

A Discourse on Baptism

and

Treatise on 1st Peter 2nd 9-10th

We appreciate our opportunity of meeting while it is yet the day of grace and time of salvation. May we avail ourselves of God's proffered grace, while blessed with faculties and capabilities. As it is appointed to administer baptism to one of our aged friends, it will be in order that we speak on that subject. Text,—the closing verses of the 28th Chapter of St. Matthew. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The Apostle writing to the Hebrews, began by saying: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Our text is the message of the Son. In previous ages of the world, there were different methods of communication on the part of God with his people. He never left them without knowledge and without opportunity to choose the good and refuse the evil. In the hymn that we sang and the remarks that were made by our beloved brother (to whom I wish a blessing), the mind was drawn to the great good that has been provided by the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That is always a happy thought and a sweet reflection.

We have heard the testimony that God now speaks unto us through his Son and has commissioned his Apostles to go and preach the gospel. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." It was testified

that the feet of those that brought the gospel of peace, would be beautiful. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation." These were the people that came to bring the tidings of peace, because previous to that, the way of peace was not known. It was testified that the fallen race of Adam did not know the way of peace. There was the confused noise of the warrior, the garments rolled in blood, evidence of the absence of peace. There was no peace upon earth for four thousand years, till the One came promised to the fathers and heralded by the angels, with a message in advance of any that the world had ever heard, even the message of peace.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations." We notice it was God's purpose that the gospel of peace should be preached to all men, so he raised up men for the work and opened the way for them to accomplish it. The world, as then, was confined to the Roman Empire and was under one government. The language widely known

and freely spoken was the Greek. The people whom God had chosen and covenanted with were found in almost every considerable town or city where they had their synagogues, where the law was read. The apostles were admitted to these assemblies and declared the Gospel. The Gospel message was first brought to the Jews. The first ministers of Christ were converted Jews. They found ready entrance into their synagogues on their Sabbath days. In this way, you will notice, first—that these synagogues opened a door for the Apostles to enter in and preach. Second—the Greek language was almost universal. Next—there was freedom of travel throughout the world, which made an open door. They were qualified to preach by the Holy Spirit—through the change that was wrought in them.

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations.” This evidently was accomplished at that time because the testimony is that “their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” This commission and injunction was effected and fulfilled during the Apostolic age. Evidently this was enjoined not only upon

those whom Christ had taught, but upon their successors also, because we have reason to believe that there has been a succession of ministers during all the centuries that have passed, since the time this injunction was given. There is no doubt but that the Church of Christ was designed to be of perpetual standing and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," that it would exist so long as time would last and therefore it was a succession, not of a natural but of a spiritual priesthood. It was a succession of those who were qualified to preach the gospel, who were indued with power from on high and had the law of love written in their hearts.

The first consideration is, what this message implies. First, from what we have said, we agree that it is a perpetual obligation, not limited to the Apostolic age; "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." To teach would undoubtedly involve the knowledge of God as a righteous, as a merciful God, as Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, as a God who loves truth and righteousness and hates sin and

unrighteousness. In this teaching they would convey the message that God is pure and holy, that the law given from Mount Sinai, found in the Ten Commandments, is a symbol and reflection of his purity and holiness, and of his image. This was evidently the first message and labor of the disciples of Christ. It taught accountability, for God is just and holy, and that He will call all men into judgment for their works that they do in this life. It taught them that He has fulfilled his promise given in the beginning, that of the woman's seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed,—who appeared and paid the debt, so that redemption is wrought, a new and living way opened and a Church established.

