Elements of Dispensational Truth, Vol. 3

The Christian’s
Altar,
Worship,
Assembly,
Sanctuary,
and Circumcision,
with Notice of Two Forms of Modern Messianic Judaism
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Introductory Remarks

The Point to This Book

Disliking it when books do not state up-front the position from which they are written, the reader is hereby informed that this one is written in view of the recovered truth brought out by J. N. Darby -- which I believe to be the teaching of Scripture.

Thus, the writing of this book is not from the standpoint that the church has replaced Israel, or is the spiritual Israel, or is the Israel of God. After we Christians are caught up to be with Christ where He is (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:15-18), God will work with a Jewish remnant during Jacob’s trouble. Then when Christ appears in glory, He will smite the nations and place the purged Israel under the New Covenant in a distinct position, in the earth, among the nations, under His universal reign over the earth. This distinct position for Israel is not the same as the position of the assembly of God today.

One purpose in writing this book is to bring before the Christian reader that he is heavenly and has a heavenly calling -- and his place is to be outside the camp and inside the rent veil for individual and for assembly worship -- while being in the position of a stranger and pilgrim here, on his way to being with Christ above. This is the way he is viewed in Hebrews and Peter’s epistles. On the other hand, the epistle to the Ephesians views the Christian as presently seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. In that epistle, in keeping with that line of truth as seen seated there, we do not read of going into the heavenly sanctuary as we do in Heb. 10:19. Both lines of truth apply to us at the same time. Also, part 7 will bring before us numbers of consequences of the bearing of our circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11).

The epistles of Hebrews and of Peter were written to Jewish Christians -- at a certain point in time intended by God, of course -- regarding the unfolding of truth in the NT Scriptures in view of the fact that God had borne with the Judaistic practices and observances of early Messianic Jews. They had accepted Christ as the Savior and Messiah of Israel, but hung on to much from Judaism. Not paganism, but Judaism, had been a system authorized by God in His ways regarding the trial of the fallen, first man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. God was patient with their mixture of Judaism with some elements of Christianity until Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (which herein his two-year imprisonment is taken to be during 60-62 AD). During that two-year imprisonment he wrote Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, and Hebrews. 1 and 2 Peter were written about 63 and 64 AD, respectively. No doubt Peter had read Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews, acknowledging it as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15, 16), something to keep in mind when reading Peter’s epistles.
The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to direct the early Messianic Jews to go outside the camp; i.e., to depart from their mixing Judaism and Christianity. Modern Messianic Jews, of course, resist this and seek to make the NT compatible with their Judaistic practices. Indeed, they point to the Acts and its evidence of Judaistic practices of the early Jewish converts as justification for their system. (This mixture is the very form of Judaism that Heb. 13:13 addresses!) The NT suffers immensely in the Messianic Jewish expositions of Scripture as they insist that the NT is a Jewish book. We will address some of these matters and show some of the wonderful things for the Christian that are set aside by such Judaistic practices.

Regarding Gentile believers, the history of the church evidences an early, rapid Judaizing. The worst case is the growth of the Roman Catholic church. But Judaistic practices and elements are everywhere in Christendom, which is filled with professors in name only, as well as some real Christians. Many of these real Christians seem oblivious to the features of Judaism in the systems to which they adhere. What we consider herein is also for the consciences of all such, indeed for all of us, of course.

May the Lord give any reader of this book, including the writer, a deeper understanding of the truths that lead to separation from the camp and laying hold on our heavenly portion.

The Words Messiah, Christ, Christian, and the Relationship of Jewish and Gentile Believers

A few words concerning these terms may not be amiss. Regarding Messiah, Christ, and Christian, the following short discussion will indicate the way these titles are used in this book.

Christ, The Christ, ó χριστός. An official title of the Lord Jesus, which became used as a name. In John 1:41; 4:25 this title is linked with the Messiah of the OT. The Jews and Samaritans were expecting THE MESSIAH, “which is called Christ.” We find the title ‘Messiah’ in Dan. 9:25, 26 in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. The Hebrew word is mashiach and signifies ‘anointed.’ This term is employed as to the Lord Jesus in Psa.2:2: the rulers set themselves against Jehovah and His ‘Anointed.’ The same word is used in reference to the high priest and the king as God’s anointed; but the Lord Jesus is emphatically ‘the Anointed,’ this being the signification of the word ‘the Christ’ which should be read in many places in the NT where the AV {King James Version} simply has ‘Christ.’ In the Gospels it is nearly always ‘the Christ,’ and often in the Epistles, except where it is Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus which has more the character of a name. It refers to the Lord as Man, being anointed with the Holy Ghost.

In Daniel we read that Messiah the Prince would be cut off and have
nothing (margin), which was fulfilled when, instead of being hailed as Messiah by the Jews, He was rejected, cut off, and had, at the time, nothing of His Messianic honors, though, in His death, He laid the foundation of His future glory on earth, as well as effecting eternal redemption for the saved. We read in 1 Cor. 12:12 that as the body is one, and hath many members, “so also is the Christ”: the Head and the members in the power and the anointing of the Spirit form but one body.

Being rejected as Messiah on earth, He is made as risen from the dead both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36, and thus the counsels of God with regard to Him, and man in Him, are effectuated. Saints now are spoken of as having been chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. All things in heaven and on earth are to be headed up in the Christ, Eph. 1:10. As the Christ, He is the Head of the body the church (Eph. 4:15). But the subject can be merely touched on in a short article. ¹

**What Should Believers on Christ be Called?**

**Christian.** A title first applied to professed believers at Antioch (Acts 11:26). Agrippa used it when addressing Paul (Acts 26:28). Peter accepts it, saying that to suffer as a ‘Christian’ is a cause of thanksgiving (1 Pet. 4:16). ²

My attention has been drawn to the fact that Peter, a Jewish Christian, is the only Christian who applies “Christian” to a believer. This is from the apostle of the circumcision.

How good it would be if modern “Messianic Jews” would do as Peter says and suffer as Christians rather than as Messianic Jews. We are to suffer in the character of being Christians, not as being Messianic Jews. You deceive yourself if you think that names mean nothing, as you will find out in reading this book. You will see ample evidence that the relations and practices of present-day Christians and Messianic Jews is deeply affected by maintaining “Messianic Judaism.” That term does indeed convey the truth that “Messianic Judaism” is a form of Judaism, not a form of Christianity. It is quite at variance with the Christian’s altar, worship, assembly, sanctuary, and circumcision, which truths are reviewed herein for our help in the Christian walk. It is the desire of the writer that all who read these pages, including himself, will find grace from our Lord to stand clear of all Judaistic practices.

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1. Morrish’s Bible Dictionary.
2. Ibid.
Symbols and Quotations in This Book

Braces { } are used to mark material injected by myself into quotations of others.

To some of the references to Scripture in quoted material, the name of the book has been substituted for ch. or chapter to facilitate indexing. Quoted material has not been changed.

The iconic symbol ◆ placed at the start and end of some material indicates the material is quoted from J. N. Darby. The symbol ♦ is used for quotations from others. These symbols are used where 10 point type is used rather than 9 point indented quotations.

Quotations of Scripture by the writer are taken from the translation of J. N. Darby.

Acknowledgments


Also, I am indebted to Dennis P. Ryan for valuable editorial help.

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Chapter 1.1

God’s Promises to Abraham, and His Grace to the Church

by W. Kelly

No one denies that the promises made to Abraham flowed from the grace of God. But it is a serious mistake, affecting both our communion, and our conduct, to confound these promises to Abraham with God’s promise in Christ by the gospel spoken of in Eph. 3:6. It is agreed that the Abrahamic Covenant involved security, acceptance, favor, and friendship with God, for its objects. The question is, whether the Epistle to the Ephesians, for instance, does not reveal a far deeper and higher purpose of grace, which was never promised to Abraham, but was intentionally kept hid {Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3} until the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, consequent upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of God in heaven {Acts 2:32, 33}. Neither reason nor tradition will help, but hinder, the solution of the question. But, what says the scripture? Let us compare the two things, which I affirm to be totally distinct in range and character, though both find their source necessarily in the manifold grace of God.

The call and first revelation of the promise to Abram is found in Gen. 12:1-3,

Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and
curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Subsequently, Jehovah appeared unto Abram and said, “Unto thy seed I will give this land” (v. 7). What can be plainer? A particular land given to Abram and his seed, a great nation, and a great name; blessing from God to Abram, and he a blessing to others; God treating men as they treated Abram; and in him blessing secured to all the families of the earth. Blessings natural and spiritual to Abram and his seed, and so even to the Gentiles are, I believe, conveyed in this inalienable promise, part of which is repeated in still clearer terms in Gen. 13, and confirmed by sacrifice in Gen. 15. Then we have circumcision enjoined as the covenant sign in Gen. 17, where the name is changed to Abraham, “for a father of many nations have I made thee”; and, finally, after the son of the bondwoman is cast out, in Gen. 22 we have Isaac, the son of the freewoman, the child and heir of promise, raised up from the dead in a figure, and the oath. See Heb. 6.

By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen. 22:16-18).

All the nations, or Gentiles, are to be blessed in the seed, but they and the seed are quite distinct parties. The nations blessed therein are no more to be confounded with the Seed, than are the enemies whose gate the seed is to possess. There is blessing for both; but are the nations blessed in exactly the same way and in exactly the same degree as the seed? If it be so, where is the honored place of Abraham’s seed; where is their peculiar privilege in virtue of the promises to the fathers? Or, after all, do they stand on one level of common indiscriminate blessing? If it be not so, and the seed is to have its own special promised place by divine favor, above all the nations who are blessed in it, then is it evident that the covenant with Abraham is one thing and “the mystery” is another, wherein no such differences are found; but the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and joint-partakers of God’s promise in Christ by the gospel. The believing Jew from the heights, and the believing Gentile from the depths, of their earthly estate, are ushered into an unheard-of sphere of heavenly oneness in Christ, which is made good by the presence of the Holy Ghost on

3. In the most blessed and important sense, the Seed is Christ (Gal. 3:16). But, literally and quite truly, the seed means the Jews, as the Holy Ghost shows in Acts 3:25. Either sense suits the argument in the text.
earth. Such is “the mystery,” as far as regards the church.

For the doctrine of Ephesians is not merely justification by faith, and the death of Christ, as the basis of this divine righteousness, the sole ground on which stand all the saved from the beginning to the end of time: in Romans, we have that fully discussed, and applied to past, present, and future dispensations. Much less do we find here the death of Christ connected in a special way with the Jewish nation, or even with the spared Gentiles who may be saved during the future reign of the Messiah: of these things the Psalms and Prophets abundantly treat. But we are taught in Eph. 2:11-18, that, beside and apart from these applications of the death of Christ, there is a new and most glorious use to which the wisdom and the grace of God have turned it. He has founded on the cross, and effected by the Holy Ghost thereon given, a novel and heavenly structure, without parallel in the millennial period, and without precedent in the ages and generations which closed with the crucifixion.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Now, it is plain from scripture that the distinction of Jew and Gentile, with all its accompaniments, was set up of God, had His sanction so long as the earth in any way was owned (Matt. 10:5), and will be resumed when the church is caught up, and God begins to interfere immediately, and acts not, as now, in mere secret providence with the course of human things here below. The moment He enters upon the visible proof that there is a God Who judges the earth, the Jew appears first in responsibility -- in guilt, no doubt -- but first, assuredly, in blessing, by virtue of the promises to the fathers.

Accordingly the New Covenant already ratified in the blood of Christ, but suspended in its application, save to a remnant of the Jews and an election from the Gentiles, who are together brought into and form the church, and enjoy its blessings -- this New Covenant, when it takes effect in
all its value and in its literal results, will not neutralize but sanction the
divinely ordained separation of the Jew from the Gentile, and the supremacy
of the former above the latter.

I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the
house of Judah (Jer. 31:31).

Is there a word said in this covenant of obliterating the difference of Jew and
Gentile, of forming both into one new man, and of introducing them on the
same level of intimacy to the Father? On the contrary, there is not a syllable
about the Gentiles, but an emphatic assurance of blessing to the Jew,
Jehovah undertaking to put His law in their inward parts and write it in their
hearts; to be their God, and they to be His people; all of them to know Him
from the least to the greatest, for He will forgive their iniquity, and
remember their sin no more. There is no question that abundant blessing will
flow to the Gentiles.

Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of
hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of
host, in those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold,
out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of
him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that
God is with you (Zech. 8:22, 23).

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations
which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to
worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of the
tabernacles (Zech. 14:16; Micah 3, 5, 7:16; Jer. 3:17; see also Psa.
77; 96-106, &c.).

That is, the covenant order of blessing will be the Jews in the inner ring, and
the Gentiles in the outer, when all lands make a joyful noise unto Jehovah.

Nothing can be more certain than the fact that Israel, sanctified by
having Jehovah’s sanctuary in their midst, will be kept aloof from and above
the Gentiles, instead of both being made one body in Christ. That is to say,
the abolition of Jewish exaltation above the Gentile is only for the church of
the heavenly places. It was not so before Christ came the first time; it will
not be so when He comes again. The space between these two boundaries is
filled up by the formation of the church, where is neither Greek nor Jew,
circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but
Christ is all and in all: not a mere collection of all the individuals in every
different dispensation, but a body now gathered into one by the presence of
the Holy Spirit on earth, and united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His
heavenly glory. Neither of these things could be till Jesus was glorified
(John 7:39; 1 Cor. 12:13). It was then that Christ took His place above as
Head, and then that the church began to be called here below,

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ
himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:20-22).

As the difference just insisted on is of all importance, let us look at Isa. 59:20, 21; 60:1, 2, 3:

And the redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith Jehovah from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Here also it is clear that, in the coming dispensation to which the Holy Spirit in Rom. 11 applies the passage, preeminence over the Gentiles is guaranteed to Israel.

The wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee (v. 5).

The Holy One of Israel . . . hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. Therefore thy gates shall be opened continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted (vv. 11, 12).

Compare also the rest of this chapter, as well as Isa. 61 and 62. One portion of the first is so decisive and striking that it may be well to cite it.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them; and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles (is this the same common position?) and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are seed which Jehovah hath blessed.

Here, plainly and indisputably, we have the literal fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and his seed; but it is evident that the terms of the prophecy, equally with those of the original covenant, are irreconcilable with the notion of identical blessings to Jews and Gentiles, all difference between them being utterly nullified. 4 On the contrary, great as may be the

4. At most identification is only involved in that wonderful hint of “thy seed” (“as of one”) (continued...)
privileges to the nations of the earth, resulting from these promises, decided and blessed superiority will be the indefeasible prerogative of Israel. The Gentiles are to serve them, and the nations that will not shall perish. All this is in perfect accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant whose accomplishment in any strict sense is yet future without one feature of resemblance to the church, which is entirely above such distinctions. For the Christian it is grace.

The prophecy of Zecharias (Luke 1:68-79) is evidently Jewish in its sources, its associations, and its hopes, as indeed had been the previous announcement of Gabriel to him (vv. 13-17).

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, &c.

(is this the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God?)

that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us

(is this the character or manner of salvation to the church?)

to perform the mercy promised to our fathers

(are they really our fathers, or fathers of the Jewish people?)

and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father, Abraham, that he would grant unto us, &c.

It is conceded that many of the blessings are common, such as “in holiness and righteousness before him,” faith resting on Messiah and the new birth; for there are, of course, general principles which characterize all the people of God in all ages. But I affirm that, as a whole, this prophecy, as yet unfulfilled, and clearly based upon the oath sworn to Abraham, is not in any way a charter of church privilege. To say that it is, would be, in effect, to efface the peculiar doctrine of such Epistles as to Ephesians and Colossians; or, in other words, to deny unwittingly the being and proper character of the church of God.

Moreover, it was no secret that the nations were to be blessed. It was as ancient a promise, we have seen, as that which secured the peculiar seat of honor to Abraham’s seed. It was repeated to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and reiterated to Jacob (Gen. 38:14). A Jew ought not to have thought of Jehovah’s pledge of blessing to his race without remembering that he himself was to be the channel of blessing to the nations. Will it be affirmed that this most familiar
assurance of blessing to the Gentiles in the promised seed, published
frequently and undisguisedly (as the apostle Paul showed) in Moses, and the
Psalms, and the prophets, is the same thing as “the mystery” which has been
hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the
saints (Col. 1:26)?

Is that secret and silent which was published from age to age and rehearsed
from generation to generation? Can a simple and familiar covenant, revealed
so often by Jehovah, and so often appealed to by His people, from the book
of Genesis till the last prophet wound up the Old Testament canon (Mal.
1:11) -- can this be deemed a “mystery,” altogether concealed from the sons
of men? Surely not. Gentile blessing therefore, as involved in the
Abrahamic Covenant, which was the constant expectation of Israel, wholly
differs from “the mystery of Christ”;

which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is
now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This
mystery was not revealed before. It is now disclosed. From the
beginning of the world it was (not known to God’s people, but) hid in
God (Eph. 3:9).

Indeed, we have only to read Matt. 16:18 in order to see that, even in
the Lord’s life-time here below, the church did not exist save in the purpose
of God. It was His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, but actually existed only
after His death and resurrection. During His ministry He was not even
beginning to build it: “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Hence it is
said in Col. 1:18:

He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-
born from the dead.

Christ Himself, in resurrection, was the beginning. Souls had been born
again; sinners had been brought by the faith of the Savior. But the church
was a new body formed by the Holy Ghost, after its risen Head took His seat
in heaven. Hence Heb. 12:23 distinguishes the church from the “spirits of
just men made perfect” (i.e. the Old Testament saints), as plainly as from
myriads of angels, a general assembly. Scripture applies the term “Church
of God” only to the saints of the present period. The congregation of
Jehovah, Israel, was wholly different.

Is it maintained then that election, redemption, faith, life, saintship, are
peculiar to the church? By no means. The church of God shares these and
other blessings with all the faithful of all times. But this does not make all
the faithful to be the church; nor can it annul the peculiar standing which is
traced as the church’s portion, in Eph. 2, 3, 4. It is admitted fully that to us,
members of Christ’s body, it can be said, “All are yours.” Of the New
Covenant, though, strictly speaking, made with the house of Israel, we yet
enjoy the blessing; and if we are Christ’s, then are we Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. But it by no means follows that millennial Israel, for instance, though enjoying the New Covenant and the Abrahamic promise still more literally than ourselves, will have any portion in that mystery, or secret of God, which is distinct from either. Scripture speaks of the faith of Abel, of Enoch, of Noah; but that the Abrahamic Covenant was in operation as to them is assumption and false. Faith ever rests upon the word, *i.e.* the revelation of God; and the Abrahamic Covenant was not disclosed until the time of Abraham, though the Savior had been pointed to from the first (Gen. 3:15). Saints previously rested on a revealed Redeemer, not on an unrevealed covenant.

The real stumbling-block, as appears in scripture, has ever been, not so much the Jewish channel of outward testimony traced in Rom. 11 as the temporary leveling of Jewish prerogative, and the grace which gathers out of Jews and Gentiles, alike children of wrath as traced in Eph. 2. The ordinary notion, which prevails to the present, is a specious form of the same self-conceit which vexed the church from its early days.

The “new covenant” and “new testament” are merely various versions of the same Greek phrase, καὶ ἐν διαθήκῃ, of which the former is always, I believe, the right rendering, as regards the use of the full phrase in scripture. If so, the reasoning about the testator has no place save in the parenthesis of Heb. 9:16, 17 which seems owing to “inheritance” immediately preceding, besides being an admirable turn given to that other and familiar sense of the word διαθήκη singly. I do not believe the New Covenant to be identical with the Abrahamic Covenants, which are more extended in their scope, though, so far as Israel is concerned, they may coincide; but it is needless to discuss the point at this time.

Nor is there such an idea in the Bible as the grace-giving testament. The grace of God brings salvation, even to such as were strangers from the covenants of promise. There is no doubt that the shedding of blood is essential to the remission of sins, and that the New Covenant is much more too. Eph. 2, as we have seen, introduces other truth. Nor is it scriptural to say, that “the promise” and “the New Covenant” are convertible terms, though they may be intimately blended. But we can heartily agree that unconditionality stamps the Abrahamic Covenant, as the apostle so strongly insists in Gal. 3. It is evident that, when the Judaizers insisted upon the law, the apostle could appeal most powerfully to the promises of God, given so many centuries before the law (Gal. 3); when they insisted upon circumcision, he could triumphantly point to the faith which their father Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised (Rom. 4). If therefore God now justified the uncircumcision through faith, it was no more than He had done in the case of faithful Abraham.
Nor could any objections be more completely silenced. But to say that the Abrahamic Covenant is the channel of God’s grace to us argues an inadequate view of our wretchedness as outcast dogs of the Gentiles, as well as of the bright heavenly atmosphere into which we are brought, when baptized, Jews or Gentiles, by one Spirit into one body.

On the head of glory, Eph. 3:21 seems to show that the church, as the reflection of Christ’s heavenly glory, will not lose its singular blessedness “throughout all ages, world without end.” And Rev. 21:1-8 appears to confirm the idea that, even in the everlasting state, the holy city, new Jerusalem, is distinct from though connected with the men who people the then purged universe. It is true that the Old Testament speaks of Jehovah marrying Israel, and Israel’s land. Is it really meant that this equalizes them or their land with the Bride, the Lamb’s wife? But here one may pause. The grand principle has been already asserted.  

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Chapter 1.2

The Change Regarding God’s Patience With Early Messianic Judaism

Introduction

During the interval of Christ’s absence the work of God is predominantly among Gentiles, forming a people for His name (Acts 15:14). While James stated the truth concerning that fact, there were aspects to that work concerning which he likely was unaware at the time he so spoke. The work of the Spirit was the formation of the body of Christ at Pentecost and then the on-going incorporation of believing Jew and Gentile in that body (once-for-all formed at Pentecost), being members one of another, and united to the Head in heaven. The Gentile Christian was not elevated to the level of a Jew, saved or unsaved, nor made an Israelite, nor made a spiritual Jew. No, both Jew and Gentile were lifted up to “sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:16). God formed the two, in Christ, into “one new man” (Eph. 2:15). It was new, for it never existed before. Indeed, silence had been maintained regarding such things (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3).

Though not recognized by so many Christians, or by many Messianic Jews, God is doing a heavenly work now, forming a heavenly people (1 Cor. 15:48), who, as strangers and pilgrims here (1 Pet. 2:11), have a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Covenants are for the earth; this present work of God is outside of the covenants of promise -- which covenants belong to Paul’s kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5), i.e., to ethnic Jews, not Gentiles. We know from such Scriptures as Rom. 11:26ff, that eventually God will have a saved nation of Israel composed of ethnic Jews to whom He will make good the covenants of promise (Abrahamic, to Phinehas (priesthood), Davidic (kingship), and the New Covenant).

Regarding the present ways of God in the display of sovereign grace in forming the heavenly company, there is an election of grace (Rom. 11:5) among the Jews, who had been part of a system once owned of God (in contrast to paganism which never had such a place), though a system given
of God as part of the trial of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. In the earlier apostolic period, great patience was shown by God with those Jews who had (by sovereign grace) accepted the Lord Jesus as the predicted Messiah, who had come and died on the cross for them. We see evidence of this patience in Acts. We see in Rom. 14 patience with the weak brother, the reference being clearly to Christian Jews who did not really grasp their liberty in Christ. This epoch of God’s patience with Messianic Judaism was brought to an end, as marked in Acts 28, through the apostle Paul. During this epoch of God’s patience, the preaching of the gospel followed the pattern according to the statement “to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” In Acts 28 we see that the time arrived for the cessation of the application of such an order.

In the epoch of this patience with the Messianic Jews concerning adhering to so much Judaism, Christ was rejected by Israel at Jerusalem, where the gospel first went out, especially by Peter, to the Jew first. Subsequently, Peter was first used to bring the gospel to Gentiles. This followed the order of “to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Paul, too, followed this order until ended in Acts 28. So Israel at Jerusalem rejected the Gospel, and likewise at Antioch (as well as in between). And when Paul arrived a prisoner at Rome, the Jewish leaders there did the same thing. The fact that there was an election of grace among the Jews at various places does not negate the fact that Israel, as a nation, rejected the gospel as they had rejected the Lord Jesus.

Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews

There is much scholarly disagreement concerning who wrote Hebrews, as well as when it was written. Sometimes ‘scholarship’ gets quite ludicrous, as in the idea that Priscilla wrote it.

Concerning the writer of Hebrews, we ought not to expect Paul in his capacity as apostle to write to the Hebrews, for Peter was the apostle to the circumcision (Gal. 2). Paul could write as an inspired teacher. There may also well be another reason for anonymity.

There are two classes of evidence for believing Paul was the writer.

First, the Scripture statement -- Peter, the apostle of the circumcision

W. Kelly observed:

It is in fact the only Epistle attested as Paul's definitely by another inspired writer of the N.T. Yet this is the one which more than any other has been denied to the great apostle. What a proof of men’s trusting in their own wisdom, and of their blindness to divine authority! (The Bible Treasury, New Series 3:336).

7. 2 Pet. 3:15 is the Word of God, through the apostle of the circumcision, showing us who wrote Hebrews. In v. 16 he refers to what Paul wrote to the Hebrews as Scripture. If you say it was lost, you are saying that some Scripture was lost!

Second, the evidence from Hebrews itself:

(1) The writer was not one of the Lord’s disciples when He was here (Heb. 2:3).

(2) Hebrews was written from Italy (Heb. 13:24).

(3) He was hindered from leaving Italy (Heb. 13:19).

(4) He asks prayer for his release (Heb. 13:19; cf. Eph. 6:19).

(5) He knew Timothy was released (Heb. 13:23).

(6) He knew Timothy was not in Italy but he expected him (Heb. 13:23).

(7) He wanted to visit the Hebrew Christians with Timothy (Heb. 13:23). Tradition has Paul visiting east and west after his release from this first imprisonment at Rome.

The above considerations, pointing to Paul as the writer, also point to the fact that Hebrews was written from prison (c. 60-62 AD). There seems to be some amount of agreement that during that first Roman imprisonment period he wrote Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon (with disagreement concerning the order of writing). Let us keep in mind that this imprisonment involved Paul’s final word to the Jews (and through them, to the nation) in Acts 28, “Paul having spoken one word” (Acts 28:25). That was the final word before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This also marked the end of God’s patience with the early Messianic Judaism -- which the epistle to the Hebrews addressed. Hebrews is one of these prison epistles.
**Acts 28 and the End of Patience**

**With Messianic Judaism**

In Acts 28 we come to Paul’s first of two imprisonments at Rome. It was the Spirit’s purpose to stop the history of Paul at his two years in prison, subsequent to his session with the Jews when he arrived; where likewise the salvation of God was rejected. He quoted what the Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah centuries before (Acts 28:25-27). Their blinding had been fully manifested by the divinely appointed epoch we have been tracing to its conclusion: namely, Pentecost to Paul’s first imprisonment. Led by the Spirit, Paul pronounced this change:

> Be it known to you {Jews} therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the nations; they also will hear it (Acts 28:28).

This ends the recorded, inspired history, in Acts, marking clearly the end of the epoch of “to the Jew first and also to the Greeks.” Present day Messianic Jews and the Gentile supporters of their system will hardly acknowledge this. Messianic Jews do not obey Heb. 13:13 -- to go outside the camp of Judaistic practices and observances with some Christianity. Rather, they explain it so as to maintain their Judaism.

J. N. Darby wrote:

> The truth is, the associations of Christianity with Israel or the Jews -- founded (if I may venture so to speak) on the obligation the Holy Ghost was under in virtue of the promises of God and the intercession of Christ -- ceased within the period of Scripture history. Wrath was come upon them “to the uttermost”; it was no longer discipline, that is, in hope they might bend their neck. It could no longer be said, “It was needful that the gospel should be first preached to you, and seeing ye count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” The “to the Jew first” has ceased: no one now applies it, and very justly. They do not deny it; but it has had its accomplishment. And Acts 28 closed this solemn and wonderful history of the patience of God with His poor stiff-necked people, beloved, yet disobedient, so that wrath should come upon them to the uttermost; and the “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles” has its large and full accomplishment.

