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## Israel and the Middle East

*"He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root:  
Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." - Isaiah 27:6.*

WHAT is God's Plan for Israel? And why should it interest both Jews and Gentiles? I answer: God's Plan for Israel is an important feature of God's Plan for all mankind. Israel is the nation it has pleased God to choose. They are his chosen people-chosen, not for favoritism, but for service -- to be the channel through whom his blessings are yet destined to flow to all mankind.

### GOD'S SELECTION OF ABRAHAM

To get the record straight we must refer back to the first Book of the Bible. There, in Genesis 12:1-3, we read of the promise made by God to Abraham, whose name at that time was Abram:

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee [and in thy seed - Gen. 22:18] shall all families of the earth be blessed."

There is no question but that God has fulfilled a part of this promise, namely, to make the name of Abram great. This selection of Abram did not go to his head, as so wonderful a promise might easily have done, but, lest it should have that effect on his offspring, the children of Israel were expressly informed that it was not because they were a great nation, but for the exact opposite reason that they were chosen. The words of Moses on this point are found in Deuteronomy 7:7:

"The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people."

Very early in our investigation we discover that, supplementing the promise that Abraham and his seed should be God's channel of blessing to mankind, God made a specific promise that Abraham and his seed should inherit land. No sooner has he obeyed God's command and journeyed to the land to which God guided him than he is promised, by God himself:

"Unto thy seed will I give this land." - Genesis 12:7.

In later chapters this promise is amplified:

"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed [for 100 years? No!] *forever...*

"Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee ... and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting possession.*" - Genesis 13:14-17; 17:8.

How has the promise progressed? it is asked. First, we note that it was not realized by Abraham personally. However, it was confirmed to his son, Isaac (Gen. 26:23, 24); and again, to Isaac's son, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Gen. 28:10-15; 32:28; 35:9-15). Thereafter the promise passed to Israel's twelve sons and to the nation of which they were the tribal heads.

After their experience with slavery in Egypt, and deliverance therefrom at the hand of Moses, the children of Israel were led into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Here in this, the land of promise, they dwelt for centuries, and experienced the special favor of God. With them he dealt as he dealt with no other nation (Psa. 147:19, 20). According to his promises, detailed in Leviticus 26, he blessed them in basket and in store when they sought to walk in his counsels. He also graciously chastised them when they deflected from the paths of truth and righteousness, so that their national conscience might be kept tender. While they walked in his statutes, he sent them rain in due season and blessed their crops. Their enemies fled from them.

On the other hand, when as a nation they departed from the ways of God, exactly the reverse conditions were permitted to come upon them. Rain was withheld. Crops failed. They were defeated in battle. Those not slain were taken captive. And then, since this treatment proved unavailing, the "seven times" of punishment, predicted in Leviticus 26 began to take effect.

## **GENTILE TIMES**

While it may be questioned if, in this Leviticus chapter, the expression "seven times" has any chronological significance, history has shown that such was, indeed, to be the case. Israel was to become subject to Gentile rule for a long period of time. The length of that period was to be the same as that covered by two of the prophecies contained in the Book of Daniel. One of these was that of the great image seen in his dream by the Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2); the other was that of Daniel's own vision of four wild beasts (Dan. 7). The meaning of these two prophecies is not left to surmise. Each is interpreted in the Scriptures themselves to represent four Gentile World Empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, which in one form or another have held sway over the earth from that day to this.

A remarkable scale for measuring the duration of the periods indicated in the two prophecies has been furnished in the Old Testament. It is known as the year-day scale; that is, a day in prophecy stands as a symbol for a year. Using the year-day scale, "Gentile Times" are seen to extend over the long period of 2,520 years.

That the year-day scale is a Godgiven key, becomes abundantly evident when we find that by its use not only the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and that of Daniel's four beasts, but all other related time prophecies are readily unlocked.

Speaking in broad general terms, we may say that, so far as Israel is concerned, the characteristics of this long period are three in number:

1. Jewish loss of dominion and independence, and their subjugation to and suffering under Gentile conquerors.
2. Dispersion of the Jews.
3. Desolation of their land.

The period of "Gentile Times" would affect three factors in Israel's national life:

1. The land.
2. The throne.
3. The Temple.

Insofar as the land was concerned, this period would extend from the desolation of their land by Babylon to the restoration of the Jews back to Palestine.

Insofar as their throne was concerned, it would extend from the fall of Zedekiah, their last king, to the restoration of the throne under Shiloh.

And, insofar as the Temple was concerned, it would extend from the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem to the re-establishment of the worship of God on Mount Zion.

Stated very concisely, we may say that immediately prior to the commencement of "Gentile Times" the Jewish monarchy was recognized by God, and that immediately after the close of that long period God's Kingdom is scheduled to be established on earth.

### **ISRAEL'S DOUBLE**

Another very striking set of prophecies concerning Israel's experiences is three times designated in the Scriptures as Israel's double.

From the time she became a nation, at Jacob's death, Israel had enjoyed God's favor continuously, until for reasons all too apparent his favor towards her was, of necessity, withdrawn. Whatever the length of this period of favor, for an equal period of time would she be required to experience his disfavor. Only when this period of disfavor had run its course, would he be ready to take her back into favor again. Hear the testimony of three Prophets on this matter:

1. Jeremiah in Chapter 16, verses 14 and 15 (Jer. 16:14-15), says that the days will come when God will accomplish such a wonderful deliverance for Israel that his former miraculous deliverance of her from Egyptian bondage at the hand of Moses, would fade into insignificance. Then, in Jer. 16:18, he adds this further statement:

"First I will recompense their iniquity and their sin *double*."

2. Zechariah, in Chapter 9, verses 9-12 (Zech. 9:9-12), predicts the coming of Messiah and then, speaking for Jehovah, addresses Israel in these remarkable words:

"Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. Even to day do I declare that I will render *double* unto thee."

Here the word "double" is translated from the Hebrew word *mishneh* as in the prophecy by Jeremiah. It signifies a second portion; a repetition.

3. A third Prophet, Isaiah, testifies concerning the matter in these words:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand *double* for all her sins." - Chap. 40: verses 1 and 2 (Isa. 40:1-2, margin).

Here the Hebrew word translated "double" is *kephel*, which signifies double, in the sense of a thing having been folded in the middle.

