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The Coming World Potentate

"Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." - Psalm 72:11.

THE Bible may be likened to a mighty mountain range of truth rising above the plane of human seasonings, with high peaks which especially evidence Divine inspiration, such as its magnificent introductory chapter -- a record of events to which no human being was witness; or certain Psalms, as the 46th (Psa. 45), so descriptive of events in our day and those to be in the near future; or the 45th, that wonderful, royal marriage hymn in which both the King's Son and Daughter are so graphically described. Again, the awesome prophetic 22nd Psalm (Psa. 22) is one of these high peaks, opening as it does with the dreadful cry of the Sufferer of a thousand years later, continuing through his agony on the cross to the abrupt change of tone between verses 21 and 22 (Psa. 22:21-22), significant of the silence of the grave, and concluding with the triumphal resurrection paean.

And what can be said of that most remarkable key to the Bible's last book, the 17th chapter of Revelation? These and many like portions are indeed "God-inbreathed" (Gk. *Theopneustos* - 2 Tim. 3:16) words, a reservoir of sublime truth, refreshing and stimulating -- particularly so in our day when the position of the Bible as sacred, infallible, and authoritative is constantly assaulted by modern scientific theories, anthropology, and comparative religion studies.

Let us consider in detail one such "mountain peak" of divinely revealed truth, the majestic second Psalm which celebrates the dignity, power, and ultimate triumph of an Anointed One; the world-dominion of a king who is a son of David and a Son of God. His is a universal Kingdom; the whole earth is his inheritance; all nations are subject to him, and under his sway righteousness and peace everywhere prevail. It is a Kingdom in permanent form and without end. Jehovah has found One who can be in the highest sense his King and his Priest; and this one, by whom he acts in all his works, both of judgment and of blessing, is thus distinguished from and lifted up above all his predecessors.

The occurrences of his time which determined the mood of the Psalmist and called forth these glorious words, are no longer clear to us. From these occurrences he is transported in thought into the end of the age, into the very midst of those commotion among the nations which eventuate in their becoming the "Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15). Hence this Psalm is of the nature of a prophecy which awaits its final accomplishment. It had a partial fulfillment, no doubt, in the banding together of Herod and Pontius Pilate against Christ, and was thus applied by some in the early Church (Acts 4:25, 27), but this was not the complete or final fulfillment which is yet to take place.

The Psalm divides naturally into four parts, of three verses each. In the first, Psa. 2:1-3, the presumptuous rebellion of the princes of the earth is mentioned. In the second, Psa. 2:4-6, Jehovah expresses his contempt for the rebels, and announces his purpose to overthrow them by the agency of his Anointed One. In the third, Psa. 2:7-9, the Anointed One declares his office, and his resolve to carry out Jehovah's will, and execute vengeance. In the fourth, Psa. 2:10-12, a practical and solemn warning and admonition is given to the princes and people of the earth. In this order, and using Darby's translation, let us consider the prophecy in detail.

THE MADNESS OF NATIONS

Psa. 2:1-3. "Why are the nations in tumultuous agitation, and why do the peoples meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the princes plot together, against Jehovah and against his Anointed: Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

The Psalm opens abruptly; it is an utterance of amazement, breaking from the lips of one who looks out upon the nations and generations of men. He discerns in his widespread view a rebellion against God, which in the vast ignorant masses of the world is half unconscious, but in their leaders finds utterance, assumes shape and formula. It is Jehovah himself who is assailed in the person of the King whom he has set on the throne. How can they succeed who set themselves against the Lord and against his Christ? Will men "fight against God?" Such an enterprise cannot but fail. In its very nature it is a "vain thing."

Positive interpretation of these strange words in their application to our day would be premature. We must await the future for full understanding of such expressions as "these shall make war with the Lamb" (Rev. 17:14). But as we consider the present state of world affairs, we may discern in the trend of human events a glimmer as to their ultimate direction, and, consequently, the significance of the prophecy.

The "shaking of nations" which commenced in 1914, has progressively increased and will continue to that terrible climax when, but for the grace of God, "no flesh should be saved" (Matt. 24:22). By all Scriptural indications we stand at the threshold of the Kingdom of God. "It is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31). Yes, "the morning cometh," but, "*a night* also" (Isa. 21:12). The "morning" is as yet undiscerned by the nations, but there is a gradual apprehension of a steadily increasing "night" descending on all the earth.

Two prostrating global wars have upset the economic and social equilibrium of nations. The resulting wave of discontent and disillusion sweeping all before it, has resulted in the rise of atheistic totalitarianism now dominating half the world and threatening to engulf it all. Peoples of all races and colors are in a state of terrible ferment in their search for political autonomy and economic freedom. Further, the decline of real faith in supernaturalistic religion, and the ad-

ditional corruption of spirit resulting from the crass materialism so rampant, have together gendered attitudes of mind in the human race causing grave concern to serious thinkers.

As "men's hearts fail them for fear" in apprehension of the things coming upon them, from all sides is heard the cry that the present "distress of nations" must be resolved by a new order, a worldwide collaboration in human affairs. Mankind now recognize that their safety and very existence necessitate a unity independent of race, creed, color, or language. Active search for practical means of attaining such a world order to embrace all nations and assure their well-being is a marked sign of these latter days.

With this hope, every Christian must be in sympathy, for not only the creation, but "we ourselves groan within ourselves" in view of the suffering throughout the earth. We cannot, however, ignore the inspired record which witnesses that all human efforts to establish a just and equitable arrangement of society are foredoomed to failure. The "desire of all nations" will not be brought about by human ability. Every such hope, commendable as it may be, is a "vain thing."

There can be no peace apart from the Prince of Peace. There can be no world order apart from the World King. Man must learn the lessons of his own insufficiency and utter dependence upon his Creator. Such has been God's purpose in the permission of evil. Our present generation is but reaping the consequences of six thousand years of sowing contrary to the law of God. This law requires (as requisite for well-being, happiness, and prosperity) first, love supreme for the Creator, and second, love for one's fellowmen. Violation of this law, whether as individuals, as nations, or as a world, is sin. And the wages of sin is death, for "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). The time has approached for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom upon earth and all things that can be "shaken" [that will not stand up under the present testing by "fire"] will be removed (Heb. 12:26, 27).

"BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

As we return to the Psalm, the scene abruptly changes - Psa. 2:4-6. "He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then will he speak to them in his anger, and in his fierce displeasure will he terrify them: And I have anointed my King upon Zion, the hill of my holiness."

The scene of the first act of this drama is laid on earth; the scene of the second is laid in heaven. The transition here is a sublime one, from the noise and agitation of earth to the safety and tranquility of heaven. As we pass onward we pass upward. Watching all the turmoil and rebellion below, and calmly surveying the nations as they rage, there sits the One against whose rule this unwitting revolt is made. He reposes far above them and beyond their reach, in undisturbed majesty.

The Psalmist sees the utter futility of revolt against God; he discerns the strength of the Almighty; the pillars of the eternal throne are before his soul; he can find no other words to express the vanity of man's revolt than to say, "The Lord shall laugh." There is something very awful in the representation here given of God. First, as if in calm contempt, "He laughs," then there is a bitter derision which in its effect brings their counsels to naught, and baffles their purposes "He mocks them"; "then," at last, with the thunder of his word, He discomfits them. "Who thought," says Luther, "when Christ suffered and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" Beneath this bold expression there is hidden a profound truth, namely, that to all superior beings, and above all to God himself, there is something in sin not only odious, but absurd; something which cannot possibly escape the contempt of higher, much less of the highest intelligence.

It may be asked, Why should the attempt of struggling humanity to set up a world order be thus so displeasing to the Almighty? Is not such an arrangement highly desirable and justifying men's greatest efforts? Is not the present global turmoil a natural prelude to a global order? Should not such an ambitious undertaking for the benefit of all receive instead the bounteous blessing of a benevolent Creator?

At first thought it would seem indeed that such a proposed happy arrangement would be prospered by a loving God to the blessing of the nations. But as we look deeper into the provisions of the Lord for the ultimate and eternal welfare of all people, we discern that this humanly-instituted arrangement would actually be a direct expression of resistance to God's will. For though a beneficent worldwide government is the logical solution to the problems of mankind, no strength or wisdom of man can possibly effect such a solution. Rather, the inherited burden of individual sin, plus the hatreds and prejudices engendered by the conflicts of nations, have raised insuperable obstacles to such a Utopian scheme, and this truth is recognized by practical men. But whether man realizes this truth or not as regards his helplessness, God does, and has wisely provided his own arrangement for the welfare of mankind. Consequently, he "who ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:32), and guides the course of human history, as once to the literal sea, so now to the raging "sea" of humanity, says, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further" (Job 38:8-11; see also Luke 21:25; Ps. 104:5-9; Jer. 5:22). "Vain" will be any attempts to "break the bonds and cast away the cords" of restriction set up by divine omniscience as limits to the unhindered exercise of human ingenuity. To permit man to go further in his social experiments would be to endanger his very existence. "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:22).

So the Lord speaks, and here in the sixth verse (Psa. 2:6) we have God's own answer to those that oppose him: "I [the pronoun is emphatic in the Hebrew], the King of heaven and earth, have set my own King, my Son and my Vicegerent, on the throne. His, and his alone, shall be earth's world dominion, and he who dares to attempt accomplishing this through human ability is setting himself against me and my unalterable purpose. I have constituted my King upon Zion, my holy hill, and he, and none other, shall work my sovereign will, for he alone is worthy."

In the light of the above expression of the divine counsel, verse five of this Psalm, which speaks of an outpouring of wrath, can be linked with the judgments of Revelation 16 which terminate at Armageddon. And what a wealth of other Scriptures comes to mind! "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought . . . Say ye not, A confederacy." "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his Anointed." "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect." "The heathen raged, the Kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, and the earth melted." "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come" (Isa. 8:9-12; 1 Sam. 2:10; Psa. 33:10; Psa. 46:6; Rev. 11:18; Zeph. 3:8, 9; Isa. 2:11, 12, 19).

"O EARTH, RECEIVE THY KING"

And now with inimitable beauty the Messiah himself appears, and speaks, witnessing to his sonship and kingship, and to the constitution -- the grand charter of rights -- under which this fallen world is given to him as his empire.

Psa. 2:7-9. "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; I this day have begotten thee [brought thee forth - Young]. Ask of Me, and I will give thee nations for an inheritance, and for thy possession the ends of the earth: Thou shalt break [shepherd -Rotherham] them with a sceptre of iron, as a potter's vessel thou shalt dash them to pieces."

No word of transition, no formula of introduction, marks this sudden passage from the words of Jehovah to those of his Christ. Just as Jehovah in opposition to the rebels acknowledges the King upon Zion, so in opposition to the same rebels the King upon Zion appeals to God. He pronounces the Father's counsel concerning himself, a royal decree which like that of the Medes and Persians is irrevocable. He reigns not by the will of man, but by the grace of God; not by right only as the Son of Jehovah, but by covenant and promise likewise. (Note the force of Hebrews 5:5.) The plain thought of the decree is: "This day, by anointing thee as King on my hill of Zion, I have recognized thee as my Son. This enthroning is my public and solemn recognition of this relation" -- a relation never brought to the knowledge of created minds till this momentous inauguration as King. So Paul understood this verse, for he finds it fulfilled in Christ's resurrection and subsequent ascension and enthronement in heaven. (See Acts 13:33; Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:4.)

Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore dear to him; his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and because the Father loveth the Son, he hath given all things into his hand (John 3:35; John 5:20). Being a Son, he is Heir of all things, and since God has said unto him, "Thou art my Son," it becomes each individual to say to him, "Thou art my Lord, my Sovereign." And since the nations are given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, there awaits a great unveiling of the glory of earth's rightful King the proclamation on earth of the decree of Heaven. This we believe will be accomplished at the time of the deliverance of natural Israel from "Jacob's Trouble," in a miraculous demonstration of divine power; the first *visible* evidence to an astounded world of the new heavenly arrangement for earth. Then shall every knee begin to bow to him (Phil. 2:9-11), and every voice acknowledge his right to lordship. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. 110:3). Then shall be revealed God's wonderful provision for the eternal welfare of the suffering creation; his answer to their groanings and prayers -- and this, when evidently faith in a divine helper will be at its lowest ebb. Just when man will realize his necessity the most, when the consciousness of his own weakness will be well-nigh overwhelming, yea, when he shall cry out in fear and the despair of his soul, God shall answer by the revelation of his chosen King, who with his associated saints, shall commence the reign of righteousness which will more than satisfy the needs of mankind. But, there must first come divine judgment upon the institutions of man through this same righteous King, for "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).

"THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR YE HIM"

Finally, the Psalmist, who has heard the words of Jehovah and the words of his Anointed, seeks by wise counsel to dissuade the rebels from their mad enterprise - Psa. 2:10-12: *"And now, O kings, be ye wise, be admonished, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, though his anger burn but a little. Blessed are all who have their trust in him."*

Thus closes this sublime and solemnly impressive Psalm. It will be observed that these last three verses of the Psalm correspond to the first three. The revolt against the Lord and his Anointed finds its parallel in the injunction to serve the Lord and to kiss the Son, for there can be no resisting his authority. For of him Moses truly prophesied, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he

shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22, 23). Therefore, "kiss the Son," do homage to the King, O ye mighty ones of earth "lest he be angry and ye perish in the way." Be quick to obey, for his anger may easily be kindled. In his Kingdom nothing shall be permitted to hurt or destroy, and the slightest opposition to his authority shall be summarily dealt with. But trust him, obey him, confide in him, and he shall bless you with a "feast of fat things," for he and those with him are appointed to "bless all the families of the earth." For "he shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.... Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.... His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:6-17).

What a glorious message does this. second Psalm hold forth! Oh that men could see within its beautiful and impressive words the lesson of submission to the divinely decreed arrangement! What a thrill of hope and joy would surge through the trouble wracked earth! Praise God that men will yet see, and this we believe, in the not far distant future. *"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever: And let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen"* (Ps. 72:18, 19).

- W. J. Siekman

Feasting With Jesus

"The mountains shall drop sweet [new] wine." - Amos 9:13.

ONE of the earliest recorded events in our Lord's ministry occurred in Cana of Galilee, where he and his disciples attended the marriage feast recorded in John 2:1-11.

Jesus did not refuse to contribute to the happiness of others. Nor did he separate himself from the mainstream of life, as some do in the name of religion. He was aware of the needs and feelings of those around him, and he dealt with these without sacrificing his God-inspired principles. Our Master enjoyed being with people, especially the common folk, and he knew of their hopes, desires, strengths, and weaknesses.

At this marriage celebration, Jesus was sympathetic with the predicament of the host. Although his miracle was illustrative of greater spiritual truths, it also exemplified Jesus' temporal concern for his friends and his power to save them from embarrassment and disappointment.

Our Lord's performance of this first miracle showed how he is able to enter into our troubles, suffices in every difficulty, and enriches every experience. Just as at Cana, he can turn any seeming disaster into a blessing unexpected. Jesus truly converts our liabilities into assets if we invite him to do so. We thus learn to trust him and rely upon him completely for our every need.

The unselfishness of Jesus was an outstanding feature of his earthly ministry. Tempted to appease his own hunger on another occasion, he refused to turn the stones of the wilderness into bread.

But in Cana, he exercised power for the sake of others. He relieved the perplexity and sorrow of a humble wedding feast by turning water into wine.

The fact that Jesus attended this wedding evidences his sanction and honoring of the marriage relationship. Marriage is a happy and joyous occasion when our Lord is invited to be present and assist. Without his aid, however, it can, and frequently does, become a disaster.

It is also significant that Jesus' disciples were present. They had become, in effect, part of his family. They had placed themselves in his care, and were included with him in the invitation.

We who follow Christ also feast with him. He cares for us and provides more than we expect. By ourselves, we have nothing; but with our Lord, we have everything needed.

THE QUIET WONDER

The miracle was Jesus' first. How unlike what might have been expected! How unostentatious! How calm and peaceful! The method is beyond our understanding. It was not done with fanfare. It took place in an obscure village, an ordinary wedding, a humble home, in the presence of some faithful, peasant guests. No splendid amphitheater or regal audience witnessed Christ's manifestation of power.

How apt the Scripture: "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). Our Lord's life on earth was the prime illustration of this truth. As Isaiah wrote so graphically centuries before, Jesus grew up as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. He had no form or comeliness of the kind worldly men admire. To most, there was no beauty that they should desire him. - Isaiah 53:2.

Another important point in our lesson is the fact that Jesus remained in the background. He did not evidence to the majority of those present that he was performing a marvelous work. "Only the servants knew." It were as though he never entered the room where the guests were assembled.

And so with us; we should not attract attention to ourselves, but stay behind the scenes as much as possible. It is the Lord who works in and through us. He operates among his people without any pealing trumpets or clanging cymbals. Each member of Christ's Body does contribute his share but is able to do so only because of the inward working of the mighty power of God. It is this same power of God that sanctifies and qualifies us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is an ancient story of Phidias, the sculptor, and the statue of the god which he had carved. When finished, he chiseled his name on the bottom, thereby incurring the wrath of many. They objected that the statue could not be worshipped as a god, nor considered sacred, while it bore the sculptor's name. It was even seriously considered that Phidias should be stoned to death because he had so desecrated the statue. How dare he put his own name on the image of a god?

Is it possible that we likewise occasionally try to inscribe our diminutive names upon any work which we have done for God, so that we may be remembered? God forbid! Instead, we had best chastise ourselves for any such repugnant thought to claim the credit for that which God enables us to do.

FURTHER LESSONS

There is another point in this miracle we should note. As suggested earlier, it concerns a symbolic message. As in almost all of Jesus' signs and miracles, it combines the characteristics of a work of mercy and a prophecy. So had Christ advanced the Mosaic law into the perfect law of liberty; the baptism of John into the baptism of the holy spirit; sorrow and sighing into hope and blessing.

Let us consider the difference between the wine that was first served and that provided by Jesus. How could the guests, after having drunk freely of the inferior wine, recognize the latter supply as being superior? It has been suggested by some that the wine Jesus provided had no fermentation, no bacteria. Whether this is so or not, we do know that it differed in some way from the first. When the guests drank it, they recognized a difference.

