

***J. N. DARBY'S TEACHING
REGARDING
DISPENSATIONS, AGES,
ADMINISTRATIONS
AND THE TWO PARENTHESIS***

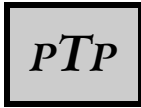
INCLUDING:

A reply to ultradispensationalism;

***A reply to the charge that dispensationalism is
inherently Arminian; and,***

***A reply to the charge that the kingdom offer
makes God immoral.***

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Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Preface	iii
Chapter 1: God's Glory in Christ Manifested in Two Spheres	1
Chapter 2: God's Government in the Earth Introduced God's Dispensational Ways and Governmental Administrations	7
Chapter 3: Abraham: Election, Calling and Promise	23
Chapter 4: Israel: Government and Calling Combined	31
Chapter 5: The Two Parentheses	43
Chapter 6: The End of the Trial of the First Man at the Cross, and the Consequence for the Christian	59
Chapter 7: The Mystery and the Rapture	67
Chapter 8: The Ruin of the Church	73
Chapter 9: The Millenium	79
Notes	88
Appendix 1: Did J. N. Darby Systematize Dispensational Truth?	95
Appendix 2: The Opening of the Heavenly Parenthesis: An Answer to So-called Ultradispensationalism	99
Appendix 3: Is "Dispensationalism" Inherently Arminian?	137
Appendix 4: An objection to the Offer of the Kingdom by an 'Authentic Calvinist'	159
Notes for the Appendices	167
Bibliography	173

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Preface

It was originally intended that J. N. Darby's (hereafter JND) teaching regarding dispensational truth be included in *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 1, but it grew too long. Appendix One contains some comments on whether or not C. I. Scofield built on JND. Additionally, it was thought to add an Appendix Two to critique "ultradispensationalism" from the standpoint of the truth recovered through JND. And finally, the publication of a book characterizing that dispensationalism is inherently Arminian provided motivation to present a survey of the teachings of JND as they bear on "the five points of Calvinism." Thus, Appendix Three will show that JND is rejected by both Calvinists and Arminians. This same book motivated a response to the objection that "the offer of the kingdom," as viewed by dispensationalist, is an immoral offer (Appendix Four).

The body of the book gives a brief survey of J. N. Darby's dispensational teaching, which involves the following:

1. God has one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ. This involves glory in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly.
2. In keeping with this purpose, God has made the Church distinct from Israel, though salvation of all saints is ever and only by grace, in view of the atoning work of Christ. The body of Christ, of which Israel is not a part, is composed of saints seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), and this constitutes them a heavenly people, while Israel is an earthly people and shall be established in the land by sovereign power. All Israel will then be saved (Rom. 11:26, etc), the rebels having been purged (Ezek. 20), etc.
3. It is most important to understand the truth concerning the two men (1 Cor. 15:47). The first man is man viewed in Adamic standing under testing -- to bring out his state; and this testing ended with the cross. In the rejection of the Son of the Father man was finally and fully proved to be totally depraved. Then Christ took His place above and became head of a body, formed by the baptism in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 32,32), united to the Head in glory. The gathering in of Christ's heavenly coheirs is a heavenly work going on until the era arrives when a remnant of Israel will be prepared for Messiah's coming in power and glory. This heavenly work was not foreseen by the O. T. prophets and is a "mystery" (Rom. 16:25,26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9).
4. Before the last week (seven years) of Daniel's 70 weeks, the pretribulation rapture of the saints will occur. After the close of that week, the Lord will execute the second phase of His coming. He will come to establish the millennial kingdom and reign for 1000 literal years.
5. Strictly speaking, dispensations are not identical to distinguishable time periods or to ages, though the word dispensation is often so used. To understand dispensational truth it is important to distinguish between 1) an age, i. e., a distinguishable time period, and 2) a dispensation.¹ Strictly speaking, they are not the same thing. However, the word dispensation is conventionally used for an age. JND so used the word dispensation conventionally also, and it must be discerned where he did and where he did not use the word conventionally.

JND cited some examples of dispensations such as priesthood, judges and kingship in Israel. These are not ages but something that God dispensed.

6. Certain time periods, which I will call administrations, in an effort to clarify JND's teaching, have an essential and characterizing element, namely *government*, introduced with Noah. With Moses, the principle of God's *calling* was combined

with government. These are the first two of the three administrations. The Gentiles do not have this calling of God during the times of the Gentiles. Moreover, the church does not have government placed in its hands, though the saints have a heavenly calling. Thus, there has been no third administration yet. But Christ will make good, to God's glory both calling and government, wherein the first man has failed. The third, the last of the three administrations, will be the millennial kingdom. The ways of God *in government* is an essential component of an administration -- for these have to do with God's ways in the earth.

7. The time wherein the church is called is not, properly speaking, a dispensation or an administration. The first man, as such, is no longer under testing since the cross, because he no longer has a position before God. The testing of the first man *now* would mean that God is not finished with man in his Adamic standing. But he is removed, and the last Adam is established.
8. It may be seen from all this that the times of the Gentiles forms an earthly parenthesis of judgment on Israel. It is an earthly parenthesis of the times of the Gentiles until *both government and calling* are taken up by Christ and made good by sovereign power, by Christ, during the millennium.
9. Within the earthly parenthesis of judgment on Israel is a heavenly parenthesis of saints being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). No saints before, and none after, will partake of this special, heavenly position and blessing. Therefore it has been called a "heavenly parenthesis."

These and other truths will be traced in the following pages without pretending to completeness.

Chapter 1

God's Glory in Christ Manifested in Two Spheres

GOD'S GLORY IN CHRIST

God's glorification in Christ is the reason for the existence of all things. JND wrote:

The first grand and capital point is to have the end and design of God clearly and settledly in mind, so that it should be constantly before us as the key and test of all. For "no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation . . . but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The divine glory is ever the end of all things; but I speak now of the effect of divine counsels in which God glorifies Himself. Now this is altogether in Christ, known in the various glories in which He is revealed. In the church the office of the Holy Ghost, who moved the holy men of old, is to take the things of Christ and shew them to us. Hence, though Jerusalem, or Israel, or even the church, may be that in connection with which Christ may be glorified, it is only as connected with Him that they acquire this importance. So of the word even of the Old Testament scriptures: they are all to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. On the other hand, as it is evident that this alone gives, to whatever subject may be mentioned, its true and just importance, so, if Jerusalem is connected with Christ, with His affections and glory, Jerusalem becomes important; and I get in its connection with Christ, so far as I understand His glory, the key to interpret all that is said of it. It has, in the mind of God, its development in connection with the manifestation of His glory.²

TWO GREAT SUBJECTS AFTER PERSONAL SALVATION

There are two spheres for the display of God's glory in Christ, the heavenly sphere and the earthly sphere. In the dispensation (or administration) of the fullness of times, i.e., the millennium, Christ will head up both (Eph. 1:10). Associated with Christ in this headship are two special companies. Though there are some spiritual blessings both companies possess in common (for example, the new birth) they form two distinct companies in most respects. One company is heavenly and the other company is earthly. In this connection JND wrote the following on Colossians 1:

You thus see the truth about the double headship of Christ -- His being Head of the church, and His being Head over all things; and then the double reconciliation, the present reconciliation and redemption of the church through grace, and then the reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth. Now we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Him by faith, sitting at the right hand of God, until His enemies are made His footstool. And when that time comes, and they are all put under Him, He will take possession, according to the character given to God in the appellation used by Melchizedek when he came out to bless Abraham -- "The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." Thus,

when Christ becomes in all its fullness the King and Priest upon His throne, God will have that title.

We come then to the next thing, which I will just state -- I do not know how far we may be able to go through it this evening. Taking these two statements, that He is to reconcile everything in heaven and earth, and again, that He is to gather together in one, all things which are both in heaven and on earth; we also see, in several of the passages which I have quoted, that the church, or the saints who compose it, are joint-heirs with Him. What I have been seeking to shew you is, that the church of God (all the saints whom in this present time God is gathering by His grace in the gospel) are being associated with Christ, as the center of blessing; that they get the central place with Himself, under whom all possible existences are to be placed. But the time for this which the scripture speaks of is when Christ receives the kingdom and returns, when the dispensation of the fullness of times comes. Then everything will be brought into order and blessedness under the authority of Christ. When God the Father has put everything under His feet, He will bring everything into order, and will then deliver up His kingdom. But the central thing during the dispensation of the fullness of times [the millenium] in the heavenly places will be the church, and the central thing in earthly places will be the Jews.

This brings in what are the two great subjects of holy Scriptures, after personal redemption. The church is that in which He displays sovereign grace, bringing its members to share the glory of Christ. The Jews are those in whom He reveals as a center the government of this world. These are the two great subjects in Scripture after personal salvation. The Scripture speaks of the church of God as those who are associated with Christ, who are the heirs of Christ's glory. But the moment we say this, we cannot but think how wondrous it is that poor wretched creatures like us should be brought into the same glory with Christ -- should be brought into the same place with Himself. And the work of reconciliation is to embrace all things in heaven and on earth.³

GRACE AND GOVERNMENT

Each sphere, the heavenly and the earthly, has its own great leading characteristic. They are, respectively, grace and government. This is not to say that there is no grace at all in God's governmental dealings.

. . . after the question of personal salvation or relationship to God, two great subjects present themselves to us in Scripture: the church, that sovereign grace which gives us a place along with Christ Himself in glory and blessing; and God's government of the world, of which Israel forms the center and the immediate sphere. Only we have to remember that in this government grace must have a part, or it would not be the government of God. It would be simple judicial condemnation, and impossibility of blessing. These ways of God are revealed in Exodus 32, 33, 34, and Deuteronomy 32. The prophets, founding themselves on the law given in Horeb, are sent in grace to seek the fruit which the vine of the Lord's planting ought to have borne. They reproach Israel with not producing it; and solemnly warn the people of the consequences in judgment.

But as God, and therefore grace, was at work, there were the purposes and will of that grace to be revealed: only that it was not in Israel's case made effectual in a simple sovereign gift to the divine glory in a new creation, but in a display of God's ways in divine government in connection with the responsibility of man. This grace must be in Christ, for He is the center of all God's ways. He is the Messiah, then, of the Jews, the King that is to reign in righteousness, and to display fully and in perfection God's immediate

government. (See Psalm 101.) Hence there is a double test applicable in the ways of God in government in Israel. Have they profited by and glorified God in the privileges, in the enjoyment of which they were originally placed? Are they in a condition of which they were originally placed? Are they in a condition to meet Jehovah in glory, coming in the Person of Christ? These two questions may be seen treated in Isaiah 5 and 6.⁴

Nor is this to say that there is no government, meaning in this context the disciplinary ways, of the Father regarding the objects of that grace which presently associates the believer with Christ in the heavenlies. JND wrote, concerning the church:

It is not of the world. It, as such, sits in heavenly places in Christ, where prophecy reaches not. It never will be established on earth, as the Jews. It is not its calling. The government of God will never settle it there in peace.^a His blessing for it will be to take it away from earth, to be with the Lord in the air. A partial application of the Apocalypse to what has the name of the church, but is the power of evil in the world, I do not deny; but this does not make the church a subject of prophecy. Accordingly, we find, as we have said, the church in heaven at the end in connection with the earth, when all is united in Christ; but no account of any dealings of God to establish it, or a progress towards a result of any kind. She is to reign with Christ, and suffer with Him.

The remaining spheres of the display of the glory of the blessed Lord are the Jews and Gentiles, subjects in different degrees of His earthly government, as the church was the full exhibition of His sovereign grace in redemption, which places her in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come God might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. This distinction is full of interest. Man is not governed in introducing him into the church. He is taken as a rebellious lost sinner, a hater of God, a child of wrath, be he Jew or Gentile, and set in the same place as Christ. This is not government, it is grace. The Jews are the center of God's immediate government, morally displayed according to His revealed will. The Gentiles are brought to recognize His power and sovereignty displayed in His dealings with them. I speak of the thing, properly speaking, in its revealed character; **for every sinner in all ages, is saved as such, individually, by grace,**^b and every Christian is under the immediate government of the Father⁵ as of the heavenly family; but even so the object of government is different. With the Christian, it is to prepare him for heaven; with the Jews, on the contrary it is to display God's righteousness on the earth: I speak of them as a body or people. Christ and the church suffer for righteousness, and reign. The Jews, as a people, suffer for sin, and the result of their history will be, "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judgeth the earth."⁶

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT

There is a difference between God's direct government and His providential government.

On another occasion, Daniel spent three weeks in fasting and prayer, for God was trying his faith. The angel was to accomplish the purpose of God before

a. [The government of God will settle Israel in peace, in the earth, during the millennium.]

b. [Emphasis mine. There are persons who have taught several ways of salvation. Such a teaching is obviously not inherent in dispensational truth, and here JND rightly denies such a teaching.]

communicating it; the Lord permitted that the prince of Persia should hinder its accomplishment for three weeks. It was a question of deciding something at the court of Persia, and those there, who were opposed to an edict for favoring the Jews, could put obstacles to its promulgation. When the angel of God had prevailed in these counsels, he came and said so. This is very instructive to us, for God always governs the world. Whilst the throne of God was at Jerusalem, He governed the world immediately (not only Israel but the world, and this according to the good or bad conduct of Israel); whilst after that, although He did not cease to govern everywhere, already (even in this book -- Israel being in captivity) He is seen acting by the secret springs of His providence, and not by the immediate action of the revealed rule of His law, as in the midst of His people.⁷

There is now a providence of God which is a concealed government; but hereafter there will be a manifest and public rule by Christ, when everything will appear -- a government direct from God. There is now a government of arrangement, by which all things are made to "work together for good to them that love God," and for the accomplishment of His purposes; but this action is usually a concealed one. In Esther we have a remarkable instance. The name of God is not found in the book; the Spirit has wished to shew that, whilst the Jews were in captivity, God had His eyes upon them, but that He acted in a hidden manner and would not name Himself in their midst.⁸

GOD'S GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT

JND called attention to this difference:

On the other hand, one sees the world suffering the consequences of the sins of their fathers; the heathen are living witnesses of it. God gave them up to a reprobate mind, Rom. 1:17. Thus we may easily see that we ought accurately to distinguish between the eternal judgment of God and His judicial government of the world; for in reference to His eternal judgment it is said of the Gentiles -- "those who have sinned without law shall perish without law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:12,16) -- the gospel which Paul preached. As to the government of the world, it is said, as to the same Gentiles, "The times of this ignorance God winked at"; for in truth, sin is not reckoned where there is no law. Nevertheless death and sin reigned. Here man inherited the guilt of his fathers, while, in present government, they were not held responsible for their own acts: they were so, indeed, as to eternity, according to the light they had neglected. When God puts Himself in relationship with any people, and places a testimony in the midst of them in such sort that the light of the testimony is cast upon the sin they commit, and in which they continue to walk in spite of the testimony, then God brings, according to His government here below, judgment of all that sin upon the generation which fills up the measure of the evil, so that there is no more room for patience.

As witnesses of this, see the Jews who rejected Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit: all the blood which had been shed since the blood of righteous Abel had to be required of that generation. God had not required it before; He had enlightened them by His law, stirred them up by His prophets, warned them by chastisement, had made an appeal to their whole moral being by the mission of His Son. The very sins of the fathers ought to have been a warning to their children to avoid the same offenses, because, after the sins of the fathers, their offenses were committed in the light. But they persisted therein, and *thence* ~~thence~~ *up* wrath for the day of judgment; and they had to submit to the consequences of

all this, according to the just judgment of God. This in no wise prevents each of their fathers having been and being subject, at the judgment of the dead, to the consequences of his own individual sin; but the nation, the system as a whole, the public object of the government of God in the world, has been judged.⁹

Chapter 2

God's Government in the Earth Introduced God's Dispensational Ways and Governmental Administrations

The Pre-Flood State of Man

THE TRIAL OF MAN

In a certain, and most important, sense there are only two men; two men who are respective heads of races.

The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

Christ is called the *last* Adam because there is no other head after Him. The first man is natural; the second man is spiritual. When we speak of the testing of the first man we are referring to the testing of the race of Adam's headship. The first man had a standing before God in responsibility and was tested by God in various ways until the casting out of Christ. Adam's trial was unique in that he was tested before the fall, when he was "innocent" -- which means that he was ignorant of evil. JND wrote:

We find men tried in every way from innocence to the cross of Christ, and the Son Himself is cast out of the vineyard and slain.¹⁰

However, it was not until after the "innocent" man fell that Adam became the head of a race.

Just as Adam became the head of a race after he sinned, so Christ has become the Head of a race after He has risen.¹¹

After the fall, man was *lost*, though we well know that men will not admit that, and even many Christians will not admit that man is totally lost, though "man as man has been fully tried, and God has set up another man"¹² thus ending the testing of the first man (see ch. 8.6). The history of the O. T. and Christ's coming and rejection give us the history of the testing of the first man. That, having ended in the cross, the second man, Christ, has taken His place as the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45-47). But observe that the trial of man while "innocent" had its own peculiar character and is not one of a sequence of trials having the common character of man being tested in the fallen state. The fall introduced a totally new condition where man as fallen formed a race of men with fallen Adam as head.

Since the fall it was *fallen man* that was under trial by God, not to educate God, of course, but to completely manifest fallen man's condition. The first trial of fallen man occupied the time from the fall until the flood. This age had its own distinct character of testing from the form that the testing took following the flood. The flood marked a distinctly new method in the ways of God's testing of fallen man and that flood broke this

world's history into two parts. This is noted in 2 Pet. 3:6,7 where the pre-flood period is called "the then world" and the post-flood period is referred to as "the present heavens and the earth."

"The then world" was a world of fallen man left to himself without an arranged dealing of God¹³ by which to try man. God did not introduce any arranged order or principle but simply left man to himself. Christians may call that age "the dispensation of conscience" but the fact is that God did not introduce conscience as an arranged order; He simply left man to himself. Now, JND well knew that man was left to his own *conscience*, but he rejected the idea that there were any "dispensations" before the flood. JND has made remarks that there were no dispensations, properly speaking, before the flood.¹⁴ Man was in the garden in "innocence."¹⁵ He also referred to the time between Adam and Noah as "conscience."¹⁶ JND did not believe that Adam had *the* law, but he had *a* law.¹⁷

In the following quotation from an 1838 paper there is a key thought regarding the pre-flood condition: "... there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God."

There is a very clear distinction between the ways of God before and after the deluge. Since the fall, there has always been a people of God, and the world of the ungodly. God has never left Himself without a witness. The prophecies of Enoch were the instruction of the people of God in those days, and the hope of the faithful in our days. Nevertheless, in those times, there was no manifested judgment, no nation, no external call, which formed believers or an elect people into a body acknowledged before God; and there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God. It was a fallen race; and the fallen nature of man shewed itself, and followed its course in spite of the witness of God; and God did nothing until (the evil being intolerable) He swept them from before His face, by a judgment which none could escape, save the little band in the ark; and the world, swallowed up in the waters, perished. God "repented that he had made man," for "the earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence," and God destroyed it.¹⁸

Again:

It is not without interest to note the distinction of God's ways before and after the flood. When Adam was judged, no promise was made to him. The first man had lost all but the judgment he merited, nor could promise be made to sinful flesh. But the total destruction of Satan's power is announced. In judging the serpent, it is declared that the woman's Seed, not Adam (clearly he was not the woman's seed), should bruise the serpent's head. The promises were in Christ. Then, though individuals were dealt with in grace, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, there was no new system or principle set up. Man remained responsible as man; and the earth was lawless, corrupt, and full of violence, and so bad that judgment came, and the world that then was perished. There was no new head and root of promise.¹⁹

THE RULE OF LIFE BEFORE THE FLOOD

There were various considerations that bore on fallen man's behavior before the flood.

The rule of life for unfallen Adam was consistency with the innocent nature and place of blessing in which God had set him. He should have felt and walked in consistency with this.

To continue man's subsequent history briefly and see what rule of life is before us in scripture -- warnings, we know, were given, as by Enoch and Noah, but the scene after the fall ended in the flood. The power of evil in corruption

and violence was judged. For them the knowledge of God (brought with them from the beginning), conscience, the testimony of these prophets, with the witness of God in the creation, was the rule by which they would be judged. So others, as the apostles, teach us after them. It is evident when God was revealed -- as to Enoch -- the true knowledge of God as far as given in grace would guide.²⁰

What is a Dispensation?

DISPENSATIONS AND DISTINGUISHABLE TIME PERIODS.

While there is a distinguishable time period from Adam's fall until the deluge, that does not constitute it, strictly speaking, a dispensation.

During the period which transpired between the expulsion of Adam from the terrestrial paradise and the deluge, man was one family, one race. There was no idolatry. Man was left to his own ways (not without witness, but without restraint from without), and the evil became insupportable: the deluge put an end to it. After this event -- this judgment of God, a new world began, and the principle of government was introduced. He who should kill a man should himself be put to death: a curb was put upon violence, a bridle on outward sin. The corruption of the heart in a world at a distance from God remained just as it was. But although there were as yet no nations, the destiny of various races, such as it has been to the present day, began to dawn at least prophetically. Noah failed in the position in which he had been placed after the deluge, as Adam had failed in paradise, as man has always done; as every creature has done which has not been directly sustained of God.²¹

Since numbers of readers have been accustomed to thinking of "innocence" and "conscience" as dispensations, the fact that JND did not accept the idea that there were any dispensations before the flood will raise the question, 'What did he mean by a "dispensation"?' For one thing, he did not attach to the word the importance that some persons do:

I do not hold to the word dispensation, although it is generally used to specify a certain state of things, established by the authority, during a given period.²²

Be that as it may, it is clear that he did not think that every distinguishable time period was a dispensation. There was a necessary element that needed to be present for an age to be a dispensation:

A dispensation is any arranged dealing of God in which man has been set before his fall,^c and having been tried, has failed, and therefore God has been obliged to act by other means.²³

In fact, *the introduction of dispensation hinged on the introduction of government.* In an address in June 1839 at a gathering at Leamington JND pointed out:

Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves.

c. [He means a fall with respect to the arranged order and dealing of God; for example, as Noah becoming drunken after receiving government.]

There was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth. We find even in this, that God acts in the grace of His own character. Noah was a faithful witness; in him was the great principle [of faith], though this was not strictly a dispensation.²⁴

THE WORD *AION*.

Concerning the word *aion*, age, JND wrote:

. . . formed from *aion*. This latter word is used in classical Greek writers for "man's life," and in scripture for "a dispensation" (or course of events in this world ordered of God on some particular principle . . .).²⁵

Here again we see that he understood that in order for there to be a dispensation it required the introduction of some particular principle on God's part. It is insufficient for one to merely distinguish an *aion*, or age, and, *strictly speaking*, call it a dispensation. So, strictly speaking, dispensations have to do with the trial of the first man during the ages from the flood to the cross, after which God set up the second Man in resurrection.^d This should be kept in mind also in view of the fact that JND often used the word dispensation, in a conventional way, when speaking of the present period.

HEBREWS 9:26 AND 1 CORINTHIANS 10:11.

There are a number of interesting remarks bearing on our subject in JND's comments on Heb. 9:26 and 1 Cor. 10:11, which, in his translation, read:

But now once, in the consummation of the ages he has been manifested for [the] putting away of sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 9:26).

Now all these things happened to them [as] types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor 10:11).

JND wrote:

The Lord said (John 12:31), in speaking of His death, "Now is the judgment of this world"; and in John 15:24, "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Therefore it says, in Hebrews 9:26, "Now once in the *end* of the worlds hath he appeared." The cross was morally the *end* of man; but at the same time, and by the same fact in the death of Christ, was laid the foundation of the new creation according to the righteousness of God. The same fact which on God's part has made an end of the first Adam, inasmuch as his race rejected the Son of God, has also laid the foundation of the new condition of man in the *second* [last] Adam. Christ was made sin on the cross; sin was there judged, and the old man forever set aside.²⁶

The "end of the ages," or "consummation of the ages," are all the dealings of God with man to test his general condition. In this general sense the state of innocence came in; but the proper connection is what comes after the fall, yet not looking at man as lost, but testing his state and whether he was recoverable; or was lost and had to be saved. Without law; under law; God manifested in the flesh, were the great features of this [testing of the first man]. Hence in John 12 the Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world." Though there was testimony there were no religious institutions before the flood, unless the fact of sacrifices.

d. I suggest that in view of the fact that there are no dispensations after the cross, W. Kelly was the more consistent in translating οἰκονομία as "administration." See Table 1, below. However, in his writings JND affirmed that in Eph 1:10 the word signifies "administration."

There were after: government; promises to Abraham, showing it was grace to one separated from an idolatrous world and head of a new race [not an accurate description]; the law; the prophets; and at last the Son as come, not as deferred. Then God laid the foundation of His own purposes in righteousness.²⁷

The expression, "the ends of the ages," which will be found in 1 Corinthians 10:11, is rather strange; but to preserve the sense of the Greek, we could not say "the last times," any more than "the end of the ages," still less "the end of the world." The end of the ages was not yet come; but all the ~~different~~ dispensations by which God had put Himself in relation with man, so far as they were connected with man's responsibility, had come to one point, and were brought to an end in the death of the Lord Jesus. After that -- great as had been His long-suffering -- God established a new creation. We have therefore used the literal translation, "the ends of the ages."²⁸

Thus it was morally the consummation of the ages.²⁹

... because man's moral history is ended -- grace is not ended.³⁰

"In the end of the world," i. e., in the end of the dispensations -- not dispensation -- "in the completion of the ages, Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Consequently I get Christ's work as the ground upon which I am already with God.³¹

[Concerning 1 Cor. 10:11] It is not Israel who is the figure, but that which happened to Israel -- the ways of God with Israel. The things themselves happened to Israel; they were written for our instruction who find ourselves at the close of God's dispensations.³²

It is clear from scripture that the first man is no longer under testing since Christ was rejected and so we "find ourselves at the close of God's dispensations." Thus there is no dispensational trial now:

In [1 Cor. 10] verse 11 the "ends of the world" is the completion [consummation] of the ages. To me the world is not now under any dispensation, but the whole course of God's dealings with it are over until He comes to judgment. Man was under responsibility from Adam to Christ, and then our Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world."³³

What about the present time, then?

The scripture, the Lord Himself there, does speak of periods carried on under God on different principles (which are very justly called dispensations), whereas one of the writer's periods is never called *οικονομία*, nor is this word ever applied to, nor does it mean, a period at all. "So shall it be in the end of *this age*" (του αἰῶνος τούτου), says the Lord. (Matt. 13). So He appeared *ἐπι συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰῶνων*. (Heb. 9). Now *αἰὼν* clearly signifies, in such passages, a period or course of time in which certain principles have sway on God's part. Thus until the end of the age, judgment, which plucks up out of this world, is not to be executed by the Lord's servants; whereas, in the end of it, judgment will gather out of the kingdom of the Son of man all scandals. And hence it is also that this present time is called (not I judge a dispensation, but) a parenthesis, because the Lord Jesus speaks of "this age" when He was upon earth, as the same as that which will close by judgment at the end; but this was a period connected with His relationship with Jews, and which will not be closed till He is again present in person; whereas, in the interval, the Church of the first-born has been gathered for heaven.³⁴

The above quotation requires some thought on the part of the reader in order to digest its contents. The chart found at the end of this chapter illustrates these thoughts and may

help in apprehending them.

THE WORD ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ.

There is another word in the N. T. besides αἰον (age) that bears on our subject: οἰκονομία, translated stewardship, or dispensation or administration. A table of its usage may be helpful here.

TABLE 1

VERSE	KJV	J. N. DARBY	W. KELLY
Luke 16:2,3,4	stewardship	stewardship	stewardship
1 Cor. 9:17	dispensation	dispensation	administration
Eph. 1:10	dispensation	dispensation	administration
Eph. 3:2	dispensation	administration	administration
Eph. 3:9	fellowship	administration	administration
Col. 1:25	dispensation	dispensation	stewardship
1 Tim. 1:4	edifying	dispensation	dispensation

JND denied that the word οἰκονομία signifies a period:

But I deny entirely that the Adamic state is called an οἰκονομία, or that οἰκονομία signified period anywhere.³⁵

In connection with this fact, he remarked:

But there is another word which is employed in scripture, which does give distinct periods . . . which Christians in general call dispensations, as when the principles on which they are carried on are distinct; namely αἰων and αἰωσες. Of these scripture does speak, but it never speaks of οἰκονομία as a period at all.

However, there is a coming administration (Eph. 1:10) that will be in force during the 1000 year reign of Christ as we shall see in the next quotation where JND says that the word means "administration."

. . . οἰκονομία does not mean headship of creation at all, but administration; . . . I give the passage literally: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself for the administration of the fullness of times, [namely] to head up all things in Christ, the things in heaven and the things on earth, in Him in whom we have an inheritance,' etc. Now here οἰκονομία, administration, is as simple a word as possible. The particular kind of administration is heading up all things in Christ.

Concerning a misuse of the word "dispensation" and the present, JND said:

And see what extraordinary confusion Mr. Oliver introduces into his criticism of that word. "The present dispensation is the dispensation of the grace of God" (p. 111). But this passage is merely speaking of a ministry confided to Paul -- "if ye have heard of the dispensation (ministry, οἰκονομία) of the grace of God which is given me to youward." Here we see the meaning which I have pointed out -- the primitive sense of the word; it is someone to whom the distribution and administration in the house have been entrusted. But can one say that the present dispensation, in the ordinary sense of the word, was entrusted to Paul? That would be ridiculous.

In 1 Corinthians 9:16,17, the word of evangelization is said to be an

administration (oikonomia) which is entrusted to him. Once more let me ask, was the present dispensation, in the sense in which everyone takes it, confided to Paul? The apostle used the word "stewards" (1 Cor . 4) in the same sense, applying it to ministry.³⁸

The time during which the saints are seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), then, strictly speaking, is not a dispensation. Moreover, it is not an administration; for while the saints now are called and seated in the heavenlies, they do not have government committed to them, as Israel did. The present period is a parenthesis, a "heavenly parenthesis," as W. Kelly aptly called it. It is a heavenly parenthesis of being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, which saints before Pentecost were not, nor shall future saint saints after the rapture be so seated, though we saints ever shall. This is illustrated on the chart at the end of this chapter. And this brings us to the consideration of the introduction of the first dispensation.

Government is the First Dispensation

THE DISPENSATION OF GOVERNMENT

In 1836 JND wrote *The Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations*. In this paper he used the word "dispensation" frequently in a conventional way, though he made the following remark:

Here dispensations, properly speaking, begin. On the first, Noah, I shall be very brief: restraint and godliness should have characterized it -- the government which would have repressed corruption and violence. But the first thing here found is the saved patriarch drunk, and his son shamefully mocking him, for which the curse justly descends upon him. This issued in idolatry; Joshua 24.³⁹

The introduction of dispensation hinged on the introduction of government. In an address in June 1839 at a gathering at Leamington JND pointed out:

Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves. Here there was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth.⁴⁰

Here we find clearly what JND understood to be of the essence of a dispensation, *strictly speaking*. It requires a -- **"dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth."**

In 1840, at Geneva, he delivered a series of eleven lectures, *The Hopes of the Church of God* . . . , wherein he said:

But (to enter a little more into the succession of dispensations, and also into that which concerns the character of God in this respect) the first thing which we would remark is the deluge, because until then there had not been, so to speak, government in the world. The prophecy which existed before the deluge was to this effect, that Christ was to come. The teachings of God were ever to this end: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

Let us pass on. In Noah's time there was government of the earth, and God coming in judgment and committing the right of the sword to man.⁴¹

Yes, the antediluvian prophecy was that the Lord would come in judgment. The Father has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son (John 5). But before that coming in judgment, government was put into the hands of man. We read in 1 Cor. 15 a divine principle of God's ways, namely, first that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual. So in the development of God's ways in government in the earth, it first was in the hands of the first man.

The trial of man under government began in the post-flood world, ⁴² called "the present ^e heavens and the earth" (2 Peter 3:7), scripture thus marking the change. In Noah, man began to be guided by God's mind in connection with the introduction of government. Dispensations, then, have to do with the post-flood world.

I pass over the time before the flood, whose general character of ^fers a sad contrast to the time when righteousness dwells in the new heavens and the new earth, without a government to maintain it and make it good against the opposition of an adverse nation or the weakness of a failing one. Neither one nor the other can properly be called dispensation. They are both another world from that in which we live.

With Noah, we begin the course of dispensations, or of the manifestations of the ways of God ^f for the final bringing out the full glory of Christ. These ways regard the earth, and are founded, so far as they are conferred blessing, on the sacrifice of Christ. Enoch indeed had been taken out of the midst of the corrupt world and had a heavenly portion in Christ. But Noah was preserved through the deluge, to begin a new world, of which he was the head and chief.

The name Noah is expressive of the rest of the earth, comfort concerning the work of men's hands, because of the ground which the Lord had cursed. Three especial features accompany and characterize this position: the sacrifice which turned aside the curse, the restraint of evil, and the pledge of secured blessing to creation while earth lasted. But, as regards dispensation, Noah was the head of a new system, where evil was, but where evil was to be restrained, and the curse relieved under which the earth groaned. ⁴³

Another point to touch on is Noah as a type of Christ compared with Adam as a type.

The reader may, in passing, remark Adam as an image of Him who was to come, of the last Adam; and Noah as also a figure of Christ, inasmuch as the government of the world and the repression of evil were now entrusted to man.

THE RULE OF LIFE AFTER THE FLOOD

Near the beginning of this chapter we considered the rule of life before the flood. Those things that constituted the rule of life before the flood ought to have continued to affect man's conduct. In connection with Noah, three things were especially prominent from which men ought to have learned, though it was government which was expressly committed to man.

1. SACRIFICE: the burnt offering, pointing to Christ giving Himself up completely to God, for His glory, a savor of rest to God (Gen. 8:21).

e. In a footnote to his translation JND remarked, "Lit. 'the now heavens,' in contrast to the 'then world,' ver. 6."

f. [I think that he has in mind here government in the earth and earthly calling.]

2. GOVERNMENT: to put down evil, which Christ will accomplish (Gen. 9:1-7). Christ will enforce capital punishment also, if required, during the millenium.
3. THE BOW: the promise of blessing, which only Christ can accomplish (Gen. 9:8-12).

CHARACTERISTIC FAILURE

Not only do the successive ages, or time periods, end in failure, as for example, the pre-flood era ended in violence and corruption, but at the beginning of a distinguishable time period there is a characterizing sin. A characterizing sin has a character to it that forshadowes the character of the failure that finally brings the judgment of God. Thus in the first generation of man after the fall we find violence in Cain killing Abel and corruption in presenting to God the fruit of the ground. These two characteristics filled the earth when God sent the flood. The same pattern followed upon the introduction of government. Shortly after , Noah failed in governing himself in connection with becoming drunk (Gen. 9:18-27). He failed in governing himself.

Abraham, called of God to the land of promise, went down to Egypt; and, when there, he denied his true relationship to his wife. Thus the children of Israel went quickly out of the way when Moses was still on the mount. They sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play -- a not uncommon conduct -- and worshipped the golden calf. If the Spirit came in a divine capacity to form and indwell the church, in personal presence, and indwell the believer, very soon two lie to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5), acting as if the Spirit was not there in the special capacity for which He came.

The Three Administrations

There are a number of subjects, upon which JND laid heavy emphasis in connection with the development of God's ways for the bringing out of Christ's glory, that I wish to bring to bear in connection with what is called "dispensational truth." These are:

1. "With Noah, we begin the course of dispensations, or of the manifestations of the ways of God ^g for the final bringing out of the full glory of Christ."
2. A dispensation is "a dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth." I will call this an *administration*, rather, in order to distinguish this from such dispensations as priesthood, judges and kingship, which, observe, are not time periods.
3. The calling of God (introduced through Abraham -- see the next chapter).
4. The combination of government and calling (in Israel).
5. The testing of the first man ended at the cross.
6. Consequently, the mystery of Christ and the church, unforeseen by the O. T. prophets (Rom. 16:25,26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9), is presently unfolded as a heavenly system of grace.
7. And, all wherein man failed shall be made good to God's glory, by Christ, in the *administration* of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10), when Christ will head up both the heavenly and the earthly, glorifying God in government and calling, as part of the headship of earthly things.

g. [I think that he has in mind here government in the earth and earthly calling.]

Points 3-7 will be developed in subsequent chapters. I bring them together here in order to illustrate these things on the chart at the end of this chapter and also as bearing upon the special character of two things that occurred in connection with the dispensational testing of the first man, designated as (1) and (2) on the chart. In order to arrive at a convenient terminology to describe these two things, which JND did not specifically do, I suggest the following points as helping to this end.

- a. The word "trinity" is not found in Scripture but it does indicate the truth which we find in Scripture regarding the three Persons of the Godhead. Thus, it would be convenient to have a word or designation indicating the special character of (1), (2) and (3) on the chart located at the end of this chapter.
- b. An administration (οικονομία) was committed to Paul personally; but a period of responsibility (the period from himself to the rapture) was not committed to him. However, while οικονομία does not mean a period of time, the fact is that the administration of the fulness of times (Eph. 1:10) will be an administration for the 1000 years while Christ administers it for that long; and this shows that an administration may be in force over a length of time.
- c. Christ will glorify God in all things wherein the first man failed under trial, including failure under the two previous administrations. Christ will take up the *administration* of government and calling (3) *ADM.* on the chart at the end of this chapter) perfectly for God's glory
- d. Bear in mind that the millennium is the time when Christ will make good, what remains to be made good, wherein the first man failed. This implies one or more previous administrations involving calling and/or government in which the first man failed.
- e. Government was committed to *man*, as such, not merely to Noah. And it was *the nation* of Israel, as such, which received government and calling combined. These are special and important principles of God's dealings with man, and were heavily emphasized by JND. Indeed, government and calling, along with the end of the trial of the first man at the cross and the consequent establishment of the last Adam, are of the essence of his teachings on the ways of God with man, giving distinctive character to his teachings.

I therefore suggest that it would have been better to have designated the commitment of government to man as the first *administration*⁴⁵ (as well as a dispensation) in order to take into account the above points and to give it distinctive force commensurate with what JND pointed out. A new test of the first man came, however, when government and calling were combined in Israel. This is the second^h *administration* (as well as a dispensation), a designation that also gives this a distinctive force commensurate with what JND pointed out. And during the time that Israel was recognized as Jehovah's people, there were other subsidiary dispensations, such as priests and kings. These were additional ways in which God placed Himself in relation to the people. Priesthood and Kingship were institutions dispensed by God in connection with His government in the earth in the called nation under the covenant of the law. They were subsumed under the administration which combined government and calling in Israel, which continued from Moses until the times of the Gentiles began.

Consequent upon Israel's failure, government was transferred to Gentile empire (Dan. 2) and thus **an earthly parenthesis of judgment upon Israel** occurred.

h. Meanwhile the principle of calling was established in Abraham but this was not a new dispensation because, man, as such, was not being tested by calling at that point in time.

The event of which we speak *changed the whole state of the earth*, by separating the *government* from the *calling* of God -- two things which had long been united in the Jewish people under responsibility: a union which (having failed through the unfaithfulness of man, when God Himself ruled over them [i. e., before they had a king]) had been propped up, and established afresh, under the reign of a man who was a chosen type of Christ [David]. From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the throne of David, the government of the world was in the hands of the Gentiles; and the times of the Gentiles commenced (see Dan. 2:37,38) under a responsibility, the effects of which are described in the book of Daniel, the Apocalypse, and Zechariah, and which are characterized in Daniel 4. . . . All the time of their dominion, Israel has been *Lo-ammi*, "not my people." ⁴⁶

But with this change the Gentiles did not have calling; nor did Israel any longer have government committed to the nation by God. And so there was no longer an administration. The first man had failed in carrying out the administration of government and calling. The next administration, in the sense in which we have been speaking of it, is when Christ will make good, to God's glory, this failure of the first man when He administers the fullness of times (Eph 1:10); i. e., the millennial reign.

At the cross, representatives of the called people (Israel) and the Gentile government (Roman) cast out the Christ of God. Thus ended the trial of the first man. Consequently God brought out the great secret, the *mystery*, hid from ages and generations (Col. 1:26; Rom. 16:25,26; Eph. 3:9), as a heavenly parenthesis, a heavenly system of grace, between Pentecost and the Rapture. After this work is completed Daniel's 70th week will take place. But now, the saints have calling but not government. There is now no dispensation (i. e. administration).

In the middle of Daniel's 70th week, the beast (Rev. 13:1- 10) will receive authority from Satan, marking a new form of government in the earth not from God, but from Satan. Here, then, we see *governmental apostasy*. Also, it is at this time that the apostates of Christendom, and the Jewish apostates, will be given over to the lie (2 Thess. 2) and worship Satan, the beast and the Antichrist (2 Thess 2; Rev. 13:11-18).

At the point when evil has ripened to its fullest expression, the judgment of this world, made certain by the casting out of Christ ("now is the judgment of this world"), the second Man will come from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1). Then will our Beloved be publicly established as universal Lord, to Whom every knee shall bow. On earth, all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 1:26; Isa. 66:8) for they shall have been brought into the bond of the covenant by the sovereign act of God (Ezek. 20:33-38; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13). Then shall Messiah reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) and we with Him (Rev. 3:21; 2 Tim. 2:12). He shall make good all wherein man has failed, even in priesthood and kingship, hence He shall take the place of priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13). Our Lord Jesus humbled Himself to the lowest when He glorified God and finished the work He was given to do (John 17:4). On Calvary's cross He sustained the glory of God and it is morally right that in the very scene where He did so, there shall He himself bear the glory. Listen:

Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold a man whose name is [the] Branch; and he shall grow up from his own place, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah: even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zech. 6:13).

The coming of Christ in power and glory will be the occasion of the smashing of the image of Dan. 2. It marks the catastrophic end of Gentile empire and the establishment of government in the hands of Christ, administered through Israel now restored, all saved, a called nation (cp. Rom 9:4). Thus, in the administration of the fullness of times

there will be re-established an administration of government and calling (then under Christ) which had been interrupted (due to the failure of Israel) by the earthly parenthesis of judgment on the nation.

What we have discussed in this chapter is that there are in Scripture only three administrations of God's government in the earth but there have been some subsidiary dispensations of God's relationship with His ancient people besides the law (as priests, judges and kings). The first administration was of government only, the latter two combine government and calling. These three administrations are illustrated on the chart on the next page and will be amplified in following chapters.

chart goes here

Chapter 3

Abraham: Election, Calling and Promise

THE OCCASION OF THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

After the flood nations developed as a consequence of God's judgment in confounding the language at the tower of Babel. It was part of His ways with man that it be so, for man would now form nations. And thus the background was formed for the introduction of God's calling.

Two great principles, which subsist to the present day, characterize the world which is developed after Noah: they are connected with the tower of Babel. Up to this time, whether before or after the deluge, there had been only the human race, one family only. Now, in consequence of the judgment of man, who seeks to exalt himself on the earth and to make himself a name or center which may give him strength, God scatters those who were building the tower, and there are nations, languages, and peoples. The actual form of the world was established in reference to its division into different tribes and different nations. Moreover individual energy forms an empire which has Babel for its center and point of departure. Now that the world is constituted, we arrive at the testimony and ways of God. In the midst of this system of nations, there were languages, peoples, and nations.

The judgment of God had thus ordered the world, but an immense fact appears in the history of the world. The sin of man is no longer only sin against God, manifested in corruption and in the activity of an independent will. Demons take the place of God Himself in the eyes and for the imagination of men. Idolatry reigns among the nations, and even in the race brought the nearest to God, the race of Shem. Although, at bottom, this idolatry was everywhere the same, each nation had its gods. The system established by God Himself, at the time of the judgment of the race at the tower of Babel, acknowledged demons as its gods. This gives occasion to the call of Abraham.⁴⁸

The two great principles, therefore, to which JND called attention, are idolatry and the call of God. God, by His judgment, had scattered men, and nations arose. The peoples became worshippers of demons. Thus, what God had established fell into awful corruption. In the development of the ways of God, this state of the nations, and relatives, and immediate family, formed the background for the introduction of the call of Abram to separation.

The God of glory appears to him and calls him to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house. He must break completely with the system established by God, and that in its most intimate relationships. He is chosen by sovereign grace; being called, he walks by faith, and the promises are made to him.⁴⁹

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

There are three, new, leading truths brought out in connection with Abraham. They are

election, calling and promise. They necessarily involve separation; separation from country, kindred and father's house.

The next important principle brought out is calling and election. The earth was not only now corrupt and violent -- it had departed from God. It had not liked to retain God in its knowledge, and served other gods. God, in sovereign election, calls Abram to follow Him apart from the world; and separation from the world for enjoyment of promise by faith becomes the divine principle of blessing. Abraham is the father of all them that believe. He has to quit all on the supreme claim of the Lord -- country, kindred, and father's house -- for a land only in promise, which God would shew him. Brought there, he has still to walk by faith in patience, not yet inheriting the promises. When in possession of them in pledge, in Isaac he has to give them all up, as held in the present life of Isaac, in unquestioning confidence in God, to receive them in the power of One who raises the dead [Rom. 4].

We have election, call, promises, by which the believer is a stranger in a world departed from God. To this we may add the distinct principle of receiving the promises by the power of God in resurrection. This special position made of Abraham in a peculiar manner the father of the faithful -- of all them that believe -- the father of many nations before God in whom he believed, the heir of the world.⁵⁰

RESULTS OF THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

The call of Abraham introduced important principles in God's ways.

But this call introduces another principle of great importance. There had already been many faithful ones who had walked with God -- Abels, Enochs, Noahs; but none was like Adam, who was head of evil, the stock of a race. Now Abraham, being called, became the stock of a race which was to inherit the promises outside the world. Of course this may be developed in a spiritual manner in Christians, or in a carnal manner in the people of Israel; but the heir of the promise (and this applies to Christ Himself) enjoys it as the seed of Abraham. If the nations, the people, the families, and the languages took demons for their gods, God took a man by His grace to be the head of a family, the stock of a people, who may belong to Him for His own. The fatness of God's olive-tree [see Rom. 11] is found in those who grow on the root of Abraham, whether it be in a people, the seed according to the flesh, or a seed which shares in the promised blessings;ⁱ inasmuch as belonging to Christ the true Seed of the promise. This call and this vocation, whatever phases may be which the objects to which they apply pass through, always remain firm. Christ Himself came to accomplish the promises made to the fathers [Rom. 15:8] as a witness of the unchangeable truth of God.