One of the things to teach, is—that Christ died upon the tree of the cross, and effected the redemption of man through his atoning sacrifice and opened a new and living way for the salvation of all who accept Him by faith. He provided for the edification and safety of his redeemed people by authorizing the church and enjoining the ordinances. In our text He commanded baptism through which be-

lievers would be admitted to Church membership. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." He testified to its durability, saying, "upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It is manifest that baptism implies the existence of a church, but baptism does not create the Church of Christ. There was a literal temple made of natural material under the law, which was a type of the house that should be built,—the Church, not with human hands, but that building which the Apostle Peter said is spiritual and enduring. "Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." You will notice that under the old dispensation God had chosen a people. He had a purpose in choosing the seed of Abraham for the preservation of his great name, for the destruction of idoltary to which mankind were so prone and for the preservation of the order through which the Savior should come into the world, pertaining to the lineage through which he would come.

Their inheritance was natural, their rewards were natural; their weapons of warfare were natural, their offerings were natural; but it is well to recognize that while giving attention to these offerings, much depended in what manner and in what spirit they offered their sacrifices, such as the lambs they offered, the peace offerings, the burnt and the sin offerings. If they conceived the idea that they would be acceptable to God because they did this service, then they erred in overlooking and losing sight of their intent, and misunderstood what the real purpose and design of these were. They who offered the offerings under the old dispensation, were Jews. If they had rightly understood the design of the ceremonies under the law, or been under the influence of the right spirit, they would all have accepted Christ when He came, but you will notice it was the opposite. Only a few accepted Him, such as the aged Simeon, and the aged widow Anna as it is written: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Why did they not receive him? They looked for a Messiah, they hoped for the great Redeemer, it was the

joy of their life, and the inspiration of their service such an one would come to redeem them. But they observed these ordinances in a legal sense, and in the spirit that the observance would make them acceptable to God, that the more they advanced in those lines the more acceptable they would be to God.

The observance of these ceremonies was a duty and they were designed to impress them with the need of a Savior, with the need of a sacrifice much higher. It was designed to remind them of what they were, of their inability to save themselves. But these ceremonies and ordinances could not take away the guilty stains from the soul, neither could they restore that which was lost through the transgression. If they had been thus exercised, they would have seen in these services only a figure, a shadow or a symbol of the great Savior. They would have been humble, looked for Him in spirit and have received Him. Now we have not a land of Canaan, not a natural land, not a natural inheritance. Virtually that was so under the old dispensation. I repeat that we are all well aware how the Jews

observed these services and how they should have been observed, they should not have lost sight of the change they were designed to fore-shadow. The Apostle Philip when he went down to Samaria, preached to them concerning Christ and the kingdom of God. Here was a great change, here was an unhinging of the old ecclesiastical system of the Jews that stood for fifteen hundred years; here was the opening of a new and living way; here was the presentation of a kingdom lost, of an image lost, of a life that had vanished. So you will readily agree it would be very clear and plain to every one of us that if man had not lost the image of God, which is the love of God, there would have been on earth peace, good-will, co-operation, forbearance and willingness to suffer wrongfully. There would not have been the confused noise of the warrior, the sad distress of which the garments rolled in blood were evidence. Not that they did not have the benefit of the striving of the spirit, and the ministration of angels, but peace was lost. *We* are exposed to the danger of seeking justification by works as did the Jews.

Under the new dispensation, the proclamation was, "teaching them to observe all things." Baptism is to be taught and observed inasmuch as it is manifestly an ordinance through which persons are admitted into the visible Church of Christ as it is testified: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." First, three thousand that believed were baptized. They exercised faith. It is evident that baptism is an initiatory ordinance into the visible church of Christ. It is evident that the Church is an institution of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He authorized it, and gave precepts that should govern it, and that his ministers should be the guides in the regulation and in the caring for the Church. In observing baptism as an initiatory ordinance into the visible Church of Christ, it becomes important to consider what constitutes the Church. The Church of Christ dates from Pentecost. The Church of Christ resulted from the restoration of the lost love and kingdom to the soul, the Lord Jesus having come and being put under the law, fulfilled the law, revealed the Father's will, died upon the tree of the