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8. I understand that in Roman law regarding such a case as Paul’s, if in two years no charges are brought, dismissal was automatic.

9. *Collected Writings* 8:159. He also wrote:

If we trace the actual order of church history in the Acts, we shall find the breaking up and scattering of the central and only church of Jerusalem by the death of Stephen, gone to Jesus -- (continued...)

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That is the profound and solemn point on which the inspired history in the Acts closes. It will be well to consider W. Kelly’s closing remarks in *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* given just below. You will note that he remarks that Paul wrote to the Hebrews while in this first imprisonment at Rome. Surely it is so that he then wrote Hebrews -- consequent upon this great change we have been considering. The spiritual appropriateness and connection with this change gives rise to Paul writing the Hebrews to go outside the camp (Heb. 13:13; i.e., outside of Judaistic practices and observances, with some Christianity).

Two things appear in the apostle: entire superiority to the rancor that had hitherto pursued him from the Jews, and also untiring zeal to seek that they should hear the truth, and not judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. Nor was there the least underhand work. He invited their chief men, not the less informed; and he explained that, without wrong to the Jews or to their hereditary customs, he was a prisoner from Jerusalem among the Romans; who after examination were minded to acquit him but for the opposition of the Jews, which forced his appeal to the emperor. But he points out the real offence -- his stand for the hope of Israel. He might have exposed their conspiracy to murder him when in Roman hands, a fact which, if published in Rome, would have as completely served himself as blasted the Jews. But not a word escapes him, save of unselfish love, saying he had no charge against those that had so persistently sought his death. It was truly for the hope of Israel he wore the chain -- for the Messiah fraught with blessings of every kind, never to wane, for Israel. And if Jews turned a deaf ear, those sure mercies (before which Israel one day will melt in true repentance) must find suited objects, if not in the favored land, in the barren wilderness where open outcasts now live to God’s glory, the objects of the grace of Jesus.

Of this grace to Gentiles, however, which had roused the hate of Jews elsewhere, the apostle does not yet speak, but simply of the fact that it was for the Christ, the hope of Israel, that he was a prisoner.

9. (...continued)

and then the church on earth scattered; thereon Saul called for, an entirely new instrument to Gentiles, rulers, and the people of Israel; and thereon the union of the church with Jesus in heaven for the first time mentioned, “Why persecutest thou me?” but after this (though the principle of Paul’s mission and the union of the church with Jesus {Christ} was established), the patience of God continuing to work by the ministration of Peter . . . We find the lingering traces of habitual evil in the saints, for they objected to Peter his having gone to the Gentiles; yet this was the final sin of the Jews. Such was the patience of God, that they were not, historically, then shut up, till Paul’s intercourse with them at Rome (Acts 28); and even so, it was blindness in part, not stumbling to fall, and there was a remnant according to the election of grace (*Collected Writings* 2:176, note).

The fact is that the Jews, having failed with successive governors, and even with king Agrippa, were shrewd enough to apprehend the folly of carrying their complaints of Paul to Caesar. They had no true criminal charge. And what would a Roman emperor care for their religious accusation? The Jews therefore replied that neither letters nor visitors had laid any formal complaint before them against Paul, but that they wished to hear what he had to say of the sect so universally spoken against as Christians. This was precisely what the apostle’s heart desired.

And having appointed him a day, many came unto him into the lodging, to whom he expounded . . .

Thus God gave His servant an open door to the very people whom he loved so well and whose brethren’s malice made him a prisoner, and so much the longer because there was no one to lay a definite charge. It was a moment of exceeding solemnity to the apostle’s spirit, as there in Rome he laid bare the truth of God’s kingdom and of the Person of Jesus from the law and the prophets for one long day; and with the result that some were persuaded of the things that were said, while others disbelieved, a stronger expression than their simply not believing. The word of God in the light of Jesus comes to put them to the proof, as it does and is intended to do.

But if disagreeing among themselves they took their leave, Paul reiterated the long suspended sentence, already pronounced by the Judge Himself in John 12:37-41 seven centuries and more after Isaiah was inspired to utter it from the vision in the temple in the year when king Uzziah died (Isa. 6). What a witness of divine patience as well as of sure judgment on His own people! Jehovah, the God of Israel, sent His prophet with the message originally. Then Jehovah-Jesus toward the close of His rejected testimony of love and light in their midst departed and hid Himself, after having done so many signs which manifested the Father and the Son at work in grace. Yet they believed not in Him, according to Isa. 53; yea more, they could not believe, for the judicial spell was taking effect, fruit of despising every word and proof of God Himself, the Son, on earth.

These things said Isaiah, because he saw His [Christ’s] glory, and he spake of Him (John 12:41).

Such is the comment of the inspired Evangelist. Now the word is again cited by Paul, only with this emphatic reference -- ‘Well spoke the Holy Spirit.’ He Who of old gave the prophet to see, hear, and write, was now sent down from heaven to make good Christ’s glory, and is declared to be the One Who then and thus spoke. The Spirit had been rejected by the Jews as the witness of the glorified Son of man, as truly as the Son on earth had been, and Jehovah as such of old. On the ground of responsibility all was over with the chosen people, who, having failed in righteousness, abhorred
sovereign grace in the gospel. But the mercy they despised will be their only ground in the latter day, when the last empire of the Gentile rises up to oppose the returning Lord at His appearing in glory, in alliance with the Antichrist in the land of Israel. These are the Beast \{Rev. 13:1-12\} and the False Prophet \{Rev. 13:13-19\} of the Revelation.

Meanwhile the Jew is finally cut off, and before the apostasy is come and ‘the man of sin’ \{2 Thess. 2\} revealed, the gospel goes forth on its errand of heavenly mercy to the Gentiles. ‘They also will hear,’ said the messenger from his bonds in Rome. And so it has been; so it is; though the shadows deepen as the end of the age draws near. Then an ungrateful Christendom will cast off the faith, and more and more return to naturalism, in love not only of present things but of idolatry, and in man set up as true God, that wrath may come to the uttermost on all, whether Jew or Gentile, who spurn grace and bow down to the creature lifted up to destruction by Satan in the despite and denial of the Father and the Son.

But meanwhile ‘this salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles.’ For the grace of God goes down to the lowest when the light of the knowledge of His glory shines, as now in the gospel it does in the face of Jesus at His right hand. Thus Israel is cast off, the Gentiles hear and the apostle was in bonds. So the history ends.

But the apostle, a prisoner in Rome, sent thence to the Jews the deepest message they ever received from God, as also Paul sent to the saints at Ephesus and Colosse the fullest words on the body and its Head, and on Christian experience to the Philippians, and personally to Philemon: so fertilizing was the stream that flowed through him in his captivity.

And he remained two whole years in his own hired lodging, and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness unhinderedly (Acts 28:30, 31).

Such is the simple, solemn, and dignified close of inspired ecclesiastical history. Some speak of it as abrupt, because it does not tell us of the subsequent imprisonment of the apostle and his death. It is the same spirit of unbelief which complains of the two Gospels that do not set before us the ascension scene; as if God did not know best how to reveal His own truth. Paul is a prisoner, yet not so as to hinder the going forth of the truth even in Rome. To know more of the apostle we must read closely the word; yet even so nothing is there to encourage curiosity, superstition, or hero-worship, but everything that God in all things may be glorified by Jesus Christ.
What It Means to be Outside the Camp

(10) We have an altar of which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle; (11) for of those beasts whose blood is carried [as sacrifices for sin] into the [holy of] holies by the high priest, of these the bodies are burned outside the camp. (12) Wherefore also Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate: (13) therefore let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach: (14) for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek the coming one (Heb. 13:10-14).

Introduction

The thrust of Hebrews has already been noted regarding its bearing on the early Messianic Judaism. That many Messianic Jews disobeyed the epistle to the Hebrews after its writing is no more surprising than that so many Gentile Christians disobey Scripture then and now, as well as do present-day Messianic Jews.

Various treatments of Hebrews, both as an entire book and regarding various subjects and chapters have been written by J. N. Darby. Below, we shall consider part of a paper answered several particular errors involving the aim of Hebrews and to whom it was written. Thus, the extract shows the character of the present priesthood of Christ, that though in resurrection Christ is declared priest forever after the order of Melchizedec, He will function in that order of priesthood in the millennium. Presently Christ’s priesthood is of a heavenly order, in a heavenly sanctuary, and applies now. This treatment of the matter will bring forward other important truths. The extract will be supplemented in footnotes by extracts from other of his writings on Hebrews, especially with a few remarks upon Heb. 13:12, 13.

Hebrews deals particularly with certain central elements of the Old Covenant, namely, the priesthood and the sanctuary, and also the sacrifice and the altar. The message to the Hebrew Christians is that the shadow, under the Mosaic system, is displaced by the image itself (Heb. 10:1).

Before we come to the point in Hebrews (13:9-16) concerning going outside the camp, it is expected that we have read the previous part of Hebrews and profited from it. It is needful to have read concerning all the

ways in which the things of Christianity are called “better,” 12 or “more excellent,” 13 or “greater,” 14 or “once for all,” 15 “once,” 16 “perfect/perfected,” 17 mostly by way of characteristic contrast with the tabernacle system.

The temple is not referred to in Hebrews but the tabernacle, because the tabernacle foreshadowed figurative representations of the things in the heavens (Heb. 9:23).

The temple of Solomon pointed to the earthly things of the millennial kingdom but the tabernacle foreshadowed the heavenly privileges that we Christians have as our portion -- though few Christians are in the good of the appreciation of it.

The “camp” refers to Judaism. Consequent upon the writing of this inspired epistle, the Hebrew Christians were to disconnect themselves from Judaism -- i.e., separate from, abandon, withdraw from, its principles, practices, and rituals. Moreover, where we see the mixture of Judaistic principles and practices among Gentile Christians, that also takes on the character of the camp, from which those who seek the heavenly things to which the tabernacle pointed need to be “without,” i.e., outside. Inside the holiest and outside the camp are correlative positions brought before us in Hebrews. Indeed, in the passage quoted above we see the two positions stated in the type of the sacrifice for sin:

(1) the blood carried into the holy of holies, and

(2) the body of that sacrifice burned outside the camp.

The Lord Jesus suffered outside the city of Jerusalem -- outside the seat of Judaism -- and there He shed His precious blood. The blood rent the veil, so to speak. The infinite value and efficacy of the blood of the atonement was before the throne of God immediately it was shed, and consequently the veil was rent from the top to the bottom. The Son of God, as God and man, imparted the glory and value of His Person to the work done on Calvary.

14. Heb. 3:3;
18. The Son of God took holy humanity into His Person. He is the God-man. He took humanity in order that His body might be given in death. While death is a human thing, it was the act of His Person. The sufferings in the three hours of darkness, the voluntary death, and the shedding of His blood -- the atoning work -- have the value and glory of His Person imparted to them. Such value and glory is necessarily infinite.
The blood of the atonement had the glory and value of His Person imparted to it. This is so because in the incarnation the Son of God took humanity into His Person. We must bear in mind that the work on the cross was the work of the God-man.

The glory and value of His Person is seen in the type in Lev. 16 when the special incense -- the compounding of which for another use warranted the death penalty -- was placed by Aaron, in the sanctuary, upon the hot coals from the altar of burnt-offering that was in a censer. A cloud of the incense rose up before the Shekinah on the mercy-seat. This cloud filled the holy place and enveloped the cloud upon the mercy seat, yes, enveloped the Shekinah. J. T. Armet remarked that righteousness can meet the claims of righteousness, but only a cloud can meet a cloud. It is the glory of the Person of Christ meeting the glory of God! How blessed it is to meditate on this. True indeed, only glory can meet glory. Only the glory of the Son, as man, could accomplish that work on the cross that met the claims of the glory of God. The Son glorified God in His majesty, nature, and glory. Glory met the claims of glory. The blood sprinkled before and on the mercy seat was presented in the value of the cloud of incense rising from the hot coals of the altar of sacrifice. The value of the blood Christ shed is commensurate with the value of His Person. This explains the way in which the apostle John presents the value of the propitiation wrought:

and he is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2).

John did not express it that Christ offered a propitiatory sacrifice, but the way he states it is: He is it! This shows that the value of the propitiation is commensurate with His personal worth. This value is beyond human comprehension though we in our measure apprehend something of its value. The blood of the atonement includes as its value the value of Christ’s sufferings in the three hours of darkness (when made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21)); the value of His death which He died as an act of His own will (John 10:18; the offering of Himself (Heb. 9:23); once-for-all (Heb. 9:26)); and the value of His shed blood, accompanied by the water of cleansing (John 19:34). 19 He bore “the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28), not of all! This text also tells us that He has “been offered once.” It is non-repeatable. We are perfected in perpetuity (Heb. 10:10) and have no more conscience of sins as standing out against us (Heb. 10:2) regarding coming under eternal punishment for them. With respect to His work, therefore, in contrast to standing priests in the tabernacle service, He sits in perpetuity (Heb. 10:14; cp. Heb. 1:3). In resurrection, He is given the place of a priesthood after the order of

19. Sin makes us dirty -- defiled -- as well as guilty. The water from His side points to His work providing for our cleansing from the filthiness of sin, while the blood points to expiation of guilt.
Melchizedec (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20), though the exercise of that priesthood awaits the implementation of the New Covenant in the millennium. Meanwhile, He is high priest according to a heavenly order in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 10:21), to which we have entrance, by His blood.

That the Lord Jesus did this work outside the gate of Jerusalem is likened, by the Spirit, to the body of the sin-offerings being burned outside the camp. Look at the text; is that not the fact? However, in the type, the blood of the sacrifice was presented in the holy of holies (Heb. 13:11-12). These are the two positions that the Hebrew Christians (Messianic Jews, if you will) were called upon by the Spirit of God, in the epistle to the Hebrews, to take. One position is on earth and the other is in heaven. In Heb. 13:13-15, the order is (1) that we are to go outside the camp, then (2) we are instructed to offer the sacrifice of praise continually.

(1) On earth, our place is to be identified with a rejected One, outside Judaism. In Hebrews, you are not outside Judaism if you are partaking of things of Judaism which are physical shadows now displaced by spiritual realities. You are not outside Judaism when you have one foot in Judaism and the other foot in Christianity. You are eating husks and a little of the kernel. You are engaged with shadows and just a little of the reality.

Moreover, there is no place for a class of go-betweens between the worshiper and Him to Whom worship rises. There is no earthly sanctuary; or of repeated offerings such as the Romanist mass.

(2) Our correlative place is where the efficacy of the blood of the atonement fills the holies, where Christ is minister of the sanctuary (Heb. 8:1, 2). It is by that once-for-all shed blood that the worshipers are once-for-all purged (Heb. 10:1, 2) and in virtue of that blood that we have entrance into the holies above (Heb. 10:19); where He leads the singing of the assembly (Heb. 2) -- inside the veil, outside the camp. He is the high priest there and we are priests there. Can you imaging being in spirit there above with another person between us and Him? Such a thing goes on here on earth in Judaized systems that men have set up, contrary to God’s word, under specious pleas concerning why it must be done.

Is it not the fact that the epistle to the Hebrews was written to those who were engaged in a mixture of Judaism and Christianity? Why, present-day Messianic Jews point out the Judaistic practices in the book of Acts as justification for their own practice of Messianic Judaism now. Do you think that Hebrews was written to say that Messianic Judaism is acceptable to continue with? Is that its message? Messianic Jews and Judaized Christians will, of course, attempt to explain the epistle to the Hebrews so that it does not condemn their Judaistic practices.

In going outside the camp, do not leave it by walking backwards away from the camp, still facing it. Turn your back to it and leave it.
When the will is engaged in any doctrine, it leaves one but a faint hope of its being given up by him who holds it . . .

The theory is, that the Epistle to the Hebrews is for the remnant after the Church is gone, not for us Christians; and that Christ’s intercession is simply His presence before God for us in the worth of His work -- nothing active; that there is no exercise of any priesthood after the pattern of Aaron’s on the part of Christ. I could hardly have thought anyone could have made such statements. But they are made.

The only priesthood of Christ is Melchisedec, and that is for blessing, not intercession. The intercession, as I have before said, is His maintaining us before God in all the value of His own person and work.

Israel will be in the land in unbelief, keeping the commandments of Moses this epistle takes them up on that ground and tells them Christ is the end of the law, &c.

Christ is indeed on the right hand of God -- He is there by right and title; but He is there also for us, and so He is there presenting Himself as the Head and the representative of the redeemed. It is His presence intercedes or avails for us.

Some who would not say quite so much [that Christ had a double priesthood], yet say that though Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec only, yet He exercises it at present after the character of Aaron. . . . Thus they make the word of God of none effect by their tradition.

Referring to Christ’s work and the Spirit’s, the writer says,

Still, one is a finished work abiding before God in all its finished perfectness, the other is that which is carried on from age to age in the world; and from day to day in the heart of the believer; and the two works, for they are two, are effected by different persons and differ greatly in character; one is completed, the other not; and it is because
one is completed and not to be added to and is ever in its completeness before God, that the other is being carried on by that other person.

And certainly, if we take the testimony of the book itself, it is clear that it is the world (or, habitable earth) to come whereof we speak, and that is assuredly connected with Israel, not the Church being gathered.

Again,

Melchisedec priesthood is prominently presented, and from Psa. 110 we know that to be coincident with the rod of strength out of Zion.

And, quoting from me as to this priesthood, he says,

it is blessing and refreshment after and consequent upon the destruction of all enemies; it is not that which Christ the Lord now exercises,

And the way in which they [these matters] are here treated . . . shows that it is not the Church as being gathered that is contemplated, but that which follows after the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

My purpose is to go through the Epistle to the Hebrews sufficiently to see what its true aim and bearing is, and then I will take up particular statements to show how utterly groundless they are . . . Now I fully admit, and have often stated, that the Epistle has the Jews as a people in view, Christ having died for the nation {John 11:51; 52; see Rom. 15:8}; and it is interesting to enquire in its place as to the bearing of this on the remnant, after the Church is gone. I will try and touch on it briefly; but our present enquiry is, Does the Epistle apply to Christians?

The Epistle to the Hebrews at the time it was written was written to somebody. To whom? Either to Christians who at the same time were Jews, 21 or to unbelieving Jews who rejected the Savior. The answer to this question is an answer to the whole theory. No doubt there are interesting and important details to consider after it is answered. But if it was written to Christians the whole theory is proved false. I have not to enquire as to my use of it and to whom it may apply. I have learned to whom it did apply -- to Christians, and though specially addressed to Jewish Christians (for such there were, Christians jealous of the law and frequenting the temple, and offering sacrifices) and adapted to their case; yet available for all Christians, in the doctrines by which it acts on these Jewish Christians, though not as to the circumstances in which they were found, for we are not in them; though we may be in very similar ones, when the professing church has judaized.

I repeat then my question: To whom was it addressed when written?

Were the unbelieving Jews then “partakers of the heavenly calling?” {Heb. 3:1}. If not, it applies to Christians. Had the unbelieving Jews taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and enduring substance? {Heb. 10:34}. Had they to consider the end of the conversation of their departed rulers whose faith they were to follow? Who had an altar which they had no right to eat of, who served the tabernacle? The unbelieving Jews? Why, they are in express contrast. Christians, christian Jews, were therefore to leave the system which they up to that time had been walking with {Heb. 13:12, 13}. I ask any sober person to read ch. 13 through and say, Was the epistle addressed then to Christians or not? If it was addressed to Christians, as Christians, and because they were such, the question is answered and set at rest: most interesting for Christians to enquire its import and value for themselves, but as belonging to themselves and addressed to themselves.  

But I anticipate a little the details, and will enquire now regularly what proofs the Epistle gives of being addressed to Christians, though not speaking of church privileges as such. The writer places himself amongst those he writes to. This is not denied; and is clear from the beginning of the second chapter. Was the writer among the unbelieving Jews? For it was addressed to some one then. Those addressed had received the teachings of the apostles. There was danger of letting them slip; but they had heard and received them. He speaks of the world to come, but was not in it, for Jesus was sitting at the right hand of God, all things being not yet under His feet. But he speaks for himself and those he writes to: “We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor.” This last is an important point. Besides His divinity -- it is that which the first chapter insists on -- it is characteristic, specifically characteristic of the whole Epistle. I mean that Jesus was sitting at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens: not, after the destruction of His enemies, a priesthood of blessing on His own throne. Thus, in the wonderful statement in Heb. 1:3: the groundwork of the epistle, the place

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22. I am aware that the author says, “Were there not at that time a Jewish remnant, some of whom might listen to these last words of exhortation, own Jesus, and be brought into church position?” But this alters nothing. However God might dispose their hearts to hear, they were still unbelievers -- had no part in Christ -- and belonged to that part of the nation which had refused Messiah. The question is, Is the Epistle addressed to believers or to unbelievers? I do not even admit that the remnant in the last day will be in the state of those here spoken of. These were yet unbelieving, with a full present Christianity; those, though not a freed people knowing salvation, will be a repentant and expectant people, otherwise prepared to say, “Blessed is he that cometh,” &c. But, though confirmatory of what I say, this is not the question. These were unbelievers: is the Epistle addressed to such?
Christ is found in, is, having “by himself purged our 23 sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.”

The position which makes the basis of the whole Epistle is Christ’s present position, not His Melchisedec position, but a heavenly Christ sitting at the right hand of God on high. So when the writer has gone through his doctrine on this subject, he gives the summing up of it: --

We have such an high priest who is set at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

When His position is considered in reference to His manhood, as we have seen, all things are not put under His feet; He sits at the right hand of God till they are. We see Him crowned with glory and honor. He suffered being tempted here, that He may be able to succor those that are tempted. Neither the position nor the service has any possible application to a Melchisedec priesthood on earth. Temptation and conflict will not exist then. The Melchisedec priesthood, the writer agrees and insists on, is, in its exercise, after the destruction of all enemies; Satan will then be bound. Antichrist’s time is not the time of Melchisedec’s priesthood; and the exercise of Melchisedec’s priesthood is not the time of temptation. Further, the object in view is bringing many sons to glory. The remnant are not the object of this purpose. The place of Christ, the service of Christ, and the object of God all refer to the saints at this present time, not, as such, to a Jewish remnant to be blessed on earth, or to a Melchisedec priesthood in its acknowledged exercise as such.

Does Heb. 3 teach us any other doctrine, or the same founded on the same truth of Christ’s heavenly present glory? Christ is as Son over God’s house. That is the position in which the Epistle views Him, not in a Melchisedec one. And note here, He is the high priest of our profession, compared to Moses and Aaron; that is according to the doctrine of Heb. 1 and 2. Whose profession? The unbelieving Jews? An unbelieving remnant when the heavenly saints are gone? A Christian, more than a Christian, we are told, writes the Epistle, and says, “our profession,” -- and this means unbelieving Jews, or an expectant remnant!

But I prefer at present to follow out the direct teaching of this Epistle, which makes all clear, if anything can, if there is spiritual intelligence. Further, then, in this chapter it is said, “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” To whom does this apply? For whom is it written? Are unbelieving Jews, however

23. I do not insist on our sins, as the reading is questionable. It would otherwise be -- having made the purification of sins, He sat down. I insist on the position, which is the basis of the Epistle.
inclined to listen, the house of Christ as the exalted Son of God? Are they to hold fast their profession, the beginning of their confidence and rejoicing of hope, firm to the end? The Jewish remnant is not, further, a partaker of the heavenly calling, but of the earthly. In a word, thus far we have Christ, not as Melchisedec priest, but as sitting at the right hand of God, the high priest of our profession; and those addressed are “partakers of the heavenly calling” {Heb. 3:1}, and are to hold fast their first confidence. We, says the writer, are His house if we do. “Made partakers of Christ,” which in English might embarrass a soul, offers no difficulty, but the contrary. It is final partaking with Him in glory, according to Heb. 1:9, where “fellows” is the same word. Some remarks on how far this chapter may subsequently suit the remnant in its use of the wilderness history I will make when I refer to that point.

In Heb. 4 it is said, “For we which have believed do enter into rest.” Does “we which have believed” (πιστεύσαντες) apply to unbelievers? and this of the rest of sons whom God was bringing to glory? Again I read,

Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Whose? Whose then? The unbelievers willing to listen, or even the Jewish remnant after the Church is gone, have no profession to hold fast which a Christian could call “ours,” when he referred to having a high priest in the heavens. This priesthood moreover, a present priesthood which “we have,” has nothing to do with a Melchisedec priesthood; it is a priesthood for the time of need, a priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are, except sin; so that we can come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy and help in time of need. This is priesthood, and not Melchisedec priesthood, after enemies are destroyed; but what enables us to come boldly to a throne of grace for mercy and help.

In Heb. 5 the “for” of this first verse shows that the Aaronic priesthood was founded on this very principle. It is not Christ’s priesthood itself, as the fifth verse very clearly and positively shows; but it takes the Aaronic priesthood as a sample of the thoughts of God in priesthood, clearly not Melchisedec priesthood. It was different from Christ’s, inasmuch as the Aaronic priesthood had sympathy while in, and because they were in, the same weakness as the others who drew nigh to God; whereas Christ’s priesthood is exercised in the heavens. The partaking of the sorrows, when here, fitted Him for it, as Heb. 2:18; 4:15, 16 show, and Heb. 5:7. But these took place in the days of His flesh before He became a priest. He became that when perfected on high, for “we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens.” This makes the place and nature of His priesthood as clear as possible. He was tempted and suffered here below, as we suffer, to be fitted for it, touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but He
exercises it on high. These two points are the fundamental and essential ones of the doctrine of the Epistle, while it clearly states that it is for us. He is the high priest of our profession. He is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. That those whom the apostle thus addresses were Christians will appear in the strongest light from what is here and afterwards said of them -- Christians in danger of being led away by Judaism and of apostatizing.

“For the time ye ought to be teachers” (Heb. 5:12). What had time to do if they were unbelievers or Jews? or how could the writer say to the Jewish remnant after the Church was gone, that they for the time ought to be teachers? Ye ought to be teachers. Who? The unbelieving remnant? 24

And now let the reader remark here what lies at the root of all this question.

We have seen, as clearly as scripture could make it, a priesthood based on Christ’s being exalted at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens on the one hand, and on His having been tempted and having suffered and having learned obedience here below in the days of His flesh on the other; the priest of our profession who has the heavenly calling; a priest, as we shall see, who is entered into the heavens as our forerunner; and able, as having suffered, to help those who are tempted; and this priest is the priest according to the order of Melchisedec. (See Heb. 5: 7-10.) We have the whole process of His perfecting for priesthood; and then He is saluted of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Is it not perfectly clear that, though personally the priesthood be not after the order of Aaron, but a new one, the exercise of the priesthood is not after the similitude of Melchisedec? Save what belongs to the person, not one element of Melchisedec priesthood is here found. The priest is in heaven, and profits by sufferings experienced here below to succor a tempted and suffering people. So that we come boldly to the throne of grace. I add to this, that it is after He has perfected the work of propitiation, Heb. 1:3 to 2:17, where reconciliation should be propitiation (ιλάσκεσθαι); but His priesthood is wholly and expressly on high, and He is on no Melchisedec throne, no throne of His own at all, but on the Father’s throne, on the right hand of the throne of God; not after His enemies are all subdued, but expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. His priesthood is this; not Melchisedec priesthood in its place or exercise.