In connection with these three prophecies it has been well observed: "The student of prophecy should notice that the Prophets vary their standpoints of utterance, sometimes speaking of future things as future, and sometimes assuming a position future, and speaking from that assumed standpoint."

That these three Prophets lived hundreds of years apart, and wrote things quite contrary to Israel's expectations, only serves to increase the force and value of their utterances.

One other Scripture bears directly on this phase of our subject. It is found in Psalm 102, verse 13, and reads:

"Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come."

Evidently the same spirit which operated in Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Isaiah, inspired the words of the Psalmist. The time to favor Zion, "yea, the set time, is come."

When is that to be? We may know today, within a very close approximation, our position on the stream of time. As in the case of "Gentile Times," so also in reference to Israel's double of disfavor, these great time prophecies are not to be measured from any one particular year to another, but from one era to another. This is so, because the rise and fall of nations must, in the very nature of the case, cover more or less extended eras. The fall of Israel and Judah covered a period of 160 years, culminating in the overthrow of their last king, Zedekiah. It should not surprise us then, if we find their restoration extending over a number of years, or decades, or even longer periods. What we should be on the lookout for is not a thunderbolt from the skies, but a *noticeable change* in the *trend* of events. We should be watching and intelligently reading the signs of the times, and noting how they fit in with the prophetic forecasts.

### **ISRAEL'S MESSIAH**

The promise to Abraham was not confirmed to all of his children-not to Ishmael, for example, but to Isaac only.

Again, not all of Isaac's children constituted the seed of promise. Esau was by-passed in favor of Jacob.

Even in the case of Jacob, while none of his twelve sons was excluded from God's promise of an inheritance in the *land*, yet on his deathbed Jacob saw, and predicted, that the *throne*, as distinguished from the land, was to be limited to the tribe of Judah. Moreover, within the tribe of Judah, Jacob's deathbed prediction narrowed down the throne-promise to one individual. - Genesis 49:10:

"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." Doubtless it was this same great one to whom Ezekiel referred, when he addressed Zedekiah:

"Thou profane, wicked prince of Israel. . . . Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: ... I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." - Ezekiel 21:25-27.

In other words, the original promise to Abraham, when closely examined, is seen to contain much more than at first appeared, much more, doubtless, than Abraham himself realized. It is composed of two parts. One, the one we have been considering earlier in our discussion, is to the natural seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel. To them, as we have seen, God promised an inheritance in the land. That promise will yet be kept. Not only so, but through them God's blessing of everlasting life and all earthly favors will be channeled to the Gentiles in due time.

But there was another part to the promise, also sure of fulfillment. It is to be the inheritance of one worthy of the honor, namely, Israel's great Messiah.

Moses had seen this. In Deuteronomy 18:15-19 he declares:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet .. like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."

David, in Psalm 110:1, spoke of the future Messiah as his Lord, that is, his superior, as one evidently destined to be a greater king than himself, while in verse 4 he declares that, in vision, he heard God himself addressing this great Messiah as a priest, occupying a much higher station than the high priest Aaron, a priest who would function not for a few brief years and then, because of death, be compelled to resign the office to a successor, but one who would serve for an entire Age; a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was both a priest and a king, whose exalted station even Abraham recognized, in that he did him homage, paid him tithes, and from him received a blessing.

This great prophet, priest, and king, is not a man like Moses, Melchizedek or David, but a highly exalted spirit being, the very Son of God himself. He it is whom the great Jehovah delights to honor. Of him it is written in the second Psalm (Psa. 2):

"Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son; ... Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the utter most parts of the earth for thy possession."

## **RESTORATION OF ISRAEL**

So far as Israel is concerned, the signs of the times according to the unanimous testimony of the Old Testament prophets, should be looked for in three main directions, namely:

1. Restoration *of* the land.

2. Restoration *to* the land.
3. Restoration *to God*.

The land is to be recovered from the state of desolation in which it has lain during the long period of Gentile rule. As Isaiah expresses it, in that wonderful 35th chapter of his (Isa. 35):

"The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose, . . . in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Is this sign in evidence today? Is the land, in fact, being restored? He would be blind, indeed, who could not see this sign. Restoration of the land, admittedly, is far from complete, but the economic growth of the country in recent times, along both agricultural and industrial lines, has been nothing short of miraculous; and this, too, notwithstanding the hardships and difficulties which beset the nation of Israel under present conditions.

And what of the second sign? Are there any indications that the people of Israel are being restored *to* the land? Yes, indeed, there are. Even as far back as 1878, the year of the famous Berlin Congress, faithful watchers realized that *a change* in the status of Israel *was taking place*. That conference, with the war that preceded it, was without doubt a most marked stage in the downfall of the Ottoman power—a stage in the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, which was destined to be completely broken up at the end of World War I.

Then, too, it was surely no mere coincidence that when the British General Allenby, without firing a shot, captured Jerusalem from the Turks, the date of that event, perhaps one of the most important in Israel's national life, namely, December 9, 1917, should prove to be exactly 1335 lunar years from the birthday of that particular Gentile power which, for so long, had desolated the Holy Land, and trodden down Jerusalem.

### **JACOB'S TROUBLE**

But what of the third sign mentioned? Is there any evidence that not only is the restoration of the land in progress; not only is the nation being regathered to that land; but that the hearts of the people of Israel, as a nation, are returning to the God of their fathers?

It must be admitted, that while there are, indeed, some signs in this direction, they are not very pronounced. The economic progress of the country, both in relation to the land and the people, is still largely secular. With all due respect to the few devout souls in Israel, there is little of the faith of Abraham to be seen in Israel today.

As a matter of fact this state of affairs should not surprise us. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah -- each has cautioned us to expect exactly what we see in progress today. Briefly summarizing their forecasts, my understanding of them is that first, there was to be the regathering of a representative remnant of Israel, not in the faith of Abraham, but in unbelief. This is now taking place. But what follows? I answer: After a brief interval of prosperity there comes a time of anguish. To quote Jeremiah 30:7, "it is the time of Jacob's trouble." What is it, according to the united testimony of the four Prophets I have named, that occasions this dark hour which threatens to fall on Israel in the nighttime of her sad history? It is nothing more nor less than a gathering of envious nations against her, graphically described in Ezekiel 38:1-13. In these verses the chief actors in this yet future struggle in Palestine are named. However, we may not be too sure of our identifications. But one thing is quite definite, the battle will not end in triumph for Israel's enemies. Does one ask: "Why not?" I answer: *Because it is the set time for Israel's deliverance.*

God himself, represented by Israel's great Messiah, will intervene. Of this there is no question, for, after telling us that it is the time of Jacob's trouble, Jeremiah goes on to say: "But he shall be saved out of it." According to Zechariah 14:2, 3, God will go forth and fight against Israel's enemies as he fought in the day of battle. Isaiah, too, speaks in a similar vein. - Isa. 28:21.