cross, arose in triumph, ascended to the right hand of the Father, fulfilled the promise and gave the Holy Spirit. But before He ascended He instructed his disciples to go to Jerusalem and tarry there until they were endued with power from on high. We recognize that Christ opened the way that this message could successfully and authoritatively be proclaimed. He said: "All power is given unto me." All authority is given unto me. Why? Because I have taken the sins of all upon me, I have taken away the sins of the world, I have made atonement, I have paid the debt, I have abolished death, I have arisen in triumph, I have won an eternal victory and I am the only one that ever arose from the dead to die no more. Now "All power is given unto me," the world is mine, all the people in the world are mine; I was provided from eternity, was even slain from everlasting, to effect this great work, to overthrow the powers of hell, to take the armor from the strong man armed, and to effect an everlasting deliverance. Now, "power and authority are given to me."

Through Christ a wonderful condition was brought about, that had been testified, pre-figured, foreshadowed and could now be realized. From the beginning it was testified that a great change should come, that all the families of the earth should be blessed. Then again, that war and violence should cease, that there should be a brotherhood, a fellowship upon the earth. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, I 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." It was typified by the animals of opposite disposition, such as the wolf and the lamb. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. "And the sucking child shall play on the hole of

the Asp, and a weaning child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It is evident that all these states are in agreement and that where they exist, there would be no destruction and no wasting. We know that this was not to be understood literally, or naturally, but it was a figure of what was to come and did come to this people in spirit and in life.

Certainly this is a matter worthy of our consideration. Do these conditions come under the dispensation that we are now under, or do they not? We have to reach a conclusion —must that which was prophesied, be realized here upon this earth, in this time of salvation, or not? We claim that it must be realized, in this day of salvation. Notice upon Pentecost, what a wonderful change came when the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, when he testified: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." Upon that occasion when the Holy Spirit came upon them, there

was a wonderful change wrought. It affected them to such an extent that they became one heart and one soul. "The love of God was shed abroad in their hearts." "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." Three thousand people were all affected similarly, they were wrought upon, and received the spirit of Christ, and having received his spirit they had his disposition, they were disposed to walk as He walked,—never to render evil for evil, they were disposed to work in harmony with him, when He said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." He came to bring peace on the earth, certainly that peace must be with the redeemed. He testified: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

He came to give them power; he came to give me power and to give you power,

by the Holy Spirit. Baptized by the Spirit. It is a change wrought in the heart, which gives a realization of the love of Jesus, his great service, his wonderful triumph, the redemption that He wrought, the spirit that He manifested toward us: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." His spirit is the new and living way effecting an entrance into grace, into blessing and into peace. This is the origin of the Church. As aforesaid we are to realize the origin of the Church and its character. If baptism is an initiatory ordinance into the visible Church of Christ, it is certainly worthy of our most serious consideration. The Church is a united body. Christ prayed for the Church: "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 the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The Apostles labored most devotedly to keep the believers together in the fellowship of the Spirit and in the bond of love.

This dear sister, this aged friend who is about to receive the ordinance of baptism, a careful consideration with her has

been, am I in a saved state? What is the ground of her hope or by what means did she obtain it? We would all answer, by reading the New Testament and by the exercise of faith in Christ. Has she confidence in every member of the church? Do we have confidence in her? This is an important consideration. The ministry are to watch for souls, they are to be true shepherds, to lay down their life for the sheep. The ministry whom Christ appointed and those who should succeed them, know no one after the flesh are no respecter of persons, and make no difference between rich and poor, high and low; there is no aristocracy. They would not receive any one into the Church or administer the ordinance of baptism unless they had full confidence in their uprightness, and willingness to live a life, as the Gospel of our Lord Jesus calls for. One of the reformers of the sixteenth century said: "If any one were to come to me, even the emperor or the king and would desire to be baptized, still walking in the unclean, ungodly lusts of the flesh, and were he not blameless, penitent and regenerated, I would sooner die by the grace

of God, than to baptize such an impenitent and sensual man." That is the character of all faithful ministers, to watch for souls, and see that persons that come into the church are awakened and have come to a knowledge of themselves, that they have knowledge of their sins, and have sorrow for sin, and have separated from sin, and have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ in faith as their righteousness wisdom, sanctification and redemption.