I remark, further, that though the application of every blessing -- all the

24. {Who? the Messianic Jews? Why, YES. Heb. 5:12-14 is a rebuke to the poverty of spiritual development of the early Messianic Jews. Hebrews was written about 61AD.}
work of God in good from creation on -- is by the Spirit, yet that this truth is not taught here. The person who feels for us has had experience, so as to be able to feel for us. “Who is able to succor the tempted” is not the Spirit here, but Christ, and Christ as priest. And this is a most important thing. For the heart of the Christian Christ is an object of affection, which the Spirit -- though we are indebted to His working for every blessing -- cannot be.

I pursue my enquiry into the contents of the Epistle. They for the time ought to be teachers; and (Heb. 6) the writer will not go back to Jewish elements. How does he speak of the responsibility of those he addresses? He will go on to perfection (that is, the estate of full age: it is the same word as in Heb. 5:14, “full age”) with those he addresses.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God.

Is this the state of Jews disposed to listen then, or of the Jewish remnant in the last days? Falling away from having enjoyed their privileges is the thing contemplated. But these two categories of persons had never enjoyed them at all. And this is the aim of the whole epistle -- to guard against falling away. The nation had crucified Christ -- they might be forgiven it as an act of ignorance. But these, after the enjoyment of christian privileges, did it for themselves; then there was no help. But in spite of this so solemn warning, he hoped better things of those he addressed, for they had brought forth fruits of grace. He could not think they could fall away from their privileges; for fruits of life had been shown. Only he desired that everyone of them might show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end. Is that addressed to a then unbelieving remnant, or to Christians who had received all fulness of privileges, and whose fruits made their teacher fully hope they would not abandon them? What was falling away from unbelief? The best thing they could do was to give it up. What was the same diligence to be shown to the end in unbelievers? And what was the hope that belonged to them? It entered in within the veil whither the Forerunner was entered for them, even Jesus. That is not the hope of the remnant, any more than the beginning of the chapter was the state of the remnant. Their hope is deliverance. The forerunner is for us entered within the veil. We hope to be with Him in heaven. Jesus is gone in: we are to follow Him there. Yet this is He who is made a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

The inspired writer then unfolds this priesthood of Melchisedec; but of
the exercise of the priesthood not a word. All relates to His person, and the
setting aside of the law by the setting up of another priest. There is large
allusion to the history, or to His person and personal dignity; but not a word
as to what He did. But we have the bringing in of a better hope, by the
which we draw nigh to God. Who? the unbelieving Jews ready to listen? Of
whom does the writer say, “We draw nigh unto God”; and “He is able also
to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever
liveth to make intercession for them?” Here we have an ever living priest,
by whom we draw nigh to God, able to save through and through to the end
(not because He has perfected us by His offering, infinitely precious,
unspeakably precious, as that is; not because He has died for us, though that
be the ground of all, a ground even for the Father’s love to Him; but)
because He ever lives to make intercession for us. It is what He is active in,
as life, that is here before us.

Appearing in the presence of God for us is another thing, and otherwise
expressed in this epistle (Heb. 9:24). And really “ever living to appear,” has
very little sense. That He is able, since He ever lives, to do something which
requires activity, is plain enough; but “ever living to appear” is not a
sentence which could commend itself to any sober mind taught of God. But
ἐντυγχάνειν does not mean that; it means “to intercede.” If he who has
given occasion to this paper likes to take the dictionary sense given by his
correspondent as a general idea, I have no objection: -- “talking with, or
getting to the spirit of another.” This is, activity; not appearing before
another, but talking with that other, getting to his spirit, if we are so to
express it. And I insist distinctly, that the use of it in Rom. 8 is a very
distinct and plain proof of its meaning. The Holy Ghost in us does not
appear before God for us. He is active in us, and makes us groan, and God
recognizes it as His activity in us, finds the mind of the Spirit in us; for He
makes intercession for the saints. This is activity. It is talking to another,
even to God, in a groan; and, if I am reverently to use such an expression,
“it gets to His spirit.” God apprehends His mind when even we cannot, and
recognizes it as His, accepts it. He talks to another, and it gets as far as we
may venture to use the words, it gets to His spirit -- it reaches God’s mind
and heart. Christ ever lives to intercede for us on high. I say “for us,” not
as sitting in heavenly places, but as coming to God by Him. I say “us,” “for
such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate
from sinners, made higher than the heavens” -- “became us” because we
belong to heaven -- go in spirit into heaven in our coming to God. We have

25. ἐντυγχάνω never means anything else in scripture than active intervention. It is used five
rimes: Acts 25 :24; Rom. 8 :27, 34; 11:2; Heb. 7 :25. The reader can easily see if these are
active interventions or not.
not to do with a priest on a throne on earth, or on His own throne anywhere; but with One who is now made higher than the heavens. Such is the priesthood of Christ always in this Epistle, a present priesthood, a priesthood in heaven, a priesthood on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, exercised there; a priesthood, not after the order of Aaron as to person or descent, but our Lord, priest on high after the power of an endless life, personally similar to, and after the order of, Melchisedec, but never introduced as exercising His priesthood after the pattern, or in the place, of Melchisedec; always, from chs. 2 and 3 as compared and contrasted with Aaron’s, to lift Jewish Christians (for they were Jewish Christians specifically) then from Jewish habits of association with that which was on earth, in showing a present priesthood exercised above the heavens, and to preserve them by grace from falling away from the heavenly things to what they were used to; and, I may add, to bring them out from, what they had hitherto stayed in, the camp {Heb. 13:12, 13} -- outward association with Israel and a judged system, and by teaching, which, for us, is based on the truth, in its continual exercise, that He ever lives to do it, now as then. It is the exercise of a continual priesthood after He had offered up Himself once for all.

It is well that the reader should remark, that though the sacrifice has been stated (it is spoken of in the very first chapter, so in the second, as it is again here), we have not one word as yet of being made perfect in fact or in conscience, but the priest’s fitness for tempted exercised souls down here -- a priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is gone on high, but we have no perfecting by sacrifice, no appearing as yet in the presence of God for us. Though the value of His priesthood for tried ones, and its fitness, are fully stated, as yet it is not our perfectness, before God, but help for the feeble and tried, who need help and mercy. It is to this last that priesthood is applied, and priesthood at the right hand of God, on the right hand of the throne of majesty on high, not at all on any Melchisedec throne. And this application of the priesthood of Christ to our infirmities and help in time of need is the more remarkable, because, when the author of the epistle comes to speak of perfectness through His offering and His appearing in the presence of God for us, he does not speak of Him as priest at all; the reference to His priesthood is wholly dropped. Though contrasted with the Jewish priesthood, infirmities, help, intercession, ever living to make it, and these alone are identified with His priesthood save the fact of propitiation in Heb. 2, which is admitted to be an exceptional case, in which the high priest represented the people (not a proper act of priesthood, though of the high priest on the day of atonement); and, on the other hand, when our perfecting by His offering of Himself, and His appearing in the presence of God for us, are spoken of, priesthood is wholly dropped. There is distinct and marked
contrast. That is not priesthood, intercession is, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In Heb. 8 we have the whole doctrine of the priesthood summed up before the unfolding of the worth of the sacrifice, and His appearing in the presence of God for us, are gone into. We have an high priest set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, a purely heavenly one. None of this belongs to Melchisedec. The priesthood spoken of is solely while Christ is on high. It is in the sanctuary -- that is, in heaven itself -- exercised in that of which the tabernacle man pitched was the shadow, made according to the pattern of things in the heavens, a heavenly priesthood in a heavenly sanctuary. This is so distinctly the case, that if He were on earth He would not be a priest. (Of Melchisedec’s exercise of priesthood on His throne no trace or hint is found.) There were priests who served to the example and pattern of heavenly things; we have to do with the heavenly things themselves. And Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry. When and where according to this chapter? What is -- “But now hath he obtained?” What, as to the priesthood and ministry of Christ, “replaces here?” -- the heavenly things and a heavenly service and a heavenly sanctuary as a present thing, or a Melchisedec priesthood after all enemies are put down on earth? Is that shadow and pattern, according to which it is exercised, the sanctuary set up by Moses, or the Melchisedec service? For a calm and straightforward mind there can be but one answer. It may be said he speaks of the covenants. He does. But to what end? Solely here to show that the old is passing away and ready to vanish, that the Jewish Christians might not hang on to it. The New Covenant is surely not made with us at all. The basis of it is laid in Christ’s blood, as the institution of the Lord’s Supper shows, and we have all the advantages of it (but a great deal more), and Paul was a minister of it.

But this allusion to the pattern of heavenly things has led the inspired writer to the whole order of the sanctuary, to unfold the worth of Christ’s work and sacrifice. And here let me make a remark not without its importance in the study of the Hebrews. The mention of the temple is carefully excluded. That was connected with royalty, with the establishment on earth of what was practically Melchisedec rule and priesthood, the rule of the Son of David. The tabernacle only is mentioned; this was the pattern of heavenly things. The temple is never given as such, whatever analogies there may be; the tabernacle is. Even when he speaks of the system as having still its standing (Heb. 9:8), it is the tabernacle, not the temple. It is the camp they were to leave, and come outside {Heb. 13:12, 13}. The analogy of Christ’s service is distinctly, definitely, and declaredly after the similitude of the Aaronic service in the tabernacle, not after any Melchisedec service. The pattern is what Moses gave, but it is in heaven, and in heaven
only and specifically. It is a present thing, specifically a present thing, as He is in heaven now; not a future thing as Melchisedec is. He is entered in, not come out (Heb. 9:12). The veil is rent, the way into the holiest is open, and the blood of Christ purges the conscience. And the apostle speaks to those to whom the epistle is addressed, who are partakers of the heavenly calling, and can say, He is the high priest of our profession. The heavenly things themselves are in question. Christ is entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us.

In this, as we have seen, though compared with what Aaron did, there is no mention of priesthood. It is another matter. In Heb. 4:14 we have the analogy strikingly stated: “a great high priest that is passed through [not into] the heavens,” as Aaron through the court and holy place into the sanctuary. But here we have no priest but Christ appearing in the presence of God for us. He has appeared, not to restore Israel and the world, but to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He has been once offered, not to redeem Israel, but -- in contrast with death and judgment, man’s portion as a child of Adam -- to bear the sins (not of Israel, but) of many. Does this mean that He did not die for the nation, or that the remnant will not be restored on the ground of this sacrifice? Surely not. But the passage speaks of other things.

In Heb. 10, still in express comparison and contrast with the law, the application of Christ’s sacrifice is gone into; but it is fact and efficacy -- no priesthood now. It is application; we are sanctified. It is taught as that which is known by him who teaches it, a present thing. The position of Christ is still the opposite of that of Melchisedec. He is expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. It is not a reign and kingly priesthood after they are destroyed. It is only heavenly; He sits at the right hand of God. The sanctified ones, already spoken of, are perfected for ever. He is not, as Aaronic priests were, standing ever renewing inefficacious sacrifices; but sitting at the right hand of God, because His is complete, and those having a part in it perfected for ever; that is, not merely for eternity, but in uninterrupted and unbroken continuity, just as He sits there. It is those who have part in it while He is sitting there. And the Holy Ghost is a witness of it, to the writer and those he writes to, as a present possession of peace. And mark the consequence. We brethren, “have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” When and where? Jews under Melchisedec? And now we come back to the high priest. Where? In the holiest in heaven, or in the house of God, whose house (we have read) are we if we hold fast, I suppose, what we have got. It will be remarked, that with Heb. 10:18 the doctrine of these two chapters ends, and exhortation begins. We are to draw near with full assurance of faith into the holiest, having a high priest over the house of God. I will suppose for the moment, what clearly could not
possibly be, that this exhortation was addressed to unbelievers disposed to
listen, which is the theory of the deniers of priesthood as to any present
application. I ask. Was not that into which they were brought the christian
position? Those living men could not be brought into the residue position in
the last days; they could be brought, if anywhere, among Christians. That,
then, to which they were called, was where Christians were: a rent veil;
access into the holiest by it; a purged conscience; full assurance of faith; and
a great High Priest over the house of God. I do not believe that this is the
position of the remnant in the latter day at all, but I leave that aside. It is the
position of Christians now, for it is what the then listeners, according to the
theory, were called into.

When we go on with the chapter it becomes evident, beyond all possible
question, that it is the christian position. “Let us hold fast the profession of
our faith.” Does the writer of the epistle identify himself with unbelieving
Jews in the profession of a common faith? What were the unbelieving Jews
to hold fast? “The profession of our faith” in the mouth of a Christian must
be christian faith; and if it be “our,” he must write to Christians. We (who?)
are to “provoke one another to love and to good works, not forsaking the
assembling of ourselves together” -- who is that? Was it a Jewish assembly,
or Christians and unbelieving Jews together? Besides, it supposes that the
knowledge of the truth had been received; and, as in Heb. 6, if the Spirit,
whose presence distinctively characterized Christians, and Christianity was
received in vain, so here, if the one sacrifice which characterized it was
departed from, there was no remedy, no room for repentance. Only
judgment remained. They were christian professors, and enjoyed the
advantages of Christianity, and if they cast them away, there was nothing
else to come but judgment. What distinguished the remnant is that there is
deliverance to come, because they have not had these privileges, and had not
cast them away. What characterized any Jews disposed to listen then was the
same fact, they had not had them. What characterized those to whom the
writer addressed himself is that they had. They, if they departed from the
faith -- drew back, had trodden under foot the Son of God, counted the
blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and
done despite to the Spirit of grace -- there was no remedy left. Are
unbelieving Jews, however disposed, as to their position, sanctified by the
blood of the covenant? What does v. 32 mean? “After ye were illuminated,
ye endured a great fight of afflictions;” and “knowing in yourselves that ye
have in heaven a better and an enduring substance?” What is the confidence
they were not to cast away? In a word, they were not of those -- the writer
hoped -- who drew back to perdition, but of those who believed to the saving
of the soul, and certainly had the privileges from which they could draw
back.
I resume the proof from these exhortations. The Epistle -- the practical exhortations were addressed in fact to some one. Those to whom they are addressed are illuminated, had received the knowledge of the truth, are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (they had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing they had in heaven a better and enduring substance), and even not to cast away their confidence; were not to be of those who drew back, but believing to the saving of their souls; in a word, were believers, or at least professed believers, and believers then were Christians. Profession left them in danger of drawing back to Judaism, and gave occasion to warning in this respect; but, if Christians, Christians had and therefore have a great high priest over the house of God -- a priest gone into heaven, and who exercised his priesthood there, and, as here described, there only -- a priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who ever lives to make intercession for us: our perfection by His offering, and His appearing in the presence of God for us, not being connected with His priestly service.

What remains of the Epistle, after such evidence, needs not very enlarged reference. In Heb. 11 I notice one passage -- “God having provided [or foreseen] some better thing for us, that they [Abraham, &c.] without us should not be made perfect.” Is it for Christians or for the Jewish remnant that some better thing than Abraham’s heavenly portion is provided? Is not the perfection resurrection glory, not blessing under Melchisedec?

All the exhortations in the beginning of Heb. 12, if they mean anything, are addressed to Christians. They were not come to Sinai, but to the full heavenly and earthly blessing, in which the Church of the firstborn and the Old Testament saints are included. Here alone we have the Church in the Hebrews. They were come to Jesus. It will be said, To Jesus, mediator of the New Covenant. Quite true: and I do not doubt that this refers in accomplishment to the millennial earth. But they were come to Jesus, and this is the essential point; and it is a Jesus not coming back from heaven, but speaking from heaven while He is there. Heb. 13:8, 9, clearly shows with whom they were in connection. The Christ they had been taught to know, by those whose faith they were to follow, was the same yesterday, today, and for ever. I do not connect the verses as in the English Bible; but it is quite clear that the faith a Christian exhorts to follow is christian faith, and here suggests Christ as the One whose unchangeableness should guard them from strange doctrines: grace, not Jewish meats, was to be their portion.

But further, “We,” says the writer, “have an altar of which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle” {Heb. 13:10} Who had an altar in contrast with the Jews? the unbeliever willing to listen? Of a future remnant there is no idea or question. The writer declares that he and those with whom he was associated had (had then) an altar, a place of worship, where
the food of and communion with God was, at which those who held to (now bypast and soon to be judged) Judaism had no right to partake. Who had, who could then or now have, this but Christians? Judaism as a system is then rejected as being a religion for this earth, a camp of God (now left of Him) here. Such a religion was now rejected. When the blood was carried within the sanctuary, the body of the victim was carried without the camp. The true sanctuary, heaven (as is expressly taught in Heb. 9:11, 12, 24), is one essential element of the position spoken of; abiding rejection of and by worldly religion, made for or suited to the flesh, “outside the camp,” or the earthly holy city, is the other. This is distinctly Christianity. The remnant at the end look for and will have the restoration of an earthly system, and the Lord’s presence and throne in Jerusalem. The system into which men are called in this epistle (and, if Christians, are, and warned not to fall away from) is exclusively and uncompromisingly Christian and heavenly, in contrast with what the remnant could have at the end, founded on this same work, but established in a restored throne on earth and a holy city here, not a rejected Savior and a heavenly throne. Verses 20, 21, are most clearly addressed to Christians, and outside all old and new covenants; and the rest, as the whole chapter, suppose that in faith, joy, hopes, interest, and warnings, the writer and those addressed are alike Christians, though the latter Christians in danger of slipping back into Judaism, from which they are called finally to separate themselves.

The result of this survey of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, that our being perfected by the offering of Jesus Christ, and His appearing in the presence of God for us, is not referred to priesthood, but that there is a priesthood of intercession available for us because the priest can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and, having suffered, being tempted, is competent to succor those that are tempted. That this priesthood is exercised in heaven specifically, in its whole character and nature, and only there, is here brought forward as that which became us; that the comparison and contrast of this priesthood in its exercise is wholly with the ordering and service of the tabernacle. The priest is according to the order of Melchisedec, but of the exercise of a Melchisedec priesthood there is no mention, hint, or trace. It is a priesthood exercised in heaven only, into which Christ is entered as Aaron into the holiest made with hands. It is addressed to Christians formally and expressly in all its parts; if it reach over -- as a groundwork of Israel’s future hopes, as what is taught in it surely does -- it has no direct application to them, save as Christ’s present position and His accomplished work secure these hopes; and as it does not take proper church ground (that is, our sitting in heavenly places in Christ), it can reach over in certain parts to their hopes and blessings as an accessory. But the hopes given in the Epistle are not theirs, but heaven and glory. Further, it is written to Christian
Jews, that is, to Christians from among the Jews, and who in fact clung to their old thoughts, and feelings, and system, and were in danger, if not kept of God, of falling back into Judaism, which was ready to be judged, and are warned moreover to come out and leave their connection with it -- warned that the faith of Christ, which they had, and Judaism could no longer be connected as it had been, many thousand Jews, as we know, holding fast to their ancient law.
Chapter 1.3

The Christian Altar and Worship

We have an altar of which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle (Heb. 10:10).

God bore with the early Messianic Judaism, but Hebrews shows that the bearing with it came to an end. For the heavenly people of God (1 Cor. 15:48; Heb. 3:1) there has been instituted a totally new order -- a heavenly order -- that stands separated from the earthly tabernacle and all its attendant ritual and keeping of days, feasts, new moons, the mixture of saints and unbelievers, a separated class regarding worship, etc. Serving the tabernacle is -- not serving acceptably (see Heb. 12:28). If you engage in practices from Judaism, you are not serving acceptably.

Features Concerning the Christian Altar

Where Is the Altar?

Linked with that question is another. Where is proper Christian worship? The so-called Christian altars set up on earth, and the sanctuaries on earth, all answer: it is here on earth. But is that true? Hebrews shows this is false.

Heb. 9 reviews some matters concerning approach to God regarding the tabernacle set up by Moses. Heb. 9 makes it clear that the earthly tabernacle service showed:

that the way of the [holy of] holies has not yet been made manifest while as yet the first tabernacle has [its] standing (Heb. 9:8).

This verse shows it was God’s intention to manifest the way into the holy of holies when the tabernacle no longer had its standing before him. Regarding that tabernacle, we read:

the which [is] an image for the present time (Heb. 9:9).

Thus we learn that there is presently a holies that may be accessed. Where is that holy of holies?:

. . . by his own blood, has entered into the [holy of] holies (Heb. 9:12).
Part 1: Hebrews and the Christian’s Altar and Worship

For Christ is not entered into holy places made with hand, figures of the true, but into heaven itself . . . (Heb. 9:24).

Where, then, do those whose consciences have been perfected (Heb. 9:14) worship? On earth as Israel did regarding the earthly tabernacle; or is it in the heavenly, which the earthly shadowed? The heavenly, of course. That is where the holy of holies is. Therefore we read in Heb. 10:19 of entering there, and of every Christian having “boldness” to enter in virtue of Christ’s shed blood. We read of no holy of holies on the earth for Christianity. Our high priest is there above. Our sanctuary is there, where there is but one minister of the sanctuary (Heb. 8:1, 2). Why is it not clear to Christians that we worship there and our altar is there? We do not go in there physically, but in spirit.

Those Who Have No Right to Eat of the Altar

J. N. Darby remarked:

Law was religion in flesh, or religion for a people in flesh, and it was to prove totally wanting. No provisional sacrifices would do. The whole system was to demonstrate the failure of such a ground {of standing before God}. They were put there with appliances for occasional restoration, but it was evidently all of no use, and this from the very beginning itself. They made a golden calf at once. God went on to show whether a people could go on, mixing grace with law, and grace as it were to help them out; but they could not. So the sacrifices took that ground of fleshly religion for a time.

In the millennium when it comes, the sacrifices will be figures in a measure as they used to be. The people will not go into heavenly places then; but the sacrifices {in the OT} had to go into the figures {i.e., into the tabernacle} of the heavenly places {i.e., the heavenly sanctuary}, and the blood was carried in to the mercy-seat in the holiest of all and sprinkled there {Lev. 16}. The camp was fleshly religion, and the veil was there; but the blood must be in the holiest, and the body be burnt outside the camp even for Israel to get a blessing. It must be effectual with God; this is what is wanted. So the apostle reasons for us, that the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach {Heb. 13:13}. 26

We have now got heavenly things, and we must go outside the camp. In the millennium neither have they heavenly things nor will

26. {Observe, we must be outside what is connected with the tabernacle system.}
they go outside the camp {see Rev. 20:9}. The blessing depends on
Christ having gone outside the camp originally, and He in virtue of
His blood is gone into the heavenlies; but when He comes again, the
blessing on earth will be made good. Meanwhile we must go outside
the camp and have, too, the privilege of going into the holiest {Heb.
10:19} . . . 27

What Is the Altar?

First, let it be observed that this is not a reference to the Lord’s table. The
Lord’s table has to do with the subject taken up in 1 Corinthians -- it
expresses fellowship. In Hebrews, “altar” is used in connection with
expressing worship. No doubt after the execution of the Lord Jesus, the Jews
would continue to insist that they had the true altar, the true system of
worship. The cross ended that. When Paul wrote Hebrews (about 61 AD)
God had not yet struck the awful governmental blow against Jerusalem (in
70 AD). Paul told the Hebrew Christians, “We have an altar . . .” Earth had
no valid altar. It was now in the heavenly sanctuary.

The altar in the camp was for sacrifices where sin was never once-for-all
dealt with. The once-for-all expiation for sin was made on the cross.
However, the cross is not the Christians’ altar, though that was a necessary
work for us to have our altar. The cross was here on earth, outside the
camp, where we are to be concerning being identified with Christ in His
rejection, His reproach. Any altars that Israel had are described in
dimensional terms or how it was built physically, as is suitable for the earth.
Our altar is not so described for it is in heaven, and it is spiritual.

Through what did the Israelite worship? He worshiped through the
presentation of a sacrifice on the Jewish altar. How, or through what, does
the Christian worship?

By {i.e., through} him therefore let us offer [the] sacrifice of praise
continually to God, that is, [the] fruit of [the] lips confessing his name
(Heb. 13:15).

As He was our offering for sin here on earth (He offered Himself
(Eph. 5:2 28), as put outside the camp, so now He is our altar in the
heavenly sanctuary where all the efficacy of His sacrifice subsists. The
sacrifice offered is praise to God, through Christ.

28. Actually, Eph. 5:2 speaks of Him as the burnt-offering, but it was here on earth He offered Himself.
What Does Eating of this Altar Mean?

Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is our altar and we feed on Him in connection with worship. The Lord Jesus, speaking anticipatively of His death for us, said:

He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life . . . (John 6:54).

This does not mean the Lord’s supper, of course; for then anyone who partakes would have eternal life, even if not trusting Him as Savior. It is the Christian’s feeding on Him as having given Himself for us. But in the Lord’s Supper, which is a memorial of His giving Himself for us, we remember Him thus. Spiritually, in remembering Him thus, we do feed on Him.

Christ Suffered Outside the Gate

(Heb. 13:11-12)

(11) For of those beasts whose blood is carried [as sacrifices for sin] into the [holy of] holies by the high priest, of these the bodies are burned outside the camp. (12) Wherefore also Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate:

There are two things to consider here, the first of which is the practice noted in v. 11, which is quite specific. The reference is to the day of atonement, which is brought before us in Lev. 16, the day on which, once a year, the blood of the sin-offering was brought into the very presence of the Shekinah that was between the cherubim upon the mercy seat.

The “wherefore” in v. 12 indicates that what was done with the sin-offering finds its fulfilment in the work of Christ, done outside the camp of Israel.

When the Son of God came to His own in holy manhood, we know that His own received Him not (John 1:11). But He had not come in the way of judgment, but in grace. He never had a formal place in Judaism, and certainly not in Jerusalem. Indeed, Jerusalem rejected Him. The law given to Israel was perverted by His own to make Him guilty of death; and the governmental sword, first given to Noah, in the hands of the Roman was unrighteously wielded against Him. Thus by the instrumental use the Jews made of wicked Roman hands He was slain (Acts 2:23) -- Jew and Gentile together guilty. He was, so to speak, delivered to the secular arm. He was taken outside Jerusalem, the place where the preliminary guilty acts were committed, which resulted in His crucifixion outside. Man’s guilt was sealed to his responsibility. However, we must ever remember that this was voluntary on Christ’s part. No man took His life from Him (John 10:18)
though that was the tendency of their act. God characterizes acts by their tendency; therefore does Peter charge Israel with the guilt (Acts 3:14-15). Yet Christ offered Himself (Eph. 5:2). He took that place at calvary, outside the camp -- outside the gate -- the center of which was at that time Jerusalem. Jerusalem was then the center of what God had first appointed through Moses. The Lord suffered for us outside the camp, outside that gate, that we might be identified with Him in that rejection and have an entrance into the heavenly sanctuary where He is now.

These two verses we have just considered lead to the “therefore” in the next verse. Verses 11 and 12 introduce us to a consequence.

**Separation Below, Worship Above, and Service Below**  
*(Heb. 13:13-16)*

(13) therefore let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach: (14) for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek the coming one. (15) By him therefore let us offer [the] sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, [the] fruit of [the] lips confessing his name. (16) But of doing good and communicating [of your substance] be not forgetful, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

These verses instruct us with a beautiful spiritual order for our obedient practice:

1. verses 13-14 place us, here on earth, in separation from Judaistic principles, observances, and practices;
2. verse 15 places us, in the sanctuary above, as worshipers;
3. verse 16 places us, here on earth, in service to others.

We ought always to be in the observation of this order, in obedient practice, so as to please Him who has called us with a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).

Let us consider some things involved in these three areas to which we are directed.