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM WERE UNCONDITIONAL

There was another important element in the ways of God, contrasting with the law, and that is *the promises*. These began with the Fall itself, but as a principle in the ways of God,⁵² with Abraham, when the world was already fallen, not only into sin, but into idolatry, Satan and demons having taken possession of the place of God in man's mind. Now Abram's *election*, his *call*, and *the gift of the*

i. [Regarding the subject of *the Seed*, and of the seed of Abraham, see JND's comments in his writings on Galatians.]

promises made to him, were all connected with grace. Thus Abram followed God^j towards the country that God pointed out to him, but in it he possessed not whereon to set his foot. This introduced another vital principle, that of *living faith*, receiving God's word as such, and counting upon His faithful goodness. The promise evidently depended upon grace; it was not the thing given, though this was assured by the word of God; and faith counted upon the promise, and more or less clearly introduced the thought of blessing outside the world; otherwise, he who had faith obtained nothing by his faith. The consciousness of God's favor was doubtless so far something, but it depended upon faith in His fidelity as to what He had promised. But in connection with promises there is an important point to notice: there are unconditional, and there are conditional promises. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were unconditional; whereas those made at Sinai were conditional. God's word never confounds them. Moses calls to remembrance the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Exod. 32:13); Solomon, what came in under Moses (1 Kings 8:51-53); Nehemiah 1, refers to Moses; Nehemiah 9, first to Abraham as the source of all, then to Moses, when it becomes a question of God's ways. It is of this difference that the apostle speaks in Galatians 3:16-20. Under the law, when there was a Mediator, the enjoyment of the effect of the promise depended upon the faithfulness of Israel, as much as upon the fidelity of God; but then all was lost from the outset. The fulfillment of the simple promise of God depended upon His fidelity; in this case, all was sure. We learn further, by the passage alluded to in the Epistle to the Galatians, that it is to Christ, the Second Man, that the promises made to Abraham were confirmed, and they will be fulfilled surely -- all of them Yea, and all Amen -- when His day, which the prophets had ever in view, shall come. But here the difference, already pointed out, between the government of this world and sovereign grace, again finds its application. The grace that sets us in heaven is not prophesied of at all; prophecy belongs to what is earthly and so far as relates to the Lord Jesus, contains the revelation of what He was to be upon the earth at His first coming; and then continues with what He will be upon the earth when He comes again, without alluding to that which should take place in the interval between those two events. Still, the facts as to the Person of the Lord are announced in those Psalms which reveal to us more of His personal history; His resurrection (Psa. 16), His ascension (Psa. 68), His session at the right hand of God (Psa. 110); and as to the Holy Spirit, they teach us that Christ would receive it as man -- that the gifts are not only gifts of God, but that Christ would receive them "in Man," that is, as Man in connection with mankind. On the other hand, except the desires of David in Psalm 72 and 145, where the subject treated of is what concerns the Lord's Person, the Psalms do not take up the state of things that shall follow His return; whilst in the prophets, this future state is amply described in the fulfillment of the promises made to the Jews, and its consequences for the Gentiles. There is another point that may be noticed: when the prophets on God's part give encouragements to faith for the time then present, and to meet trying circumstances, the Spirit of God uses this to penetrate into the future, when God will interpose in favor of His people.⁵³

TWO CLASSES OF PROMISE

The bearing of the promises to Abraham is this:

In Galatians the promises to Abraham were to Christ and to Christ only: that is the whole of the apostle's argument. There were two classes of promises and all

j. He only partially did so at the outset; but I speak here of the ways of God.

go with Abraham. Abraham is the beginning of promise. If we go back a little, there were no dealings of God before the flood. He turned man out of the garden, if that can be called a dealing, but nothing between that and the flood. Then when God brings in the new world, in Noah He brings in government to restrain man; there is the power of the sword. After this, that it might be understood all was pure grace, God begins with promise. . . .

There were two classes of promises; that a great nation should spring from him and his seed, to be as the stars of heaven (that is not "thy seed," or one). But in Genesis 12, God says, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," that is not Israel. Then we find that promise confirmed in Genesis 22. It is never said, "to thee" and thy seed, "to Abraham," but "in thee." But when Isaac had been offered up and been received in resurrection, then he says in Galatians, "to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made." Genesis 12 gave it to Abraham, and Genesis 22 confirmed it to the Seed. The promise is made to Abraham personally in chapter 12, and confirmed to the seed, Isaac, in chapter 22, and that is a figure in which Christ had died and risen. That was confirmed to Christ (but not in Christ), and the law which came later on could not disannul or add to it. Hence therefore you cannot bring in the law now; law cannot be tacked on to promise. Then you see there was only one Seed, and that is Christ, and then he adds, If I am in Christ, I have the promise. That is the way he brings the Gentile in. The Jews were the natural seed, but he says, the promise of the blessing was to the one person, Christ. Very well, I am in Christ, then I have the promise; "If ye be in Christ, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise."

It is not a promise to the Gentiles, but one confirmed to Christ and then to the Gentiles in Christ, through the Spirit. Genesis 15 is specific to the Jews, and in Genesis 22 is promise to the seed. The stars of heaven are the Jews only, as Moses says, "Behold ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude," Deut. 1. It is a great thing to see what the Lord is pointing out in a passage. And He takes two illustrations of a great number -- what we see in the heavens, and what lies on the sea-shore.⁵⁴

We should understand that these promises were unconditional, contrary to covenant theology. Covenant theology puts Christians under the law as the rule of life, thus bringing legalism which recognizes the flesh (and the standing of the first man) and gives it some place. It also would have the promises to Abraham be on some condition. But God sovereignly promised and pronounced to Abraham His "I will."

Here positive promise begins, not merely the revelation of a deliverer who should destroy the works of the devil on the one hand, and a conscience knowing the evil in which it walked on the other, but a positive promise to a given object, "in thee"; so that the grace which called him out of the world singled him out also as its heir, and the vessel of the blessing of God in it.

The promise was unconditional and absolute. God gives it as the revelation of a purpose He will accomplish, and addresses it to Abraham, so as to fix the person in whom it was to have its accomplishment. God interferes in blessing, reveals His intention to confer it dependent on His own faithfulness alone. He blesses because He is pleased to bless, and blesses him whom He calls out to enjoy it. The promise extends out too, remark, to the whole world as to the sphere of its application. "In thee shall all nations be blessed." It is universal in the sphere of its application, absolute in its character, and its accomplishment dependent on the sole faithfulness of God.

In figure there was a development of this, which casts fresh light on the ways of God. Isaac is offered up, a remarkable type of the offering of Jesus, of the

Father's not sparing His Son. He is received again from the dead in a figure, and presents a risen Christ after the accomplishment of His sacrifice. Thereupon the promise is confirmed to him. The promise of the blessing of the nations was not given to Abraham and his seed. It was made to Abram alone in Genesis 12; and so in Galatians 3 we read in the original, "And to Abram were the promises made, and to his seed." So again, the promise which was confirmed before of God to Christ (not in Christ). Hence it is the apostle insists upon its being one, for the promises to Abraham, as father of the Jews, were made in common to him and to his seed together; and it was promised that the seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is by the seashore, innumerable. Whereas the promise of the blessing of the nations was given to Abram first, and then confirmed to the one seed, Isaac, figure of Christ sacrificed and risen again, with no mixture of anyone else, nor mention of a numerous posterity.

But to return. The promise was absolute and unconditional, the announcement of the accomplishment of blessing on God's part through the one promised Seed, an accomplishment dependent on His own faithfulness alone. The question of righteousness in those who were to enjoy it was not raised. God's grace in blessing was revealed, and, we may say with the apostle, in Christ; but the sin of those who should enjoy it was untouched, conscience left without resource, or without raising a question indeed about it. The revelation of a deliverer and the promise of God were now brought together, but the state of him who was to be blessed was not entered on in any way. Such was the force of the unconditional promise made to Abraham. It made the blessing of the nations certain: the question of righteousness was not raised. God had promised to Abraham, and confirmed it to the one Seed. His faithfulness would perform it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF "CALLING"

The calling of God had its importance for the Patriarch -- and also for Israel as a nation in the past and in the future. It has a bearing, too, on the church. The call of God, however, does not constitute a dispensation of promise anymore than grace now reigning through righteousness constitutes the present period a dispensation of grace, which last we shall touch on when showing that JND did not regard the church, or the present, as a dispensation. We have already seen that he indicated that it is essential to what we are calling an administration that characterizes a time period, that there be an administration of government. However, when Christ takes the reigns of government of the earth, with Israel at the center through which that government will be administered, Israel will be in the full good of calling, both individually and nationally.

We must give the subject of the call of God a little more attention from JND, citing from his paper "Abram: Genesis 12,"⁵⁶ which could be entirely read with much profit to the soul. Herein, I suggest, he uses the word "dispensation" in a conventional sense, as he *often* does in many places.

The great point of the chapter [Gen. 12] is the call of God, and the principles on which its proceeds. The *calling of God* is a cardinal point in His dispensations. It is identified with grace, and in it there is no repentance; God does not swerve from it. It expressed His purpose, as it is written, "The gifts and calling of God are unrepented of," Rom. 11:29. Of this there had been heretofore no mention; individuals may have been called (as assuredly every saint had been from Abel downwards), but until this chapter it does not form the subject of the revelation of God.

It is important to consider what subjects the scripture previously presents; they were substantially two -- Adam and Noah: creation, and creation secured

by government. That Adam was placed at the head of natural creation will be called in question by none. That Noah stood as the representative head of government I learn from the committal of the sword to him, or at least from the revelation of the principle to him, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." There might be repentance in these things, though in gift and calling of God there could be none. He was not declared as the God of Adam, or as the God of Noah; but He was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; "this is my name for ever , and this is my memorial unto all generations," Exod. 3:15. Creation, in point of fact (as to its existing estate), was repented of -- "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, *I will destroy*"; and He did destroy sparing favored Noah; as it is written, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them," Gen. 6:5-7. But God's calling is His purpose, and He hath sworn in His holiness, and He will not repent. . . .

"Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Here is distinctly shown the calling of the "father of the faithful." Country and kindred were recognized as existing; how they were formed in creation, and under government (as established in Noah), and the subsequent circumstances, we have already seen.

They were now left just as they were. They were not meddled with. In fact, in their own place (though corrupted), and as having instamped upon them that they had been God's ordinances, they were both distinctly maintained. There is not to this day any abrogation of them, nor indeed ever will be in principle, though they will be transferred to Christ, and under Christ they will be unto righteousness and blessed. "A king shall reign in righteousness," and although the queen and Jewish partner of His glory shall be taught to forget her father's house (being called through grace, not descent), yet the offspring of the remnant shall be blessed with them; instead of the fathers shall be the children. However, therefore, evil may have overrun them, both government and relationship, home, etc., are principles in no way rejected, nor could they be abstractedly. But the calling of God acts paramountly to them, or else there could be no other principle, and the prevailing of man's evil in them would be left unremedied. . . .

We have then, in the calling of God, the assertion of a paramount claim on God's part upon an individual in grace, *leaving* everything out of which he was called without further change; only calling *him* out of it. This is one very strong distinct, and new principle, not previously revealed, consequent upon, and acting in, an especial and paramount way , in reference to the existing relationships, which had arisen out of what was previously ordered and appointed. No declaration of blessings or principles of men where they were, but the calling of them out thence, and thus a personal calling is what we find. The principle further established in it mere personal obedience, upon the ground of this call, to individual responsible action. "God had said to Abraham, Get thee out." Here on the word of God the individual responsibility of obedience attached. It necessarily and avowedly involved the breaking of subsisting relationships in person, *as to his own interest in them*, but without affecting them, as they stood in themselves, in the least. He was to leave his country and his kindred, and his father's house. They might still continue just what they were before (they might, or they might not): this was a question of Providence; obedience to the words and calling of God was the only point in grace to Abram, the only point to be

considered by him. The word of God led the way in the direction which was given, and gave the promise to him as that which should encourage him in acting. "Into a land that I will shew thee"; this was the certain hope of certain faith, by which a man is made entirely a stranger where he was before at home. It was merely a promise, but it was a promise which involved not only the certainty of God, but also the guidance of God unto the thing promised -- "to a land that I will shew thee."

Let us turn more to the detail of this calling of God; we have seen already that its grand distinguishing feature was *separation from the world*. "The Lord had said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." This was the substance of the present character of the calling, as acting upon the nationalized world; and thus was brought forward the specific character of the church. . . .

From this we may see how often JND remarked that the dispensation of government continued unchanged by the call of Abraham. But particularly note that in the last paragraph he brings all this to bear on the church. Government was not given to the church, as in the case of the nation of Israel, in which "calling" had a national character. However, as belonging to Christ, we are the seed of Abraham, and "calling" has its bearing on us in the moral character that it had in Abraham's case.

THE RULE OF LIFE FOR ABRAHAM

The "moral law" was not the rule of life for Abraham. The law was given by Moses (John 1:17) and so was not yet given. Concerning Abraham's rule of life, JND wrote.

So with Abraham: the revelations God made to him of Himself, realized by faith, would form the guide and rule of his conduct. "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect." Conscience surely was there, but the original and constant revelations of God impressed their character on his walk by faith. All these are partial revelations. Yet it was thus the elders obtained a good report; they walked by faith.⁵⁷

NO NEW DISPENSATION INTRODUCED WITH ABRAHAM

I am not aware that JND anywhere refers to the introduction of a dispensation in connection with Abraham. And while the introduction of promises is most important, "promise" is an adjunct to calling. Hence, if one were to speak of a dispensation in this connection, 'dispensation of calling' would be more appropriate. However, neither calling nor promise in itself constitutes a dispensation. On the other hand, calling may constitute an element in an administration, as the administrations of law and of the fullness of times. But "promise" and "calling" by themselves do not institute a period of time during which God is testing man, as such. With the call of Israel, united with government, we do have an administration wherein "the first man" was tested and failed in calling and government (and in all else dispensed by God, such as priesthood and kingship). Moreover, the test included man's ability to realize the promises through his own efforts. But this failure did not annul the promises given before to Abraham (Gal. 3:17-20). Meanwhile, government, given to Noah, as head of the world that now is, in connection with that government, continued on while God dealt with the patriarchs.

Chapter 4

Israel: Government and Calling Combined

Government is placed before calling as in the chapter title because:

1. In the Word of God, God is said to be Light before He is said to be Love (see 1 John 1 and 3).
2. In accordance with that order, government was introduced before calling, as reflecting that order (see Gen. 9 and 12). The Word of God is written to reflect that moral order (light and love) everywhere as reflecting the nature of Him who is the Author of the Bible.

COMBINATION OF GOVERNMENT AND CALLING IN ISRAEL

The combination of government and calling introduced the second dispensation. It comprised a test of "the first man" (man viewed in his Adamic standing and responsibility), in the persons of a specially-favored people, Israel, which stood in covenant relationship with Jehovah. It was a test in which "the first man" failed. In contrast to that, the combination of both calling and government will occur again when Christ reigns and *He* will fully glorify God in it. We shall see more of this as we proceed.

In Noah's time there was government of the earth, and God coming in judgment and committing the right of the sword to man. After this comes the call of Abraham. Mark: the principle of government is not put forward by the word [in Abraham's case], but the principle of promise, and the call to be in relationship with God, of that one person who becomes the root of all the promises of God - Abraham, the father of the faithful. God calls him, makes him quit his country, his family, bidding him go into a country which He would shew him. God reveals Himself to him as the God of promise, Who separates a people to Himself by a promise which He gives them. It is at this epoch that God revealed Himself under the name of God Almighty.

After that, among the descendants of Abraham, by this same principle of election, God takes the children of Jacob to be His people here below - the object of all His earthly care, and out of whose midst Christ was to come according to the flesh. It is in this people of Israel that God displays all His character as Jehovah; it is not only as a God of promise, but it is a God who unites the two principles of calling and government, which two had been each successively brought out in Noah and Abraham. Israel was the called, separated people - separated indeed only to earthly blessings, and to enjoy the promise; but, at the same time, to be subject to the exercise of the government of God according to the law. We say then, that in Noah was marked the principle of government of the earth, and in Abraham that of calling and election; and so Jehovah will accomplish all that He has said as God of promise, "who was, and is, and is to come," and govern all the earth, according to the righteousness of His law -- the

righteousness revealed in Israel. . . .

We have remarked that, when the fall of the Jewish nation was complete, God transferred the right of government to the Gentiles; but with this difference, that this right was separated from the calling and the promise of God. In the Jews, the two things were united, namely, the calling of God, and government upon the earth, which became distinct things from the moment that Israel was put aside. In Noah and Abraham we had them distinct; government in the one, calling in the other.

With the Jews these principles were united; but Israel failed, and ceased thenceforward to be capable of manifesting the principle of the government of God, because God in Israel acted in righteousness; and unrighteous Israel could no longer be the depository of the power of God. God, then, quitted His terrestrial throne in Israel. Notwithstanding this, as to the earthly calling, Israel continued to be the called people: "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." As to government, God transports it where He will; and it went to the Gentiles. There are, indeed, the called from among the nations (namely the church), but it is for the heavens they are called. The calling of God for the earth is never transferred to the nations; it remains with the Jews. If I want an earthly religion, I ought to be a Jew. From the instant that the church loses sight of its heavenly calling, it loses, humanly speaking, all.⁵⁸

When Christ comes in power and glory He will judge the nations, take the government into His own hands, and administer it through restored Israel, then all righteous (Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:25,26) and in the good of national adoption, or sonship (Rom. 9:5). Thus government and calling will be again combined in the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10), but under the reign of the second Man.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TRIAL UNDER LAW

The principle of the trial under law is that man is viewed as standing in responsibility, a standing in Adam, and all depends on what he is.

Intimately connected with this government of God is the Law; it establishes the rule of good and evil according to God, and founds it upon His authority. The Lord furnishes us with the expression of it, in drawing from various parts of the Pentateuch principles, which, were they established and operative in the heart, would lead to obedience, and to the accomplishment of God's will, and would be productive of human righteousness. The Ten Commandments do not create duty, the existence of which is founded on the relationships in which God has set man.

There is this difference between the principles of the law as laid down by Jesus, and the Ten Commandments, that the principles drawn by Him from the books of Moses comprehend absolute good in all its extent without question of sin, whilst the Ten Commandments suppose sin to be there, and with one exception, are prohibitory of all unfaithfulness to the relationships of which they treat. It is important to notice that the last of these commandments forbids the first motion of the heart towards the sins previously condemned: "the sting is in the tail." Moreover, the various relationships were the basis of duty, the commandments forbidding men to fail in them. But the principle of law of any law, is this: that the approbation of Him to whom I am responsible, my reception in favor by Him who has the right to judge of my faithfulness to my responsibility, or of my shortcomings -- in a word, my happiness -- depends upon what I am in this respect, upon what I am towards Him. For the relationships are established by the Creator's will and authority, and when I fail in them, I sin against Him who established them. Although the sin may be directly against the

person I am in relation with, yet as the obligation was imposed by the will of God and is the expression of His will, I in fact despise His authority and disobey Him. The principle of law is that the acceptance of the person depends upon his conduct; grace does what it pleases in goodness, in conformity to the nature and the character of Him who acts in grace.⁵⁹

JND'S HISTORY OF MAN UNDER THE LAW

There can exist no more serious question for the soul than this: where shall I find righteousness before God? We have said that the law raised this question. It is of importance to see the position it takes when the law is given.

From the first existence of man on the earth the question between responsibility and grace was placed at issue. In the earthly paradise there was the tree of life which only communicated life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to which the responsibility⁶⁰ of man was attached. As to the tree of life, ⁶¹ man did not eat of it; and (once become a sinner) the mercy of God, as well as His righteousness and the moral order of His government, closed against him the way of this tree. An immortal sinner on the earth would have been an insupportable anomaly in the government of God. Besides, man had deserved to be shut out of the garden. On the other hand man failed in his responsibility. Before the fall he did not know sin, but he was in the relation of a creature towards God. There was no sin in eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, except inasmuch as this had been forbidden.

When man fell, the Seed of the woman, the last Adam, ⁶² was immediately announced: the hopes of the human race are thenceforth placed upon a new ground. The deliverance presented does not consist in something which would have been but a means of raising up [fallen man] again founded on the moral activity of man already in a fallen condition; but another person is announced, who, while of the human race, should be a source of life independent of Adam, and who should destroy the power of the enemy; a person who should not represent Adam but replace him before God, should be the seed of the woman, which Adam was not, and should at the same time be an object of faith for Adam and for his children -- an object which, being received into the heart, should be the life and salvation of whoever should receive it. The first Adam was made a living soul; he was lost: the last Adam, the second Man, is a quickening spirit. ⁶³ Until the coming of Christ the promise only was the source of hope; it alone, through grace, begat and sustained faith. We believe in its accomplishment. When God called Abraham, He gave him (Gen. 12) the promise that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Afterwards (chap. 22) this promise was confirmed to His Seed. The one who was to be the seed of the woman was also to be the seed of Abraham. ⁶⁴ Thus the ways of God towards man were established on an indefectible promise. ⁶⁵ It is without condition, a simple promise, and consequently it did not raise the question of righteousness nor the responsibility of man.

Four hundred and thirty years afterwards the law comes, and, as we have said, raised the question of righteousness, and that, on the footing of the responsibility of man, by giving him a perfect rule of what man, the child of Adam, ought to be. Now, observe it well, he was a sinner. This law had a twofold aspect, a kernel of absolute truth, which the Lord Jesus was able to draw from its obscurity -- supreme love to God and love to one's neighbor. It is the perfect rule of the blessedness of the creature as a creature. The angels realize it in heaven. Man is as far as possible from having accomplished the law on earth. But this rule is developed in the details of relative duties, which flow from the relation in which

man finds himself, as a fact, before God, and from the relation in which he finds himself placed as towards others in this lower world.

Now in the circumstances in which man found himself these details necessarily had reference to the moral state in which he was, supposed sin and lusts, and forbid them. As the law of God applying itself to the actual state of man, it necessarily condemns sin on the one hand, and necessarily proves it on the other. What can a law do in such a case, but condemn -- be, as the apostle says (2 Cor . 3), a ministry of death and condemnation? It demanded righteousness⁶⁶ according to the rule which the conscience of man could not but approve, and which at the same time proves his guiltiness. It is in this, in fact, that the usefulness of the law consists; it gives the knowledge of sin. God never gave it to produce righteousness. In order to this, an inward moral power is absolutely necessary. But the law on the table of stone is not the power. The law requires righteousness of man, and pronounces the last judgment of God, makes sin exceeding sinful, and brings the just anger of God. No law produced a nature. Now the nature of man was sinful. The commandment demonstrates that he will seek to satisfy that nature, in spite of God's forbidding it. The law is thus, and because it is just and good, the strength of sin. It entered that the offence might abound. Those who are of the works of the law (these are not bad works: the apostle speaks of all who walk on this principle) are under the curse it has pronounced on such as disobey it. The flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The promise of God remains sure. Man is put to the proof so that it may be made manifest whether he can produce a human righteousness.

The law was presented to man under a twofold aspect -- the law pure and simple, and the law mingled with grace, that is to say , given to man after the intervention of grace, but leaving man to his own responsibility after a forgiveness accorded by grace. The history of the first point of view is very short. Before Moses came down from Mount Sinai, Israel had made the golden calf. The tables of the law never entered the camp. They never were able to form the basis of the relations of man with God. How reconcile the commandments with the worship of the calf of gold? Subsequent to this sin Moses intercedes for the people, and they receive the law anew, God acting in mercy according to His sovereignty and proclaiming Himself merciful and gracious. The relationship of the people with God is founded on the pardon which God grants, and established no longer as an immediate relationship with God, but on the ground of Moses' mediation.⁶⁷ The people however are put under the law , and everyone is to be blotted out of God's book through his own sin, if he render himself guilty. At the same time the law is hidden under an ark, and God Himself is hidden behind a veil, within which the sprinkling of blood was to be made on the mercy-seat which formed, together with the cherubim, the throne of God.

But this mixture of grace and law could not, any more than the unmingled law, serve to establish between God and man relations capable of being maintained. It could serve to demonstrate that, whatever might be the patience of God, man, responsible for his conduct, could not obtain life by a righteousness which he himself should accomplish. Also, the impossibility in which man finds himself of subsisting in presence of the exigencies of the glory of God, however feebly it may be revealed, is presented to us in a remarkable figure, which the apostle makes use of in 2 Corinthians. The people prayed Moses to cover his face, which still shone with the reflection of the glory of Jehovah, with whom he had been in communication on the top of Mount Sinai. Man cannot endure the revelation of God when God demands of man that he should be what he ought to be before Him. The veil disclosed, at bottom, the same truth. God must hide Himself. The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. A law was

given on God's part to direct man's life, a priesthood established to maintain the relations of the people with God, notwithstanding the faults of which they became guilty; but man could not come nigh to God. Sad state, in which the revelation of the presence of God, the only thing which can really give blessing, necessarily repelled the one who needed the blessing! We shall see that, in Christianity, exactly the contrary takes place: the veil is rent.

But let us pursue the ways of God with man under the law.

We have already seen that, in the system we are considering, life was proposed to man as the result of his faithfulness. Whatever may be the patience and grace of God, all depends on this faithfulness; and not only is the responsibility of man completely at stake, but all depends on the way in which he meets this responsibility. God, no doubt, had patience, and manifested His grace. He bore with Israel in the desert and introduced them into the land of Canaan, in spite of all sorts of unfaithfulness on the part of the people. He put the people in possession of the country, giving them victories over their enemies. He raised up judges to deliver them, when their unfaithfulness had subjected them to their powerful neighbors. He sent them prophets to recall them to the observance of the law. At length, with a goodness which would not judge them without using every means to gain their hearts, He sent His Son to receive the fruit of His vine, on which He had expended all His care, and on which He had lavished so many proofs of love. But His vine yielded only wild grapes; and those who cultivated it, those to whom He had entrusted it, rejected His servants the prophets, and cast His Son out of the vineyard and killed Him. Such was the end of the proof to which man was put under the law: all the grace and all the patience of God having been employed to induce them to obey and maintain them in obedience -- all was useless.

There is the history of man under the law.⁶⁸ If we examine the bearing of the law on the conscience, we shall find that it brings condemnation and death as soon as it is spiritually understood; but the aim of this article is to consider the ways of God. Nevertheless I cannot leave this subject without entreating my reader to weigh well what is the bearing of the law, if it be applied to his conscience and his life before God, if he be responsible -- and he surely is -- if all he can do is to recognize the justice and excellence of that which the law demands. If he sees that he ought to avoid that which the law condemns, and that the two commandments which form the positive part of the law are the two pillars of the blessedness of the creature; if he finds that he has constantly done and loved that which the law and his own conscience condemn, and that he has entirely failed in that which his conscience must acknowledge as being the perfection of the creature: if all that be true, where is the life which is promised to obedience? How escape the condemnation pronounced on the violation of the law, if he places himself on the ground of his own responsibility and has to be judged according to a rule which he himself acknowledges as perfect? Another law could not be found. If he is without law, good and evil are indifferent; that is as much as to say that man is more than wicked; even natural conscience is ruined, good does not exist, and man is unbridled in evil, saved by the violence of his neighbor or the just judgment of God displayed in an event like the deluge. No: the law is just and good, and man knows it, his conscience tells him so. But if the law is good and just, man on the ground of his own responsibility is lost. The life which it promises to obedience [to the law] man has not obtained; the judgment which will make good the authority and justice of the law awaits the one who has disobeyed it, and will at the same time be pronounced against all the shamelessness of an unbridled will. All the guilty will be reached. As to the law as the apostle expresses it -- happily for the awakened conscience -- that which

was ordained to life, man finds it to be unto death.⁶⁹

COMBINATION OF GOVERNMENT AND CALLING IN ISRAEL, AND ITS PAST HISTORY

The *national call* of Israel formed a national display of the government of God in conjunction with calling. Israel's history under this combination is an administration. It formed a trial of the first man *in the persons composing the nation*, as well as the nation as a whole. The law did not address the children of God, as such. The law addressed the children of fallen Adam in their Adamic responsibility, in the persons of the favored nation. It is a form that the testing of the first man took. It is God's purpose to display His government in the earth in combination with calling, under the second man (Christ). But first that which is natural (1 Cor 5:46) and so the first man, in the persons of the favored nation, must make trial of God's government in the earth combined with a national call, not to educate God concerning the inevitable result, but to instruct us concerning the first and second man and that all depends on sovereign grace, for man obtains no blessing on the basis of discharging his Adamic responsibility as fallen man. JND has traced God's dealings with Israel in a number of papers and I quote from one of them here at some length.

We have seen the principle of judgment and daily retribution introduced under Noah, as a constituent of the new world. This is the principle of government. We have also seen the principle of the calling of God marked out in the history of Abraham. This is the principle of grace, holiness, and the supremacy of God. But the union of these two principles is also presented to our view in the Scriptures; a union very remarkable for a time, as a new trial of the faithfulness of man under responsibility, and in circumstances altogether singular, and accompanied by a still more astonishing display of patience on the part of God, which will furnish the subject of that solemn praise in the latter times: "His mercy endureth for ever." As to the future, the union of these two principles is the source of a state of things which will be the manifestation of the incomparable wisdom and power of God, when He takes the government into His own hands.

The history of the union of these two principles, whether under the responsibility of man or in the efficacy of the supremacy of God, is the history of the Jewish people. The law is the directing principle of it, as being the expression of the actual terms of God's government. It is consequently in the history of this people that we must look for the center of the administration of the government of the world; containing (as it does) in its past history, on the one hand, the witness given by a people called to the knowledge of the only true God against the false gods of the Gentiles ("Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord!"), and, on the other hand, the witness afforded to the principles of the government of the true God by His conduct towards His chosen people, blessing or punishing them openly according to their proceedings: "Ye only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities," Amos 3:2. . . .

But if the responsibility of man gave mediately an opportunity for the display of the whole character of God on the one hand, the weakness of man on the other made it necessary for God to establish the hope of all His promises on some other basis than this responsibility. And, in fact, we see, in the history we are examining, that Israel receives the promises in Abraham, according to the calling of God absolutely and unconditionally. Under the law, Israel takes these promises on the responsibility of their own obedience. . . .

Let us pause for a moment at this important juncture, and consider the unfolding of the relationship of God with the world, and with men, in this people:

after that we will return to their history. From this time we see the three great instruments of these relations, holding their place in the midst of them: Moses was the representative of royalty among the people of God. "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." Aaron held the place of the great high priest; and Miriam as the prophetess: "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam," Micah 6:4. See also Exod. 15; Num. 13.

Thus we see in the wilderness the model of the three mediatorial instruments of the power of God -- one, the communication of His will; the second, the means of our approach to Him; and the third, the instrument of His government, the recipient of His power.

Moses at different periods filled all these three functions. Thus also in the plagues inflicted on the proud Egyptians, Aaron acted as prophet, Moses as God to Pharaoh, but that changes nothing in the main. During the union of the two principles of government and calling, these things were fully developed. But under responsibility in these things, the Jewish people corrupted themselves in each one of them.

Under the priesthood (when God was their King, and there were only judges raised up from time to time to preserve them in their inheritance from the occasions of misery produced by their unbelief), . . . there was complete corruption, even in the priests; as we see in 1 Samuel 2, and in the touching scene described in chapter 3, which marked *Ichabod* on the people of God. I say not that the priesthood was abolished; far from it: it was, on the contrary to be an example of the patience of God, until He came who could efficiently fill all its functions.

Samuel was the representative of the prophetic line, a *judge* also, governing the people by the witness of God -- a witness given, as we have seen, against the actual state of the priesthood. It is for this reason Peter says, in Acts 3, "All the prophets *from* Samuel and those that follow after." This then was God's government by prophets; yet the people were not yet satisfied with it, but desired a king: and God gave them "a king in his anger", and took him away in his wrath," Hos. 13:11. A king chosen according to the flesh, when God was their King, served only to shew the weakness of all that man did, the folly of all he desired. Nevertheless, the kingship of Christ over His people was ever in God's designs. And He gave them a king after His own heart, and David and Solomon furnished the type of kingship of Christ: one, in suffering and overcoming all his enemies, after complete obedience; the other as reigning in peace and glory over a happy, obedient, and prosperous people. There the picture ended! Man may furnish types, but can never fill the functions of that which is true, and which shall be fulfilled in Christ. The repose and glory which Solomon enjoyed were the cause of his fall. He kept not his uprightness in the midst of the gifts of God, but, drawn aside by his wives, he followed other gods. Kingship, the last resource of God for maintaining His relationship with His people, was corrupted, just in that particular in which Israel should have been His witness. . . .

ISRAEL'S CONTINUANCE IN THE LAND

We have just had a sketch of Israel's history from the pen of JND. We should keep in mind that the introduction of judges, kings and prophets did not change the dispensation. We shall now consider some points in connection with Israel's continuance in the land that might be profitably noted.

We see, in the book of Deuteronomy, the people, when nearly entering Canaan, put under the principle of obedience, and their enjoyment of the promises dependent on that obedience . . . As it is said, Moses "set before" them "life and death, blessing and cursing." It was a covenant which, in remembrance of the oath made with the fathers, is a covenant of blessing, if they obeyed, and of threatenings, if they disobeyed. God did not promise that they should possess the land, but that they should be blessed in it; otherwise, that they should be driven out of it; but that God would shew mercy unto them in a far country, if their hearts turned to the Lord. For this reason the apostle quotes a passage here as a pledge of the righteousness of God according to faith, because the observance of the law was impossible in any land except that of Israel. Nevertheless, if they were obedient in heart, and turned to the Lord, they should be heard and delivered. The return under Nehemiah was a partial accomplishment of this promise, and this covenant. But in that return, there was no question of the promises made to Abraham. It was an event that shewed the mercy and faithfulness of God, but which was not the fulfillment of His promises and original covenant, although it involved important consequences. The original promises, given unconditionally, and guaranteed by the oath of God, must find a complete fulfillment in all their extent.* This is what still remains for the people of God. Joshua gives the history of their then present and earthly fulfillment; and the book of Judges, that of the fall of Israel in the midst of human enjoyment.

* What is said in Deuteronomy 32 goes farther and deeper: God speaks not according to the covenant, but according to His sovereignty, and His thoughts. Consequently, the joy of the Gentiles with His people is there introduced.⁷⁰

Gal. 3:17 shows that Israel's failure under the conditional covenant (i.e., the law) cannot set aside the promises given to the fathers. The promises were unconditional and will be made good under the new covenant in the dispensation of the fullness of times.

THE NATIONS RECEIVE NO EARTHLY CALLING

The times of the Gentiles, though a distinguishable time period, is not a dispensation. The Gentiles never received an earthly calling combined with government in the earth. JND wrote:

We have remarked that, when the fall of the Jewish nation was complete, God transferred the right of government to the Gentiles; but with this difference, that this right was separated from the calling and the promise of God. In the Jews, the two things were united, namely, the calling of God, and government upon the earth, which became distinct things from the moment that Israel was put aside. In Noah and Abraham we had them distinct; government in the one, calling in the other. . . .

What has happened to the nations by their having had government given over to them? They have become "beasts" [Dan. 7]: so the four great monarchies are called. Once the government is transferred to the Gentiles, they become the oppressors of the people of God: first, the Babylonians; secondly the Medes and Persians; thirdly, the Greeks; then, the Romans. The fourth monarchy consummated its crime at the same instant that the Jews consummated theirs, in being accessory, in the person of Pontius Pilate, to the will of a rebellious nation, by killing Him who was at once the Son of God and King of Israel. Gentile power is in a fallen state, even as the called people, the Jews, are. Judgment is written upon power and calling, as in man's hand.⁷¹

These last two sentences mean that man has failed in the use of the power given to the

Gentiles during the times of the Gentiles; and Israel failed in its calling. Note that at the cross Israel and the Gentile power were their and rejected Christ. Thus power and calling will be taken up by Christ in the millennium and perfectly administered.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

We have noted that the times of the Gentiles (which began with the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and which will end at the appearing of Christ in power and glory) is a distinguishable time period during which God gave the power of empire to the Gentiles, but that does not make it a dispensation. The time of the Gentiles forms a parenthesis, an earthly parenthesis of Gentile judgment upon Israel, during the time when this people is declared Lo-Ammi.⁷² In his *Elements of Prophecy*, JND has some wide-ranging comments about the Jews and Gentiles regarding the ways of God in government and grace (this last affording reason to comment on the church also).

But this leads me to note two characters of prophecy, arising, as regards the Jews, from two different positions in which we find them in Scripture: first, a people more or less fully owned of God (God acting amongst them on known principles of government); secondly, rejected for a time (the sovereign power in the earth being confided to Gentiles). This last period forms the times of the Gentiles.

For the moment, I confine myself to the Jews. God, while He could in any sort own His people, addressed Himself directly to them. Until Nebuchadnezzar's time, God's throne and presence was in the midst of Israel. From that period, sovereign power in the earth ceased to be immediately exercised by God and was confided to man, among those who were not His people, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. This was a change of immense importance, both in respect of the government of the world, and God's judgment of His people. Both lead the way to the great objects of prophecy developed at the close -- the restoration, through tribulation, of a rebellious people, and the judgment of an unfaithful and apostate Gentile head of power. However the previous relationship of Israel and the nations is not left out; but we must introduce another all-important point for the development of this.

Israel, as we have seen, as between it and Jehovah, had been unfaithful, and Ichabod written on it; the ark of God, His glory and strength in Israel, delivered into the enemy's hand; enemies left in the land by their unfaithfulness. But God comes in, in sovereign grace, and raises up David, figure of Christ, who descended from him according to the flesh, king of Israel in grace and deliverance. Evil arising in his descendants, the major part of Israel revolt from the king of his family: two tribes remain, and to a residue of them brought back from Babylon, Christ is presented and rejected. Hence two things gave occasion to Israel's judgment -- idolatry and rebellion against Jehovah, and the rejection of Christ.

Having brought out this second ground of judgment, I leave it for the moment, in order to consider the former ground, rebellion against Jehovah. Israel ought to have been the witness of the blessedness of being in such a relationship with the Lord. "Happy are the people who are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God." Israel, on the contrary, learnt the ways of the heathen; yea, became more corrupt than they and the Lord allowed the surrounding nations to attack and distress them. This had its full development in the ten tribes; the house of David, raised up in grace, being for a time a stay to Judah. . . .

But the family of David itself, as placed responsibly on the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem, was, we know, unfaithful, and the sin of Manasseh made their

government insupportable to Jehovah. Judah was removed out of His sight, as Israel had been. But, then, what remained of the sphere of the direct government of God on a given law? Nothing. His glory left Jerusalem and the earth, for it had filled the temple of Jerusalem. (See Ezekiel 1-10.) This judgment then was of a far weightier character and import. It removed the government of God from upon the earth, and confided power to the head of the Gentiles. Israel was laid aside for a time. But Judah, providentially restored in a partial way , have Messiah presented to them, but as we have seen, reject Him, declaring they had no king but Caesar. This placed Judah under the Gentile power , not only as a chastening for their rebellion against Jehovah in the person of their King and of David's race, but on the ground of their own rejection of the promised Messiah and taking the Gentile for their head. This also consequently has its accomplishment in judgment in the latter days. The special Gentile part of it is scarcely alluded to in the prophets, who address Israel as more or less owned. It is the subject of Daniel, and we may add of the Apocalypse, for a reason we will add just now. Judah is seen in prophecy in the latter days under the oppression of the head of Gentile power, deceived by a false Christ, and oppressed. But God regards Israel still as His, having caused it to pass through the deepest tribulation. Those who, through grace, cleave to the Lord, call upon His name, and receive the word of the Spirit of Christ, instead of joining idolatry with the Gentiles and their chief, will be delivered, and the apostate Gentile power and the false prophet judged.

Another element introduced itself here. On the rejection of the Jews, as we know, Christianity came in. But alas! man was as unfaithful here as in Judaism. Early in the apostle's time, the mystery of iniquity began to work, resulting in an apostasy, and the ten kings of the Gentile world make war with the Lamb. In a word, a public apostasy in the sphere of Christian profession and the revelation of the man of sin, the open war of the beast and kings associated with him against the Lord, came in as an element of the latter-day events, completing the character and description of the Gentile power, which had taken the place of God's throne at Jerusalem, and to whom He had confided authority in the world. This, with its antecedents, is that which the Apocalypse furnishes of the prophetic volume.

The result of the destruction of this power, as well as of that of the Assyrian and other nations, is the establishment of Israel in blessing under Christ upon the earth, the throne of the Lord being thus re-established in surety at Jerusalem. The destruction of the Gentile power does not reach this latter period entirely. Hence Daniel, who treats of the period of Gentile power , never speaks of the millennium. He is made just to reach the deliverance, and stops there. The effect of the destruction of the Gentile power is to reunite the Lord, Jerusalem and Israel, and then comes the judgment of the Assyrian and the various enemies who have risen up against the Lord and His people. This brings in the full reign of peace. Their connection with Israel had led in many respects to the anticipation of what regards the Gentiles.⁷³

PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING

Previously we saw that JND spoke of the priest, the prophet and the king, as "the three mediatorial instruments of the power of God," and that during the union of the two principles of government and calling, these were fully developed. But under responsibility for these two principles, the Jewish people corrupted themselves in each one of them. Thus was the failure of the first man put in bold relief, though he was cultivated with every provision and care of God lavished so richly on him. These three things in which the first man failed will be made good in Christ, to God's glory , especially in the dispensation of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10) when Christ heads up

both the heavenly and earthly spheres.

DISTINGUISHABLE PERIODS NOT NECESSARILY ADMINISTRATIONS

There came a time when Kings were placed over Israel. While this is a distinguishable time period, that does not make it a dispensation, strictly speaking, though JND, speaking conventionally, used the expression "kingly dispensation."⁷⁴ When the time period arrived characterized by Gentile empire (Daniel 2 and 7), i.e., the times of the Gentiles, that did not constitute a dispensation either. There are other 'periods' during which the ways of God were manifested in some character, but they do not add to the number of administrations.

Chapter 5

The Two Parentheses

The Gentile Parenthesis of Judgment

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will state the thrust of JND's teaching, as I understand it, without extensive quotations, in order to minimize the length. In view of this, the chart below will assist.

A parenthesis "()" interrupts a sequence (just as this parenthesis does) without otherwise affecting it. The word "parenthesis" was used in the early 1800's in connection with the unfolding of dispensational truth, to indicate something that God has brought about in connection with a sequence of His dealings. There are two of these parentheses. One has to do with the heavenly sphere of God's glory in Christ; and the other is connected with the earthly sphere of God's glory in Christ. Recall that God has ONE purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ -- and this glory will be displayed in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly (Eph. 1:10).

The times of the Gentiles constitutes a parenthesis of judgment upon Israel. Government was taken away from Israel and transferred to Nebuchadnezzar. Government will again be found in Israel in the millenium. Thus, this interruption of government in Israel was called a parenthesis.

the chart goes on this page

THE EARTHLY GENTILE PARENTHESIS OF JUDGMENT

Here we will consider the wider of the two parentheses,⁷⁵ namely, the earthly one, the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel.⁷⁶ Israel will be at the center of God's display of His glory in Christ in the 'earthly places,' so to speak, during the millennium. The setting aside of Israel and the removal of God's throne from Jerusalem is a parenthesis in the development of God's ways in government in the earth. Of course, this interruption is part of God's ways with man for His own glory

This period, the times of the Gentiles, has been called a "parenthesis" because it is a period of time during which God's "reign" in Israel is interrupted. The administration of kingly government in the earth, according to God's choice, began with David, the great type of Christ. Saul represents the man after the flesh. Saul's reign was *provisional*. By that is meant that it was something provided by God, in response to the people's request for a king, in order to bring out the state of the people.⁷⁷ **God's choice** was Zion and David (Psalm 78:65-72). The throne of David (B.C. 101) and Solomon (B.C. 971) was called the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23). This was the seat of God's kingly government in the earth. David and Solomon together are a type of the Lord Jesus as coming from heaven (Rev. 19) to conduct the war of the great day of God the Almighty (Rev. 16:14) and then to reign as the Prince of peace.

But Solomon, who sat on the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23), was unfaithful (1 Kings 11). So God chastised the nation through the division under Jeroboam (B.C. 931) and the kingdom split in two (1 Kings 12). Still, the throne of Jehovah remained at Jerusalem. After a while the 10 northern tribes (often called "the house of Israel" and sometimes "Ephraim") were taken captive by the Assyrians (B.C. 722). And finally rebellious Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 605/604). A 70 year captivity of Judah then commenced (Jer. 25:1-14; 29:10), a year for each sabbath year not kept for 490 years (2 Chron. 36:21). The end of this 70 year period did not, however restore the kingdom to the house of David in Jerusalem.

The capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was used by God to bring to an end God's kingly government in the earth through Israel for much more than 70 years. The removal of this government is reflected in Scripture in several ways:

1. Notice that in the book of Daniel God is referred to as "the God of the heavens"; notice also the statement, "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26).
2. In a vision, Ezekiel saw the Shekinah remove (Ezek. 10:18; 11:22). The time will come when it will return (Ezek. 43:1-7; 44:1). During the interval of its absence, the heavens rule rather than God exercising government in the earth in Israel.
3. God pronounced Israel to be Lo-Ammi, meaning "not my people" (Hosea 1:9). They are not outwardly owned as His people from then until a coming day when they will be called Ammi, meaning "my people" (Hosea 2:1).
4. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (Daniel 2) in which an image depicted four Gentile empires. This image depicts Gentile rule from Nebuchadnezzar until the smiting stone falls upon the feet of the image and smashes it. Christ is the smiting stone and when He comes from heaven (Rev. 19) to conduct the war of that great day of God the Almighty (Rev. 16:14), He will bring Gentile empire to an end and reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).
5. Daniel had a dream (Dan. 7) in which these four empires are depicted in their beastly character.
6. Our Lord called this period the times of the Gentiles (nations; Luke 21:24).

These conditions exist during the time designated by "the Gentile parenthesis of

judgment." It is a time of Gentile empire brought as a chastisement, a judgment, upon Israel, but it will come to an end when God establishes His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2). This will end the period when God is not directly exercising government in the earth through Israel.

FAILURE MADE GOOD BY CHRIST

The failure of kingship in Israel led to this parenthesis of Gentile empire depicted by the image in Dan. 2. Behind this failure was God's purpose to have the people of Israel representatively in the land (though under Gentile dominion) when Christ came the first time, in order that Christ might be universally rejected by Jew and Gentile. Thus, at the end of the 70 year captivity, a remnant returned to the land (Ezra). Though not outwardly owned as before, as when the throne of Jehovah was in Jerusalem, God continued to work with this people (see Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) in view of the great test He would bring to pass connected with the Son come in holy manhood. This test, meant to bring out the state of the people and the state of the Gentile power, declared the state of the first man (1 Cor. 15:47). The rejection and crucifixion of Christ led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matt. 22:7; Dan. 9:26). Meanwhile, there is now "a remnant [of Jews] according to election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). These are part of the body of Christ, looking at them in one relationship, and are also called "the Israel of God" when distinguished from believing Gentiles (Gal. 6:16). These are the 'true Jews' of Rom. 2:28,29. We will note that in this passage Paul is addressing Jews. See v. 17.

All will be made good for God's glory in the second Man. Even the failure in kingship will be made good; for Christ will reign, reign perfectly, during the millennium, and *deliver up* the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24). All others had to have rule *taken away* from them. He, the Servant-Son, will glorify God in government in the earth, perfectly so, and then deliver up the kingdom to God. What a wonderful Person He is!