The Church did not come into existence through the ordinances, but it is the effect of a change of heart of a renewal of the mind, of being born again, that is being born from above. Sorrow for and separation from sin, submission to the divine will, invoking the presence of Jesus, by his Spirit, is evidence of being born again. For He will come and dwell with us. He will give us light, He will beget in us love and give unto us a revelation of the divine will, so that the Gospel we now have will be engraved upon every Christian heart. The Church of Christ is never governed by laws. Its government is the gospel and spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. I remember of once visiting a very serious

person who sought to devote her life in accord with her religious feelings, but she had very much trouble because the young people who come into the church, get away from the simplicity, from the plainness, and non-conformity to the world and she said in a very sorrowful way: "Do you not think that the ministry are too slack in duty, they give too much latitude as they come into the church and then cannot control them? I said, "I think the trouble lies at the hearts of those young people because they have not suffered the Savior to enter. If they are going out and fulfilling the desire of the flesh and the mind, then it is only an evidence that his Spirit is not directing them, that they have not yet become partakers of the divine nature, not yet separated from the corruption that is in the world and been renewed into the divine image, and not subjects for baptism."

The Church did not come into existence through outward ordinances, neither is any one saved through the observance of the ordinances. We never could get a Church as the Gospel calls for, by attendance to the ordinances such as bap-

tism and communion. We could not effect the work by that means. The Church existed in spirit before baptism. Baptism did not make the Church, it is only a witness to the Church. What constituted the Church was that those people became living stones. A new life came to them, a new existence, new hope, disposition, inspiration, a new purpose of life brought them together. They were baptized by one spirit into one body. The Church of Christ was not one member, but many members, one of another and baptism is a testimony to this change.

Being baptized in the name of the Father implies a knowledge and realization of God's holiness and of our need of the Savior, no matter what our endowments, how amiable our disposition, how high our moral standing, nor how blameless our lives in the sight of men, we cannot abide the judgment of God's holy law which requires perfection, a perfect love and no deviation from it. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father." Through that knowledge we were awakened and realized we are sinners, that we can not

abide the judgment of God. That knowledge brought us to Jesus the Son.

"In the name of the Son." We realize that we are weak, helpless and needy and realize we are greater sinners than we knew. We are lost unless there is a remedy, a "balm in Gilead." We heard the inviting voice of Jesus "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." We heard the message "that the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Through the ministration of the law, (because the moral law is the substance of man's duty) the principle is impressed on every heart, coming from Mt. Sinai and by grace is brought into life and power. It is utterly powerless to us unless we awaken, just as Saul of Tarsus said, "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." When the call came, grace became effectual, it brought to us

such a manifestation that God reigns, that the word of God is his law, "for the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged-sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints, and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." We then surrendered our hearts to Jesus giving our all to Him, and He saved us through the blood of the everlasting covenant as John testified;" Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He took the sin of all upon Him. We realized the enormity of our sins, that sin is desolating, and hardening. When we come to that situation, oh! what a welcome Jesus. oh! what a Savior. We are bought with a price, we are no more our own, we are under a most solemn vow to honor Him in body and spirit. We are baptized in the name of Jesus because He has redeemed us.

Baptized "in the name of the Holy Ghost," or the Holy Spirit, which is one and the same. There is only one spirit of God and that is holy. That Spirit is in this house today, is in this community.