**1. Separation Below**

“Therefore Let Us Go Forth to Him Without the Camp.” The world, as such, and our separation from it, is not the subject here. The word “therefore” refers to vv. 11, 12. The place Christ took in suffering outside Judaism, outside the camp, calls the early Messianic Jews, who were mixing Jewish practices and observances with some Christianity, to the same outside
This shows quite clearly that the Messianic Jews in the apostolic days were considered to be inside the camp, else they would not be instructed to go out of it. Their Jewish practices kept them inside the camp, even though they did not partake of the Jewish altar. Those were the Jewish practices we read of in Acts, in which the early Jewish Christians were engaging. Yes, those very practices that present-day Messianic Jews use to justify themselves in engaging in such like things, constituted the early Messianic Jews as being in the camp. The command of the Lord, by the Spirit of God, through the apostle Paul, directed the early Messianic Jews to go outside the camp. The meaning is clear enough for an obedient heart! Engaging in similar practices today means one is in the camp as to practice, and the word of the Lord to such is to go outside that.

Concerning the setting aside of Israel, three points were well summarized by C. H. Mackintosh:

> The final breach with Israel is presented, morally, in the death of Christ; doctrinally, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; historically, in the destruction of Jerusalem. In the judgment of faith, Jerusalem was as thoroughly rejected when the Messiah was nailed to the cross, as when the army of Titus left it a smouldering ruin.

A few years subsequent to this command of God to go outside the camp (Hebrews was written, about 61 AD), He struck Jerusalem (Matt. 22:7), overthrowing the system outwardly (70 AD). The Hebrew Christians had opportunity to have left the camp before God so struck the capital seat of Judaism.

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29. . . . when the blood was carried into the holiest, the body was taken and burned without the camp. This, he says, is what was found in Christ who suffered without the gate and is now gone into the presence of God, in order to place us within the holiest and without the world. Some look for a middle way. It is a poor comfort to have anything but the full grace and glory of God. We should not rest short of the truth of God on man’s prudence. The way of prudence is unsafe in the sight of God. It is not faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Hold on, therefore, not to the reasonings of common sense, but to the revelation of the divine word. We are brought into the holiest because of that blood that has cleansed us and removed every trace of sin; and here, too, we who are brought into the holiest take the place of Him who was crucified, bearing His reproach.

Are you willing to be despised? to be nothing here, because made everything in the presence of God? This is the true glory of the Christian, and the Christian does most for God when he is most despised of men. May our record be not in the newspapers, or on tombstones, but on high, where it is never forgotten. The Lord grant, meanwhile, that we be worshipers in the holiest, and witnesses without the camp, bearing His reproach (The Bible Treasury 9:297).

We must take note of a point which has an immense bearing on the practice of Gentile Christians, for there is much Judaizing in Christendom. The point is that the early Hebrew Christians were mixing Christianity and Judaism, yet this mixture is here called “the camp.” An attempt to circumvent the command of the Lord to separate from Judaistic observances and practices by saying that strict Judaism is meant is just that: a desire to circumvent what God has said in order to go on with a mixture of Judaism and Christianity. The mixture may take various forms. Whatever it is, leave it! The reading of Hebrews with the intent of finding all the things wherein Christianity is “better,” “more excellent,” etc., than Judaism, will acquaint the reader with Judaistic practices that he may observe in systems that men have set up as “Christian.”

It may be admitted that such is the command but that one is doing a work for the Lord by staying within Judaized Christianity. C. H. Mackintosh remarked on this:

Yes, christian reader, we may rest assured that the outside place, the place of rejection and reproach is that to which we are called, if indeed we would know aught of true fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Mark the words! “Let us go forth.” Will any Christian say, “No; I cannot go forth. My place is inside the camp. I must work there?” If so, then, your place is clearly not with Jesus, for He is as surely outside the camp as He is on the throne of God. If your sphere of work lies inside the camp, when your Master tells you to go forth, what shall we say for your work? Can it be worth much? Can it have your Lord’s approving smile? It may exhibit His overruling hand, and illustrate His sovereign goodness; but can it possibly have His unqualified approval while carried on in a sphere from which He peremptorily commands you to go forth?

The all-important thing for every true servant is to be found exactly where his Master would have him. The question is not, “Am I doing a great deal of work?” but “am I pleasing my Master?” I may seem to be doing wonders in the way of work; my name may be heralded to the ends of the earth, as a most laborious, devoted, and successful workman; and, all the while, I may be in an utterly false position, indulging my own unbroken will, pleasing myself, and seeking some personal end or object.

All this is very solemn indeed, and demands the consideration of all who really desire to be found in the current of God’s thoughts. We live in a day of much wilfulness. The commandments of Christ do not govern us. We think for ourselves, in place of submitting ourselves absolutely to the authority of the word. When our Lord tells us to go forth without the camp, we, instead of yielding a ready obedience, begin to reason as to the results which we can reach by remaining within. Scripture seems to have little or no power over our souls. We
do not aim at simply pleasing Christ. Provided we can make great show of work, we think all is right. We are more occupied with results which, after all, may only tend to magnify ourselves, than with the earnest purpose to do what is agreeable to the mind of Christ. 31

Note the way that this direction of the Lord to separate is put. Himself is put first -- “go forth to Him.” It is with Himself we are identified, and then where: outside the camp. Then the character of this identification with Himself, outside the camp, is stated.

Bearing His Reproach. “Let us go forth unto him . . .” As He is the great attraction in the Sanctuary above, so is He as in the place of reproach when He was crucified. 32 He Himself is first set before us, then where He is in reproach, morally speaking: “outside the camp.” How can we go forth outside the camp, merely? But to be identified with Himself in the reproach is another matter. This reproach will not merely come from Judaism, as such, but from the Judaism represented by the mixture we have been noting, and from the Judaized systems in Christendom. We all ought to sense the awful condition of professed Christianity and mourn before God about it.

The Lord Jesus, then, has made two corresponding places for us

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31. Ibid., pp. 171, 172.

32. “For the bodies of the beasts, whose blood is brought for sin into the holies by the high priest, are burned without the camp.” It is only in Christianity that the two-fold truth is realized; in Judaism it was unknown, still less enjoyed. The two extremes meet in the true sin-offering, which points to the blood which fits for the holiest, and to the body burnt in the place of rejection outside. The Christian has access into the sanctuary, but along with this he shares the place of scorn here below. So it was with the Master and Lord. “Wherefore also Jesus, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate.” Here is not type only, but fact, the ground of the exhortation, so needed then by the Jewish confessors, so needed at all times by the Christian: may we not add urgently now, when men revive Jewish elements?

Therefore let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach; for we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after that which is to come.

We are not of the world, as our Lord was not; and as He never sought its ease or honor, but accepted its shame, so are we called to follow His steps “outside the camp,” the scene of religious respectability; as Heb. 10:19, &c., sets forth our boldness to enter the holies by the blood of Jesus. We are now constituted meet to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. The Jewish system by its nature not only offered no such privilege but denied it to all, even to the high priest who could approach but once a year its figure, and then with awful fear lest death should avenge any failure on his part. And where are God’s children now as to all this? Are they not in general, as far from availing themselves in practical ways of approach to the holies, as they run after man’s mind and the world’s honors? In fact, as in doctrine, the two things are closely tied together. And as grace makes us first free of the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, we are the better strengthened next to obey the call to go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Soon the unbelieving or half-believing Jew had to learn that here he had no abiding city (The Bible Treasury 20:347).
according to the place He took in offering Himself as an offering for sin and the place where He is now in the sanctuary above.

“For We Have Not Here an Abiding City, but We Seek the Coming One.” The earthly and the heavenly is here contrasted. The thought of a “city” brings before us protection, fellowship, and order. We have no such city here on earth, but there is a coming one which is spiritual in character, the new Jerusalem. It is not a literal city, for it is the bride, the Lamb’s wife, as Scripture says (Rev. 21:9, 10). In the following verses, the bride is seen in a governmental way regarding the millennium. However, our text indicates that we seek an abiding city that is coming. Thus, in Rev. 21:2 we see the new Jerusalem abiding in eternity. The church shall never lose its distinctive character (Eph. 3:21) but abides eternally distinct.

2. Worship Above

By him therefore let us offer [the] sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, [the] fruit of [the] lips confessing his name (Heb. 13:15).

The One unto Whom we are called upon to go forth -- outside the camp -- is the very One by Whom we are to offer sacrifice. “We have an altar.” He is the altar above, in the heavenly sanctuary, and it is by Him, i.e., through Him, the sacrifice is offered. The offering must needs be of a spiritual character suitable to that sanctuary. This is priestly sacrifice in character.

This calls on all Christians to exercise their priesthood and shows how they are to do it. There is not in the New Testament one passage which speaks of, or alludes to, a priesthood upon earth, except as every Christian is, or supposes the existence of a priesthood on earth except that of all Christians. No one on earth is ever called a priest, except the Jewish priests, and once a heathen one, except when Christians in general as such are called so. A distinct class of priests on earth amongst Christians is totally unknown to the New Testament. Our great High Priest is gone to heaven. And all Christians are priests in a spiritual and heavenly way, for praises and intercessions under Him. The New Testament does not know or own a class of Christians on earth who are priests in a distinct office from other Christians. Such a thought is unscriptural and false in every way. 33

Also, “continually” is an important word.

Let us carefully note this. Praise is to be the primary and continual occupation of the believer. We, in our fancied wisdom, would put work in the first place. We are disposed to attach chief importance to bustling activity. We have such an overweening sense of the value of

33. The Bible Treasury 3:17.
We do not offer a prayer (what kind of an offering is that?) but offer praise. The offering of the sacrifice of praise is the heart’s adoration going out to God. No doubt the Christian will offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God eternally. Eternally we will sound the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ in God the Father’s ear -- ever open to hear what so sweetly and un weariedly fills His heart with delight, and which will be our blessed occupation.

The confession of the name of the Lord Jesus with our lips began with our salvation (Rom. 10:9) and shall never end. Meanwhile as we wait to be physically in His presence, now in spirit we worship in the heavenly sanctuary, a company of priests in the presence of our great high priest.

**3. Service Below**

But of doing good and communicating [of your substance] be not forgetful, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13:16).

Here we have another character of sacrifice, one that will come to an end, as all that is on earth must come to an end. It has its place after the sacrifice of praise above, even though that sacrifice of praise is to be continual. The fact is that we learn in Scripture that God’s portion is to be rendered to Him first. What we generally call service follows after that. This is divine order and ought to be much observed. It seems that, generally, service to man is put first. Worse still, service is often confused with worship, and/or with ministry of the Word. There seems to be a strong, natural tendency substitute busyness in service for worship -- and even with being acceptable to God. Personal considerations and convenience are often placed before obedience and worship. Service gets used to set aside separation, as well as push aside worship in spirit and in truth. Let us remember the order we have noted in Heb. 13:10-16: (1) separation below; (2) worship above; and, (3) service below. The inspiring Spirit has caused the Word to be written so as to give us what pleases God, not what pleases the flesh in us. Are we wiser than God?

“Doing good” would be for necessary wants (Titus 3:14), for there are unnecessary things that people want to have. It is really necessary needs that are the object of sanctified “doing good.” We need the guidance of God in such activity, keeping in mind, as James says, that the wisdom from above is first pure (James 3:17). Change the order and you are sure to be defiled. He wrote:

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, to keep oneself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

We do not join with the world in doing this. Moreover, while we may do so for literal orphans and widows, we keep in mind that in Scripture orphans and widows also point to spiritual plights.

In the worship above, we note that what is given is fruit of lips. In service below, by way of contrast we may call it fruit of the pocketbook. Not that it necessarily takes the form of literal money.
Chapter 1.4

The Assembly Gathered Together to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 18:20)
Worships in the Heavenly Sanctuary

The Ecclesiastical Character of Matt. 18:20

I take it that W. Kelly answered the following question.

Q. -- Matt. 18:20. It has been recently stated that men like Mr. J. N. Darby sought to help out their interpretation of this scripture by a quite unwarrantable change in the translation of the words εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα which they rendered unto my name, and took to import a gathering to Christ’s Name as a rallying point.” Is there any doubt of the right version? or any warrant for so evil an imputation?

A. -- None whatever for either: no true scholar could have weighed the usage and given such an opinion. The evidence is decisively for the change. The aim for opposing it is to set aside the ecclesiastical character of the context, on which the Lord has impressed it so indelibly, that almost all the jarring parties of Christendom recognize that character, though they naturally overlook a word which none of them heeds, and which does mean a living and exclusive center. Its denial is a very bold exegetical error; for any serious inspection of the Lord’s words suffices to prove that the case adduced had passed out of individual dealing to “the church” or assembly (not the synagogue). Then the Lord (Matt. 18:18) strengthens this with His solemn averment of heaven’s sanction of their binding and loosing (not the keys), and His gracious assurance of His Father’s answer to the united petition of even two. Then He closes with the general principle for the worst of times (v. 20) that He is in the midst, where two or three are gathered unto His name. The last promise is an invaluable guard against party work, as well as unbelief and the world. It speaks little to hearts which never had, or

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have lost, faith in His word or presence . . .

As a matter of fact too, it was not till long after the Christians referred to had gathered, not as belonging to denominations, but simply as members of Christ, recognizing the one body and one Spirit according to the word, that the precise force of the Lord’s word in Matt. 18:20 struck any. Believing in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost, they had learned the immense value of every inspired word. Tradition had no place in their eyes. Since they accepted every scripture as God-breathed and profitable, they sought entire subjection to it as a living word, while declining either to claim more than they had or to substitute human devices in lieu of what they had not. Any scholar who looks into the text in question must allow that, unless there were an obstacle from our idiom in this particular case, “unto” must be the exact force; for “into” would be absurd, and ἐν properly, not εἰς, means “in.” But, far from a difficulty, the context here favors nothing so much as the proper import of εἰς, gathered “unto” My Name as the central presence on which they all depend and confide.

It was thus and only then perceived to be confirmation of their position, already founded on the revealed principles of God’s assembly, modified as this must be by the ruin not less carefully foreshown in the later Epistles and the Revelation, of which we are bound to take account, if we avoid that assumption which is so unworthy of Christ and so unbecoming in all that are His. How blessed to know that Christ remains as ever the center for even two or three gathered {together} to His Name!

But it was received as certain truth, on the evidence of scripture better understood and independently of any ground other than the precise and full meaning of our Savior’s words. Just so for many other truths of moment we have learnt since: we acted on the little that we first knew to be from God and of God; for we need the Spirit as well as the word. “To him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him.” Nothing more perilous to man, nothing more dishonoring to God, than to give up what we once confessed and enjoyed as divine. Who can tell where departure once begun may end? 35 💢
Chapter 1.4: The Assembly . . . Worships . . .

Assembly Worship in the Holy of Holies

Worship Leads to the Lord’s Supper

It is the privilege of every believer to worship individually in the heavenly sanctuary (cp. Heb. 10:19). But not only is there worship as individuals, there is also assembly worship (Heb. 2:11). And if an individual Christian delights in worshiping, would you not think that he would desire to worship together with other worshipers? Does not Matt. 18:20 show that the Lord Jesus desires to have His own gathered together unto His name?

We go in where our High Priest is minister of the holy places (Heb. 8:1, 2); and where He sings in the midst of the assembly (Heb. 2:12) in the heavenly sanctuary. That is where the assembly is, in spirit, for worship; in the holiest when gathered together unto Christ’s name, with Him in the midst (Matt. 18:20), to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread -- for the Lord’s Supper is the center of Christian worship collectively. Worship leads to the Lord’s supper. Worship arises in the heart and we desire to worship collectively in the assembly where Christ is in the midst in that special way and where He sings. So worship leads to the Lord’s supper, not the other way around.

What is Worship?

Worship is such an important point of practical Christianity that it will be beneficial to see what J. N. Darby taught regarding Christian worship in the assembly.

Worship . . . is the heart rising up through the power and operation of the Spirit of God in praise, thanksgiving, and adoration, for what God has done and does, and for what He is, as we know Him in Christ. The returning up by the Spirit from our hearts in adoration and praise of what has been revealed and descended in grace through Christ to us, expressed in our present relationship to God, the going up of the heart in spirit and in truth to our God and Father in the full knowledge of Him.

Worship is the expression of what is in our heart to God according to the holy claim He has upon us, and the full revelation He has made of Himself to us. Intercession is intervention with God for another. Christ may be present in spirit to lead the praises of His

36. What an attitude towards the Lord Jesus is displayed in the comment, “I can worship at home.” Yes you can, and you should, but it will not be with the Lord Jesus in the midst singing praises to God. Why do you think He does that if it is not important enough to command your presence where His own are so gathered together unto His name?
saints, and offer also their praises on high that they may be accepted. 37

Where is the Place of Worship?

Worship is the adoration, and for us in the holiest, of those who have been brought nigh by sacrifice, who know God as love, who know Him as a Father who has sought in grace worshipers in spirit and in truth, and brought them in cleansed to do so. The worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. By one offering Christ had perfected them forever, such is scripture truth (see Heb. 10); and then they worship, adore, praise in the sense of perfect divine favor and a Father’s love. They have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way He has consecrated for them through the veil. It is not that Christ is doing it in heaven actually in the triumphant church, and they on earth in the militant. They enter in spirit into the holiest, in heaven itself, to worship there; and hence a high priest made higher than the heavens was needed for them, because their worship is there. They do not offer the sacrifice in order to come in, they are within in virtue of the sacrifice.

And this is the place the symbols, of Christ’s broken body and blood, have in worship. The worshipers are in spirit in heavenly places, Christ in spirit in their midst, as it is written, “In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee,” and they own and remember that blessed and perfect sacrifice by which they can so worship, by which they have entered in. Doubtless they feed on Christ in spirit; but that is not the point we are on now. The Christ that is represented in the Eucharist is a Christ with a broken body, and the cup is His shed blood, not a glorified Christ in heaven. It is His death, a broken body and the blood separated from it, life given up in this world, that is before us. We may in spirit eat also the old corn of the land -- be occupied with a heavenly Christ, assuredly we may, and blessedly so; but that is not the Christ that is here. We eat His flesh and drink His blood, that is, separate from His body -- not only the manna which is for the desert and ceased in Canaan, the bread that came down from heaven, but the additional and necessary truth of His death. Hence His going up is only spoken of in John 6 as an additional subsequent truth. We worship as belonging to heaven and own that by which we got there, that perfect blessed work which He, who could speak what He knew there, and testify what He had seen, could tell was needed that we might have the heavenly things, and not only tell but in infinite love, accomplished. But no such Christ as the one whose symbols lie before us in the Lord’s supper exists now. It is specifically, solely, and

37. *Collected Writings* 15:360; see also 7:88, 100-102. See also *Synopsis* 1:134.

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emphatically, as a dead Christ that He is remembered there. They were
to do that, that is, to use the emphatic symbols of His death, in
remembrance of Him. Hence it is the center of worship because hereby
know I love, because He laid down His life for us. Here He glorified
the Father for me, so that I can enter into the holiest. Then the veil
was rent and the way opened; but here was the perfect work
accomplished, by which I, as risen together with Him, can say I am
not in the flesh. In the heavenly Christ I say, by the Holy Ghost, I am
in Him and He in me. It is being of Him, being united to Him, He in
our midst in grace. A dead Christ I remember. I do not, in the joy and
glory in which I have a part through and with Him, forget that lonely
work in which He bore the sorrow and drank the cup of wrath. I
remember with touched affections the lowly rejected Christ, now that
I am in heavenly places through His solitary humiliation. The offering
Him up now is a presumptuous denial of Christianity. The
remembering Him, that divine Person, in His solitary suffering and
perfect love to His Father, is the most touching of Christian affections,
the basis and center of all true worship, as the efficacy of the work
wrought there alone admits us to worship at all. The drinking of the
blood apart points it out as shed. We show forth the Lord’s death,
emphatically, not a glorified Christ, but we do so as associated with
Him the glorified Man, who Himself purged our sins, remembering
with thankful hearts how we got there, and, above all, Him who gave
Himself up that we might. 38

We worship in spirit in heaven . . . 39

They enter in spirit into the holiest, in heaven itself, to worship
there. 40

Being one with Christ, I can have no place of worship on the earth,
though my body may be there. 41

The Jews had worship on earth; we go higher than the heavens. Our
priest is there, on the right hand of God. That stamps the character of
our worship. “Higher than the heavens” is the place of our worship. 42

A perfect and eternal redemption has been accomplished, and the love
of God flows out on every side, embraces all races of men, calls them
to worship in the heavenly sanctuary, where the glory is manifested in
the Person of Jesus with unveiled face, where the love of the Father
does not hide itself, where it attracts and reveals itself. 43

What is the Center of Worship?

I admit the Lord’s supper to be the center of true worship . . . The Lord’s supper is the center of worship. 44

Worship is that for which Christians should meet, and, I add, the Lord’s supper is the center of worship. 45

I have no doubt that worship, with the Lord’s supper as the great and characterizing center of it, and not preaching, is the great object of Christians assembling themselves together. 46

. . . hence we see how the Lord’s supper allies itself to worship, witnessing to redemption. 47

If Jesus attaches value to our remembrance to Him -- if He presents Himself to us with so much tenderness in the memorials of His dying love, that love, at the same time, produces in us the very deepest affections -- affections which are connected with what is most exalted in the grace of God, and which express themselves in the adoration of the heart. We can understand, then, that although worship is offered in various ways, by hymns, by thanksgivings, in the form of prayers, in praise, etc., we can understand, I say, that the Lord’s supper, as representing that which forms the basis of all worship, is the center of its exercise, around which the other elements that compose it are grouped. The worshiper is thereby reminded of that which is the most precious of all things in the sight of God -- the death of His beloved Son. He recalls the act in which the Savior has testified His love in the most powerful way. Other considerations add their weight to those which we have just presented with regard to the Lord’s supper. The worshiper eats in the house of God, as the priests ate of the things with which expiation had been made; he enters with spiritual affection into the perfection of that expiation -- of what Christ has been in the accomplishment of it. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” I apply not this exclusively to the Lord’s supper, although the most vivid expression of it.

The peace-offering presents, with the passover, the most lively images of the true character of the Lord’s supper. The former was a feast consequent upon a sacrifice; in the latter, Israel fed upon the sacrifice, the blood of which was their safeguard against judgment. In

43. Collected Writings 4:165.
44. Collected Writings 15:356.
45. Collected Writings 15:301.
46. Collected Writings 29:324.
47. Notes and Comments 1:67.
the former, the partakers were, God, the priest who officiated, the priests, the worshiper, and those who were with him. The fat burnt upon the altar was called “the food of God.” This expresses the full satisfaction of God in the sweet odor of the work of Christ. The priest who offered the blood had his part. That is, Christ partakes in the joy of those that are His through the efficacy of His death. The other priests ate another part. They represent Christians in general. Lastly, the guests of him who makes the sacrifice represent united worshipers. Thus God Himself has His part in the joy; so has Christ; so has the Church in general; and lastly, the assembly which participates therein.  

Praising With Christ, Corporately

He leads the chorus of praise. Thus our praise must be according to the fullness with which Christ knows and enjoys the blessedness of the fruit of His work, and the relationship into which he is entered as man in virtue of it. It must answer to the name He declares to us as heard from the horns of the unicorn and risen, that we may join Him in praising His Father and our Father, His God and our God, or it is out of tune with Him, who leads so blessedly these praises. We must praise with Him on the ground of that blessedness in which He praises, or it is discord.  

But worship together has a distinct character, because there is Christ’s promise to be there. “In the midst of the church will I sing praise to thee.”

The Father Seeks Worshipers

What is presented in the epistle to the Hebrews does not refer directly to the Father. But worship certainly includes the Father. Indeed, the Father is seeking worshipers (John 4) and we will look at some extracts from JND concerning this.

The Difference Between the Names “God” and “Father”

The difference between the names of God and of Father is always distinctly maintained in John’s Gospel. When it is a question of the

49. *Collected Writings* 17:328.
nature, and of the acting of God according to that nature, as the origin of redemption, and of the responsibility of man, the word God is employed; when it is a question of the grace which acts in Christianity, and by Christ in us, it is the name of Father. Thus “God so loved the world”; and in John 4, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth”; but, in grace, “the Father seeketh such to worship him”; and here, “the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.” (Cp. John 13:3.) The Father has been revealed in the Son, and we have received the Spirit of adoption; the little children in Christ have known the Father. “The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him”; and on the other side, “No one hath seen God at any time.” Thus the Person of the Son come into the world, and for us, the exaltation of Jesus, after He had accomplished the work which the Father had given Him to do, then the descent of the Holy Ghost, in a word, the grace which operates in the Person, and for us, by means of the work of Jesus -- there is where we find the Father revealed. Jesus revealed this name to His disciples, although they had understood nothing of it (John 17:26); and now that the work which purifies us and justifies us has been accomplished, we have received the Spirit, by whom we cry, “Abba, Father.” The name of Father is a name of relationship, revealed by the presence of Christ, and which one knows and enjoys individually by the Holy Ghost. This is what characterizes Christianity, and we may say, Christ Himself. God is what God is in His nature and His authority, the name of a Being, not of a relationship, except in the rights of absolute authority that belong to Him; but of a Being who, being supreme, enters into relationship with us, in grace. We see the importance of this distinction in the words of Christ Himself. During the whole of His life He does not say, “my God,” but, “my Father,” even in Gethsemane; and the enjoyment of this relationship is perfect. “I am not alone, for the Father is with me.” He says again, “Father,” when He explains what it is for Him to drink the cup. On the cross He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Made sin for us, He felt what it was to be it before God, God being what He is. After His resurrection He employs the two names of God and of Father, when He introduces His disciples into the position into which He entered, from that time forth, as Man, according to the righteousness of God. “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, unto my God, and your God.” His own were, by grace, as Himself, in their relationship with God as Father; they were, by His work, before God such as He is in His nature, and that in righteousness, according to the value of the work that He had accomplished, and according to their acceptance in His Person, well pleasing in the Beloved. But what a wonderful privilege to know what the Father’s affections are set upon, and to know Him who is the object of them, and who is worthy of them -- who suffices for these affections! What happiness to know the Lord, for the Father wills that
there where He finds His delight we should find ours. What perfect, infinite happiness! 

**The Worship of Priests and Children**

As we have already seen, Christianity has an entirely different character {from Judaism}. It considers mankind as universally lost, proves them in reality to be so, and seeks, through the power of a new life, worshipers in spirit and in truth. In like manner does it introduce the worshipers themselves into the presence of God, who there reveals Himself as their Father -- a Father who has sought and saved them. And this is done, not by means of an intermediate priestly class who represent the worshipers because of the inability of the latter to approach a terrible and imperfectly known God; but it introduces them in full confidence to a God known and loved, because He loved them, sought, and washed them from all their sins, that they might be before Him without fear.

The consequence of this marked difference between the relations in which Jews and Christians stand as toward God is, that the Jews had a priesthood (and not a ministry) which acted outwards, that is, outside the people; while Christianity has a ministry which finds its exercise in the active revelation of what God is -- whether within the church or without -- there being no intermediate priesthood between God and His people, save the Great High Priest Himself. The Christian priesthood is composed of all true Christians, who equally enjoy the right of entering into the holy places by the new and living way which has been consecrated for them -- a priesthood, moreover, whose relations are essentially heavenly. Ministry, then, is essential to Christianity; which is the activity of the love of God in delivering souls from ruin and from sin, and in drawing them to Himself.

