

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Grant Cross

The Year of Jubilee was a Hebrew festival and the most exalted year of the Jewish calendar. It crowned a cycle of seven sabbatical years, occurring every fiftieth year, thus completing each half-century; the year following being the first of a new cycle of sabbatical years. The weekly sabbaths secured rest for the individual, the sabbatical year for the land, and jubilee for the nation. According to Usher, the first jubilee occurred 1395 B. C. The observance of the sabbatical year and of jubilee early began to be neglected by the Hebrews, and there is no account of the latter ever having been observed after the Babylonian captivity, but the year continued to be reckoned in the Jewish calendar.

The origin of the word "jubilee" is doubtful. Josephus records that it means "liberty"; and this was indeed the intention of the festival. Learned rabbis state that the trumpets used in announcing jubilee were made of rams' horns, and termed yobel, the translation of which is jubilee.

The jubilee year began the first of Tizri, the first month of the Jewish civil year. The first nine days was a time of festivity, men and women wearing crowns. On the tenth came the great Day of Atonement, a time of national humiliation before God, the observance of which is described in Leviticus, chapter 15. After the sacrifices of this solemn day were ended, the priests ordered the jubilee trumpets to be sounded, the joyful notes of which proclaimed liberty through all the land; the alienated lands were returned to their hereditary owners, and all Hebrew bond-servants were declared free. The wisdom of such a law is evident; it prevented the rich from gaining permanent possession of all the land, and the reducing of the poor to lifelong slavery. Jubilee was designed to be the ever-recurring period of civil and social restoration.

In the Jewish economy it frequently happened that a Hebrew, through dire necessity, was forced to forfeit his possession, originally allotted to his ancestors in the division of the land of Canaan. The land could not be unredeemably sold, for it belonged to God, the great Landlord, who had granted to each family an equal portion, of which the Israelites were but tenants. When alienating his inheritance, the Hebrew received for it a sum of money reckoned according to the number of harvests to be reaped between the date of sale and the coming jubilee year. Should he or any of his relatives desire to redeem the possession before jubilee, they could do so by paying the value of all the harvests between the year of redemption and jubilee.

Dwellings and business houses in walled cities, when sold, if not redeemed within a year after the transfer, became the permanent possession of the purchaser. This rule did not apply to dwellings in unwalled cities and country places, for such were considered as belonging to the inheritance on which they stood. Possessions consecrated to the Lord, if not redeemed before jubilee, became devoted to the divine service forever.

The Hebrew whom necessity had led to sell himself into the service of another Hebrew was treated not as a slave, but as a bond-servant. The Israelites were considered as the Lord's servants whom He had redeemed from Egyptian bondage, therefore could not be considered as the slaves of others. They were typical of God's children in this gospel dispensation. A Hebrew bondsman was redeemable at any time by his kinsmen, the price of his redemption being regulated by the

number of years between his redemption and jubilee. **Foreigners remained bondsmen forever.**

The year of jubilee resembled a sabbatical year in some respects. There was to be no plowing, sowing, reaping or storing. The earth and trees were left to produce spontaneously and their products were to be the common property of all, including foreigners and the beasts of the field. The year was to be held sacred unto the Lord and devoted to school and instruction, to the reading of the law, holy life and religious devotion in a spirit of thanksgiving and of rejoicing.

The Roman Catholic Church observes jubilee year from Christmas to Christmas every twenty-five years. During this time plenary (full) indulgence can be obtained by all Catholics by complying with prescribed conditions. St. Peter's and St. Paul's in Rome were first made jubilee churches, and subsequently others.

The Roman Catholic jubilee dates back to Boniface VIII, to whom it was suggested by a great influx of pilgrims to Rome. He issued a bull providing for the observance of a jubilee year once in a century. Clement VI changed the time to fifty years, Urban VI to thirty-three years, and Paul II further reduced the time to twenty-five years.

On Christmas eve of jubilee year the Pope in a processional approaches the walled-up door of St. Peter's, knocks three times and repeats in Latin, "Open to me the gates of righteousness." The doorway is then unwalled and sprinkled with holy water and the Pope passes through. Other jubilee churches observe the same ceremony, cardinals officiating. At the close of the jubilee year these doors are again walled up with solemn rites.

The great Jubilee yet to come (See Acts 3:21 and Rom. 8:21.) will be the restoration of all things, when even creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of the curse and forever restored to the heavenly state. The year of jubilee as originally observed was a vivid type of sanctification which implies complete deliverance from the bondage of sin and the carnal nature, the soul being restored to purity and innocence.—Pillar of Fire.

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Rev. B. A. Hammond.

This was God's message to the Ephesian church through His servant Paul. We believe that it was given not only to them, but to us as well.

You will notice that this is a command from the Lord given through Paul to the children of God. It is not spoken to the world. It is wrong to disobey and ignore this command.

Since it is commanded, it is a possibility and a privilege. It is not an ideal beyond our reach, it is a possibility. It is God's gift. It was even bought by the precious Blood of Christ.

It is important that we be filled with the Spirit. Our experience is not complete without it. "Be filled!" It is an equipment for service. It is an anointing for service. Did not Jesus command His disciples to tarry until they were endued with power from on high? We, like them, have a great task to perform and a great enemy to meet. Without this filling we are not prepared.

This is a purifying fire. It purges from carnality and selfishness. It fills with the love of God, and faith and hope. It offsets unbelief and discouragement and indifference. It fills with a holy "go."

The church filled with the Spirit will be filled with evangelistic power and fire. Revivals will break out, and souls will be saved. It makes the

children of God real witnesses for God. They will witness through their lives the reality of salvation. "When He is come He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." My friends, the world needs this demonstration. Then folks will witness for Christ by word of mouth. They cannot help it. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The Holy Spirit gave the apostles boldness and liberty to speak. He does today. The folks filled with the Spirit will have a better understanding of Christ and His work and resurrection, for He comes to reveal the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is a Comforter. Those who are filled are satisfied. A taste might make you uneasy, but to be filled contents the heart. To be filled with the Spirit is a normal and healthy condition.

If you want some examples of those who were filled, look at Peter, John Wesley, Bishop Asbury, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody. Then consider their work for God. They did a great work because they were filled with the Spirit. If we try to labor without this filling we will be like an engine trying to work with only a little steam, when it needs full pressure.

How to be filled: See your need of it. Consecrate for it. Pray, ask, tarry. Believe that it is for us all today who meet conditions, and that God wants to fill you, and that He will do it now.

God commands us to be filled with the Spirit. If we are not, we will be held responsible for what good we could do if we had obeyed. What are we going to do about it? Let us pray to be filled—Wesleyan Methodist.

Hickory Corners, Mich.

GOOD READING A HELP TO HOLY LIFE.

"Other things equal," says Faber, "a person beginning the spiritual life with a taste for reading has a much greater chance both of advancing and of persevering than one who is destitute of such a taste. He who begins a devout life without it may consider the ordinary difficulties of such a life multiplied in his case by ten. It is not easy to think out for ourselves even very obvious things. Reading suggests them to us. It increases the light round about us, and also the light within us. We gain time by appropriating through books the experience of others. We learn methods which shorten roads. It is the common rule that an ill-instructed person can never attain any considerable heights of devotion. He must have a knowledge of spiritual things, and even some knowledge of theology."—The Way of Faith.

THE FINAL RELIGION

Christianity is the final religion. There are people today who are looking for a religion that will be an amalgam of all the best religions in the world. There is something attractive about that thought, but is it true? I do not deny that there are valuable elements in all the religions. Is a combination of these to be the one and final world religion, or have we that already? Christ Himself is God's last Word. The Theosophists are looking for a greater, but we know from the New Testament that a greater need not be expected. The Christ has come. I speak quite reverently when I say that God has exhausted His vocabulary. He has spoken His last word. If there is any hope for this world, it is to be found in Christ. If it cannot be found in Christ it can not be found at all.—W. Graham Scroggie.