We may term it the grace of God if we will. It appears unto all men and impresses us. Sometimes death comes into our families, and that spirit though invisible, knocks at our heart. It impresses us with mortality and accountability, That spirit has a great influence and is everywhere, "unto all the ends of the earth." Some think it wrong to say they have received the Holy Ghost. All acquainted with the German language know that the German word, Geist, is Spirit and the English, Ghost. So the Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost are one and the same. There is no one here today who has come to years of understanding who does not know something of the Holy Spirit. There are those here today who would confess that they have not obeyed. It has come to you but you were not willing to yield to it, to surrender yourself to it, and therefore it left you again. I remember in my youth after being out at night upon coming home I was so much impressed I could not sleep. I was convicted by the light given me that I saw I offended God and I was almost ready to yield, and turn away from sin, and never

live in sin any more; but the next day that spirit wended its way because I grieved it, I would not have it to reign over me and was again as light-minded and foolish as before. But that spirit returned to me, I pondered it, cherished it, I threw open my heart to it, saying: "Come and abide with me." From that day on the Holy Spirit was given as an abiding guest. If I lie down or rise up, in the crowded city and in my labor, everywhere, it is effectual, redeeming and sanctifying. Just as soon as the soul welcomes the spirit, opens the door of the heart, that spirit makes its dwelling there and one can answer, with a good conscience, he has the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost.

As to the import, or the divine order of the ordinance, from what we have said, you will agree that salvation is a gift of God and is not by works of righteousness which we have done. It is free unmerited grace. Salvation was wrought through the Lord Jesus Christ, by his atoning sacrifice upon the tree of the cross. We are saved through faith, the blood of Christ saves and when we realize that, our

reformation begins. John the Baptist preceded the setting up of the kingdom of Christ. I look upon John's baptism as distinct from Christian baptism, accepting John as the forerunner of Christ. The Holy Spirit was not then given because Christ was not yet glorified. As another evidence that John's baptism and the baptism of our text are not the same, I would refer to the 19th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the apostle Paul at Corinth, going to Ephesus, met twelve men who had received the baptism of John. He asked them what baptism they had received, and when they said, John's, he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Christ. John's administration is a manifest testimony of repentance, of sorrow for sin, of separation from sin, which is confirmed by scripture testimony.

The Lord Jesus was put under the law and submitted to all ordinances of the law that were consistent with his sinlessness. When He was baptized of John, He said: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." This was certainly a submission to the

dispensation of God under John's ministration, "for it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." When the Lord Jesus received the Holy Spirit, the bodily form of a dove rested upon Him and He heard a voice from heaven saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here was the anointing and consecration to his heavenly work, that He came to accomplish. The forty days and nights in the wilderness, during which time He did not eat, but fasted, comes right in line with repentance. Every one of you here today knows something of repentance. When we become convicted of wrong, when we are sorry for the wrong, then we fast, and it is not likely that we will do the same thing again. That is the character of repentance. When we come to a realization of having sinned, having gone wrong and have true sorrow for it, we loathe it and will not do it over again while we are in that penitent state. Under the Gospel the fast is spiritual.

We recognize the water baptism of John, as typical and figurative of the clean, pure character of repentance, since persons who awaken and repent "cease

to do evil and learn to do well." It will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, and work a wonderful work. I have known remarkable evidences of repentance, that men have called their neighbors together and made peace with them. The penitents made wrong right as far as was in their power. Repentance covers the ministry of John, it went beyond that of the teachers of the law. When John came, he laid the axe right to the root of the tree. He knew of the misdeeds of King Herod and he told him "It is not lawful for thee to have her." To the leaders of the Jews who came to hear him, he said: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." Do not think that by such outward performances as you are now about to engage in, that it will be acceptable to God. Oh my friends, repentance meant much in time past and yet man is the same. It was the mission of the law to awaken those people, to bring people right by repentance, to make them dutiful, and wrought a great change, so we recognize

John's baptism as being distinct from the baptism of our text.