That will indeed be a great and wonderful day in Israel's history, an hour of triumph such as they have never known before, greater even than when they came out of Egypt; greater than when they triumphed over Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea; greater than when they entered the Promised Land and the walls of Jericho fell down before them.

There is, however, something greater, more solemn and more blessed, than mere deliverance and triumph over their enemies that Israel is to experience. And that is God's final conquest over them.

On former occasions, when God had given them the victory over their enemies, it was not long before they became proud in heart and rebelled against the Rock of their salvation. But this will never be true of them again. For he, their great Messiah, who comes to conquer their foes, comes also to subdue their hearts. Hence, great as their triumph will be when they return from the victory, their glorious day of triumph will end in self-abasement and tears. How this wonderful change will be brought about, how the stubborn heart of unbelieving and gainsaying Israel will at last be broken, we are told in Zechariah 12:10:

"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication;"

or, as Jeremiah speaking as the Lord's mouthpiece expresses the matter:

"I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord, But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." - Jeremiah 31:31-34.

### **EGYPT'S NATIONAL PRESERVATION ASSURED**

Nor will this be true of Israel only. No! It will be true also of Egypt and Assyria (present-day Iraq). Dr. Arthur W. Kac writes instructively as follows:

"Many of the nations in the ancient world have disappeared forever in accordance with Biblical prophecy, but in the case of Egypt we have a definite -assurance in God's Word that her national life shall not be extinguished. On the contrary, God has a future for Egypt. The passage in Jeremiah painting a gloomy picture of the destruction of Egypt at *'the hand of the people of the north'* concludes with this significant statement: *'And afterwards it [i.e. Egypt] shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith Jehovah'* - Jeremiah 46:26.

### **EGYPT'S SPIRITUAL REGENERATION**

"Since God has decreed that Egypt shall not perish from the earth, the purpose of the many afflictions heaped upon her is not merely to punish her, but to rid her of her vain pride, to cause her to forsake the errors of her ways, to give up her false doctrines and philosophies, and to come to a saving knowledge of Jehovah and place her trust in him. That this is the aim which God seeks to accomplish through his judgments upon Egypt may be seen from the frequency with which the phrase *and they shall know that I am Jehovah*' occurs in the Egypt passages in the Bible. '*And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah*' - *Ezekiel 29:6*; (see also *Eze. 30:8, 19; 32:15*).

The true purpose of the chastisement of Egypt is nowhere expressed better than in the following passage in Isaiah: '*And Jehovah will smite Egypt, smiting and healing, and they shall return unto Jehovah, and he will be entreated of them, and will heal them*' - *Isaiah 19:22*.

"Egypt's conversion to the God of Israel is more fully described in the second half of the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah: '*In that day shall there be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to Jehovah. And Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day*' - *Isaiah 19:19, 21*.

"That the Egyptian people have never fully experienced the kind of spiritual transformation spoken of in Isaiah 19:19-22 is quite certain. This may be easily seen from an examination of the concluding passage of this chapter in Isaiah describing the striking changes which are to take place in Egypt's international relations as a result of her spiritual regeneration.

### **A NEW DAY FOR THE NEAR EAST**

*"In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt; and the Egyptians shall worship with Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth. For that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" - Isaiah 19:23-25.* To grasp the full significance of the closing passage of this great chapter one must be acquainted with the history of the Middle East in the centuries before, and at the time of, this recorded prophecy. The Near East, or the Middle East, was the known civilized world of ancient history. On the southwest border of this world was Egypt, while Assyria was situated on the northeast rim of that part of the world. Israel lay between these two great empires. For many centuries that ancient world was dominated either by Egypt or Assyria. Israel's position was that of a buffer state between these two great powers . . . . If Israel favored Egypt she incurred the enmity of Assyria and vice versa. Israel often became a battleground where the two opposing forces met. This rivalry between Egypt and Assyria never ceased until both were struck down by the rising power of Persia. Now, after some 2,500 years, Assyria, Egypt and Israel have regained political existence, the ancient rivalry between Egypt and Assyria has reappeared ...

"The meaning of the closing portion of Isaiah 19 is, therefore, that this rivalry between Egypt and Iraq, so catastrophic to the whole Middle East, will not cease until both these nations, humbled by many defeats and much suffering, will surrender themselves to Jehovah, the God of Israel. When that day comes there will be a highway between Egypt and Iraq; the two nations will mix and mingle freely and unite as friends instead of being divided as enemies. This newly found friendship and cooperation between Egypt and Iraq will be reinforced by a covenant with Israel, who at that time will be a blessing not only to the Middle East but to the whole world."

### **ALL MANKIND TO BE BLESSED**



**Yes!** All mankind will then be blessed through Israel as God promised to Abraham. The Prophet Isaiah tells us this in Chapter 2 (Isa. 2:4), verse 4. So also the Prophet Micah states in Chapter 4 (Micah 4:1-3), verses 1-3:

"In the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain [or kingdom] of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains [that is, overruling all other kingdoms], and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many nations shall come, and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths.'"

"And *they* shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

-P. L. Read

## **The Glorious Prospect**

"What a glorious prospect the new dispensation will present when fully inaugurated! The changes from one dispensation to another in the past have been marked and prominent, but this change will be the most eventful of all.

No wonder that the thought of such a spectacle -- of a whole race returning to God with songs of praise and everlasting joy upon their heads -- should seem almost too good to believe; but he who has promised is able also to perform all his good pleasure. Though sorrow and sighing seem almost inseparable from our being, yet sorrow and sighing *shall flee away*; though weeping in sackcloth and ashes has endured throughout the long night of the dominion of sin and death, yet joy awaits the Millennial morning, and all tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and beauty shall be given for ashes, and the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness."

- C. T. Russell (D642)

## **The Memorial**

"This do in remembrance of me." - Luke 22:19.

ALL Christians should commemorate with deep devotion the anniversary of our Lord's death.\* To those who have been taught the deep things of God there is more than the remembrance of this event, there is a wondrous privilege. It is not only a remembrance of the past, but it is a finger-post to the future.

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\*The 14th of Nisan this year, as previously announced, falls on Thursday, April 20, beginning at sundown, at which time it is appropriate to keep the Memorial. - Ed. Com.

An important event in the history of the Israelites was memorialized by some outward ceremony or ritual. This was intended to deepen the impression and to prevent the occurrence from fading from the memory. Too often and too soon the freshness of an experience fades from the mind. This can happen to the actual participants. How much more readily will it happen to non-participants!

### **THE PASSOVER AS A MEMORIAL**

The feast of the Passover was instituted on such a basis. Here was a mighty and most striking deliverance of God's people by God's power. They must not forget it. (Exodus 12:24.) An annual ceremony must be established. Thus was the feast of the Passover most carefully outlined by the Creator, together with specific instructions that it should be perpetuated.

Obviously as time passed this feast became a reminder only of some act in remote, history. But always linked with this reminder was the name of Jehovah - his greatness and his watchful care for his own. Jehovah's name and his greatness were inseparable from this feast.

"I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

This and similar exhortations were "that they might observe his statutes and keep his laws." - Psalm 105:45.

With God there is no hidden future -- all is known to him. He saw his Son Jesus as the great Passover Lamb. His Plan included that greatest of all deliverances followed by the blessing of all the families of the earth. The human family was to be freed from sin and all its concomitants terminating in death. What a deliverance! Abraham saw it by faith and rejoiced. Joseph, the husband of Mary, had just a glimpse when he was told by God that the child should be named Savior.

### **THE ATTITUDE OF THE DISCIPLES**

Jesus himself knew that he was the great Passover Lamb for the world. He tried to convey this thought to his disciples but they were so trammelled with earthly ideas of a kingdom with great pomp, power, and glory that they heeded not his words. Here is a lesson for us. Are we so attached to the affairs of this life that we fail to appreciate all that our Heavenly Father would have us know concerning the Memorial?

When the disciples inquired of the Master where they were to keep the annual Passover, he gave them instructions and on the Day of Preparation they had carried out his orders. No other thought,

so far as we can gather, was in their minds but the partaking of the legal Passover. Jesus had other intentions. He was about to leave them. He wished to have an intimate, loving, farewell Supper -- something for them to remember; something for them to look forward to. They were not aware that they were on the threshold of the greatest event in human history! Illimitable results would follow this act.

### **WHO CAN UNDERSTAND?**

We believe we are nearing the end of this Age. All the called, chosen and faithful of the Lord should be enjoying a deeper insight into the meaning and import of this last meal of our Redeemer with his loved ones. Jesus knew that his disciples would not be able to understand the deep things that he knew and had in his mind. But he longed to convey as much as possible at that time. Symbolism is a powerful means of conveying a profound thought. He must convey to them the understanding that they were to have a share with him in a great undertaking to establish his Father's name in the earth, and to have a part in the great work of blessing all the families of the earth. Further, he must convey to them the fact that to reign with him they must suffer with him. His pathway must be their pathway, his suffering must be the precursor of their suffering; his glory would include their ultimate glorification. No human mind can grasp this. Only those begotten of God can do so. This act of begetting, is entirely the result of the work of God, consequently it may be said that only those to whom the Father reveals the great truth contained in the Memorial can fully and really enter into its height and depth, its length and breadth.

### **JESUS THE PASSOVER LAMB**

It should be understood that the meal partaken of by the Lord and his disciples was not the Passover Feast, for it was yet the 14th day of Nisan.\*\*

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\*\* The Passover lamb was eaten on the 14th; the Feast of the Passover commenced on the 15th and continued until the 21st. - Ed. Com.

Feast day was the 15th. It is not reasonable to think that Jesus would break the Law. Luke records that Jesus definitely stated that he would "not eat thereof." If it was not the Passover Feast, what was it? Jesus saw himself as the lamb to be slain. Within a few hours he was to die, therefore he instituted a simple ceremony that would live in their minds because it was of the deepest significance to them. He was chosen and begotten of God; they were chosen, and later to be begotten of God. He was the Son of God; they were chosen and privileged to be sons of God. They were his brethren; he was their elder Brother. How his heart must have yearned over them! How great his desire to do all that he could to help them.

Surely we can see what a very intimate, family atmosphere must have pervaded that sacred, very private, but very far-reaching event. He was to leave them; but he would see them again. A place in heaven he would prepare for them and eventually spend eternity with them. All that he thought and did for them, he thinks and does for us.

When he broke the bread and said, "This is my body which is *given for you: this do in remembrance of me*"; and when, after pouring the wine, he said further: "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you," he uttered great truths that they did not yet understand. The word "remembrance" that he used conveys the thought of "waiting for." What were they to wait for? Soon they would know, and then they would continue the Memorial feast annually "until he come." This the faithful followers of the Lord do, and have done for the last

nineteen hundred years. Now our hopes are high, for we are nearing the time for his glorious return in power, and his first act is to gather together all those who are the chosen and begotten of his Father. In all conditions and circumstances; in peril and in danger; in sickness and in health, this simple feast has been kept.

### **INCREASED LIGHT**

Very soon our Heavenly Father rewarded the faithful followers of the Lord by giving a deeper insight into the real significance of the bread and wine. It was the privilege of that faithful servant Paul to reveal the hidden meaning of the symbol used at the Lord's last Supper.

There is no evidence that Jesus ate of the bread or drank of the wine -rather the words go to show that he would wait for the time of the establishment of the Kingdom. In simple and expressive language, but with impelling force and power, the Apostle demonstrates that we enter into that breaking. When we partake and assimilate the bread, and it becomes part of us, this symbolizes that we are one with our Head and united to all other members of that Body. Paul in essence says, here is a mystery kept hid from the ages, that Christ is not composed of one person but is composed of many, all of whom become one! Christ is one, but comprises many members. - 1 Cor. 12:12.

Evidently the great Apostle found it necessary to give the foundation of his interpretation of the symbol used in the Memorial and we find him saying, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you." Paul was anxious that his fellow-members should see and know that the partaking of the emblems was more than a reminder of a sacrificial life and work finished at Calvary. For him, for them, and similarly for us it is an entering into a covenant or agreement with the Lord Jesus and with his Father. Note the words of Jesus and see what a flood of light is thrown upon them by this understanding.

*"And I covenant for you, even as my Father has covenanted for me, a Kingdom" (Luke 22:29, Diaglott).*

Here was a loving intimacy, a sweet fellowship that had never before been extended to members of the human family. Did the disciples appreciate these words when they were spoken? Have we appreciated them as much in the past as we do now? A greater knowledge of our loving Heavenly Father, accompanied *by* a wider experience of his purpose and way should endear this ceremony to us more and more. Our relationship to our Heavenly Father and to the Lord should be quickened and enhanced.

### **OUR ATTITUDE**

Our Father, at this Memorial season, would have us carefully and prayerfully examine our relationship with him and his purpose. Frequently we quote, "Now are we sons of God." How have we become sons? Could we take this relationship of our own volition? Can we attain to this position by a demonstration of faith or of works? Is it a natural growth or development? John declares it to be a privilege or position given by God. (John 1:12.) Paul asserts that only those led by the spirit of God are his sons. To all those who have the assurance of being sons of God, what an intimate, reverential, homely feeling becomes associated with the partaking of the feast.

This knowledge that, by the grace of God, we are in a special relationship to him; that he has undertaken all on our behalf; that he will never leave us nor forsake us, will not puff us up. If rightly exercised we shall approach this Memorial with the deepest gratitude, with the truest

humility, and with the sincerest honesty of heart. *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me."*

*"Cleanse thou me from secret faults."*

*"Therefore if a man purge himself from these things [dishonoring to God] he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, fit for the Master's use, prepared for every good work."*

If this be the attitude of our heart toward God, towards this time of the Memorial, happy will be our lot! Further, if we fully apprehend what our Father has done for us through the gift of his dear Son, and with faith and with gratitude live in harmony with his definite promises, how blessed we shall be as we once more partake of the emblems so lovingly introduced and used by our Head and Elder Brother.

*"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."*

- A. J. Lodge, Eng.

## **The Resurrection**

*"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins ... But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." - 1 Corinthians 15:17, 20, 22.*

GOD is said to have "looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth: to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem" (Psa. 102:19-21). God saw that these prisoners of death, banished from their home, perfect food, and climate, had lost much in strength and endurance. From the 969-year life span of Methuselah, man's life expectancy had dropped to 120 years in Noah's day, and to 70 or 80 years in the Psalmist's time. Genesis 5:27; 6:3; Psalm 90:9, 10.

God also "saw [by the time of the flood, about 1654 years after the great disobedience] that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Man's thoughts, sentiments, and morals had shriveled even as his life span had shrunken. Men had become corrupt, dissolute, and continually in rebellion against God and his laws, and as such, "children of [God's] wrath." - Colossians 3:5, 6.

### **RANSOM MUST PRECEDE RESURRECTION**

In his pity God determined to loose these prisoners of death and to declare the name of the Lord and his praises (excellent qualities) in Jerusalem. But how should he go about this gracious work of salvation for all mankind? How could God be true to himself, to his wisdom, justice, and power, and yet show the compassion and love his great mercy had determined upon? How could God be consistent with his glory and be reconciled to such wretches as we are? Could he accept us back into his love and care just as though no disobedience, rebellion, sin, death, or wrath had occurred? Could he deal directly with us or must he use a mediator? If too easy a forgiveness were given to men would it not have a bad effect on the "morning stars" and "all the sons of God"

who "sang together" and "shouted for joy" when the corner-stone of the earth was laid (Job 38:6, 7)? Would the God of Truth, after saying, "Thou shalt surely die," release the sinners and reverse his own word? Could he, the most righteous and holy, let pass this opportunity to show his love for obedience and purity and his hatred of evil?

Obviously we could not be cleared from our guilt and death penalty without expiation, without a satisfaction of justice, without a ransom. So God designed to make this salvation a work that would increase the knowledge of his glory throughout the universe; that as a result of Satan's rebellion there should be a better understanding of God and a gathering together of all his sons, human and spirit, under the great Savior of men. - Ephesians 1:7, 10.

But who should be the savior, ransomer, and mediator between God and men? There was none of Adam's race who could "by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. 49:7). The angels had tried to stem the tide of sin and death in the first Age, before the flood, and had failed, and they themselves, many of them, had "left their first estate, had "sinned," and been "cast down to Tartarus [earth's atmosphere] and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment of the great day" (Heb. 2:2, 5; 2 Pet. 2:4 - margin; Jude 6). Lucifer, the shining one, once "the covering cherub" to Adam and Eve, until "iniquity had been found in him," had now become Satan, the enemy of God and man (Ezek. 28:13-16). God, being divine, could not die, yet only some one having sufficient knowledge of Jehovah to cope with the wily Adversary and his minions could be the savior, else he would fail under the great pressure put upon him by the forces of evil, and the redemption would not be accomplished. - Isaiah 53:7-11.

Therefore the great Logos, the Word of God, the only direct creation of God, the one through whom all things were made, was selected. When the offer was made, and the "joy set before him," he said, "Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (John 1:1-3, *Diaglott* Literal; Heb. 10:7; 12:2; Rev. 3:14). The life and personality of the Logos was then transferred and he became the babe of Bethlehem. "He was made flesh and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." - John 1: 14; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 2:14.

The advantage Jesus had over Adam and the angels in resisting Satan's attempts to divert him from the path of sacrifice, the doing of God's will, was in his knowledge and experience of his prehuman life. In memory he saw "Satan as an angel of light, fall from heaven." To others he said: "Before Abraham was, I am." - Luke 10:18; John 8:58.

### **JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS NECESSARY**

It was necessary for our Savior to die. But why did Jesus' cup include the death on the cross, a criminal between two thieves? "He was numbered among the transgressors." "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin." He was accused of many crimes-sabbath breaking, blasphemy, making himself equal with God, deceiving the people. destroying the Jewish religion and the Temple, being a malefactor, seditious, rebellious, and teaching the people not to pay tribute to Rome. For these he was condemned to death, though Pilate, the judge, did not believe the accusations and wanted no part in his death. - John 18:31, 38.