So, figuratively, mankind for centuries has been drinking the wine of false doctrines and practices. Probably we too, at times, have imbibed of these. But once having tasted the Lord's pure wine (his truth and righteousness), we also discovered the difference. We recognized the superiority of this miraculous wine.

Likewise, when God's kingdom is fully established upon the earth, the world will be shocked to discover the true nature of what they had been partaking-error, ignorance, and superstition. They will then be able to evaluate what they had formerly believed and practiced and appreciate the benefits of divine truth and righteousness. At that time, mankind will come to a realization that this vastly greater miracle of the "new wine is being performed for their eternal benefit.

Finally, the marriage which Christ adorned and beautified in Cana also foreshadows the mystical union between himself and his Church; we being likened to the six waterpots, in this present life having the "treasure of truth in earthen vessels." The water (our present limited measure of truth), he will miraculously change into wine (the rich, full measure of truth), illustrating the wondrous transformation 'of our justified lives by the gift of a new spirit nature, and the kingdom joys of dispensing perfect refreshment, to follow (Joel 3:17, 18; Isaiah 25:26-29). Jesus promised his prospective Bride that he would drink of "new wine with her in his Father's kingdom." - Matthew 26:29.

This is our hope, brethren. Let us lay firm hold upon it. Do not let it slip away-"give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard." - Hebrews 2:1.

- T. Thomassen

The Typical Significance of Pentecost*

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, ... " - Acts 2:1.

DURING the space of forty days following his resurrection our Lord Jesus showed himself alive to his disciples by many infallible proofs, speaking with them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. At length the time came for him to take his last leave of them and ascend to the Father. Just before doing so, he gave them final instructions. They were to return from Olivet to Jerusalem, there to remain until they had received the Promise of the Father. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Instead of perplexing themselves with questions as to when the Kingdom was to be restored to Israel, they were to expect an outpouring of the holy spirit which would fit them for the ministry -- that ministry in which angels would fain engage -- of carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth. "Ye shall receive power, when the holy spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

*For many of the thoughts and suggestions presented in this article, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to David Baron. His able work, "Types, Psalms and Prophecies," has been at our elbow throughout its preparation.

They had not long to wait. When ten days had passed; as soon as the day of Pentecost had fully come, the promise of the Father was fulfilled. (Acts 1:1-12; John 15:26; John 14:17, 26; Acts 2:1).

ISRAEL'S SEVEN FEASTS

The Feast of Pentecost was one of the seven "feasts" or "appointed seasons" or "holy convocations" of Israel, all of which occurred in the first seven months of their ecclesiastical year (Lev. 23:4, margin). First came the Feast of Passover, on Nisan 14. Next came the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted seven days. On the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 16, the Feast of Omer, or presentation to Jehovah of the Sheaf of Firstfruits, took place. Fifty days thereafter came Pentecost, the very word "pentecost" meaning fifty. The remaining three festivals were all appointed for the seventh month, and were, respectively, those of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles.

THE FEAST OF PASSOVER

Not only are the details of the ceremonies observed at these seven holy convocations full of meaning, but the order in which they took place is significant, revealing the sequence in which the various stages of God's great plan of redemption were to unfold themselves. Readers of this journal are well aware that the passover lamb was a type of our Lord Jesus. Indeed, in our "Memorial" celebration, we are reminded of this by the Apostle: "Christ [Jesus] our Passover [Lamb] is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

We see, too, how this first feast stands related to the second as cause to effect, for if the paschal lamb sets forth the anointed Jesus as our Passover Lamb slain for us, in order to bring us pardon, peace, and new life, the feast of unleavened bread was designed to prefigure the holiness of that new life. From the moment the paschal lamb was slain, the Jew had to put away all leaven (type of sin) from his dwelling, and we read: "Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (Ex. 12:15). So it is in the spiritual reality which the type prefigures. It is Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away our sins and brings us pardon and reconciliation; but associated with this truth is another: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19); or, as the Apostle, with the Old Testament type in mind, expresses it, "Christ [Jesus] our Passover [Lamb] is sacrificed for us, therefore [or, "so that"] we should keep the feast" -- the feast, namely, of unleavened bread, the bread of sincerity and truth.

THE SHEAF OF FIRSTFRUITS

In the feast of Omer, or the presentation of the first sheaf of ripe barley to God, there is no doubt Israel was taught to acknowledge God's power and bountifulness, and thus by a representative "firstfruits" to consecrate to him the whole harvest. All the Jewish festivals were in connection with the natural seasons of the year; with the harvests which God gave unto his people; with the outward blessings with which he surrounded them. But here too the earthly and visible is the symbol of greater and deeper spiritual realities. There is another harvest field for the first ripe fruit of which the Lord of the harvest (Jehovah himself) had long been waiting; a harvest of which Christ Jesus was the firstfruits. "Now is Christ [Jesus] risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). It was on the third day after the Lamb of God was

slain (after the corn of wheat which was not content to abide alone, but fell into the ground and died, that it might produce much fruit, John 12:24), that he arose again, and stood forth as the Branch of Jehovah for beauty and glory, and as the fruit of the earth for excellency and for comeliness to his redeemed people (Isa. 4:2, margin). In him we see a glorious new federal Head of our race, coming forth out of the earth, a Sheaf waved from the earth unto' God. Furthermore, when after his resurrection he ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God (John 20:17), it was not only to be accepted for us (Lev. 23:11); to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24); but also, as the pledge and earnest of the harvest to follow -- of the resurrection to life eternal of the whole family of the redeemed of earth.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

But before this great harvest of earth's redeemed ones should be reaped, another "firstfruits" was to be presented. Thus St. James writes: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). In the glorious vision, St. John identifies these "firstfruits" as "an hundred forty and four thousand" standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, "having his [the Lamb's] Father's name written in their foreheads." "These," writes St. John (Rev. 14:1-5), "were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

To this gracious feature of our Father's plans and purposes the Feast of Pentecost pointed.

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenths parts of an ephah; they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, for firstfruits unto Jehovah" (Lev. 23:15-18, A. R. V.).