Under the gospel, we recognize that obedience is a testimony confirmatory of a heavenly spirit, of a heavenly exercise. Baptism by water is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Now this aged sister who will receive the ordinance of baptism, has awakened, has sorrow for sin, has come to a realization of her situation, and her hope is in the atoning blood of Christ. The ordinances do not save, because baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." How can any man or woman have a good conscience without an awakening, a knowledge of sin, a sorrow for, and separation from, sin; and without the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, that which cleanses from all sin and all uncleanness? In this way we look upon every service and duty enjoined upon us in the New Testament. Through our receiving the spirit of Christ, the image and love is restored, we are led into a state of obedience to the divine will, and in this situation, or in getting into this attitude, we attain to humility so

we with purpose of heart desire to have an humble mind, a pure heart and a sanctified spirit. To such water baptism is a sign and seal to their faith. Such penitent, believing souls are in agreement with all Christ's commands.

It is asked, why delay baptism so long since in the apostles' time it was not so? I acknowledge that in that time the gospel message was a new message; the whole Jewish system was unhinged. "Christ and Him crucified" was the message they carried in their preaching, which led the people, whether Jew or Gentile, into that great truth and when they accepted that faith, they baptized them immediately. Later they formed them into church order and gave directions, appointing officers, ministers and deacons, and brought them into fellowship. But under the conditions today it is different. Dear friends, I have no disposition to criticize the profession of religion. I am set only in the defence of the Gospel. There are people who admit that divisions into various sects is confusing, and that a united church only has the sanction of heaven, a membership joined together in the same bond and

who speak the same thing, who have the same faith and the same doctrine. Now friends, with the divided condition of professed christians, do you not think it is justifiable to look into it, and consider it carefully before any one takes this step? What is the Church? What constitutes the Church? What is the character of and the life of the Church? Before any one is baptized and unites with the church, he should be able to answer these questions. We are not authorized to administer baptism to any but believers, not to little children. The scriptures make that very plain.

I will not dwell upon the mode of baptism. What I would say here today would not change the mind of those who defend a mode. I would only say that as I see it and as we learn it from the New Testament, coming to the different baptisms, under the Christian order, there is no command of a special mode but of baptism on faith. Water baptism is a sign and seal to our faith in Christ, and testimony of having received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit falling upon believers is called a baptism. Under the Gospel it is the

Christ life that is definitely described, and insisted upon, and not the outward form or mode of administering ordinances, as they are only a testimony to what is within.

BISHOP JACOB S. LEHMAN.

Treatise Based on I Peter 2; 9 and 10.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

In this text the Apostle carried along the idea of God's chosen people under the law, as being a figure of the spiritual Israel of God. Referring back to their relation under the law, he wrote, “Ye are a chosen generation.” Referring to God's choice of Abraham with whom He made a covenant to give the land of Canaan to him and to his posterity for an everlasting

inheritance, which was confirmed to Isaac and Jacob. Circumcision was a sign and seal of the covenant.

The Apostle used the natural covenant with Abraham and his children, granting them the land of Canaan, as a figure of the spiritual covenant made through Jesus Christ, granting unto Christians eternal life; not a natural land with preservation from natural want and suffering, but an inward peace above all understanding. The sign and seal of the spiritual covenant is "the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," which is the anti-type of the natural circumcision made with human hands. The natural covenant made with Abraham contained the promise of a numerous posterity, but the spiritual covenant was not limited to Abraham's posterity but embraced all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, in time past and in time to come, reaching from the fall of Adam to the end of time. It is an everlasting covenant. God is witness to this covenant, saying: "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head." "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "I will

make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

The anti-type of the natural Israel is a chosen generation *in the spirit* and is an unbroken succession since Pentecost. The choosing of this generation is by grace through Jesus Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead (meaning the spiritually dead) shall hear the voice of the Son of God and *they that hear* shall live." "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us, etc." It appears to all men but does not teach any the mysteries of salvation, by faith in Christ, except those who are obedient. "Many are called but few are chosen." The obedient are chosen. They are spiritually a chosen generation. The choosing of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their posterity as a separate and peculiar people, covenanting to them the land of Canaan, with promise of special natural protection and blessing; along with their

laws and statutes and their initiatory service (of circumcision) is a fitting type of the spiritual Israel, of their being chosen, by the grace of the Lord Jesus, to the heavenly inheritance not of a natural land, to be defended by natural weapons, but to a faith that overcometh the world, walking in love toward all men and finally to an everlasting home in heaven.