On earth, then, as regards the relations subsisting between God and man, a priesthood was the distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish dispensation; ministry, of the Christian: because priesthood maintained the Jews in their relations with God; and because by ministry Christianity seeks in this world worshipers of the Father. I say, on earth, for, in truth, when we consider the portion of the Christian in its highest point of view, namely, in that which has relation to heaven, Christianity has its “kings and priests” -- that is to say, all saints. The worship of God is not ministry; it is the expression of the heart of the children before their Father in heaven, and of priests before their God; in the intimacy of the presence of Him who, in His love, has rent the veil, which His justice had opposed to the sinner; and has rent it by a stroke which has disarmed justice, and left her

51. *Collected Writings* 33:158, 159.
nothing but the happy task of clothing with the best robe those to whom before all entrance had been denied. 52

**The Father Seeks Worshipers**

The woman now turns to worship. The Lord tells her that salvation was of the Jews; the Samaritans worshiped they knew not what; but the hour was coming, and now was, when the true worshipers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for it was no longer a question of what man ought to be for God, but of what God is for the sinner. “The Father seeketh such to worship him.” As for man’s worship, it was all worthless. You may get a machine to do ceremonies if you only are clever enough to make one. As we read in the prophet of the outward worship of Israel. God calls it, “bowing the head like a bulrush.” It is utterly worthless. You must have to do with God who knows you, and whom you must know if you would worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is not God requiring worship -- all very true, as man’s duty -- but the Lord is here in grace, and out of the abundance of His heart He says, “The Father seeketh” worshipers. He is not regarding forms of worship, but He is seeking vile, broken-down sinners to make them worshipers. He is not seeking the Pharisee: his worship proceeds out of himself; he thanks God for what he is. 53

But there remains yet another element of our intelligent service -- the character of “the Father.” God must be worshiped in “spirit and in truth,” for He is a Spirit: but it is as “the Father” that He “seeketh such to worship him.”

To worship “in spirit” is to worship according to the true nature of God, and in the power of that communion which the Spirit of God gives. Spiritual worship is thus in contrast with the forms and ceremonies, and all the religiousness of which the flesh is capable.

To worship God “in truth,” is to worship Him according to the revelation which He has given of Himself.

The Samaritans worshiped God neither in spirit nor in truth. The Jews worshiped God in truth, so far as this can be said of a revelation which was imperfect; but they worshiped Him in no respect in spirit. Now to worship God both are needful. He is to be worshiped according to the true revelation of Himself (that is, “in truth”), and according to His nature (that is, “in spirit”).

Yet this is not all that is presented to us in this passage: in it is found another precious element of worship. The Father seeks such

52. *Collected Writings* 1:207, 208.
worshipers. It is grace which makes such now -- grace flowing forth from love to themselves. Worship, therefore, is not rendered under a responsibility imposed by the flames of Mount Sinai, which, whilst demanding worship in the name of the holy majesty of the Lord, placed a barrier in the way of access to God, which no one could pass, under penalty of death; and which left the worshiper far off from God, trembling under the sense of responsibility, although encouraged by the benefits received from Him whom he dared not approach. No. Love seeks worshipers, but it seeks them under the gentle name of “Father.” It places them in a position of freedom before Him as the children of His love. The Spirit, who acts in them and produces worship, is “the spirit of adoption,” which cries, “Abba, Father.” It is not that God has lost His majesty, but that He, whose majesty is far better known, is known also under the more tender and loving character of Father. The Spirit, who leads to worship the Father, leads us also into the knowledge and enjoyment of all the love of God, who would have us to worship Him as His children.  

**The Spirit’s Operations in Worship**

These observations lead me to refer to a very important principle; namely, that the Holy Spirit is the energy, the sole living source, of all that takes place in worship so far as it is genuine. This principle, indeed, is true universally; it is true of all the exercises of spiritual life. We live by the Spirit. We walk by the Spirit. We worship in spirit and in truth. It is the Spirit who contends against the flesh. It is the affection of the Spirit which is the expression of the whole of the inward Christian life. But in Christian worship, the members of Christ being united together, the Spirit acts in the body. All that which is real and blessed comes from Him. Sovereign in action, but acting according to the spiritual capacity of each, He uses this sovereign power in order to express the feelings which are suitable to the assembly before God, to nourish and strengthen them by His grace. That which takes place ought to be according to the spiritual capacity of the assembly, raising it up, however, in the tone and spirit of worship, and leading it into the sensible enjoyment of the divine presence. It is thus that the Holy Spirit acts, for He acts in man, but according to the energy and grace of God.

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54. *Collected Writings* 7:100; see also 33:168.

55. *Collected Writings* 7: 107.
The two grand elements of Christian worship are the presence of the Holy Spirit and the remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, which is commemorated in the Supper.

But in this worship the affections which are connected with all our relationships with God are developed. God, in His majesty, is adored. The gifts even of His providence are recognized. He who is a Spirit is worshiped in spirit and in truth. We present to God, as our Father -- the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ -- the expression of the holy affections which He has produced in us; for He sought us when we were afar off, and has brought us near to Himself, as His beloved children, giving us the spirit of adoption, and associating us (wondrous grace!) with His well-beloved Son. We adore our Savior-God, who has purged us from our sins, and placed us in His presence without spot, His holiness and His righteousness, which have been so marvelously displayed in our redemption, being to us a source of joy which passes not away; for, through the perfect work of Christ, we are in the light as He Himself is in the light. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who reveals to us these heavenly things, and the glory which is to come, and who works in us so as to produce affections suitable to such blessed relationships with God. He it is who is the bond of union between the heart and these things. But in thus drawing out our souls He makes us feel that we are children of the same family, and members of the same body; uniting us in this worship by means of mutual affections and feelings common to all towards Him who is the object of our worship. Jesus Himself is present in our midst, according to His promise. In fine, worship is exercised in connection with the very sweetest recollection of His love, whether we regard His work upon the cross, or whether we recall the thought of His ever fresh and tender affection for us. He desires our remembrance of Him.

Sweet and precious thought! Oh! how joyous to our souls, and yet, at the same time, how solemn ought such worship to be! What sort of life should we be careful to lead in order to render it! How watchful over our own spirits! How sensitive as to evil! With what earnestness should we seek the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to render such worship suitably! Yet it should be very simple and truthful; for true affection is always simple, and at the same time devout, for the sense of such interests imparts devoutness. The majesty of Him whom we adore, and the greatness of His love, give solemnity to every act in which we draw near to Him. With what deep affections and thankfulness should we at such times think of the Savior, when we recall all His love for us -- abiding through Him in the presence of God, far removed from all evil, in the foretaste of our eternal blessing!
These two great subjects about which Christian worship is occupied (namely, the love of God our Father, and the love of the Lord Jesus, in His work, and as Head of His body the Church) afford slight changes in the character of worship, according to the state of those who render it. At times the Lord Jesus will be more specially before the mind; at times thoughts of the Father will be more present. The Holy Spirit alone can guide us in this; but the truthfulness and spirituality of worship will depend upon the state of those who compose the assembly. Effort in such things has no place. He who is the channel of worship, let it be observed, should not present that which is proper and peculiar to himself, but that which is truly the exercise through the Spirit of the hearts of those who compose the assembly. This will make us feel our entire dependence upon the Comforter -- the Spirit of truth -- for truthful service to God in communion. Nothing, however, is more simple or more evident than the truth, that the worship which is rendered should be the worship of all.

There is another observation which the consideration of scripture would suggest, namely, how much the worship will be affected by all that grieves the Holy Spirit; every impediment, therefore, even in an individual, will make itself felt, if there be spirituality; for we are there as but “one body.” It is of the utmost importance that this delicacy of spiritual feeling should be cultivated and maintained, and that we should not habituate ourselves in worship to but little sense of the presence of God and of the power of the Holy Spirit. If there is true spirituality, if the Holy Spirit fills the assembly with His presence, evil of every kind is quickly discovered. For God is a jealous God, and He is faithful. A single Achan was discovered at the commencement of the history of Israel -- a single lie in Ananias in the beginning of the Church’s history. Alas! what things afterwards occurred in Israel! And what things afterwards took place in the Church, without anyone having even the consciousness that evil was present! May God make us humble, watchful, and true to Him, and enable us to bear in mind that His Spirit abides with us, in order that we may be able to render spiritual worship! It is by the Spirit’s powerful testimony to the efficacy of the work of Christ, that we can abide in the presence of God, without blame and full of joy, and thus present to Him worship which is a witness before the angels of heaven to God’s gracious and unfathomable love, and which presents to God Himself the most acceptable proof of the efficacy of that work which takes from us all fear in His presence, and which opens a channel, otherwise eternally closed, for the outflowing of that love in which He finds His delight.

The privilege of being able to render worship to God is granted to two or three gathered together in the name of Jesus. Disciples are so gathered, when it is the power of His name known amongst them as the common tie, which is recognized as the principle of their
assembly. Jesus, in accordance with His promise {Matt. 18:20}, is there as the joy and strength of their common service. 56

Let Us Draw Near With a True Heart

The following extract is by H. H. Snell, from The Bible Treasury 11:362-364.

* * * * *

No doubt one chief reason why the glory and perfections of the sacred person of THE SON are thus so fully brought out in the first and second chapters of the Hebrews is to set forth the infinite value of the one sacrifice, and the perfectness of His priestly office, for there must necessarily be an everlasting efficacy connected with all that He did. Hence, as to the offering, we read,

By one offering he hath perfected for ever [or, in perpetuity] them that are sanctified {Heb. 10:14};

and, as concerning priesthood, we are told, There were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: and every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever [or in perpetuity] sat down on the right hand of God (Heb. 10:11, 12).

Thus, through the infinite efficacy of the one offering, the worshippers, instead of having to do with many sacrifices which could not take away sins, are once purged, and have no more conscience of sins, so that the Holy Ghost can in-dwell them and unite them to Christ in the heavens; such have also liberty to draw near to God -- to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, where our High Priest is, and where His blood ever speaks. Instead therefore of there being now “a remembrance of sins,” we remember Him, who has by His one offering for ever put away sin. Hence, though sin is in us, we have no sin on us; for we are cleansed, sanctified and perfected for ever by the will of God through one offering; and God has said, “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more” {Heb. 10:17}. Christ being now in heaven is the clearest proof that our sins have been borne, suffered for, and are gone for ever. We have, therefore, “no more conscience of sins” 57

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56. Collected Writings 7:114-117.
57. {The meaning of this is that those who stand in the value of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ have no more troubled conscience that sins stand against them so as to possibly separate them from God and bring them into judgment. Their conscience is purged from this fear. In that (continued…)}
{Heb. 10:2}. How rich and abundant is the grace of God to us in Christ!

If, then, in virtue of the accomplished work of the Son, the conscience is purged, the veil is rent, and He is gone into heaven itself by His own blood, we, as purged worshipers, necessarily have access to God with confidence; our hearts are attracted to where He now is, so that we run the race set before us according to His word; and we also take that position here which is suited to His mind. Hence the believer is looked at in the closing chapter of this Epistle as a happy worshiper, an earnest runner, and a faithful bearer of the reproach of Christ. He is a worshiper inside the veil, where Jesus is, a runner of a race looking steadfastly unto Jesus, and outside the camp with a rejected Jesus bearing His reproach.

The liberty of access for the worshiper is here contrasted with the way of approach, while the first tabernacle was standing, according to the only ritual divinely-instituted but now done away in Christ. It was characterized by distance from God, for the veil excluded them. It was, not rent -- the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; so that they never knew what it was to be in the presence of God, as purged worshipers. The priesthood too was of an earthly and successional order, confined to an earthly line of things (not heavenly) as between the people and God. It was a changeable priesthood, and often interrupted by death. There was also a "worldly sanctuary" -- a place of worship on earth, a material building, which was truly, and the only one ever recognized as the house of God. Such was the Jewish order of things. Whereas Christianity tells us of distance having been removed by the veil being rent from the top to the bottom, when Jesus died upon the cross, so that the worshiper comes now with boldness into the holiest of all {Heb. 10:19}. The order of priesthood is heavenly and eternal, all believers being made priests, and Jesus the Son of God being the unchangeable High Priest. Worship therefore is not now connected with a building on earth, but with the holiest of all above, "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man" {Heb. 8:2}. Because the Lord’s people are His house, there is now no building on earth, which can be truthfully designated a house of God. (See Heb. 3:6.) It was therefore said by our adorable Lord,

Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in {unto} my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20).

To attach the idea of a sanctuary now to any building on earth is then so far to abandon christian ground, and to go back to the Jews’ religion; which

57. (...continued)
particular respect, the conscience is considered to be perfect. This is the meaning of “perfect” in Heb. 10:1.)
is not only dishonoring to the Lord, but far more damaging to souls than many imagine; because it throws them at a distance from God, and necessitates their requiring a humanly-ordered priesthood {or other intermediary} to come between themselves and God. This the natural man likes, because it gives importance to men; while he rebels at the thoughts of divine grace, and refuses the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. But, blessed be God, we have remission of sins, and we have boldness to enter where He is. Hence we are welcomed with “Come boldly to the throne of grace.” Do we know what it is to be inside the vail, in the sweet consciousness of God’s “perfect love” and in the enjoyment of “perfect peace,” while our hearts at the same time are going out to the Father in worship and thanksgiving? It need scarcely be said that this is not the sinner drawing near in order to be cleansed, but the worshiper entering in with boldness, because he is cleansed, and has “no more conscience of sins” {Heb. 10:2}. Hence it is written,

Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:22).

Our Lord referred to this remarkable change in the character of worship. He said to the woman of Samaria,

Believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

Worship then must be “in spirit;” suited to the nature of God, and “in truth,” or according to God’s own revelation of His mind. Happy indeed are those who thus worship the Father!

At the same time the believer is deeply conscious he is in a world where Jesus was but is not, and is running on to where He is. The spiritual worshiper is also then a devoted runner, and in so doing he is exhorted to drop every weight which impedes his course, to lay aside unbelief in all its delusive forms -- that easily besetting sin -- and to run the race set before him (Heb. 12:1-3). He is encouraged to run, not to loiter, nor to seek a resting place, where the faithful Forerunner had none; but to follow on in the race with patient persevering faith. Not with spasmodic or desultory efforts, but with patience; not looking to men, however well they may have been reported for their faith: but to keep the eye steadily on Him who has run the race perfectly, who knows every step of the way, every impediment and temptation, and is now sitting on the throne of God. We are then to ruin the race set before us, looking unto Jesus (or looking steadfastly on Jesus)
where He now is. Thus turning from every other object, and fixing the eye of our heart on Him, the Leader and Completer (not of our faith, but) of faith, we must look steadfastly and dependently on Him who has trodden the path of faith perfectly from the beginning to the end; for all our resources are in Him. We are enjoined also to “consider him,” whose path was beset so painfully with opposition and trial; for when we well consider Him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against Himself, we become so cheered and strengthened that we do not grow weary and faint in our minds. The blessed Lord had joy in prospect, and so we have the bright hope of being with Him, and like Him for ever. We are told that

for the joy which was set before him, he endured the cross, despising
the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God
{Heb. 12:2}.

The Forerunner is for us entered within the veil, and we are to run the race with patience looking unto Him.

We are also to bear the reproach of Christ {Heb. 13:13}. We cannot now be associated with a worldly system of religion on earth, for the veil is rent. He suffered without the gate, and we are exhorted to go forth unto Him without the camp. Our place then here is to suffer with Christ in His rejection. God has highly exalted Him, and has made Him the central object of His counsels; Christ must therefore be the true and only center for the faithful here. False religiousness is as displeasing to the Lord as irreligiousness itself. Yet there is a way for faith in the darkest times. The Lord has interests still on earth of deepest moment to Him. He cannot bear what is evil. It is only the more hateful to Him, when His holy name is used to accredit it; though ecclesiastical evil is often the last thing which arouses the conscience. Still the word to the faithful is

Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity
{1 Tim. 2:20},

and

go forth unto Him without the camp {Heb. 13:13}.

This brings its “reproach,” but it is the path of blessing. To turn away from what is not according to His truth, “and to go forth unto him without the camp” is clearly His will concerning us. It may entail painful severances; but to be out to the Lord, and “with those who call on his name out of a pure heart,” is the divinely ordered path; and that is enough for a true heart.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach (Heb. 13:11-13).

It has been rightly said that a worldly religion, which forms a system in which the world can walk, and in which the religious element is adapted to man on earth, is the denial of Christianity. May we know increasingly the
blessedness of being inside the veil as purged worshipers, outside the camp with Christ in faithfulness to His name, and patient runners of the race which before long will bring us into His presence for ever:

for yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry (Heb. 10:37).

When the Lord presents Himself as “the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star,” it is immediately said “and the Spirit and the bride say ‘Come’”! {Rev. 22:17} so we may be assured it is the apprehension of His blessed person that will keep fresh in our soul the hope of His coming -- the earnest desire of seeing His face.
Part 2: From Judaism to Christianity

Chapter 2.1

Judaism Set Aside

The change that came about with Paul’s final interview with Jewish leaders, when he had arrived at Rome as a prisoner, has been noted. The destruction of Jerusalem, God’s judicial blow against the capital seat of Judaism, was impending. C. H. Mackintosh noted that Judaism was set aside morally by the cross, doctrinally by the Epistle to the Hebrews, and judicially by the destruction of Jerusalem. In the interval between the cross and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, God had patience with the Jewish believers who held on to Judaistic practices — practices of a system that He had at one time sanctioned. (He had no patience with heathen practices.) It was a transition period. Messianic Judaism seizes on this, and on Paul’s lapses (Paul will be considered later), as if these were evidence of God actually sanctioning Messianic Judaism. The fact is otherwise and the time of patience with this was ending. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, with the destruction of the temple and its service, as well as the break up of the assembly at Jerusalem, was impending. And before that destruction and break up of the assembly at Jerusalem, Paul, then a prisoner at Rome, gave a final testimony to the Jewish leaders in Rome, consequent upon which a change took place. In prison, Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, telling them to go forth to Christ, Who is outside the camp. It is obvious on the face of it, that in Hebrews “the camp” is Judaism, though this is necessarily explained otherwise by Messianic Jews, as well as by Gentiles professing Christianity who are involved with elements of Judaism in their church systems.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gave opportunity to the Jewish believers to act in faith on God’s Word to separate from the Judaistic practices before God’s judicial blow fell upon Jerusalem and the temple. God graciously
provided the Jewish believers with a wonderful sketch of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, in every respect. “The body” had set aside “the shadow.” The idea of Messianic Jews that there is spiritual benefit for them in observing Jewish practices flies in the face of the statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the “better” things of Christianity that displace what they were hankering after in Judaism. Christian worship is in the sanctuary above (Heb. 2:12, 8:2, 10:19-22). The tabernacle, though a “sanctuary, a worldly one” (Heb. 9:1) was “an image for the present time” (Heb. 9:9), a shadow of things in the heavens, where Christ is “minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle which the Lord has pitched, [and] not man” (Heb. 8:2). It is what is noted in Colossians concerning the “shadow” and “the body.” The shadow is “worldly” and the body is heavenly. We must not mix them together. ‘I have Christ, the body, but I also have spiritual benefit by observing ordinances that are shadows’ is false. Moreover, it is a patent pretense, for there is no tabernacle service and there is no temple and its service, in Christianity, nor do Messianic Jews have those things. The temple and its service were there until AD 70. The “Messianic Jews” of today do not have that available to them. But a Messianic Judaistic system is set up anyway — in order to preserve Jewish distinctives, with, falsely of course, spiritual benefits not available to Gentile believers! It is spiritual pretension, false and inherently divisive; a system that lowers, hides, and distorts what we have “in Christ,” namely, a heavenly position, outside the camp, illustrated on the chart below. Rev. 20:9 speaks of the camp and its city -- which is Jerusalem, of course. It becomes once again the object of hatred of the Gentiles at the end of the millennium when the divine restraint is removed.

It is instructive that it is called “the camp of the saints.” It had been the

58. In the winter 2003 Arial Ministries Newsletter, p. 1, Dr. Arnold Fructenbaum, a Jewish believer and a Scofieldian, speaks of “Dispensationalism” as “the most pro-Jewish, pro-Messianic theology.” He laments that many “in the Messianic Movement” attack dispensationalism. He wrote that “there was a time when Messianic Jews were known for their sound theology. That is no longer true since so much of the movement is being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine . . .” Does he include Arno Gaebelein in this phrase “Messianic Jews”? How about Alfred Edersheim? Would C. I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer approve of this mixture of “Dispensationalism” and Messianic Judaism?

And where does Scripture authorize Dr. Fructenbaum to suggest a recipe under the title “Passover Lamb” having “One boneless leg of lamb (5 to 7 pounds; serves 6-8 people” . . . “for your next Passover Seder”? Why not also have a pretended day of atonement (Lev. 16) also?, etc.

I am aware that he seeks to ground his form of Messianic Judaism in the Abrahamic Covenant, including the circumcision of all Jewish boys. Circumcision for a non-spiritual reason is one thing, but placing present day Jewish believers under the Abrahamic Covenant, as Jews, is utterly undispensational.
camp of the mixed company of Jews before the cross, but could not be the camp of “the saints” while the first, fallen man was under trial. But all wherein man fails, Christ makes good to the glory of God. “The camp of the saints” indicates this result of Christ’s coming in power and glory to glorify God in the establishment of God’s purpose in government in the earth.
2 Pet. 3 gives us the outline of God’s dealings with creation in three divisions. There are the heavens and the earth that were, which have been destroyed by water -- the flood; the heavens and the earth which are now, which are reserved unto fire; and the future, or the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. These will last for ever.

We are not to speak of the heavens and the earth which have been, nor of those which are to be, but of the heavens and the earth which now are. With these we have specially to do, and we find them again divided into three distinct parts: the camp that was established on earth, embracing the days of Judaism; the camp that will be, spoken of in Rev. 20:9; and Christianity, which comes in between these periods. It is with it we have to do -- not with the camp as it was, nor as it will be. We are in the days of Christianity.

Scripture is most plain in defining these things, and if one is but simple and obedient, he may know the truth and how to walk in it.

I will now seek to trace the establishment of the camp as it was, when God set it up at first -- i.e., of the system or order of things, technically called Judaism (Gal. 2:14). Leaving the false religious systems which man has built up may be mistaken for “going outside the camp”; but when the camp was first instituted, it was not a false human system, but a divine one. The camp, was, then the only right, the only blessed place on earth, so that the thought of leaving the systems of man for liberty of ministry or the like, does not necessarily touch the kernel of the truth. For, you may leave all these and carry with you the spirit of the thing you profess to leave, and rear it up again in your very midst. The camp was the proposition by a God-given machinery for the improvement of the first man -- man in the flesh. The camp was God’s meeting-place with man in the flesh. Christ is now the only meeting-place between God and man; but it is with the Christian, and not with man in the flesh. The history of man in the flesh came to an end in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s dealings with him are over, and it is unto Jesus we go forth-- the man on the other side of death: who was in death, but is now in glory. God now only recognizes Christ the second man. It is outside the camp you meet Him. He “suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:12). Christianity has reference to Christ and to man in the spirit {sic, Spirit}, not in the flesh in any way. The apostle says,

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more (2 Cor. 5:16).

The flesh, therefore, must be ignored by the one who goes forth unto Jesus
outside the camp.

Let us look at the camp as instituted by God at the first. What was it then, and what has its history been? As instituted by God it was beautiful, but in man’s hands it became horrible. It was the most beautiful place -- a scene of beauty and order, and designed to be so by God. To prove this, I refer you to Num. 5:2, 3,

Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one a that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: that they defile not their camps, in the midst of which I dwell.

Then in Deut. 23, we have fuller instruction as to the character to be maintained in the camp.

If there be among you any man that is not clean, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: for the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

If obedient to this the Lord promised to deliver the children of Israel from their enemies (vv. 9-14). The camp was the dwelling-place of God and His parade ground. God walked there, so there must not be a speck of defilement in the camp; and if purity had been maintained, this Scripture tells what God would have been to Israel. The camp was the place where God, so to speak, took man in hand, to train him, and prove if by a Divine institution and His own commandments anything could be made of {the fallen first} man. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ tells what the result of this trial was. The Jews, spite of all these privileges, preferred the robber Barabbas to the Son of God.

The first break-down in the camp we find recorded in the Ex. 32. When Israel made a calf of gold and worshiped it as God, Aaron, that he might be a popular man, fell in with the desire of the people. Man’s will worked -- that was the root of the evil -- the foundation of everything went, and Israel dishonored God in toto. Instead of the command, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,” the word went through the camp, “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.” This was the break-down before God, and “the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made,” but His mercy endured towards Israel, and Moses proclaimed,

The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin;

and thus the system was kept going. God by this means kept the camp together, in order to show that, with man in the flesh, nothing could be done. Corruption and failure went on till, in Amos 4:10, we read,
I have made the stink of your camps to come up in your nostrils.

It had {come up} alone so in the nostrils of God in Ex. 32; but, in Amos 4 the wickedness is so great that it is abhorrent to the very people who corrupted it. There is no capacity in man to recover himself. You may put a fine gloss upon corruption, but that does not remove the root of the evil. It is there still. Man in the flesh is utterly bad; death must be his portion, through death recovery by Christ. The death of Christ has ended the history of the first man, and out of His death has arisen the man that can bear fruit to God. Israel’s fall was complete, but they would not own it, nor turn to God. Had they done so, He would have had mercy on them and set them right. They were a stiff-necked people. He gave them laws, and said if they would do them they should live in them but it was to no purpose. There was no good in man, nor any ability to do good. It is the same still; and if God has failed {rather, demonstrated the impossibility} to improve man in the flesh, need we spend time trying to so? Christianity begins with Christ the second man. His death ended the {standing before God as under testing of the} first man, and death must be written on the flesh and all its workings by those who believe in Him and go forth unto Jesus now.

But the camp will again be set up. Of this we read in Rev. 20:9. Then {in the millennium} the camp will stand and not fall as did the camp of Israel {under the Mosaic Covenant}. Though even then it will not be a perfect order of things, yet integrity will be maintained by the manifested glory of Christ, not by the beauty or perfection of man in the flesh. For a thousand years it will be so, and then Satan will again come and seek to destroy the camp. Speedily he carried his point in the camp of Israel, but when he comes with all the strength he can command against “the camp of the saints,” he will himself be destroyed. The glory of Christ will be the victory that day.

There are two verses in Lev. 16 which reveal to us the means by which God could keep the camp of Israel going, after it had broken down before Him. We should not have been able to tell their meaning had not the Spirit of God interpreted them for us in Heb. 13. On the great day of Atonement, Aaron offered the bullock and the goat for the sin-offering without {outside} the camp, and their blood was brought into the holy place. The verses I refer to are Lev. 16:27, 28, and, but for this ordinance, the whole Jewish system would have collapsed from its first failure. It was a failing system, but kept together by virtue of that which took place outside the camp. This went on till the antitype of the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the saving ordinance, whose efficacy affected all the camp of Israel, was offered outside the camp, so the Lord Jesus, the antitype of this, “suffered outside the gate.” That which preserved the camp in its existence, was an act done outside its precincts, and it pointed to Him who should suffer the cursed death on the cross, that death which is to be the basis of everything when righteousness will reign in the camp of the saints, and the glory of the
Second Man, the Lord from heaven, will be manifested {Col. 3:4; Rev. 19}. Am I then to go back to that system which has come to an end (Heb. 9:26), or reintroduce principles and shadows which found their fulfilment in the cross *thereon* and the work of Christ?

Christianity gives us a heavenly, not an earthly, order of things. The cross of Christ is the end of the system that was, and through it are introduced the things that now are. It puts me outside the camp and all its types, but it puts me also inside the veil, where Jesus is, who died on the cross. It is with Christ, in the glory of God, I have to do. I am by the Holy Ghost linked up with Him.

You may try revivalism, teetotalism, anything you like, but these have to say to the first man. You will find all such things fail. Do not seek to recover the man God has ceased to deal with, on whom death is stamped and not recovery. God went fully into all that which people are now in vain seeking to do. He used a divine system when He made trial of man, and it failed. Will you succeed better, when you have only human means at your command? You must fail, and the sooner you believe it the better. You must begin at the cross of Christ, and from thence go on with Christ and Christianity.

Christianity begins with Him who glorified God on the cross, and by whom God was more glorified as to sin than if sin had never been in the world. As a Christian, I am outside the camp with Jesus, the One who suffered for sin without the gate. I must bear His reproach. There must be reproach. I must share Christ’s fortunes. If I am linked with His glory, I must accept His rejection. From man, or for man in the flesh, I must seek nothing. But is this the spirit of the Church in general at this moment? The moral features of apostasy which crept in to the Jewish camp until it reached the picture in Amos 4:10 (cp. 2 Thess. 2) are flagrant now in Christianity. They exist in the generation that is, as they did in the generation that is past (Psa. 78). You may call the people Jewish or Christian, it is all the same -- you find similar principles at work.

The professing Church has not set aside that which God judged on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first man is rampant even in Evangelicalism: God’s judgment on man in the flesh is not accepted by it as a system. The forgiveness of sins they are glad to have, and this gives peace of conscience but this is not holiness. Nothing will give holiness but that which sets the flesh aside and brings in Christ. In Rom. 5 you have forgiveness, but there is not a word about holiness; but in Rom. 6, where death with Christ is brought out, you find holiness enforced.

*He that is dead is freed from sin.*

*Let not sin reign in your mortal body.*

*Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.*
Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

It is important to see that, till death is accepted, and self seen to have no place, there cannot be holiness; happiness there may be, but Christianity is more than that. “It is Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12). It does not say, without happiness. There should be happiness, but holiness is the thing that is sought. God looks for this in His people, and it is inseparably linked up with the acceptance of death on self and the workings of the flesh.

Let us now see how the Church departed from this line, and how failure came in.

In Acts 15:5, there is manifestly the desire to bring in that which recognized the flesh as having place in the things of God. It was believers who did the mischief.

Then rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

It was Gentile Christians upon whom those burdens were imposed; but how does the apostle act with reference to the proposal? Verses 10 to 19 show. He treats it as seeking to subvert their souls. The departure began with the introduction of that which was Mosaic adding Moses to Christ; and to add thus was to spoil. This could not be tolerated by the apostle; but mark, it was believers who did it, and it is believers to-day who are diverted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Epistle to the Galatians shows how the evil worked, and in what strong language it was condemned. It is even called another gospel, this mixing up of Moses and Christ. It is this spirit we have to watch against in our own day. The little sprout soon grows into a luxuriant branch. You may say there is no fear, but there is every cause to fear. If you fear, then there is no fear; but if you do not fear, you will fall most certainly.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Our God is a consuming fire.

Moses’ God was not so pre-eminently. Heb. 12:22-29 does not end with the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel, but it goes on to the shaking of all things and the consuming fire. He is set on the destruction of that which is sown in the flesh.

He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

It is the fashion in some places to give out that Christianity is for the sinner, and thus God is forgotten; but God has His part in Christianity. The sinner is blessed most surely, but it is the goodness of God he is brought to share. It is the glad tidings of the love of God’s heart that goes forth. The prodigal hears them, and he is brought to feed with God upon His food. It is God’s food that is shared -- God must not be forgotten. The whole of the fat, the excellent part
of the offering, was for God. Let us then take heed lest we spoil that which
God looks for as His part in Christianity. It was the Pharisees who believed
who led the vanguard of defection in Acts 15; and in Gal. 2 it is an apostle
who dissembled and led another to do the same. Peter had given up Judaism,
and yet he sought to carry the Gentile converts back to it. Paul withstood him
to the face. These early records of Christianity need not surprise us, for we
see the same thing occurring now. It requires the continuous energy of the
Spirit of God to go on.

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

It may be a difficult thing to put right, but it is not less difficult to keep right.
The enemy is ever on the watch, and we are so unsteady. We get a glimpse
of Christ for a moment, but strength lies in having Him ever as “the mark”
before us. To this we are called. To have the eye ever and only on Christ.
With the Apostle Paul it was so.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high (Phil. 3).

Peter was losing this singleness of heart and aim, and he was leading others
with him; but the reproof entered his soul. Paul stands out as the only one
who maintained the glory of Christ against those who would have brought in
with Him something else.

In Gal. 4:9, we read,

How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye
desire again to be in bondage (Gal. 4:9).

It was to Gentiles who had professed Christianity the apostle spoke thus,
“Why turn ye again?” but it was Gentileism they left! Now they were adding
Jewish principles to their profession of Christ, and the apostle classes it as a
return to heathenism -- “again anew.” “If ye be circumcised Christ shall
profit you nothing.” The introduction of that which was of the camp into
Christianity, or seeking to improve the first man, is that which forms the
camp now which we have to beware of.

Col. 2:1 shows how earnestly the apostle desired the saints might be
preserved from all that savored of the camp, and grow up fully into the full
truth of Christianity,

I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at
Laodicea; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together
in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to
the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the
treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

They had doubtless the full assurance of faith, and of hope; but what they
needed, that they might stand in the truth of Christianity, was the full
assurance of understanding, the full knowledge of the mystery of God -- i.e.,
the present connection of the saint with Christ. It is the knowledge of the
mystery alone that will keep one out of evil now. In Col. 2 we find that by which we may be carried off the true ground of Christianity, or, as it is expressed, “made a spoil of.” When the sportsman has made the game his own, he takes it off the field and carries it home, and so the enemy of Christ now seeks to lead souls from simple occupation with Christ. Thus they become his prey, and are taken from the ground of Christianity, and that ends in apostasy and infidelity.

There are two highways which lead from the profession of Christianity to that of open infidelity. These are rationalism and ritualism -- or, in other words, the philosophy of the mind of man in the flesh, and the religiousness of his nature. These two will bring in the apostasy of the last days. There are many Christians, and true believers too, who have not the knowledge of the “mystery.” They have been made a spoil of, and are not really on the ground of Christianity. Clever men there are amongst them, who can lecture well and preach beautifully but it is the mind and wisdom of the first man that is at work in all that is short of Christianity. It is not Christ simply, nor the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in the mystery of God. All real knowledge, all spiritual teaching, is linked up with the truth of the mystery. That which is popular today is not coupled with bearing His reproach who suffered outside the gate. It is unto Jesus, outside the camp, we are to go forth. The spirit of the camp cannot be added to Christ. The shadows which pointed to Him must not again be brought in. Now we have the substance -- “The body is of Christ.” We no longer need the shadow: the fulfilment is ours in Him who is the Head in heaven of His body, of which we are on earth the members. To know the connection between the members of His body with Christ the Head in heaven, and to walk as such, was the truth which the Colossian saints were in danger of losing. We stand in danger now of letting it slip from us. The word of God must be allowed to judge us, and not the reason of man. “Let no man judge you,” says the apostle. Do not be made a spoil of. Let not the enemy carry you off divine ground. Christ the Head in heaven, and man in the Spirit, is the truth you have to maintain. Seek grace to walk in the power of that. What characterized Judaism is that which we must avoid.

Beware lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

If dead with Christ, you are out of the old thing -- you are risen with Christ, and you must not revive that which has now no place in the Divine presence. Your standing is in Christ in heaven, and in the Spirit on earth. You have now to do with the things where Christ is, and to “walk in newness of life.”

From 2 Thess. 2 we learn that there is to be an apostasy, and not a wide-spread reception of the gospel of Christ. There will be the abandonment of even the profession of Christianity before the ushering in of the kingdom
of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, or, in other words, before the establishment of the millennium. Such is not the general belief, but it is what Scripture plainly teaches.

That day shall not come, except there be a falling away first (2 Thess. 2:3).

What, then, are we to do? Verse 15 tells us --

Stand fast, and hold the traditions {instructions} which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.

Remember what the Apostle Paul has said. Hold to the truth of the mystery, and to “the full assurance of understanding therein.”

In Ezek. 43 we see the camp will again be reinstated on the earth; and you ask, what about the sin-offering then? It will be offered, but not outside the camp, as in Lev. 16. Christ will then be the center of all things.

In the dispensation of the fulness of times, He (God) will gather together in one all things in Christ {Eph. 1:10}.

The camp will be under the sway of the Lord Jesus, then the acknowledged Messiah of Israel, and the savor of His name will spread to earth’s utmost bounds.

Divine order in the camp will be maintained by the presence of the glory of Christ; and the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, commemorative of Him who suffered the sacrifice for sin outside the gates of Jerusalem, will be offered in the house, outside the most holy place, in the appointed place (Ezek. 43:21).

This seems in keeping with the place Christ will then have as Head and Center of all things. Still even the millennium is not a final and perfect order of things. It belongs only to the second great division of 2 Pet. 3. The new heavens and new earth are beyond it; and so, it would seem, the sin-offering, while offered in the house, is still without the sanctuary. In Rev. 5:6, we get further on, for the Lamb as it were slain, is in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts and of the elders. The center and support of the whole system, of divine glory is Himself, my title to be there.

The pillar and support of the millennial camp will be the Divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; but we are in the days of Christianity, and it is unto Jesus, who suffered without the gate, that we go forth. In fellowship with His rejection, we bear His reproach.
In considering the distinctiveness of the place into which God has called the believer, whether as to Himself, as to Satan, or as to the world, in either or both of its aspects -- whether worldly or religious -- we have seen what the truth which sanctifies reveals, namely, that the Lord Jesus, by taking in grace His people’s place has made their place in righteousness. The fitness of the Lord thus to take His people’s place has been already considered, also the fact of His having done so as regards God and as regards Satan. The result to the believer as regards God we have seen from the word to be his reconciliation to God, his introduction into His presence. Cleansed from all his guilt, associated with the risen Man at God’s right hand, in whom the believer is, as to his place before God, taken into favor in the Beloved {Eph. 1:6}, in the relationship of a child to God, who has now been revealed as Father. The result to the believer as regards Satan is that he is delivered from his power, that power being broken when the Lord, through death, “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”; and is delivered from that bondage in which he all his lifetime was through fear of death. What we have now to consider is the Lord in grace taking His place as man in the world, that we may learn therefrom our true place as regards it.

From John 1:14, we have already seen the Lord was made flesh. He came down to this earth and walked a man among men, full of grace and truth, the declarer of the Father. If we refer to vv. 10, 11, of this chapter, we shall see there the reception man accorded Him at the very outset of His career.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He who was Himself the Creator of all, stood in the midst of the creation He had formed, but it knew Him not. There were, however, others with whom He had relationship more intimate than with the world around, “his own” people of Israel, a people chosen of God from among the nations of the earth, a people carefully instructed to look forward to the coming One. To these He came. How did they receive Him?

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Thus, at the very outset of His career, instead of being received by the world He is rejected.

If we turn next to Luke 4:16, we shall see there also the enmity of men to this blessed One who came down in grace among them. Having met and foiled the enemy in those forty days of temptation in the wilderness, as we
have already seen, He comes to Nazareth, goes into the synagogue, opens the book, and, after having read a portion from the prophet Isaiah, pours forth such words of grace as man had never heard before. Man is attracted by the sound of grace.

They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

It was an unwonted sound in their ears. But while wondering at the grace, the evil of man’s heart comes out: they recognize the lowly place He had in grace taken in order to bring Himself near to them -- “Is not this Joseph’s son?” -- and take advantage of it to despise Him and refuse the grace He proclaimed. This being so, the Lord turned the light of truth on their consciences; He brings to their mind what had happened in the day of Elijah, when Israel had departed from God -- a day when God passed beyond the bounds of Israel and sent his servant to a poor gentile widow of Sarepta, by her to be sustained, and to that poor Gentile He displayed His grace. Again, in the days of Elisha, God had, in the exercise of His grace, passed beyond the limits of an apostate, grace-despising people, and, though many lepers were in Israel, that grace took up and healed a poor Assyrian leper. Thus, by bringing truth to bear, He warns them against despising grace, lest, despising it, God would do as He had done before, and carry His grace beyond them to others.

The effect of this is to bring out the true character of the heart of man in its enmity against God and grace:

All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

Such is the reception accorded by man to this One full of grace and truth at the opening of His ministry among them!

Nor was it different at the close. Look for a moment at the 22nd chapter of this gospel. Here I find the Lord Jesus Christ, having been in this scene where he ever went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil

-- here I find Him betrayed by His friend, subjected to the mockery and indignities of those He had permitted to take Him, and arraigned before the chief priests. No impartial trial was His. Another gospel (Mark) supplies us with the fact that they “sought witness against Jesus to put him to death”; yet none could they find. But they will not be balked of their purpose; bent on that purpose -- His death -- they will condemn Him by any means. In reply to their question, “Art thou, then, the Son of God?” He witnesses that part of the good confession which would most deeply involve Him with them: “Ye say that I am”; and, for this witness of the truth, is condemned. Brought before
the Roman governor, as we see in the next chapter, He witnesses the second part of the good confession -- that which would tend to involve Him with Pilate. In answer to the question, “Art thou the king of the Jews?” His reply is, “Thou sayest it.”

And now, just as Christ has witnessed the good confession in the presence of those who would condemn Him, God is careful to establish a testimony to the spotlessness of that blessed One, and that through the heathen judge himself. Pilate says, “I find no fault in this man.” Again, on His return from Herod, to whom He had been sent, the testimony of Pilate, based on Herod’s action towards the Lord, is still the same: “Nothing worthy of death.” And so saying the Roman governor seeks to release Him. But no, not so would they have it; their heart “is fully set in them to do evil,” and nothing will satisfy their dire enmity save “away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.” Was ever such a picture of the heart of man? Here we have, as it were, two men presented to them from which to choose one: the one, a Man who had in His own person presented God in grace to men -- One who had gone about amongst them ministering grace to them in every possible way -- God’s Man; the other, a man who had in his person presented the characteristics of Satan -- corruption and violence -- Satan’s man. Which will they choose? Satan’s man, Barabbas, is the man of man’s choice, while for the Man of God’s choice nothing will satisfy them but a cross: “Crucify him, crucify him” -- the further appeal of the Roman governor only furnishing opportunity for a more determined expression of their hatred:

They were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified . . . And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

They would have it so. It was their will, and to that will was delivered by the guilty governor the blessed One who had gone about doing good, the only one since the fall of man on whom God’s eye could rest with perfect complacency, the One concerning whom He could, in expressing the affection of His heart, say,

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The only place the world would give to Him was a cross. Thus we learn the reception and place accorded by the world to the Lord of glory come in grace and love, a man amongst men.

If we view the Lord’s path while passing through this world, we find that He ever walked in the most absolute separation from it. As to place in it, He, though Creator of all, though Son of man who is to have all, had not where to lay His head. As to association, His path was one of distinct separation. In speaking to the Jews, in John 8:23, He distinctly tells them He is not of this world. He, though in it, belonged to another sphere. In John 10:36 we find another passage referring to this; He says to the Jews: “Say ye of him, whom
the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world,” etc. He came down from God into this scene on God’s behalf, separate from everything in it, carrying out the mission on which He came. Then in John 17 He twice repeats this truth, that He was not of the world. In John 17:14 He would seem to refer rather to the fact that, while passing through it, He was not of it -- that is, as to association. He was truly a man in the midst of it, going through it, but He was not of the world through which He went. In v. 16 He perhaps speaks rather in view of His own proper place as outside of, not belonging to, not coming from, this world.

Such was the place of the Son of man in this world. Let us now see the result flowing from the cross to those associated with this world-rejected One -- the result to them as regards the worldly world.

In writing to the Galatians Paul, in Gal. 1:4, speaks of the object the Lord had in view in giving Himself for His people:

Who gave himself for our sins;
but, besides,

that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

There is the effect of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its result to the soul that believes in Him is deliverance from this evil world through which he is passing. In Gal. 6:14, we find the Apostle speaking of the effect of the cross on himself, a believer, as regards the world. He says,

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Paul had looked upon this world as a place where good was to be found; but in the cross of Christ he has discovered the true character of it. It was a corrupt, guilty thing, and had at the cross cast out in rejection the only One who truly manifested good, who was for, and displayed, God in this scene. That One the world took and nailed to a cross. By that cross the world was henceforth crucified to Paul, and Paul, who had found his all in the One it crucified, was crucified to it.

Do we, like Paul of old, enter into this true and legitimate effect of the cross as regards the world? There is not a believer who is not thankful for the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, because through it he is cleared from the guilt of his sins, in it he sees the condemnation of his nature as a child of Adam, and deliverance therefrom. But that is not all the result flowing from the work of the cross. The cross of Christ has also come between the believer and the world. The effect of the cross of Christ is to draw the line of separation between everyone that believes in Him and the world that has rejected Him. This being so, the only way in which believers can enter into association with
the worldly world around is by stepping over the line of separation which their Lord has made between them and it by the sacrifice of Himself. What must be the character of such an action in the eye of God, who judges all things in the light? What the dishonor to the Christ who loves us, and has given Himself for us? What the loss, incalculable, to our own souls? May we truly recognize and act according to this result to us, as regards the world, of the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Num. 31 furnishes us with an illustration of the inevitable consequences of joining affinity with the world. Israel, following the counsel of Balaam, had joined affinity with the Midianites; they had formed associations with the world. The result of their doing so is that they prepare conflict for themselves. Here they have to go forth to war against the very people with whom they had joined affinity. The word of the Lord to Moses is: “Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites”; and Moses’ word to the people: “Avenge the Lord of Midian.” Just so do believers prepare conflict for themselves by forming association with the world. The time is sure to come when they will have to treat as foes the very people with whom they have joined affinity. It is blessed to see, however, that when there is true readiness to break with all that would ensnare, God gives full victory; so it was with Israel, so it is with the believer.

If, it be asked, What place, then, is the believer to have in the world? the answer is, The place his Master had. What place was that? No place. The believer, then, is to have no place either. It is not place or portion in this world that the Lord presents to His disciples, but the cross; as He said (Matt. 16:24),

If any man will come after me (the world-rejected One), let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.

In John 15, from verse 12, the Lord instructs His disciples as His friends. Mark what He tells them in v. 19:

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Here we find the believer’s place as regards, and the portion he is to expect from, the world through which he is passing. He is not of it, but chosen out of it by Christ, and while in it has from it the portion his Lord had -- hatred.

Again, in John 17:14, 16:

I have given them thy word; the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

In v. 14, the point seems to be that the believer, though in the world, is not of it -- that is, as to association; and in v. 16 the point seems rather that the believer is one who, by faith, recognizes that his place is in another sphere --
in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, not yet, though soon, to be with Him there. His place of acceptance there marks our place, of acceptance with the Father; and our place there determines our place here as regards the world through which we at present pass.

The Lord give us to recognize that, through the cross, He has entirely separated us from this world, and, recognizing that, may we through grace walk according to it. The great things in the world are not half so ensnaring as the little things; the heart is afraid of the great things, but is prone to allow itself in the little things. We do well to remember that it is “the little foxes that spoil the vines.” If these have been at work, may we know what it is to take them by self-judgment, so that the place of separation from the world, which is ours through the cross of our Lord, may be maintained in all its integrity to His honor and our blessing.

It is because this separation from the world is not maintained by believers that they so fail to enter into the joys of the relationship into which God has brought them to Himself -- that of children to a father, and the portion He has given them. Separation, therefore, from the world is indispensably necessary to the practical enjoyment of our blessings. Those who are before God as members of the new creation cannot have concord or fellowship with those who are members of the old creation. In 2 Cor. 6:14, where we have the characteristic features of each given, we read,

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Between such opposites there can be no concord; hence, if the believer desire practically to enter into the joys and privileges of that new creation of which he is, through grace, a member -- of that relationship in which God has set him -- he must

come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

So doing, he enters practically into the joys that are his.

And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty.

I believe we get distinctly the worldly world presented to us here; in another Scripture we get the religious world. If we want to enjoy God according to the revelation He has been pleased to give of Himself -- our Father -- and His things, we must come out from the worldly world: separation from it is indispensable. May the exhortation of the first verse of ch. 7 (which verse
really belongs to the subject we have been considering in ch. 6) have its full power in our souls, and that which is exhorted be practically true of each one.

Thus far, then, as to the place of the believer as regards the world in its worldly aspect. Let us now consider the place His Lord has made for him as regards the world in its religious aspect.

In what we have read in Hebrews we get the Lord Jesus Christ taking His place as to the religious world. From time to time during His life we find Him in that city which was then the center of the religious world -- Jerusalem; there in gracious service to those who were in it, but always in separation from it. Never did He join affinity with it; never did He take a place in it. There is surely deep significance in the language used, the fact stated, in Mark 9. There we find the Lord day after day in Jerusalem, carrying on His gracious service; but invariably the word which closes the history of His day’s service is,

when even was come he went out of the city.

He could not take any place in it. Had He done so He would have had to judge it on account of its corruption, and He came not to judge but to save. His own very grace was shown by going out of the city at eventide. During His life He was found in the midst of it, but associated with it we never find Him; and at His death, where do we see Him? Suffering without the gate.

Jerusalem was the center of that religion which had been appointed by God. Its religion was not a humanly devised thing, nor was it a copy of another religion that had preceded it; it was what had been appointed by God Himself. And what was the place the Son of God, in grace a man among men, took in relation to that city -- the center and representative of the religion of the day? Outside it. He took that place in His grace and obedience. True, man’s hands put Him there, and so demonstrated his own guilt:

By wicked hands was he crucified and slain;

but it was also true that He was

delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

In His life there was never association with the religious world, but in His death there was absolute separation from it.

Now, we have said that the Lord, by taking in grace His people’s place on the cross, has made their place in righteousness. What, then, is the result to them of His having suffered outside the gate? He, by that suffering, has made their place outside the camp -- that is, outside everything that has to do in a religious way with man in the flesh. What is especially taken up in this passage is this: those addressed were Christians, but who, before they had through grace embraced Christianity, had belonged to Judaism. In embracing
Christianity they had given up Judaism and become Christians. 59 The Jews who still adhered to Judaism maintained that they had the true altar (an expression used for a system of worship), and that of it those who gave up Judaism and embraced Christianity had no right to eat. Here the writer denies their assertion, and affirms that not the adherents of Judaism, but those who had given it up -- Christians -- were those who had the true altar, and that of it the adherents of Judaism--those who serve the tabernacle--have no right to eat.

He then refers to the place in which the sin-offering was consumed, and shows that the Lord Jesus, the true sin-offering, suffered without {outside} the gate, and exhorts the Christians He is addressing to fulfil the responsibility that devolves on them consequent thereon, namely, to occupy the place their Lord by suffering without the gate had made for them. This they were to do by going forth to Him “without the camp.” If such were the responsibility of the saint when the religion of the day was adapted to man in the flesh, and had, as such, been set aside by God, what is his responsibility in every day in which the religion of the day assumes a like character, even long after God has set aside that order of things? It is surely the same: “Go forth to him without the camp.”

It may be asked, What constitutes the camp? The answer is, An earthly religious relationship with God outside the sanctuary; a religion established on earth; having priests between the people and God; a religion suited to man in the flesh. Such a religion was Judaism, and from it the true believers are here exorted to “go forth.”

If we turn to Heb. 9 we shall there find the features which the Spirit of God defines as characterizing the camp.

Then, verily, the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

Here we find one feature, a worldly sanctuary. This is then described as being divided into two parts-- vv. 2, 7 -- into one of which those who were priests could go; this was called the holy place. But into the second, which was called the holy of holies, the high priest only could go, and that only once a year, and then not without blood; the signification of this being, as the Holy Ghost explains, that “the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.” That is to say, there was no free access to God; God was shut in and man was shut out. In this we find another feature characterizing the camp.

Again, in this ceremonial certain offerings were made. The efficacy of these is here spoken of, and the Spirit of God states that they were ineffectual to make the conscience of the offerer perfect:

59. {Positionally, “in Christ,” this is true, but it was not true in practice.}
Sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.

Here we have yet another feature of the camp: in it a perfect, that is, purged, conscience was unknown. Nor was an eternal redemption. Thus we have, as the features characterizing the camp, the religion suited to man in the flesh: a worldly sanctuary; no freedom of access to God, but a body of priests officiating between the people and God; no purged conscience; and no eternal redemption.

In vv. 11-15 of the chapter, the Spirit of God unfolds the features that characterize Christianity, where we find quite another order of things to that which we have just been considering. In the first place, there is no worldly sanctuary, no tabernacle made with hands. It is not earth, but heaven itself, which is the sphere of Christian worship. It is in the holiest, the very presence of God Himself, the Christian worships. See Heb. 10:19. That is, in Christianity there is free access to God; as another Scripture has it: “By him [Christ] we have access, by one Spirit, to the Father.” Again, the sacrifice which Christ has presented to God, His own blood, is effectual to purge the conscience.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Here a purged conscience, therefore, we find to be another of the characteristic features of Christianity. But there is yet another characteristic, namely, an eternal redemption.

By his own blood, he [Christ] entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

Thus we see that the features characterizing Christianity are free access to God in the holiest, a purged conscience, and eternal redemption, and, as is added in v. 15 of this chapter, an eternal inheritance. By comparing the features characterizing Christianity with those characterizing Judaism -- the camp -- the contrast will at once be apparent; and the amalgamation of the two will be seen to be impossible, the two things being in direct opposition the one to the other. To attempt to amalgamate them is to lose both.

It remains for us to see to which description the religious world around us answers. In speaking of the religious world, I do not speak of individuals, but of the religious system of the day. Is it marked by the first distinguishing feature of Christianity, freedom of access to God? It is not. No doubt God is most truly entitled, as God Almighty, as Most High, etc., but is the religious
world of the day characterized by the adoption cry, “Abba, Father”?  
Individuals in it may no doubt, through God’s grace, know the sweetness of 
that cry, but it is not the characteristic of the religious system of the day; on 
the contrary, that system is marked by the absence of free access to God, by 
a worldly sanctuary in which a body of priests is found between the people 
and God. Again, as to a purged conscience, in this, as in the case of access to 
God, individuals may through grace possess it; but is it a characteristic feature 
of the religion around? Alas! it is not; on the contrary, there it is too generally 
considered presumptuous for any to say they have forgiveness of their sins, 
have that which is a distinguishing feature of Christianity, a purged 
conscience. Again, as to an eternal redemption, or an eternal inheritance: is 
this a characteristic of the religion suited to man in the flesh which is abroad 
in our day? No. Thus, when we come to examine to which of the features the 
religious world by which we are surrounded answers -- that is, to the features 
characterizing the camp, or to those characterizing Christianity -- we find it 
is to the former, and not to the latter, it answers.

And if this be so, where is the place of the Christian with regard to it? 
Outside the camp.

Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, 
suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him 
without the camp, bearing his reproach.

He suffered without the gate for you, and has thereby made your place with 
Him outside -- outside the camp. The believer has no other true place than 
clean outside it all.

Note, too, the character of that separation. It is not merely negative -- 
there never was a soul maintained right by mere negative separation; you must 
have something positive. It is, “Let us go forth without the camp” -- that is 
the negative side; but it is also “unto him,” and there we have the positive. It 
is separation from the evil to Christ. The Lord would have the believer 
separated from what is contrary to Him, most surely; but He would also have 
him separated positively to Himself; and if the separation be not to Christ, it 
is simply another form of sectarianism. What is separated to may be a truth 
in itself, but such is not a separation according to God, if the separation be 
anything short of the Christ outside the camp. However right in itself the thing 
separated to may be, the character of the action is sectarian.

But now let us mark the character and spirit in which the separation is to

60. {The use of the disciples’ prayer -- “Our Father who art in heaven” -- does not express the 
nearness and intimacy we have with “Abba, Father” but rather it expresses distance. That 
prayer was suitable to the disciples in their then state, a time of transition, and before the Spirit 
of sonship had come in His special capacity to indwell believers and indwell the church. The 
disciples’ prayer is not expressive of the Christian’s place before the Father.}
be carried out. We are to go forth to Him outside the camp, “bearing his reproach.” He who is truly separated to Christ outside the camp will be there with a lowly, sorrowing heart, feeling the failure and wreck in the hands of man of that which was once set up so bright and so beautiful by the hand of God Himself -- the church of God on earth. He will feel that he, too, has at one time been a party to helping on the failure. Nor should any who may through grace have been led to occupy this place outside the camp imagine they are a testimony to any great thing though in one sense they are a testimony to a great thing, namely, a great ruin. The fact of their being but a little remnant acting on the truth is a testimony to the ruin of the whole. Therefore if we go forth without the camp in a spirit which God can own, it will be in a lowly spirit, bearing Christ’s reproach. Our personal walk and ways should testify for Him in such a way that, if any sought to reproach Him, they would cast that reproach on us, so fully were we representing Him, answering in our little measure to what the Lord says of Himself in Psa. 69: “The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” He so perfectly manifested God here below, that, when man wanted to reproach God, the reproach fell upon Him -- Christ.