In the light of the two New Testament Scriptures just quoted (James 1:18 and Rev. 14:5) this second "firstfruits" is seen to be full of typical and prophetic significance. The preparation and presentation of the loaves are doubtless emblematic of the Church, and set forth that part of God's Plan which has been in process during this Gospel Age, *and which is now, we believe, about to be consummated*. The true Corn of Wheat having fallen into the ground and died, it brought forth much fruit, and the result, as set forth in this type is bread -- two loaves which are waved and presented to Jehovah -- for not only is our Lord Jesus the true meal-offering in whom the Father ever finds delight, and who exhibited in the earth the habits and ways of heaven, but his people, his Ecclesia, also are constituted a new meal-offering unto God, that in them, too, traits of heavenly character might be found, and that so, the earth, sown with seed from the harvest field of spiritual Israel, might produce an abundant crop, to our Lord's and the Father's glory.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH"

Two or three significant points in connection with this "new meal-offering" as a figure of the Church, call for our reverent notice. First, in contrast to the Omer, or Sheaf of Firstfruits, presented on the 16th of Nisan, the "Bikkurim" (as this second firstfruit is called) consisted of *two* loaves.

Of the *duplicate character* of the emblems two explanations are worthy of special notice. One is that suggested by Brother Russell, as follows: "The two loaves . . . represented the two classes of the consecrated-the overcoming 'little flock,' and the 'great company' of the consecrated servants

of God who do not make the 'high calling,' theirs by overcoming the world as they might and should do" (*Reprints*, R1289, R2271, R5191). The other explanation, presented by David Baron, is that which interprets the type as intended to set forth the two formerly irreconcilable elements - Jew and Gentile - made one in Christ.

Both of these explanations appeal to us as having merit. It would be interesting to learn if the author of either was acquainted with the writings of the other or whether their respective conclusions were reached without each having the benefit of an exchange and consideration of each other's views. As to this we have no information. However, while we may not know with certainty just why the loaves were two in number, we may profit from the lessons to be found in both of the interpretations suggested. Certain it is that we need Brother Russell's reminder that in the "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, only overcomers will be found, and if we frequently pause to meditate on this exhortation, it will stimulate and energize us to "gird up the loins of our mind," to "run with patience the race set before us," to give diligence to "make our calling and election sure" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 1:13; Heb. 12:1; 2 Pet. 1:10).

IN CHRIST THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GENTILE

The other interpretation, too, is not without its valuable lessons, expounding, as it does, the truth so long kept hidden. For this secret of God, which could not have been known apart from revelation, namely that the Gentiles should be partakers of the same promise in Christ, with the Jews -- made "fellow-heirs and of the same Body" -- was not made known in other ages and generations unto the sons of men, as in the New Testament it is revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the spirit (Eph. 3:5, 6). As a matter of fact, until Christ broke down the middle wall of partition, and consecrated a new and living way for both Jew and Gentile through the veil of his rent flesh, no Gentile, even if he was circumcised, and became a proselyte, and surpassed the most pious in Israel in piety and learning, was ever received on terms of absolute equality, and regarded as altogether one with the congregation of Israel. For two thousand years the knowledge of God and the ordinances, of true religion were confined exclusively to the land of Israel. The nations of the earth, with few exceptions, having rejected the opportunities which had been granted to them, were left to reap the consequences of their own apostasy, and given over to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:18-32). God's mercies in the meantime were richly lavished on the Jews; they were the chosen depositories of these mercies -- the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, all pertained to them (Amos 3:2; Rom. 9:4).

But with the present dispensation, the "spirit dispensation" as the Gospel Age is rightly called, a new order of things commenced. In Christ, that is to say, in the Christ Company, the anointed company of consecrated believers in Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one body. As the Apostle elsewhere declares: "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; . . . and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:14-18).

As the two Pentecostal loaves combined to make up one offering and were waved *as one* in the presence of God, so the believing Jew and the believing Gentile, washed in the same precious blood, sanctified and indwelt by the same spirit which teaches both alike to cry, "Abba, Father," and presented by the one great High Priest, are made equally acceptable, and are consecrated as one offering to the service of God.

Writing on the same truth in connection with the exposition of Rom. 11:15, 16, Brother Russell has himself observed: "Oh, the rich depths of God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover his dealings except as he is pleased to reveal his plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by his spirit. Who knew this gracious plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could be its author. A Jew would never have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the chief blessings of the promise. A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored graft. No, the plan is clearly of God ... to him be the glory forever" (*Reprints*, R5533).

"THEY SHALL BE BAKED WITH LEAVEN"

The second peculiarity we wish to notice in connection with the presentation of the loaves at Pentecost is that expressed in the words, "They shall be baked with leaven." This is remarkable, especially in the light of the express injunction given to Israel to exclude leaven from their sacrifices (Ex. 34:25), but it only supplies us with another instance of the minuteness with which these types are regulated, because of their rich symbolic significance.

Leaven, as we have already observed, signifies sin, or corruption. From every sacrifice, therefore, which set forth the perfect Servant of Jehovah, the true Lamb of God, leaven was rigidly excluded. Thus with the Omer, or Sheaf offered on the 16th of Nisan, which represented Christ Jesus in resurrection, the true firstfruits and meal offering, there was no leaven, for nothing even suggestive of corruption could be associated with the only sinless One, in whom was no guile, or deceit. But it is otherwise with his people. The Church is indeed "elect through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." We are, as consecrated believers, possessed of a new life, are now washed and sanctified and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God, and are "clean every whit" in his sight. Yet well aware are we that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," and the more we seek by his grace to follow him wholly, and in the power of his spirit to keep our hearts pure and our hands clean, the more conscious we become of our daily need of cleansing (1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11; John 13:10; 1 John 1:8).

For the same reason also there is no sin offering connected with the Sheaf which prefigured our Lord Jesus (Nisan 16); but with the two loaves there is the express command that apart from the other accompanying offerings there should be one he-goat for a sin offering (Lev. 23:19, 20), which again teaches us that the Church, though called and qualified by the power of the holy spirit to serve, does, nevertheless, need at every moment of its service, the protection of the "precious blood," even of that one sacrifice in which the virtue and efficacy of all the offerings here enumerated, were combined, and under the shelter of which, the Church, presented as the new meal offering in the earth, abides. In the one sacrifice of the Cross, the Savior provided for his Church a fragrance and acceptableness, which it could never find in its own leavened self.