“A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD”

Aaron and his sons were chosen of God, to fill the priestly office under the law. The high priest entered the holy of holies once a year to offer both gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people, and as the high priest was taken from among men and was compassed with infirmity, he also offered sacrifice and made atonement for himself and for the priestly family. No one entered the most holy place except the high priest once a year. His vestments were for beauty and for glory. He was a type of Christ, the perfect high priest of his redeemed people, who entered the holy of holies in heaven, not made with hands, to make unceasing intercession for his people. His vestments are *Holi-*

ness. The priests who ministered daily in the temple, offering the evening and morning sacrifices, preparatory to their temple service, washed their hands and their feet. Bodily deformity disqualified them for the priestly service. If animals that were lame, sickly or deformed were offered in sacrifice, it was displeasing to God. The twelve loaves of shew bread prepared weekly were only lawful for the priests to eat.

The perfect physical bodies of the priests, their daily washings, and the shewbread signifies that we should daily offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice, in coming before the Lord with an humble mind and a contrite spirit, mortifying our earthly members, and subjecting our will in all things to the Divine will. The twelve loaves of bread prepared for the priests were a fitting type of the bread of life, viz., the word and spirit of the gospel of Christ which is the bread that came down from heaven, which giveth life to all who accept Christ and are priests of God. "A royal priesthood." Aaron's rod was the only one of the twelve dry rods laid away by Moses, one for each tribe, that budded,

blossomed and grew almonds, a figure of the life-giving power of the Lord Jesus, the great high priest, in giving life to a spiritually dead world.

“A HOLY NATION”

Of all nations God chose Israel to be his witness upon earth that He is the true God, Creator of all things visible and invisible. All the nations were idolators except Israel. They worshipped imaginary deities, many of which were hewn out of stone, or carved out of wood. They also worshipped the sun and the moon. In God's promise to Abraham and the fulfillment of the same in their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage and their settlement in Canaan, the Israelites had signal evidence of God's care for them and of his might and power. He gave them a law separating them from the idolatrous nations, inculcating justice, truth and righteousness, which, if they had obeyed they would have been a holy nation. God provided ministers to teach them, whom, if they had obeyed, they would have found their counsel profitable for reproof, for correction and instruction tending to right-

eousness, befitting a people chosen to be a holy nation. *The Church of Christ is spiritually a holy nation.* Christ is prophet, priest and king. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." "Of his government and peace there shall be no end." Christ in spirit is enthroned in every Christian heart. He rules His Church by His word and spirit. The gospel is the constitution of His kingdom. It is a holy nation because all the subjects are born again from above, and cherish love to God and holiness of life.

"A peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of *him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" This applied to the chosen people under the law. They were separated from the idolatrous nations, they had a law that inculcated truth and righteousness, they had a temple, that with its numerous sacrifices and purifications, symbolized truth and holiness.

"A PECULIAR PEOPLE"

This term is especially applicable to the Church of Christ. It is the salt of the

earth and the light of the world. It is the witness to the truth of the Gospel on earth. It is the city of peace that lieth four square, the gates of which are open continually, there being twelve. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. A peculiarity of Christians is that they love one another, that they are kindly affectioned one toward the other, that if there is a misunderstanding between them leading to contention and alienation in their feelings, they feel constrained to reason together and forbear and forgive each other as God for Christ's sake forbears and forgives. The love they have for each other is pure and unselfish, so that if one is overtaken in a fault, the one cognizant of the error, labors in love to correct it. One of the peculiarities of Christians is that they are united in faith and doctrine, there is no division among them, they are joined together in the same judgment *spiritually*. Theirs is a heaven-born love that does not fail. "Charity never faileth." A peculiarity is to reverence God and the Bible, to obey its precepts and have faith in its promises.