Naturally, one would think God would have spared his beloved Son the disgrace attached to death as a criminal. St. Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23). But the wisdom of God is above ours, and as we study over the matter, we think we can see some of God's reasons.

It is distressingly painful to any one to be accused of dishonesty and crime. Jesus was no exception, for he said at Gethsemane, "Be ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?" (Luke 22:52). Early in his ministry he knew of his coming betrayal, rejection, and death (John 6:64; 16:1-33; Luke 9:22; 18-32, 33). To have died an easier death similar to Enoch's or Moses' (Heb. 11:5; Deut. 34; Jude 9), might not have revealed the exceeding costliness of the ransoming work. He had been willing not only to become a man and dwell among poor, sinful humanity, but to be a servant, misunderstood, falsely accused, and finally condemned as a criminal to die on the cross, the most odious and painful means of death in that day. Further, since Jesus was to take our place as a ransom—we who are all sinners and criminals before God's court it was proper, to assist our understanding, that Jesus should die as an apparent criminal for us (Isa. 53:6). Jesus accepted this as God's will, for he said to Pilate. "Thou couldest have no power against me except it were given thee from above." - John 19:11.

While Jesus' death as a criminal has caused some to stumble and say he acted foolishly, Christendom has accepted Jesus as a good man just because he suffered these indignities. Seneca said of Socrates that his taking the cup of poison made him a great man, and gave him the respect of those who since have studied his socialistic ideas, for which he died so meekly, telling his disciples of his philosophy even while drinking the cup of hemlock. Plato, before Jesus' day, had said that he could approve a man as fully righteous only after he had been tortured for his faith.

The Jewish people, besides being under the Adamic death penalty, through heredity, were under the added curse of the failure to keep their promise to obey the Sinaitic Law. They therefore required a special sin-offering. Jesus, born under the Law Covenant, keeping it fully, and dying on the cross, provided that special sin-offering and saved the Jewish nation.- Galatians 3:10-13.

Jesus was perfect in his prehuman condition, and still perfect as a man, for his life came not from Adam, but from God's holy spirit. Mary gave Jesus his human body. His life was from God, his Father (*Scripture Studies, Vol. V*, pages E97-E106). However, the Logos had the promise of a high exaltation to the divine nature, that he should be King of earth, Mediator of the New Covenant, and High Priest to make intercession for the Church and the world. These latter positions, evidently required added perfections, for we read, He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered," and was "made perfect" (Heb. 5:8, 9). These added requirements of character explain why his patience, meekness, temperance, and love were so sorely tested and fully developed. Surely he became qualified as a *merciful* and faithful high-priest; learning obedience through his suffering has fitted him for all power in heaven and on earth; his faithful performance of God's will under most grueling tests proved him worthy of the crowning reward, that of being resurrected in the "brightness of God's glory, and the express image of the Father's [divine] person." - Hebrews 1:1-3.

Much of what Jesus endured was for the sake of his followers of this Gospel Age who were to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," who were to "go to him, without the camp, bearing his reproach," be "baptized for the dead," and "die daily." They were to be tempted to "becoming weary and faint in their souls, striving against sin," and were likely to "despise" the chastenings of the Lord or "faint when rebuked by him." How often the only comfort in our woes is to look "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," to "consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," and to say I have not yet shed great drops of blood striving against sin as he did. - Colossians 1:24; Hebrews 13:10-13; 1 Corinthians 15, 29, 31; Hebrews 12:1-7.

## **IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED - YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS**

What a waste of creative effort, experience, and suffering it would have been if Jesus (who carried with him into the tomb all the magnificence of the great Logos, all the tenderness of the man who wept at Lazarus' grave; who said to the woman "neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more"; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; who, when he knew that just a few of his brilliant words of defense would cause the wavering judge to declare him innocent, "opened not his mouth"; who during the six hours of agony on the cross gave comfort to the thief, provided for his mother's welfare, and would not accept the proffered drug to deaden his suffering) - if he had not been resurrected from the grave.

1 Corinthians 15 is Paul's argument against the teaching of some in the Church, who, while still believing in Jesus' resurrection, denied the resurrection of the saints and the world. The Apostle proves God's ability to resurrect these by the admitted fact that Jesus was resurrected. A further thought in the reasoning is that Adam's race needs lifting up from death, degradation, and sin, and that Jesus who bought us from death is the only One who can perform this restoration work. The Atonement has two parts, ransom and restitution.

God, whose throne is founded on justice, cannot look on sin, hence he has arranged for the 1000-year judgment day, when the world will be under the Mediator of the New Covenant, and God will not be in direct contact with the weakened human race until they are brought to physical and moral perfection.

If Jesus were not raised, how could he call from their graves the 20 billion human beings estimated to have lived on earth since Adam? How then could Jesus be the King of earth, Mediator of the New Covenant, and High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, to make intercession for the sins of the world? And how could a dead and unresurrected Savior oversee the vast multitude of mankind, as they walk the highway of holiness and write God's Law in their hearts and minds? - John 5:28-30.

Thus we see the force of St. Paul's argument in our text, "If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Now the promised resurrection of all of Adam's race Jew and Gentile, black and white, bond-servant and freeman, those who have done evil and those who have done good-all will be resurrected, each in his own order by our risen Savior.

But how could Jesus die as the corresponding price for Adam and his race and yet on the third day be resurrected? We briefly answer, the *man* Jesus has not been resurrected, but will stay dead throughout eternity. It was the New Creature, Christ the Head, which was begotten at Jordan and which was resurrected from the tomb. All of the personality, experience, knowledge, and character of Jesus is in the divine Christ; his being was transferred from the human to the divine body in the same way the personality of the Logos was transferred to the Man Jesus.