So the earthly, Gentile parenthesis of judgment on Israel, which is "the times of the Gentiles," began with the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the deliverance of Jerusalem when our Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, comes to set up God's direct government in the earth in Israel. The smiting stone will come from heaven and grind to powder him on whomsoever He falls. The image will be smashed and that smiting stone will fill the earth. Then shall the knowledge of Jehovah cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

The Heavenly Parenthesis

THE DESIGNATION "THE HEAVENLY PARENTHESIS"

Those who hold dispensational truth are often accused of teaching that God has two purposes. Perhaps some have said such a thing, but the fact is that God has one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ. But the display of His glory in Christ involves two spheres: the earthly and the heavenly. Israel especially is connected with the manifestation of God's glory in Christ in the 'earthly places,' while the body of Christ is especially connected with the manifestation of His glory in Christ in the 'heavenly places.' Psalm 8 speaks of the Son of Man having dominion in the earthly sphere. Thus that is not one of the N. T. mysteries. But Eph. 1:10 tells us that Christ will head up *all* things, both the earthly and the heavenly. That Christ should head up the heavenly sphere was not

revealed in the O. T.

The calling of the saints *now* is not part of the development of the ways of God in government in the 'earthly places.' Israel was, and will be, connected with that government in a special way. The body of Christ has not replaced Israel, nor is it the (spiritual) continuator of Israel. The body of Christ is not an earthly people as Israel was, and will be, but rather a heavenly people, seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), with a heavenly hope (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20,21).

The Lord Jesus was "a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy . . ." (Rom. 15:9). So both Israel and the nations will be blessed. Note well, though, that Israel -- the nation, as such -- will be blessed. Why, Scripture expressly declares, and does so after Christ was exalted above, that the covenants belong to Israel, Paul's kinsmen *according to flesh*! (Rom. 9:4,5). Yet, right in the face of the express words of God, antidispenationalists will affirm that the New Covenant is for the church. The death of Christ specifically provided for the future of Israel as a saved nation (John 11:51,52). The rebels having been purged (Ezek. 20), all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26).

And so, under Messiah the millennium will be a great upward step and advance regarding God's ways in 'earthly places.' Concerning salvation, Israel will stand under the new covenant, with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10-13). Concerning government, the One Whose precious blood is the basis of their blessing under the new covenant, will reign. God will be glorified in Him in direct government in 'earthly places' in Israel. Christ will reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) and so Israel will be the head while the nations will be the tail (Deut. 28:13,44).

Viewed, then, from the standpoint of the development of God's ways in government in the earth and of Israel's knowledge of salvation (Heb. 8:10-13), when all Israel is saved (Rom. 11:26) and stands before God in national adoption (Rom. 9:4), when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9), when the Lord alone is exalted (Isa. 2:11), etc., etc., the millennial reign of Christ is an immense advance, a great upward step, compared to Israel's and the Gentiles' positions in the O. T. times. This is easily apprehended by those not given to spiritually alchemizing the statements of the prophets. Leave out the heavenly parenthesis and the **immense upward step** in the earth is quite clear.

Non-millennialists think of the millennium as it is understood by premillennialists as a retrograde, a downward, Judaizing step -- because it is lower than Christian privileges (which they do not properly understand either). But this argument is based on refusing the truth that the body of Christ is connected with a heavenly parenthesis in the development of the ways of God in government in the earthly sphere. Such think of the church as the "spiritual Israel" and so there will be nothing after the church. But **this concept of the church as a new Israel is what Judaizes** -- not dispensational truth.

We now come to the matter of designating the time during which the heavenly company is being formed. How shall we designate the present period? We want to speak of it in some way; just as we speak of the Trinity; though the word Trinity is not found in Scripture, yet the truth of it is.

W. Kelly well called it "a heavenly parenthesis."⁷⁸ This designation nicely contrasts it with the wider, Gentile parenthesis of judgment on Israel (i. e., the times of the Gentiles) which has to do with the earth and with Israel. He also called it "the Gentile parenthesis of mercy"⁷⁹ and "church parenthesis."⁸⁰ I suggest that the best is "the heavenly parenthesis." During the Millennium mercy will go out to the Gentiles also and so "the heavenly parenthesis" distinguishes more sharply; moreover, "church

parenthesis" does not directly address the fact that the body of Christ is heavenly However, the description, "*a heavenly parenthesis*," contrasts well with the earthly hopes of the nation of Israel, and denotes that there is a special, heavenly people now being formed during a further development of the ways of God -- for His glory in Christ in the heavenlies. It is *heavenly* parenthesis of saints being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). It is a heavenly *parenthesis* because saints previous to Pentecost and subsequent to the Pretribulation rapture will not have the special place of being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus.

We have noted previously that the period from B.C. 605/604, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem until the time of the appearing of Christ to smite the Gentiles is the period our Lord called "the times of the nations" (Luke 21:24). It is depicted by the image in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2). This was called the Gentile parenthesis of judgment on Israel because this period interrupts God's reign in Israel. We noted that after B.C. 605/604, God continued to work with Israel, though they were not owned outwardly as His people (declared to be Lo-Ammi -- Hosea 1:9), until that work ceased in connection with the rejection of Christ. This brought about another parenthesis, the heavenly parenthesis, from Pentecost to the rapture. After the rapture, God will commence dealing with Israel again, though they still will not be outwardly owned, the heavenly parenthesis that interrupted such dealing with Israel having been terminated at the rapture. Thus there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis; a heavenly parenthesis within a wider earthly parenthesis.

The heavenly parenthesis is not a subject of the O.T. . . . prophecies. The O.T. . . . prophecies about Gentile blessing will find their fulfillment in the millennium, the 1000 year reign of Christ. Except for the citations concerning the birth, life, death, resurrection and session of Christ at Jehovah's right hand (Psa. 110:1), the texts quoted from the prophets by the N. T. writers are millennial in fulfillment, but are used by the N. T. writers for a principle or partial application meanwhile concerning the ways of God.

THE O.T. PROPHECIES ALLOW ROOM FOR THE HEAVENLY PARENTHESIS

Psalms 110:1. Here we see that Jehovah said to Adonai (our blessed Lord Jesus) that He should sit on His right hand until He makes Adonai's enemies His footstool. This allows room for the heavenly parenthesis to occur During this heavenly parenthesis Adonai (cp. Matt. 22:41-46) is not on His own throne but sitting at Jehovah's right hand, as Psalm 110:1 says. Rev. 3:21 states: "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne." The Lord Jesus is not yet on His own throne -- though opposers of dispensational truth seek to assure us otherwise. But the time will come when He *will* sit on His own throne (a figure of speech for His reign). "But when the Son of man comes [or 'shall have come'] in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit down upon his throne of glory . . ." (Matt. 25:31). If there were a Scripture that stated Christ was on His own throne of glory now, it would have long ago been produced. The Scriptures are clear: He is not on His own throne now. Meanwhile we are part of the heavenly parenthesis -- waiting for, and with Him.

Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-20. Isa. 61:2 says: "to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God. . . ." Our blessed Lord Jesus read from this passage and did not read the above emphasized phrase. It was not the time for Him to then proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God" (Luke 4:19). But He will do so in its own due season when He comes forth from sitting at Jehovah's right hand (Psalm 110:1-3; Rev. 19:11-21) to conduct "the war of [that] great day of God the Almighty"

(Rev. 16:14). Between these two proclamations there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Daniel 7. The four beasts of Daniel 7 parallel the four sections of the image of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar as found in Dan. 2. In his dream, Daniel "beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit." Christ is not sitting on His throne now (Rev 3:21). The time seen in the vision has not yet arrived. But there is room left for the heavenly parenthesis. After the close of this parenthesis these thrones will be set.

Daniel 8:22,23. We have just seen that "at the time of the end" (Dan. 1 1:40) the wilful king (the Antichrist) will be attacked by Egypt and overrun by the king of the North (Assyria). Dan. 8 shows us the he-goat (Greece) with a great horn (Alexander the Great) suddenly broken off and four horns, representing four kingdoms (v. 22) replacing the one horn. Alexander's empire was divided among his four generals. One held Egypt and is the king of the South. Another held Assyria and he is the king of the North. The geographical notices are referenced with respect to the location of Israel. There is an immense gap of time between verses 22 and 23. In v. 23 the prophecy speaks of "the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressor shall have come to the full, a king of bold countenance," etc., will arise, who will be broken by the Prince of princes. This king is not the Antichrist. He is the final king of the North. At any rate, there is a gap of time between verses 22 and 23 that leaves room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Daniel 9:24-27. This Scripture has been considered in detail in *Daniel's 70 weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*.⁸¹ It is one of those signpost Scriptures, so to speak, that, properly understood, point the reader to a premillenarian understanding of prophecy; i.e., that there will be an earthly kingdom, preceded by the advent of the King. Briefly, 69 weeks of years (483 years) have passed from the decree to restore and build Jerusalem (i.e., the walls would be rebuilt), given in Neh. 2., until the Sunday on which the King rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:5). The last week (7 years) is yet future and will just precede the second advent of the king. The heavenly parenthesis occurs during this interval between the first 69 weeks and the last week.

Daniel 11:35-45. Dan. 11:1-35 speaks of things historically accomplished. Not so Dan. 11:36-45. The king of Dan. 1 1:36 is one against whom the king of the south (Egypt) will push (v. 40), and against whom the King of the North (Assyria, at least) will come as a whirlwind and overflow. This wilful king, whose territory lies between Egypt and Syria, is the (false) king of Israel. The Lord had warned that another would come in his own name and he would be received. This wilful king is the foolish shepherd (Zech. 11:15), the Lawless One (2 Thess. 2:8), the final Antichrist (1 John 2:18). Between Dan. 11:35 and 36 there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Hosea 3:4-5. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without statue, and without ephod and teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall turn with fear toward Jehovah and toward his goodness, at the end of days." It certainly seems clear that Israel has been in this condition for a very long time. Nothing is said about the forming of one body, formed by the Holy Spirit and linked to a glorified Head in heaven. But it is clear that room is left for the heavenly parenthesis.

Hosea 5:15. "I will go away, I will return to my place, till they acknowledge their trespass, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Jehovah came down, came in holy manhood. Jehovah-Jesus came to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), and surely the day will come when by the working of sovereign grace He

will turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 1 1:26, etc.). Meanwhile the Son of man has ascended up where He was before (John 6:62), until that people acknowledge their greatest trespass of all and seek His face, that face in which the creature dared to spit. It was the only sinless face this fallen world has ever seen. They dared to pull the hair from His face. Yet the day will come when they will know that "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, raised beds of sweet plants; His lips lilies, dropping liquid myrrh" (S. of S. 5:13). Oh, how they will acknowledge that great trespass (Zech. 12:10-14)! It is God Who will act sovereignly from Himself (Ezek. 20:37, 38) to bring about a repentance suitable to His own glory and moral ways and to bless them under the new covenant. Meanwhile, there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Amos 9:9-11 and Acts 15:13-18. Amillennialists and postmillennialists teach that the "tabernacle of David" is set up now and that Christ is on His throne now. But the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David will occur in the millennium. In Acts 15, James cited the passage against Jewish bias; to show that God intended to bless the nations. And, of course, He will do so according to many prophecies. But James saw that this prophecy had a bearing mean- while on the Jewish prejudice against Gentile blessing. What was happening in James' day was not inconsistent with God's purpose, which included Gentile blessing. He cited the passage in order to show this. He did not cite it as if it was fulfilled, or fulfilling, in his day. Note that this is a general character of many citations from the prophets in Acts and the Epistles. What is cited is millennial in fulfillment, but has a bearing on some matter meanwhile. Before the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Zechariah 11:12-17. The 30 silver pieces foreshadow the price of the true Shepherd of Israel, Who was slain by the nation -- through the instrumentality of the Gentile power. But God will give them another "a foolish shepherd," even the Lawless One who will do his own will. "Little children, it is [the] last hour and according as ye have heard that antichrist comes, even now there have come many antichrists, whence we know that it is [the] last hour" (1 John 2:18). The foolish shepherd is the final Antichrist of prophecy. Between the murder of the true Shepherd of Israel and the manifestation of the "foolish shepherd" there is room left for the heavenly parenthesis.

Other Scriptures. The reader will also find, if he is willing to find, a gap in Luke 17 between verses 21 and 22. Also he would find this in Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Even the feasts of Jehovah (Lev. 23) allow room for the heavenly parenthesis. The first four feasts have been fulfilled but the last three will yet occur. The first four feasts occurred in the first and second months of the year and the last three in the seventh month. The seventh month foreshadows the summing up of the ways of God. The period between Pentecost and the summing of God's ways leaves room for the heavenly parenthesis.

"This Age" *and the Heavenly Parenthesis*

INTRODUCTION

The O. T. prophets prophesied an earthly kingdom under Messiah and that is the kind of kingdom a Jew had rightly to expect. Thus, the Jews and the remnant expected a

literal kingdom as the O. T. prophets had prophesied. Moreover, our Lord endorsed that expectation. This kingdom was presented in the Person of the lowly and meek One Whom the remnant received but the mass did not. God offered the kingdom in the form of a moral test of the people at large, knowing, of course, the depravity of the human heart and that His Son would be rejected. The temporal kingdom is therefore postponed, in accordance with God's purpose of glorifying Himself in Christ. Meanwhile, during the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel, while they are Lo-Ammi, God is doing another work: namely, the forming of a heavenly company blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ -- during a period we are calling "the heavenly parenthesis."⁸²

"THIS AGE" IS NOT THE HEAVENLY PARENTHESIS

Let us now consider three expressions found in Scripture concerning "this age."

1. *This age*: Matt. 12:32; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10.
2. *The completion of the age*: Matt. 13:39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20.
3. *The age to come*: Matt. 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Eph. 1:12; Heb. 6:5.

Previously we considered the *Gentile parenthesis* of judgment upon Israel (i.e., the times of the Gentiles). Our Lord lived here during that parenthesis and spoke of "this age." It was the Mosaic age preceding the introduction of the earthly kingdom.⁸³ Note, then, that the *Gentile parenthesis* of judgment upon Israel did not change the age!

But more, the introduction of the *heavenly parenthesis* did not change the age, either. Several epistles refer to "this age" after the introduction of the heavenly parenthesis. Observe, then, that "this age" is still in progress. It will come to an end, of course, when "the age to come" (which means the millennial age -- the dispensation, or administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10)), is introduced. There is a short period just preceding the introduction of that administration which brings to an end "this age." It is called "the completion of the age." You will see from this the fitness of designating the work God is doing in forming a heavenly company now as "the heavenly parenthesis." This work does not alter the fact that "this age," which has to do with the earth, existed before the Lord came, was in progress when He was here, is in progress now, and will be completed after the rapture; and when this age is ended, the earthly parenthesis of judgment on Israel will close (at the appearing of Christ in glory, when the smiting stone smashes the image (Dan. 2)). But if this is all true, and it is, what about the change introduced with John the Baptist?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

Verily I say to you, that there is not arisen among [the] born of women a greater than John the baptist. But he who is a little one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he. But from the days of John the baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is taken by violence, and [the] violent seize on it. For all the prophets and the law have prophesied unto John (Matt. 11:11-13).

The Law and the prophets [were] until John: from that time the glad tidings of the kingdom of God are announced, and everyone forces his way into it (Luke 16:16).

These texts do not mean that prophecy had no further fulfillment after John came preaching. There were, for example, prophecies of Christ's death and resurrection that were fulfilled after John was dead. And so it is in the case of the law. There were types in the law that Christ fulfilled in His death. "For all the prophets and the law" indicates

the whole of what we call the O. T. I suggest that they *pointed toward* the coming kingdom but John *announced* it. Thus, these passages do not mean the end of the prophets and the law arrived when John came preaching. But this does mean that an impending change was announced. This was a period of transition.⁸⁴ The kingdom had not yet commenced, of course (else John would have been in it and not compared with the least in it).

In Matthew, the rejection of Christ is especially marked in chapter 12 when the religious leaders said that He wrought by the prince of demons -- thus committing the sin against the Holy Spirit, Who was the true power that wrought in Christ.⁸⁵ In Matt. 13, the parabolic form of teaching about the kingdom began indicating that the kingdom in power and glory was being postponed and a mystery form of the kingdom was being introduced. This was consequent upon the commitment of the sin against the Holy Spirit as recorded in Matt. 12. The kingdom would therefore take a mystery form (Matt. 13:11), i.e., a form unforeseen by the prophets and the law.

The preaching of the kingdom up to this point of the rejection of Christ, implicit in this sin against the Holy Spirit, was not about the mystery form but about the kingdom in power. This includes Matt. 11:11-13. "A little one in the kingdom of the heavens" refers to one in the kingdom in power, what we call the millennial reign of Christ. As JND remarked:

The introduction in testimony, of the kingdom, made the difference between that which preceded and that which followed. Among all that are born of women there had been none greater than John the Baptist, none who had been so near Jehovah, sent before His face, none who had rendered Him a more exact and complete testimony, who had been so separate from all evil by the power of the Spirit of God -- a separation proper to the fulfillment of such a mission among the people of God. Still he had not been in the kingdom: it was not yet established; and to be in the presence of Christ in His kingdom, enjoying the result of the establishment of His glory, was a greater thing than all testimony to the coming of the kingdom.⁸⁶

The moral state suitable to the kingdom (Matt. 5-7)⁸⁷ was quite at variance with the state of the people generally and especially the leaders (with a few exceptions). The "violent" are those who break through all that which spiritually opposed entry into the kingdom. This does not refer to physical violence, but to those who at all personal cost would lay hold of that kingdom with its blessedness under Messiah's reign before His ancients in glory.

To return; my point is that John's announcement of the coming kingdom did not put an end to the law and the prophets (cp. Matt. 5:17 and JND's footnote). There yet remains the kingdom in power "to fulfil." John had announced it as at hand; and so did our Lord likewise. But the kingdom in power is "postponed," but not because God did not know Christ would be rejected.

God presented the kingdom in the Person of the meek and lowly Lord Jesus, One that depraved man would certainly reject. And through this rejection, and consequent upon His exaltation in glory at the Father's right hand, He has taken the position of Head of the body formed at Pentecost by the Spirit sent down upon those who had received Him (Acts 2:32,33, 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.). This unity of the saints with the Head in heaven is the great mystery of Christ and the church, unforeseen by the prophets (Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9). The kingdom pointed to by the law and the prophets will yet be established by the crushing power of the stone of Daniel 2 after God's present work of forming a heavenly people is completed.

Concerning the law, we do not read that it has died. But the Christian is dead with Christ (Rom. 6:8). The law does not apply to a dead man (cp. Rom. 6:7) but, "Now we

know that the law [is] good if anyone uses it lawfully, knowing this, that law has not its application to a righteous person . . ." (1 Tim.1:9).

Still, the law does not appear to be in force since the law-giver , Jehovah, having come down here in holy manhood, was crucified. Scripture shows that the Christian is not under the law of Moses as the rule of life, a subject on which a few further remarks are in order at this point. The system that puts the Christian under the ten commandments as the rule of life finds it necessary to transmute the seventh day sabbath into the Lord's day sabbath, else how have all ten?

Galatians does, in spite of all contradiction, oppose putting the Christian under law for any purpose; and speaks, not of fulfilling the law of Moses, but of "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The law of Christ is not the law of Moses. *The law of Christ is **the rule of the new creation**.*

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation. As many as shall walk by this rule,⁸⁸ peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15,16).

Here, believing Gentiles and believing Israelites⁸⁹ (the Israel of God) are directed to the law of Christ, namely , the rule, the norm, the standard, of the new creation of which Christ in resurrection is the head. The law-of-Moses-minded do not seem to comprehend this and call us antinomians (i.e, without, or against, or opposed to, law). The rule of the new creation is for those who ought to be here in this world to give expression to the will of the Head of the new creation, Christ Himself. This rule of the new creation is the law of Christ. The law of Moses was addressed to those who stood in Adamic responsibility. Our standing is "in Christ."

NEW CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS AGE

During "this age" the Lord Jesus was rejected. His crucifixion marked the end of the testing of the first man (man in the lost, Adamic standing of responsibility). Since His rejection, Satan is called the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). The true God has been rejected. And "this age" is now for the Christian "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). Demas forsook Paul, "having loved the present age" (2 Tim. 4:10). How well it is for us to "love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8) which will display the rights and glory of Christ in "the age to come," i.e., the millennium.

WHAT IS 'THE PRESENT DISPENSATION'?

In many, many places J. N. Darby (and others) spoke of the present period as a dispensation, *speaking conventionally*. However, consider the following:

The church is not, properly so called, a dispensation. It is the assembling together the co-heirs in unity, whilst the kingdom is in mystery. When the law ends as a dispensation, the kingdom is not yet established in power, and all is in transition. Here the saints are seen above, and the throne of God is in relation with the earth.⁹⁰

The Church, properly speaking, the body of Christ, is not a dispensation, it does not belong to the earth; but there is an order of things connected with it during its sojourning here below -- an order of things whose existence is linked with the Church's responsibility.⁹¹

Notice that in both cases he used the word "properly." And we are seeking at this point to be more exact so as to enlarge our understanding, not merely gliding along on a scheme that regards a dispensation as "a period of time during which . . ." while leaving out the essential subject of the development of the ways of God in government *in the*

earth, not apprehending the end of the testing of the first man, and not apprehending the true meaning of the heavenly parenthesis and other concomitant truths. Why speak of man being *tested now* with respect to "grace" since the first man is no longer under testing since the cross? It is because of erroneous notions about the character of dispensations accompanied by defective views regarding the end of testing the first man (who no longer has a standing before God) and concerning the consequences of this great change.

At any rate, dispensations have to do with the earth, not with a heavenly company

Really, this is not a dispensation. The Jews had a "this world" and "a world to come," "this age" and an "age to come." Messiah was to bring in the "age to come." The age of the law went on and Messiah did come, but they would not have Him, and the whole thing stopped:^k then comes the church between that and His second coming; and this is why I said this is not strictly a dispensation, but when Messiah comes again, it will close this time, and then will be the last day of this age.

The times of the Gentiles in Daniel, and the parenthesis of the church, are not at all contemporaneous; for the times of the Gentiles began in Babylon, being the times of the four Gentile beasts in Daniel. The times of the Gentiles will not end at the same time with the church, but go on a little after we are caught up. The temple of Jehovah on earth was set aside when the people were carried to Babylon, and they never got the ark again, but a remnant of them was spared to present to them Messiah.

I know what a person means by "the dispensation of the kingdom of heaven," but we belong to a heavenly thing in an interval, and there are no dispensations in heaven. The kingdom of heaven is a dispensation,^l the dispensation of the gospel is an administration.⁹²

The fact that "this age" is still proceeding does have a bearing on the way we should think of the period we are in.

And hence it is also that this present time is called (not I judge a dispensation, but) a parenthesis, because the Lord Jesus speaks of "this age" when He was upon earth, as the same as that which will close by judgment at the end; but this was a period connected with His relationship with Jews, and which will not be closed till He again is present in person; whereas, in the interval, the Church of the first-born has been gathered for heaven.⁹³

The dispensation of the law will be followed by the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10), the millennial reign of Him Whose right it is to reign. Observe that the covenant of the law will be followed by the New Covenant. The New Covenant, if we believe the express statements of Scripture, will be made with the house of Israel and Judah (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:7-13),⁹⁴ not the church. There are certain blessings for Israel under the new covenant that we share. We already have the Mediator and the blood and the forgiveness of sins as our own, *on the basis of our oneness with Christ*, not by covenant.⁹⁵ And thus we are able ministers of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3) without being under it. These things are sovereignly given of God. The Law demanded; the

k. [The testing of the first man under the law stopped.]

l. [He is using "dispensation" in the conventional sense as is seen in his words "I know what a person means by" The "dispensation of the gospel" is a personal administration and has no reference to a time period. The millennium will be the dispensation (really, administration), of the kingdom of heaven, i. e., the rule of the heavens under Christ as head of all.]

New Covenant gives, and gives by grace. To contrast the two covenants, may we not say that the law and works go together, and the new covenant and grace go together?⁹⁶

It is true that Paul received an "administration of the grace of God which has been given to me towards you" (Eph. 3:2). Paul was not given "a time period during which man is tested" Properly speaking, we are not in a dispensation; not in "the dispensation of grace." Paul had an administration to discharge and he did discharge it. This involved the mystery, which is beyond the grace that Israel will experience in the millennium, of course. But nonetheless, grace⁹⁷ will characterize God's dealings with Israel in the millennium; and a blessed Israelite will be able to say, 'This is indeed the dispensation of grace' (having a position greater than John the Baptist). And as far as God's dealings with an earthly people are concerned, that is true.

Observe again J. N. Darby's remark: "To me the world is not under any dispensation, but the whole course of God's dealings with it [with the world; with the earth] are over until He comes to judgment."⁹⁸ Dispensations have to do with the earth, not with a heavenly people. The personal administration committed to Paul does not contradict this. This was toward those composing a heavenly company during the heavenly parenthesis, while "this age," begun in the time of Moses, continues on.

So there has not been a change in the age; and it continues while God's formation of the heavenly company is in progress. The kingdom as Messiah's reign has not been inaugurated; but rather, in God's ways, consequent upon the rejection of Christ, the manifested kingdom has been "postponed" and the mystery form of the kingdom introduced, during the time of which, God is forming the heavenly company,⁹⁹ although the mystery form runs from Christ's ascension until His return in glory (see Luke 19:11-27 and other Scriptures).

Chapter 6

The End of the Trial of the First Man at the Cross, and the Consequences for the Christian.

Thus also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

THE END OF THE FIRST MAN AND THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION

The testing of man in the O. T. revealed what was in man, man as standing in Adamic responsibility. It manifested his depravity. In Israel, the law addressed the first man (1 Cor. 15:47) in a people specially cultivated by God placing them in favorable circumstances to see if the blessing could be obtained by man's effort. The law did not address the child of God as such. The law made no distinction regarding whether or not those under it were children of God. Indeed, many were not. National Israel was a mixture. One of the fruits of Christ's death was to end that mixture (John 1:12; 11:51,52). Providing a basis upon which the children of God could form a visible community of the saved depended upon the ending of the standing of the first man in Adamic responsibility. Adam had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (responsibility) but not of the tree of life. The law did not answer to the tree of life. If a man kept the law perfectly, he would continue to live his natural life, but that is not what Scripture calls eternal life.

The first man put the Lord Jesus on the cross, the cross where the standing of the first man, as under Adamic responsibility, was brought to an end. It was the first man's crowning act of declaring himself totally lost. Thus Paul, and we also, can say, "I am crucified with Christ." I, in responsibility in my standing in Adam, the first man, am crucified with Christ. What I am as connected with the first man is removed from before God. What is my standing and responsibility now? After tracing the history of failure of the first man, JND wrote:

Now, although the ground of man's responsibility is over in the sense of having wholly failed under it, when proved in every possible way, yet as to moral dealing with each individual, the responsibility is there to the full; and as an individual under moral dealing, a man has to go through the history of the process of responsibility and its failure; but he goes through it to bring out this, that he is lost already. He has to prove the truth of God's verdict that in man there is no good thing; and so the result of the principle of responsibility is for him to find out that he is lost, that the responsibility is over; not as if it was not true, but because he is lost and ruined, as the man who has lost all his money by foolish ways. It is important to keep up responsibility, but the individual is brought to the consciousness that on that ground it is all up with him. Man is lost. We have spent every farthing, and have only debts; these we have if that is any good. It is all over with the first man, and no mending of him will do: he is lost and ruined; but Christ came to save the lost.

Now the Second Man is set up. It is not a mending of the first man, but the

substitution of the Second. There is no improvement or correction of the first man (although we are practically changed if we come to Christ), but the sins of the first Adam are all cleared away; and, secondly, the tree itself is cut down by the roots for faith. In the cross we see the responsibility met completely; Christ has met all the failure, the fruit of the tree of responsibility, and has glorified God in so doing. Man has brought in confusion; but Christ came, met the case, and cleared the scene, and triumphed over all. When He came, God's character as to facts was compromised, and there was no escape. If He had saved none, but at once cast off sinners, it were righteousness, but there would have been no love. If He had let all pass, when man was a sinner, and in such sort saved all (which man would call love, but which would not have been divine love, for God is holy), where were the righteousness? But Christ came. Well, surely in the cross there is righteousness against sin, as nowhere else, yet there is the infinite love of God to sinners.

In Him, in Christ, I get both the trees of Paradise united, fulfilled in grace, bearing our sins and putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and becoming life according to righteousness. I am brought to the discovery of what I am, and then I see Christ has died on the cross and has taken the whole thing on Himself. When I see Him -- the Son of God -- dying on the cross, I say if this is not righteousness -- judgment against sin -- I do not know what is. But whom is He dying for? -- the guilty sinner. Well, if this is not love, I do not know what is. On the cross we get every attribute of God perfectly maintained -- His majesty and truth, as well as His righteousness and love -- every claim met, and God perfectly glorified in the Person of Christ, the Lamb of God. He was there making atonement for sin that the gospel might go out to all the world; and as to believers, bearing their every sin. The whole thing is met there, and the believer's responsibility cleared away, as to sins, that he may enter into responsibility on a new ground, that of a child of God. He has met fully, and completely, and absolutely, all the fruit of man's eating the tree and all the sins of the believer (his responsibility). This, of course, does not touch the believer's responsibility to Christ or to God as a believer in Christ; for this is of a new order, and comes in upon a different ground.

But in the cross God's character is not only maintained but fully glorified; for the death of Christ is the perfect putting away of sin^m and of all that belonged to the first man. We, therefore, as believers, are crucified with Christ; we are not in the flesh but in Christ. We are dead to the condition in which we were as children of Adam, and we are in a new position altogether; in Christ we are children of God. All that we were has been met and settled on the cross, and a new life has been given to us, so that now we are not in the first Adam but in the Second Man. The fruit of the first is all taken away and the tree itself cut up by the roots for our faith; we have died with Christ, been crucified with Him. The responsibility is met by the atonement, and He Himself is the eternal life; so the two trees of Paradise are fully reconciled. . . .

We have thus the two trees in grace -- the tree of life, and the tree of responsibility. Under the law we saw it was responsibility first, and then life. In grace it is first life, then responsibility.

Not only are my sins gone, but I and everything belonging to me buried in the

m. This, in its fullest effect, reaches, I doubt not, to the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But the believer knows its efficacy for himself now. I do not here speak of those who believe not. They are doubly guilty.

death of Christ; the "I" merged into Him as to life, as it is written, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and the life I now live is in the Risen One. He rose, and is now seated in glory in virtue of what He did as man, and has sent down the Holy Ghost to unite to Himself as Head (having taken this place as man in heaven) believers as members of His body, and to reveal all the counsels that were about us before the world was; and this is the church. The Christian is united with Christ, where He now is, we are seated there, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. The Head is there, and we, the members, are, by the Holy Ghost, united to Him.

Now comes in the responsibility of the Christian. True responsibility flows from the place we are in -- not as having to get into the place, but as being in it. Seeing our place we can learn what our responsibilities are; else we never can assume responsibility. You are not responsible to me as children or servants, because you are not my children or my servants. If you were my servant, your duties and responsibilities would flow from your being so. You have totally failed as a child of Adam; and now, if a believer, God says you are a child of God. Well, now, let us see if you are walking as a child of God in all your ways. This is our responsibility. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and are left in this world to shew out the character of such. We are the epistle of Christ, and have to see that we are a good one, known and manifestly so before all men. Christ should be so seen in us that he who runs may read.

If you are in Christ, Christ is in you; and our place is a settled one. Christ is before God for us, and we are before the world for Christ. What is laid on us is not responsibility before God as a child of Adam, but as a child of God. I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and the life of Jesus is to be manifested in our mortal bodies. There is our responsibility and it is an individual thing. You will see the individual put always first in scripture, because the individual must be put right before there can be any church. The epistle to the Romans deals with the individual, so also does the first chapter to the Ephesians, till we come to the last verses. We always have truth brought out for the individual before corporate blessing is unfolded or responsibility is enforced. We are saved by Christ individually and owned as brethren.

This leads on to relationship with Christ and with one another. Our relationship with the Father is that of children; our relationship with Christ, first, that He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and then as members of His body, and so baptized into one body by the Holy Ghost. This is the effect of God's work, and we are created unto good works, which God has fore-ordained for us. The ground we stand on is not our works: Christ stood on that ground once for us, and if we did we should be lost. We stand on Christ's work and are saved, and the Holy Ghost has come down and united us to Christ as His members; and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

This [being united to Christ as his members] brings out what the church of God is. The Holy Ghost never came down to earth before that [union was to be effected], although He was the immediate agent of all God's works. All immediate action from creation onwards is [by] the Holy Ghost; He is the direct agent, but never came till the day of Pentecost. . . .

We get before [the death of Christ] (in Deut. 32:43) such a word as "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people"; but [in the O. T. .] there is His people: the nationality is kept up, and the Gentiles are kept distinct from His people. The Jews were the people who had the promises; but the One in whom all the promises centered came, and they refused and crucified Him; so they must now come in on the ground of mercy like any poor Gentile. There is no difference, for

they have all alike sinned. God fulfilled His promise, but the Jew who had it rejected the fulfillment. So then the middle wall of partition could be broken down, for both came alike under mercy. All nationality now is merged in Christ. He now sits in glory as man, and the Holy Ghost whom He has sent down links us with Him. The distinction of Jew and Gentile is abolished, and the church is the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. If you had had a mention of the church in the Old Testament, Judaism must have gone. The church is a heavenly body the Head being in heaven.

Now, if you appropriate Old Testament promises and apply them to the church, you drag it down from heaven to earth, and put Israel quite out of that place which God in His sovereignty gave to His chosen people. Individually we get much comfort for our hearts and instruction, too, from God's dealings with Israel; for (besides great truths as to God's nature), what happened to them happened to them for ensamples, and is written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come. See, for instance, Deuteronomy 8:2-4, which is the history of God's dealings with them in the wilderness. So we too, in a spiritual sense, are put through the wilderness, and learn God's care of us and our continual dependence on Him for every need and each step of the way. God took care even of the wearing out of their coats all the time, while He sought to teach them what they were. We are in the wilderness, and need to learn to know the God of the wilderness. We are left here to find out both what we are and what He is, and we have the same principles to guide us as led Israel in their wanderings.

Being children of God, however, our home is the Father's house, and Christ has gone there to prepare a place for us. This leads us at once to the coming of Christ, not as a matter of prophecy, but for us, as He said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also," John 14. This is not prophecy, which is concerned with the government of this world, and is connected with the Jews who are the center of prophecy. We are identified with Christ, and were in the counsels of God before even the world was, and so are not of the world at all. He has promised to come first and put us in our right place beside Himself; and when prophecy comes true we shall be with the Lord. We are in heavenly places in Christ, and our conflict is there now; "we wrestle . . . against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places."¹⁰⁰

THE CHRISTIAN IS CALLED, BUT NOT WITH GOVERNMENTAL RULE

We considered that the call of Abraham had two aspects, one national and another individual. One is for 'earthly places' so to speak and another heavenly. The Christian's calling is altogether heavenly.¹⁰¹ Neither the Christian nor the church has had governmental power committed. The Christian finds himself in a heavenly parenthesis of being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, during the wider parenthesis of Gentile judgment on Israel, i.e., the times of the Gentiles. These times run on until terminated by the smiting stone falling upon the feet of the image (Dan. 2). Gentile empire is in the hands of those to whom God transferred it when Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar. God has not called the Christians to seize this power, or infiltrate it. The epistles tell him to be subject and to maintain a good conscience directed by the Word of God. To seek governmental power, united with calling, is, therefore, *to Judaize*. It has long been observed that those who seek governmental power now, especially postmillenarians, seek their model in the word of Jehovah to Israel in the O. T. . . and yet such accuse "dispensationalists" of Judaizing.

The following anonymous extract is consistent with the teachings of JND and sums

up much that he taught on the Christian's relationship to the Gentile power . It is consistent with comments he has made on this subject.¹⁰²

GOD'S CALL OUT OF THE EARTH.

In the midst of the increased and still growing corruption of the whole scene around us, and of the threatened dissolving of all things, it is much laid upon the mind to consider with simplicity and clearness the character of our calling.

The call of God out of the earth, and God's assertion of title to the earth, are things that greatly differ, and should be morally and practically distinguished by the saints.

The call of God proceeds on the principle that God Himself is outside the earth, and that He is not seeking it, but seeking a people to be His in His place outside and above it. The earth, therefore, by this call, is left just as it was. For it is a stranger to the purpose of God.

This call of God out of the earth was exhibited in the family of Seth, before the flood. Cain's house was in possession of the earth, and Seth does not interfere with them. Not at all. All he and his generation have to do with the earth is to call on the name of the Lord while they are on it (not to engrave, like Cain, their own name there -- Gen. 4:17), and then to lay their dead bodies in it.

So was it exhibited afterwards in Abraham. He is called of God. But such call leaves the Canaanites without a rival. He does not contend with the potsherd of the earth. He does not dispute their right as lords of the soil. He desires only to pitch his wandering tent upon the face of it, or to lay his bones in the bowels of it.

And so the Church or heavenly family of this dispensation. Their call leaves the Gentiles in power. The Church has nothing to say to "the powers that be," but either to obey unreluctantly, or to suffer patiently, according as the demand made by the powers be such or not as involves their subjection to Christ.

This determines at once our *duties*. We render to the powers ordained of God their dues, without in any wise seeking to disturb them, knowing also that even if they behave themselves unrighteously, we are not constituted their judges.

But the character of our *service* is likewise determined by this call of God. Service to God is wanting in its true character, if it does not intimate that He is not now re-asserting His title to the earth; or, in other words, our service to Christ must be to Him as the *rejected* Christ. For He is such an One all the time He remains in the "far country." The cry has followed Him there from the earth, "We will not have this man to reign over us." And is that cry to be answered by the servants who occupy their talents during His absence? (See Luke 19.) Surely not. They serve Him in the patient sense of His rejection all the time, and "they are not ashamed of his chain."

In like manner, moreover, this determines what our *habits* should be. Our habits should tell that the earth is not *our* place, as our *services* should tell that it is not *our Lord's* place.

This affords a holy and serious admonition to our souls.

Our call does not connect us with the earth. Our necessities do so, it is true. We need the fruit of the ground, the toil of the hand, and the skill of the heart, to provide things needful for the body. Our necessities, thus, connect us with the earth, and we may attend to it for the supply of such necessities. But our call does not connect us with it, but rather separates us from it.

To link the Church and the earth is acting at once on apostate principles. To aim at changing the character or condition of Christ in the world, or to serve Him *save as the rejected One*, is not service rendered in spiritual discernment.

These things we may know well and admit easily. But if we refuse to link *the Church* with the world, are we daily watching to refuse to link *the heart* with it, the *hopes* with it, the *calculations of the mind* with it? If it be easy to see the Church now on the eve of losing the world, and to see this without regret, is it alike easy to see our interests losing it, our name and distinction losing it? Such an one was Paul. He would not reign as a king yet; but he had learnt how to have and how to want, how to abound and how to suffer need.

In God's dealing by Israel, there was an assertion of title to the earth. Joshua went into the "possession of the Gentiles" and took with him "the ark of the Lord of all the earth," that his sword might make it the possession of the Lord and His people. But Paul went into the possessions of Jews and Gentiles, not to disturb their tenure of anything there, but to take out of them a people unto God, to link souls with the disallowed Stone, and to teach them that their blessings were spiritual and heavenly.

So, according to the Lord's teaching. See the two parables in Luke 19, 20. In settling Israel, the Lord gave them a vineyard, *a portion of the earth*, and told them to till it for Him, rendering Him dues as the Lord of the soil. In settling the saints of this age, He gave them talents, *such gifts and opportunities of service as were suited to the fact of His absence and rejection by the world*, having no estate or kingdom here till He should return.

Practically to for get such distinctions, or to act on the principle that the Church is God's instrument for asserting His claim to the earth, is apostasy from her calling of God.

In His ministry the Lord was judging Satan, but refusing to judge the sinner. And, according to this, at the end of His ministry, He tells Peter to put up the sword, and Pilate, that His servants could not fight.

The way of His saints is to be according to all this. They are to judge morally or spiritually (i.e., defilements within themselves), but not contend about the interests of the world. The apostle condemns them for not doing the one and for doing the other (see 1 Cor. 5, 6), with this difference however -- their duty in the *first* matter is peremptory (1 Cor. 5), their way in the second is left more to their measure of grace (1 Cor. 6). And according to this also the apostle tells us that our weapons are not carnal but spiritual, our warfare not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness (2 Cor. 10, Eph. 6). We are really or spiritually defeated, when we fight carnally; for the devil has raised in us that temper which has sent us forth to the carnal fight.¹⁰³

In keeping with these things, observe that the lawⁿ is not the rule of life.¹⁰⁴ Not that the law died, but the Christian is dead.¹⁰⁵ Nor did the Lord *vicariously* fulfill the law.¹⁰⁶ The law of Moses supposes that the first man is under trial.¹⁰⁷ It is Christ who is the Christian's rule of life.¹⁰⁸ This is connected with the new creation (Gal. 6:15,16).¹⁰⁹ The man of Romans 7, who has the "inner man," is under the principle of law in his conscience, concerning his place before God. It may take the form of *the law*, i. e., of Moses. When he comes to an end of himself, realizing his bondage, he cries out for deliverance (Rom. 7:24) by looking to One outside himself. He then comes under a new

n. The distinction theology makes between the law and the moral law so as to put the Christian under "the moral law" as the rule of life is not found in the N. T.

law (Rom. 8:2) the consequence of which is that he is "in Christ." Christians are under "the law of the Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, or uncircumcision; but new creation. As many as walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15,16).

"The Israel of God" means the believing Jews. *They*, and they alone are true Jews, outwardly and inwardly (Rom. 2:17-29). Besides that, they are also members of the body of Christ. Moreover, they, as well as believing Gentiles, answer spiritually to the meaning of circumcision (Phil. 3:3).

Chapter 7

The Mystery and the Rapture

I distinguish entirely between the *church* and prophecy. I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the recipient and depositary of prophecy, as Abraham was of what should happen to lot.¹¹⁰

The church as one body in Christ, composed of Jews and Gentiles, was not spoken of in the O.T.¹¹¹ "The scripture meaning of mystery is that known only by revelation, not by human knowledge."¹¹² The mystery formed no part of O. T. prophecy or promise.¹¹³ (The bearing of the mystery on the millenarian question was discussed by W. Trotter¹¹⁴).

The reader should consult the expositions by JND of the books of Scripture that speak of the mystery (including his *Synopsis*). Here we will cite an outline of his teaching regarding the mystery and the rapture.

We have the largest and fullest warrant for saying, that it was entirely unrevealed in the Old Testament. Speaking of the mystery, the admission of the Gentiles to be of the one body in the assembly of God, Paul says (Rom. 16:25,26), "The preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest and by prophetic scriptures [not "the scriptures of the prophets"], according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," etc. In Ephesians 3:4,5, "The mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body"; and (v. 9), "the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus." So in Colossians 1:24, "for his body's sake, the church, whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." This doctrine, of which Paul, as he states in the Colossians, was a minister, as well as of the gospel, in order to complete the word of God, was thus wholly unknown to the saints of the Old Testament. Much more was utterly obscure; but this was hid in God. Other things they might have were for an age to come, not for themselves, as the promise of the Spirit and the Messiah's glory and redemption; but this they knew not at all. When the Father had revealed to Simon Bar-jonas the truth of the Person of Christ, that He was the Son of the living God (not merely the Christ), Christ could then speak of the church; for it was to be founded on that. But He spoke of it only prophetically, and as a future thing -- "on this rock I will build my church." It was by resurrection He was declared Son of God with power; so that Satan's power was of no avail; and His death was needed to gather together in one the children of God, wherever scattered abroad -- His departure, that the Comforter might come.

Except the corn of wheat fell into the ground and died, it abode alone. When Christ had died -- had gone up on high -- the great foundation was laid for all blessings, and in particular for the church. And the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, came down according to promise; and the assembly, the church, was formed; and the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved (the residue); Acts 2:47. That was the way He now disposed of them, though His promises to Israel remained sure. The doctrine of the church, however, was not taught as far as Scripture informs us. The Christians remained strictly attached to Judaism, zealous of the law; priests were obedient to the faith, nor seem to have ceased to be priests. Peter never even teaches that Jesus is the Son of God;

his doctrine is, "Him whom ye have crucified, God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins": God had made Him both Lord and Christ.

What will, perhaps, surprise the reader, the church is never named in the epistles but by Paul. A particular assembly is named by John; but the assembly or church as a whole, the body of Christ, is spoken of by Paul only; nor, consequently, I may add, the rapture of the saints before the appearing of Christ. God raised up, we learn in the Acts, a free ministry outside the college of the apostles. This brought out the fullest hatred of the Jews; and Stephen, an eminent instrument of God in this ministry, is put to death. Heaven receives its first-fruits of the power of the Holy Ghost, of the church; heaven itself is opened, and a heavenly Christ is seen -- a man in glory is seen. Conformed to Christ, the spirit of Stephen joins Him on high, and the final tale of Judaism was told in blood: they always resisted the Holy Ghost. God did not dwell in a house made by hands. This changed everything; a heavenly gathering before Christ's return was actually begun.

This, however, was individual; but the enmity of the Jew was to assume a yet more active and violent character. Not content with making havoc of the church at Jerusalem, Saul must persecute them to strange cities; but while occupied with this, and close to Damascus for the purpose, he is arrested by the Lord's revealing Himself in glory to him, and telling him that those he was persecuting were Him-self -- "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; why persecutest thou me?" Here, then, sovereign grace abounded over final resistance to the Holy Ghost Himself. The foundation for the gospel of the glory was laid, and the identification of all the saints on earth with their glorified Head in heaven was made the starting-point for Paul's testimony as to what His church was. Of this he became minister. For a heavenly, glorious Christ, Jew or Gentile were all one; they were all one in Him. . . .

Another character as to the formal existence of the church on earth is, that we, Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2), are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. The manner of its building is the breaking down the middle wall of partition, and to make of twain one new man; or, as is expressed in a passage already quoted, the mystery is, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of one body. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which it was formed, took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8), which it was the distinctive title of Christ to confer (John 1:33,34), and which for the saints He ascended up on high to receive. Acts 2:33; compare John 16:7.

In a word, the church, or assembly, is the body of Christ, formed, when the Head was exalted, by the Holy Ghost, which He then sent down to gather together the saints into unity. Before Israel's being owned as a nation, the saints walked in individual faith; when Israel was owned, they were individual members of a nation owned as such as God's people, but of which the vast mass were unconverted, the unity of which, such as it was, was in the flesh -- a unity with which the Spirit had nothing to do, and which, consequently excluded Gentiles. After the death and exaltation of Christ, who gave Himself, not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, all was changed in this respect; the distinction of Jew and Gentiles effaced; both alike (through faith) reconciled to God, and gathered into the unity of one assembly by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which assembly is the church, i.e., the assembly of God, the body of Christ, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost on earth. We are not enquiring here how far it could be corrupted or ruined, viewed as the house of God, or dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost on earth; but what it is in the primitive scriptural view of it. Nothing is that but itself.

This assembly is, as may be seen (Eph. 5), the bride of Christ. The word is applied to the particular assemblies of Christians in different places, because they formed the assembly of God in that place; but, if the word be taken as Scripture uses it, it is not possible to attach any equivocal sense to it. It is God's assembly, formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, when the Head had been exalted as Man on high. It is His body and His bride. Translate the Greek word by the natural English one, and no one would have a moment's hesitation as to what it meant -- the assembly, or the assembly of God. The Lord added daily to the assembly. He set some in the assembly; firstly, apostles; secondly, prophets.

It is called to participate in the sufferings of Christ, and He will present it to Himself as His bride, as Eve to Adam, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. When the Lord added to the assembly such as should be saved, it is quite clear that it was not to that to which they belonged already; and their adding to it, an act which shewed they did not belong to it as members of the Jewish nation, not even if they were previously pious. It was a newly instituted body formed in unity by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and united to the Head, Christ, who was there.

We have now to enquire what the testimony of God is as to its joining Him there. The church's joining Christ has nothing to do with Christ's appearing or coming to earth. Her place is elsewhere. She sits in Him already in heavenly places. She has to be brought there as to bodily presence. Christ could not remain with His disciples here, and tells them, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am there ye may be also." The thing she has to expect for herself, then, is not, though sure of that also, Christ's appearing, but her being taken up where He is. And so the apostle, speaking of it in detail, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

We go up to meet Christ in the air. Nothing clearer, then, than that we are to go up to meet Him, and not await His coming to earth; but that this coming to receive us to Himself is not His appearing is still clearer, if we pay attention to Colossians 3, which shows that we are already with Him when He shall appear. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." This identification of the church's hope and glory with Christ Himself is of the essence of the church's blessing. He is our life, our righteousness; the glory given to Him He has given us: we are members of His body, we are of His flesh and of His bones. We reign with Him, suffer with Him, are glorified together, being like Him -- conformed to His image. He is hid in God: our life is hid with Him in glory; but for this we must be caught up to meet Him, and that before He appears at all when He does, we are already with Him and appear with Him. This does not state the epoch of the rapture of the church, but, what is far more important, it does clearly shew the entire difference of relationship of the heavenly saints with Christ, and of those who only see Him when He appears. The one are blessed under His reign, and are connected with the earth; the others are identified with Himself -- with Him who reigns -- appear and reign with Him. Wherever this is enfeebled, Satan is at work.

There are truths common to all, such as being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. There are those which are the prerogative of faith; and such is our association with Christ, the Firstborn among many brethren, the being His bride and His body. He who awaits Christ's appearing, as the time in which he is to go to be with Him, has denied the proper hope and proper relationship of the church with Christ. On this point there can be no compromise. Ignorance of privilege is one thing (it is our lot, all of us, in one shape or other), the denial of it another. When once we have seen that we are to appear with Christ, and that, consequently, our hope of Christ's coming for us is not properly His appearing, all our habits of thought and our spiritual affections are changed. Our proper hope is not even the glory in which we appear with Him, wonderful as that is, but this, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." "So shall we ever be with the Lord." . . .

Such is the general doctrine of the rapture of the church -- a doctrine of the last importance; because it is immediately connected with the relationship of the church to Christ, its entire separation from the world and its portion. It is the act which crowns its perfect justification. This rapture before the appearing of Christ is a matter of express revelation, as we have seen from Colossians 3:4.

As to the time of this rapture, no one, of course, knows it. But the difference, in this respect, between it and the appearing is very marked, in what is most important. At the appearing comes the judgment of this world: hence it connects itself with, and closes, its history; and before it that history must have run on to its revealed result, revealed events must have occurred, and the objects of judgment must have appeared on the scene and accomplished what is predicted of them. The church is associated with Christ already gone, is not of the world as He was not, is risen with Him, has its life hid with Him in

God. There is no earthly event between it and heaven. It must have been gathered, and Christ rise up from the Father's throne to receive it: that is all. It is this conviction, that the church is properly heavenly, in its calling and relationship with Christ, forming no part of the course of events of the earth, which makes its rapture so simple and clear; and on the other hand, it shows how the denial of its rapture brings down the church to an earthly position, and destroys its whole spiritual character and position. Our calling is on high. Events are on earth. Prophecy does not relate to heaven. The Christian's hope is not a prophetic subject at all. It is the promise that Christ will come and receive him to Himself, that where He is the Christian may be also.

Although the question be already answered in principle, it may be well to put it formally here, When is the Christian to expect the Lord? I answer Always. It is his right spiritual character. His always doing it is that by which his right spiritual state is characterized. Be ye "as men that wait for their Lord when he shall return from the wedding, that they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. . . . Be ye therefore ready also, for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." And, after speaking of service to the saints, the Lord adds, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth, I say unto you, He will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to beat the men-servants and the maid-servants. . . he will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." Here, as a general principle, the constant waiting for the Lord as a present thing is given as characterizing those who are blessed when the Lord comes, and who reign over all things. That which leads the wicked servant into all mischief is, not the denial of the Lord's coming, but the loss of the sense and present expectation of it.

This was the origin of the church's departure from simplicity, and its fall into clerical authority and worldliness -- the cause of the loss of its spiritual authority. The saints went out, left the world and worldly religion by going out, to meet the Bridegroom. It characterized them as a present thing. It was recalled to its primitive position and liveliness by the renewal of the immediate expectation of Him. He did tarry in fact; and the sense of His coming was lost. "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" was what aroused and prepared them. No events, no earthly circumstances, intervene or modify the direct summons. They go out to meet Him. There is no other thought, no confusion with the government of this world, none of any previous dealing in respect of the marriage-feast (His union with the Jews). They go back with Him to it.

That the apostle lived in, and taught, this immediate expectation, as the proper primitive doctrine of the Spirit of God, is evident, whatever degree of light as to detail may have been possessed. The Thessalonians were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven; with very little clearness of light; but they had been so taught, and Paul approves of their expectation as a divine witness to the world, of which the world itself spoke. It was his manner of entering in -- they were waiting for Him. It was not a prophetic explanation of events they possessed: there is no event, I repeat, between us and heaven. God's Son was coming from heaven; and they were waiting for Him as the fruit of Paul's entering in among them, owned and delighted in by himself. They drew certain conclusions from it in which they erred, which Paul corrected (as he did another mistake, induced by false teachers, in the second epistle); but their constant expectation was right. The word even is used only here, and speaks of awaiting; but Paul was doing as much. He speaks to them of "we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord." We are told this is a class. Be it so. But it is a class in which Paul reckons himself, showing that that class could and ought so to await the coming of the Lord. ¹¹⁵

Chapter 8

The Ruin of the Church

J. N. Darby understood that the body of Christ was complete *on earth* at every moment, just as it was on the day of Pentecost when it was formed. One of the Scripture indications of this fact of completeness at all times is that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it (1 Cor. 12:26). Saints who are with the Lord are not suffering. This suffering is on earth, where the body is to carry out the will of the head in heaven. However, this does not mean that the saints who were in the body on earth are no longer of the body. They are not looked at as in the activity of, or in the suffering of, the body here on earth. When Christ is manifested in glory then shall all be manifested with Him in their union with Him as one body.

It is the divine intention that the body display its unity here on earth. Christ's power will display it someday, but the body is here to express His holy will. There has been a ruin of the keeping of the unity of the Spirit (cp. Eph. 4:3). Keeping the unity of the Spirit means giving practical expression to the unity that the Spirit formed. The ruin of this does not, of course, disconnect a Christian from the actual Spirit constituted unity with Christ and the other members of the one body.

Moreover, this unity of the Spirit, the practical manifestation of membership in one body, can only be rightly expressed in separation from evil to the Lord. The church fell at the end of the apostolic age but before the apostles were all gone (see 2 Timothy and 2 Peter for examples). The writing of the book of Revelation supposes this fall, this ruin, because **the occasion of prophecy is failure**. In the divine purpose, the church, as God has constituted it, cannot be ruined. The testimony to be borne regarding the church as a testimony to unity with the head in heaven, and to one another, as members of one body on earth, put into man's hands, has been ruined. Along with the other truths which JND saw very early, he realized that the church had irremediably fallen, but God brought before his soul a provision His prescience had provided even before that fall. We saw that B. W. Newton spoke of an 1827 paper of JND's on *the fall of the church* (see Chapter 2.3). JND wrote:

For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was that, where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name,¹¹⁶ there He would be [Matt. 18:20].¹¹⁷

This was in 1827. The consciousness of the ruin burdened him and afterwards the doctrine of the ruin became more clear.¹¹⁸

The ruin of the church occurred at the end of the apostolic age.¹¹⁹

Of course, many Christians object to the idea of the fall, or ruin, of the church.¹²⁰ Perhaps we sense that there are consequences that we may not like to face, and act upon, if the ruin is a fact, particularly if it occurred while apostles were still living.

Important writings by JND on the subject of the ruin of the church include: *What the Christian Has Amid the Ruin of the Church*,¹²¹ "Of the Ruin of the Present Dispensation" in *On the Formation of Churches*¹²² and "On the Ruin of the Church" in *A Glance at Various Ecclesiastical Principles*.¹²³ Another important paper is his *What is the Church and in What Sense is it Now in Ruin?* In his *On the Epistle to the Ephesians*¹²⁴ we read

the following:

Many dear brethren have been troubled at the expression "the ruin of the church"; now I can quite understand this, and I make no complaint about their jealousy lest it should be thought that the church could fail, because in one sense it is impossible that the church can be ruined; but there is confusion in some minds between the purposes of God, and present dispensation in which man is placed under responsibility. In speaking of the ruin of the church, we speak of it as down here, set to manifest Christ's glory in unity on the earth, and we must remember that there we are placed, and as in this responsibility, there we must stay. If it could fail spiritually it would be disastrous indeed! There are two thoughts respecting the church in ruin which are full of mischief. The thought on some brethren's minds is, that we intend by this the interruption of God's purpose, which evidently cannot be. There is a jealousy, which I respect and for which I have no regret, lest the idea of the church in ruin should seem to affect the purpose of God. As regards the purpose of God the church cannot be ruined, but as regards its actual present condition as a testimony for God on earth it is in ruin. The other thought is: Well, suppose it is in ruin, so it must be; there we are and there we must stay; so that we are saved at last, never mind; we will take no thought about the present condition of the church, being satisfied that we are saved from the wrath to come. This listlessness and hanging down of the hands, causing cessation of all spiritual energy, is induced by a want of apprehension of what the church is in God's sight. But practically many saints think they are to remain content in the ruin. There is danger in taking up such a thought, because it would be the denial of the power of God. To unbelief discouragement may be the result of this idea of the church's ruin, but I do not look at it as discouragement, because I believe the grace and power of the Lord is suited to the need of the church *such as it is* at all times. I should feel it to be a very sad defect if the expression "ruin of the church" were to dishearten a soul about the operation of the Spirit in bringing blessing to the church. Neither of the suppositions I have alluded to can be proved, for it is impossible that the church can be in utter ruin in the sense of upsetting God's purpose, or that the *power of the Lord* is enfeebled when there is actual present ruin. His working will be according to *the state the church is in*, not to the state she is not in. We are all liable from the feebleness of our minds to say too much or too little, even where truth is held. Man is in a sad state, and I should get disheartened unless I saw the power of Christ to meet that state. God's purpose, of course, is unfailing, and therefore it is not true that the church can fail as it exists in God's purpose. What we want is not so much an abstract notion that the church will be saved, but real practical faith in the application of the resources of God to meet present circumstances. If a Christian is in a bad state, and I do not look beyond it to Christ I am troubled, but if I do I have confidence, and in that sense I am at rest, because I know the Lord can and will bring it right by His power working for him. I should feel sorry if seeing failure should enfeeble faith as to the Lord's care of the church, and I have felt the danger of this; still I say He introduces blessing according to the present condition of the church. We must not say if we are looking for blessing in the path of faith, the church is sure to be brought through according to God's purpose of grace, it would produce listlessness; we have to look to the present working of His power in blessing to glorify Christ. God always takes an interest in the church's circumstances, and if we are looking for blessing, we shall find it even in times of the greatest failure, for God will have His church in glory, and living faith sees not only the need, but sees also the thoughts and mind of the Lord about that need, and counts on the present love of the Lord. It is as true of an individual as of the church. As having the Spirit of Christ I cannot rest in the thought that a Christian is secure in Christ, and

therefore not endeavour to instruct and exhort him and lead him on. The church will be saved, and so will every member of it; but if I have the affections of Christ, I cannot be contented unless I see the power of the Spirit in any individual saint manifesting that saint's relationship to Christ, and just so it is with the church of God; if my faith is in exercise, I am not satisfied unless I see the carrying out of its relationship to Christ *as a present thing*.

In the midst of this ruin, were those who were gathered together to Christ's name, as JND spoke of it, *the church of God*? Of course not; such were *part* of the church, meeting together. Such a company could not scripturally be called *the church of God*.

First, allow me to say that the assemblies of so-called "Plymouth Brethren," far from calling themselves the "assembly" or "the church of God" in a particular place, have always formally opposed the title. So little truth is there in the insinuation, that it is principally this which has hindered these brethren from forming part of the Rochat flock. They believe that they alone are assembled upon the true principle of the church of God, which I in no wise doubt: but they believe that the church is in ruins, and that the pretension to be the church of God in a place would be a false pretension. I add that, if all the Christians in a place were to be found gathered together which would form (according to order) the assembly of the place, I would not give it that title, because the universal church is not gathered; and I do not believe in independent churches. I believe that there were formerly local churches representing in a certain sense the whole in their localities; but we are very far from that now. All who have taken the trouble to inquire know, or might have known, that from the first the brethren in question have taken their stand upon the principle of Matthew 18 as a resource given of God in the general ruin. The pretension to be the assembly of God has always been rejected by the brethren we speak of. Every assembly gathered by the will of God around the Person of Jesus or in His name is *an* assembly of God, if it be only a question of the force of words; but when it is a question of being *the* assembly of God in a locality, it is not so in the true sense of the word, and could not be so, considering the state of the universal church. It ^o may gather together on the principle of the church of God, may find the promised blessing, may be the only one gathered according to that principle in the place, and may attach immense importance to it [being gathered together to Christ's name -- Matt. 18:20] (and it ought to attach immense importance to it, if it desire to be obedient and faithful); but it is only the witness for God so far as by its separate walk it testifies to the faithfulness of God, to the divine principles which govern its walk and to the true state in which the church is found as a whole. In this case it will be God's witness; certainly it ought to be so.¹²⁵

The church as viewed in responsibility on earth has accumulated mere professors. However, even though such professors are not in vital union with Christ, their baptism and their profession brings them into a sphere of responsibility concerning the privileges of Christianity (cp. Rom 11).

I distinctly maintain that there are privileges outside vital union with Christ, and privileges for which the Gentiles will be responsible, as the Jews have been for theirs. See 1 Corinthians 10. Those who have enjoyed these privileges will be beaten with more stripes if they have not profited by them; whilst those who have not possessed them will be beaten with few stripes. It was a privilege to be a servant in the house, to have received a talent; but such persons, or classes of

o. [By the word "it" JND refers to the company of the few gathered together to Christ's name, on the basis of the oneness of the body on earth.]

persons, were not vitally united to Christ. The seed sown on the stony ground was a privilege; but it had no root, no vital union. . . .

The word of God says three things as to the present dispensation.^p First; by the existence and by the principles of this dispensation, the world is placed in a fresh relationship with God. The Gentiles are no longer regarded as "dogs" in contrast with "the children." It is the time of salvation for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Salvation is granted to the Gentiles; the fall of the Jews has been the reconciling of the world. If the church has not been faithful in using this grace for profit to the poor world, so much the worse for the church.

Secondly; those who are called, but not elect, all the baptized, are put in direct relation with the Lord, and are responsible in general (I say in general, because circumstances vary) for the privileges of Christianity. [Cf. Rom. 11] If those who really enjoyed these privileges have given liberty to Satan to corrupt; or, if others have been able to come in because of the corruption which had already been introduced, so much the worse (I say again) for them and for the aggregate; such is Christendom.

In the third place; there is the body of Christ, those who are united to Him, who partake of His life and who will be saved spite of all the obstacles that they meet with in the journey.¹²⁶

Jude, 2 Peter, 2 Timothy and Rev. 2 and 3 show how early the ruin came in. 1 John refers to the changed time as "the last hour." But the purpose here is merely to indicate the change, not to develop the subject. After the Lord comes for His own to receive them to himself, in his own time the Antichrist will be revealed and will orchestrate both the Jewish apostasy and the apostasy of Christendom. The mystery of lawlessness already was at work in the apostle Paul's day (2 Thess. 2) and the time came when he likened Christendom to a great house (2 Tim. 2), a figure for the organization of evil in Christendom. This will develop into the apostasy and is the result of the fall and ruin of the church. The occasion of prophecy is failure; and so the great prophetic book of the N. T. (the Revelation) is a standing witness to the failure and fall of the church as a vessel of testimony. These are truths and principles that JND taught.

p. [He is using the word dispensation here, as often, in a conventional way.]

Chapter 9

The Millennium

THE LORD'S COMING AND THE CONSEQUENT CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATION

It was while JND was laid aside in Dec. 1826-Jan. 1827 that he understood from the Word of God the immediate coming of Christ and the change in dispensation to follow it.

The coming of the Lord was the other truth which was brought to my mind from the word, as that which, if sitting in heavenly places *in* Christ, was alone to be waited for, that I might sit in heavenly places *with* Him. Isaiah 32 brought me to the earthly consequences of the same truth, though other passages might seem perhaps more striking to me now; but I saw an evident change of dispensation in that chapter, when the Spirit would be poured out on the Jewish nation, and a king reign in righteousness.¹²⁷

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES

The millennium is the final display of the ways of God with the present earth. It is characterized in Eph. 1:10 as the administration of the fulness of times.¹²⁸ In contrast to this, when the new heavens and the new earth are created, "time shall be no longer."

In this administration by Christ, Satan shall be bound¹²⁹ and judgment shall be immediately executed.¹³⁰ Righteousness and judgment shall characterize that period.¹³¹ It is the fulfillment of promise.¹³²

THE SAINTS CALLING ON THE EARTH DURING THE MILLENNIUM

JND has sketched a contrast between the character of the calling of a saint now and a saint in the millennium. Keep in mind that he taught that there was only one way of salvation in all ages. Grace saves in all ages.¹³³

As to the difference of the saints' calling, therefore on the earth during the millennium, it will be quite different from that of the saints now on earth, for the obvious reason that the millennial dispensation, as regards the saints on earth, will be a dispensation of judgment. In one sense it was grace to the Jew, yea, even in paradise. There can be no dealing with the sinner except in grace; but the Jewish economy is not one of grace, but of the law. The law is of works, but grace is not. There never can be departure from the principle on which the soul can stand with God, but the economy of a special time is a different thing. The economy of the church is judgment within itself. The church consists of persons separated by internal sanctity from the rest of the world. Into the church's outward forms a person may enter, but the church is essentially an assembly of separated persons. The moment it is not, it ceases to be a church. It consists of those whom God has called out of the world. In the millennium it will not be so, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus will manifestly govern the world on another principle; until Satan is loosed again, there is no necessary manifestation of who

is not of the world, and who is; but the character of the church is quite different.

When persons speak of an invisible church, it is merely the assertion of apostasy, for the Lord says of the church, "Ye are the light of the world." Now what is the good of an invisible light? "No man when he had lighted a candle," etc. (Luke 11:33). I do not say that there are not invisible saints as individuals; but the term, "invisible church," conveys no other idea to my mind than that of apostasy, and that the church has ceased to be what the Lord set it to be -- the light of the world. The church is to be a distinct, manifested, gathered body, while the world is under the dominion of Satan . . . The Lord gave Himself to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad on the face of the earth. This oneness can only be maintained through the power and energy of the Holy Ghost. Wherever the Holy Ghost has been grieved, the church has ceased to fulfil in the world what it was sent for; though God's purposes cannot be altered. Then the church is not one, and the world does not believe that the Father has sent Jesus. The church will be displayed in the glory that has been given them, that by their being one the world may know that the Father has loved them as He loved Jesus. This will be known in the millennium. Then it will not be the Holy Ghost working secretly, as He does now, but the manifestation in the world of God's reign in righteousness.

The proper duty of the saints now is by secret association with Christ to withstand evil, that they may be fashioned in suffering and grace with Christ. There all the fine traits of fellowship with Christ are brought out, "the trial of your faith," etc. The vessel of earth being put into the furnace, it shines forth, when it comes out, with all that was in its Master's mind. In the millennium we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father, and the government [shall] be of the Son of man. A new nature is always necessary to fellowship with God. The man who is taught of God knows that his old nature is bad, learning by experience "that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The knowledge of this principle I believe the Jewish believer had, and he had a new nature above the dispensation. If he could say, I delight in the law of God after the inner man, then he had a new nature and the Spirit of Christ, as the apostle says, though he might not get beyond the standing of the dispensation; but in the millennium it will not be merely that man born again will be a new creature, but the creation itself will be also new; Satan will not then be corrupting it by our lusts. Now the whole creation is subject to vanity, then it will not be so. Still, man will exist in nature, but the whole creation will not be actually subject to vanity. We are subject to vanity as to the fact of man's will in it, and the consequent dominion of Satan over it. When permitted, he could bring down a great wind on Job's house. When the Lord comes as the Last Adam, the saint shall be clear out of all present subjection to vanity -- it will be gone, because Satan will be bound.

Through our fallen nature and lusts the creation is wholly under Satan's power -- not that he can do a tittle more than he is permitted. The more blessed man is, and the more blessings he has by-and-by, the more will he enjoy God. It is not so now. I believe they will then have an enjoyment of natural happiness of which we can scarcely have any idea. God having stamped vanity on everything that is under the sun, whatever is sought as an object takes us away now from God. Happiness in the things of nature must therefore now be restrained, as the security of the man-slayer was in the city of refuge, though we have liberty through other hopes. There will be a vast difference between the position of the saints on earth and ours in this respect. The affections of their hearts can fully flow forth on everything around them. The happiness of the saints on earth will be in ministering fulness of joy and blessing through Christ to others: their joy will not

be merely in being blessed as recipients, but in having the mind and joy of the blessing. Being the administrators of government, they will be the ministers of blessing. Then will be fulfilled that promise, "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

It will not be then, as now, "one sowing, and another reaping." They will not only not have to stir up their hearts to watchfulness against the flesh, having no temptations to resist, but, Christ then ruling over the world, men may lawfully enjoy everything that is in the world. When temptation comes, then those who have not faith will fail. No hypocrite could enjoy natural things unto God, but, the temptation not being there to draw out his evil, it remains unknown to him. "The man who anon with joy received the word" was not a hypocrite; but, when trial came because of the word having no root in himself, he is offended.¹³⁴

GOVERNMENT AND CALLING

We previously observed that it was of the essence of an administration, *strictly speaking*, that there be a display of God's government, as in the case of Noah and Israel. With Abraham the principle of calling was introduced. In Israel government and calling were combined. Hence with Noah and with Moses there was the introduction of an administration. The church has a calling but is not the display or development of, God's government in the earth; hence, is not a dispensation. However, when the millennium is established by power and judgment:

... He will return as a King, and fill the throne of David His father. He shall be a Priest upon His throne [Zech. 6:13], according to the promise: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," Hos. 3:4,5. In those days, the government and the principle of calling shall be united under the reign of Christ; and "the Lord shall be King over the whole earth: in that day there shall be *one* Lord, and his name *one*." Nevertheless, Jerusalem shall be built and safely inhabited; and God shall say "It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. 13, 14.¹³⁵

The Christian meanwhile is in another position. Writing on 1 Peter, JND remarked:

Here, it will be observed, it is suffering for righteousness sake (chap. 2:19; 3:17) in connection with the government and judgment of God. The principle was this: they accepted, they followed the Saviour whom the world and the nation rejected; they walked in His holy footsteps in righteousness, as pilgrims and strangers, abandoning the corruption that reigned in the world. Walking in peace and following after good, they avoided to a certain extent the attacks of others; and the eyes of Him, who watches from on high over all things, rested upon the righteous. Nevertheless, in the relations of ordinary life (chap. 2:18), and in their intercourse with men, they might have to suffer, and to bear flagrant injustice. Now the time of God's judgment was not yet come. Christ was in heaven; He had been rejected on the earth, and the Christian's part was to follow him. The time of the *manifestation* of the government of God would be at the judgment which Christ should execute. Meanwhile His walk on earth had furnished the pattern of that which the God of judgment approved (chap. 2:21-23; 4:1 and following verses).

They were to do good, to suffer for it, and to be patient. This is well-pleasing to God; this is what Christ did. It was better that they should suffer for doing

well, if God saw fit, than for doing ill. Christ (chap. 2:24) had borne our sins, had suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust, in order that we, being dead to sins, should live for righteousness, and in order to bring us unto God Himself. Christ is now on high; He is ready to judge. When the judgment shall come, the principles of God's government will be manifested and shall prevail.¹³⁶

SKETCH OF GOD'S WAYS WITH RESPECT TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME

Consequent upon glorifying God on the cross, the Lord Jesus took His place above, to become the head of the body. But not only that, He is the destined head of all things.

The millennium will be "a dispensation of glory."¹³⁷ God's purpose is to glorify Himself in Christ in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly (Eph. 1:10), and so all will be placed under Christ's dominion. The following sketch by JND will outline his thoughts on the millennium and its introduction, and the eternal state.

Man has entered into His place in glory according to the counsels of God, to be the head of everything that exists (Psa. 8:3-7; 1 Cor. 15:25-27; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 2:5-9). Compare Colossians 1:15, etc. There is the truth in its full largeness. Christ, as man, is established head of all things in heaven and earth. In this respect the first Adam was only a figure of the last. At the same time, as for the first Adam there was a help who was like himself; it is the same with Christ. Eve did not form part of the inferior creation of which Adam was lord. Neither was she lord; she was the spouse and companion of Adam in the same nature and the same glory. It will be thus with the church when Christ shall take the dominion over all things into His hands. Compare Ephesians 5:25-27, and the passages already cited. But at the present time He is seated at the right hand of God, and His enemies are not yet subjected to Him. But it remains to point out the various parts of the dominion He will exercise. The angels (1 Pet. 3:22) are made subject to Him (compare Eph. 1:10). But His dominion must also be extended over the earth.

Now this dominion over the earth is subdivided with respect to the human race. The Jews are to be subjected to Him, and the Gentiles also. King of the Jews is His indefectible title; He must also reign over the nations, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust. Every creature is also subjected to Him (see the passages referred to); they sigh after His reign; Rom. 8:21. . . .

Then the man Christ, when He shall have subjected all things, and set all in order, will yield up (1 Cor. 15) the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. The yielding up the kingdom makes no change in His divinity, be it carefully observed. Man up to that time had possessed the kingdom according to the counsels of God. This mediatorial kingdom comes to an end. Christ is neither more nor less God. He was God on the earth and in His humiliation. He will be so in the glory of the kingdom which He will hold as man. He will be so when, as man, He shall be subject unto God, the firstborn eternally among many brethren, in the joy of the family of men eternally blest before God.

Some remarks remain to be made concerning the ways of God, which are destined to bring in this blessed result and to establish the mediatorial glory of the Christ.

During the time that the Saviour is seated at the right hand of God, God gathers the church by the action of the Holy Ghost on earth. . . .

This [gathering of the church and their being taken to heaven] does not establish the kingdom, but gathers the co-heirs who are to reign with Christ, and

gives their place to them with Him, infinitely above all reign (whatever it be) over the earth; although the latter be the necessary , blessed, and glorious consequence of it. Satan is cast out of heaven, where he will never again enter; Rev. 12:12; ch. 16:13,14; ch. 18:13,14; ch. 19:18, etc. Afterwards the saints return with Christ (Rev. 19; Col. 3:4; Jude 14; Zech. 14:5), and the power of the enemy is destroyed on the earth set free from evil; Satan cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3) -- not yet into the lake of fire -- is no longer the prince of this world. Even the angels no longer govern it as administrators on God's behalf. Christ and those who are His own [govern it as administrators on God's behalf, the millenium being the time that] man is established according to the counsels of God (Psa. 8; referred to in 1 Cor 15; Eph. 1; Heb. 2) over all things, over all the works of God's hands (Compare Col. 1:16-20). Christ appears in glory, the saints also appear with Him (Compare John 17:22,23). It is the kingdom of God established in power. (Compare Matt. 16:28, and ch. 17; Mark 9; Luke 9). Righteousness reigns, and men, the world, are in peace; Eph. 1:10. There is in this state of things, fruit of the reign of Christ, the realization of all that the prophets have spoken of peace and blessing on the earth. Blessed time, in which war and oppression shall entirely cease, and in which all shall enjoy the fruits of God's goodness, without passions inflamed by the enemy impelling men to snatch from each other the objects of their lusts. Christ will maintain the blessing of all; if evil appear, it will at once be judged and banished from the earth.

Some accessory facts have to find their place here. The kingdom of the Son of David is to be established. All the promises of God with regard to Israel shall be accomplished in favour of that people; the law being written on their hearts, the grace and power of God shall accomplish the blessing of the people, blessing which they could not obtain when it depended on their faithfulness, and when they were placed on the principle of their own responsibility. At the same time the dominion over the Gentiles will be in the hands of the Lord, while they will be subordinate to Israel, the supreme people on the earth. Thus all things will be gathered together under a single head -- Christ: angels, principalities, the church in heaven, Israel, the Gentiles, and Satan will be bound.

But before the introduction of this universal blessing, the wicked one will be in open and public rebellion against God. The Jews will be joined to him, at least the great majority of the people, and the Gentiles will gather themselves together against God. This rebellion will bring in a time of extraordinary tribulation on the land of Judah, and in general there will be a temptation which shall put to the proof all the Gentiles. But the testimony of God will go throughout the world, and the judgment will come, and will be executed upon the apostates from among Christians, upon the rebellious Jews, and upon all nations which shall have rejected God's testimony. This will be the judgment of the quick, the first resurrection having already taken place. The fulness of times begins at this period.

A few words will complete our sketch. Satan will be loosed from the abyss, after the inhabitants of the earth have long enjoyed the repose and blessing of the reign of Christ, and have seen His glory. When the temptation shall come, those who are not vitally united to Christ fall; and Satan leads the world against the seat of God's glory on the earth (Jerusalem) and against all those who are faithful to the Lord. But those who follow him are destroyed.

Then comes the judgment of the dead and the eternal state. ¹³⁸

There is a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness. The kingdom having been delivered up to God the Father , Christ, who will have already subjected all things, is Himself subjected as man: a truth so precious for

us, because He remains eternally the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover I do not think that the church loses its place as the bride of Christ and the habitation of God (See Eph. 3; Rev. 21). The kingdom only, the existence of which supposed evil to be subjugated, will have an end.

All things will be made new, and God will be all in all. We shall enjoy Him in perfect blessedness, and we shall know Him according to the perfection of His ways already developed in the history of humanity. His Son will be the eternal expression of His thoughts, and the First among those who are eternally blessed through His means -- blessing founded on the value of His blood, which never loses its worth in the constantly fresh remembrance of the blessed.¹³⁹

THE BINDING AND LOOSING OF SATAN

Amillennialists and postmillennialists believe Satan was bound when Christ was on the cross. To explain certain present phenomena they have come up with the 'solution' that Satan is bound on a *long* chain! We will close with JND's comments on the binding and loosing of Satan, in his *Notes on the Apocalypse*" (1842).

The death of Jesus has not expelled him [Satan] thence. Nevertheless, when, in the name of Jesus, the disciples cast the demons out of creation, Jesus says, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." He foresees the downfall of Satan by the power of the name of Jesus. Actually, Satan acts still in the creation, as we see in the case of Job. Jesus is now absent -- in heaven. Not being bound, Satan tries and tempts man, and man falls. He is busy about the church; he sows tares there, and spoils the work of God upon earth. He cannot spoil it in heaven.

We see, in this recapitulation of what Satan accomplishes upon the earth, how he spoils everything until he is bound. God, it is true, watches over the faithful; nevertheless, Satan is in the world, and spoils there the work of God; and if our salvation were resting on man's own responsibility, there would be no salvation for us. Men of the world can form no idea of the manner Satan is blinding the heart. Before God gives them up to it as a chastisement, Satan is already using his power in blinding men, and in making them fall into error. From the beginning to the period to which this chapter of Revelation brings us, all that God has done upon the earth, in the world, and in the church, has been spoiled through Satan. Satan has influence in the world; he blinds the heathen and the christianised world. Alas! he also blinds God's children as to their inheritance and as to the coming of the Lord Jesus. Satan endeavours to rob the church of this truth, and to make her say "My Lord delayeth his coming." He will not have it that one should believe his dominion is going to be overthrown; but at the same time, truth is professed and maintained even by unconverted persons, and subsists as given of God amongst men. But now in the time of judgment this will be no more so; God gives men up to an efficacious error that they may believe a lie.

We have seen in chapter 12 Satan cast out from heaven. He will never enter there again. He falls upon the earth, and causes Antichrist to revolt against Christ. Then Christ comes down from heaven, destroys the beast and the false prophet, and binds Satan himself. All that Satan did to the first Adam disappears. Creation ceases to be under his dominion, and man, delivered from Satan's power, passes under that of Jesus. Evil may remain in man's heart, but Satan is banished from the scene of this world. The Judge, the Last Adam, comes down from heaven in the power of the victory He has already gained in the resurrection. This is not yet the state of eternity. These are things manifested on the earth, where Jesus shall reign after having bound Satan and delivered the creation from the bondage of corruption.

Why not bind Satan immediately? Because the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; Rom. 8:19. Christ cannot manifest Himself in the glory and in the judgment, nor deliver the world without having delivered and raised the church, nor before the judgment be given to the church as well as to Christ. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22). "Until the Ancient of days comes, and judgment be given to the saints of the Most High." Therefore it is that creation is not yet delivered from the yoke of corruption. The church risen must judge the world with Christ. The world to come is also to be subjected to the same trial. This does not take place during the continuance of the thousand years of Christ's reign -- only at the end of that reign, when Satan comes up out of the bottomless pit. Then, as always, man fails immediately.

While Satan is bound there is no seduction, and, consequently, no combat, no suffering, no victory. God permits these things to take place now, that we may have the glory. The most ordinary precepts of the gospel suppose the superiority of the enemy as to this world, and command not to resist evil; they suppose, therefore, a state of suffering. If the world were really Christian, these precepts would not be applicable, because there would be nothing to suffer. . .

. . . [Rev. 20] 7,8 contain a very important and humiliating principle. It is impossible, in whatever position man may be, that he should not fall if he is left to himself, and if he has not communicated to him from God a life of which the grace of God is the strength. Jesus manifested in glory does not change the heart. This change is a work of grace. As soon as those even who have seen the glory are no more kept from temptation by the power of God Himself, where they are subjected to temptation, they fall and Satan makes them at once his slaves. Satan, being loosed, comes up out of the bottomless pit, upon the earth, not into heaven, where he re-enters no more. When at last banished from the earth, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are since the beginning of the millennium, and shall never come out of it. This is a proof that the judgment of the wicked [dead] does not take place at the coming of Christ. When the great white throne is there, the earth flees away; and this is not the return of Jesus.

In the present dispensation, God visits the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name; Acts 15:14. Satan is opposed to this people in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, and who have the foretaste of the glory and the joy that belong to the people of God. The consequence is, that they are a separate people, who fail in rendering testimony if they enter, however little, into the ways of the world. Already, in Abraham, God takes out of the world a people to Himself, whom He leaves in the world. Israel was, as a nation, separated from the world. An Israelite could not espouse a Gentile. This separation was according to the flesh, not the result of faith.

In the church, it is individual faith which causes this separation. All the precepts of the gospel suppose a state of persecution; Matt. 5:38-48; 20:16. Everything supposes opposition; Luke 14:25-32. If there were a Christian world, the precepts of the gospel would not have any application.

During the thousand years, on the contrary, Jesus shall be the Prince of this world, of which Satan is now the prince. Now, all those who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; 2 Tim. 3:12. We are called to suffer; and if the world were really christianised, we should be called to run with the tide instead of contending against it.

When Satan shall be bound, all that will be changed, and this opposition of the world will cease. The Lord Jesus shall reign in righteousness; there will be

no temptation, and the mass of people will be really governed by Him. If this took place in the present dispensation, all the precepts of the gospel would become useless and out of place. Under the reign of Christ, the church, which has already suffered, will be seen glorified, and the world blessed, without Satan's temptations, living in peace and under the government of the Son of man. It does not follow that every soul on earth shall be converted.

If the reign of a thousand years were a spiritual millennium, it would not be possible that Satan could be loosed to seduce all those who would have the life of Christ in them. Instead of that, it is a government without temptations; and when Satan is loosed, he carries man away with him in spite of the sight of the glory of Jesus; and this is the final trial which displays how impossible it is for God to trust in the creature; John 2:24. We are called to trust the faithfulness of God, because we have learned that God cannot trust us.

It would be extraordinary in a dispensation for man not to be subject to trial and temptation in the ways of God. Those of the millennium are to be tempted like others. The consequence of it is the same -- man falls. Even the presence of Christ does not prevent it; and the heart is so irremediably wicked and evil, that in the presence of Jesus it will yield to its passions and lusts, and please himself instead of pleasing Jesus. Innocent man fell -- still more does he when he is no more innocent.

During the manifestation of the glory of Christ, the revolt cannot be hidden. Man may see the glory of Christ, be convinced of it, and oppose himself to it! Lazarus being risen, the Jews wish to put him to death with Jesus, because of the testimony rendered to the power of Christ. If the heart of man is not converted, renewed, and kept of God, it is capable of anything. Verses 9,10. They will make war with the saints and with the city beloved of God.

At that time the whole world shall be the sphere of the judgments of the prophecy. With the Jews the promises and the ways of God are circumscribed in the land of Canaan, which is simply also called the earth. Later this sphere extends itself, and the four monarchies, then Christendom, become the prophetic earth. Jesus shall reign over the whole inhabited earth, and prophecy shall then extend over all its surface. If, when Christ is manifested in glory, the world oppose the people of God, it is not surprising that the same thing should happen now that Christ is hidden. To think otherwise is to be in illusion.

To understand the glory of Christ in the church, the church must be separate from the world. When the church is mixed up with the world, this only spoils the church and Christians. The world never draws towards Christians, and it cannot do so, for its own nature cannot allow it; but Christians may to their own loss draw near the world, because the old man is still in them.¹⁴⁰

Appendix 1:

Did J. N. Darby Systematize Dispensational Truth?

It is held by various "dispensationalists" that JND systematized dispensational truth, based on the statements of the two writers which are next quoted. The idea is implicit in this statement by C. C. Ryrie:

Suppose dispensationalism had never developed beyond its unsystematized form as existed before Darby¹⁴¹

This idea reflects the fact that JND's teachings are not rightly understood as may be seen on C. C. Ryrie's "Chart of Representative Dispensational Schemes."¹⁴² He presents Pierre Poiret (1646-1719), John Edwards (1639-1716) and Isaac Watts (1674-1748) as precursors to JND. I suggest that this has no more merit than the idea some dispensationalists have that the pretribulation rapture is found in the writings of some of the Apostolic Fathers (so-called). It seems that the author of the idea that JND systematized dispensational truth is A. D. Ehlert, who wrote:

This so-called "modern dispensationalism" is usually dated from Mr. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and the Plymouth Brethren of England, or from Dr. Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921), who popularized the doctrine in his preaching, teaching and Bible notes.¹⁴³

This [the reformation to 1825] is the period during which the larger doctrine of ages and dispensations had its beginning and unfolding. By 1825 there was a considerable literature to be found on the subject, and the doctrine was well established as a theological concept. It is a strange phenomenon that almost without exception dispensational writers since that date, however, have ignored this body of literature.¹⁴⁴

These writers distinguished a number of *ages*. Calling them dispensations does not actually help the case, if we are looking for an understanding of what the true case is. From the viewpoint of the teachings of JND that we have surveyed in this book, it should be clear that an "unsystematized dispensationalism" did not exist before him, except that the truths he brought out are found in Scripture.

Let us note the following:

1. A. D. Ehlert said that the "modern dispensationalism" which he dated from JND was popularized by C. I. Scofield. This is an incorrect view of the case, as one can see by comparing C. I. Scofield's system with the teachings of JND. The fact that some writers before JND distinguished some *ages* (even referring to them as previous dispensations), and JND also distinguished some ages, does not show that writers before JND held dispensational truth and JND systematized it. I am not interested in a semantic dispute. The fact is that what JND taught is not the same thing -- systematized.

2. Moreover, there would be no Scofield system had he not borrowed from JND the distinction between Israel and the church, the truth of the pretribulation rapture, and the offer and postponement of the kingdom. **Let someone describe a Scofield system without these truths!** And, were these truths a systematization of what preceded JND?

3. Besides these things, there are some very important omissions from the Scofield system, truths that characterize the teaching of JND concerning these matters, such as:

- a. The testing of the first man was completed with the rejection of Christ at the cross. There is no testing of man after that.
- b. The ways of God in government in the earth is related to a proper understanding of the distinction between Israel (as an earthly people) and the church (as a heavenly people). The chart that shows JND's understanding of the place of God's ways in government in the earth shows a basic difference, not only from what preceded him, but from the Scofield system also.

4. The material in L. Crutchfield's doctoral dissertation ¹⁴⁵ has been presented in his *The Origins of Dispensationalism* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992) and was briefly reviewed in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, ^q Oct./Dec. 1992, pp. 497,498, by R. L. Lightner, which reads, in part:

Crutchfield pursued this study in an effort to help "set the record straight," as it were. He points out two errors that need to be corrected with regard to dispensationalism. The first is the denial by some that dispensationalists owe any debt to Darby at all. The second is that Darby is the sole source and fountainhead of dispensational theology.

The research presented in this book demonstrates that Scofield and those who followed him did not borrow from Darby in a wholesale fashion. Darby did stress a literal hermeneutic which led to a clear and continued distinction between God's program with Israel and His program with the church. But beyond that Darby's "Dispensational system bears only sporadic resemblance to that of Scofield" (p. 206). There is little evidence to connect Scofield directly to Darby . The indirect link between the two was through Arno C. Gaebelin and perhaps James Brooks.

Having already suggested that there really would be no Scofield system at all without what he did borrow from JND, I point out here the omission of a name regarding an "indirect link." In the introduction to the Scofield Reference Bible we read:

The Editor's acknowledgements are also due to a very wide circle of learned and spiritual brethren in Europe and America to whose labours he is indebted for suggestions of inestimable value. It may not be invidious to mention among these . . . Mr. Walter Scott, the eminent Bible teacher . . .

Walter Scott, a very prolific writer, was 44 years old when JND died, having been 'in fellowship' with JND.

^q. This is the theological journal of the Dallas Theological Seminary.

Concerning "indirect links," I am not aware of any such indirect link to JND on my own part. And just what does that prove? -- that I have no access to his teachings? JND's *Synopsis* and *Collected Writings* have been available for a long time. JND's seven vols. of *Notes and Comments* began to be printed in 1883. The *Bible Treasury*, edited by William Kelly, was also available at that time -- and, etc.

Well, "there is little evidence to connect" *me* "directly to Darby ." "The indirect link between the two [JND and me] was through" JND's writings. Is it documented that C. I. Scofield did not read any of the above named books? At any rate, he was "indebted for suggestions" to "Mr. Walter Scott, the eminent Bible teacher."

Appendix 2:

The Opening of the Heavenly Parenthesis

An answer to so-called Ultradispensationalism

Introduction

The book of Acts gives us the history of the Spirit's testimony to Christ resurrected and glorified. The truths connected with the heavenly parenthesis were not unfolded suddenly on the day that parenthesis opened (Acts 2). The opening of the heavenly parenthesis is interconnected with truths and facts that would help us understand why the heavenly parenthesis (which is bound up with the formation of the body of Christ) opened when it did. In particular, it is important to understand the truth regarding the two men (1 Cor. 15:45-47), *when* the trial of that first man was completed and consequently the second man was established, and *when* the fall of Israel occurred. We will also examine in some detail the subject of the baptism in the Spirit, when it occurred and the results. Pentecost, and Joel's prophecy (cited in Acts 2), will also be considered.

There are Christians who claim that the body of Christ was begun with the salvation of Paul. I will refer to this as the Acts 9 position. Others claim that the body began in Acts 13 (Acts 13 position). Others say it was formed in connection with Paul being in prison (Acts 28 position). These later are followers of the scheme of E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) and have been called "Bullingerites" and "ultra-dispensationalists." Many of them hold the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked -- a doctrine that is a fundamental affront to the work of the atonement.¹⁴⁶ E. W. Bullinger seemed to hold a sort of Acts 13 type position in his *The Church Epistles*,¹⁴⁷ but under the influence of Charles Welch he switched to the Acts 28 position.

Subsequently, J. C. O'Hair (independently of E. W. Bullinger, he claims) took an Acts 13 position. From this the Acts 9 position sprang, C. R. Stam apparently being the father of this variation. These do not hold annihilationism or the unconscious state of the dead.

I have thought it well to thus briefly touch on these errors because we will consider teachings of the Acts 9 and 13 positions, showing how refusal of the fact that the body was formed at Pentecost leads to setting up two churches, two baptisms in the Spirit and two different meanings for persons being "in Christ," thus even placing O. T. saints "in Christ," and other errors (such as the denial, in effect, that the standing and testing of the first man was ended at the cross; consequently leading to error concerning the new creation). And such

supposedly revel in the truth of the mystery -- but I suggest that these positions lower Christ's glory and confuse the Christian position and the truths that Christians ought to apprehend.

In the Jan. 1988 issue of *The Berean Searchlight*, p. 301, C. R. Stam wrote:

Later Mr. John N. Darby and Dr. C. I. Scofield were raised up to recover "that blessed hope" and related truths . . . This writer well remembers the days when the "Darby-Scofield Movement" had gotten under way"

In a short article, "The Recovery of Grace Truth," (*The Berean Searchlight*, May, 1989, p. 90), P. Sadler (the present editor of that publication and a holder of the Acts 9 position) wrote about Paul, Luther and the Huguenots and then said:

These were followed by devout men of God like J. N. Darby who recovered the truth of the premillennial rapture. C. I. Scofield built upon this by uncovering the dispensational approach to Scripture. Then God raised up Pastor J. C. O'Hair who took a giant step in teaching us how to rightly divide the Word of Truth. He showed us that there is a difference between Prophecy and the Mystery. He was followed by Pastors Stam, Baker, Elifson and others who were used of the Lord to bring order out of chaos. Pastor Stam was largely responsible for systematically putting the message together and working out many of the problem areas.

In the Jan. 1991 issue, p. 295, P. M. Sadler wrote:

The Huguenots were followed by devout men of God like J. N. Darby who as we have said, recovered the truth of the pretribulation Rapture. C. I. Scofield built upon this by uncovering the dispensational approach to the Scriptures. Later, God raised up Pastor J. C. O'Hair who took a giant step in teaching men how to rightly divide the Word of Truth.¹⁴⁸ He was instrumental in showing the Church the great distinction between *Prophecy* and *the Mystery*.¹

Today, we stand upon the shoulders of giants who have retrieved for us the glorious truth of the pretribulation Rapture.

J. N. Darby was used by God to recover the truth of the *pretribulation* rapture (posttribulationists also believe in a premillennial rapture) in connection with, and at the same time as he understood, the truth of the church, the body of

r. [Here is what JND wrote in 1848 (Letters 1:131):

I distinguish entirely between the *church* and prophecy. I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the recipient and depository of prophecy, as Abraham was of what should happen to Lot.

What is meant by the "difference between Prophecy and the Mystery" is that J. C. O'Hair viewed the early chapters of Acts as fulfillment of prophecy and so the mystery could not have begun until Paul ministered. The fact is that JND was the one who brought out that the church was not the subject of O. T. prophecy, as well as the character of the mystery. Now, readers of JND know these things and realize how shallow the above citations are -- but there will be some who need this called to their attention.]

Christ. These are interconnected. He understood also the fall of the church (all in 1827). It was he who rightly understood dispensational truth, the mystery the place of prophecy, and much else. C. I. Scofield (CIS) was saved about 1879 and JND died in 1882. As to a "Darby-Scofield Movement," obviously the two men had nothing to do with each other personally. CIS took from JND the teaching of the pretribulation rapture and the distinction between Israel and the church. He omitted (or never understood) the end of the standing of "the first man" at Calvary, *an error that opens the way for ultradispensationalism*. Moreover, omitted from CIS's dispensational scheme is the place of the government of God in the development of His ways in the earth. Without the distinction between Israel and the church, and the truth of the pretribulation rapture, both borrowed from JND, there never would have been a Scofield dispensational scheme at all, defective as it is. So while his scheme is dependent on JND, it nevertheless hinders a proper understanding of dispensational truth.

Above, we saw that P. M. Sadler claimed that "C. I. Scofield built upon this by uncovering the dispensational approach" Of course, this notion is quite absurd. However, he sees CIS in the line of recovery of truth now espoused by the Acts 9 position of ultradispensationalism (omitting E. W. Bullinger). I suggest that what is transpiring is this:

1. Failure to credit JND with the recovery of the truth of the mystery.
2. Failure to credit JND with the unfolding of dispensational truth: --
 - a) especially regarding the end of the testing of "the first man,"
 - b) as well as the bearing of the development of the ways of God in the earth in government.
3. Crediting CIS with an advance upon JND (whereas particularly by the omission of 2 a) CIS opened the way for this ultradispensational scheme).
4. Bypassing E. W. Bullinger.
5. Crediting J. C. O'Hair (Acts 13 position) with finding the key to deny that the body of Christ was formed at Pentecost (Acts 2).
6. Crediting C. R. Stam with solving the problems left by J. C. O'Hair and settling on the Acts 9 position.
7. And so, "Today, then, we stand upon the shoulders of giants who have retrieved for us the glorious truth of the pretribulation Rapture."

In reality, what this represents is a systematic undermining of truth recovered in the nineteenth century, while holding some elements of that recovered truth.

We shall now examine some of the erroneous teachings on which ultradispensationalism rests beginning with how the system necessarily denies that the trial of the first man ended at the cross and that consequently the Second Man took His place.

The Trial of the First Man

Completed at the Cross

This subject was before us in chapter 6 in a lengthy quotation from JND. Here I shall address the subject in view of the system which says that the body of Christ was not formed at Pentecost (Acts 2), doing so from the perspective of the teachings associated with the name of J. N. Darby -- which I believe to be truth taught in the Word of God.

In effect, this system means that the trial, the probation of the first man, was not completed at the cross, for Israel was still under testing in the early chapters of Acts. Thus, the early chapters in Acts are a part of a period of *prophecy*, and not part of the time during which the church as a *mystery* existed. Thus there are two churches, the first being a *kingdom church*, beginning before the cross and extending through the early chapters of Acts. Then, consequent upon the salvation of Paul (Acts 9 position) the *mystery church*, which displaced the kingdom church, was begun (in some very vague way).

1 Cor. 15:45-47 reads:

Thus also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven.

The first man, Adam, was appointed the head of the natural, earthly creation. Such he was in his own person. But he fell, and after the fall he begot children likewise fallen. Consequent upon the fall, he became the head of a fallen race. This fallen race is an order of men ranged under a fallen head, Adam. It is an earthly order characterized by "the first man." This order of man stood before God in responsibility. Adam had eaten of the tree of responsibility not of life. In the fall he had the knowledge of good and evil, without the power to morally please God. His order of *fallen man* was under probation, under testing, from the fall until the rejection of Christ. All this is centered in what Scripture calls the first man. We need to see that "the first man" does not merely refer to the first in time. It has a moral significance and refers to all ranged under Adam's headship as fallen. All men are naturally a replication of him as fallen and hence we are "in Adam" naturally; or, as Scripture also says, "in the flesh." The trial of the first man ended in putting Christ on the cross. Hence in the parable concerning the vineyard, we read:

And at last he sent to them his son, saying, They will have respect for my son (Matt. 21:37).

Yes, the time of respect will eventually come, but meanwhile He was cast out, closing the times of testing of the first man. Our Lord said:

Now is [the] judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out: and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all men unto me. But this he said signifying by what death he was about to die (John 12:31).

Morally speaking, this was the end of the world, though the sentence awaits execution, as He here anticipated. Another Scripture reads:

But now once in the consummation of the ages he has been manifested for [the] putting away of sin by his sacrifice (Heb. 11:26).

There is still an age to come (Heb. 6., etc.). The consummation of the ages, here, refers to the ages (I did not say dispensations, nor did Scripture) of the trial of fallen man, the first man. It is His sacrifice which terminated the trial of the first man.

The conclusion in Romans 3 is that the first man is "without strength" when looked at as alive in sins. Indeed:

"Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).

Colossians, which stands between Romans and Ephesians in doctrinal unfoldings, declares man to be "alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21), goes further and declares man to be "dead in offenses" (Col. 2:13). Ephesians simply begins with man being "dead in your offenses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) and then shows the believer this:

(we too being dead in offenses,) has quickened us with the Christ, (ye are saved by grace,) and has raised us up together, and has made [us] sit down together in the heavens in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5,6).

Christ is called the last Adam because there will be no other race after the one He formed. The word "Adam" signifies, in both cases, the headship of a race. The first man, Adam, was the head of the natural creation on earth while Christ is head of the new creation.^s

Now, Christ took the place of last Adam in resurrection, and this was founded upon an accomplished redemption. Christ is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). When did that creation of God (i.e., the new creation) begin? When Paul was saved (Acts 9);¹⁴⁹ or when he began his formal ministry (Acts 13)? Of course not. When Christ rose from among the dead He had that place. Thus Col. 1:18: "Who is the beginning, firstborn¹⁵⁰ from among the dead." He stood forth in glorious resurrection -- in resurrection-life. He had laid down His life, but took it again in resurrection, and thus we call it resurrection life, life on the other side of death.

The Son had ever quickened whom He would. Thus, O. T. saints, and also His disciples (except Judas) were quickened, that is, had divine life, were born again. But His disciples that were with Him, though having divine life were not connected with Him as one in life. Such a connection could only be with Him in His risen manhood. Thus he Himself told us that before His death He abode alone:

Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

^s. Keep in mind that he is also head of other things (Eph. 1:10, 21-23).

He rose from among the dead in resurrection life, Head of the new creation, and shortly thereafter He breathed upon His disciples (John 20:22) the Spirit as power of life, thus characterizing the divine life they already had (as having been born of God) as resurrection-life (John 20). The grain of wheat fell into the ground and died and brought forth much fruit (John 12:24). He now no longer abode alone, but the disciples (as we do now also) formed one plant in Him (John 12:24), now having life in abundance¹⁵¹ (John 10:10). This is indeed *oneness* of life in the Son (1 John 5:11).¹⁵²

The second man (Christ) is out of heaven. This does not mean that His humanity came from heaven. It came from Mary under the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit. The second man being out of heaven refers to what characterizes the second man. It refers to what is moral. He is characteristically a heavenly man. He was *from* heaven. He was of heaven. And He will eternally bear this character. And, oh joy, He has connected us with Himself eternally, too. Not that we could be in deity; we have life in the Son in connection with His risen manhood, now glorified above all heavens.

None of this could be until that which was first, that which was natural, was fully tried and found wanting. All this blessedness awaited Christ's death and resurrection. It could not be earlier (John 12:24). There was a long period of trial of the first man Adam. What was first was natural (1 Cor . 15:46). The principle of this is illustrated throughout the book of Genesis where the one born first does not obtain the inheritance! Have you ever noticed that?

There is also the instructive word "yet" in Rom. 5:8. Why does it say while we were "yet" sinners? The word refers to the fact that though God tested the first man (all of us ranged under his headship naturally) in every way he was still but a sinner.

What was the last trial of the first man? Note that while Israel stood in a special place, their trial was a part of the trial of the first man -- now with promises, the law, priesthood, sacrifices, the glory cloud, kings and prophets and the covenants. All was failure upon failure. That is why the prophetic ministry became so pronounced. But it was the trial of the first man in the persons of the favored nation. The parable of Matt. 21:33-46 tells the tale. The owner of the vineyard had one remaining thing to do. He sent His Son. They will reverence His Son, He said -- yes, but in a future day , of course, when God will also answer the prayer of that Son, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The crucifixion closed the trial of the first man. It is a grave mistake to think that the preaching in Acts 2 - 7 or 2 - 12 indicates that the Jew was still under trial, that the first man was still under trial. God's dealings in trial concerning the first man were over at the cross, and the second man consequently took His place in glory, upon which the Spirit came in a special capacity.

There are two truths that especially characterize the heavenly parenthesis:

- (1) Christ is in glory.
- (2) The Spirit is here in the special capacity of testimony to a resurrected and glorified Christ and for forming a heavenly company united to the

Head in heaven as members of one body , etc. His coming at Pentecost opened the heavenly parenthesis and when He, the restrainer of 2 Thess. 2 leaves at the rapture of the saints, the heavenly parenthesis will thereby be closed.

Now, it is much to be observed that Christ taking His place in glory and the coming of the Holy Spirit in this way is dependent upon the trial of the first man having been completed. Christ resurrected and glorified is proof of it. Note the sequence: "But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. 15:46). It is contrary to Scripture that the natural (when the first man was under trial) should have a standing before God (as under testing) at the same time as the spiritual (when the second man took His place). When did the second man take his place? When Paul was saved (Acts 9) or began his formal ministry (Acts 13)? Where is Scripture for such notions?

I ask, when did Christ take His place? What did it follow? Paul's salvation or the beginning of his formal ministry? Listen:

... having made [by himself] the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high, taking a place so much better than the angels ... (Heb. 1:3,4).

Well, I suppose, no one would think otherwise than that He took His place consequent upon His finished work and resurrection. Why don't all see that therefore the trial of the first man (and therefore the trial of the first man in the persons of the favored nation, the Jews) was over by their rejection and crucifixion of the Son? Apparently not all Christians see the end of the trial of the first man at the death of Christ, because they say that what they call "the dispensation of the Spirit" (or some, "the dispensation of grace" or "the dispensation of the mystery") began at Acts 9, or 13 or 28 or somewhere else. Part of their system is that the Jews continued to be tested after Acts 2 under *the previous dispensation* (or an additional one intercalated) and up to Acts 9, or 13 or 28 according to the school of opinion they espouse.

Those who delay the formation of the body of Christ to some time after Acts 2 do not apprehend that the testing of the first man ended with the cross. This seems implicit in ideas concerning what a dispensation is. For example:

God Himself never changes. In His person, essence and character He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). His dealings with man, however have undergone various changes down through man's history -- changes made necessary down through man's history. Identifying these changes is a basic issue in studying the Bible dispensationally for a dispensation is a particular program that God administers (or dispenses) for man's obedience.¹⁵³

Since that writer holds that we are in a dispensation now, with the idea it is "a particular program that God administers (or dispenses) for man's obedience," this means that man is still under testing. That is, this system implicitly denies that the cross ended the testing of the first man. Worse yet, what this writer says means that the first man is still under test even after whenever he thinks the fall of Israel occurred. Indeed, this is implicit in his definition of a dispensation. And this brings us to the subject of Israel's fall and when it occurred.

The Stumbling of Israel

Rom. 11:11-15 reads:

I say then, Have they stumbled in order that they might fall [πεσωσιν]? Far be the thought: but by their fall [παραπτωματι] [there is] salvation to the nations to provoke them to jealousy. But if their fall [παραπτωμα] [be the] world's wealth, and their loss [the] wealth of [the] nations, how much rather their fullness? For I speak to you, the nations, inasmuch as I am apostle of nations, I glorify my ministry: if by any means I shall provoke to jealousy [them which are] my flesh, and shall save some from among them. For if their casting away [be the] world's reconciliation, what [their] reception but life from among the dead?

Rom. 11 does not support the notion that there is no future for Israel as if they have irremediably fallen. They have fallen but not irremediably. (Of course, the non-elect have indeed fallen irremediably). In verse 11, the word "fall" (πεσωσιν) means to fall irremediably so as not to regain the former place. "Far be the thought," says Paul. The next two uses of the word "fall" in verses 12 and 13 are translated "trespass" by Wm. Kelly and others. This is, perhaps, clearer. At any rate, it is a fall that involves a moral trespass on Israel's part.

Israel has stumbled but not so as to fall irremediably. Verse 15 speaks of their casting away, meaning that they are laid aside. The natural branches (Jews) of the olive tree (a figure for the line of God's blessings) have been broken out (Rom. 11:16-24) but not the elect Jews; because *some* of the branches were broken out (Rom. 11:17), thus not all.

Israel stumbled and fell (Rom. 11:11), were cast away (Rom. 11:15) and blinded (Rom. 11:7), or as Wm. Kelly has it, were "hardened." The question before us is when did this happen? I answer, the stumbling and fall and hardening of Israel is interlocked with the end of the trial of the first man and thus occurred at the death of the Lord Jesus, Whom they slew. This is the trespass of Romans 11. Just imagine delaying this to when Paul was saved,¹⁵⁴ or began his formal ministry or was put in prison or who knows where. Likely some will say it occurred when Israel finally rejected the "reproof" of the kingdom in Acts. Such notions are the exigencies of a false system. The reader should have noted by now that *implicit in moving the formation of the body of Christ from Pentecost is the denial that the cross marked the end of the trial of the first man*. In effect, this makes something else the center and turning point instead of Christ and the cross -- and thus far lowers Christ's work. How so, you say? Why, in the cross God fully judged the first man, and put him away from before Himself. This is why the Christian can reckon himself dead (Rom 6). This is why a Christian can say, "I am crucified with Christ" It is because his standing in Adam, the first man, was terminated at calvary. It was part of Christ's work. Giving the first man any standing after that lowers the work of Christ.

Christ Himself is the occasion of Israel's fall:

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, Lo, this [child] is set for the fall and rising up of many in Israel (Luke 2:34).

It is Christ Himself that is the touchstone of this whole question. Matt. 21:44 reads:

And he that falls on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.

Here are the two positions of our Lord: on earth as the stone of stumbling, and above as the smiting stone. "And the chief priests and the Pharisees, having heard his parables, knew that he spoke about them" (Matt. 21:45). Reader, I ask you, what was it that sealed their doom? Was it not what they did to Him Who was set for the fall and rising of many in Israel (Luke 2:34)? Was it not that they fell on this stone? He was the stone that the builders rejected (Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17). Yes, He was the stone of stumbling and the rock of of fence (1 Peter 2:7,8). The subsequent preaching to Israel (Acts 2-11) cannot change this. The parable in Matt. 21:33-42 is express:

And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him (v. 39).

And the hearers of the parable pronounced their own judgment. The judgment, note well, turns upon the casting out and killing of the heir.

When therefore the Lord of the vineyard comes, what shall he do to those husbandmen? They say to him, He will miserably destroy those evil men . . . (Matt. 21:40,41).

The rejection of the Lord Jesus is very strongly marked in Matthew which emphasizes God's governmental dealings, ways and changes. In Matt. 12, the leadership committed the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, namely, saying that the power (confessedly) working in Christ was Beelzebub's (Matt. 12:24). It may be perceived that in the unfolding of God's purpose in Matthew's account, this led to the parabolic form of teaching wherein certain things were meant to be hidden from the rejecters of Christ (Matt. 13:13-15). He had hinted to them that they would make of Him their adversary (Matt. 5:55; Luke 12:58).

The rejection of the Lord came to a climax at the cross. Just before He was crucified we read of His lament in Matt. 23:37-39 where He said, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." A few days later, the awful shout of rejection rose up before God, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Then they crucified the heir (Matt. 21:38) and therefore the kingdom of God was taken from them (Matt. 21:43). Thus Israel stumbled and fell.

The fact is that the Lord sought fruit from Israel for three years, for Israel was a fig tree without figs, and the sentence was:

. . . cut it down; why does it also render the ground useless (Luke 13:7).

The added year (Acts 2 - 7) does not change the sentence against Israel. Another year was added to demonstrate, not that it would produce fruit, but to prove that the stumbling, the fall, the blindness, had indeed taken place. It was a **year of exposure** of the state of Israel while the believing remnant (the Israel of God) continued to be augmented. After that the Word began to go forth to the Gentiles. It was not a continuation of the testing of the first man. It was an added demonstration of Israel's resistance to the Spirit (Acts 7), Who answers to the servant of the parable. They cast Christ out down here and would not have a Christ in glory either (Luke 19:11ff; Acts 7:54-58).

Additionally, when charged with the murder of the Lord Jesus, those whose hearts were touched by the preaching in Acts 2ff had an opportunity, as it were, to take the place of the manslayer and run into the city of refuge, while the rest were left for the avenger of blood to overtake them (Deut. 19).

It is true that reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles consequent upon Israel's fall (Rom. 11:11,12,15). This does not prove that the message was sent (or had to be sent) to the Gentiles, say, the day Israel fell, or the day after. There was a lapse of time marked by the **exposure** of Israel's resisting the testimony of the Spirit regarding the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. So before the Gentiles were blessed and the mystery was revealed, the Jews were addressed first (Acts 3:26). This was the first step in the **NEW** mission, new because it was to the Gentiles, beginning, however, at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

The Acts 9/13 position advocates have a difficult time pin-pointing the fall of Israel, whereas it is interlocked with the testing of the first man; and thus the fall of Israel occurred when the testing of the first man ended (the cross). Consequently, the second man was glorified. *This false system results in a concurrent standing for both the first and the second man.* Now, Scripture declares that there was no concurrency:

But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:46,47).

Previously, it was pointed out how a false definition of a dispensation betrayed the fact that implicit in that definition was a denial that the trial of the first man ended at the cross. Of course, it would follow from this error that the same writer would find the fall of Israel somewhere in Acts instead of at the cross -- in order to suit the theory of the body of Christ being formed with Paul's salvation or his formal ministry. The following citation will show this and also many errors concerning how the N.T. is handled as a consequence of delaying the formation of the body of Christ to a time subsequent to Acts 2:

Time Past: In *Matthew through John* we find the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ to the nation Israel. In the book of Acts we have the fall of Israel and salvation going to the Gentiles through the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

But Now: *Romans through Philemon* provide the doctrine for the present dispensation of grace.

Ages To Come: *Hebrews through Revelation* focus on the ages ¹⁵⁵ to come when God will bring to fruition His purposes for both the nation Israel and the Body of Christ. ¹⁵⁶

While Bullingerism gave rise to the term "ultra-dispensationalism," there are references now to that as "extreme" and the Acts 9/13 positions as "moderate." Distinctions do have value (especially if one feels misrepresented). "Moderate" is too mild a word when I look at the last quotation above.

SUMMARY

The point at which the testing of the first man ended involves many truths, some of which we have considered.

1. The testing of the first man ended with the death of Christ, not at the salvation of Paul, nor at the beginning of his formal ministry, nor when he was put in prison, nor when Israel finally rejected the "reof fer" of the kingdom, whenever that is supposed to have happened.
2. Israel was cast away consequent upon slaying the Lord Jesus.
3. The second man took His place in glory consequent upon finishing redemption and its correlative ending of the testing of the first man.
4. As a consequence of His taking His place above, the Holy Spirit came down in a special capacity . He came to empower the disciples for the **NEW** mission, to the nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8), and to baptize those who had believed on Christ into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

The Baptism in the Spirit

THE MAN IN THE GLORY

It is blessed indeed to contemplate our Lord Jesus as the man in the glory of God. The eternal Son, Who always is, uninterruptedly , in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) yet speaks of Himself thus:

... and have believed that I came out from God. I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father (John 16:27,28).

How unspeakably precious this is to the soul! He came out from God and came out from the Father. Have you noticed that this is, so to speak, movement in the Godhead? Why, yes, my soul, it is movement in the Godhead, the Son coming out from the Father and coming into the world. The Father was the Father when (and before, too) the Son so came out. And it was **the Son**, as such, Who came out from **the Father**, as such, before He came into the world in incarnation.

In John 17:5 we read:

And now glorify me, thou Father, along with thyself, with the glory which I had along with thee before the world was.

The blessed Lord never glorified Himself in any way. As man He asks and receives everything. And now He requests to enter that glory as to presence and place. It was a glory He had along with the Father before the world was -- only now, oh staggering thought, He would enter that personal glory as man!

He had told His own that He was going to prepare a place for them (John 14:3). This was a place above, to be shared with Him. And *as soon as He entered* the place above, as man, victorious over sin and hell and death, *the place was ready*. He has not been busy for 1900 years getting it prepared. No, no. When He entered there as glorified man, it was, by that very entry prepared.

He said, "and I sanctify myself for them . . ." (John 17:19). This sanctification is not in a moral sense -- could not be -- but refers to setting Himself apart in the glory for effecting our practical sanctification to God. And

thus He is, in the glory, the transforming object to our gaze (2 Cor. 3:18).

The cross marked the end of the testing of the first man; and consequent upon that work the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4). Yea, and God gave Him glory (1 Peter 1:21). There is a consequence of the glorification of Christ. The Spirit could not come until Christ was glorified (John 7:39).

The finished work of Christ, and the consequent resurrection and glorification above is the great change upon which all devolves, not the salvation or formal ministry of a servant of Christ (Paul), however illustrious, or anything else. See, for example, in Eph. 1:20-23 how all is connected with Christ's glorification. And so the giving of gifts is likewise the expression and demonstration of His ascension into glory (Eph. 4:9-13). We see some of these gifts functioning in the early part of Acts, including Philip the evangelist.¹⁵⁷

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit is omnipresent, present everywhere. He was here in O.T. times. Yet our Lord spoke of the Spirit as One Who would come:

But I say the truth to you, It is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you (John 16:7).

Here we learn that in order for the Spirit to come, the Lord Jesus would have to go away (into the glory, of course). We also learn that as thus gone away, the Lord would send the Spirit. Not only must the Lord go away before the Spirit would come, the Lord had to be glorified first:

But this he said concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive; for [the] Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:39).

There are several other Scriptures to note:

And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him; but ye know him, for he abides with you, and shall be in you (John 14:16-17).

... but the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you (John 14:26).

Those who receive the Spirit during the heavenly parenthesis will have Him for ever. 'He is not a come-and-go Spirit. The words, "for he abides with you," do not mean that they had Him indwelling already, for He had not come yet to abide in them. It is a statement of character; He is such a One as abides -- once come, of course, in this special capacity. He was not yet in them, but "shall be in you."

t. Indeed, the church will have its place eternally, as Eph. 3:21 and other Scriptures indicate.

Note also that the Father would send the Spirit in the Son's name. In John 16:7 we saw that the Son would send Him. Thus *both* would send Him; and the Spirit would be the divine remembrancer and teacher.

In Luke 24:49 we read:

And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but do ye remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high.

The Spirit is ***the promise of the Father*** and thus He is the Holy Spirit of promise, as we read of Him in Eph. 1:13.

... in whom also, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Why is He so designated in Eph. 1 as "the Holy Spirit of promise?" It is to draw our attention to the connection with what transpired at Pentecost when the Spirit came and baptized those who had believed into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). He came at Pentecost as the promise of the Father and formed the saints into one body united to the glorified head in heaven. The body was formed once for all and we are joined to it by the same Holy Spirit of promise (via sealing) that formed that body.

Before the Lord Jesus was received up into glory He,

... commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to await the promise of the Father, which [said he] ye have heard of men. For John indeed baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with *[en]* the Holy Spirit after now not many days (Acts 1:4,5).

So they waited; and the Spirit came at Pentecost, the 50th day after the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits (Lev. 23). The sheaf of firstfruits was waved before Jehovah the morrow after the sabbath following the passover; i.e., on our Sunday. This signified Christ's resurrection as the firstfruits. Now of the grain of the same crop from which the sheaf of the firstfruits came, were made two loaves. However, leaven was put in the two loaves, for there is an evil nature in those who compose the present testimony; but it was baked, and fire (judgment, self-judgment) stops the action of the leaven. Two loaves speak of testimony, testimony to Him Who is the firstfruits.

The Spirit came, and parted tongues, as of fire, sat upon each of those waiting according to our Lord's instructions. In Acts 2:32,33 we read:

This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which ye behold and hear

So our Lord, having been exalted, received the Spirit the second time. He received Him once as perfect man, in bodily form as a dove, for Him did the Father seal without measure. But now as glorified man, He received the Spirit in consequence of His work which glorified God and saves and cleanses sinners so that they, too, may receive the Spirit. The Father gave Him, as glorified man, up there in the glory, the Spirit, (i.e., gave Him the promised Spirit) and the glorified Lord Jesus Christ sent that Holy Spirit of promise here below. Thus were the Scriptures we have been considering fulfilled. This was how both the Father and the Son sent the Spirit. Note, too, that when we considered how the Son prayed in John 17:5, asking to enter that glory which He had with the Father

before the world began, we noted that as man He asks and receives all. He did not glorify himself. And here, in the glory, as the glorified man, He asked the Father for the Spirit for his disciples (John 14:16-17), and in the glory He received the Spirit for His disciples, and sent that Spirit (Luke 24:49). Of course, the Father thus sent the Spirit also. And the coming of the Spirit clothed them with power from on high. They were also baptized in the power of the Spirit into one body, though the results of that were not revealed at this time, for God would yet expose the moral state of Israel now stumbled, fallen and blinded.

The Spirit, we have been considering, came; came in a special capacity, though He was ever here as the omnipresent One. When will He leave? For those who understand that the restrainer of 2 Thess. 2:7 is the Holy Spirit, it is clear that He will be removed at the rapture. Now, this is the close of the heavenly parenthesis. The close of the heavenly parenthesis is coincident with the removal of the Spirit, i.e., removal with respect to the special capacity in which He came.¹⁵⁸ It is clear that He came at Pentecost. It was His coming that is coincident with the opening of the heavenly parenthesis -- a conclusion which is, of course, opposed to the notion that the body of Christ began in Acts 9, 13 or 28, or anywhere other than Acts 2.

THERE IS ONLY ONE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

The reader may be aware that Pentecostal/Charismatics speak of several baptisms in the Spirit, for they speak of in, by, of and with, the Spirit.¹⁵⁹ Here are the passages, before Pentecost which speak of the baptism in the Spirit:

he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11)

he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:4)

he shall baptize you with [en] the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16)

he it is who baptizes with [en] the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)

ye shall be baptized with [en] the Holy Spirit after now not many days (Acts 1:5)

In a footnote to the word "with" in Matt. 3:11, J. N. Darby says, "En, 'in the power of,' be it external or simply the nature and character of, but always including the latter: see Luke 2:72."

The Pentecostal/Charismatic varying of the English prepositions to represent *en*, in order to have several kinds of Holy Spirit baptisms is a farce. Amazingly, C. R. Stam, an advocate that the body of Christ began in Acts 9, did a similar thing, *while writing against Pentecostalism*:

There is a vast difference between the baptism with or in the Spirit at Pentecost and the baptism *by* the Spirit today. At Pentecost it was Christ who baptized believers *in* or *into the Spirit* (Matt. 3:11), while today it is *the Holy Spirit* who baptizes believers *into Christ and His Body* (Rom. 6:3; Titus 3:5; 1 Cor 12:13). These are exactly opposite.¹⁶⁰

Of course, if 1 Cor. 12:13 does actually refer to Pentecost, his entire system

collapses. Rom. 6:3 reads *eis* Christ, i.e., *unto* Christ, and refers to water baptism (which he does not believe, of course).

What this means is that there are two absolutely distinct baptisms in the Spirit. It is really not possible to deny that a Spirit baptism took place at Pentecost, of course. But the system involves that the body of Christ was formed in Acts 9, Paul being the first member of that body. The body never had only one member; no, not for one second.

It is a Pentecostalist doctrine that persons were baptized "into the Spirit." There is no such teaching in Scripture.

It is true that Matt. 3:11 shows us that Christ is the baptizer. The Spirit is the effectual power. But the gospels do not tell what the result of Christ baptizing in the power of the Spirit would be. It awaited the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church before the result would be stated; namely, the formation of one body. So while the five scriptures cited look forward, 1 Cor 12:13 looks back at what happened and tells us that the body of Christ was formed.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

1 Cor. 12:13 reads:

For also in [the power of] one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit.

The word "in [the power of]" represents the same Greek preposition, *en*, as in the other five places. Let us insert this preposition.

For also *en* one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body . . . (1 Cor. 12:13)

he it is who baptizes *en* the Holy Spirit (John 1:33).

Where the difficulty is in understanding this simple and obvious connection is that men impose their troublesome system on Scripture.

The baptism in the Spirit is a once-for-all event. It happened only once. J. N. Darby remarked:

As to 1 Corinthians 12:12,13, it is the aorist (ἐβαπτισθημεν) and therefore says *nothing of continuity*: it is continuous, if we speak of individuals receiving the Holy Ghost. But people look for a re-giving of the Holy Ghost, as if He did not abide for ever; and the thought of *re-giving* denies that, and also the responsibility of the church consequent upon it, which is a great evil.¹⁶¹

When a Christian is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13), Who is the same Holy Spirit of promise that came at Pentecost, as we have seen, he is joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17) and thus becomes a member of that body once-for-all formed at Pentecost. In the power of one Spirit, the Man in the glory baptized those that had believed, into one body.

So the above citation from C.R. Stam, regarding several differing baptisms *en* Spirit, says five references to the baptism *en* Spirit refer to one thing and the sixth reference¹⁶² to the baptism *en* Spirit refers to another thing (no evidence being produced in Acts 9-28 for its occurrence). His system requires this. It

takes away, too, the truth that the man in the glory was the baptizer, *en* Spirit into one body. The theory is that the Spirit, not Christ, in virtue of one Spirit, formed the body. I think this lowers one of Christ's glories.

I suppose also that this must mean that some like Peter were baptized into the Spirit and Paul was not; that Peter was clothed with power from on high by being baptized into the Spirit, but Paul was not. I ask, did Peter ever become a member of the body of Christ? When? -- and how (if not at Pentecost)? What did it? How do we know? If so, then he was a member of the body as Paul was, but in addition, he was baptized into the Spirit and clothed with power from on high. Poor Paul; he missed being clothed with power from on high, yet he said,

For I reckon that in nothing I am behind those who are in surpassing degree apostles (2 Cor. 11:5; cp. 12:11,12).

As we have considered the doctrine of two distinct baptisms in the Spirit for the purpose of delaying the formation of the body of Christ (and thus the opening of the heavenly parenthesis), it follows that what it means to be positionally "in Christ" must be also divided into two different things.

The body of Christ is a joint body formed from Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:15). The fact that no Gentiles were added to the body until after Pentecost is irrelevant. 1 Cor. 12:13 comprehends all members from Pentecost until the rapture, though that baptism took place at Pentecost. We are joined to that body when sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise in the power of Whom that body was then formed. That baptism is an all-encompassing and embracing event as is this:

... has quickened us with the Christ (ye are saved by grace) and has raised [us] up together, and has made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:5,6).

So just as these things are true in connection with Christ's resurrection and seating above, and God including us in His divine view of it, so with 1 Cor. 12:13. Jews, Greeks, bond or free did not need to be present at Pentecost any more than you or I needed to be present when Christ was raised.

"In Christ" and the Finished Work of Christ for Salvation

"IN CHRIST"

On the day of Pentecost, those baptized in [the power of] one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), were made members one of another and were joined to the head in heaven, the man in the glory. "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also [is] the Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). "The Christ" in this passage is likened to the human body. In this passage, "the Christ" refers to the Head in glory and the members on earth forming -- "the Christ." All such have the indwelling Spirit. "But he that [is] joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). The man in the glory received the Spirit there, in consequence of the perfection of His work,

and poured Him out upon those fit to receive the Spirit, as those cleansed by that perfect work. So He received the Spirit and they below received the Spirit; and He above and they below were joined, united, by one Spirit (a collective act). Subsequent to Pentecost, saints are joined to that body when sealed (an individual act) with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13).

Hence, those who were "in Christ" between Pentecost and Paul's salvation were "in Christ" before Paul. Paul stated expressly that some were "in Christ" before him.

Salute Andronicus and Junia . . . who were also in Christ before me (Rom. 16:7).

What this means is that the body of Christ, formed by Christ's baptizing, in the power of one Spirit, into one body, existed before Paul was "in Christ"; and the only time this could have happened was at Pentecost. Therefore, those who say that the body was formed when Paul was saved, or later, must explain away the above verse. Here is a way in which an Acts 9 position advocate does so.

When the Apostle Paul makes mention of those who were *in Christ* before him he does not mean to imply that Andronicus and Junia were in the *Body of Christ* before him. It deserves our most thoughtful attention that the Church, the Body of Christ, was not even introduced on the stage of this world until the conversation of Paul, who was the *first* member of that Body (Col. 1:24-26; 1 Tim. 1:12-16). The phrase in Christ used by the Apostle here in Roman 16:7 is to be understood in its broadest sense of *redemption*. Every blood-washed saint of all ages can be said to be in Christ redemptively. He stands before God, not in himself, but *in Christ!*¹⁶³

The believers of this dispensation have the unique honor to not only be *in Christ* redemptively, but also *in Christ* as far as being in the Body of Christ is concerned. Christ, who is our head, is the one we share in common -- He is the common denominator.¹⁶⁴

O. T. saints are nowhere in Scripture said to be "in Christ." The writer says they were, not because Scripture says so, but because it is a notion essential to his system; and without this invention of these two kinds of "in Christ," the system collapses -- because there were persons in Christ before Paul, thus indicating that the body of Christ began before Paul.

It is alleged that 1 Cor 15:22 demonstrates that it is a redemptive term:

While *dispensationally* it is possible to be "*in Christ*" either according to the *prophetic program* (Gen. 22:18, Isa. 45:25) or the *mystery program* (Eph. 2:13; 3:6), "the term itself is actually a *redemptive* term, as 1 Cor. 15:22 demonstrates . . ."¹⁶⁵

Appending a reference to Gen 22:25 and Isa. 45:25 merely exposes that he has no Scripture warrant for his notion of O. T. saints being in Christ. But let us come to his demonstrative text. Note that Eph. 1:10 says:

. . . to head up all things in the Christ.

u. [For the writer's meaning regarding that distinction, see note b.]

1 Cor 15:22 says:

For as in the Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive.

Here we have "in the Christ" as in Eph. 1:10. It is not a redemptive expression. Moreover, the words "be made alive" refer to resurrection; to being raised from physical death, not to redemption. Besides, saying that in the Christ all will be made alive is not the same thing as saying that all those made alive are "in Christ." It is clear that 1 Cor. 15:22 does not "demonstrate" that "in Christ" is a redemptive term. In the next verse (v. 23) we read:

But each in his own rank: [the] firstfruits, Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming.

All saints belong to Him but that is not to say that all saints are "in Christ." Keep in mind that what gave rise to these erroneous notions is the need to prove some other erroneous notions.

THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST FOR SALVATION

Not only were the early saints in Acts not "in Christ" as members of His body according to this system, we are also informed that they did not have the finished work of Christ for salvation preached to them. C. R. Stam wrote:

We should like to ask who, before Paul, proclaimed the finished work of Christ for salvation. Did Peter preach this at Pentecost? (see Acts 2:38 and cf. Rom. 3:21; Gal. 3:23; 1 Tim. 2:5-7). And who before Paul presented Christ as Head of a new race? ¹⁶⁶ Did Peter at Pentecost? Did he not rather present Him as King of Israel? (Acts 2 and 3). Christ as head of a new race was revealed through Paul with the ushering in of the dispensation of grace and the mystery (Rom. 5:12-19; cf. Eph. 2:15; 3:1-3). Does this sound as if "basic salvation" was presented for the faith of "all believers, regardless of calling"? ¹⁶⁷

Regarding the souls that accepted what Peter preached, we are told that they were "saved" (Acts 2:47). The saved persons also continued in "breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42). In Luke 22:19 we read that the Lord Jesus said:

This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me . . . This cup [is] the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Paul, in 1 Cor. 11 refers to this remembrance of the Lord. Certainly from Pentecost on the disciples continued to remember the Lord in His death for them. Keep in mind that the idea we are reviewing is that these "saved" ones who remembered the Lord Jesus in His death for them in the breaking of bread allegedly did so apart from having had presented to them "the finished work for salvation." Peter preached:

Repent, therefore, and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins (Acts 3:19).

Is not the effect of the notion being reviewed that these saints had the forgiveness of sins preached to them as a result of Christ's death and had their sins blotted out without knowledge of the finished work of Christ for salvation? In Acts 4:12 Peter says:

and salvation is in none other, for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved.

Also, Peter preached for givenness of sins (Acts 5:32). So these so-called Kingdom Church people were indwelt by the Holy Spirit of promise sent down as a result of Christ's finished work, His resurrection and exaltation; they had their sins blotted out, had Christ presented as the only One in Whom there is salvation, were saved, had forgiveness of sins -- all without having had, it is alleged, the preaching of the finished work of Christ for salvation, because, allegedly, no one before Paul preached this. This is an excellent example of how systematized error works. The final section of this appendix, where we will consider the new mission, also has a bearing on this issue.

The Church Divided

THE CHURCH DIVIDED

In Matt. 16:18 Christ spoke of building His church upon Himself as Son of the living God.¹⁶⁸ It was something future. In Acts 2:47 we learn that the Lord added daily to the church. The church had been formed previously that morning and continually thereafter received accessions. In Acts 5:1-11 we learn of an occasion when great fear came on the church, while Acts 8:1 speaks of the church at Jerusalem. Paul made havoc of the church, Acts 8:3. The system which delays the formation of the body until Acts 9 would not regard these as references to the church which is Christ's body.¹⁶⁹

We might ask, in view of Acts 8:1 speaking of the church at Jerusalem, if the reference to the church in Jerusalem in Acts 1:1-22 is the pre-body "Kingdom Church"; or did the church at Jerusalem change into the church which is Christ's body? And if it changed, when did it change, and how did it change? In Acts 15:4 we find Paul being received by the church at Jerusalem. Was it then part of the church which is Christ's body? If so, when and how did it change over? And if it had not changed into the body of Christ, what did Paul have to do with it? But if the church at Jerusalem was still "the Kingdom Church," then we have the interesting phenomenon of the delivery of the decrees of the apostles and "the Kingdom Church" to all others to keep (i.e., those who were in the body of Christ).

Before Paul was saved he persecuted the church (Acts 8:3); i.e., the Kingdom Church, as we are supposed to believe. So fierce was he that "being exceedingly furious against them, I persecuted them even to cities out [of our own land]." So there must have been quite a few of these so-called Kingdom Churches (cp. also Acts 9:31).

In 1 Cor. 15:9 he says that he persecuted the Church of God. Here the church is not looked at in a local character but as an entity encompassing all believers on earth. It is the church on earth that he persecuted. In 1 Cor. 1:2 he addressed the epistle to the church of God at Corinth. He used the expression "church of God" in 1 Cor. 10:32 and 11:22 also. Evidently the Corinthians were part of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Were they supposed to think that "church of God" in three passages had to do with the body of Christ and the last

one referred to the Kingdom Church? In persecuting the church, Paul was persecuting Christ's body (and thus persecuting Christ -- Acts 9:4). Were the Galatians supposed to know that he persecuted the Kingdom Church (Gal. 1:13); and the Philippians also (Phil. 3:6)?

Well, those who believe in two baptisms in the Spirit and two kinds of being "in Christ" are quite capable of believing such things. The system demands it. The system collapses if any one of these distinctions is false.

Two arguments offered to prove the existence of two fundamentally different churches are these:

1. Acts 2:41 says that souls were added and a thing has to exist already to receive additions. Therefore, the church already existed at Pentecost (i. e., before Pentecost).¹⁷⁰

In reply to this we say that these 3000 "were added in that day" to what had been *formed just that very morning*. Peter and those with him had received the baptism in the Spirit and thus formed one body (1 Cor . 12:13). Subsequent to this, on the same day, after the preaching, about 3000 were added. The above argument does not prove the church existed before Pentecost. The Lord said "I will build" (not, I am building) "my church"; and we first hear of its existence in the early chapters of Acts.

2. When Paul says "the church which is His body" he implies another church which is not Christ's body.¹⁷¹

In reply to this we observe that Col. 1:18 says, "and *he* is the head of the body, the assembly." Reasoning in the same manner, one would allege that this implies another body, which is not the assembly. 1 Tim. 3:15 says, ". . . how one ought to conduct oneself in God's house, which is [the] assembly of [the] living God." Does this imply that there is another house of God, which is not the assembly? If I were to assert such things would you not conclude I was trying to bolster an unscriptural system?

WAS PAUL THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?

Recall that in the above citation from P.M. Sadler, he said:

. . . the church, the body of Christ, was not even introduced on the stage of this world until the conversion of Paul, who was the *first* member of the Body (Col. 1:24-26; 1 Tim. 1:12-16).¹⁷²

Is it not rather obvious that Paul being the special minister of the mystery that is spoken of in Col. 1:24-26 does not prove that the mystery began with Paul? It began at Pentecost but was not manifested to the saints immediately. But besides the hollow reasoning about Col. 1:24-26, there is an appeal to 1 Tim. 1:12-16 as if this Scripture states Paul was the first member of the body of Christ. Paul says, rather, that he is the first of sinners. The text states that. But let us see how the reasoning proceeds.

The BODY OF CHRIST begins with the Apostle Paul. Notice very carefully his testimony to this fact.

1 Timothy 1:13-16, "Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and

injurious: but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am FIRST (chief). Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me FIRST Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a PATTERN to them which should hereafter believe of Him to life everlasting."

This is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of Paul's conversion in Acts 9. It is worthy enough to be accepted by all. The word 'first' is the **same** Greek word in both cases, and the using of 'chief' as a translation is very misleading. Paul was no worse a sinner than anybody else. All outside of Christ are DEAD in sin (Ephesians 2:1).¹⁷³

The argument devolves upon the words "that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern" The writer takes this to refer to becoming a member of the body of Christ. An implication is that thus he would be the first to be baptised in the Spirit. Then a second person, a third, etc; and thus the result is continuous baptism in the Spirit -- which is contrary to the construction of 1 Cor. 12:13.

The passage says nothing about entering the body of Christ, or about the baptism in the Spirit. The words, "that in me first," refers to rank. Wm. Kelly translated thus:

. . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. But for this cause mercy was shown me that in me, [as] chief, Christ might display the whole long-suffering for an outline-sketch of those that should believe on Him unto life eternal.

J. N. Darby translated:

. . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am [the] first. But for this reason mercy was shewn me, that in me, [the] first, Jesus Christ might display the whole longsuffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on him to life eternal.

If "first," it is first in rank; if "chief," it is chief in rank. In both verses the word *protos* (chief/first) refers to the same thing; namely, his rank as a sinner, not to being the first in time to be a member of the body of Christ. It was the character of His terrible persecutions that gave him this rank. And the character of the grace shown to such a one was the character of the grace shown to all.

C.R. Stam (Acts 9 position) wrote:

We believe that Paul's conversion and call to apostleship marks the beginning of the new dispensation and of the body of Christ.¹⁷⁴

There is no proof whatever that the baptism in the Spirit of 1 Cor. 12:13 took place at that time, or any other time, if it did not take place at Pentecost. "We believe" is what has determined it for him, not Scripture.

It is interesting also that after the body of Christ was allegedly formed with Paul's salvation, the Spirit "fell upon them even as upon us also at the beginning" says Peter, concerning a group of Gentiles (Acts 1 1:15). For the Acts 13 position this is interesting because this would be the inclusion of

Gentiles in the "Kingdom Church."

*Joel's Prophecy***JOEL'S PROPHECY NOT FULFILLED AT PENTECOST**

Joel's prophecy, quoted by Peter in Acts 2, was not fulfilled at Pentecost.¹⁷⁵ Let us consider why it was not fulfilled; and after that, why Peter quoted Joel's prophecy. First we will place Joel 2:28,29 alongside of Acts 2:17,18:

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. Yea, even upon the bondmen and upon the handmaid in those days will I pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28,29).

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, [that] I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your elders shall dream with dreams; yea, even upon my bondmen and upon my bondwomen in those days will I pour out of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:17,18).

The number of people upon whom the Spirit came hardly answers to "upon all flesh." Granted that "upon all flesh" does not mean every person on the globe; it does indicate more than Jews only. It refers to people generally without distinction of nationality and class. Those Jews present at Pentecost, upon whom the Spirit came, do not answer to the prophecy.

At Pentecost, those upon whom the Spirit came were Jews. Now, the Spirit of God had numbers of O.T. prophecies to cite, through Peter, referring to the pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel (Isa. 32:15; 44:3,4; Ezek. 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; cp. Isa. 59:21; Zech. 12:10), and needed not to cite Joel, who speaks of the Spirit coming "upon all flesh," if the intent was that Pentecost was the fulfillment of prophecy concerning only the Jews.¹⁷⁶

Of the prophets who speak of the effusion of the Spirit, Joel is the only one who prophesies of it as going beyond Israel. This is the prophecy selected by the Spirit for Peter to use. I suggest that this is in keeping with the new mission stated in Luke 24:47:

... and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The NEW mission given by the Lord (see also Acts 1:8), whether understood by them or not is beside the point, was *a mission to the nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. The prophecy cited from Joel, regarding the effusion of the Spirit, includes the nations ("all flesh") and thus fits so beautifully in application to Pentecost, for Pentecost began that new mission.

Joel is the only one who in speaking of the giving of the Spirit, views it as going beyond Israel. This may be one reason why Joel was quoted rather than the other prophets. God indeed intended to bless Gentiles during the time of the heavenly parenthesis.

References to the Spirit coming on Israelites clearly refer to the millennium. And, the expression in Joel, "upon all flesh" includes Israel.

Where is Joel's prophecy placed chronologically? Joel says, "And it shall come to pass afterwards After what? Isa. 1:26 says of Jerusalem, "Afterwards thou shalt be called, Town of righteousness, Faithful city." Hosea 3:5 says, "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall turn with fear toward Jehovah and toward his goodness, at the end of days." Compare the expression "at the end of days" with Peter's word, "and it shall be in the last days" These verses all refer to the millennium.

It is claimed that Peter said the last days had arrived. Not so; nor was it yet the prophesied last days of Joel. Nor did he say 'this is the fulfillment of that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.' Besides, just shortly before, the disciples asked the Lord if it was time for the kingdom to be restored to Israel (Acts 1). Did the Lord tell them something to encourage them to think that Israel's last days were about to arrive?

There is no reference in Acts 2 to anyone actually dreaming and seeing visions.

Now we will consider what was written concerning signs:

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be changed to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible days of Jehovah come. And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of Jehovah shall be saved: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Jehovah hath said, and for the residue whom Jehovah shall call. (Joel 2:30-32).

And I will give wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be changed to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and gloriously appearing day of [the] Lord come. And it shall be that whosoever shall call upon the name of [the] Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:19-21).

Spiritualizers may point to the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70) to find a fulfillment of these signs. However, when Jerusalem was destroyed in A. D. 70 there was no deliverance in mount Zion and in Jerusalem. Indeed, it was quite the opposite.

Moreover, the fact is that these signs will actually take place **before** Israel's deliverance and subsequent experience of the Spirit being poured out. Notice, too, that Peter did not cite all of Joel 2:32, the last half obviously pointing to a future day for fulfillment of this prophecy. He sought to make an application of the portion cited in Acts 2:21 to his hearers.

The texts state expressly that these signs precede that advent of the day of the Lord. And there will be those who shall call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. The pouring out of the Spirit will follow after the setting up of the kingdom. Thus, the signs will precede, in time, the pouring out of the Spirit. The destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) cannot answer to the signs, therefore.

C. R. Stam (Acts 9 position) claims that 'the signs of Pentecost were to be followed by signs both in heaven and on earth'¹⁷⁷ Concerning the purpose of Pentecost, he claims it was for the purpose of enduing them with

"supernatural power" in preparation for the great tribulation which would have come had God not intervened in grace.¹⁷⁸ This gives the appearance that he thinks that the effusion of the Spirit was even to precede the great tribulation. C. F. Baker (Acts 13 position), who asserts that Joel predicted Pentecost (and thus Israel's last days began), says that the signs did not take place because Israel's rulers "hardened themselves in their unbelief and opposition to Christ."¹⁷⁹ Not only do these writers reverse the order (necessary to their system) but claim fulfillment of the prophecy, and some excuse away non-fulfillment of parts of the prophecy. I suppose anything can easily be 'proved' by such methods.

Referring to Joel 2:28-32, J. N. Darby noted:

This is an entirely distinct prophecy, which goes by itself, preceding the day of Jehovah, as indeed is clearly stated, which day ushers in the blessing previously spoken of. The order in the last days will be repentance, deliverance by the day of Jehovah, temporal blessing, the Holy Ghost. Before the day of Jehovah, signs will take place. This last stands therefore necessarily apart, as the calling on the name of Jehovah of course precedes the deliverance.¹⁸⁰

The Spirit, then, will be poured out upon all flesh in connection with the setting up of the kingdom. In Acts 2 the coming of the Spirit, which involved the baptism in the Spirit, brought about the body of Christ.

THIS IS THAT

As has already been indicated, Peter has made an application of two things in Joel's prophecy:

1. What the onlookers were witnessing was consistent with what Joel had said about the Spirit being poured out.
2. He used the point that whoever would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved.

His thrust, then, was *this has that* character. It has been objected that the text does not say 'this has that character.' Well, then, we ought to note that the text does not say 'this is the fulfillment of that.' Notice Acts 1:16 shows Peter was quite capable of using the word "fulfilled" (cp. Acts 3:18). It is a prophecy of the signs preceding the establishment of the kingdom, that those calling on the name of the Lord would be saved and there would occur the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh. The fact is that there are numbers of citations of the O. T. in the N. T. used in just this way as Joel's prophecy; for an application or illustration, while the fulfillment of those passages is in the future.

The Day of Pentecost

IS PENTECOST RELATED TO THE CHURCH?

As part of the system of delaying the formation of the body of Christ, C.R. Stam

wrote:

Pentecost was a Jewish feast day, not related in any way to the Body of Christ.¹⁸¹

Paul wrote:

For also our passover, Christ, has been sacrificed; so that let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven . . . (1 Cor. 5:7,8).

Paul speaks of Jewish feasts and these feasts have application to members of the body of Christ. Passover, as we know, refers to the death of Christ. The "feast," however, refers to the feast of unleavened bread which ran from the 15th to the 21st of the month (Lev. 23). It denotes an unleavened walk and here Paul applies it to members of the body of Christ. Moreover, the feast of first fruits (Lev. 23) typifies the resurrection of Christ. That, too, is related to the body of Christ. There is one more of the four feasts that took place in the first two months of the Jewish year (starting with Abib -- Ex. 12) and that is Pentecost.

The last three feasts of Jehovah took place in the 7th month and speak of the regathering of Israel (trumpets), Israel's national repentance (the day of atonement), and Israel's entry into rest (booths).¹⁸² See Lev. 23. These apply to Israel.

Not only have the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits and Pentecost something to do with the church (which is Christ's body) but in Ezekiel 40 - 48 where we learn about feasts to be celebrated by Israel in the millennium, no mention is made of Pentecost (the feast of Weeks). It received its fulfillment just as passover did. However, Passover will be celebrated in the millennium because the blood of the New Covenant was shed for them also. Christ's death had in view both us *and* the nation of Israel, as such (John 11:51,52).

Besides this, the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits (Christ in resurrection) and Pentecost have a connection. See Lev. 23.

THE TIME OF THE FEAST

Israel was to count from, and include, the day that the wave-sheaf was waved, seven sabbaths. That equals 49 days. They were to count also the day after the seventh sabbath, which made *50 days* in all (Lev. 23:15,16). This is where the word *Pentecost* comes from. It refers to the 50th day. J. N. Darby translated Acts 2:1, "And when the day of Pentecost was now accomplishing . . ." It was then that the Holy Spirit came (John 7:39; Acts 2:32,33) in a special capacity, the doctrine of which was reserved for the apostle Paul to expound.

Lev. 23:15 says of the days, "they shall be complete." This is seven sevens. It signifies, I suggest, the spiritual exercises of the Lord's people during those days that they were awaiting the descent of the Spirit. See Luke 24:29; Acts 1. This was a time during which exercise for testimony was prepared; which testimony is typified in bringing the *two* loaves out of their dwellings. This was done on the morrow after the seventh sabbath, the Lord's day when fulfilled.

We should learn from this that it is morally right and suitable that spiritual exercise precedes testimony and service.

A NEW MEAL OFFERING

There is a reason why the meal offering of the Feast of Weeks is called a NEW meal offering, or, oblation (Lev. 23:16).

1. The meal offering of Lev. 2 typifies the perfection of Christ in His holy Person and His walk for God's glory, as energized by the Spirit (the oil). No leaven was allowed in it.
2. Hence this is a new meal-offering. It had leaven in it, which was strictly forbidden in the meal offering which speaks of Christ. Leaven always denotes evil in Scripture usage.

THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW MEAL-OFFERING

Let us look at each characteristic of the new meal-offering.

1. It was brought "out of your dwellings." To be a testimony to the true character of the wave-sheaf (a resurrected Christ) there must be an exercise of heart in our dwelling. Where, and in what condition of soul, do we spiritually dwell?
2. There were two wave-loaves. Two is the number of testimony in Scripture. The Holy Spirit formed a testimony, to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, at Pentecost. They were made from the same grain as the wave-sheaf. "Except a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). His grace has identified us with Himself in His victory over death and with His resurrection-life (John 20:22). As the sheaf of firstfruits was waved before Jehovah, so were the loaves. The waving signifies something for the enjoyment and pleasure of God.
3. The wave-loaves were of two-tenths (of an ephah, probably) of fine flour. The quantity of the wave-sheaf was also two-tenths. Again we have the number of testimony. It also means that we ought to maintain the character of Christ Himself as the faithful and true witness, for He has made us partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).
4. The wave loaves were baked with leaven. There was no leaven in the meal-offering (Lev. 2) which typifies Christ. Evil is present with me, said Paul (Rom. 7:21). The leaven in the wave-loaves signifies the difference between Christ and His people. But fire, representing judgment, stops the action of leaven. Hence these are baked loaves. Do we judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:31)? Self-judgment will stop the working of leaven. There is, then, a treasure that we have in these earthen vessels. But in the earthen vessel there is sin, and this refers to our fallen nature. The prince of this world had nothing in Christ (John 14:30). In us, alas, he has material upon which to work. But fire, judgment, self-judgment, will stop it working.

Now, Christ stood forth in victorious resurrection, "marked out Son of God in power, according to [the] Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of [the] dead" (Rom. 1:4). This is the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. Of necessity there followed His exaltation, "far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph.

4:11). He fills the very heart of the Father . Oh, that He might fill your heart and mine!

The exaltation took place 40 days after He rose from the dead (Acts 1). We may thus distinguish the resurrection and exaltation but not separate them morally. On the 50th day, the descent of the Spirit took place, forming what answered to the wave-loaves. Yea, His coming formed the one body (1 Cor . 12:13; Eph. 4:3), but this is not seen in the wave loaves. The two wave-loaves typify a testimony, like Christ Himself, to the true character of the wave-sheaf. We have observed that Acts is the history of the Spirit's testimony to the resurrection and glorification of Christ.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST

No doubt the feast of weeks was celebrated many times in Israel. It was one of the three feasts (Ex. 23:15,16; 34:22; Deut. 16:16; 2 Chron, 8:13) at which all the males had to appear before Jehovah. This did not hinder women and children from coming however (1 Sam. 1:3,4; Luke 2:41).

Note that a record in the O. T. of this feast being kept is absent. Also, it is absent in Ezekiel 45:21-25. It will have no application in the millennium because it was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. What took place as recorded in Acts 2:1-4 is the formation of a new testimony to the character of the wave-sheaf. The testimony of the Jewish remnant during the great tribulation will again be the gospel of the kingdom, which John (Matt. 3:2) and our Lord (Matt. 4:17) preached. That is the testimony to the coming of the kingdom in power , as drawn nigh. That which was preached in the early part of Acts is part of the new mission, to the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), beginning at Jerusalem.

The Alleged Continuance of the Kingdom Program

We are told that the early part of Acts is a continuation of the kingdom program that existed before the cross. R. Jordan wrote,

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM" (Luke 24:47).

After some 40 days of personal instruction from their resurrected Lord in things "pertaining to the kingdom of God," the apostles understood that the program of God still focused on Israel and her coming kingdom:

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, LORD, WILT THOU AT THIS TIME REST ORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?" (Acts 1:6).¹⁸³

It is interesting that he cited two Scriptures which show the opposite of his theory. Notice where he put the emphasis in Luke 24:47. He is trying to force continuity whereas this text explicitly states discontinuity. The program our Lord specified in Luke 24:47 was that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. This is the New

program and it is not a continuation of the kingdom for Israel program.

Previous to the cross the mission was expressly confined to Israel:

These twelve Jesus sent out when he had charged them, saying, Go not off into [the] way of [the] nations, and into a city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6).

But he answering said, I have not been sent save to the lost sheep of Israel's house (Matt. 15:24).

Subsequent to the cross, we read:

And he said to them, go into all the world and preach the glad tidings to all the creation . . . And they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working with [them], and confirming the word by the signs following upon [it] (Mark 16:15,20; cp. Heb. 2:3,4).

Then opened he their understanding to understand the scriptures, and said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:45-47).

Now observe what could be said by the time the book of Hebrews was written:

How shall *we* escape if we have been negligent of so great salvation, which having had its commencement in being spoken [of] by the Lord, ¹⁸⁴ has been confirmed to us by those who heard; God bearing, besides, witness with [them] to [it], both by signs and wonders, and various works of power, and distributions of [the] Holy Spirit, according to his will? (Heb. 2:3,4).

How much more clearly does it need to be stated before believed? The "great salvation" the Lord spoke of was spoken by the Apostles; and had application when the book of Hebrews was written. To neglect that "great salvation" was perilous to the soul at the time of the writing of Hebrews, long after Paul was saved. Certainly more truth was revealed through Paul, but the "great salvation" was preached before Paul and was preached long after he was saved, and continues to this day -- though Paul speaks of the gospel of the glory, which is an additional subject.

Of course Peter preached to the Jews. And it is quite true that Acts 10:9-16 shows Peter's Jewish prejudices. God knew how to over-rule that. True, too, that Peter might have been slow to grasp the implication of Luke 24:47. But for all that, when guided in his preaching by the Spirit, he said, on the very day of Pentecost itself:

For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who [are] afar off, as many as the Lord our God may call (Acts 2:39).

Yes, we Gentiles who "once were afar off" (Eph. 2:13) are included here in Acts 2:39, for the sovereign God has called us. Peter says, "For to you is the promise." I suggest that this refers to the promise of the Holy Spirit (the promise of the Father) about which the Lord had told them (Luke 24:49, etc.). And not only did Jewish believers receive the promised Holy Spirit, so did Gentiles:

. . . in whom also, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of

promise (Eph. 1:13).

Thus we are sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise that they received at Pentecost. How wonderfully all fits together. The point here is, however, that in Acts 2:39, Peter, guided by the Spirit, included the Gentiles.

In summary, observe these points:

1. Before the cross the preaching was confined to Israel.¹⁸⁵
2. Subsequent to the cross the Lord told them to preach to the whole world.¹⁸⁶
3. They preached everywhere and the Lord worked with them and confirmed this preaching everywhere with signs.¹⁸⁷
4. The Lord told them to preach repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins. They did so.
5. Heb. 2:3,4 calls this "great salvation" and says there was witness to it by signs.
6. The Lord told the disciples that the preaching should begin at Jerusalem.
7. The preaching, as guided by the Spirit, had in view those who were afar off.

Now, this is obviously a NEW program, not a continuation of the pre-cross program¹⁸⁸ to only the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is new in both content and audience. What the disciples understood is not the point. The question is: What was God's program? Yes, the program was to begin at Jerusalem, but that fact alone does not determine what the program was, whatever else God may have been doing in connection with Israel.¹⁸⁹ It is expressly stated that the nations are in view. And what was the Lord's answer to the disciples' question (Acts 1:6)? Did he encourage them to expect the kingdom immediately? Quite the contrary. Indeed, in Luke 19:11-27 we are expressly told that the parable was stated because they were near Jerusalem and because the disciples "thought that the kingdom of God was about to be immediately manifested." In fact, He subsequently told them what the program would be: "... and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, *and to the ends of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). Here again is the new mission to the nations. Now, this shows a break with what preceded. Yet, because the new program was to start at Jerusalem, and it did, it is asserted that this is only a continuation of a previous kingdom program. Such false reasoning is required by the theory that the body was formed some time after Pentecost (Acts 2).

It is claimed that the "first real offer of the kingdom" was made after Pentecost (cp. Acts 3:19-21). C. R. Stam wrote, "The kingdom was not even offered to Israel until Pentecost..."¹⁹⁰ because Christ had to suffer first before the kingdom glory would be realized (cp. Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:11). To this I reply:

1. Certainly Christ had to suffer before the Kingdom would be inaugurated. But as a matter of fact, we now know that it was also the purpose of God (Eph. 3:11) that the assembly be formed before the kingdom would be established. The formation of the body, therefore, had to be before the

kingdom. But, behold, this fact did not set aside the preaching of Acts 3:19-21. So I ask this: if a real offer of the kingdom could not be made because Christ had to suffer first, how could a "first real offer of the kingdom" be made until the body of Christ was here no longer, since in the divine purpose of the ages, the formation of the body of Christ had to precede the advent of the kingdom? Obviously, God is not limited in offering the kingdom by either case.

2. Jerusalem had to be destroyed, not necessarily before the rapture, but certainly before the setting up of the kingdom (Matt. 22:7; Luke 21:20). Yet this did not hinder the Spirit regarding what was said in Acts 3:19-21. C. R. Stam's reasoning is contrary to the facts of Scripture -- yet required by his system. Surely his system is wrong.

The objectors' delay of the kingdom of God is part of a false system and their reasoning upon it falsifies what the sovereign God can and cannot do. He did offer the kingdom in the Person of the lowly and meek Lord Jesus as a moral test to thus bring out the state of the people. This false system systematically takes away from Christ what is His due. In *Thy Precepts*, May/June 1989, vol. 4, #3, pp. 87-96, there is a discussion of the offer of the kingdom to Israel when our Lord was here and is a refutation of the notion that the first real offer of the kingdom occurred after our Lord was in the glory, as well as refuting the amillennial/postmillennial notion that He did not offer an earthly kingdom.

I would just add that as J. N. Darby pointed out, the mission given in Matt. 28 is one that will be carried out by Jews in the great tribulation. I have somewhat discussed this elsewhere.¹⁹¹

Summary

The worst feature of the Acts 9/Acts 13 system is that it lowers numbers of Christ's glories and unduly exalts His honored servant, Paul. Let us briefly review this.

1. The end of the standing and trial of the first man, in the death of Christ, is, in effect, not acknowledged.
2. And so the fall of Israel occurring upon the end of the standing and trial of the first man in the rejection and death of Christ is also not acknowledged.
3. When Christ rose from among the dead, He thus became the beginning of the new creation. He is robbed of this by asserting that the new creation began with Paul's salvation.
4. Christ's headship of the body resulted from a complex of glories: His death, resurrection, exaltation and consequent sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The false system, in effect, makes Christ's headship of the body devolve upon Paul.
5. Christ Himself is the One Who is the baptizer into one body. This system says that the Spirit is the baptizer into one body.
6. This system means that those in the earliest part of the Acts did not have the

finished work of Christ for salvation preached to them.

7. The mission for which Christ sent the Spirit is broken into two incompatible programs which are viewed as operating simultaneously for some time.

I trust that you will clearly see that this system lowers Christ's glories. This system is not of God, Who is not the author of confusion. It is a confusion pretending to rightly divide the Word of God, but rather it is retrograde regarding dispensational and other truth.

Addendum

There has come to hand a periodical containing the following comments regarding Acts 7:54-56:

Don't tread over this too lightly, for a tremendous change has taken place: In Acts 2 Peter warns them that Christ had *sat down* in heaven at the Father's right hand *until* that time came for Him to return in wrath and destroy His enemies. In Acts 7 Steven sees Christ *standing* -- no longer seated, but now "*standing* on the right hand of God." There is only one scriptural explanation for the change in His posture: the time for the outpouring of His wrath had arrived. Our Lord was standing to do what Psalm 110:1 warned He would do: "make His foes His footstool." . . .

At the very *moment* when the prophetic clock had reached the hour of judgment, God in His grace *interrupted* the prophetic program by ushering in an *unprophesied* [sic] program -- a previously unknown purpose called "*the mystery*"

. . . Just as the prophetic clouds of judgment lay heaviest on the horizon, God in His infinite grace and manifold wisdom *interrupted* prophecy¹⁹²

1. This falsifies the Word which says, *with respect* to His enemies, "sit until." This theory has Him sitting, getting up and then sitting again *with respect* to His enemies; so he did not do as the Psalm said: "sit until."

2. His "only one scriptural explanation," used to bolster the Acts 9 position, being false, we may look for another explanation. That kind of reasoning upon scripture to bolster a false theory reminds me of an amusing posttribulationist argument, which says, why do you pretribulationists say Christ gets up from the throne to come for the rapture seven years before He crushes his enemies, when Psa. 110:1 says he sits until then? Suppose I were to reply that Christ sat down in perpetuity (Heb. 10:12) and therefore will never get up? You would answer, "But that sitting forever is *with respect* to the finished work on the cross." Well, of course; but *with respect* to His enemies, He will not, nor ever has, risen from the throne until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet. That says nothing *with respect* to His martyr Stephen, nor does it say anything *with respect* to the rapture of the saints.

Appendix 3:

Is "Dispensationalism" Inherently Arminian?

J. N. DARBY NEITHER AN ARMINIAN OR CALVINIST

Since J. N. Darby believed in the sovereignty of God in salvation, "the total ruin of man," eternal security of the believer, and denied freewill, he hardly appeared to be an Arminian. However, I do not think he would like to be labeled a Calvinist, because there is much freight carried by that name which he rejected. For example, he said:

... not that I believe in what is called reprobation.¹⁹³

In his paper "Presbyterianism," he wrote:

Does the Moderator soberly believe that intelligent unity of doctrine obtains in all Anglo-Saxon Presbyterian churches on this statement? "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and other foreordained to everlasting death." I delight in the sovereignty of God; but surely I could find a good many Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians, and ministers, too, who do not believe in reprobation.¹⁹⁴

Does that make these Anglo Saxon Presbyterians Arminians? Certainly JND did not regard himself as an Arminian. Listen to what he said:

All his statements mean is, that he holds Wesleyan or Arminian doctrine instead of a true view of the gospel.¹⁹⁵

I understand that Mr Trench believes, as an Arminian, that it is good in us that leads to grace in God; but this he cannot expect those better taught of God to follow him in.¹⁹⁶

The Calvinist, John Gerstner,^a comes at JND from a self-styled "authentic Calvinist" perspective, and has attempted to show that "dispensationalism" is inherently Arminian. He tries to show this by citing "dispensationalists" that he claims make Arminian statements. I doubt that he would attempt to show that Scripture is Arminian because persons who make Arminian statements believe Scripture to be the Word of God. I urge readers to read JND for themselves and not the misrepresentations of him that I find characterize anti-dispensationalists. I do not say that they do it on purpose, but there is something about their theological systems (as well as the hostility to dispensational truth, sometimes coupled with animus and rancor) that affects their judgment in such a way that they evidence difficulty in apprehending JND's teachings. In this appendix it is not my purpose to respond to John Gerstner in an extensive way but rather

a. I am thankful for the stand he has taken regarding "evangelicals" who are propagating the evil doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked.

present the reader with a sketch of Some of JND's teachings so that he will be in a position to make his own judgment.

Before we review some things JND has written on the subjects of election, freewill, etc., it might be instructive to know how an "authentic Arminian" viewed JND. Daniel Steele, Professor of Didactic Theology at Boston University, an Arminian, regarded JND as a Calvinist. He wrote:

A LIMITED ATONEMENT

Is the inevitable outcome of the doctrine that sin was punished on the cross. Whose sin? If it be answered, that of the whole human race, then universalism emerges, for God cannot in justice punish sin twice. It must be, then, that the sins of the elect only were punished. Hence at the bottom, this system of doctrine rest upon the tenet of a particular, in distinction from a universal atonement. The fact that this basis is not avowed, and that the terminology of hyper-predestinarianism, such as "the elect," "the reprobates," "special call," "irresistible grace," "perseverance of the saints," and salvation by "Divine Sovereignty," is studiously avoided, makes this system of doctrine still more dangerous, because these offensive features are concealed with Jesuitical cunning. We cannot resist the suspicion that this is designed, so as to make it palatable to those educated in the Arminian faith, in order to catch them with guile. Some unreflective Arminians are thus unawares entrapped into the reception of that unmitigated scheme of doctrine which Christendom is almost universally shaking off.

In our first interview with Mr. Darby, we asked what was his view of election founded on the foreseen, free, acceptance of the conditions of salvation, repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus Christ. His reply was that "an election, grounded upon reasons, would destroy the sovereignty of God, and that no act of the creature, no foreseen faith in Christ, conditioned election."¹⁹⁷

Passing by his cheap, angry and ridiculous polemical statement about concealing matters with "Jesuitical cunning," we grant that JND generally did not use certain Calvinistic terms; likely, because of objectionable freight carried by these terms. Observe, here, that there are Calvinists who interchange the expression "limited atonement" and "particular redemption." Had JND customarily used the expression "particular redemption" it would not, in such a situation, have reflected his understanding of atonement. However, he held that Christ bore only the sins of the elect on the cross. His teaching on atonement and redemption differs from both Arminianism and Calvinism. To have expressed himself carefully according to Scripture hardly warrants a charge of concealing with "Jesuitical cunning." Moreover, he did not believe in an election of reprobation, and so was not hiding that. At any rate, the authentic Calvinist and the authentic Arminian both reject JND. The Calvinist calls him an Arminian and the Arminian calls him a Calvinist.

J. N. DARBY'S 1831 NON-ARMINIAN PAPER

JND published a paper in 1831 to show Arminians in the Church of England that at the time of the reformation the church of England was Calvinistic. This he surely proved. My point here is that dispensational truth was unfolded by a non-Arminian person who did not qualify as an "authentic Calvinist," like

J. Gerstner, either. I suggest that this is strange if "dispensationalism" is inherently Arminian. The fact is, dispensational truth is very distinctively its own thing and is neither Calvinism or Arminianism. *It is the balance of truth.*

Here I will quote some passages that indicate his own views as set forth in this 1831 paper.

I believe that predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, by which, before the foundations of the world were laid, He firmly decreed, by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and destruction those whom He had chosen in Christ out of the human race, and to bring them, through Christ, as vessels made to honor, to eternal salvation. . . .

But sin is a thing which affects the conscience when a man thinks: and it is only the direct exercise of faith in the blood of the atonement, which can give knowledge of actual forgiveness, which purges the conscience from dead works to serve the loving God. And here consequently is the association of salvation with it; because the redeeming love of God is personally known, the Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. And hence persons holding these general views can go along with the world as others, because they have never personally come to God. And, I add, its thoroughly Antinomian tendency cannot be too strongly pressed; because what is it that is to be got over in man? The enmity of his heart against God; the carnal mind, which is enmity with God; and the friendship of the world, which is enmity with God. But how is the enmity of the natural heart to be got over but by bringing in love? And how? By knowing that "he loved us." And how shall we know this? but "hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us." For observe now, the enmity is a real thing, and the love must be a real thing: as Paul expresses it, "by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (or, if you please, "atonement"): and to be produced it must be by practically knowing "he first loved us," which is known by the value of Christ's death received by faith, and the Father's love as manifested in it. If I rest in a pardon received in baptism, I can feel assured that I am pardoned without ever personally coming to God in my conscience, which is the root and essence of Antinomianism;^c whereas if it hang on the exercise of personal faith in Him, this brings me directly into His presence and subjection. But if I now exercise faith in Christ's death as an atonement and reconciliation, now that I am writing this; I must believe that my sins are everlastingly forgiven and rejoice in the Father's favor, or I do not believe in the efficacy of Christ's death, or the Father's manifested love therein.

I say, that not to see it is neither more or less than unbelief. A man may be brought afterwards to believe, but at present he is not properly a believer in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I see that he really believes in His Person, but Satan is clouding his mind, then I may feel a good assurance that he is a forgiven sinner, though *he* cannot. But I am not to sanction his unbelief, but minister the

b. I do not mean by this to imply that a dispensationalist can not get out of this balance.

c. [Here we have a better understanding of antinomianism than the 'reformed' view of it. For an "authentic" Calvinistic view of JND's "antinomianism," see John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 214.]

sure mercies which I may be given to know myself. But I am told, True, if it be so with you, you are very happy; but how do you know you will continue to believe? This is still unbelief. I may wait on a person's weakness of faith, but cannot preach it: it is simply getting back into distrust of God, which is the devil's greatest triumph. "I knew thee (said the unprofitable servant) that thou wast an austere man." "I heard thy voice in the garden," said Adam, when the devil had effected his first self-ruining purpose, "and I was afraid, and went and hid myself." The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is not of their perseverance, but of God's faithfulness. Their confidence is, not that they would not fail, but God; it is a trust in his promises, as the opposite is unbelief. "They have known and believed," as John expresses it, "the love that God hath to them": and they rest and hang upon this as a child upon the parent, yea, much more. Nor is this present enjoyment, or confidence in the favor and known love of the everlasting God (how better known than in the gift of His only and glorious Son?) merely stayed by the witness in their own hearts, but it hath also the stable foundation of testimony which they dare not disbelieve, yea, which it is sin not to believe, and a great dishonor to God. They believe that God did not shew them this love in the gift of Christ, and the earnest of the Spirit, to leave them as uncertain, as they were before of their estate. They read, "who also shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. *God is faithful*, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ." And they believe it; and bless God that to such poor and mere sinners He could have destined such things and shown such love. They believe that, if any man sin, they have an advocate with the Father; and that he is the propitiation for their sins; and they do therefore believe that if they should fall, through mercy they will rise again.

They reason, with wondering faith, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." If "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Observe here the singular and marked contrast between the argument of natural unbelief, and of that holy faith which believes in God. It is plain, says the author of the "Remarks," from this passage, that salvation and justification are distinct things; and therefore, though we be justified, we are not made thereby sure of salvation; I suppose, because of our own weakness and sinfulness and infirmity. But faith is that which sees the intervention of God's power, and leans on it; it knows that it has been justified, and from its justification concludes infallibly its salvation: one indeed has taken place, says unbelief, which it cannot help ascribing to God, but that is no proof that he shall obtain the other. God reconciled when we were enemies argues faith: certainly, having reconciled us, He will now save us from wrath; and again, if we were reconciled by His death, surely His life shall save us. Thus, while unbelief sees nothing but that they are distinct things (and they are distinct only because we are in the body, and therefore the latter is only matter for faith and not of sight), faith sees yet the certainty of one from the other, as proving God's love with an even stronger argument, and the certainty yet again of the same from the power of the Instrument now exalted in life, who reconciled us by death. The sinner doubts no more about his falling than his standing: he knows certainly that he would fall instantly if in himself; but he knows that God has promised, and that God will perform, and that He cannot fail; and that none, not

Satan himself, can pluck him out of His hands; nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord. . . .

And, to conclude, God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son: but "whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say then to these things?" It is a simple question of the power of God; we know through faith in Christ that God is for us: if God be for us, who can be against us? "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he *not* with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is *God* that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? For I am persuaded," etc. Who is he that condemneth? Why not reckon upon salvation as to this? If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead dwell in us, God shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us: why not reckon on salvation as to this? In a word, we know that we are alive in our souls and spirits; we know that there is no condemnation for us; and we know that our mortal bodies will be quickened; what are we to doubt of? It is poor office to make God a liar in the assurance of His grace towards His children . . . But if we are to assume that there is a latent idea which takes away the absurdity, namely, that the free gift of the gospel is a covenant; then I say, that the argument flows from direct contravention or ignorance of the whole statement of Scripture on the subject. In the first place, the argument proceeds on there being a covenant with man. There is no such thing in Scripture. You may call the law on Adam one, if you please, by which he fell (though I think incorrectly). And the covenant which God made with Abraham, and confirmed to Christ, has no conditions: and the difference of this as a pure promise is at length argued by the apostle on this very ground, to wit, that there was no second party but as a receiver, as contrasted with the one at Sinai; and therefore simply received by faith, which believes in a thing done by someone else.

. . . In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, etc. Now here we have a covenant of gift, where the only party was simply God; who condescendingly entered into it, that man might know the solemnity and immutability of His promise. And here, accordingly, Paul contrasts the difference of the law, and the gift of the inheritance. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise, which the law could not disannul. The law was conditional, and therefore was forfeited (yea, before its conditions were declared) by the making of the golden calf, and was temporary: but the inheritance was of promise [Gal. 3:15-17], and therefore secure. Why? Because it rested on the unity of God [Gal. 3:20]. When a second [covenant] came in, it was not merely of promise [as in the case of Abraham]; and of this the mediator was evidence [Gal. 3:19], showing that it was not of one [party]. But the inheritance is simply of the promise of God, and therefore of gift: and His covenant [to Abraham] was a solemn pledge merely, as connected with the promise, of the security of the gift, and not including two parties at all; save as a Giver securing the faith of the receiver by His solemn engagement of mere mercy to assure, which none could claim; and the receiver of the thing promised waited for by faith upon the assurance of the promise and covenant.¹⁹⁸

This is not an Arminian writing. Moreover, in the last two paragraphs quoted,

it is clear that he had **already rejected covenant theology**. Here we have evidence that he was, in 1831, a non-Arminian, holding dispensational truth. I suggest that this was true already in 1827. What he says here interlocks with the distinction between Israel and the church and his union with Christ that he saw in Dec. 1826/Jan. 1827 and with the immediate coming of Christ that he saw. Here we see that right views on the sovereignty of God, the total ruin of man and the eternal security of the believer (non-Arminian teachings) and dispensational truth go together. Dispensational truth is not inherently Arminian.

FREEWILL

We shall now review a few extracts from the writings of JND that confirm the fact, already shown, that JND was not an Arminian. For example, he often wrote against the notion of freewill:

Most of what is called personal freedom is simply sanction of sin. I ought always to obey -- "Lo, I come to do thy will" was Christ's uniform and sole motive. If freedom means that God does not purpose evil or hinder good, it is quite true; but if it means a right to have a will of one's own, it is sin -- atheism. A man being really set to choose between evil and good (he may be, for trial to show him what he is) is alike horrible and absurd; because it supposes the good and evil to be outside, and *himself neither*. If he is one or the other in disposition, the choice is there. To have a fair choice, he must be personally indifferent; but to be in a state of indifference to good and evil is perfectly horrible. If a man has an inclination, his choice is not free: a free will is rank nonsense morally; because, if he have a will, he wills something. God can will to create. But will in moral things means either self-will, which is sin (for we ought to obey); or an inclination to something, which is really a choice *made as far as will goes*. In truth it is never so. Man was set in good, though not externally forced to remain so. He first exercised his will -- free-will, morally speaking -- in eating the forbidden fruit, and was therein and thereby lost, and since then he has been inclined to evil. Dependence lies in this -- that a creature must depend on God. He does so joyfully in perfect good, and on whom it comes has the claim when he knows God. Independence in will (there cannot be in fact), and disobedience, its fruit, are the conditions of the old man. Dependence and obedience are the characteristics of the new man -- of Christ. Save what grace works, God does leave the will free; but it tends in its nature away from God; because it is will. And the not looking to God must have an object below man. That wretched freedom man has, and perseveres in it but for grace, and resists the motives of grace, because it calls to God, to dependence and obedience of heart.¹⁹⁹

I believe that we ought to keep to the word; but, philosophically and morally speaking, free-will is a false and absurd theory.²⁰⁰

Adam before the fall "was free in Paradise."²⁰¹

Choice is not free where there is inclination²⁰² and JND discussed this at some length.²⁰³ Indeed, "free and will do not go together."²⁰⁴ A man can, of course follow his own choice, but that choice is conditioned and directed by "the carnal mind" (Rom. 8:7).

THE TOTAL RUIN OF MAN

The fact that man's will is bound is interlocked with "the total ruin of man":

As for me, I see in the word, and I recognize in myself, the total ruin of man. I see that the cross is the end of all the means that God has employed to gain the heart of man, and, consequently, that it proves the thing to be impossible. God has exhausted all His resources; man has shown that he was wicked, past recovery; the cross of Christ condemns man -- sin in the flesh. But this condemnation having been expressed in that another has undergone it, it is the absolute salvation of those who believe, for condemnation, the judgment of sin is behind us; life came out of it in resurrection. We are dead to sin, and alive to God, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Redemption, the very word, loses its force when we entertain these ideas of the old man [i.e., that he is not totally ruined]. It becomes an amelioration, a practical deliverance from a moral state, . . . [instead of the truth of] a redeeming by the finished work of another. Christianity teaches the death of the old man, and his just condemnation, then the redemption accomplished by Christ, and a new life, eternal life, *come down from heaven* in His Person, and which is communicated to us when Christ enters into us by the word. Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, pretends that man can choose, and that thus the old man is ameliorated by the thing it has accepted. The first step is made without grace, and it is the first step which truly costs in this case.²⁰⁵

The notion of free-will implicitly denies the total ruin of man and perverts Christianity:

This fresh breaking out of the doctrine of free-will helps on the doctrine of the natural man's pretension not to be entirely lost, for that is what it really amounts to. All men who have never been deeply convinced of sin, all persons with whom this conviction is based upon gross and outward sins, believe more or less in free-will. You know it is the dogma of the Wesleyans, of all reasoners, of all philosophers. But this idea completely changes all the idea of Christianity and entirely perverts it.

If Christ has come to save that which is lost, free-will has no longer any place. Not that God hinders man from receiving Christ -- far from it. But even when God employs all possible motives, everything which is capable of influencing the heart of man, it only serves to demonstrate that man will have none of it, that his heart is so corrupted and his will so decided not to submit to God (whatever may be the truth of the devil's encouraging him in sin), that nothing can induce him to receive the Lord and to abandon sin. If by liberty of man, it is meant that no one obliges him to reject the Lord, this liberty exists fully. But if it is meant that, because of the dominion of sin to which he is a slave, and willingly a slave, he cannot escape from his state and choose good (while acknowledging that it is good, and approving it), then he has no liberty whatever [except to sin]. He is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be [Rom. 8:7]; so that those who are in the flesh cannot please God.²⁰⁶

RUINED MAN IS RESPONSIBLE

JND observed that "the question of responsibility . . . lies at the root of Arminianism and Calvinism."²⁰⁷ He also wrote:

All depends on the depth of conviction that we have of our sinful condition; and security and joy depend on it likewise. Lost and saved answer the one to the other: our condition in the old man, and our condition in Christ. But in the reasoning of Arminians there is a totally false principle, namely that our

responsibility depends on our power. If I have lent £ 100,000 to any one, and he has squandered it all, certainly he is not able to pay , but has his responsibility come to an end with his ability? Certainly not. Responsibility depends on the right of the person who has lent it to him, not on the ability of the one who has wrongfully wasted the money. If a man can make use of his free will, it must be either to keep the law, or to receive Christ. Salvation is not by the law: if righteousness had come, or could come by the law, Christ has died in vain. But it is expressly said that the flesh "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."^d The conscience indeed owns that the law is righteous and good: to be subject to it, and to keep it, is quite another thing. Even if "to will is present" the man is a slave, and the doing does not follow. But the will is not there: the approval of the conscience [is there], as has already been said, but not the will; the latter desires to be independent of God. Does the law accept such a disposition? Free -- yes, from God's side; but man desires to be free, that is to be free to do his own will. But this is not obedience; "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God." A heathen could say, *Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor* ('I see and approve the good; I follow the evil').²⁰⁸

Man, totally ruined, is responsible, though a slave to sin, the "law of sin" in his members captivating him. But God begets by His own will through the Word of truth (James 1:18), not through some human agency (John 1:13). The person is thus quickened, made alive, experiencing the new birth. But a full salvation may not be understood. Still, there is faith in the divine testimony which has quickened. When quickened, he can repent. Before quickening, without divine life, a slave to sin, he could not repent. Quickened, he can, and come into the liberty of full salvation.

PREDESTINATION

Predestination refers to God's purpose for those persons who are the elect:

The object of Ephesians 1 and Romans 8 is I think clearly to show *what* we are predestinated to, but when it says predestinated us, it is hard to say it does not refer to persons: "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate." Now this shows that in the main the object was to teach what they were predestinated to, but then it is affirmed of the persons whom he foreknew, that is a distinct class of persons so foreknown -- not, predestinated those whom He foreknew would be conformed (which was the Arminian scheme); but those whom He foreknew He predestinated to be conformed. Election supposes a large number out of whom God chooses; and if we take it as eternal, or no time with God, still a number are in view out of whom a choice is made. Predestination is the proper purpose of God as to those individuals; even supposing there were no others, God had them in His mind -- surely for something, which is thus as we see connected with it; but it is a blessed idea that God had His mind thus set on us

d. [The doctrine of free will is wilfully defiant of such a Scripture. If someone had kept the law, we would know about it, and that would be claimed as a substantiation of the notion of free will. Since no sinner did keep it, what is that fact a substantiation of? Also note that God offered life for keeping it, knowing no one could keep it. Rom 8:7 tells us that the law could not be kept.]

without thinking of others. "The good pleasure of his will" is connected with it, and if we ascribe it to grace that we are elect, that thought, though we stop in it, does suppose others. We are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."²⁰⁹

In general the epistle to the Romans deals with man's responsibility, and God's blessed remedy in Christ, but here the epistle rises up to the purpose of God formed before the responsibility began; it reaches to the point where that to the Ephesians begins. The saints are called according to this purpose. Compare Titus 1:1,2; and 2 Tm. 1:9. God foreknew these persons and predestinated them to a state equally in His purpose, for the glory of Christ, namely, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Wonderful place! but the place of God's counsels for them, who works all things after the counsels of His own will, not relative to anything that we are, save as connected with Christ's becoming a man; but the fruit of God's will, so that we measure it by that. But how blessed for us, not only as intrinsic glory, but as likeness to, and association with, Christ, the Son of God! He is the firstborn among many brethren. Such is the counsel of God -- to associate us with Christ, in the place of sons, and conform us to the image of Him, the firstborn. Our responsibility was as children of the first Adam; the purpose of God concerning us in connection with the last Adam. This is a glorious and blessed truth. "As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly; as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Being in this place, we are, then, anew responsible to shew forth the life of Christ, and glorify Him; but this is founded on the possession of life. This purpose God pursues and accomplishes. Whom He has predestinated to this, He calls; whom He calls, He justifies: whom He justifies, He glorifies. He carries it on to the end. We have nothing here of sanctifying.²¹⁰

REPENTANCE, CONVERSION AND FAITH

Concerning repentance, conversion and faith, JND wrote:

It [repentance] is literally an after or changed thought, a judgment formed by the mind on reflection, after it has had another or previous one; habitually, in its use in scripture, the judgment I form in God's sight of my own previous conduct and sentiments, consequent on the reception of God's testimony, in contrast with my previous natural course of feeling. Of course this may be more or less deep. It is not the sorrow itself: that works repentance if it is godly sorrow. Not the regret or remorse: that is *μεταμελεια* not "*μετανοια*" words used sometimes one for another, but not in scripture. Godly sorrow works repentance never to be regretted. Repentance is the judgment we form, under the effect of God's testimony, of all in ourselves to which that testimony applies. Hence it is always founded on faith: I do not say the faith of the gospel. That may be its source; but we may repent through the testimony of God to the soul, and afterwards receive those glad tidings. Conversion itself may follow repentance; that is, conversion as the full deliberate turning of the heart to God. "Repent," says Peter, "and be converted." (Acts 3:19.) Conversion is the turning of the will to God. Repentance (*μετανοια*) is the changed thought, or judgment, we have of things, bringing in with it often, when it concerns self, the sense of the change of feeling. The use of it in classical writers will shew us the meaning of the word in itself; Scripture, the scriptural use of it.²¹¹

The only place in the New Testament in which I believe it means simply change of mind, without reference to the judgment of ourselves and our sins, is in Hebrews 12:17. He found no place for repentance -- for going back from his previous way of taking up the matter, though he sought it -- the blessing, not the repentance -- bitterly with tears. The blessing and taking back his previous act, and unbelieving self-gratification go together; but here it has nothing to do with repenting of sin, but the first ordinary sense, changing his mind. It is not necessary, nor, I believe, just, to refer it to Jacob.

One text remains which gives its character and full force to repentance, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21.) He looked, not merely that crimes and wickedness should be judged, but that a man should judge all his state in the light of God's sown presence, and in reference to His divine character and authority over him, and in the thought of His goodness. This is true repentance; man judged and judging himself in the presence of God, to whom he belongs and to whose nature he has to refer with mercy before him. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ meets this; because there God has judged sin according to His own nature and authority, and His love is perfect, and we are reconciled to God according to that nature and righteous claim. But this requires a word of explanation. It is not that repentance comes first by itself and then in an absolute way faith. But that repentance, the judgment of what we are before God and in God's sight, is one great effect of the truth; it refers to God as God with whom we have to do; whereas faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is faith in that sovereign intervention of God in which in grace He has met our state in the gift of His Son. Repentance is not change of mind as to God, though this may produce it, but self-judgment before Him, the soul referring to Him who is over us, with whom we have to do. It is not that repentance precedes faith. We shall see that it is not so: but it is first the heart returned into divine light, and then faith in the blessed intervention of God that fitted the state it finds itself in.

Practical repentance then is the estimate a man forms of sin, of his own ways as a sinner, on reflection, through the light of God penetrating into his soul, with some sense of goodness in Him, and setting up withal divine authority there. This may be through divine warnings as in the case of Jonah, or the lamenting of a John Baptist announcing that the axe is laid to the root of the trees. It is always mercy. He gives repentance to Israel, grants repentance unto life: His goodness leads us to it. That is, instead of visiting sins according to man's desert, He opens the door to return to light and grace through grace. Hence, when grace is fully announced, when the truth is there, repentance is on the footing of God's perfect revelation of Himself in grace, in Christ. Repentance was to be preached *in His name*, and remission of sins. In coming to God it is always the first *effect* in the soul when it is real, and the turning of the will to God, and faith in the redemption and forgiveness the gospel announces comes after. Hence it is said, "Repent and be converted," "Repent and believe the gospel." But this just shows us how faith is the only and necessary source of repentance. It is by the testimony of the word it is wrought. Be it prophets, or Jonas, or John, or the Lord Himself, or the apostles, who taught that men should repent and turn to God, it was wrought by a testimony of God, and a testimony believed. Now, this testimony is the testimony to Christ Himself. Repentance, as well as remission of sins, was to be preached in His name. It is by the revelation of God, whether in judgment or in grace, grace in any case working in the heart, that repentance is wrought. When the prodigal came to himself he repented; he is converted when he said, "I will arise and go to my Father;" the gospel is *realized* when he meets his Father and gets the best robe. But he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He

is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and there is always in true repentance some sense of goodness. "How many servants of my Father's have bread enough and to spare." There would be no returning if there was not hope, it may be very vague, but still a hope of being received, and goodness truest to. Even the Ninevites say, "who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" In the gospel the full grace of God is made the very ground of a call to repentance, still in view of judgment. "Now he calls all men everywhere to repent, seeing he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Goodness leads to it, the door to flee is open, but to flee from the wrath to come, to flee to God, who assures of forgiveness in coming through the perfect work of Christ.

My object was to give a scriptural statement of what repentance is. I add a practical word.

