

and to assume His Dispensational task, as the Agent of the Godhead, of preparing a peculiar holy people "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). This *time* of the absence from the world of the Spirit's gifts in profusion (*i.e.*, of His more excellent and exclusively *spiritual* gifts) took in all the centuries that passed *before Jesus was glorified*. And when was Jesus glorified, that is, clothed in the "body of his glory"? The answer is unmistakable. On the night of His betrayal, He prayed in these words: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Jesus was glorified, then, when He was raised from the dead, received up into Heaven, clothed in glory and honor and incorruption, and crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Phil. 3:20, 21—"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, *that it may be conformed to the body of his glory*, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." Once the Messiah had been installed in His proper place on the Throne of the universe, at the right hand of the Father, and properly invested with the Scepter of the Kingdom, then God the Father, in the name of Christ, according to Divine promise, dispatched the Holy Spirit to earth, to qualify the Apostles for their work, to inaugurate the dispensation of Gbspel preaching, and to incorporate the Body of Christ and take up His abode therein. The Gospel Dispensation is, in fact, the Dispensation of the Spirit.

### 3. The Prophecy of Joel

God had foretold through Jeremiah, as we have seen, the spiritual character of the New Covenant. The first prediction of a general outpouring of the Spirit, however, was communicated to men through the prophet Joel. God said through Joel, by inspiration of the Spirit: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaid's in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the

heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call."

"I shall come to pass *afterward*," that is, "in the last days," the days of the last or Gospel Dispensation (Isa. 2:2-4, Acts 2:17), "that I will pour out my Spirit ["pour forth of my Spirit," Acts 2:17] upon all flesh." The first problem arising here is the meaning of this phrase, "*all flesh*." Paul writes 1 Cor. 15:39—"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes." Hence if this expression, "all flesh," in Joel's prophecy is not to be limited, we have the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit, not only upon mankind, but upon birds, beasts and fishes as well. This is absurd, of course; no one believes that the Holy Spirit was ever poured out, for spiritual ends, upon brute flesh. Does the expression, then, include all humanity, *all human flesh*? Evidently not, for it would then take in the wicked and irreligious as well as the most pious of Christians. Surely no one would contend that the Spirit is poured out on people who live in sin and debauchery. It is obvious, therefore, that the term as used by Joel must be pruned down to fit the facts in the case. It is equally obvious that the expression is used, in this connection, primarily by way of contrasting the privileges and blessings of the New Covenant with those of the Old. The blessings of the Old Covenant were for the Jews only; it was a Covenant made with the fleshly seed of Abraham. But, according to both promise and prophecy, the New Covenant would be entered into with believers of all nationalities, Gentiles as well as Jews; under its beneficent provisions, there would be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:28). It becomes obvious, therefore, that the term "all flesh" in Joel's prophecy means *all peoples, all nations*, that is, *without regard longer to the age-old distinction between Jew and Gentile*. Hence, after the outpouring of the Spirit in baptismal measure upon the Jews in the person of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, and several years afterward upon the Gentiles in

the person of Cornelius and his house at Caesarea, Paul could truthfully write: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized [*i.e.*, incorporated] into one body, *whether Jews or Greeks*, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

Again, we have learned that the Holy Spirit is a Person. How, then, would it have been possible for God to pour out one person upon another person or upon a multitude of persons? The meaning is, of course, that God would pour out the *graces, gifts and influences* of the Spirit, upon people of all races and nationalities, without regard longer to distinction between Gentile and Jew. The Spirit, a Person, is one thing; His gifts, graces and influences are another. The prophet is writing here of the gifts and influences of the Spirit which would attend the Spirit's advent and follow His assumption of His official duties as the Vicegerent of the Godhead upon earth. In Old Testament times, the Spirit was given only partially and intermittently to certain individuals chosen of God, and for purposes of inspiration, demonstration and leadership. These were in a sense just "drops" of Spirit-power. But, according to Joel's prophecy, there would be a general outpouring of the Spirit's powers and influences—in varying measures, of course, for corresponding ends—upon obedient believers of all nations, with the accompanying promise that whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord should be saved. Cf. Acts 5:12, with reference to the *name* (authority) of Christ: "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we *must* be saved," that is, if saved at all Jesus Himself said: "No one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). All this becomes very clear in the light of New Testament teaching.

#### 4. The Promise of John the Baptizer

On further investigation we find that the message of John the Baptizer included something about the Holy Spirit and what is called the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit. According to Matthew, John said: "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones