

## May 20

*A peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 2:14*

A "peculiar people,"--not peculiar in dress, nor in manners, nor in language, nor in foolish, senseless forms and idiosyncrasies; but peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the spirit of the world. It has

### A PECULIAR PEOPLE IN THAT THEY KNOW THE TRUTH

(Heb 5:4 KJV) "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

(Joh 6:44 KJV) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."

(Joh 14:21 KJV) "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

(Jn 8:31-32 KJV) "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

R5508 "The reward of continued discipleship is, "Ye shall know the Truth"--not, Ye shall be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth." (2Timothy 3:7) Here is the mistake many make; failing to continue in the Word of the Lord, they delve into various human philosophies, which ignore or pervert the Word of the Lord and set up opposing theories. To those who seek for Truth among these human theories, there is no promise that they shall ever find it, and they never do."

(1Co 2:4-5 KJV) "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

(Col 2:6-8 KJV) "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: (7) Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (8) Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

R1475 "In the Scriptures there are many surface truths which all may see and appreciate, but the systematic ordering of the divine plan, much of which was purposely hidden and obscurely expressed, and the bringing out of its wonderful details, was left for an appointed time. And when the appointed time has come and the faithful watcher is led to see the systematic harmony of divine truth--not to guess at it, or to surmise about it, but to see it, so plainly that he can clearly, logically and Scripturally demonstrate it to others..."

But such should remember that the commission is to "make it plain," not to make it obscure. And if a man has no truth to make plain, but is only seeking for truth,

the Spirit of Christ--a spirit of full consecration to the Lord, and separateness from the world and its selfish aims. It is peculiar in its adherence to the Word of the Lord as its only law. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the divine revelation. It is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world. It is peculiar

he makes a great mistake in launching out his crude and inharmonious ideas for the confusion of other minds."

R5860 "We have known Christians who, if they have a doubt about a certain feature of Truth or a weakness of faith, would discuss their doubts in the presence of those who were weak in the faith or who were of the world. This is a great mistake and productive of much harm. One never knows when a weak one may be present who might be greatly injured by words of doubt or distrust."

R1719 "Let us see, then, that we have the faith of Christ--the faith well founded in the Word of God, a faith examined and proved, deeply rooted in the heart as well as in the head, and therefore established as the motive power of life."

### A PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE

R5825 "St. Peter wrote of the followers of Jesus--the consecrated Church: "Ye are a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people [a people for a purpose, Diaglott], that ye should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1Peter 2:9.) This New Nation--God's nation--is in the world, but not of it. Its members cannot be loyal to the prince of this world, and to the Prince of Glory, both. They must choose between the two. This will make them "peculiar" in the eyes of the majority of people..."

R5057 "The Apostle Peter says that the Church is a people *for a purpose*; that is, God has a special object or purpose in selecting the Church. They are to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light," "that men may see their good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven."--I Pet. 2:9; Matt. 5:16.

We ask respecting the object of this shining of the light, and the Scriptures answer that it will have an effect upon the world, reproving mankind and setting before them an example of better living, better thinking. We ask whether this is the ultimate object of the call. The Scriptures answer that it is not; that the Church is called out to be a privileged people and to become joint-heirs with her Lord in His Kingdom... Those who faithfully follow the Lamb through good report and evil report, who take up their cross and follow Jesus, will be accounted worthy to be His associates in the Kingdom.

### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We ask whether the Church will be able to combat the evil tendencies in the world. The answer is, Yes; Satan will be bound for a thousand years, that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years shall have been fulfilled. During those years the Savior's mission will be to

in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith, and with zeal. It is peculiar in that it is self-sacrificing and knows no will but the will of its King. It is peculiar in that it knows the Truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within while others merely speculate and wonder and doubt. Z.'97-95 R2128:2

bless mankind as the "Sun of Righteousness," with "healing" in His beams; and the Church is to have a share with Him in the blessing of the world. We ask whether this is some *new proposition* God has made; and the answer comes, No; this was God's Plan and purpose from *before the foundation of the world*. This is the Gospel, or good tidings, first declared to Abraham: "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."-- Gen. 12:3, etc.

God intended to bless all the members of the human race, all nations and kindreds and tongues, and purposed that the blessing should come to them through the Seed of Abraham. The Jewish nation were merely the *typical seed*; the *antitypical Seed* is The Christ (Jesus the Head and the Church His Body), who will "bless all the families of the earth."

### R5460 "CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PECULIAR PEOPLE

While others seek the emoluments and distinctions of the present time, these count all the things of this world as loss and dross, in view of the wonderful things that God has set before their minds. They have seen the "pearl of great price," and have given their all to purchase it. They see that the Kingdom of God is the most valuable thing that is obtainable now or ever will be attainable. They have recognized the terms upon which this Kingdom-Pearl may be obtained and are seeking to make good the purchase. The terms are self-sacrifice, faithfulness to God at any cost, and patient endurance under adverse conditions, even unto the end.

These peculiar people are seeking to accomplish this work in themselves, because they see that these are the most gracious characteristics and qualities that can be imagined. Hence they are doubly solicitous; they are *zealous of good works*. They love to see others good and happy, and they love to spread the knowledge of God. They love the things that God delights in, because they have the Spirit of Christ. They are interested in reforms -- social reform, temperance reform, every kind of reform; but this does not mean that they will engage in these reforms. The same man cannot be a great preacher, a successful farmer, a successful lawyer, etc. If he be a great farmer, he must give up the other things to a large extent. Or if he be a great preacher, he will have to give up, for the most part, other things. Yet he may have *pleasure* in them *all*.

And so with these peculiar people: they have one particular work given them of the Father. They recognize that this work is most important to be done, hence they cannot give their attention to political reform, social reform, or other reform, outside of their own work. For this reason they are called *theorists* instead of *practical* people. Nevertheless they have the most practical plan of all; for *God's Plan* is of all plans the *most practical*. These people, in becoming co-workers, are taking the wisest course.

But they do not find fault with others. They see that the only ones who can grasp these things are those who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear; they know that others cannot go beyond what they see. The peculiarities of these "peculiar people" extend to all the affairs of life.

#### WHAT CONSTITUTE GOOD WORKS

This class of people are wise enough to know that all the Truth even should not be mentioned at once. The Master said to those who had been His close followers for three and a half years, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John 16:12.) The Lord's people are eager to do good, but in the way that will be the most effective, and in the way that will not stumble others. The good works, then, that this peculiar people are zealous of are the works of God. As Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me."--John 9:4.

The world cannot appreciate this, not having the Spirit of God, but more the spirit of the Adversary. The world are walking in the way of slander and hypocrisy, more or less. Jesus said, when speaking to the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father, the Devil." (John 8:44.) And when Jesus walked in the way of God, His course was a condemnation to them. Therefore Jesus declared, "The darkness hateth the light," and He forewarned us that it would be the same all the way down through the Age. He warned His followers that they would suffer the same persecution He had suffered. But the Master urged that they be zealous for the Truth--solicitous for it.

Since God has called us to good works, we are to show great zeal, even though it bring upon us the envy and hatred and opposition of others. We are to rejoice, even if we are called to suffer persecution for His sake. And though the world does not appreciate these good works now, they will see and understand by and by, in their day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:12.) They will see that God's Plan was the best plan. The Church glorified will be the channel for blessing the world in general."

R3199 "We beseech you, brethren, as you value the glorious hope set before you in the gospel, that you give no heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, as the Apostle terms them (1 Tim. 4:1); but that, with fixedness of purpose, you apply yourselves to the one thing you are called and are privileged to do as prospective members of that Royal Priesthood. Let us never forget that we are a "peculiar people," separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into his marvelous light. And if thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the worldly spirit, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us.

Such opposition is to be expected and will, doubtless, continue until we finish our course in death. To submit patiently to this opposition is to sacrifice our own *natural* preferences for the friendship and the pleasures of the present life, and to endure hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake, in whatever shape that hardness may come, in our effort to do the Lord's will and work of

advancing the interests of his Kingdom. This is what is meant by the presenting of our bodies living sacrifices in the divine service. To be really in this service involves: first, the careful and continual study of God's plan; second, the imbibing of its spirit; leading, thirdly, to an enthusiastic zeal for its accomplishment, and to activity to the extent of ability in its service, at whatever cost or sacrifice it may require.

If we are faithful in this service we have no time, nor have we the disposition, to give heed either to false doctrines or to other themes which have no bearing on the *one thing* to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives. Our time is not our own if we have consecrated all to God; and consequently, we have none to spare for the investigation of fanciful false theories, built upon other foundations than that laid down in the Scriptures; nor have we time to devote to the ideas and pursuits which engross the world's attention, many of which are harmless in themselves, but would be harmful to us if we were to allow them to occupy consecrated time and to divert our attention from the *one thing* we ought to be doing. The Apostle warns us "to shun profane babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness;" but adds, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." "Teach no other doctrine: neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith."--2 Tim. 2:15,16; 1 Tim. 1:3,4.

Each consecrated believer should ask himself, How carefully have I studied that which I have clearly recognized as divine truth? and how fully capable am I, therefore, of handling the sword of the spirit? Few indeed are those who can say they have fully digested and assimilated all they have received; that they have let none of these things slip from memory; that they have so treasured it up in their hearts that it is their meditation by day and by night; that they have a ready answer--a "Thus saith the Lord"--for every man that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, concerning any point of doctrine; that they can clearly and intelligently portray the divine plan, quote the divine authority for each successive step of it, and, if need be, point out its place in the divine system of types. To gain such proficiency in the Word is indeed the work of a lifetime; but every day should see a closer approximation to that proficiency, and will, indeed, if we are faithful students and faithful servants of the truth.

If all the consecrated were thus busily engaged putting on the armor of God, and in proving it by actual use in zealous endeavors to herald the truth and to help others to stand, there would indeed be no time left for disputings on the Anglo-Israel question, or whether the earth is a plane instead of a globe, or whether the principles of socialism would be advisable among Christians in the management of their temporal affairs. Nor would there be time for politics, nor even for the good temperance-reform work, nor the work among fallen women, nor among the slums of the great cities, nor even for preaching the doctrine of divine healing. All this is work which can and will be effectually accomplished in "the Times of Restitution," now in the near future....

How narrow this way! say some, contemptuously, of those who, like Paul, devote their energies to the *one thing*--the service of the truth. Yes, that will be the verdict against you, of all except the few who, like yourself, have carefully sought out this "narrow way," and who are determined to walk in it, regardless of the reproach it brings. The way to the mark for the prize of our high calling is not wide enough to admit all the vain philosophies and foolish questions and babblings and speculations of science, falsely so called. It is only wide enough to admit the Lord's plan and those who are willing to discard all other plans and projects and questionings and to devote themselves fully and entirely to its service, and who are quite willing to bear any reproach it may bring.

Consider your calling, brethren, for ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood to offer sacrifices acceptable to God; a 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. The very object of our being called into this light is that we may let it shine. If we do not let it shine we are unworthy of it, and the treasure will be taken away and we will be left in darkness. If indeed we have received the light and have consecrated ourselves fully to God, let us ask ourselves. What am I doing to show forth the praises of him who hath called me out of darkness? Am I going forth with these tidings to my neighbors near and far? Am I busy from day to day in seeking to vindicate the divine character, and to make known God's righteous ways? Am I economizing time and means, and so arranging my temporal affairs as to give as much time as possible to the work? And, then, am I diligently studying to make myself thoroughly familiar with the truth, so that I may indeed be a living epistle known and read of all men within the circle of my influence? -- a workman indeed that need not be ashamed? Can I truly affirm that I am

"All for Jesus, all for Jesus--  
All my being's ransomed powers;  
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,  
All my days and all my hours"?

If so, then we are just narrow-minded enough to say, This one thing I do; and I make everything else bend to this one thing of showing forth God's praises and helping others into his marvelous light. And to this end I cultivate and use what talents I possess as a wise steward of my heavenly Master...

Paul was a plain uncompromising teacher. When he knew he had the truth, he spoke it with confidence, and boldly declared that everything contrary to it was false doctrine; and he taught his disciples that it was not only their privilege, but their duty also, to be *established* in the faith and to know, on the evidence of God's Word, why they believed, and to be able to give to every man that inquired for it a reason for the hope that was in them.

There is among Christians today a great lack of established faith on any point of doctrine. They say, "I think," "I hope," or "Perhaps it may be so, but this is only my opinion, and it may be right or it may be wrong. I have charity, however, for your opposing opinion, and for every man's opin-

ion; for who knows which is right? I'm sure I cannot say; but, nevertheless, I have *great faith* and charity... In Christian love I bid them all Godspeed and pray for the success of all their teachings, no matter how antagonistic they may be to each other or to the Scriptures as I read them.

All this passes among Christians generally for large-hearted benevolence and personal humility, while in fact it is an ignoble, compromising spirit that is unwilling to forego the friendship of those who oppose the Lord by opposing the truth; and which would rather see the truth suffer, and those weak in the faith stumbled, than that they should bear the reproach of Christ."

(Phil 3:8-10 KJV) "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, (9) And be found in him... (10) That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship [koinōnia] of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"

C209 "And suffering with Christ, we have seen, is not the ordinary suffering, common to all in the fallen state, but only such sufferings as are the results, more or less directly, of the following of Christ's example, in advocating unpopular truths and in exposing popular errors. Such were the causes of the sufferings of Christ; and such will be the causes of persecution, suffering and loss to all who follow in his footsteps. They will have fellowship in his sufferings now, and in the end will be accounted worthy to share

in the reward of such faithfulness to principle. This, throughout the Gospel age, has meant self-sacrificing labor and endurance of reproach in the sowing and watering of the seed of Christ's doctrines"

R310 "When Luther discovered how fully Papacy filled the picture given by Paul, in 2Thes. 2:3-8, and the symbols of Rev. 17, he felt justified by that knowledge, in publicly denouncing that system... Luther would have been unworthy the knowledge and the honor of being the Lord's mouthpiece, had he been too cowardly to speak.... As in Luther's and Paul's day, so now, those too indolent or too cowardly to express truth which they see, prove both by word and act that they are unworthy of the knowledge"

R2127 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)  
**GOD'S "PECULIAR PEOPLE"**

*"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew 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."--1 Pet. 2:9,10.*

WE LOOK in vain for this "holy nation" amongst the various nations of the world today. The pathway of even the best of those denominating themselves Christian nations is marked with blood and violence and various evidences of selfish rapine. The very best of them would fall far short of any reasonable standard of holiness. They are all, as the Scriptures declare, parts of the kingdom of darkness under the prince of darkness, "the prince of this world," who still rules the "kingdoms of this world."

This "holy nation" was founded by our Lord Jesus, and had no existence before his advent. The basis upon which it was founded was the "ransom for all" which he gave at Calvary, and the beginning of the construction of his kingdom was at Pentecost. Since then it has progressed after a manner which is adapted to his purposes, tho very contrary to the manner of the world and the nations of earth. It is unknown to the worldly, as it is written, "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not."

This Kingdom is an ecclesiastical Kingdom--a Church-Kingdom; but even if we look amongst the numerous church-kingdoms which have sprung up in the world (each of which claims to be the kingdom of God's dear Son), we find that this "holy nation" or Kingdom is none of these. It is not the Roman Catholic church or ecclesiastical kingdom, nor the Greek church, nor the Armenian, nor the church of England, nor the Methodist church, nor the Lutheran, nor the Presbyterian, nor the Baptist, nor the Congregationalist. These all may have amongst their millions some members of this "little flock," this "holy nation," this true Kingdom class which the Lord is selecting; but none of these institutions *is* the Lord's Kingdom; none of them contains all who are his. There is only one record in the universe that enrolls all the members of this "holy nation" or Kingdom: it is called, "The Lamb's Book of Life." Hence, if we examine church history, we shall no more find this "holy nation," this holy ecclesiastical Kingdom, than amongst the temporal kingdoms. The historians knew not of the true "holy nation;" they saw and knew and recounted the incidents of the human organizations, called "Christ's kingdoms," but they knew nothing of the true one. Altho it has existed from the day of Pentecost to the present time, it has always been the kingdom of heaven *suffering violence*--despised and rejected of men, insignificant and ignored in the sight of the world.--Matt. 11:12.

The reason for this is that it is <sup>{1}</sup> a "peculiar people"-- not peculiar in dress, nor in manners, nor in language, nor in foolish, senseless forms and idiosyncrasies; but peculiar in that it is separate from the world and the spirit of the world. It has the spirit of Christ--a spirit of full consecration to the Lord, and separateness from the world and its selfish aims. It is peculiar in its adherence to the Word of the Lord as its only law. It is peculiar in that it rejects worldly wisdom when it conflicts with the divine revelation. It is peculiar in that it is in the world, but not of the world. It is peculiar in that it has a decided faith and acts in harmony with its faith, and with zeal. It is peculiar in that it is self-sacrificing and knows no will but the will of

its King. It is peculiar in that it knows the truth and is able to give a reason for the hope within, while others merely speculate and wonder and doubt.

The King, when establishing this Kingdom, forewarned all who would be of it that, in proportion as they possessed his character and his truth, and were thus "children of the light," and likenesses of himself, who was "the Light of the world,"--in that proportion they would have the enmity of the world and the opposition of the flesh and the devil to withstand and overcome. In view of his forewarnings, "Marvel not if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you;" "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but now ye are not of the world; because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;" "Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" in view of these admonitions it should not surprise us that the nations of the world (political and ecclesiastical kingdoms) have always hated and persecuted the individuals composing this "holy nation." They seem to realize an antagonism, however little it may be expressed. This "holy nation" looks to a higher King and higher laws than any by which others are governed, and as Herod sought to destroy "him who was born king of the Jews," so the various worldly nations have sought (under the influence of the prince of this world) to hinder the development of this holy nation as antagonistic to their systems.

Nevertheless, we note the care with which the apostles pointed out that all who compose this holy nation shall, so far as possible, "live peaceably with all men"--avoiding strife and contentions, except where principles are involved; and even when contending "earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," to manifest the spirit of meekness and patient forbearance, that "whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." He urges, therefore, all of the holy nation, saying, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake...For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God...For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully....For even *hereunto were ye called*: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."-- 1 Pet. 2:13-23.

Thus the King of this "holy nation" set for every member of it an example that they should walk in his footsteps. He declared that his Kingdom was not of this world; consequently neither does the Kingdom power of this "holy nation" belong to this present age. It awaits the return of the King himself, who said, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself." He has promised, moreover, that when he comes again it will not be in a body of humiliation for sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the world--for this sacrifice he has already accomplished to the full: He comes to reign, and has promised that his "holy nation" shall be associated with him in the

<sup>{1}</sup> May 20 Manna, Tit. 2:14

reign of righteousness, wherewith he will "bless all the families of the earth."

But we notice further the Apostle's statement that this "holy nation" or Kingdom is also a "royal priesthood." We look amongst the priesthoods of earth, but we find that the priestly office is distinctly kept separate from the kingly office, everywhere. Indeed, they are generally antagonistic. The kings and royal families usually represent the highest developments of ambition and self-gratification: the priests of earth, theoretically at least, present sacrifices, and thus seek to make atonement for sins. Priests do not exercise kingly authority, nor kings condescend to priestly services. But in this "peculiar people" the priesthood and kingship are united.

It was so with the King himself,--as a *priest* he offered up his own life, unselfishly, for the redemption and blessing of others. As a *King* he still has the same unselfish character and will use his kingly office to carry forward to all mankind, and make available to all, the blessings, liberties and privileges purchased with his own precious blood. His reign will be for this very purpose;--and for the establishment of righteousness and the extirpation of evil and those who adhere to it. The King himself is the great High priest of this "peculiar people," this "holy nation," this "royal priesthood;" and it is required of each individual member of this "holy nation" that he shall be a *priest*; that he shall be a *sacrificer*; that he shall partake so much of the loving and generous disposition of the King that he will desire to do good unto all men, as he may have opportunity, especially to "the household of faith;" and that he shall lay down his life for the brethren--in the service of the truth, in their interest. In these and all respects they must all be conformed to the image of God's dear Son.--Rom. 8:29.

This experience as sacrificers in this present time as sufferers for righteousness' sake, as tempted and tried and able to sympathize with the weak and the erring, is a necessary part of the educational discipline which must be undergone by this priesthood before they are accounted ready to enter the honors and powers of their divine kingdom, as representatives and associates of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Nor does their priesthood end when their kingly powers begin, for it is written concerning their future reign,--"Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10,11.) This "peculiar people," this "holy kingdom" or nation all of whom are "royal" priests, has a great work to do when established in the kingdom power; for it is none other than the promised "Seed of Abraham," which, according to the divine promise, is to have entrusted to it the great work of blessing all the families of the earth, by bringing them to the knowledge of the Lord, and into harmony, if they will, with the New Covenant sealed by the precious blood of the King. As explained by the Apostle Paul (Gal. 3:16,29), the King himself is the head of this "seed," this "peculiar people," this "royal priesthood;" and they are reckonedly members of his body, and with him they complete this holy seed to which is committed the work of blessing.--Rom. 11:31.

Israel after the flesh, the natural seed of Abraham, supposed that they would have inherited this great privilege and honor, of being the divine representatives in blessing and enlightening the world; but when the King came unto them as "his own," they received him not, as a nation, but to as many as received him, the faithful remnant, to them gave he "liberty to become the *sons of God*" and members of this "peculiar people," this "royal priesthood;" and he then visited the Gentiles to take out of them suitable ones of sufficient number to complete this foreordained priesthood. This "royal priesthood" then, be it noticed, is not the priesthood of Levi, even as this "holy nation" is not the nation of Israel. It is a *new* priesthood, a *new* people and a *new* nation, which never before had any existence, "which in times past was not a nation," and was not a priesthood, but now is become the people of God, the "royal priesthood," the "holy nation."

The Apostle notes still another distinctive feature pertaining to this "peculiar people," saying that it is a "chosen generation" or race. How strange it would at first seem that the Apostle should speak of this peculiar people, gathered out from amongst various races, Jews and Gentiles, as being a special, particularly *chosen race*: as though they were a different family entirely from the remainder of mankind. If tribal relationship be understood, is not this "peculiar people" a mixture of all the races? And if all humanity be considered, are not these "peculiar people" of the *same race* as the remainder of mankind?

Ah, no! they are a new race, a race separate and distinct from all others. True, they once were of the same race, and some belonged to one branch or family and some to another; but their King,

in calling them to be this "holy nation," set aside entirely their previous genealogy and started them as a new race. As members of the Adamic race they were already slaves of sin and under condemnation of death; but their Master and King, who redeemed them from sin and death, opened the way for a full completion of the great divine purpose, and they were *begotten again*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:3.) They are therefore "*new creatures*" in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 6:15.) To them old things have passed away, and all things have become *new*.--2 Cor. 5:17.

The apostle therefore was right in his declaration that these are a different generation or race from others of mankind. He was right also in speaking of them as a "*chosen generation*"--the race which God himself is selecting for the accomplishment of his great and wonderful plan, first declared to Abraham, but not understood, and expected to be fulfilled in Abraham's literal posterity. In reality this salvation "*began*" to be preached by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3.) True, God has certain provisions and blessings in reservation for the natural seed of Abraham, and let us remember that to them also came the first opportunity, and the first place, in this new, select, spiritual race or "chosen generation." The Head or Chief of this chosen race, the twelve subordinate chiefs, the apostles, and many of the other members of this "holy nation" came from the literal seed of Abraham; but as a whole the natural seed was not worthy to become the "chosen race" or generation; but only to as many of them as received him (Christ), to them gave he liberty to become the "*sons of God*,"--by *regeneration*.--John 1:11,12.

Grasping the full statement of the Apostle with reference to this peculiar people, this holy nation, this new or regenerated race, this royal priesthood, we can see readily that none of the human systems or organizations of earth, past or present, fit these demands. But we can see also that the conditions are well fulfilled in a "little flock" of which we may find scattered members here and there to-day, and all the way back to Pentecost. They are all self-sacrificing priests, who serve the living God through Christ Jesus acceptably, by serving one another, and all men as they have opportunity, and in general serving the gospel. Fully consecrated to God, and their imperfections (unintentional) all covered by the merit of the Redeemer, they are indeed a "holy nation," with higher and different aims from those of the world, and with a different spirit, they are indeed a peculiar people. And the royalty of their priesthood, altho unknown to the world at present, shall be revealed in due time; for it is declared by the inspired Word, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."--Rom. 8:19,22.

When the glory of these sons of God, this chosen race, this royal priesthood, shall be revealed in the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, during the Millennium, the entire groaning creation--the whole race of Adam, condemned in Eden, but ransomed at Calvary--shall be blessed by this great "Seed of Abraham." Instead of their groanings they may have joy and peace, through accepting the blessed arrangements of the New Covenant; and as a result, by the close of the Millennial age, all who will may have experienced the blessings of the divine promise, "God shall wipe away tears from off all faces and turn away the reproach for being his people." Then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."--Rev. 21:4,5.

Is it any wonder that the Apostle declares that each and all of these "peculiar people" should make it the first, the chief, practically the only business of life, "to show forth the praises [the virtues of character and plan] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light?" And the showing or the telling of these is the preaching of the gospel, whether it be done in public or in private, by word of mouth or by printed page. And this, the chief business of the peculiar people, begun now, will continue to be their business throughout the future, tho under more favorable circumstances, in the majesty of the Kingdom, with power to enforce the wise and just and wholesome laws, and with love and mercy to help and to succor the weak and the erring, and gradually to restore them, if they will, to *all that was lost* in Adam.

What a wonderful gospel! What a wonderful privilege to be permitted to engage in its proclamation in any manner! Truly, all of the peculiar people can appreciate the testimony of the great Apostle Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."