In practice, the true working of the gospel in the heart is to bring first of all to repentance. As we have seen, warning such as Jonah's may lead men to repent, or a John Baptist ministry. But the fullest gospel does the same. It bring into the light though it tells of love, for God is both, and that love makes us judge ourselves when God is really revealed. It cannot be otherwise. If men have been *already* exercised, the preaching of a simple and clear redemption will, through grace, give peace. It answers the soul's need, which, having already looked to itself, if now enabled to look to God through Christ, learns that God is for it, and learns divine righteousness. If a man has not been previously exercised, wherever there is a true work, the effect of the fullest grace is to reach the conscience, to lead to repentance. Not to give peace as the first thing, but to bring the soul into the light, in which it discovers that state which makes it need a peace-making for it. It has lived without God, perhaps openly flown in His face, and it does not merely discover He is holy and good, that is, change its mind as to God and learn to love Him, but it casts its eye on itself, on its past ways, has a reflective afterthought in which it judges itself in the presence of God so known, judging sin by the great work which has put it away. It repents. The soul feels it has to do with God responsibly, has failed, been evil, corrupt, without God, is humbled, has a horror of itself and its state; may fear, will surely hope, and eventually, if simple, very soon find peace. But it will say, "Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." If there is not this - though the degrees of it may be various, as the form it takes in the soul -- there is no true work wrought. If revivals (so called) be examined into, it will be found that previously exercised souls have got happy if a plain gospel has been preached. Those who have not and rush into peace are found after all to have no root at all. And if there be a superficial work and hasty peace, the work has to be done afterwards to reaching the springs and foundation of the conscience, and often through much sorrow. We cannot preach the gospel too clearly or too fully grace abounding where sin has, grace reigning through righteousness; but the effect of this when fully received, the effect we ought to look for in souls, is repentance - I mean the present first effect. It will be a deepening one all through our course.²¹²

RECONCILIATION

Concerning reconciliation, an extract from JND's article, *On Reconciliation*, will suffice:

Reconciliation is, to use familiar language, making all straight; and even primarily, I believe, used in money-changing as that which makes the sum even, so that there is satisfaction of the parties in the matter; and thence passing into the more ordinary sense of making all smooth between alienated parties, and reconciling one who is alienated or at enmity. But it is not simply the change of mind from the enmity, though that be included; nor the justification. It is the bringing back to unity, peace, and fellowship what was divided and alienated. We must not confound in scripture "making reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17), with "reconciliation" in 2 Corinthians 5; Colossians 1; Romans 5:10,11. The former is making propitiation, atonement, *ἱλασχεσθαι*, *ἀνδ ἱλασμος*, propitiation (1 John 2:2); while on the contrary "atonement" in Romans 5:11 should be *reconciliation*, *ῥαταλλαγή*. Compare 1 Corinthians 7:11, "Let her be reconciled to her husband;" where it is not merely her mind being restored to affection and good feeling, but matters made straight between them -- the relationship made good. So it is between us and God; but the alienation was on our part. It was not *alienation* on God's part, but righteous judgment against sin in His creature, and that righteousness must be met in order to bring back the alienated creature into relationship with God. Only now it is much more than bringing back, because of the purposes of God in Christ, and the infinite value of the work by which we are brought back to God. Still it is an establishing a blessed and peaceful relationship with God, and us in it.

Reconciling God to us is quite unscriptural in expression and thought. No act of dealing could change God's mind, either in nature or in purpose; but He acts freely in what is before Him according to that nature, and in bringing about that purpose; and though His mind be not changed, yet the meeting, satisfying, and glorifying His righteousness, is according to that mind and the imperious claim of His nature and authority -- is necessary in the highest sense, that is, according to that nature. His holiness too is involved in reconciliation. Reconciliation is the full establishment in relationship with God according to His nature and according to the nature of that which is reconciled. It now acts in redemption and a new nature, and, as regards all around us, a new state of things, so that it is more than re-establishment. It is re-established inasmuch as the old relationship was broken and forfeited, but it is not the returning to that but the establishing a new one which has the stability of redemption and it the accomplishment of the purpose of God. Still it is a bringing back into the enjoyment of divine favor that which had lost it. This reconciliation is twofold in scripture -- of the state of things, and of sinners. Thus in Colossians 1 all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him, "and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven; and you, that were sometime enemies and alienated in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unprovable in his sight." The force of the word is evident from the first case. Then there is no question of changing the disposition of the reconciled things, because the purposed reconciliation spoken of in verse 20 refers to all created things as to the vast majority of which no such change can take place. It is the bringing of the whole created scene of heaven and earth into its true order and right relationship with God, and to its right standing and condition in that relationship.²¹³

ASSURANCE

Concerning assurance of salvation and the security of the believer, JND wrote:

As to Article 17, he confounds the counsels of God before the foundation of the world, and our knowledge of our election when we are called and justified, and cry Abba, Father. Whatever the means of assurance, I am necessarily assured that if I believe and am sealed so as to cry Abba Father, I know I shall be kept to the end; one, according to scripture and the seventeenth Article, involved the other. They that are called, says the article -- obey the calling -- are justified, etc. and at the length by God's mercy, attain everlasting felicity. So that the question, according to the article is, Can I know I am called and justified? for if so I shall attain everlasting felicity. Now scripture says -- first John as Christ's forerunner came to give the *knowledge* of salvation, then the blessed Lord says, "in that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" -- and the apostle, "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." So John writes, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." I need not quote more. The epistles are addressed to saints, to the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit," and we are said to be saved, not merely as a principle (but in the perfect) *σέσωσμενοι*, actually saved, for He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling -- fruits the proof in others, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, in ourselves. "Knowing, dearly beloved, your election of God." So 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

Now I would deprecate levity in so solemn a thing as the consciousness of our relationship to the Father. I had rather see a man deeply exercised in Romans 7 than taking up the *doctrine* of assurance with levity. And further, I see in the scripture the Christian looked at as not only in Christ, where there is no "if," but as running the race to attain actually the glory, as actual man in this world; and here I find "if," and working out our salvation with fear and trembling, and the responsibility of the saint comes in, but with a sure promise of being kept. And this is the difference in the *character* of the assurance; one is in an actually accomplished redemption, with the *knowledge* (John 14) that we *are* in Christ: the other, glory, is not an accomplished thing, as is evident; it is certain through the promise of God. See Romans 8, "Whom he justified, them he also glorified": the whole chain is there from beginning to end, and depends on His faithfulness in keeping us. And this distinction is morally very important, because it maintains constant *dependence*, but dependence on a faithfulness that cannot fail, which is most important for practical spiritual life. As regards my *path*, I am *kept*, and if so need it, but do not doubt God's faithfulness in doing it. I cannot speak of danger as to redemption, it is accomplished, but for my wilderness journey there is; but there is a keeping which exercises my dependence and faith. (See 1 Peter 1:4,5.) See, too, 1 Corinthians 1:8,9 -- where he then goes on to blame them for everything -- and the far happier testimony in John 10. I must close. This is more important than ecclesiastical questions or the Fathers. It is "that which is from the beginning."

In Ephesians you will find plenty of exhortations but no "ifs,": you do, when we are spoken of as yet on the journey. No doubt we see this, as all things, clearer if we are near to God, because what He is is realized, and Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. We make our calling and election sure, not surer, of course, in God's mind, but in ours.²¹⁴

PROPIATION AND SUBSTITUTION

Some idea of JND's teachings regarding the atoning work of Christ will be seen

from the following, which is neither Arminianism or Calvinism. He wrote:

My intercourse with saints, and especially with those who preach, has led me to discover that a good deal of obscurity in their manner of putting the gospel (and I may add a good deal of Arminian and Calvinistic controversy) arises from not distinguishing propitiation and substitution. I am not anxious about the words, but about the practical distinction, which is very simple, and, I think, of moment. I say the words, because in propitiation, in a certain sense, Christ stood in our stead. Still there is a very real difference in Scripture.

This difference is clearly marked in the offering of the great day of atonement. Aaron slew the bullock and the goat, which was called Jehovah's lot, and sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat and on the altar. The blood was presented to God, whose holy presence had been dishonored and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself. Our sins gave occasion to it; but God himself was glorified in it. Hence the testimony can go out to all the world that God is, more than satisfied, glorified; and whoever comes by that blood is freely, fully, received of God and to God. But there was no confession of sins on the head of this goat; it was about sin by reason of Israel's sinfulness; but it was simply blood offered to God. Sin had been dealt with in judgment according to God's glory; yea, to the full glorifying to God; for never were His majesty, love, and hatred of sin so seen. God could shine out in favor of the returning sinner according to what He was; yea, in the infiniteness of His love, could beseech men to return. But besides this there was personal guilt, positive personal sins, for which Israel was responsible, and men are responsible, according to what is righteously required from each. On the great day of atonement the high priest confessed the people's sins on the scapegoat, laying both his hands on its head; the personal sins were transferred to the goat by one who represented all the people, and they were gone for ever, never found again.

Now this is another thing. Christ is both high priest and victim, has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, and borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ; but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice, Godward, and bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishment of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins. But in this aspect the world comes in too. He is a propitiation for the whole world.²¹⁵ All has been done that is needed. His blood is available for the vilest, whoever he may be. Hence the gospel to the world says, "Whosoever will, let him come." In this aspect we may say Christ died for all, gave Himself a ransom for all -- an *antiutron peri panton*, an adequate and available sacrifice for sin for whoever would come -- tasted death for every man.

But when I come to bearing sins, the language is uniformly different. He bore our sins, He bore the sins of many. "All" is carefully abstained from. I say carefully, because in Romans 5:18,19 the difference is carefully made. The first, our sins, is the language of faith, left open indeed to anyone who can use it; but used and to be used only by faith. The believing remnant of Israel may use it, including the blessing of the nations, for He died for that nation [John 11:51,52]; Christians use it in faith, for all that have faith to use it. The second "many" restricts it from all, but generally has the force of the many; the *oi polloi*, as contrasted with a head or leaders, the man in connection with them. Adam's *soi polloi* were in result all, but all as in connection with him; Christ's *oi polloi*,

those connected with Him. But it will never be found in Scripture that Christ bore the sins of all. Had He done so, they never could be mentioned again, nor men judged according to their works [Rev. 20:12].

That Christ died for all is, as we have seen, often said in Scripture. Hence I go with His death to the world as their ground and only ground of approach, with the love shown in it. When a man believes, I can say, Now I have more to tell you: Christ has borne every one of your sins; they never can be mentioned again.

If we look at the difference of Arminian and Calvinistic preaching, we shall see the bearing of this at once. The Arminians take up Christ's dying for all, and generally they connect the bearing of sins with it; and all is confusion as to the efficacy and effectualness of Christ's bearing our sins, for they deny any special work for His people. They say, If God loved all, He cannot love some particularly; and an uncertain salvation is the result, and man often exalted. Thus the scapegoat is practically set aside.

The Calvinist hold Christ's bearing the sins of His people, so that they are effectually saved; but he sees nothing else. He will say, If Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, there can be no real love for anything else. Thus he denies Christ's dying for all, and the distinctive character of propitiation, and the blood on the mercy seat. He sees nothing but substitution.

The truth is, Christ is said to love the church, never the world. That is a love of special relationship. God is never said to love the church, but the world. This is divine goodness, what is in the nature of God (not His purpose), and His glory is the real end of all. But I do not dwell on this, only pointing out the confusion of propitiation and substitution as necessarily making confusion in the gospel, enfeebling the address to the world, or weakening the security of the believer, and in every respect giving uncertainty to the announcement of the truth. I believe earnestness after souls, and preaching Christ with love to Him, will be blessed where there is little clearness, and is more important than great exactitude of statement. Still it is a comfort to the preacher to have it clear, even if not thinking about it at the moment; and, when building up afterwards, the solidness of the foundation is of the greatest moment.²¹⁶

Concerning redemption, then, we would say that JND held "particular redemption," when that phrase is rightly used and not made synonymous with atonement. W. Kelly wrote:

He sends the message of grace to every creature. He chases all men everywhere to repent [Acts 17:30,31]. But in order to be saved, first is the effectual call of the sinner according to the divine counsel; secondly, the working of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer in receiving Christ. This is not the case with "the whole world"; and it is vain to deny that which is a fact. But here we have the Scripture that explains it.

When you believe in our Lord Jesus, we too can say, following the word, He bore your sins away; but we are not entitled to say so to the unbeliever, nor to "the whole world." Faith only is entitled to speak thus.

The fact is that this type is only a particular witness to the great principle of Scripture, dogmatically laid down in the clearest terms of the New Testament. Take the distinction between "redemption" (Eph. 1:7) and "purchase" (2 Pet. 2:1): the true key, which opens the Calvinistic and Arminian dilemma. For they both confound the two truths, so that each is partially right, and partially wrong. The

Lord by His death "bought" all creation, and every man of course, "false teachers" and all. It is at their everlasting peril that they deny His rights and rise up against their Sovereign Master. But none are "redeemed" save those who have through faith in His blood the forgiveness of their trespasses. Hence the Calvinist is as right in holding particular redemption, as the Arminian in maintaining universal purchase. But they are both in error when they fail to distinguish purchase and redemption. But His death on the cross the Lord added to His creator rights, and made every creature His by that infinite purchase. All are His, and not their own, as the believer only and fully acknowledges. But redemption delivers from Satan and sins; and this is nowhere the portion save by faith.

Take again another form of the truth in Heb. 2:9,10. Christ by God's grace tasted death for every thing (ὕπερ πάντος), including of course every man (compare vers. 7,8). All were purchased. But the language quite differs from ver. 10, where we hear of God, in bringing "many sons" to glory, perfecting the Leader of their salvation through sufferings. When the two distinct truths are confused, not only precision is lost, but the truth suffers from the heart's lack of enlargement through knowing universal purchase, and from evaporating into vagueness through ignorance of the specialty of redemption.²¹⁷

Christ certainly did not bear everyone's sins, or pay for everyone's sins. Unbelief is a sin; and for the lost that sin was not paid for by Christ because He did not pay for everyone's sins. If Christ bore everyone's sins no one would be judged for any sins including the sin of unbelief.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Concerning preaching the gospel, JND wrote:

... I believe we ought to preach the love of God to sinners, and appeal to them more than we do, though I do so much more when addressing a mixed crowd of probably careless people than in the assemblies where you would hear me. In these you must remember that the great body are believers, and want rather to be better founded than called. All I look for is that the preaching should be such that it should convict of sin, and the impossibility of sin and God going together; so that it should be well understood that there is a need of *reconciling*. And here Christ at once comes in, and atonement and righteousness. Holiness precludes all sin from God, righteousness judges it. This I believe the sinner should understand, so that he should know *what love applies to*, yet that love should be fully preached. It does itself often convict of sin, for the conscience has often its wants already, and this draws them out, so that men find consciously where they are. But conviction of sin under righteousness is a very useful thing if grace be fully preached with it, and both unite in Christ.

I think it very important that preachers should go to the world, especially now, with a message of distinct love to them. All I desire is that it should be love manifested in Christ, so as to bring out the sinner's condition to himself; that it should not be mere easiness as to sin; that it is a gracious love to sinners -- grace abounding over sin -- grace reigning through righteousness, than which nothing is more perfectly grace. Sometimes I think the love of God is so preached as if it were a kind of boon of the sinner to accept it. It is God's joy Still, as a sinner his being a debtor to God ought to be before his soul. ... I count evangelizing the happiest service. Yet my heart yearns over the saints and the glory of Christ in the truth too. Happy there is One above *who does all*.²¹⁸

WESLEYAN PERFECTIONISM REFUTED

I close this brief survey of some of JND's teachings, showing that he is neither a Calvinist or an Arminian, with a highly instructive extract from his, *The Doctrine of the Wesleys*. It was written in a conversational style. It is also an answer to the charge of J. Gerstner that JND held sinless perfection.²¹⁹

A. I admit that Paul is there [Romans 7] describing not a state of freedom, but the judging of the flesh in the presence of the law. This, however, is not the question which we are now considering. Whether it be or be not a regenerate man who is speaking, if nothing is sin but the voluntary transgression of the divine law, it is plain that sin in the flesh, of which the apostle is here writing, is a mere fancied thing: for what can be less voluntary than the doing of that which we "would not"? If, therefore, he did the things which he would not, it is no more a voluntary transgression; and on your principle he was quite wrong to be so distressed about it.

N. But in chapter 8 he declares that he was "free" from it.

A. Doubtless he does. But that does not hinder that, according to your system, it was not sin at all; for in Chapter 7 he declares that it was so little voluntary, that it was not he that did it, but sin that dwelt in him. My dear friend, all the experiences we find in the New Testament are quite against your doctrine; and your definition of sin, that it is nothing but the voluntary transgression of the divine law, absolutely denies the existence of sin in the flesh -- the existence of that sin which dwells in us even when it is subdued by the Spirit. It is a definition which attenuates the idea of sin, to make us satisfied with ourselves, instead of adoring the grace and the goodness of our God. Assuredly lust is sin; my failures in the fulfillment of the duties of love proceed from the sin which is in me. These things were not in Christ, because He was "without sin." He ever did the will of God perfectly. . . .

N. But I do not say that lust is not sin; it is *desire* which is not sin. And when you maintain that we cannot observe the law, you seem to forget that it is written, That the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; Rom. 8:4. In fact God never commands man to do what man cannot accomplish. And in this epistle of John, which *you* perfectionists would get away from, it is declared, eight times over, that he who is born of God sinneth not.

A. You certainly did say that lust is not sin, and your definition expressly declares it; for the lust in my nature in [sic -- is] not a voluntary transgression of the divine law, if I have a will, through grace, directly opposed to it.

N. If I said that lust is not sin, it is because James says, When lust hath conceived, it *bringeth forth* sin (James 1:15), and you confound temptations with lust.

A. Alas! into what uncertainty and contradictions does error plunge the mind of man! As to the argument you derive from James, that apostle himself affirms that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed."

N. No. The proper translation of that passage is not, of his lusts; But, of his desires.

A. Your distinctions are deplorably subtle and dangerous. Thus men play with poison. It is in vain that I look for this difference; for the word which you

translate *desire*, is the same Greek word which Paul employs in Romans 7 to express the *lust* by which he had been convicted of sin. And pray observe, it is there said that sin produced lust (v. 8). It is true that when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin *as an act*; but it is just as true that sin, which is in our nature, produces all sorts of lusts. With your definition of sin, which is totally anti-scriptural, you may indeed reason on the subject; but you will find yourself constantly in opposition to the declarations of God's word. Temptation may, doubtless, be distinguished from sin. When I abhor the evil, and the new man rejects with indignation that which Satan presents, or, it may be, flattery, it is a temptation and not a sin. But lust in me is always sin. I do not say it will be imputed to me; but that is solely and absolutely because of the *blood of Christ*. But the "new man" judges it as sin. Woe is me, If I do not Judge it!

N. But Christ had desires.

A. Oh! see to what you are reduced, to bring Jesus Christ down to your level in order to exalt yourself! It is a fearful principle. No, No; you dare not say that Jesus Christ had desires like those which are found in our fallen nature. You will reply, that there are desires which are not sinful. I admit it. There are for example hunger, thirst, and such like. These desires are the results of wants which our heavenly Father knows to exist in us. But would you venture to compare those desires which are in the human heart, and which, you say , occasion in the most pious, errors which require the *blood of Christ*, with the desires which were in the heart of the adorable Savior? Is it not true that all the *thoughts* of Christ proceeded from the Holy Spirit, while He still felt the wants and sufferings of a man? Did then those evil desires which are in us, which require to be kept under, and which, if not restrained, produce sin, exist in the heart of Jesus Christ? My dear friend! the more I look into your doctrine and its tendency to reduce to the same level God, Christ (who knew no sin), and us poor vile creatures fallen from our first estate, the more do I see that, instead of being a doctrine of sanctification, it is a doctrine which, while it pretends to exalt our condition, abases all that is worthy of being exalted, exalts all that should be abased, and destroys the distinction between good and evil. You tell me, moreover, that God commands nothing but what man can accomplish. Where do you get that in the Bible? The law, for example, was given to the Israelites, that is to say, to man in the flesh. Can man fulfil it?

N. No: but we can by the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus.

A. In one sense that is true; but that, by no means, establishes the principle upon which you lay so much stress, that God commands *nothing but* what may be accomplished. The law was given to man in the flesh, and the New Testament teaches me, very clearly, that God did not give the law in the thought that man *could keep it*. The carnal mind pretends to do so; but the word tells me that the law of God was given to convince man of sin, by the discovery that he could not keep it, so "that sin might become by the commandment exceeding sinful." The law entered, says the apostle, that *the offence might abound*. Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin is dead; Rom. 7:8. Remark here, in passing, that sin produces concupiscence or lust. When the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, then Paul knew sin. "The strength of sin is the law," says the same apostle elsewhere; 1 Cor. 15:56. I gather, therefore, that in giving the law, God's purpose was to convince man of the sin which is in him; and not, as you say, with the thought that man could and would keep it.

N. But it is said God has condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; Rom. 8:3,4.

A. That is true, yet the iniquity of the flesh is there again pointed out, as being ever the same in its nature. But we have been made free from the law of sin and death, by the new life which we have in Jesus Christ, strengthened by the Spirit of God, which is here called the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus. We are able then, in walking according to this new life, to keep from failing in obedience to His commands, while we still judge and *because* we judge the flesh. But as soon as we think and act after the flesh, the law is no longer fulfilled. On the other hand, God, in giving this life, in which we walk in love, has, at the same time, given us the knowledge of a state which convinces us that we are very far behind Jesus Christ (that is to say, from the perfection of the example set before us). I "know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope in him [does not look merely at the law, but] purifieth himself, even *as he is pure*, 1 John 3:2,3. If then God gives us strength to walk in his ways, that strength is given to us through a knowledge, which, at the same time, makes us understand that we cannot, here below, attain even to that which we know. ° Thus instead of an end which we can attain to embolden us, God sets before us that which hereafter will assuredly be accomplished in us, but which preserves us ever in humility ever in the feeling that we *are not* all that we would be. But this very thing keeps us even *advancing* towards our great end. Y our principle, which has a semblance of requiring nothing but what is just and suitable, is, accordingly, entirely opposed to the mind of God; it is akin to *self*-righteousness, which, instead of being "strong in the grace" which God has given us, prefers saying, *I have attained* to the end. God has given us a full pardon at the very outset of our career; and at its termination He has set before us a glory, the power of which is in us by the communication of the life of Christ: but the nature and the very excellence of this glory make it evident to us that it is not a thing to which we can ever attain while here below. We "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," Rom. 5:2. "We are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24); and in the confidence of the certainty of God's grace, we press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

N. But it is said that we are "made free" from sin *itself*, and not only from the law of sin.

A. If you had read the passage, you would have seen that the apostle, in saying "made free," tells them that he speaks "after the manner of men," because of the infirmity of their flesh. He says made free, as contrasted with slavery; and therefore he adds, by way of marking the contrast, that they had become *servants of God*; Rom 6:22. It is a simple comparison between a slave and a freed man, introduced to make the matter better understood. And pray observe, that it is not the condition of a *perfect* Christian only, but of *all* Christians without exception; so that this passage is not at all applicable in support of your doctrine.

e. John Gerstner has tried to fasten the doctrine of sinless perfection on JND (*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 240) by quoting from *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:478. I suggest both that he found in this letter something that is not there; and also that his allegation is refuted by what we are reviewing -- as well as other papers by JND.

N. But is it not said , Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself?

A. I have already answered you in principle. God *necessarily* commands what *ought to be*, not what man can perform; for this commandment which is the essence of the law, was given to man in the flesh, when he was "without strength." And we have already seen that, although it is the eternal law of perfect beings, it becomes, when it is imposed upon those who are already under sin, a ministry of death and condemnation; 2 Cor. 3.

N. I admit it: but we who are under grace can accomplish it.

A. I have answered you, likewise, on this point. Under grace a new life has been given to us. It is the life of Christ in us, which sees and considers Jesus Christ glorified, and which knows that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Now *this life* judges all things in us according to the perfection of our hereafter state in the resurrection. It discerns that we have not yet obtained the redemption of our body. It judges the old man in us -- his root, his trunk, and his branches. But all the while the Christian purifies himself as Christ is Himself pure. Observe, it is not only said that he aims at growth in Christ, but that he purifies himself as He is pure. He does not say that he is purified, but that he *purifies* himself after the resemblance of Christ glorified; and, knowing that the time is not yet come for the redemption of his body , he dreams not of perfection here below.

N. I think I understand you. The Christian has already in his soul "the power of the resurrection." Nothing which is not after the power of the resurrection can satisfy him. He does not think that he has attained it, although he follows after such a purification of himself as he sees in Christ, whose life he possesses, and into whose image he is already changed from glory to glory; (2 Cor. 3:18). Yet it seems to me discouraging to say to a Christian, You can never attain the object you have in view.

A. But he is certain of attaining his object! And it is evident that, instead of discouraging him, it is, in God's mind, the very way to urge him onward; "for every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," 1 John 3:3. And Paul says, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; Phil. 3:13,14. This view, according to your system -- which lowers all the privileges of Christianity -- this view, I say, according to your system, may discourage; but it is because your Christianity is, in a great degree, *man's* Christianity and not God's: a Christianity which works in order to obtain eternal life, and not because God has given it to us. What you really want is, not to be able to say, "I shall apprehend here below"; but it is to be able to say with the apostle, that I *may* apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus; Phil. 3:12. What you really want is to believe that, *through grace*, we have *in us* the very life of Jesus -- eternal life by our union with Him; that all things are ours; that we are joint-heirs with Christ; that we are assured of the love of God; that we are loved of Him as Jesus Christ is loved. Therefore with joy and gladness of heart we press onward, while on earth, toward the realization of this glory. By the power of the Holy Ghost we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory; by faith we are already made partakers of a perfection which will be given to us in its fullness, when Jesus Christ returns. "We have our

citizenship in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. 3:20,21.

No; we say not that we must stumble; for theoretically, why cannot we walk every moment after the Spirit? But, practically and by experience, we know that in many things we do offend all; James 3:2. But, while confessing our fault, and that we are without excuse, we know that God is faithful, and that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. God, who loves us, and brings good out of evil, although He never justifies it -- God, I say, humbles us either by His Spirit or by His chastenings, and gives us a deeper understanding of the boundless riches of his grace. And even I speak not now of outward falls; and I am very far from affirming that failures are necessary for our instruction; but in point of fact we do learn, in the tender and faithful care of our God, that His grace is sufficient for us, that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. But your doctrine fixes the heart upon low views, and in the belief that you have realized them, your Christianity becomes debased and proud. Your watchfulness is no fruit of confidence in God's love, and joy in His holiness and in communion with Him, but of fear; for one of your perfect men may at the end, find himself in hell! In fact, one of your most distinguished teachers, who assuredly was a child of God, was four times perfect. He fell away from this state, he tells us (and the reason assigned is curious enough), because, in the state of perfection, there was unfaithfulness in his conduct: he consequently lost what had been given to him; and you caution us against those who profess that once in grace we are always in grace and infallibly in glory. I admit that the presence of the Spirit gives a happy inconsistency to those who are in this system; and I bless the Lord for it. Mr. Wesley, who thought at first that a *perfect* man could not fall from that state, afterwards affirmed that it was a great error to think so. . . .²²⁰

CONCLUSION

Dispensational truth was expounded in the context of such teachings by JND that we have so briefly touched on; sufficient, however, I trust, to show that he was neither a Calvinist or an Arminian. No doubt both would disown him as not one of themselves and with that I would concur. At any rate, John Gerstner's opinion that dispensational truth is inherently Arminian is not a fact. Rather, *it is the balance of truth*, with which what we have been reviewing is interlocked. Dispensational truth is the unfolding of God's glory in Christ, manifested in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly.

Appendix 4:

An Objection to the Offer of the Kingdom by an Authentic Calvinist

Among many other objections to dispensational truth John Gerstner, a Presbyterian, church history Professor, has written and attack on dispensational truth. He has once again raised the morality issue regarding the offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel at Christ's first coming. He alleges that the offer, as described by dispensational truth, would be an immoral one for God to make. The objection is that God could not make the nation an offer that He had no intention that they should accept. Before coming to that point, I desire to connect that issue with his Calvinistic view regarding the gospel, compare that view with Acts 17:30,31, the giving of the law, and the presentation of Messiah to his own. Then we will consider the matter of the kingdom offer. My purpose in doing this is twofold. We will observe that this morality of God issue involves not only the offer of the kingdom, but also these other actions of God. This will also illustrate the contrast between Calvinism as a *system of man's devising* and **the balance of truth** brought out in the unfolding of dispensational truth. First, then, consider what J. Gerstner says about the offer of the gospel:

The dispensationalist asks the authentic Calvinist whether, supposing a non-elect person had actually chosen to believe, God would have accepted that person's faith. God knows who and who will not accept it, yet He offers the gospel to everybody. If everybody actually did accept it, then God could not actually save everybody because He had already declared that everyone would not be saved. If He saved everybody, He would prove Himself to be ignorant of what was going to happen and frustrated in all of His counsels and purposes. So what difference, the dispensationalist asks, is there between the dispensational idea of a kingdom offer and the Calvinist saying that the gospel is *offered* to all while God designs the Atonement only for the elect and hence could save only the elect?

This might be a compelling argument except that the dispensational representation of Reformed theology is a caricature at this point. We *do not* teach that God invites reprobates to believe and be saved knowing full well that He will not give them a heart of faith. In fact, God does not call reprobates! He calls persons who recognize and admit themselves to be sinners. Those who confess themselves to be sinners, and they only, are called. Any one of them who comes will be saved. God *never* invited anyone who, if he responded, would be refused. God would never be embarrassed, even hypothetically, by someone coming and being rejected because he was not predestinated and foreknown. Every convicted sinner who has come, would come, will come, has been, would be, or will be accepted.²²¹

We are told here that God does not "invite reprobates to believe and be saved knowing full well that He will not give them a heart of faith." Here is the crux of the argument -- which he will apply to the offer of the kingdom also. In

regards to the invitation of "reprobates," we might notice that "a certain man made a great supper and invited many" (Luke 14:16), but *all* made excuse, yet the servant (indicating the Spirit) is told, "Go out into the ways and fences and *compel* to come in . . ." (Luke 14:23). Obviously, an invitation is not enough. Not one that was invited came. But were they invited to the supper? Whyyes, they were. What if they had all come? But that was not possible, because man is totally ruined, and so those ridiculous excuses not to come to the supper were made. Something more is needed: "compel to come in." Many are invited, but the house will be filled with those compelled by sovereign grace. *This* is the grace of God in effecting a sinner'ssalvation. Why deny that those who *didnot* come were actually *not* invited? -- unless you have a troublesome theological notion to maintain. Many Calvinists and Arminians do not properly understand the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God. The invitation addresses the responsibility of man and puts into bold relief his total ruin.

It is obvious that the apostles preached the gospel to all. But the authentic Calvinist retorts that God does not 'invite reprobates to believe and be saved.' The Word of God says:

God therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, now enjoins men that they shall all everywhere repent, because he has set a day in which he is going to judge the habitable earth in righteousness by [the] man whom he has appointed, giving the proof [of it] to all [in] having raised him from among [the] dead (Acts 17:30,31.).

See also Acts 3:18,19; 8:22; 26:20,21.

God does sovereignly quicken whom He will (James 1:18; John 1:13; Rom. 9:16; Luke 14:18-23; Rom. 8:7; John 6:44; 3:27); but that God therefore does not command *all everywhere* to repent is a caricature of the Word of God. If God had meant to say that all everywhere should repent, how would he have said it? If God had enjoined that all the elect everywhere should repent, how should He have said it? Are we going to be told that God does not enjoin "reprobates" to repent? -- as if they are not responsible to repent? Inability to pay does not relieve one of responsibility to pay.

Of course the flesh cannot repent. We know that, not by constructing a system, the (supposed) logic of which we can rejoice in, but by the Word of God:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be" (Rom. 8:7).

Man is totally ruined. He needs to be born again (John 3:3) and this is accomplished by a sovereign act of God (James 1:18; John 1:12,13, etc.) in communicating a new nature (1 John 3:9). This is not the flesh improved. That is totally and unalterably corrupt. God's seed abides in a Christian (1 John 3:9). When God views the Christian in a certain way, He says of him, "and cannot sin" (1 John 3:9). This is not "sinless perfection" on earth but God predicating of the believer, viewed as in Christ, what is true of the new nature. God looks at the believer as "in Christ" and says of believers, "even as *he* is, *we* are in this world" (1 John 4:17). "The mind of the flesh" cannot repent. The person who receives the new nature, sovereignly communicated by God, repents because,

as having that new nature, he can repent.²²² This does not relieve the sinner of his responsibility.

In order to indicate the connection of this issue with other great facts of Scripture, we might ask the following questions:

How could God "invite" a "reprobate" to His supper (Luke 14:17) or wedding feast (Matt. 22:1-6) who He has no intention shall attend, while He has others *compelled* (Luke 14:23) to come?

How could God offer Israel a promise of life and blessing if they would keep the law (Lev. 18:1,5; Deut. 30:19,20) when He knew no man could keep it (Rom. 8:7)?

How can God enjoin all everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30,31), when He has no intention that all everywhere shall repent?

How could God "offer" the kingdom to the nation of Israel (Matt. 21:4,5) if He had no intention for them to accept it?

J. Gerstner, and others of the same theological system, raise the issue of how can an insincere offer be compatible with the morality of God. *The issue raised* means that God is dishonest in doing the things that He actually has done.

Of course, I can easily imagine that a response would be that the words "all everywhere" do not mean "all everywhere"; but rather they mean only those who actually repent. That is, God would be enjoining only the elect to repent. In other words God

. . . now enjoins all everywhere, except reprobates, to repent.

If the authentic Calvinist accepts such a view of Acts 17:30,31, it should be obvious to the reader where this objection leads: *systematic* distortion of the words of God for the support of a false theological system. On the other hand, the authentic Calvinist says that "all everywhere" means exactly that, then the insincerity/morality issue he has raised is turned against himself because then he is a person who condemns God for what he has, in actuality, done.

As indicated in a question above, this issue also involves the law:

And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, Speak unto the children of Israel . . . And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments, by which the man that doeth them shall live: I am Jehovah (Lev. 18:1,5).

I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you: life and death have I set before you, blessing and cursing: choose then life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed, in loving Jehovah thy God, in hearkening to his voice, and in cleaving to him -- for this is thy life and the length of thy days -- that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah swore unto thy fathers (Deut. 30:19, 20).

This was addressed to all Israel -- and surely there must have been some

"reprobates" ^f among them. How could God do such a thing when he knew not one man could keep the law:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).

So here is God doing the very thing that the authentic Calvinist says that God cannot do, because that would be immoral. I suggest that the problem is with those who wrongly say such things about God. It is reasoning from man to God. It is limiting God by what man ought not to do.

The law, which addressed the first man in the persons of the favored nation of Israel, *addressed the first man as responsible*, and it brought out the total ruin of the first man. We saw in Appendix 2 that because a debtor cannot pay his debt he is not therefore absolved from responsibility. Is that so difficult to understand? Everyone insists on that fact when his own wallet is involved, but, interestingly, some may say that if a man cannot pay God then he is absolved from responsibility. ^g Moreover, J. Gerstner says, in effect or explicitly, that God may not expose man's inability and ruin by offering him something he cannot accept; or by commanding him to do something he cannot perform. But it is clear to those who are neither Calvinists or Arminians that God has done exactly that in displaying his own sovereignty and man's ruin, in His purpose to glorify himself in Christ.

The presentation of Messiah to Israel is also involved in this issue. The Lord Jesus came; to whom?

He came to his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11; cp. 19:15).

But all this came to pass, that that might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, . . . (Matt. 21:4,5).

Are we to believe that He only came to the elect? The fact is that *all* of those designated by the phrase "his own received him not" ^h were placed into responsibility to receive Him -- though God knew that totally ruined man would not. What? His own were not responsible to receive Him? Excuse me, but the idea is absurd and exposes this system. Inability to pay does not relieve from responsibility to pay; and God addresses that responsibility to bring out man's total ruin.

Let us now turn to the subject of the offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel. There is an argument against the offer of a temporal kingdom to Israel: that if Israel had accepted such an offer, then the prophecies of Christ's death, etc., would have been false. This argument has been reversed upon those who

f. I am using his word, but do not accept the Calvinistic theory of reprobation.

g. God holds man responsible, though he cannot pay, and we ought to learn from this that it is right to hold man responsible though he cannot pay. Grace and mercy is another matter.

h. I suppose these would be "reprobates" to an authentic Calvinist.

believe that the offer was about a spiritual kingdom: if the Jews had accepted the offer of a spiritual kingdom that would have set aside the prophecies of Christ's death, etc. How does an authentic Calvinist respond to such a turn of the argument? To this J. Gerstner replied:

... Christ never offered His true spiritual kingdom to *all* Jews but only to Jews who acknowledged that they were sinners. All those Jews did accept the kingdom offer. In other words, all those Jews to whom Christ offered His kingdom did accept it and those who did not were never offered it. The later could and did account for the cross.²²³

We see here the same argument applied to the offer of the kingdom as we saw, above, applied to the offer of the gospel.

Concerning the kingdom, he wrote:

This "kingdom offer" is surely an appalling notion . . .

The primary objection is a moral one. A clear implication of the dispensational view is that God was offering Israel a very wicked option. According to Dispensationalism, the Lord Jesus Christ was offering something to the Jews in good faith which, had they accepted, would have destroyed the only way of man's salvation. God is an honest God. He is a sincere God. He, therefore, truly offered to the Jews the setting up of a kingdom which would have made the Cross impossible. *Obviously, if God did offer a kingdom which He could not have permitted to be established, He could be neither honest nor sincere.*

We know the way the dispensationalists themselves account for such a concept. They feel that they are absolved from guilt by their view of divine sovereignty. Because they believe in divine foreknowledge, they say that God knew from all eternity that, when the Jews were presented with the kingdom by Christ, they would refuse it. Consequently there was no possibility of Christ setting up His kingdom at that time and making the Cross unnecessary. But this knowledge of God does not make Him honest and sincere. He is doing it safely as it were, because He knows that this dishonest and insincere offer will never be accepted.

The fact of the matter is He could not possibly have redeemed His promise. If the Jews had embraced Christ's offer, God would have had to say, "I am sorry, Christ cannot be elevated to the throne at this time. He must die on a cross." If the Jews expostulated and said, "But you offered us this," He would have had to say that it was not a sincere offer. I thought that you would never accept it. Of course, the dispensationalist in the background is saying, "No, that would never happen because God knew it would never happen."

We are granting that it never could have happened. Still, such a divine offer would have been insincere. God was making an offer that He could never have redeemed though He dishonestly said that He would if it were accepted. It is as if I safely offered a million dollars (which I do not have) to a debt-ridden relative who detested me because I knew, his hatred of me being what it was, he would never accept it.²²⁴

But what of the fact that John and our Lord preached the kingdom to all the Jews as also did the disciples (Luke 9:1-6)? The "authentic Calvinist" retorts that "Christ never offered" the kingdom to those who did not accept it.²²⁵

This is meant to 'save' the character of God from 'offering' something it was

not His intention to give them. The Calvinist should not do such a thing and therefore reasons upon the prerogatives of God and limits His sovereign action. This is the solution of this theological system to what they have called a moral issue regarding God's character. It parallels the notion that God does not "invite" those who do not respond to the gospel to believe and be saved. Truly, the 'authentic Calvinist' view is "an appalling notion," "a moral one," that falsifies God's dealings with sinners. The solution of these questions lies in rightly applying to the issues the sovereignty of God and the total ruin of man -- with an understanding of the testing of the first man.

Concerning this, John Calvin (the most authentic Calvinist, I suppose) wrote:

Now he willeth all men. In these words Paul teacheth that we must give ear to God so soon as he speaketh, as it is written, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," (Psalm 95: 7, 8.) For the stubbornness of those men is without excuse, who foreslow [neglect] this opportunity when God doth gently call them unto him.²²⁶

Concerning *whosoever* in John 3:16, John Calvin wrote:

And he has employed the universal term *whosoever*, both to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life, and cut off every excuse from unbelievers.²²⁷

Since John Calvin did not believe that any of the indiscriminately invited sinners could partake of life except the elect, does that mean, according to J. Gerstner's reasoning on the offer of the kingdom, that John Calvin believed in an immoral, or insincere, invitation on God's part? We agree with John Calvin's quoted statements and regard J. Gerstner's objection as deficient in understanding God's addressing man's responsibility

Recall that, in appendix two, JND pointed out that what is at the bottom of the Arminian/Calvinist dispute is *responsibility*. Both systems view man's responsibility wrongly. And I suggest that this is what is at the bottom of the issue of the morality of the offer and the other points discussed above. Keep in mind that the morality issue really is involved also in the giving of the law as well as the coming of Christ to His own. Now, it so happens that in a reply to B. W. Newton, JND addressed one of his errors, the reply to which meets the issue under discussion here. It is as if he were replying to John Gerstner JND wrote:

I believe that the author has not known how to distinguish responsibility and the purposes of God. I believe that Christ came seeking fruit on Israel and found none -- that He was presented to their responsibility. He piped to them and they would not dance.

But the reasoning of the author proceeds from his not seeing that, *had* He been received, it would have proved that there was good in man -- that man was not in an absolutely lost state, just as his keeping the law would. Whereas his rejecting Christ proved, not only that man's flesh would not keep the law, but that even the goodness of God, and sending Messiah, and sending His Son, and light into the world, and love in the world, their king in the world, yea, God, Himself in power and goodness in the world, would not lead the flesh to repentance. And until this trial was put to it [the flesh], and (specially as regard's the Jews) coming according to promise and prophecy, man was not, in the dealings of God with Him, pronounced absolutely and finally bad. "If I had come and spoken unto

them they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." God never purposed to save by the old man, any more than he expected the law to be kept by the old man. But He did present His Son to man in his former state, and viewed as Israel after the flesh, to show the hopelessly sinful state of it [the flesh]. And, till He had done this, He did not pronounce upon it as the subject of nothing at all but judgment.

Now the testimony starts from this ground that all are entirely lost, the world is convicted of sin, because they have not believed in Christ.²²⁸

J. Gerstner complained that it is assumed "that a sincere offer is compatible with the foreknowledge of God rather than demonstrating how it is compatible."²²⁹ What does 'demonstration' mean to authentic Calvinists who, when God says "all everywhere," pretend that it means "all everywhere except reprobates," etc. etc. If you say to such, 'I will show you a Scripture where God commands all everywhere to repent,' he will tell you that you have not demonstrated it, nor are you able to do so -- because God does not command "reprobates" to repent. Do you see how *he* "demonstrates" *that*?

I suggest that the 'moral issue' is a bogus one, resulting from reasoning upward from what a finite Calvinist should and should not do to what God can and cannot do. It is the mind of the flesh intruding itself into the sovereign God's using his exposure of the total ruin of man in the accomplishment of His eternal purpose in Christ. Moreover, the trial of the first man, and the end of that trial in the cross, is not understood.ⁱ

It is of the same character as the Arminian who says that God cannot violate man's (alleged) freewill; who says that God looked down the avenue of time, saw that I would choose Christ, and therefore chose me.²³⁰ A Calvinist who raises such a moral issue thinks God is at the center of his thinking about the issue, but it is man that is really at the center, limiting God by what man should and should not do. The difference with the Arminian is that in his case the man centered reasoning is more obvious.

i. There are also "dispensationalists" that do not understand this (see Chapter 2.4).

Notes for the Appendices

GENESIS

Gen. 4:17	64
Gen. 6:5-7	28
Gen. 8:21	16
Gen. 9	31
Gen. 9:1-7	16
Gen. 9:8-12	16
Gen. 9:18-27	16
Gen. 12	26-28, 31, 34
Gen. 15	26
Gen. 22	26
Gen. 22:18	118
Gen. 22:25	119

EXODUS

Ex. 3:15	28
Ex. 12	128
Ex. 15	37
Ex. 23:15,16	131
Ex. 32, 33, 34	3
Ex. 32:13	25
Ex. 34:22	131

LEVITICUS

Lev. 2	129, 130
Lev. 18:1,5	161, 162
Lev. 23	52, 113, 128, 129
Lev. 23:15	129
Lev. 23:15,16	129
Lev. 23:16	129

NUMBERS

Num. 13	37
---------------	----

DEUTERONOMY

Deut. 8:2-4	62
Deut. 16:16	131
Deut. 19	109
Deut. 28:13,44	48
Deut. 30:19,20	161
Deut. 32	3, 39
Deut. 32:43	62

1 SAMUEL

1 Sam. 1:3,4	131
1 Sam. 2	38

1 KINGS

1 Kings 8:51-53	25
1 Kings 11	45
1 Kings 12	45

1 CHRONICLES

1 Chron. 29:23	45
----------------------	----

2 CHRONICLES

2 Chron. 8:13	131
2 Chron. 36:21	45

NEHEMIAH

Neh. 1	25
Neh. 2	50
Neh. 9	25

PSALMS

Psa. 2	46
Psa. 8	83
Psa. 8:3-7	82
Psa. 16	25
Psa. 68	25
Psa. 72	26
Psa. 78:65-72	45
Psa. 95: 7, 8	164
Psa. 101	3
Psa. 110	26
Psa. 110:1	49, 136
Psa. 110:1-3	50
Psa. 145	26

S OF S

S. of S. 5:13	51
---------------------	----

ISAIAH

Isa. 1:26	126
Isa. 2:11	48
Isa. 11:9	48
Isa. 24:23	20, 46, 48
Isa. 32	79
Isa. 32:15	125
Isa. 44:3,4	125
Isa. 45:25	118, 119
Isa. 59:21	125
Isa. 60:21	32
Isa. 61:1-2	50
Isa. 66:8	20

JEREMIAH

Jer. 25:1-14	45
Jer. 25:1-14	45
Jer. 29:10	45
Jer. 31:31	57
Jer. 31:31-34	20, 48

EZEKIEL

Ezek. 1-10	41
Ezek. 10:18	45
Ezek. 11:22	45
Ezek. 20	iii, 48
Ezek. 20:33-38	20
Ezek. 20:37, 38	51
Ezek. 36:27	125
Ezek. 37:14	125
Ezek. 39:29	125
Ezek. 40 - 48	129
Ezek. 43:1-7	45
Ezek. 44:1	45
Ezek. 45:21-25	131

DANIEL

Dan. 2	20, 46, 49, 50, 53, 55, 63
Dan. 2 and 7	42
Dan. 2:37,38	19
Dan. 4:26	45
Dan. 7	39, 46, 50
Dan. 7:22	85
Dan. 8:22,23	50
Dan. 9	iii
Dan. 9:24-27	50
Dan. 9:26	46
Dan. 11:1-35	51
Dan. 11:35	51
Dan. 11:35-45	51
Dan. 11:36	51
Dan. 11:40	50

HOSEA

Hos. 1:9	46, 49
Hos. 2:1	46
Hos. 3:4,5	51, 81
Hos. 3:5	126
Hos. 5:15	51
Hos. 13:11	38

JOEL

Joel 2:28,29	125
Joel 2:28-32	127
Joel 2:30-32	126
Joel 2:32	127

AMOS

Amos 3:2	37
Amos 9:9-11	51

MICAH

Micah 6:4	37
-----------------	----

ZECHARIAH

Zech. 6:13	20, 81
------------------	--------

Zech. 11:12-17 52
Zech. 11:15 51
Zech. 12:10 125
Zech. 12:10-14 51
Zech. 13, 14 81
Zech. 14:5 83

MATTHEW

Matt.
Matt. 1:21
Matt. 3:2
Matt. 3:11
Matt. 4:17
Matt. 5-7
Matt. 5:17
Matt. 5:55
Matt. 10:6
Matt. 11:11-13
Matt. 12
Matt. 12:24
Matt. 12:32
Matt. 13
Matt. 13:11
Matt. 13:13-15
Matt. 13:39,40,49
Matt. 15:24
Matt. 16:16
Matt. 16:16,18
Matt. 16:18
Matt. 16:28
Matt. 17
Matt. 18:20
Matt. 21:33-42
Matt. 21:33-46
Matt. 21:37
Matt. 21:38
Matt. 21:40,41
Matt. 21:43
Matt. 21:44
Matt. 21:45
Matt. 21:4,5
Matt. 21:5
Matt. 22:1-6
Matt. 22:7
Matt. 23:37-39
Matt. 22:41-46
Matt. 24
Matt. 24:3
Matt. 25:31
Matt. 28:28

MARK

Mark 1:4
Mark 9
Mark 10:30
Mark 12:10

Mark 13
Mark 16:15,20

LUKE

Luke 2:34
Luke 2:41
Luke 2:72
Luke 3:16
Luke 4:16-20
Luke 4:19
Luke 9
Luke 11:33
Luke 12:58
Luke 13:7
Luke 14:16
Luke 14:17
Luke 14:18-23
Luke 14:23
Luke 14:25-32
Luke 16:2,3,4
Luke 16:16
Luke 17:21,22
Luke 18:30
Luke 19:11
Luke 19:11-27
Luke 20:17
Luke 21
Luke 21:20
Luke 21:24
Luke 22:19
Luke 24:26
Luke 24:29
Luke 24:45-47
Luke 24:46-49
Luke 24:47
Luke 24:49

JOHN

John 1:11
John 1:12
John 1:12,13
John 1:13
John 1:17
John 1:18
John 1:33
John 1:33,34
John 1:49
John 3:3
John 3:16
John 3:27
John 5
John 6:44
John 7:39
John 10:10
John 10:16
John 11:27
John 11:51,52
John 12:24

John 12:31	.....
John 14	.....
John 14:1-3	.....
John 14:3	.....
John 14:16-17	.....
John 14:26	.....
John 15:24	.....
John 16:7	.....
John 16:27,28	.....
John 17:4	.....
John 17:5	.....
John 17:19	.....
John 17:22,23	.....
John 19:15	.....
John 20	.....
John 20:22	.....