That which is typified by the Feast of Pentecost, looked at from one aspect, is spread over the whole of this Gospel Age, though a striking fulfillment took place at the inauguration of the Christian dispensation fifty days after our Lord's resurrection, when the Pentecostal season for that year "was fully come;" But perhaps that which is specially set forth by the actual presentation and waving of the loaves is yet to be fulfilled at the close of this dispensation, when all the firstfruits from among men being gathered, and the number of the elect being completed, Christ Jesus shall present to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26, 27); but even then it will be so, not because he found her so, or

because of her absolute purity while on earth, but because, having first bought her with his own precious blood, he sanctified and cleansed her with the washing of water by the Word, and made her perfect in the beauty and comeliness which he did put upon her (Eph. 5:26; Isa. 61:3).

"THE AFTER-FRUITS"

There is another feature of this "Feast of Pentecost" too important to escape mention even in so brief a space as remains to us. It is this Just as the Omer presented on the morrow after the Passover; setting forth Christ Jesus as "the firstfruits of them that slept," was a pledge and earnest of the two loaves presented on Pentecost, which prefigured the Church in its elective character as the firstfruits from among men, so also the second firstfruits are themselves a prophecy and pledge of the fuller harvest yet to be gathered in the coming Age, of which in the Scriptures, all God's holy Prophets have spoken since the world began (Acts 3:19). The blessing which came to the world at the first advent of our Redeemer, wonderful though it was, has thus far been only partial in degree and extent.

Indeed, unbelieving men sometimes taunt us with the little that the Gospel has accomplished, and maintain that Christianity has been a failure, and truly if, as is supposed by some, God had purposed the conversion of the world during this Gospel Age, it must be admitted that his plans have thus far been frustrated. For when we contemplate the condition of the world after more than nineteen centuries of Gospel witnessing, what do we see? How far are we from seeing a believing world! Consider how small a proportion of the human race are even professedly believers in Jesus. And of these who mentally assent to the truth as it is in Jesus, how few are governed by it!

But a better acquaintance with our Father's Word reveals the fact that the conversion of the world in the present Age was not expected of the Church. Indeed the very fact that the world has not yet been converted, far from confirming the unbeliever's view that God's plans have failed, is merely a convincing proof to the consecrated child of God that God has not even attempted the world's conversion yet. The Scriptures declare that all God's purposes shall be accomplished, that his Word shall not return unto him void, but shall prosper in the thing whereunto he sends it (Isa. 55:11). And as we look into the Scriptures and then around us at the condition of the world in which we live, we see that the Gospel has accomplished just that which God said it would accomplish in this Age now closing. First, a remnant according to the election of grace was to be saved out of Israel (Isa. 10:22; Rom. 9:27; 11:5). And the Gentiles, we read, God hath visited, to take out of them a people for his name (Acts 15:14). These two, reconciled in one body unto God, through the Cross of Christ, were to unitedly form his Ecclesia, his Church, the Bride or Body of Christ, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. And as the Scriptures foretold, so it is: Israel as a nation still rejects Christ, but have there not been thousands who received him and became sons of God thereby? The other nations of the earth, the Gentiles, still, for the most part sit in darkness, and under the shadow of death, but wherever the Gospel has been preached as a witness, some have heard the call, and have joined the company of *taken out* ones, "called out" ones, as the very word "ecclesia" means.

But an election is never an end in itself; it is rather a means and preparation for some vastly larger accomplishment. And the very fact that the Church is spoken of as a kind of "*first-fruits*" implies "*after-fruits*." The Gospel of the Kingdom must first be preached as a witness unto all nations, for the gathering in of the first ripe ears, to constitute a glorious firstfruits, and then:

"After this I will return,
And I will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen
And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up;
That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the Gentiles upon whom my Name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:16-18).

REVIEW

Let us now review the ground covered foregoing. First, we noted that Israel had seven "feasts" or "appointed seasons" or "holy convocations," three of them occurring in the month Nisan, the first month of their ecclesiastical year, the fourth, that of Pentecost, sometimes called the "Feast of Conclusion," came in the third month, and marked the conclusion of the Passover Season. The remaining three feasts did not take place until later, all three occurring in the seventh month.

The four we have considered have received their fulfillment already, in this Gospel Age; Christ our Passover, to whom the paschal lamb had so long pointed, has already been slain for us; the Omer Sheaf, which was both a type and a prophecy, that he should be the first that should rise from the dead (Acts 26:23), received its glorious fulfillment when on the third day he rose again, and became the firstfruits of them that slept; and with the day of Pentecost there commenced the gathering out of the firstfruits from among men of all nations, who by one spirit are formed into one new body in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, and who, in the power of a new life, are called into fellowship with God, and to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

TIME FEATURES

It is also interesting to observe that insofar as this series of prophetic types has run its course, not only do type and antitype answer to one another in a most striking manner and in a variety of ways which preclude the possibility of their fulfillment being brought about by anything but design, but they also synchronize in point of time. Was it mere chance that when the hour was at last come for the Lamb of God to be offered for the sin of the world that it should have fallen on the Jewish Passover? And when he whom the pains of death could not hold was raised from the grave, victorious over death, to be the beginning of a new, spiritual harvest unto God from among men, was it a mere coincidence that it should have been at the time that the priests and leaders of Israel were busying themselves in preparing and presenting in their Temple the Omer of Firstfruits?

And again, was it mere chance that it was not until the day of Pentecost was fully come (Acts 2:1) that there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind to inaugurate the new dispensation and the spirit of God was poured out in such abundance that about three thousand souls were added to the company of apostles and disciples to form a new meal. offering unto Jehovah, a kind of firstfruits of his creatures? The Christian cannot but perceive in all this not only the prophetic character of Israel's types and ceremonies, and therefore that they could not have been designed by man, but must have originated in the mind of God; the Christian cannot but perceive also, that Christ is all, and that the very election and call of Israel was typical, and that all their divinely ordained ritual and services had Christ and the great redemption which he was to accomplish, for their center and goal.