Christians are peculiar in this, that they obey New Testament teaching, to love their enemies, not to resist evil by physical force or by process of law, but contrariwise, to return good for evil. Christians organized in church fellowship (as they are if there is opportunity) have peace among themselves. Discord and disunion are unchristian, therefore they dare not exist in the Church. When differences exist between members they must get together and become reconciled. If members transgress the doctrine of Christ, they must be labored with for their recovery from their error. If they are unwilling to amend their way, they must be placed under gospel reproof through love, for their amendment and for the unity and purity of the church. This is a special peculiarity of the church. Christ, whom the church hears, prayed for the unity and purity of the church.

Persons professing the religion of Christ, that do not practice this mutual interest in others, and devotion to all their fellow believers' spiritual welfare, are without promise in the word of God. If spiritual fellowship is not preserved in a church,

it is evident that Christ's spirit does not rule there, and no one obedient to Christ's teachings can remain a member in such a body—love will constrain him to come out from among them (2 Cor. 6: 17), not out of a prejudiced feeling, but as a testimony against their error in disobedience to the gospel, to the honor of God, and the profession of love to Christ in obedience.

The practice of love for and forgiveness of enemies is unnatural, and therefore is especially peculiar when practiced. The real basis of such act is deep-seated. No human mind can fathom the depth of redeeming love. Human reason cannot analyze the atonement. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man (in its fulness) the price paid for our redemption. We are saved by grace from the awful doom of the unsaved, though we were one time disobedient, serving divers lusts, living in envy and malice, hateful and hating one another. At that time we had not obtained mercy and were not the children of God, but now having obtained mercy and forgiveness, through the agonizing death

of Christ, we are saved and redeemed from all our sins by free grace and our names are written in the Book of Life. We realize we are not our own, but are bought with a price and that it devolves upon us to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are God's. We can only glorify God by doing his will, which is, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." The secret of the love of enemies is *grace in the heart*. We cannot refuse to others who are yet unsaved, what has been graciously given us. Christians or members of the Church of Christ are peculiar that they do not engage in politics, do not vote nor engage in political discussions because these employments belong to the kingdom of the world which is founded upon justice, "an eye for an eye," and is of the world, and will perish with the world. The kingdom of Christ is founded upon love and is indestructible. Christians having the mind of Christ devote themselves to the extension of his kingdom and the promulgation of peace and goodwill upon the earth. Christians

are peculiar in that they take no part in the idle pastimes of the world, such as foolish talking and general conformity to the world in its mirth and pleasure seeking, and in the excessive adorning of the body. A peculiarity of Christians and the Church is to practice moderation in all things, so as to use the world and not abuse it, to be sympathetic with the unfortunate and kind to the poor and needy, a fruit of love, attained by the spirit of Christ.

In all these respects Christians are appointed to show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Individually and collectively Christians are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill and cannot be hid, being purchased with the blood of Christ, sanctified with His spirit and redeemed from the bondage of sin with the blessed hope that at Christ's second coming they will be like Him, for they shall see Him as he is. All Christians having this hope in them will purify themselves as He (God) is pure. Before the gospel message came, neither Jew nor Gentile understood the mystery of regeneration nor the nature of Christ's kingdom, as

they had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy through faith in Him Who died for their offenses and arose for their justification of which they give evidence by their obedience to the doctrine and spirit of Christ and the Apostles.

The summary of our brief comment on the text of this tract is: All regenerated souls are led by the Spirit of God and by it are baptized into one body, of which water baptism is a testimony. There is no promise of salvation given in the New Testament without repentance and separation from sin. The effect of accepting the faith in Christ is obedience to the commands of Christ and the Apostles. The result of which is, a united church separated from all forms of worship not in accord with unity of faith and doctrine, with peace and non-resistance of evil, and with brotherly love and true spiritual service.

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