occur when the Babylonian captivity terminated. As Dr. Kac has noted on page 40 of his *Rebirth of the State of Israel*, "Politically the Jewish community in Palestine in the era of the Second Commonwealth was an appendage of one of the great powers in that era: first of Persia, then of Alexander the Great, and finally of Rome."

Let those who think otherwise ponder the words to be found in Nehemiah 9:36, 37 which describe the actual condition of the people *after their restoration* in Nehemiah's day: *"Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."*

It is not possible to *compare*, but only to *contrast* the actual conditions described in the Nehemiah passage above cited with the conditions which will obtain when a prophecy such as is found in Isaiah 14:1-3 meets fulfillment. *Then*, not merely national *independence* (wholly lacking in Nehemiah's day as we have seen) but national *supremacy* will be Israel's happy portion:

"The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors" (Isa. 14:1, 2).

**(3) THE RESTORATION PROMISED IS
TO BE A "SECOND" RESTORATION.
ITS EXTENT IS TO BE WORLDWIDE. IT IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY NO
FURTHER DISPERSIONS, AND IS, THEREFORE, TO BE PERMANENT**

Foregoing we cited Isaiah 11:12 as indicating the extent-the universality-of the gathering "from the four corners of the earth" in contrast with the mere handful who returned from Babylon. If we turn to the previous verse (Isaiah 11:11) we note that this is declared to be a "second" restoration: *"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people."*

There was no "second" restoration in Nehemiah's time. It must, therefore, *be future from his day.*

Again, in chapter 31 of Jeremiah's prophecy, after describing the rebuilding of the Holy City, the chapter closes with the declaration: *'It shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.'*

Amos, too, speaks in a similar strain, in the closing verses of his prophecy (Amos 9:14, 15): *"I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 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."*

It is, of course, a matter of history, which none would dispute, that the restoration from Babylon *was followed by another dispersion of the people into all the four corners of the earth.* Evidently, therefore, the restoration from Babylon could not have been the fulfillment of prophecies which stipulate "they shall no more be plucked up out of their land."

Recommended Literature

An increasing number of our readers request advice as to recommended literature on Israel Today, a subject which now seems destined to remain in the Headlines of Today and Tomorrow. May we suggest the following.

Books:

Vol. 3 of Scripture Studies, Chapter 8, "The Restoration of Israel." By C. T. Russell

The Death and Resurrection of Israel (A Message of hope for a time of trouble). By Arthur W. Kac. M. D.

Free Booklets:

Israel and the Middle East (is the Middle East Conflict Related to Bible Prophecy?)

Is Israel Emerging From Hell?

The A B C of Bible Prophecy

- P. L. Read

The Rebuilding of Zion

All his enemies surprising,
From the dust the Jew is rising;
See him rising from the grave,
Keen, alert, for conflict brave;
A new spirit now has come
That will gather Israel home.

In their land in deserts thorny,
Hands unused to toil, made horny;
Build and plant with sacred joy;
Busy at their loved employ.

In the valleys long neglected,
By disease germs long infected;
Many die, but others come,
Eager to reclaim their home.

While the latter rain from heaven
To the land once more is given,
Land, that looked like stoned to death;
Feeling now God's quickening breath.

Mother Zion, they are coming,
From their ghettos, from their roaming;
From their tossings on the sea
Of the Gentiles, back to thee!

What though Ishmael opposing
God's sure plan and settled choosing!
Not a word our God has spoken
Shall be canceled, shall be broken.

And the covenant will stand,
Signed and sealed by God's own hand,
To a thousand generations,
Midst the rise and fall of nations.

Like the stars on Mamre's plain,
Israel will still remain;
And the promised land be theirs,
Through the everlasting years.

- *Max I. Reich*

Notice of Annual Meeting

As announced in our March-April issue, the Annual Meeting this year is scheduled to be held (D.V.) Saturday, June 7, at 10:00 a.m., in Atlantic City, New Jersey, at Masonic Temple, N. Hartford and Ventnor Aves.

While only members of the Institute may vote (in person or by proxy), all those who love our Lord Jesus and his appearing are welcome to attend.

The agenda will include a report by the chairman, reviewing the activities of the Institute for the preceding period. Following his report, the election of directors for the coming year will take place.

Opportunity will also be given for the consideration of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting.

The seven brethren now serving as directors are candidates for reelection.

No additional nominations have been received.

Entered Into Rest

Melvin V. Atkins, West York, Ill.
Sis. G. A. Ellenger, Eng.
Eddie Godden, Eng.
Arthur B. Imhoff, Beverly Hills, Cal.
Arthur J. Lodge, Eng.
Bro. Oakley, Eng.
Antoinette Randour, Roanoke, Ill.
Harold Shaw, Eng.
Alice Smith, Gardiner, Me.
Martha Taylor, Calgary, Alta.
John H. L. Trautfelter, Baltimore, Md
Harry J. Voss, St. Louis, Mo.
Frank M. Williams, El Cerrito, Cal.
Nellie Wright, Eng.