Now, beloved friends, with what are you connected? -- with that of which the characteristics of Christianity are the distinguishing features? The Lord give you to answer the question in His own blessed presence, and enable you, if connected with the former, to apprehend and fulfil your responsibility by going forth to Him outside the camp -- to Him who has by His death made that place for you. Other place, as regards the religious world around, the believer has not, and as long as he fails to occupy this he fails in loyalty to Him who, at the cost of Himself, made that place for Him. If through grace you are connected with the latter and already occupy the place your Lord has made for you outside the camp, may it be in that spirit of lowliness and grace, while at the same time faithfulness, of which He can approve.

But another point arises here: can it be that God would have His people remain as isolated individuals here below? Clearly not; else where the force of the exhortation:

    Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is?

or, what the meaning of the prophecy uttered by Caiaphas, when he prophesied

    that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.


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Where we see such statements in Scripture, we cannot but conclude that God must have some ground on which He would have His people gathered {together, Matt. 18:20}.

What, then, is God’s ground of gathering for His people in this day? It is the church of God -- the body of Christ; that alone is the ground of gathering for God’s people. In Eph. 4:4 we read:

There is one body and one Spirit.

Mark the absolute character of the statement. Though ruin be all around, it still abides true that “there is one body and one Spirit.” God’s ground of gathering abides the same, and no amount of ruin absolves the believer from his personal responsibility. If he be true to his Lord he will recognize this, and walk in the practice of the truth revealed, though in doing so he find himself all but alone.

But, it may be asked, what is this church of God? To arrive at a correct answer to this we must lay aside tradition entirely, and seek God’s thoughts from His own word. In Eph. 1, we find the apostle Paul prays that the saints may know what is the hope of his (God’s) calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world {age}, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Here we find what the church of God is: it is no worldly sanctuary, but that body of which Christ, the living risen Man in glory, is the head.

Of what does that body consist, and how is it formed? It consists of true believers, who, by the baptism of God the Holy Ghost, have been formed into one body and united to the Head in heaven. This we find in 1 Cor. 12:12, 13.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

The body of Christ, then, which is the church of God, is composed of true believers, and of not merely true believers as such, but of true believers who are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and who are thus of that body which He, by His baptism on the day of Pentecost, \(^{62}\) formed for the first time on earth, and which He has maintained on earth ever since, and still maintains -- the church

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62. {Christ is the baptizer; the Spirit is the power of it.}
of God, the body of Christ. “There is one body and one Spirit.”

Let us now look at the way in which this truth of one body is declared -- the way in which it is shown out. In 1 Cor. 10:17 we find these words:

We, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread (or loaf).

Here we see that in the one loaf on the Lord’s table we have that which symbolizes the unity of the one body: many particles bound together; many parts, one whole. The responsibility of the believer is always according to the character of the relationship in which he is, and God always expects us to act according to what He has made us. Having made us His children by faith in Christ Jesus, our responsibility is to be “imitators of God as dear children.” But, besides this, from that at which we have just been looking we see that God has by His Spirit made us members of that body of which Christ is the Head, a body formed and maintained here on earth as a present thing by the Holy Ghost. What, then, is the responsibility of the believer in this relationship? We find it laid down in Eph. 4:3:

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The way in which this is practically carried out is by walking in the fellowship of that Spirit: the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of truth. To walk in His fellowship, therefore, the saint must walk in holiness -- that is, separation from evil {and unto the Lord}, and in truth -- that is, according to the revealed will of God.

We see, then, that God has a ground of gathering for His people in these last days {of ruin}, and that is the church of God, the body of Christ. The One to whom they are gathered {together, Matt. 18:20} is Christ, the one alone center, by the one Spirit. To endeavor to “keep the unity of the Spirit” is the responsibility of the believer, and the question for each is: Am I answering to God’s revealed truth in this respect? Am I occupying the place our Lord has made for me outside the camp -- the ground which God has provided? Am I endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

The mere profession of occupying such a ground is not sufficient. All such profession must be tested, as it is possible to occupy a ground assuming to be God’s, without the origin of that ground being divine. It is possible to adopt the theory without the practice, and such has happened. There are two indispensable requisites to be fulfilled ere any ground can be acknowledged as being God’s, and therefore as having a claim on the saints of God. Those requisites are:

(1) That the origin of the ground be divine.

(2) That the practice characterizing that ground be consistent with the character of Him whose ground it assumes to be.

Now, as to the fact God has but one ground: “There is one body and one
The center to which God gathers on that ground is, one Lord: “There is one Lord.”

The power by which God gathers is one: one Spirit.

When, therefore, the ground is really divine in its origin -- is really God’s -- saints will be gathered on one ground, to one Lord, by one Spirit. When so gathered they will own, and be in communion with, all those previously gathered after this manner on this ground. To take a place apart from any so gathered, who were walking according to the truth, would be to be guilty of the sin of independency, to assume a ground which is unknown in Scripture, and which is a dishonor to the Holy Ghost. It may be that where this occupying of an independent ground has taken place, there may be a great many apparently right things done by those occupying it, but the doing of these will never constitute the ground right; and the first really right action of every saint who is truehearted to his Lord will be to depart from such a ground.

As to the second requisite. For a ground to be God’s, the practice allowed there must correspond not only morally but doctrinally with the character of Him whose ground it is -- the Holy God, who gathers by His Holy Spirit to the name of His Holy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ -- “He that is holy, he that is true.” That is, a ground to be God’s must be characterized by holiness and truth.

When, therefore, the origin of a ground assuming to be God’s is not divine, or when its characteristic features do not correspond with the character of Him whose ground it assumes to be, such a ground has no claim whatever to be recognized as God’s ground, even though each individual soul on it were a true believer.

In a day when, alas, such grounds are to be found, having their origin on the one hand in independency and that human arrangement which is a dishonor to the Holy Ghost, or on the other, in a neutrality which manifests indifference to the glory of Christ, it surely becomes every saint of God to search the word in dependence on God, that he may have His mind as to his place and pathway. What is the responsibility of the saint when things are so? We have already seen it. To maintain at all cost the unity of the Spirit towards those who occupy such a ground. How is this unity of the Spirit to be maintained towards such? By not walking, or having communion, with them; by separation from evil to Christ.

May we ever remember that the occupation of God’s ground for His people in these last days is not optional with us. The Lord has at the cost of Himself made His people’s place; “the corn of wheat” has fallen into the ground and died, and now brings forth much fruit. The believer, therefore, is
responsible to his Lord to occupy the place that Lord has made for him. He owes it to Christ to do so. By neglecting or refusing to do so he fails in loyalty and faithfulness to his Lord, and cannot be held guiltless.

If the religious world around have assumed the place of the camp, the believer’s place is outside: to “go forth” is his responsibility, a responsibility he cannot evade without the most solemn consequences.

If Christians, professing to see the evil of the camp, have gone forth professing to occupy a divine ground, and yet are not on that which God has Himself established, and by His Spirit maintains -- a ground not characterized by holiness and truth, where there is either indifference to the glory of Christ or dishonor to the Holy Ghost -- the place of those true to Christ, of those who fulfil their responsibility -- “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” -- is outside, apart from such.

We have to remember that if we would be in the current of God’s thoughts we must have before us God’s Christ above God’s people; God’s ground, not man’s organizations; the unity of God’s Spirit, not the unity of Christians; Christ’s glory, not Christian likings.

The Lord keep us true and faithful to Himself, through His grace ministered, His strength perfected, in weakness.

May we, walking in the power of the truth and under the guidance of the Spirit, enter more and more fully into the distinctive character of the path and place He has made for us as regards God, Satan, or the world, whether worldly or religious, and answer to it, remembering the cost at which such blessing has been made for us; and waiting for the moment when we shall see face to face the blessed One who accomplished all, and who will Himself come and introduce us into the full fruition of all He has accomplishe[ll. L.]
Chapter 2.2

From Judaism to Christianity


We Gentile Christians, who have not been under the bonds of the law and have the NT Scriptures the key to the OT, should consider how great is our privilege above the believing Jews in the early days of Christianity. They had only Moses and the prophets; and these did not reveal the great and wonderful change which would take place after the cutting off of the Messiah, the parenthesis between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy (9:25-27), a few passing hints excepted which only shone out after the True Light came or rather when the Spirit led beyond what they could previously bear. That system ceased which had been ordained of God for Israel and had existed for fifteen centuries: “carnal ordinances,” which men could see with their natural eyes, and in which every soul of Israel might take a part. All that was now set aside by spiritual sacrifice and by the priesthood of every believer become a priest, Christ Himself in heaven being their great High Priest. It was no longer sights and sounds acting on the senses, but now eternal and unseen things discerned only by the eye of faith.

Hitherto Jerusalem had been the place wherein God had chosen to put His name; thither they were to bring their sacrifice and offerings, and there at the altar where He recorded His name He was to come and bless them (Ex. 20:24). But under the new order of things how great the change! Jerusalem is no longer the place where men worship truly. “The hour cometh,” said the Lord,” and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21-23). It is well to remember that these believers did not see this written till more than fifty years after Pentecost. Neither James, nor Peter, nor Paul when he at first comes on the scene, unfolds as yet such a truth so far as we know. The time had not arrived till a late day for Paul to tell them,

Let us go forth to him without the camp (the Jewish system) bearing his reproach.

This they were not yet prepared to do. Neither were they told till then,

We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle (Heb. 13:10).
This last the saints in Jerusalem had been all doing, and continued to do till the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, more than thirty years after Pentecost.

If we take these things into serious consideration, we shall the better understand how these saints could continue to follow Moses, “all zealous of the law,” for so many years after the cross. How many saints think that from the moment of the utterance of the Messiah’s dying words “It is finished,” when “the veil of the temple was rent in twain,” there was an end, not merely in principle before God but in fact, of Judaism, material sacrifices, priests, temple, with all other legal ordinances? In Acts 6:7 we read of a great crowd of priests obeying the faith; and Christians who read it now jump to the conclusion that they then gave up all sacerdotal functions, because the Lord added them to the church. But this is premature; there is no ground to believe it, but that they continued their service in the sanctuary. How slow most of us find it to apply a principle so new, strange and deep!

If we pay attention to Heb. 8:13, we see that the first covenant which had ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary “was becoming old and growing aged,” and thus ready to vanish away. Thus the Levitical regime had not yet disappeared; and it was made known to the Christian Jews only at the close, before the city and temple fell under public and divine judgment. A little later (viz. AD 70), Jerusalem was destroyed and not one stone left on another of the temple. Then Judaism finally passed away. Its death blow had been given at the crucifixion. During this interval God patiently bore with the “untoward generation,” delivering out from among them “daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Up to this the Jewish saints continued to worship according to the law and the prophets; to which they superadded elementary Christian truth, putting the new wine into the old skins.

They continued with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house (or, at home) (Acts 2:46).

Here we see the two things going on together. Their old reverence and attachment to the temple was evidently retained.

We know with certainty that up to Acts 21:20, or some twenty-seven years after Pentecost, the many myriads (or ten thousands) who believed were all zealous for the law. Among these James who was “a pillar” at Jerusalem, and even Paul too who “had come with offerings and alms to his nation,” were not behind in deference to the Mosaic routine. It was at James’ instigation that Paul agreed to prove his subjection to Moses, and that he did not, as had been calumniously reported, persuade the Jews who dwelt among the Gentiles to forsake Moses and the customs, and the circumcision of their children. Hence Paul went, with others who had a vow, into the
But can it be that these many thousands of believing Jews who were all zealous for the law were guilty, when offering a lamb, of the terrible crime equivalent to “cutting off a dog’s neck”? Or would any one of them in offering an oblation “be as if he offered swine’s blood” (Isa. 66:3)? No. This solely refers to the future day when the man of sin, Antichrist, sits there, and the temple is the scene of apostasy and defiance of Jehovah, and the temple is not owned but for judgment, and the sacrifices utterly abominable in His eyes. What has all this to do with the temple, where after Pentecost Peter and John used to go up statedly for prayer? Is it possible for God to permit of such adhesion if the old ritual was so evil in the Jewish saints, without raising a voice against continuance in it for so many years?

So far from it indeed, that long after his devoted servant Paul was in prison for what many call building again the things he had destroyed, the Lord comes to him to comfort him without uttering one word of rebuke for what the advice of James brought upon him. “Be of good cheer, Paul,” says He, “for as thou hast testified of Me at Jerusalem (what was the testimony?), so must thou at Rome.” Peter had early a vision to direct him to go outside the Jewish fold and learn that “what God had cleansed” was not common nor unclean. His preaching in Acts 3 does not rise above the earth blessings for Israel if they would repent, “when times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord.” Peter clearly had much to learn.

Had the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews been given to the Jewish disciples in the early days of Christianity, they could not have continued on the old lines without being guilty of despising God’s word and offending Him. How far it was agreeable to God or accepted, we cannot say; but if itself utterly offensive, it is unlike God to allow all the saints, apostles, prophets, etc., to continue sinning without remonstrance. We see what the consequence must have been if, after abandoning the shadows for the substance in coming to Christ, they fell away from Him and went back to the shadows. It would be “crucifying for themselves the Son of God and putting Him to shame” (Heb. 6).

Up to this time the saints had evidently followed Moses, and, although believing in the Messiah, had failed to apprehend the results of His death, resurrection, and ascension. They had not profited by the Jewish elements as read in the heavenly light. The time had now arrived when they must

63. {More likely what Paul did was a lapse in practice, as is discussed elsewhere. He knew better for himself.}
leave the word of the beginning of Christ, and go on to what belongs to full growth {Heb. 6:1}.

Their was a heavenly calling {Heb. 3:1}. Jerusalem was not, nor ever had been, the place for worshiping the Father, revealed by the Son {John 4:24}. It was now their privilege to enter in spirit into the holiest where Christ had entered, as their great High Priest {Heb. 10:19-22}, into no figures of the true but heaven itself, the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man {Heb. 8:1-3}. Thenceforth all the Jewish saints, like all believers, are invited to approach within the rent veil, having boldness to enter, in virtue of the eternal redemption which Christ obtained, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. Such a condition the blood of Jewish sacrifices never did nor could procure.

Blessed this was for those now by faith familiar with the old sacrifices, etc., to know them more than fulfilled in Christ. But one must perceive what of divinely given courage it required, added to faith, in order to turn away from that which was dearer than life to a godly Jew; established as it had been by Jehovah’s judicial authority under which every transgression received a righteous retribution. No Gentile believer of this day in leaving any of the sects or human organizations, which never were of God but of man’s device, can be compared with a Jew giving up what till then had God’s sanction and command in all its details. It is plain that the believing Jews added Christianity to their Judaism; and most patiently did God deal with them.

But it is no less plain with what warmth Paul writes to the Gentile Galatians who were adding the law to Christianity. How scathing are his words!

O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you? etc. (Gal. 3:1).

Whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4)

If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing (Gal. 5:2).

They were also observing Jewish festival-days and months and times and years. To Gentiles they were beggarly elements (Gal. 4:9), a return in principle to idolatry from which they had been delivered.

But Christendom, not satisfied with Jewish festivals, has added to its calendar many pagan festivals with Christian names and so-called saints-days, some of them of reprobate character, like St. George of merry England, merry in being patronized by a scoundrel after his death a saint! Can we close our eyes to the manifest increase of ritualism everywhere? Rome has spread the leaven in almost every section wherever the Lord’s name is named. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” as Paul told the Judaized Galatians {Gal. 5:9}. Christendom is advancing far and fast in this evil direction. The end we read in Rev. 14, 15, 17, 18, as well as in 2 Thess. 2. God calls, as He has called long, His people to come out of her, lest they partake of her sins,
and so receive of her plagues (Rev. 18:4). We may and must be accused by the old serpent; but we ought not to be deceived, as the whole world will be.

**Christian Jews Now**

The Epistle to the Hebrews gave opportunity to the Jewish believers to act in faith on God’s Word to separate from Judaistic practices before God’s judicial blow fell upon Jerusalem and the temple. God graciously provided the Jewish believers with a wonderful sketch of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, in every respect. “The body” has set aside “the shadow.” The idea of Messianic Jews that there is spiritual benefit for them in observing Jewish practices flies in the face of the statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the “better” things of Christianity that displace what they were hankering for in Judaism. The worship was now in the sanctuary above (Heb. 2:12, 8:2, 10:19-22). The tabernacle, though a “sanctuary, a worldly one” (Heb. 9:1) was “an image for the present time” (Heb. 9:9), a shadow of things in the heavens, where Christ is “minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle which the Lord has pitched, [and] not man” (Heb. 8:2). The shadow is “worldly” and the body is heavenly. We must not mix them together. ‘I have Christ, the body, but I also have spiritual benefit by observing ordinances that are shadows’ is a false notion. Moreover, it is a patent pretense, for Christianity has no earthly tabernacle service and no earthly temple with its earthly service, nor do Messianic Jews have these things. The temple and its service were there until AD 70. The “Messianic Jews” of today do not have that available to them. But a Messianic Judaistic system is set up anyway -- in order to preserve Jewish distinctives, with spiritual benefits not available to Gentile believers. It is spiritual pretension, false and inherently divisive; a system that lowers, hides, and distorts what we have “in Christ.”
The Status of the Christian Jew

_Help and Food_ 15:169-186 (1897)

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be ONE FLOCK (Gk.) and one Shepherd (John 10:16).

And that He might reconcile both unto God in ONE BODY by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:16).

The question has been raised, no doubt with the best intentions and by godly sincere persons, whether the Jew by virtue of his birth, may not continue after his conversion to Christianity to consider himself still a Jew and to observe the ordinances, such as circumcision and the passover.

It is the object of this present paper to examine the question simply in the light of the word of God. Of its importance many we believe can scarcely be aware, for it involves the very truth of the Church of God in its corporate testimony upon earth, and, if carried to its legitimate results, in its unique and heavenly glory as well.

Let us begin by asking what is Judaism and what is Christianity, and what is the connection between the two.

Judaism is the name given to that system originally established by God in relation with His covenant people Israel, but which, as its name implies, had come to mark the disruption of the twelve tribes, and the consequent annulment of that covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). Naturally this annulment was, to outward appearance at least, gradual. Practically this covenant was never fully established with the nation, for they apostatized and set up the golden calf before Moses had brought the tables of the covenant into the camp (Ex. 32). God’s relation with the people was at that time marked by the removal of the tabernacle or tent to a place outside the camp afar off (Ex. 33:7). It will be interesting later on to connect this scripture with one in the New Testament {Heb. 13:13}.

After this apostasy there was a re-establishment of intercourse but upon a somewhat modified basis. God was proclaimed as merciful and gracious, yet as One who would by no means clear the guilty (Ex. 34:6, 7). The first declaration permits Him to go on with the stiff-necked people; the second shows the legal nature of the relationship. The effect is seen in the fact that Moses was compelled to veil his face (Ex. 34:32-35), showing that there was no full, complete restoration to God’s favor. How could there be if law entered in as a factor? (See 2 Cor. 3).

The removal of the ark from Shiloh (1 Sam. 4-7), first to the Philistines’ land, and, on its restoration to Israel, not returned to the tabernacle, is but another illustration of the same truth. The relationship of God with His people was in mercy, not on the basis of mere law; and all that witnessed of standing
in the flesh, such as the pre-eminence of the tribe of Ephraim, had to be set aside.

David again is an illustration of this setting aside the flesh, and a fresh interposition in mercy. Saul was king according to the flesh, but was rejected for the simple shepherd called from his flocks. Psalm 89 presents all this in a most beautiful and interesting way, which is of especial value in the study of prophetic truth regarding Israel’s future.

But David was merely a type -- though also the ancestor of our Lord according to the flesh -- and when the throne is established under Solomon God again reasserts the principle of the uncertainty of everything under law. See the solemn statement of this after the building and dedication of the temple (1 Kings 9:1-9).

It is significant that when Stephen reaches this point in his wondrous discourse (Acts 7), he goes no further in the recapitulation of the people’s history. The highest glory which they as a nation attained did but emphasize their own alienation from God. Paul similarly (Acts 13) leaps from David to Christ. Nothing marked the interval save instance after instance of their enmity and of God’s long-suffering mercy. The darkness ever deepened. The tribes -- long severed from Judah -- were carried captive by the king of Assyria, and to this day are hidden from view (1 Kings 17:6-23). Deeper gloom follows as Judah also is carried to Babylon, the temple burned and the “Times of the Gentiles” introduced. The “Ichabod” pronounced long ago, when the ark was taken captive, is now finally the doom of the nation, and Ezekiel beholds the departure of that reluctant {to leave} glory which took its flight, never to return until the nation as a nation is born again and restored, after the great tribulation, in peace and blessing in their land, never more to go out so long as sun and moon endure. Let the reader compare the following passages for one of the most solemnly magnificent and yet most mournful occurrences described the word of God: Ezek. 1:1-28; 3:22-27; 7:4-18; 9:3; 10:4-22; 11:22, 23; 43:1-6.

The return from Babylon was not a setting up again of the nation as such, but a provisional restoration under Gentile protection and authority, with no glory, no Urim and Thummim (Ezra 2:63). But had there been a heart for God, the promise of the prophet, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former” (Hag. 2:9), would have been fulfilled. Alas when the Lord came to the temple, it was but to find it a house of merchandise, a den of thieves (John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12, 13 64). At the close of His ministry He

64. It is interesting to note, as an illustration of the perfection of Scripture and its absolute inspiration, that there are two cleansings of the temple: in John it takes place at the beginning of our Lord’s ministry, and in Matthew at its close. This is in entire accord with the theme of (continued…)
can but weep over Jerusalem and pronounce the doom upon an apostate nation:

> Behold your house (not God’s house) is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in name of the Lord (Matt. 23:34-39).

The cross is the people’s answer to God’s presentation of His Son, and their words, “His blood be upon us and our children,” do but state the solemn and awful judgment upon a guilty people. Surely it is the mark of Cain who slew his brother, which while it preserved his life, forever branded him (Gen. 4:15) as the shedder of blood. Blessed be God, when the nation turns to Him with the prayer, “Deliver me from blood guiltiness” (Psa. 51:14-19), that precious blood which now witnesses against them, will then speak “better things than that of Abel,” and the walls of Jerusalem will be built. But meanwhile Jerusalem is “trodden under foot of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

The first part of the book of Acts -- the first seven chapters -- presents to us the wonder of God’s lingering mercy loath to depart from a people still blind and hardened. We know the descent of the Spirit marked a new epoch in God’s ways -- a new dispensation. The Church, into whose character and destiny we will presently look, had its beginning at that time by that Baptism of the Spirit {1 Cor. 12:13} which is its distinguishing feature and glory. But though the new era had thus dawned, one last call is made. The gospel begins at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), and in connection with the preaching of repentance and forgiveness through the name of Jesus, His return is promised (Acts 3:18-26).

Alas, such patience but manifests the incorrigible hardness and blindness of the people; and when Stephen addresses them in a discourse which sounds like a judicial summing up (Acts 7), their answer -- final as in any sense a nation -- is to stone him, the national method of judicial execution (Josh. 7:25). Stephen, like his Lord, prays for his persecutors, and passes into the presence of a Christ rejected on earth but glorified in heaven. Most beautiful is it to see, rising as it were red handed from the murder of the first Christian martyr, the chosen vessel {Saul} who, arrested by the revelation of that rejected Jesus of Nazareth in the glory of God, becomes the apostle and minister of the Church, Christ’s body. But we pause, ere entering upon the subject of the Church, to ascertain the connection of the ordinances with Israel as a nation.

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64. (...continued)
each book. In Matthew our Lord is presented as King, as it were tentatively, and it is after His rejection is fully manifested that He purges the temple; in John He is seen as rejected from the beginning {John 1:11} and thus early pronounces judgment upon that which was called God’s house.
If our readers have followed us thus far, they will have seen the absolute rejection of Judaism as having any status whatever before God. And we have no doubt that some may say this was already sufficiently clear without taking the time to prove what all admit. Our purpose, however, has been to show that there is nothing arbitrary in this rejection, and that with it goes the whole fabric of Judaism as a system, with its ordinances as well. Let us look at this last more closely.

Moses gave unto you circumcision; not because it is of Moses but of the fathers, and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man (John 7:22).

We have here two of the principal ordinances of Judaism -- circumcision and the Sabbath -- connected with the law of Moses and yet of far earlier institution. We find the Mosaic ordinances of circumcision in Lev. (12:3, with Luke 2:21, 22): the Sabbath of course we find in the fourth commandment, where its previous observance is at least suggested (Ex. 20:8-11).

As to circumcision, it was given to Abraham as a distinctive mark of the covenant God made with him and his seed to bless them and to give them the land of Canaan for a perpetual possession (Gen. 17 with Acts 7:5-8). It was the ordinance of Judaism, so completely indeed as to be used as the designation of the Jewish people. (See Rom. 3:1, 30; 4:9; 15:8; Gal. 2:9, 12; Eph. 2:11; Col. 4:11; Titus 1:10.) Any one who failed to receive it, lost caste in the nation, was to be cut off (Gen. 17:14, see also Josh. 5:2-9). It was the initiatory rite in the reception of the stranger (Ex. 12:48). Other nations were stigmatized as “uncircumcised” (1 Sam. 17:26, 36; Jer. 9:26). We see thus that circumcision was woven into the very structure of Judaism as a whole. They stood or fell together.

As to the Sabbath, it opens up a most needful and important line of truth into which we can enter but briefly. It was commemoration of the completion of the work of the first or old creation: it is contained in the law “written and engraven in stones,” which was “done away” (2 Cor. 3:7-11). Its observance was enjoined because of Israel’s redemption out of Egypt (Deut. 5:15); it was particularly made known to that nation (Neh. 9:14). The sabbaths were a special sign given as a covenant to them (Ezek. 20:12, 20, etc). Any fancied violation by our Lord, as to the observation of the Sabbath, always aroused the special enmity of the Jews (John 5:16-18, and frequently). It is linked with other ordinances as to meat and drink, holy days and new moons (Col. 2:16, 17). It has its place with these and when, as we have already observed, the penitent nation is truly restored, the sabbath will, with the other feasts, have its appointed place (Ezek. 45:17, etc.).

The same can be said regarding all the feasts or set times. They were called, when given, “the feasts of Jehovah” (Lev. 23:2, 4, etc.); in days of decline, “your new moons and your appointed feasts” or, as frequently in John, “feasts of the Jews.” Any national recovery was marked by their
resumption, as the passover in Hezekiah’s and Josiah’s day (2 Chron. 30 and 35); or the feast of tabernacles, after the return from Babylon (Neh. 8:14-18). These will all be resumed with the restoration of the nation (Zech. 14:16, 18, 19; Isa. 66:23; Ezek. 45:21). Meanwhile they have been set aside with the nation to which they belong, while they serve as most beautiful shadows of things to come.

We pass now to consider the second question of our paper, What is Christianity?