CONCLUSION

Finally, brethren, let us not conclude our meditation without making a very personal and practical application of the lesson of Pentecost. When the Sheaf of Barley representing our Lord Jesus, was waved before the altar by the officiating priest, it was composed of the very finest ears they could find. So also, at the Feast of Pentecost, fifty days later, the wheat harvest having now been gathered in, the two loaves which were waved before the altar were made of the new flour which, in turn, had come from the very finest of the wheat. That is to say, such should have been the case. But in the case of natural Israel the Prophet Malachi reminds us that instead of coming to the Lord with their best, they were inclined to perform the letter of the law and to avoid its spirit; apparently they were ready to bring sacrifices and offerings, but the selfishness of their hearts and their lack of true appreciation of the Lord led them to proffer him the weak and the lame and the poor, while they kept the better for their own use. Through the Prophet Malachi the Lord urged them that they test him, prove him, and see whether or not he would grant them great blessings if they would but enter into the spirit of their consecration and offer unto the Lord the best of what they possessed.

We, as spiritual Israelites, may gain a profitable lesson from these sharp criticisms of natural Israel. How is it with us? We have vowed unto the Lord the firstfruits, the very best, the very finest, the most valuable of all that we have and all that we are -- of time, influence, talents, money, all. To what extent are we rendering unto the Lord our offerings and sacrifices in harmony with this our covenant? It will not be long before our trials will be over, but until that little while is past, we are in the trial time, and it is proving us either worthy or unworthy of the glorious favor which we seek -- the chief blessing, joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer. If we really appreciate this favor, we shall seek to what extent there are yet other opportunities of spending and being spent in his service. Of natural Israel the Lord required a tenth -- a tithe. Of spiritual Israelites he makes no specific requirement, but leaves it to us each, that by the degree of our sacrifices, according to our abilities, we may demonstrate the measure of our love.

The Lord's words to natural Israel come to us spiritual Israelites with still greater force: "Prove me now herewith," saith the Lord. If any feel themselves poor, spiritually, if any feel that they are spiritually lean, that they are not enjoying such fellowship with the Lord as they would desire, that they are unable to draw as closely to him as they would like, to all such the Lord says: Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, fulfill your vow of consecration and thus prove me now herewith, and see if I will not do my part; I will do for you exceeding abundantly above all that you have asked or thought. Those who accept the Lord's proposition heartily, without reservations, find their spiritual leanness departing, their joy of heart increasing more and more.

Thus may it be with each one of us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

- P. L. Read

"Ah, believe me, when the Day breaks, and we know as we are known,
In the sunlight of the glory that surrounds our Father's Throne,
He will tell us how He led us: we shall see the pathway clear,
The way we trod that led to God through failing, fault and fear.

And we'll see those guardian angels who were veiled from our sight,
We shall understand the workings of the Power put forth in might:
Yea, and with those guardian angels who were veiled from our sight,
We shall see our Savior, and our God, in Heaven's Eternal Light."

Making a Foolish Choice

"If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." - 1 Kings 12:1-7.

This was the wise advice given by the old men, but King Rehoboam did not heed it, but acted harshly according to the counsel of the young men. In forming an estimate of his conduct, however, we should remember that his mother was a heathen woman addicted to the worship of idols. King Solomon had been trying to please her and his many other wives by building various temples to false gods. So, then, it cannot be wondered at that with such a father and mother Rehoboam did not turn out very well, for great is the power of heredity. No doubt he thought that if he granted the requests presented to him at this time, he would have to keep on granting further requests *ad infinitum*. The best policy therefore seemed to be to be harsh with the people and intimidate them. So he said, "My father chastised you with whips, I will chastise *you* with scorpions."

This was a very unwise choice, for the elements of unrest and dissatisfaction were much in *evidence*. Had Rehoboam been wise, he would have discerned the condition that prevailed and would have used more tact and diplomacy in dealing with the situation. The fact is that a test had arisen, and the king failed to see that it was a test. Being proud and arrogant, he thought he could do whatever he pleased.

It is a great mistake for any one to take such a course. Today there is a testing going on among the Lord's people, as well as among the people of the world. Throughout the earth indeed the elements of discontent are manifest on every hand. If the world's rulers *were wise*, they would decrease the burdens on the people instead of increasing them. But these rulers act according to worldly, not divine, wisdom. Consequently a great disruption is now looming up. Then among the Truth people some are making demands on others that the Word of God does not make. They are setting up false tests. They have set a straight line, and claim that all those on one side of that line are in the Truth, and all those on the other side are out of it. Those who do not agree with them, they beat with scorpion tongues. This is very deplorable. It surely manifests a lack of the spirit of love, and without that spirit no person will ever win the Divine Kingdom.

Are we enabled by divine grace to discern the tests of the present time? Our faith and love will be tested to the full. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." And the will of God is that we continually manifest faith and confidence in Him and thus prove our love for Him; and that we love the brethren. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

- *Walter Sargeant.*

"Let Us Go On"

"Therefore, leaving the first principles, . . . let us go on." -Heb. 6:1.

Some of us stay at the cross,
Some of us wait at the tomb,
Quickened and raised together with Christ
Yet lingering still in its gloom;
Some of us bide at the Passover feast
With Pentecost all unknown --
The triumphs of grace in the heavenly place
That our Lord has made our own.

If the Christ who died had stopped at the cross
His work had been incomplete,
If the Christ who was buried "had stayed in the tomb
He had only known defeat;
But the way of the Cross never stops at the Cross,
And the way of the Tomb leads on
To victorious grace in the heavenly place
Where the risen Lord has gone.

So, let us go on with our Lord
'To the fulness of God He has brought,
Unsearchable riches of glory and good
Exceeding our innermost thought;
Let us grow up into Christ,
Claiming His life and its powers --
The triumphs of grace in the heavenly place
That our conquering Lord has made ours.

- Annie Johnson Flint.

The Apostle Paul as an Example

"I have all and abound; ... But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:18, 19.

OUR GOD appoints for us a path in which "mountain and valley," "sunshine and shadow" experiences are blended. We are learning what Paul means when he says, "All things are for your sakes." His path was one of constant trial and testing, a path by no means calculated to bespeak the faith by which he could say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." In Paul we have an example of the effectual power and spirit of God when they are given free scope in a fully consecrated heart and mind—a oneness of purpose in the carrying out of the obligations and privileges of a consecrated life.