## **RESURRECTION TO FOLLOW THE GOSPEL AGE**

The preparation for the gigantic task of giving a full and effective opportunity to all the human race has been going on quietly, unknown to the world. It began at Pentecost. Jesus, the only one having the right, power, patience, and sagacity to do this work, has been calling a little flock of foot-step followers to be assistant judges and under-priests. These will share his throne and his personal exaltation. The development of the Church is the Mystery of God. The Church is called the Body of Christ, the members likened to the members of the human body because of their



willingness to do exactly as their head, Jesus, directs. Members of Christ's Body start as sinful human beings, but through faith, the gift of God, are reckoned perfect because of Jesus' ransom and their belief therein. These consecrate their all, and because of their justification by faith are accepted in the Beloved, begotten by God to the spirit nature, to the same status as Jesus after his consecration at Jordan-new creatures in Christ. These are running for the prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus. Only by prayer and supreme effort can we be transformed to the image of God's dear Son. Only by *working out* our salvation with fear and trembling can we have God *work in* us to will and do of his good pleasure. But the way is not impossible, for the promise is that "as thy days so shall thy strength be." When we are weak in our own self-confidence, then are we strong, in that God will give us strength to bear our crosses.

The Christ, or anointed class, has part in the First Resurrection. Jesus was raised the third day after his death-at the beginning of the Gospel Age. Each member of the Body of Christ, from Pentecost to the end of the Gospel Age, upon completion of his sacrifice in death, has fallen asleep, awaiting Christ's second coming. "The dead in Christ," we are told, "shall rise first," upon the coming of the Lord with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. I believe Jesus' secret coming and presence have already occurred, that the thunderous events of our day and Israel's establishment in Palestine indicate this. Such being the case, I believe that the resurrection of the dead in Christ is going on now. First, those asleep were to be raised, and after that, as they finished their course, "we which are alive and remain" on the earth during the first phase of Jesus' presence are to be raised immediately upon death to join those of the First Resurrection that have preceded them. - Luke 12:37-39; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Acts 15:16.

The After-resurrection will consist of those who will be obedient children of God during Christ's 1000-year reign on earth. "Every man in his own order" indicates a planning in the awakening and lifting to perfection which the very word, "resurrection" means (1 Cor. 15:23). Lazarus and others were not resurrected, but awakened. Jesus was the first-fruits of them that slept. He awakened Jairus' daughter during his ministry, but she was not released from the Adamic death, for she later returned to the grave. - John 11:11; Luke 7:14; 8:54.

In the Millennial Age, his organization complete and ready for the task, all stones of stumbling removed, Satan bound, and the highway of holiness opened, Christ shall call to all in the graves. Those not of the first resurrection, even those who have done evil, will come forth; first awakened, as was Lazarus; then as they strive to do good, their efforts will be rewarded with greater measures of life. The arrangement for justification by faith will be unnecessary then because of the mediatorial covering, but at the end of the highway and the Millennial Age, all the willing and obedient will have learned righteousness, will have God's law written in their hearts. The effects of Adamic sin and death will be removed, and man will have become actually perfect. The last enemy to be destroyed is the Adamic death, wherein one wastes away, becomes old and dies. Adam and his race will finally be in at-one-ment with God.

What a glorious hope the resurrection holds out to this weary, sick, fear-ridden and dying world!

Let us strive to be worthy of our high calling, and faithful stewards of the knowledge of the Divine Plan of the Ages given us in advance of the world of mankind.

- B. F. Hollister

## Christian Fellowship

*"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." - 1 John 1:3.*

IT IS most natural for one to be drawn to another or a group that speaks the language of the heart's affection. That is the law of fellowship; for it is oneness of interest that creates a fellowship. Fellowship is a partnership; a common sharing with another, a jointpartaker with another. Fellowship is never arbitrary, for we either do or do not have a common interest with another. The bases for fellowship are many and varied, such as partnership in business, in social relief, in community activities, in profession or trade, in oneness of religious convictions, in scientific investigation, and in conservation projects.

In 1 Corinthians, chapter twelve, the Apostle uses the oneness of the human body as an illustration of a closely knit unit of many parts: "When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26). But oneness such as this can exist in natural family groups, clans, tribes, and other divisions of men. It can be, and often is, manifest in religious groups who closely adhere to some leader or teacher and his system of interpretation. This creates an affinity, one for another, of the same persuasion; Seventh Day Adventists for Seventh Day Adventists; Mormons for Mormons; Christian Scientists for Christian Scientists; Amish for Amish. The spirits of Lutherans are elated after spending a week together at a retreat. The same is true with Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as with any group in which there is a mutual compatibility. Often the impression left after a gathering of likeminded ones is expressed in these words, "It was good to have been there."

But our topic is Christian Fellowship, which, by its title, denotes a special oneness. The Christian Church, the prospective body of Christ, is composed of many individuals taken out of all nations, and languages, and divisions of men; but in Christ these distinctions have ceased, "for, as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" writes Paul in Galatians 3:27, 28. He also asserts that the Church is a unit apart from both Jew and Gentile: "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10: 32). Those who by nature were "children of wrath, even as others, minding earthly things," are, by a new begettal, made mindful of heavenly things, the things of the spirit. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." - 1 Corinthians 2:12.

### REDEMPTION NECESSARY

It may be that many think of redemption as being merely a bringing out of the darkness and ignorance of God's plans and purposes into the light of what Peter terms "present truth" (2 Pet. 1: 12). But redemption, as unfolded in the sacred writings, is from the slavery to sinful propensities, the thralldom of Satan's kingdom and ways, into fellowship with God. As we read in Colossians 1:12-14, where the Apostle gives "thanks to the Father ... who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Redemption is necessary to this fellowship with God. As an illustration, Israel in Egyptian bondage could have no common union with God. Certainly the Eternal, who inhabits the boundlessness of eternity, could have nothing in common with a debased, restricted people, even though they were the descendants of Abraham, the Friend of God. If they were to be the people of

the Lord, he must redeem them from their bondage, they being unable to effect their own deliverance. And so it was, "with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" on Egypt (Ex. 6:6), Israel was brought out of bondage into the relationship of a redeemed people. Thus it is with the true Israel of God, of which natural Israel was a type, or figure. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples" (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4). How could we, "dead in trespasses and sins" have fellowship with a holy God? "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Such is Isaiah's estimation of the excellencies of God. His answer to his own query is, "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." - Isaiah 33:14, 15.