ACTS

Acts 1	.....
Acts 1:4,5	.....
Acts 1:5	.....
Acts 1:6	.....
Acts 1:8	.....
Acts 1:16	.....
Acts 2	.....
Acts 2-11	.....
Acts 2 - 7	.....
Acts 2 - 12	.....
Acts 2 and 3	.....
Acts 2:1	.....
Acts 2:1-4	.....
Acts 2:17,18	.....
Acts 2:19-21	.....
Acts 2:21	.....
Acts 2:32,33	.....
Acts 2:33	.....
Acts 2:38	.....
Acts 2:39	.....
Acts 2:41	.....
Acts 2:42	.....
Acts 2:47	.....
Acts 3:18	.....
Acts 3:18,19	.....
Acts 3:19	.....
Acts 3:19-21	.....
Acts 3:26	.....
Acts 5:11	.....
Acts 5:32	.....
Acts 7	.....
Acts 7:54-56	.....
Acts 7:54-58	.....
Acts 8:1	.....
Acts 8:3	.....
Acts 8:22	.....
Acts 9	.....
Acts 9	.....
Acts 9/13	.....
Acts 9/13/28	.....
Acts 9-28	.....

Acts 9:4
 Acts 9:20
 Acts 9:31
 Acts 10:9-16
 Acts 11
 Acts 11:15
 Acts 11:16
 Acts 11:22
 Acts 13
 Acts 15
 Acts 15:4
 Acts 15:13-18
 Acts 15:14
 Acts 17:30,31
 Acts 20:21
 Acts 26:20,21
 Acts 28

ROMANS

Rom. 1:4
 Rom. 1:17
 Rom. 2:12,16
 Rom. 2:17-29
 Rom. 2:28,29
 Rom. 3
 Rom. 3:21
 Rom. 4
 Rom. 5:2
 Rom. 5:8
 Rom. 5:10,11
 Rom. 5:11
 Rom. 5:12-19
 Rom. 6:3
 Rom. 6:7
 Rom. 6:8
 Rom. 6:22
 Rom. 7
 Rom. 7:8
 Rom. 7:21
 Rom. 7:24
 Rom. 8
 Rom. 8:2
 Rom. 8:3,4
 Rom. 8:4
 Rom. 8:7
 Rom. 8:21
 Rom. 8:24
 Rom. 9:4
 Rom. 9:4,5
 Rom. 9:5
 Rom. 9:16
 Rom. 11
 Rom. 11:5
 Rom. 11:7
 Rom. 11:11
 Rom. 11:11,12,15
 Rom. 11:16-24
 Rom. 11:17
 Rom. 11:25,26

Rom. 11:26
 Rom. 11:29
 Rom. 12
 Rom. 15:8
 Rom. 15:9
 Rom. 16:25
 Rom. 16:25,26
 Rom. 16:7

1 CORINTHIANS

1 Cor. 1:2
 1 Cor. 1:8,9
 1 Cor. 2:8
 1 Cor. 3:10,11
 1 Cor. 4
 1 Cor. 5, 6
 1 Cor. 5
 1 Cor. 5:7,8
 1 Cor. 6
 1 Cor. 6:2
 1 Cor. 6:17
 1 Cor. 7:11
 1 Cor. 9:16,17
 1 Cor. 9:17
 1 Cor. 10
 1 Cor. 10:11
 1 Cor. 10:32 and 11:22
 1 Cor. 11
 1 Cor. 11:22
 1 Cor. 11:31
 1 Cor. 12
 1 Cor. 12:12
 1 Cor. 12:12,13
 1 Cor. 12:13
 1 Cor. 12:26
 1 Cor. 14:22
 1 Cor. 15
 1 Cor. 15:9
 1 Cor. 15:22
 1 Cor. 15:24
 1 Cor. 15:25-27
 1 Cor. 15:45-47
 1 Cor. 15:46
 1 Cor. 15:46,47
 1 Cor. 15:47
 1 Cor. 15:56

2 CORINTHIANS

2 Cor.
 2 Cor. 3
 2 Cor. 3:18
 2 Cor. 4:4
 2 Cor. 5
 2 Cor. 10
 2 Cor. 11:5
 2 Cor. 12:12

GALATIANS

Gal. 1:4
Gal. 1:13
Gal. 3
Gal. 3:15-17
Gal. 3:16-20
Gal. 3:17
Gal. 3:17-20
Gal. 3:19
Gal. 3:20
Gal. 3:23
Gal. 6:2
Gal. 6:15,16
Gal. 6:16

EPHESIANS

Eph. 1
Eph. 1:7
Eph. 1:10
Eph. 1:10
Eph. 1:12
Eph. 1:13
Eph. 1:20-23
Eph. 1:21
Eph. 2
Eph. 2:1
Eph. 2:6
Eph. 2:13
Eph. 2:15
Eph. 2:5,6
Eph. 3
Eph. 3:1-3
Eph. 3:2
Eph. 3:4,5
Eph. 3:6
Eph. 3:9
Eph. 3:11
Eph. 4
Eph. 4:3
Eph. 4:9-13
Eph. 4:11
Eph. 5
Eph. 5:25-27
Eph. 6

PHILIPPIANS

Phil. 3:3
Phil. 3:6
Phil. 3:12
Phil. 3:13,14
Phil. 3:20,21

COLOSSIANS

Col. 1
Col. 1:15
Col. 1:16-20
Col. 1:18
Col. 1:21

Col. 1:24-26
 Col. 1:25
 Col. 1:26
 Col. 2:13
 Col. 3
 Col. 3:4

1 THESSALONIANS

1 Thess. 5:9

2 THESSALONIANS

2 Thess. 1
 2 Thess. 2
 2 Thess. 2:7
 2 Thess. 2:8

1 TIMOTHY

1 Tim. 1:4
 1 Tim. 1:9
 1 Tim. 1:12-16
 1 Tim. 1:13-16
 1 Tim. 2:5-7
 1 Tim. 3:15
 1 Tim. 6:17

2 TIMOTHY

2 Tim.
 2 Tim. 1:9
 2 Tim. 2
 2 Tim. 2:12
 2 Tim. 2:19-22
 2 Tim. 3:12
 2 Tim. 4:10
 2 Tim. 4:8

TITUS

Titus 1:1,2
 Titus 3:5

HEBREWS

Heb. 2
 Heb. 2:3,4
 Heb. 2:5-9
 Heb. 2:9,10
 Heb. 2:17
 Heb. 6
 Heb. 6:5
 Heb. 8:10-13
 Heb. 8:7-13
 Heb. 8:8-13
 Heb. 9
 Heb. 9:26
 Heb. 1:3,4
 Heb. 10:12

Heb. 11:26
 Heb. 12:17
 Heb. 13:8

JAMES

James 1:15
 James 1:18
 James 3:2

1 PETER

1 Pet.
 1 Pet. 1:4,5
 1 Pet. 1:11
 1 Pet. 1:21
 1 Pet. 2:7,8
 1 Pet. 3:22

2 PETER

2 Pet.
 2 Pet. 1:4
 2 Pet. 2:1
 2 Pet. 3:6,7
 2 Pet. 3:7

1 JOHN

1 John 1, 3
 1 John 2:2
 1 John 2:18
 1 John 3:3
 1 John 3:9
 1 John 4:17
 1 John 5:11

JUDE

Jude
 Jude 14

REVELATION

Rev. 2 and 3
 Rev. 3:14
 Rev. 3:21
 Rev. 12:12
 Rev. 13:1- 10
 Rev. 13:11-18
 Rev. 16:13,14
 Rev. 16:14
 Rev. 18:13,14.
 Rev. 19
 Rev. 19:11-21
 Rev. 19:18
 Rev. 20:1-3
 Rev. 20:7,8
 Rev. 20:12
 Rev. 20:13

Rev. 21

1. See *Collected Writings* 13:153-156 concerning the difference.
2. *Collected Writings* 11:41.
3. *Collected Writings* 11:228, 229. See *Letters* 3:401.
4. *Collected Writings* 11:125.
5. See his "Grace and Government" in *Collected Writings* 28:198 ff; *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:274; *Synopsis* 5:393.
6. *Collected Writings* 11:46,47.
7. *Collected Writings* 5:169.
8. *Collected Writings* 5:198. See also 5:28; 11:303; 27:142.
9. *Collected Writings* 1:332,333.
10. *Collected Writings* 19:319; see also 26:115.
11. *Notes and Jottings* p. 210. See also *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:48.
12. *Collected Writings* 19:319.
13. *Synopsis* 4:15n.
14. *Collected Writings* 2:132; 5:384; 13:153; 26:248. *Synopsis* 1:24 (p. 30 in Heijkoop ed.); 4:15 (p. 19 in Heijkoop ed.).
15. *Collected Writings* 34:8; 22:337. See also 1:125; 10:177; 22:338; 32:233; For what innocence is, see *Notes and Comments* 1:107-109.
16. "Thus up to Christ we have conscience, promise and law . . .," *Collected Writings* 22:370. See also 22:337-340,366; 10:177; 34:9. For "conscience" in general, see the index in the *Collected Writings*; also *Notes and Comments* 1:104-106.
17. See *Collected Writings* 10:150,172,173; 7:319.
18. *Collected Writings* 2:132. See also 26:115.
19. *Collected Writings* 28:115.
20. *Collected Writings* 10:177.
21. *Collected Writings* 22:340.
22. *Collected Writings* 1:169.
23. "The Dispensations and the Remnants," *Collectania*, p. 41 (1839).
24. "The Dispensations and the Remnants," *Collectania*, p. 42.
25. *Collected Writings* 7:41.
26. *Collected Writings* 33:339,340.
27. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:442.
28. *Collected Writings* 13:169.
29. *Synopsis* 5:224; See *Collected Writings* 10:275; 27:393.
30. *Collected Writings* 34:295; see also 32:235; 29:194.
31. *Notes and Jottings* p. 35.
32. *Synopsis* 4:172.
33. *Collected Writings* 26:248.
34. *Collected Writings* 13:155.
35. *Collected Writings* 13:161.
36. *Collected Writings* 13:153,154.
37. *Collected Writings* 13:155,156.

38. *Collected Writings* 1:289,290.
39. *Collected Writings* 1:125.
40. "The Dispensations and the Remnants," *Collectania* . . . , p. 42.
41. *Collected Writings* 2:374,375.
42. See *Collected Writings* 34:12,13; 22:340,341; 2:134.
43. *Collected Writings* 5:384.
44. *Collected Writings* 22:340.

45. In JND's paper quoted above wherein he stated that Mr. Oliver had introduced confusion concerning the word "dispensation" (a complaint that was justified), JND spoke about the derivation of the word *οικονομία*. It is a passage that might be urged against my suggestion of the use of the word "administration" to explain his view. Well, use some other word to describe the unique character of what I have called the first two administrations. Objecting to the *thing* that he discriminated and so emphasized, which I seek thus to describe, is, of course, another matter. The word "dispensation" will not do justice to the *thing* because it is clear that he used that word for a number of God's ways in His relationship with man beyond the items marked (1) and (2) on the chart; and thus the word "dispensation" is not a word that discriminates sufficiently. At the same time, there is no difficulty referring to the first two administrations as dispensations (the dispensation of government and the dispensation of government and calling combined). At any rate, for completeness I here quote the passage.

Economy or administration . . . signifies the *administration of a house*; and, taken in an extended sense, it means any order of things that God has arranged, as when one says, animal economy, vegetable economy. It is true that the Greek word signifying 'law' is derived from the same root; but it is a derivation much more distant in meaning. *Nemo* means to distribute, divide, feed, etc.; and thus in a house there was a steward, and an *economy*, the *administration*, of the house. Thus, when God had established a certain order of things upon the earth, one has accustomed oneself, pretty correctly, as it appears to me, to call it an economy. The word of God even makes use of it in Eph. 1. [1:10]. It is possible that there may be a shade of difference between the scriptural and the conventional use of the word. In general, the way in which it is used in the word of God is more strictly according to its original meaning, and contains rather the idea of an active administration. The word *dispensation* is often used thus, and it has the same etymological meaning. God *dispenses* His favors. In the conventional sense, *economy* means an order of things established by God: the *Jewish economy*, the *present economy*, etc.

But these economies, until the coming of Christ, are as far as their course is concerned, left to man, and his responsibility, although God may work secretly. For example, the Lord speaks thus of the present economy, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Outwardly, all goes on without the intervention of Christ, from the sowing of the seed till the harvest. Well, the time which elapsed from the seed-sowing is what is generally called the *present dispensation*. I have called it "the church dispensation," because it is the time during which the church is called, and exists here below, in contrast with the Jews and the legal system. And one sees that, although it is God who causes the corn to ripen, outwardly He seems to let everything take its own course. Thus Satan may act in the midst of all this; men may sleep; and the whole state of things may become corrupt; and, in fact, it has become corrupt, as Israel had become corrupt; and this dispensation also, this order of things, is in a state of ruin.

46. *Collected Writings* 2:149,150 (1838).
47. See *Collected Writings* 2:134; 19:124.
48. *Collected Writings* 22:340,341. See also 34:12,13.
49. *Collected Writings* 22:341.
50. *Collected Writings* 5:384,385. See also 2:133-137,348; 19:304; 22:341-343,368; 29:83; 34:13; *Synopsis, in loco*, as always.
51. *Collected Writings* 22:341.
52. See *Collected Writings* 2:136; 21:304; 22:368; 26:115; 29:83; 34:13.
53. *Collected Writings* 34:4,5. See also 2:356; 3:123; 26:305,312.

54. *Collected Writings* 26:306, 307. See also 26:116; 34:4,5,13,14.
55. *Collected Writings* 22:368,369.
56. *Collected Writings* 19:122-133.
57. *Collected Writings* 10:177.
58. *Collected Writings* 2:375,377,378.
59. *Collected Writings* 34:3,4. See also 5:136, 386; 22: 342-344. See also "law" in the index of the *Collected Writings*.
60. See "Responsibility" in the index of the *Collected Writings*.
61. More on the tree of life may be found in the *Collected Writings* 5:102; 7:127; 9:61; 10:150,273; 16:330; 21:26,206; 22:345; 32:233,237; 34:148,151,294,450.
62. See *Collected Writings* 9:19,34; *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:360; 3:350; *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 17,108.
63. See *Collected Writings* 26:296.
64. See *Synopsis* 5:195; *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:173; *The Bible Treasury* 12:366; W. Trotter, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, p. 150; W. Kelly, *The Second Coming and Kingdom*, p. 153.
65. See "Promise" in the index of the *Collected Writings*.
66. See "Righteousness" in the index of the *Collected Writings*.
67. See "Mediation" in index to the *Collected Writings*. See particularly 2:141-143.
68. See *Collected Writings* 1:126; 2:138; 7:269; 11:48; 22:346.
69. See *Collected Writings* 22:345-350; 22:369,370. See "law" in the index to the *Collected Writings*.
70. *Collected Writings* 2:145,146.
71. *Collected Writings* 2:377,378. See also 11:50, 304.
72. See *Collected Writings* 2:46, 356; 4:254; 32:400.
73. *Collected Writings* 11:47-51. See also 5:138; *Synopsis* 3:336; 5:396.
74. *Collected Writings* 1:126.
75. As can be seen in the chart, there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis.
76. W. Kelly, *An Exposition of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, 1947 reprint, p. 155. In *Lectures Introductory to . . . the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, 1874, he called it "the parenthesis of Gentile empire." See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 2:53 (1830); *The Prospect* 1:148; *The Bible Treasury* 11:180,181; 12:8; 9:344.
77. Shiloh, where the tent of meeting (the tabernacle) was located, is analogous to this until God's choice of Jerusalem was manifested (1 Chron. 20:18 - 22:1; Psalm 78:65-72). Shiloh was *provisional*, to bring out the state of the people. Zion is God's election.
78. *The Bible Treasury* 11:182.
79. *An Exposition of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, p. 155, 1947 reprint.
80. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:28.
81. Obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.
82. Someone called my attention to an article in the Baltimore Evening Sun (May 8, 1989), "Israeli Rabbis Prepare for Return of Temple," in which it was said, "All Jewish history as far as we're concerned is one big parenthesis until the Temple is returned," says Rabbi Nahman Kahane of the Temple Institute."
83. Concerning "this age" J. N. Darby remarked that it was "a perfectly well-known phrase among the Jews who spoke of *olam-haze*, this world or age, and the *olam-havo*, the age to come, the latter being the time of Messiah's reign" *Collected Writings* 10:360. See also *Collected Writings* 24:12,19,45,78; 25:244; 8:13,14,22; 13:155,156.
84. See *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:400,401.

85. The sin against the Holy Spirit was committed by these men in saying that the power that wrought in Christ was of Beelzebub.

86. *Synopsis* 3:59.

87. There are moral features brought before us in Matt. 5-7 suitable for those in the kingdom in mystery now; but not all is suitable for the Christian.

88. "κανών (kanon), rule, standard, norm," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 3:339.

89. The expression, "the Israel of God," refers to believing Jews. Theology has transmuted the Israel of God into the church.

90. *Collected Writings* 5:15 (1842).

91. *Collected Writings* 4:328.

92. *Collected Writings* 25:244.

93. *Collected Writings* 13:155 (1850).

94. Rom. 9:1-5 declares that the covenants belong to Israel and this is complemented by the statement that Gentiles are strangers to the covenants of promise (Eph. 2:11-12). Zecharias, filled by the Holy Spirit, prophesied, and his prophesying shows that the Abrahamic covenant (the promises to the fathers) was not yet fulfilled and that it applied literally to Israel (Luke 1:67ff). Scriptures such as Ezek. 20:33 ff, Isa. 66:8 and Rom. 11:26, Rom. 15:8 all point to the same thing.

95. Just as dispensations have to do with the unfolding of the ways of God in government in the earth, so covenants have to do with the earth, not with a heavenly company now being formed. Indeed the Noachic covenant involved the introduction of government in the earth, the introduction of which marks the first dispensation.

96. Good works are formed by, and flow from, grace. Thus they are life-works, not dead-works.

97. The grace experienced now is poured forth from a Man in the glory of God (Acts 7:56) shining out from His face, so that it is "the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4). The grace experienced by Israel in the millennium will be of a much lesser order, but vastly greater than what O.T. Israel had. The least in that kingdom will be greater than John the Baptist; i.e., greater positionally, not necessarily morally greater. In the development of God's ways in the earth, this is a vast step upward.

98. He said, "Now is the judgment of this world." This also indicates a change, though "this age" proceeds. The judgment has not fallen on the world yet and will not do so while the heavenly company is being formed. It is for the Christian "this present evil age" (Gal 1:4) and Satan is its god (2 Cor. 4:4). He has been so designated since the rejection of the Lord Jesus. What manner of persons ought we to be while we await the Savior? Doctrine is meant to form our behavior, not entertain our intellect.

99. The Kingdom in its mystery form will run beyond the rapture up to the appearing of Christ in glory.

100. *Collected Writings* 32:236-244.

101. See *The Bible Treasury* 17:209n.

102. See *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:129,130; 2:110,111; *Collected Writings* 5:64,124,135; 11:46,47; 19:213; 32:239.

103. Cited in *The Bible Treasury* 5:229,230.

104. See *Collected Writings* 7:137; 10:10,27,75; 16:157; 31:308; *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:108.

105. *Collected Writings* 10:270. See his papers on Romans.

106. *Collected Writings* 7:330,370,379; 10:58,66,72.

107. *Notes and Jottings* pp. 33,295,321.

108. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:108. See also *Collected Writings* 4:370; 7:137; 10:89; 17:315.

109. *Collected Writings* 24:247; 31:230; See 15:263,268-270,273,297; 26:296; *Notes and Jottings* pp. 50,51; *Synopsis in loco*.

110. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:131.

111. See *Collected Writings* 10:15,83,244; 11:148; 3:386.
112. *Collected Writings* 9:248. See also p. 266; 15:357n.
113. *Collected Writings* 10:248; see also 31:351; 3:386.
114. *The Bible Treasury* 1:23.
115. *Collected Writings* 11:149-157.
116. See *Collected Writings* 1:149,273.
117. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:113; and so in *Collected Writings* 20:189.
118. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:42.
119. *Collected Writings* 1:144-147. JND taught that the ruin of the church had taken place before the last of the apostles left this scene. Indeed, 2 Timothy was written in view of the presence of the ruine, chapter 2:19-22 likening the profession to a great house. Prophecy is occasioned by a fall and the book of Revelation is a standing witness to the fall of the church. This view of the fall of the church is quite different from both the view of the Reformers and of the Anabaptists. W. R. Estep wrote:

The Fall of the Church

Anabaptists held that the primitive church of the apostles had lost its purity and had ceased to be the church. This catastrophe was referred to as "the fall of the church." Even though this is a common Reformation concept, there is no general agreement as to when the fall occurred. For the Reformers, it took place with the assumption of temporal authority by the papacy. Luther dated the fall with Sabianus and Boniface III, but Zwingli pinpointed it with Hildebrand and the "assertion of hierarchial power." Calvin was inclined to date it with Gregory the Great. However, for the Anabaptists, it was the usual procedure to date the fall with the union of church and state under Constantine. An anonymous Anabaptist tract printed in Augsburg around 1530 asserts, "There was not among the Christians of old at the time of the apostles until the Emperor Constantine any temporal power or sword."

The Anabaptist interpretation of the church's fall differed greatly from that of the Reformers. The Reformers apparently accepted uncritically the Roman interpretation of the Constantinian era as a period of the church's triumph. In so doing they fell victim to the Constantinian synthesis unwittingly embracing a pre-Christian sacral society whose paganism they conveniently overlooked or christened and sought to regulate. For them the Reformation was a revolt against papal authority but not against the Roman concept of the church as an institution. They believed that the old church needed to be cleansed from various abuses and errors, but they did not want to be cut off from its corporate solidarity. Even after their organizational break with Rome was complete, they still felt a sense of continuity with the Roman Church of pre-Reformation days.

In the Reformers' eyes, then, the fall of the church was never complete in the sense that the pre-Reformation Roman organization had ceased to be the church. This is the reason why the Anabaptists viewed the Reformers as halfway reformers. To them, the Reformers, by introducing the *Landeskirchen*, remained within the fallen church.

To the Anabaptists, the fall of Rome was absolute. The union of church and state which was set in motion under Constantine brought all sorts of dire consequences. Infant baptism was one of these. Menno [Simons] saw the culmination of "the Fall in an Edict of Innocent I, 407 A.D., which made infant baptism compulsory." This is evidently Hübmaier's reference also when he put the following words into the mouth of Hans concerning the baptismal vow in his booklet, "What Every Christian Ought to Know Before Baptism": "That is the entire baptismal vow. Lost for the space of a thousand years, all the time that Satan with his monastic vows and priest's oaths has pressed in and thrust himself into the seat of the Holy."

When infant baptism became the prevailing practice, the character of the church as a fellowship of the regenerate was seriously altered. And with the union of church and state and the accompanying use of force to compel conformity to the state church, the fall was complete. To use Verduin's words, "The 'fall' of the Church had so changed the visage of the Bride of Christ as to make her unrecognizable. She who had been sent on a mission of healing and helping had taken on the features of the modern police state."

(*The Anabaptist Story*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975, sec. ed., pp. 182,183).

There are those who have ideas about "ruin" that are quite different than JND's thoughts. For example, a clergyman, R. Govett wrote:

Mr. Darby was honoured of the Lord first to set forth the glorious standing of the Church, as the Body of Christ. He showed also, in a paper of much research, how the true doctrine concerning the Church was lost immediately after the apostolic age.

(*Govett on Colossians*, Miami Springs: Schoettle).

One of the ways he maintained his position and did not identify himself with JND is this:

... and the church is in a greater state of ruin than even themselves have imagined ... I have no doubt myself, that no believer now is in possession of the gifts of the Spirit.

(*Have We the Gifts of the Spirit? Two Letters to Indoctus*, Norwich: Fletcher, p. 1, sec. ed., 1893).

JND held to the distinction between sign-gifts and those which were not. Only those gifts that are not sign-gifts are present today. R. Govett's idea tends to further the ruin.

Another type of perversion of the truth of the ruin is found in E. W. Bullinger's *Things to Come*, June 1902, vol. 8, p. 134:

... what was *rule* in the first epistle [of Timothy] becomes *ruin* in the second. Corporate position has vanished. Everything is intensely personal, and individual. All is "I" and "me," and "thou" and "thee."

The first two sentences are correct and agree with what JND brought out. The second two sentences are in accord with E. W. Bullinger's "ultradispensationalism." It sets aside the Lord's prescient provision for a day of ruin: Matt. 18:20. These are just two examples of denying the true character of the ruin and the Christian's resource in the midst of it, besides outrightly denying that there is any ruin.

120. *Collected Writings* 3:272-281. In a characteristically hostile spirit (with characteristic misrepresentations) against JND, the editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* (1872, pp. 87,88) wrote in a review:

What the Christian has amid the Ruin of the Church. By J. N. D. London.

Some friend has sent us this little work of J. N. D. Much of it is very unscriptural, much of it we do not understand, and all of it breathes the odor of a spiritual pride which is as truly offensive as it is supremely childish. The author seems to write by inspiration, and that inspiration enables him to dispense with the apostolic framework of the Church, and to constitute another organization of his own, which much resembles socialism, and which very manifestly partakes of the lawlessness of the lawless one, the antichrist, the man of sin. "The Church is in ruins" (p. 9) is the keynote of the book, and the inference from this is that J. N. D. is the man to build another structure upon these ecclesiastical heaps. The epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy are obsolete, for "the Church is in ruins." Strauss, Bunsen, and Colenso have not taken greater liberties with the Word of God than this writer has. It may seem a small thing to him to deny the perpetual authority of these epistles in the Church, but to one who "trembles at the Word," it is profanity quite as awful as that of German rationalism. ...

The temper of this writer, as well as his judgment, seem quite out of sorts. Anyone wishing to pursue this further might consult the same periodical for 1855, pp. 22-29.

121. *Collected Writings* 14:272-300.

122. *Collected Writings* 1:169-186.

123. *Collected Writings* 4:10-14.

124. *Miscellaneous Writings* 4:149-177.

125. *Collected Writings* 20:296,297.

126. *Collected Writings* 1:293,294 (1843).

127. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:516.

128. See *Synopsis, in loco*, and JND's writings on Eph. 1. See "The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times," *Collected Writings* 13:152-166.

129. *Collected Writings* 5:83.

130. *Collected Writings* 22:363.

131. *Collected Writings* 5:72; 2:141,163,290.

132. *Collected Writings* 2:28,162.

133. *Collected Writings* 1:245.

134. *Collected Writings* 32:276-278.

135. *Collected Writings* 2:141.

136. *Synopsis* 5:294,295.

137. *Collected Writings* 1:189; cp. 2:96.

138. [The eternal state is not a dispensation: *Collected Writings* 8:222; *Synopsis* 5:420].

139. *Collected Writings* 22:359-364.

140. *Collected Writings* 5:85,86,92-94.

141. *Dispensationalism Today*, pp. 82, 83. Cp. p. 180.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

143. *A Bibliographic History of Dispensationalism*, p. 5. The material in this book first appeared in the Dallas Theological Seminary journal, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Jan. 1944 - Jan. 1946.

144. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

145. Larry Crutchfield completed a doctoral dissertation in 1985, *The Doctrine of Ages and Dispensations as Found in the Published Works of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)*. I think that this work is even-handed and informative, and that the author diligently sought to understand JND -- whatever my disagreements with his conclusions. Regarding the system of C. I. Scofield, he noted the absence of the teaching of JND concerning the trial of the first man (p. 99) and the absence of JND's teachings regarding the ways of God in government in the earth (p. 94), in C. I. Scofield's system, but opted for that system.

The interested reader may compare his various charts with the one included in this book. Concerning his chart in Appendix I (p. 369) on JND's end time chronology, I suggest that the chart included in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire* (available from the publisher) will show what he has missed as well as his error on JND's view of the 70th week.

146. E. W. Bullinger did not hold the idea of the annihilation of the wicked though he held a doctrine sometimes called "soul sleep" of the dead until resurrection.

147. Some of Dr. Bullinger's notions regarding the mystery of Christ and the church were examined in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 1:124, etc.

148. It appears to me that J. C. O'Hair fell into this erroneous system by the way he tried to refute Pentecostalism. C. R. Stam (*The Berean Searchlight*, Jan. 1988, p. 293), says:

It was in a hotel in Indianapolis that Pastor J. C. O'Hair came to see that water baptism has no place in God's program for the Church, the body of Christ.

He had been invited to help an Indianapolis pastor whose congregation had been invaded by Pentecostalist teachings. Night after night he spelled out the difference between our Lord's "great commission" to the twelve and his greater commission to the Apostle Paul and to us. He showed from

the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul how the Pentecostal program, with its supernatural sign gifts, had passed away.

One night a man came forward at the close of the service and said, in effect: I am inclined to agree with all you have said, but if your premise is correct, would you not have to eliminate water baptism for today along with the sign gifts?" O'Hair replied, "Of course not," but the question kept robbing him of his sleep that night, until he concluded that the man had been right, that it was not Scripturally consistent, or logically possible to acknowledge the passing of the sign gifts but to continue practicing water baptism.

From that time he began to see the glory of the "one baptism" into Christ and His Body, and with that, the glorious truth of the mystery so dear to the heart of the Apostle Paul.

It seems to me that there is an implication that brethren like J. N. Darby, Wm. Kelly, Ed. Dennett, R. Holden, Wm. Trotter, etc., etc., could not really have had a correct grasp of the mystery. Of course, persons ignorant of their writings might think that.

149. P. M. Sadler, editor of *The Berean Searchlight*, in a letter to me, dated Dec. 15, 1989, affirmed that the new creation began with the salvation of Paul.

150. "Only begotten Son" is a divine name. "Firstborn is an acquired title of rank, of preeminence. As come into the world He takes the place of firstborn of all creation; as risen from among the dead, He takes the place of firstborn from among the dead; and concerning brethren, He must needs be firstborn among many brethren. It is not at all a matter of priority in time; it is a matter of preeminence in rank and dignity.

151. This refers to the character of the resurrection-life, not to jubilation or fruitfulness in the Christian.

152. Interestingly, in *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:406 and 3:15, referring to Christ as quickening spirit, he capitalizes "Spirit."

153. R. Jordan (Acts 9 position), *The Grace Journal*, Nov. 1989, p. 1.

154. C. R. Stam (Acts 9 position) says that "God's dealings with Israel at Pentecost prove that He had not yet concluded them in unbelief or cast them away at that time," *Acts Dispensationally Considered* Chicago: The Berean Bible Society, 1954, 1:69.

155. I hope the writer meant to say "age" because "the ages to come" refers to the eternal state while "the age to come" is the millennium.

156. R. Jordan, *The Grace Journal*, Nov. 1989, p. 5.

157. In Eph. 4, the gifts given are the men themselves, given from Christ, the head of the body, to activate and stir up the ministry of all the joints and bands. In 1 Cor. 12, the gifts are looked at as in the persons and are manifestations of the Spirit for profit. In Rom. 12, the gifts are viewed as services to God.

158. The Spirit will, of course, remain here as the omnipresent One, effecting the new birth during the tribulation. What think you of the understanding concerning what God is doing when posttribulationists object that 'If the Spirit is removed in a

pretribulation rapture, how can anyone thereafter be born again'?

159. See my *The Word of God Versus the "Charismatic Renewal,"* obtainable from the publisher.

160. *The Berean Searchlight*, Sept. 1984, p. 168. So also his, *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:70. R. C. Brock speaks similarly:

Paul is the only one who writes about this baptism BY the Holy Spirit. What took place at Pentecost was the baptism **with** the Holy Spirit BY the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:11; Acts 11:16). Christ continued His ministry to ISRAEL on the Day of Pentecost. *The Revelation of the Mystery*, p. 12.

161. *Letters* 3:467.

162. Actually there is one more such reference (Acts 11) where Peter refers to it in looking back to Pentecost.

163. P. M. Sadler, *The Berean Searchlight* Nov. 1989, pp. 229,230.

164. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

165. R. Jordan, *The Grace Journal*, Jan./Feb. 1991, p. 1.

166. His method here is to link together what is true (concerning Paul and Christ's headship) with his unfounded assertion.

167. *Did the Twelve Apostles Become Members of the Body of Christ?* Chicago: Berean Bible Society, 1963, p. 6.

168. C. R. Stam wrote:

Israel was the Church, God's called-out people, when she was in covenant relationship with Him. Similarly, the "my Church" of which our Lord spoke, was to be founded upon a recognition of Himself as Israel's Messiah (See Matt. 16:16; John 1:49; 11:27; etc.) not upon a recognition of Christ as the exalted Lord, the Dispenser of grace to a Lost world. *The Church, The Bride and the Body*, Chicago: The Berean Bible Society, p. 2.

Scripture says, "Christ, the Son of the Living God," "and upon this rock I will build my assembly" (Matt. 16:16,18). It is Christ, not as Israel's Messiah but, in his character as Son of God upon which this assembly is built. And note how Paul immediately began preaching Christ in this character (Acts 9:20). We know that it was Paul who *doctrinally* laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10,11). Note also that our Lord said He would build, not 'I am building.' The notion that Christ built a Messianic, or Kingdom, Church is another myth of the system we are considering. The church Christ referred to began at Pentecost.

169. C. F. Baker (Acts 13 position), *A Dispensational Theology*, Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1972, pp. 528, 529, calls it "the Kingdom Church which Christ was building" and "Church of Israelites" which Christ gathered around Himself and which existed at Pentecost.

170. C. F. Baker (Acts 13 position), *A Dispensational Theology*, p. 483.

171. *Ibid.*, p. 483.

172. *The Berean Searchlight*, Nov. 1989, p.230.

173. R.C. Brock, *The Revelation of the Mystery*, Pendley: St. Petersburg, June 1968, p.6. Obviously, the Acts 13 position does not accept this reasoning.

174. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:176. His theory can be illustrated thus:

Paul saved

kingdom	body
church	church

Thus with Paul's salvation the Kingdom Church suddenly becomes the body church. Concerning the "kingdom program," he says, "the kingdom program gradually disappeared, as the program for the one body emerged thus:

kingdom	body
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From *Did the Twelve Apostles Become Members of the Body of Christ?* p. 1. The first diagram is my representation of his view. The second diagram is his and it shows, amazingly, two very distinct programs going on at once. The truth is that there was one program that had several phases to it. Acts is the history of the Spirit's testimony to the resurrection and glorification of Christ. The NEW mission to the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) began at Jerusalem, gathered in believing Jews while exposing Israel's resistance of the Spirit's testimony, and then went to Samaria and then outward. In due time the great secret came out respecting the mystery, God having, however, formed the body at Pentecost.

175. Amillennialists and postmillennialists believe Joel's prophecy was fulfilled. Such see the church as the spiritual Israel and believe that the church was a subject of O.T. prophecy. Those who say that the body of Christ was formed at Paul's conversion, or later, also claim that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost. Their reason is that they view the early chapters of Acts as strictly and only a continuation of the era of prophetic fulfillment and thus not a period included in the period of the body of Christ.

176. It is argued that 1 Cor. 12:13 cannot be applicable to Pentecost because not all those classes were present. In response, we point out that there were not representatives of "all flesh" there either.

177. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:91.

178. *Ibid.*, p. 119

179. *Understanding the Book of Acts*, Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1981, p.21.

180. *Synopsis* 2:366, note.

181. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:68.

182. The reader will find the seven feasts of Lev. 23 positioned on a five-color chart in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, available from the publisher.

183. *The Grace Journal*, Nov. 1989, pp. 3,4.

184. See especially John's gospel.

185. I do not enter here on the abeyance of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom and also the introduction of the parables of the mystery form of the kingdom. It is clear that John's gospel shows the Lord speaking of the great salvation, though it awaited the atonement, His resurrection and glorification, and the descent of the Spirit for its propagation.

186. The gospel of John assumes the rejection of the Lord at its very beginning (John 1:11) and presents the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, as Savior of the world.

187. The theory that the signs and sign gifts were for the Jews (part of the system we are noticing) is false. The signs authenticated the Apostles, as sent from Christ. Paul calls them the signs indeed of the Apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). Scripture does not state that the signs were for the Jew, though Jews sought such. "So that tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe" (1 Cor. 14:22). Now, if you want to change the word "unbelievers" to "Jews," if you want to set up a theory that the signs were only for the Jews, as J. C. O'Hair did, and go on and on with that way of handling Scripture, you may end up holding the false system we have been noticing.

188. The Lord had spoken of bringing other sheep into one flock which were not of the (Jewish) fold (John 10:16).

189. He would have a remnant according to the election of grace that was there brought into blessing while exposing the fallen state of Israel, and their resistance to the Spirit's testimony to the resurrected and glorified Christ, even as in the stoning of Stephen who testified to His place in the glory.

190. *Acts Dispensationally Considered* 1:69.

191. *Paul's Gospel*, obtainable from the publisher. See J. N. Darby's *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 281, 282, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:17, *The Bible Treasury* 12:127,128, *Synopsis* 2:368, note (Stow Hill ed.).

192. *The Grace Journal*, vol. 3, # 5, May 1990, pp. 2,3.

193. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 355.

Concerning the alleged decree of reprobation, Wm. Kelly wrote:

Election is necessarily from God entirely apart from those that are the objects of it, as it means the exercise of His sovereign choice. If there is the smallest ground in the party chosen because of which God chooses, it is not His choice, but rather a moral discernment, which, far from being sovereign, is only an appraisal whether the person deserved or not. One may hold then as strongly as the stoutest Calvinist the free sovereign choice of God, but the reprobation of the wicked which the Calvinist draws from it, as an equally sovereign decree, is in my judgment a grave error. I do not therefore scruple to say a word upon it now, inasmuch as it is an important thing in both doctrine and practice. The idea that, if God chooses one, He must reprobate another whom He does not choose, is a fallacy and without, yea against, scripture. This is exactly where human influence comes in; that is, the petty self-confidence of man's mind (*Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, p. 508 (1875)).

Such reasoning in divine matters lead Calvinists to say that John 3:16 means that God loved the elect world. It is just such reasoning of the mind of man in divine matters that called forth the following from W. Kelly on God hating Esau:

Yet He deigns to answer in grace: I have loved you, saith Jehovah; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?" Jehovah, as usual, rises up to the source of things. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: Yet I loved Jacob." Then He adds, "and I hated Esau." I do not think it would be true to draw this inference at the beginning of their history. But it is just an instance of what the best of men do in their haste. God withholds the sentence of hatred till it is evidently justified by the conduct and ways of Esau, more particularly towards Jacob, but indeed towards Himself. In short, it would be quite true to say that God loved Jacob from the first, but that He never pronounces hatred until that be manifest which utterly repels and rejects Himself with contempt, deliberately going on in pursuit of its own way and will in despal of God. Then only does He say, "I hated Esau." Along with this He draws attention to the fact that He "laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Thus, apart from such profanity, if God "despiseth not any," we may be perfectly sure He hates not any. Such an idea could not enter a mind which was nurtured in the word of God, apart from the reasonings of men. I say not this because of the smallest affinity with what is commonly called Arminianism; for I have just as little affinity with Calvinism. I believe the one to be as derogatory to God's glory as the other, though in very different ways - the one by exalting man most unduly, and the other by prescribing for God, and consequently not saying the thing that is right of Him.

Abstract reasoning is like that of Job's friends, who were not bad Calvinists before Calvin, but they certainly did not say the thing that was right of Jehovah as Job did. The reason was this -- that Job did not indulge in theories about God and His government as they did. Job held to what he knew. Not that he had not his faults; for he shewed himself at length naughty and disputed against God's ways, as we know. But he was right in rejecting their effort to carry their point by human reasonings, which, ignorant of God's grace as much as of His government, insinuated that the tried saint was only a hypocrite after all. He was really farther from it than any of them; and justly clave to the Lord, no matter what they might urge: cockles might grow instead of barley before he would give up his integrity. He could not forswear God's grace nor his own faith. Things must lose their nature and the creatures of God change their being before Job would yield to man in what touched his relationship with God. No doubt there was too much vindication of himself, and there he was wrong; but he was right about God. He was quite sure that God was Himself, and would not deny Job, and held to both firmly. He was quite sure that none of his inquisitors loved God better, and this too was true. The book is a fine unfolding of man with God and God with man: nothing is finer in all Old Testament scripture in this way. Such a value of a real knowledge of God, and this too in the face of human reasonings which may come from pious men, but are none the better for that (*Ibid.*, pp. 506,507).

It is on account of such reasonings that Wm. Kelly said:

The tendency of all men is to become what people call either Arminians or Calvinists; and a hard thing it is to hold the balance of truth without wavering to either side. There is nothing, however, too hard for the Lord; and the

word of God is the unfailing preservative from either one or the other. I am perfectly persuaded -- spite of partisans who think only their own views, or freethinkers who have no difficulty in allowing that both are there -- that neither Arminianism nor Calvinism is in the Bible, and that they are both thoroughly wrong without even the smallest justification. The fact is, that the tendency to either is deeply seated in unrenewed minds -- that is, the same man may be an Arminian at one time and a Calvinist at another; and it is likely that, if he has been a violent Arminian one day, he may become a violent Calvinist tomorrow. But the roots of both lie in man and in his onesidedness. The truth of God is in His word as the revelation of Christ by the Spirit, and nowhere else (*Ibid.*, pp. 10,11).

194. *Collected Writings* 14:345.

195. *Collected Writings* 10:123.

196. *Collected Writings* 10:138. See also *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:202, 501.

197. *Antinomianism Revived* . . . , Toronto: Briggs, pp. 130,131 (1887). John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 110, has attempted to saddle JND with the doctrine of conditional election.

198. "The Doctrine of the church of England at the Time of the Reformation, of the Reformation Itself, of Scripture, and of the Church of Rome, Briefly Compared with the Remarks of the Regius Professor of Divinity," *Collected Writings* 3:1-43.

199. *Collected Writings* 32:43. See my paper, *Free-will, or, Not of Him That Willeth*, available from the publisher, for more quotations from JND, and from others, as well as a collection of Scriptures that place man in responsibility, and also shows that man cannot of his own will keep the law or accept Christ.

200. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:315,316. See also *Collected Writings* 10:290; 21:170. This may be compared with John Gerstner, *Wrongly dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 109.

201. *Collected Writings* 10:186.

202. *Collected Writings* 32:43.

203. *Notes and Comments* 1:268-275. See also 1:160-164.

204. *Notes and Comments* 1:268.

205. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:315,316. See also *Collected Writings* 10:290; 21:170. This may be compared with John Gerstner, *Wrongly dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 109.

206. *Collected Writings* 10:185-187.

207. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:477.

208. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:501, 502. See also p. 168.

209. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:476, 477.

210. *Collected Writings* 26:102, 103.

211. *Collected Writings* 10:221 .

212. *Collected Writings* 10:223-226.

213. *Collected Writings* 10:350, 351. See also 21:344; 27:267; 19:79; 32:357; 34:408; 29:277, 270. On reconciliation and propitiation, see *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:473; 3:135, 449, 460.

214. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:71-73.

215. Christ did not bear everyone's sins in His own body on the tree, nor was He a propitiation for the sins of the world. JND wrote:

Dr. W. says: "The atonement spoken of in Scripture was an atonement by which the sins of the world were removed." No such thought is found in Scripture; that He is an *ilasmos* for the world is said, but that the sins of the world are removed is wholly unscriptural. If so, there could be nothing to judge men for; for they are judged according to their works (Rev. 20:13), and the Lord says: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"; and the apostle, "Because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." It is said of Christ that He is *o airon*, not of the sins, but of the sin of the world, and that He baptizes with the Holy Ghost, not that He has taken away our sins. This taking away of sin will be completely fulfilled only in the new heavens and the new earth, and He, as Lamb of God, is this taker away; but that the atonement spoken of in Scripture was one by which the sins of the world were removed is utterly and wholly untrue (*Collected Writings* 29:264).

216. *Collected Writings* 29:286-288.

217. *Exposition of the Epistles of John*, London: Weston, pp.66, 67 (1905).

218. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:301, 302.

219. *Wrongly dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 240. It is his own denial that the believer has two natures (pp. 34, 137-141, 185, 213, 236, 249) that is at the bottom of some of his attributing to JND things that JND did not hold. The reader is advised to read JND, and not anti-dispensationalists' representations of him.

220. *Collected Writings* 3:181-188.

221. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 177.

222. I am not unaware of denials that the believer has two natures. J. Gerstner refers to the idea of two natures as "psychical schizophrenia," *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 213.

223. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 178.

224. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, pp. 172,173.

225. It follows, for example, that the disciples in Acts 1:6 did not know they had accepted the spiritual kingdom that allegedly the Lord proclaimed. They were still looking for the kingdom for Israel.

226. *Calvin's Commentaries* 19:175, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.

227. *Ibid.*, 17:125.

228. *Collected Writings* 8:359, 360.

229. *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 175.

230. See my *Free-Will; or, Not of Him that Willeth*, to be had from the publisher.