To Paul, all was secondary to the one great objective he had in mind: "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, being made conformable unto his death." Would that the professed Church of the living God had, today, the vision and the intensity of love and purpose which, to Paul, is summed up in his own words: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me; I do not frustrate the grace of God." - Galatians 2:20, 21.

The experiences of the Church during the past many years appear to have produced opposite results: an intensified zeal, and a lethargy of compromise, just as Jesus said: "neither cold nor hot." A fast changing world has developed many "inventions," and while some of these are a blessing to humanity, there are many which not only are of a questionable nature, but also, by their usage, frustrate the spirit, and thereby hinder the work within. In Paul's day, he also met with things of a negative nature: things which he described as "lawful, but not expedient." And seeing the danger of partaking of them, he says, "I will not be brought under the power of any."

To Paul, "first things" came first, with no place or time for compromise in any sense of the word. In him we see one to whom the Master's words, "Follow thou me," meant just that and no less. Not "afar off" but hand in hand, heart to heart, and "rejoicing always." We marvel at Paul's rejoicing spirit; for his life, after that day on the Damascus road, was not a life which in itself was conducive to a joyous spirit. But his words suggest a faith which could and did override all obstacles, and which is to us in these last days, a means of edification, of encouragement, and of confidence.

Just as out of our own personal experience we dare to recommend a doctor or a friend, even so, out of his own experience, Paul declares, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." However, with a view to sharing the Apostle's exultation, let us, as it were, pay a short visit to this man of God, as he waits, with an unshakable faith and trust, the nearing climax of the life of one to whom Christ had become "All in all." As we step into his presence, we note at once a man who, while of an unprepossessing appearance, reveals, even before he speaks, a dignity, a calmness, and a serenity which can be theirs only who can sing or say:

*Only Thee whose blood has cleansed me,
Would my raptured vision see;
While my faith is reaching upward,
Ever upward, Lord, to thee.*

Our visit must be brief. Therefore, having in mind Philippians 4:19, we ask him what his God has done for him? For here we find him penniless and all but friendless, hated and persecuted, in bonds, awaiting a violent death, and yet recommending to any in need "his Lord." How strange this exhortation seems to be, as it is made by a homeless exile, beaten, scourged, stoned, shipwrecked, misunderstood, mobbed and imprisoned! It would seem that such experiences were anything but a good recommendation for the God in whom he so implicitly trusts! And so we ask the Apostle, "What need of yours has your God supplied? You are utterly stripped of everything." He looks up, and in his face there shines the light of God, the reflection from the face of his Lord and Master. Quietly, but firmly, the words come from his lips, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things." We ask, "Are you not anxious or worried as to the near future?" "No," he says, "I have the peace of God which passeth all understanding." "But, are you never lonely?" "Never," he replies, "I am never forsaken, for by my side is the angel of the God whose I am, and whom I serve." "Does not your hopeless situation, and the strife-torn condition of the churches make you doubtful or gloomy, at least sometimes?" "Not for a moment: 'Rejoice, and again I say to you, rejoice.'"

And finally we say to him, "What a life you have lived since your conversion -- estranged from your family, hounded from place to place, toiling and preaching as led by the spirit in you; in perils everywhere, among strangers and your own countrymen. What a life! And now the shadows are falling, and Nero will surely put you to death." Slowly, and with tears of joy welling from those weak, tired eyes, his face, now almost divine in its radiance, is lifted up; and with an unwavering confidence, triumphant in its hope, the aged Apostle exclaims, "I am ready to be offered up"; I would rather "depart, and be with Christ, which is far better."

Beloved, what can the Devil, the world, or the carnal self achieve in a life which, in a oneness of purpose, stands up and says with Paul: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I have all things and abound." "I have peace with God." "I have joy unspeakable and full of glory." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "I have lacked no good thing."

In our own lives, tribulation must have its place: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). But the same power which enabled our Lord and his Apostles to win out is at our disposal. "Fear thou not for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10). No need that any should fail. To many of us, the time is short. To you, the results from your labors may appear small, and a measure of futility be felt. This is by no means a new thing. It has been prevalent since the time of our Lord and his Apostles. Those who are actively engaged in the Master's service, can do no better than recall the words of Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 and Galatians 6:9, 10: "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

In the parable of the talents we read: "He gave to every man according to his several ability." Many fail to see the significance of these words; hence feel that no responsibility attaches to them. In the Master's service, all who are called may and must have a part, a place. It may be there are those who realize that for one reason or another their measure of service is very limited and small: by way of comparison, like a taper contrasted to a brilliant electric light.

If my light is but a taper, it is nevertheless my duty to keep it trimmed and burning. By God's grace, its light may reach some corner beyond the scope of the larger light, and so, do its part in the divine plan concerning mankind. To us the words are spoken, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees: say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong; fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you" (Isa. 35:3, 4). We do well to remember that the Christian life is a life in which the indwelling Christ works both in and through us. Let us then go on, doing "with our might what our hands find to do," praying for, and leaving the results in our heavenly Father's hands.

We need not look too eagerly for fruitage in response to our efforts. We are but to go forward in faith and trust, doing that which our God in his providence assigns, and it may be that in the final count, the fruitage unto salvation will be much larger than we had supposed. Yes, it is written, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." - Psalm 126:5.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth 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 man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." - 1 John 3:1-3.

-W. Wainwright

Notice of Annual Meeting

As announced in our March-April issue, the Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., is scheduled to be held (D.V.) Saturday, June 3, at 11:00 a.m., in Agawam, Mass., 218 Shoemaker Lane.

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. Brothers Julius L. Buss, Laurence Iannaccone, Wilbur L. Twelker and Earl R. Villman have also been nominated.

Entered Into Rest

Stanley Bodle, England
George Chitty, England
Robert E. Clipsham, England
George O. Jeuck, Casselberry, Fla.
Annie Jones, England
Stephen Karas, New Britain, Conn.
Ethel Krumpolt, Rutherford, NJ,
Rene McKnight, Scotland
Walter V. Mozee, Miami, Fla.
Hubert Fanteny, England
Katheryna Rumierz, South Haven, Mich.
Anthony Rutkowski, Chicago, Ill.
Mary Steele, Vancouver, B.C.