"Dead in trespasses and sins!". Not partly dead; not merely needing more or less of the merit of Christ to cover our deficiencies; but without a scintilla, not the slightest trace of life as God views life; born but to die! Jesus testified to the true state of the human family when he said to one who would postpone discipleship until first he had buried his father: "Let the dead bury their dead" (Luke 9:60). Even in the present condition of the race, what fellowship has any one with a corpse? At the cessation of sensation all communication ceases. And this lack of communication between the Giver and Sustainer of life and the Adamic race of dying humans has continued since the transgression in Eden. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (Eph. 2:4, 5). For this reason we give "thanks to that Father who called and qualified us for the portion of the saints' inheritance in the light; who delivered us from the dominion of darkness and changed us for the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:12, 13, *Diaglott* translation). This is redemption from the bondage to sin and death into a state of harmony with divine holiness. Only Divine power can accomplish this.

Self-redemption is a delusion as with Israel, who did not by their own endeavors deliver themselves from bondage. No! it was accomplished for them by Moses who was sent for that purpose. (Ex. 3:1-12). So Jesus was sent into the world for its redemption: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). With Israel redemption was with blood: "When I see the blood" (Ex. 12:13). So with the believing people of God "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2:10). These are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18). The very fact that we partake with others of the emblems at the celebration of the Lord's supper, is a testimony that we acknowledge our mutual redemption by the sacrifice of the Man, Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 10:1-10); that "God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). This is the basis of all true Christian fellowship-our mutual redemption in Christ.

The forgiving of sins is something that delights the heart of God as one, in penitence comes to him through faith in the sacrifice of Christ. This was foreshadowed in Eden when God made covering of skins for the first transgressors to clothe them (Gen. 3:21); and it is the constant testimony of the Word of God that "He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18). "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" - Psalm 32:1.

## **SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT**

Even though we have by faith a righteous standing with God (Rom. 5:1), yet there needs to be the sanctifying power of the spirit of truth, of righteousness, to fit us for the fellowship of saints. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7). This is redemption from error, prejudice, malice, and all the evil tendencies of the fallen human nature, into a new nature, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). There must be the renewing energy of the holy spirit present, for there can be no true Christian fellowship without it; "for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). This baptism not only opens up a whole new outlook on life, it opens up a whole new life: a life contrasted to death. It is doing righteousness as a consequence of having been begotten of God to a relationship with him through faith in Christ. And all who have been so begotten are drawn, as by a magnet, to Christ. This, in fulfillment of Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ... that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:21, 22). This was beautifully foreshadowed in the 12th chapter of Exodus: Israel under the shelter of the blood, and feeding on the roasted lamb.

This fellowship may be augmented by cooperation in the work of the ministry; in the spreading of the gospel of God's grace; of the call to sanctification; in deeds of mercy; in labors of love; in edifying the Church in spiritual understanding; and, necessarily, the sharing of the sufferings of Christ. In all this there is the bond of Christ which cements the saints together as one; and that bond is their mutual redemption and sanctification in Christ. - 1 Corinthians 1:30.

While there may be, and has been, a fellowship in a mutual ministry, such as "witnessing to the truth," yet this ministry can be entered into and controlled by some who are devoid of spiritual understanding. These may, and have, excluded from fellowship those who are not of their spirit of sectarianism. Or, like Diotrophes (3 John 9, 10), so love preeminence that they cast out anyone whom they think might be a rival; and put their own decisions as the authoritative voice in the church, or ecclesia.

## **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY**

In Ephesians 3:9, the Apostle writes as to the purpose of the ministry laid upon him: "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning hath been hid in God." And this fellowship is to be of those who have fellowship with God himself. "Called of God" to joint-heirship with his Son. Fellowship with God is a present reality; joint-heirship with Christ is the future inheritance.

At a time, perhaps at the close of the first century, when the Gnostics were claiming that Jesus was a mythical figure, John wrote his first epistle, testifying that Jesus had been *manifested* to the senses: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)" - 1 John 1:1, 2. What John had seen was more than the perfect man Jesus; he had seen eternal life manifested; and, moreover, was having fellowship with eternal life, with the Father and the Son. And the message he had heard of Jesus,

and desired to pass on to his readers, is that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." This is also Paul's testimony of God, that he "dwells in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man has seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). John's desire is that his readers "walk in the light as God is in the light, and have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing from all sin (1 John 1:7). Thus to have this greater fellowship, each must be having a personal oneness with the Father and the Son. This is the ultimate purpose of our receiving a knowledge of the truth and spiritual understanding.

In 1 John 2:29 and 1 John 3:7, John equates walking in the light with doing righteousness, thus having fellowship with God: "He that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as he [God] is righteous." And in 1 John 2:10, 4:8 and 4:16, dwelling in love is equated with dwelling in God; or, in other words, having fellowship with God.

How in contrast is this John who, in his younger days would call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village (Luke 9:54); or when he would forbid one the casting out of demons, "because he followeth not us." - Mark 9:38!

Brethren, let us abide in Christ; and revel in true Christian fellowship.

- *F. A. Essler*

## 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, June 3, at 11:00 a.m. in Agawam, Mass., 218 Shoemaker Lane.

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 1978-79.

The brethren whose terms of service will expire are: F. A. Essler, A. Gonczewski, L. Petran, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and J. B. Webster.

The brethren here named 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 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 April 10, 1978, such names will be published in the May June issue of the *Herald*, that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.

## **THE MEMORIAL SUPPER**

*"For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."*

According to our usual method of reckoning, the Memorial celebration this year should be held after sundown, Thursday, April 20. This, according to the Jewish calendar, is the 14th of Nisan, and the appropriate time for the brethren to meet "in remembrance" of the Lamb ho was slain.

*"This do in remembrance of Me"*

### **Entered Into Rest**

Leslie Ansell, England  
Grace Carr, England  
Desmond Colvin, Lake Charles, La.  
Mable Epple, Aurora, Ill.  
Norma Gans, Sunrise, Fla.  
Anthony Genco, Newport Beach, Cal.  
C. Gerald Hagan, Altamont, Kan.  
Annie Heyes, England  
Mary Kipps, England  
Minnie E. Lancelle, Geneva, Ill.  
Frances Parnham, England  
Alexander Schumacher, Dallas, Tex.-  
Katherine Stec, Chicago, Ill.  
Beatty Turton, England  
Ada Walding, England  
Katherine Wetzstein, Bronx,  
Martha Wheeler, Brooklyn, N.Y.