Christianity is marked by two great and related facts: -- Christ glorified in heaven and the Holy Ghost upon earth. We have already seen these as marking the setting aside of Judaism; they likewise introduce Christianity. About these two great facts cluster those precious characteristics which are the unique treasure and joy of the Church: a present and eternal forgiveness of sins, justification, access, deliverance from sin, from the law; the sealing, unction and guidance of the Spirit, with His illumination and power for a walk in the world, to witness and to suffer for Christ; Sonship and Heirship, the hope of the glory of God and Himself our joy. Such are some of the special individual blessings characteristic of Christianity, set forth chiefly in Romans and Galatians. Coming to Ephesians we find a heavenly position in Christ and the believer quickened and raised up with Him and seated in Him in the heavenly places -- in heaven already, as it were. In Galatians the believer is seen as crucified to the world; in Ephesians as in a new world {i.e., new creation}; in Colossians as quickened with resurrection life, and seeking the things which are above (Col.3:1). In Ephesians the great mystery of the Church as the body of a glorified Christ is presented (Eph. 1:22, 23) -- a mystery till Paul’s day unknown (Eph. 3:1-11 {also Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1}). In 1st Corinthians we have that body as upon earth, formed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, with its gifts and responsibilities set before us. Hebrews is filled with the contrasts between Judaism and Christianity, presenting, among other precious themes, the finished sacrifice of Christ, His priesthood, access into the holiest and a pilgrim walk here. We must select from such themes only such matter as bears directly upon our subject {though they all bear on it}, and this can be brought out in our third and final inquiry as to the relation

65. {The Seven Set Feasts of Jehovah, available from Present Truth Publishers, gives the meaning, history of observance, and fulfilment of these feasts.}

66. We have but touched upon the whole question of the law and the Christian’s relation to it, as a subject too large for the limits of the present paper. Its importance however in this connection is immense. Where it is not understood little successful resistance can be made against the assaults of such evil systems as Seventh day Adventism. “Are you under the law?” say they, “then keep the fourth commandment.” Those who desire to look carefully at the subject will find it set forth in “The Law, the Sabbath and the Christian Ministry,” “What is the sabbath and what is the first day of the week,” “The Seventh day Adventists and the Sabbath” . . .
between Judaism and Christianity.

Our answer is brief: They are mutually exclusive. This, Scripture most abundantly proves. We will present a few reasons for this, gathered from the general character of Christianity and the Church, before taking up the specific arguments so frequently set before us in Paul’s Epistles.

Judaism had to do with the old creation; Christianity with the new (2 Cor. 5:16, 17). Judaism was promised earthly and temporal blessings on condition of obedience to the law; Christianity has received spiritual blessings in heavenly places {Eph. 1:3}, through faith in Christ alone. Judaism had to do with shadows; Christianity with the substance. The hope of Israel is to inherit their land; the hope of the Church is to be caught up to meet the Lord, and to share His heavenly glory in the Father’s house {John 14:1-3}.

All are familiar with the presentation of the “no difference” doctrine in the epistle to the Romans. Jew and Gentile are alike proved to be under sin -- the one under law, the other without law. Both alike are partakers of the free grace of God through the sacrifice of Christ, for faith. The advantages of the Jew (Rom. 3) are shown to be great, chiefly because of their having the revelation of God in His word: but this only enhanced their guilt. Abraham and David, the two chief figures in the nation, are shown to have received blessing not by law but by faith, Abraham particularly having received the promises before circumcision (Rom. 4). The third section of the epistle (Rom. 9-11) is taken up with showing how the doctrines of grace, while superseding the blessings of national Israel, are not inconsistent with the promises of ultimate earthly blessing when the nation shall have repented. Rom. 11 gives us the sovereign election of God as the assurance of blessing, and not the blood {blood-line} of Abraham. Rom. 10 contrasts the faith, which accepts, with the unbelief which has rejected the Lord; while Rom. 11 declares that even now a remnant is preserved -- according to the election of grace, and therefore not of the first covenant -- while in a day yet to come “all Israel,” Israel as a nation, “shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

The passage as to the olive tree is of special interest (Rom. 11:17-25). The olive tree suggests those privileges and outward blessings connected with the manifestation of God. Its root we may say was Abraham who received the promises, and its branches his natural descendants. Israel had not continued in God’s goodness and therefore were cut off from the privileges and blessings of the olive tree; the Gentiles who professed faith in Christ had entered into those privileges and were responsible as the channels of blessing to others. But it is all profession: were this not real they would be broken off. As a matter of fact the Gentiles have not continued in God’s goodness and

67. {The idea in Messianic Judaism is that the olive tree is Israel. It is not Israel. If the Lord wills, we shall consider the olive tree at length elsewhere.}

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will, when the Church is caught up to meet the Lord, be broken off, as containing only the lukewarm self-righteousness of Laodicea and the blasphemous iniquity of Babylon. (See Rev. 3:16; Rev. 17.) After this the “natural branches” will be grafted in again, at the time of national restoration already frequently spoken of.

In other words this olive tree does not touch the question of nationality, but of privilege. Hence circumcision and the ordinances are not in question at all. Were they, then the Gentiles now partaking of the “root and fatness of the olive tree” would have to be circumcised.

Corinthians is largely occupied with the Christian Church and as such must be noticed later. We have already alluded to the striking passage in 2 Cor. 3 where the law is absolutely set aside for the “ministration of the Spirit,” and to the fifth chapter where new creation is so strikingly spoken of. We must look for a moment at this.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more (2 Cor. 5:16).

Of Israel the apostle has said (Rom.9:5):

Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever.

To know Christ after the flesh was to know Him as of the nation of Israel, as their rightful king. In Christianity, the apostle knows Him only as the risen Head of the new creation.

Galatians is so full of the subject we are considering that well nigh the entire epistle might be commented upon. Gal. 1 shows how Paul received the gospel, absolutely independently of Judaism, even of Jerusalem: Gal. 2 shows how he maintained it clear of all such influences: Gal. 3 shows, like Rom. 4, how grace antedated all law and ordinances: Gal. 4 shows us the liberty of the Spirit and sonship as contrasted with the bondage of Judaism with its “days and months, times and years” -- “weak and beggarly elements,” as the apostle calls them: Gal. 5 emphasizes the walk in this liberty of the Spirit, giving amongst much else this most pungent word,

If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law (Gal. 5:2, 3).

After a few practical exhortations in the sixth chapter, he closes the epistle with those “large letters” (Gk.) written with his own hand,

As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised: only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh (Gal 6:12, 13; see also vv. 14 to end).
If it be objected that the apostle in all this is referring to the attempt to Judaize the Gentile Christians, the answer must be that he is on the contrary establishing the great salient features of Christianity for all. One passage of a character similar to those to which we have alluded refers exclusively to those who are “Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:15-21).

But if we turn to the epistle to the Hebrews we find, as its name imports, a message to those of Israel’s race who had professed Christianity, and the burden of it all is *Christ*, setting aside all else that the Jew might glory in -- angels, law, Moses, and Aaron with his priesthood, the law, the sacrifices, the first covenant, the “worldly sanctuary,” {Heb. 9:1, 2} yea, this world. As gone on high He has opened a path for those who have believed in Him to follow, and the heavenly city and the “kingdom that cannot be moved,” are just in view.

Most solemnly again and again throughout the epistle are the professors warned against going back from Christ. Who could think that there was the least thought in the apostle’s mind of the Hebrews going on with circumcision, the Passover and the like, as he wrote,

> We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. Wherefore Jesus also that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Heb. 13:10-16).

We can but pause to notice how the death of Christ, in Colossians, has taken out of the way the handwriting of ordinances: the only circumcision recognized is the circumcision (death) of Christ, made without hands (Col. 2:11-23). Most distinctly does the apostle declare (Col. 3:10, 11), as to the new man, that there is “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision.”

This brings us to the similar statement in Eph. (2:11-16) where the division between Jew and Gentile is seen broken down, and a complete reconciliation in one body (the Church) effected by the cross; a *new man* created, ordinances all set aside.

This truth of the one Body we find presented with much fulness both in the epistle to the Ephesians and that to the Corinthians. It is the basis of all true apprehension as to what the Church of Christ {of God} is. In Ephesians it is presented as in union with Christ its head in heaven (Eph. 1:22, 23); a body formed of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 3:6); with gifts for all needed service in its upbuilding -- bestowed by the ascended Head (Eph. 4:8-13). This Church is destined to be the heavenly bride of Christ, and even now should have the affections and obedience which such an union suggest (Eph. 5: 22-33).
1 Cor. 12-14 gives us the Church as formed by the Spirit upon earth (1 Cor. 12:13) with gifts bestowed, energized and directed by the Holy Spirit. Love is the main spring of all activity (1 Cor. 13), while prophecy -- speaking to edification, and exhortation and comfort -- is to be earnestly desired. Directions as to meetings follow (1 Cor. 14). Previous to this we have (1 Cor. 5, 6) the exercise of ordinary and extraordinary discipline, and in 1 Cor. 10 and 11 the privileges and responsibilities in connection with the Lord’s supper. In short, in 1st Corinthians we have the Church and its responsibilities upon earth, as in Ephesians we see it (largely) enjoying its privileges linked with Christ in heaven. We ask, Where is there room for any of the features of Judaism in either epistle? They are both explicitly and impliedly excluded. In both epistles the unity of the body of Christ is emphasized. How could that be where the distinction between Jew and Gentile was preserved! We have Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as the two ordinances (if we may use such a word) of the Church. How could we conceive of part of that church also observing the Passover and circumcision, with all other Jewish ordinances?

But it will be replied this is just what we find in the book of Acts. We must then, ere closing, look at that book.

We have already alluded to the beauty of God’s lingering over the nation, as seen in the first seven chapters, as though He would say, “How can I give thee up?” This gives the key to the whole book. We see the good Shepherd leading the sheep out of the fold, so gently and tenderly that even the weakest need not falter.

After Stephen’s death the gospel is carried to Samaria -- a step off the plane of Judaism (Acts 8). Saul’s conversion is then narrated (Acts 9), while Acts 10 marks a most important step in the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile. Jewish persecution closes this part of the book (Acts 11, 12). Acts 13 and 14 show the gospel going freely among the Gentiles of Asia Minor, with the Gentile city of Antioch as a sort of center. When however the question of Judaizing is broached from Jerusalem, it is brought back there and settled by the apostles. Peter and James are prominent and while neither presents the truth as to the Church, both practically declare the end of exclusive Judaism; Peter even acknowledging that it was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (Acts 15:10).

Thus far we see gradual emancipation from the domination of Judaism. Yet, respect for weak consciences is most carefully enjoined. Timothy, as no necessity had been made of it, and unquestionably for the time being, was circumcised, in order that the gospel might go on unhindered. It reaches to Europe and great and wide-spread blessing is the result (Acts 16-19).

We have no heart to appear as critics of that devoted servant of Christ, the apostle Paul, but simply applying the tests which he himself has furnished us
in the epistles, his course as he turned himself toward Jerusalem seems to have been backward. We remember that he declared that once he wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren’s sake (Rom. 9:3, Gk.). His love for them was a passion. Gladly would he sacrifice anything to win them to the knowledge of Christ -- to become as a Jew to Jews. In the face of known persecution, nay of what seems like actual prohibition (Acts 21:4), he pressed on, burning with love to Christ and His earthly people. Well did that faithful Lord appreciate the devotion, but alas, poor indeed was the reception given by the Jews. Instead of winning them, he stirred all their prejudices to the depths, and was thrown into prison.

Surely God overruled all this, and from the lonely prison came those wondrous epistles which set the distinctive truths of Christianity before us -- notably Ephesians and Colossians -- epistles which cast no uncertain light upon the mistakes of a love rarely equaled.

In the face of such an ending can we say the Spirit of God encourages compromise? Gently as God had led on His beloved earthly people, the break had to come at last, and we find Paul himself severing the last strand,

Be it known unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it (Acts 28:28).

Shortly after this Jerusalem was destroyed and the last step in the break with Israel was taken.

Judaism is at the present time absolutely cast off. The Jew must take his place with the Gentile as a lost guilty sinner. He finds Christ and in Him stands before God no longer in a righteousness which is of the law, but which is by faith in Christ. The apostle (Phil. 3) describes the true circumcision, as contrasted with that made with hands. He arrays everything that he might have gloried in and sets it all aside.

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews . . . but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

It is useless to urge that this was only for salvation. This is analogous to the reasoning that the believer is not under the law for salvation, but is under it as a rule of life, and both are similarly injurious. 68 We can understand that the timid faith of the Jewish convert might cling to the ordinances of his fathers, and it is barely possible that he might escape persecution by so doing. He would, we firmly believe, be opening the way for less worthy ones to enter the same path. But, after all, these are not the things we are to consider.

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68. {Some Messianic Jews do say that their keeping of the law and Jewish practices is not for salvation. And, yes, the way of supporting the system is analogous to how holders of “covenant theology” reason on the use of the law by Gentile Christians. The mind-set is similar, however the systems differ.}
We may pray for our weak brother, but we should seek to deliver him from a yoke which can but mean a failure to understand God’s ways, and his own privileges. To make provision for him to go on in Judaism is but to provide for the dividing of the Church of Christ into Jewish and Gentile. 

But it may be asked what is the converted Israelite to do? The Church is divided, where can he go? Our reply must be, just where every Christian whose eyes are opened to the evil about him must go -- to the Lord Himself. He never changes, and He is just as ready to meet those put out of the synagogue to-day, as when He found the man whose eyes He had opened, and revealed Himself as the Son of God.

Oh, beloved, to be at the feet of the Son of God -- worshipers! what place have ordinances here?

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69. It may be argued that 1 Cor. 7:18, 19 warrants a continuance of Jewish ordinances for the new convert. Let it be noted that the apostle set aside both circumcision and uncircumcision. Grace takes one up where it finds him -- and he cannot undo the past. If married he remains so; if a slave he remains so, though he was to seek freedom if possible. But he was to go on with God (1 Cor. 7:24). Now if his original position were contrary to the mind of God, he must abandon it. Quite a similar argument is used regarding eating meats offered to idols. In one sense it was nothing, in another it was eating of the table of devils (1 Cor. 10:16-22). The most that could be gathered from the passage we are considering is that a man remains a Jew just as a man remains married -- neither having the slightest relation to God. But to go on with Jewish observances as unto God, would be going back to the flesh after having begun in the Spirit.
Part 3:
A Heavenly Sanctuary

Chapter 3.1

A Worldly Sanctuary

Christians have a heavenly sanctuary and a minister of that sanctuary, a heavenly High Priest (Heb. 8:2). By His blood, we have boldness to enter there (Heb. 10:19) where He leads the singing of the assembly (Heb. 2:12). Messianic Jews (as do many Christians) either displace this with, or mix in elements of, what Heb. 9:1 calls a worldly sanctuary. The article below, taken from Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith, begins a series of five articles regarding the heavenly order of Christ’s present priesthood, the heavenly sanctuary where He functions, and the heavenly worship proper to Christians; this is all in contrast to the old Israel under the old covenant, or the new Israel under the New Covenant, when Christ will function in the Melchisedec order of priesthood, upon His throne (Zech. 6:13).

A Worldly Sanctuary

Heb. 9:1

(From Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith 3:347-360.)

We are often in danger of coming short of the truth of God, by attaching to the words of Scripture the technical meaning which they may have in the theology of our own days. The words “carnal,” “flesh,” “world,” and “worldly,” are known to us as expressive of that which is corrupt in itself, and which is disowned of God. But if we do not see that God has had long patience both with the flesh and the world, dealing with them both in a way of probation, previous to his finally giving them up, we shall fall greatly short
in apprehending the truth of God. 70 And not only so, but we shall also fail to perceive, that every effort which man is making now, is but the repetition of that which has been previously attempted under far more favorable circumstances, and which has issued in lamentable failure.

Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? {Hab. 2:13}.

Let us, then, remember that the time was when God said to the children of Israel,

Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them {Ex. 25:8}.

This was “a worldly sanctuary.” A sanctuary suited for God’s dwelling-place in the world, and suitable also for the worship of a people of the world. God had constituted Israel to be his worldly people. He had fenced them off from the nations round about them by statutes, and judgments, and ordinances; and he had prescribed likewise “ordinances of divine service,” adapted to their sanctuary and to their standing. All here was consistent -- all was worldly. Worldly worship, therefore, was then a holy thing in itself; for God had then appointed it. And it would be so now, also, if God had a worldly people and a worldly sanctuary; but seeing He now has neither the one nor the other, the attempt to approach God, even by ordinances of divine service which He himself originally prescribed, is most sinful.

He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that offereth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also, will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not {Isa. 66:3-4}.

This is a solemn word. The very act, which was once a religious act,acceptable to God, as the killing an ox for a sin-offering or a burnt-offering, is, when God delights not in it -- but man chooses to do it -- of moral guilt, it is as murder before God! The incense which God himself so minutely directed to be compounded, and without which Aaron himself could not appear before the Lord, lest he die; for one to burn that incense, is as if he blessed an idol!

Now, if such was God’s estimate of His own ordinances of worldly

70. {The writer refers to the trial of the first man, man in responsible Adamic standing, to show that he was not recoverable (not to educate God about it, but rather us), which trial ended with the rejection of the Second Man by the first man.}
worship, when those to whom they were given used them corruptly and wilfully, what must be the iniquity of introducing an order of things distinctly set aside by God? But has not this been done in the history of the Church, and is it not with renewed zeal being attempted in our day? Forms and rituals of worship, suited only to a worldly sanctuary and a worldly people, are sanctioned and established on every hand. And this is most fearful sin. The prophet of old was commissioned to rebuke Israel for their corruption and abuse of the worldly sanctuary and its worldly ordinances; but the apostle rebukes the saints of God when tending to turn back to worldly elements. God was dishonored of old by any neglect of the worldly sanctuary; he is dishonored now by any attempt to copy or re-establish it. This enables us to determine the character of things now done in the professing Church. Such things, for example, as an altar on the earth, repeated sacrifice, the burning of incense, the consecrating of buildings and of ground, and of persons also, by outward ceremonies. Such like rites and ceremonies were so early borrowed from the Jewish worldly ritual, and transferred into the Christian Church, as to have become almost universal shortly after the apostles’ days. But where is their warrant in the New Testament? Nay, how can any read therein, and not see the introduction of such things prophesied of, and solemnly warned against? How searching, then, is such a word as this --

I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I spake, they did not hear! {Isa. 66:4a}.

How needful is that recall to the only source of authority found in the word, He that hath an ear let him hear; He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.

This marks at once the place from whence our wisdom and guidance must be sought. Not in antiquity, or in the examples of Judaized Churches; but in the unquestioned teaching of the Holy Spirit himself to the Churches. This leads us away from all whose wisdom or authority can for a moment be questioned; it places the word of God itself before the conscience of every saint. Errors, however ancient, or venerable, or attractive, are thus detected, and the child of faith is forbidden to countenance them. This makes the path of faith at all times sure, though oftentimes very difficult; for nothing can be more sure than the steps of one guided by the Spirit of God and the word of God, and yet nothing more difficult than to have to walk in separation from all that exists around. It is, indeed, difficult to have to wind one’s way through things so perplexing and so different as the religious systems of our own day. We have to avoid, on one hand, systems formed in imitation of things past; and on the other, systems more characterized by anticipations of things future. We have to allow that such things were once given by God, and that they will yet again be introduced by Him, while invariably
contending that they are positively opposed to his present workings.

There was a worldly sanctuary; -- there is yet, in the coming dispensation {the millennium}, to be a worldly sanctuary; but now there is none. Existing systems are variously compounded of things proper to these three distinct periods. Some have drawn most from the past, some from the future, some, it may be, most from the present; but all involve sad confusion in the things of God. How many, who may in some measure have been emancipated from the ordinances of the ancient worldly sanctuary of the past dispensation, do not allow that there is a worldly sanctuary yet to come, have consequently chosen and instituted that in which God delighteth not, as much as others who are professedly imitating the ancient ordinances. Thus, while denouncing worldly elements, they themselves have invested themselves with that which can only properly belong to the worldly part of the dispensation to come. Thus they are involved in the sin of mingling things heavenly and things earthly. And is not all this a work of the flesh? Is it not an admission of worldly principles into the Church of God? Do we not see this in the fond desire for official distinction, dedicated buildings, permanent institutions and ordinances, and attempts to attract worldly repute, so common to the systems around? For all this is not confined to the Church of Rome, or the Protestant establishments of Europe, but, with scarcely less prominence, characterizes the systems of Dissenters also. And surely all these things, under whatever form seen, must be alike offensive to God. We may go back to some ancient institutions of God, or forward to something He intends yet to introduce, or we may assert our own right to worship according to a pattern of our own devising; but in each and all these cases we subject ourselves to that word,

When I spake they did not hear.

It is important therefore to show that there yet will be a worldly sanctuary and worldly worship. This is very largely revealed in the prophets. 71 Their subject of hope is the restored nation, restored polity, and restored worship of Israel; but all, when so restored, under and in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Christian Church has in a great measure applied these predictions to itself, and hence we have the thought of a Christian nation, instead of the holy nation now to be gathered from out of all nations -- hence too the thought of the union of the Church and the State -- a thought to be most blessedly fulfilled when Christ as a King and Priest shall sit upon his throne {Zech. 6:13}; -- hence too the antedating of the day when the kings of the earth are to bring their glory and honor unto the holy city -- hence the constant invitations which are given to the world to contribute its aid and

patronage to the work of the Church. All this has secularized Christianity, and given a worldly character to its position and its worship.

In the prophet Isaiah we read,

Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

That is, God would have an house on earth, a worldly sanctuary, but it should be open to all, it should not be confined to Israel. The Israel of that future day would have a standing higher than that which belonged to them as the natural seed of Abraham, and in that standing others should be associated with them, even those who were naturally sons of the stranger. Joined to the Lord, these should be brought to His holy mountain, and made joyful in His house of prayer. The Lord Jesus, the Master of the heavenly house now, and in due time the builder also of the earthly house and worldly sanctuary, adverts to this scripture in the sequel of his ministry. Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them,

Is it not written, My house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations? (Mark 11:17).

It never was this in its first standing. But when it is of another building, then many nations will come and say,

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem {Isa. 2:3}.

Here we have most clearly a worldly sanctuary, a metropolitan temple on the earth -- the fountain of legislation and instruction for all who fear the Lord. Christians may perhaps think that to establish a cathedral on Mount Zion would be an approximation towards the fulfilment of this word. But if that were done the word would still be,

The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word {Isa. 66:1-2}.

Ezekiel in his vision witnessed the departure of the glory of the Lord, first from the house and then from the earth (chaps. 10, 11); but in the forty-third chapter he says,

And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is towards the east . . . and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house . . . And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall
Here again we read of that worldly sanctuary yet to be set up.

But not to multiply quotations, let us only revert to two more, both of which lead us onward from the time of the rebuilding of the temple of Zerubbabel.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye t once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with my glory, saith the Lord of hosts. . . The glory of this house shall be greater, the latter than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts {Hag. 2:6-7, 9}.

Here we must note that this worldly sanctuary is set up after the heavens and the earth have been shaken, which, according to the testimony of the apostle in the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, has not yet taken place.

Again: we read in the prophet Zechariah (chap. 6:12),

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and 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. 6:12-13}.

Now all these testimonies, and they might be greatly multiplied, tell us of a worldly sanctuary yet to be set up; but not after the old order. There God will be known as the God of peace, even where the real glory will be, where Jesus will sit as a Priest upon his throne. There will be ordinances of divine service there, and ministering priests, and a worshipping multitude. One of those ordinances is mentioned in the last prophet referred to:

All the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles {Zech. 14:6}.

The conclusion therefore from these Scriptures is, that there was a worldly sanctuary suited to a worshiping people in the flesh on the earth -- and that there is yet to be a worldly sanctuary in connection with the New Covenant, suitable for the true circumcision, the true spiritual seed, on the earth (Isa. 57). But there is no such sanctuary now. Now there is the heavenly sanctuary only. And this is the contrast so carefully drawn by the Holy Spirit in the ninth chapter of the Hebrews.

The first tabernacle in connection with the worldly sanctuary had its place for a while. During its continuance the way into the holiest of all was not yet laid open, nor could there be any purging of the conscience. Now the contrast to this first tabernacle is not a second, set up like that on the earth,
and in which the worshipers are to be kept at a distance from the holiest, but one set up by God himself in heaven, in which those only can enter who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus and anointed with the Holy Spirit; but into which all such do now in spirit enter as alike accepted and equally priests. The first tabernacle is therefore in this chapter looked at in contrast with the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building,
in which the Church now worships. Such a sanctuary as this heavenly sanctuary alone befits the “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” {Heb. 3:1}. Man, as man, can recognize the propriety of splendid buildings for the worship of God, and he has ever acted accordingly. But the spiritual house has nothing tangible in it. It is not adapted to the world, nor does it present attractions to the flesh. To one who only judged by appearances there might be some ground for the {early} slander, that Christians were Atheists; for there was no visible or imposing attraction in their worship. Their worship was in the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands. They did not attempt in their places of assembly to vie with the imposing architecture either of the temple at Jerusalem or the heathen temples around them. They had not then heard of “Christian ecclesiastical architecture,” nor was the Church then the patron of the arts. Their temple was not of this building.

And the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds with all this. It is complete and perfect, because performed by One who is divine and who is beyond the range of this world’s cognizance. Christ is entered once into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption {Heb. 9:12}. The eye of man could scan the beautiful proportions of an earthly sanctuary, and mark the service of an earthly priesthood, but faith alone can enter into the heavenly sanctuary or delight in its glories. No one of its beauties or glories is displayed to the senses -- it is the soul alone which has learnt the preciousness of Jesus which is now able to say, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts.” The Lamb is the light and the glory of it. If He be not the object of faith, no wonder that men should again make the sanctuary worldly. But even when God had His worldly sanctuary here, how little of its beauty was displayed to the ordinary worshiper. He saw not the golden sanctuary, nor the cherubim and vessels of gold, these things were most carefully hidden from his sight. The priests were charged to cover up the vessels of ministry, even from the sight of the Levites, who were to carry them (Num. 4:20). The eyes of the priests alone were to rest on these holy things. Now it is the anti-types of those veiled and precious types with which we have to do. All believers now are priests unto God, and hence now all is open to faith; but open to faith alone. What eye hath not seen, God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. The Holy Ghost is specially come down
from heaven in testimony of what He knoweth to be there. He could not
witness of a heavenly temple and a heavenly priesthood, until the builder and
sustainer of the temple, and the perpetual Priest, was in heaven.

All attempts to establish a worldly sanctuary now are therefore in direct
opposition to the present testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost by
His coming was the conviction of the world’s sin in having rejected Jesus,
because testifying that God had exalted Him; but that blessed Spirit is also,
by His very presence in the Church, the conviction of the sin of every
attempt now to set up a worldly sanctuary. He has to testify only of a High
Priest now ministering in the heavens,

Jesus, the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens,
and consequently He can only lead the soul to Him He glorifies. All who
worship “in Spirit” {John 4:23} must therefore worship in the heavenly
sanctuary {Heb. 10:19}, for there alone does the Spirit lead.

But man, as man, knows not the Spirit of God; the world cannot receive
Him (John 14). It is no part of His ministry to guide the flesh into the
presence of God, or to teach it to worship. His very presence here is God’s
most emphatic and solemn testimony of the entire ruin of man, and his utter
incompetency for any good thing. Regeneration must therefore precede
worship. The only true worshipers now, are those who are separated unto
God through “sanctification of the Spirit.” These are now, “the holy
priesthood,” “the royal nation.” And it is well for the saints themselves to
bear constantly in mind this elementary truth, for it will enable them to test
all that assumes to be worship. We may have the senses gratified, the
imagination exercised, sentiment and feeling kindled, and we may mistake
such things for worship; but they are fleshly things, and when found in
saints they sadly grieve the Spirit of God. These are things against which the
saints have to watch, and which they have to mortify; but these are the
things which must be fostered and gratified by the wilful introduction of a
worldly sanctuary. What more fearful then than to confound such a work
with the present work of the Spirit of God. Is not this to confound darkness
with light, flesh with Spirit? The whole order of a worldly sanctuary must
hinder the present testimony of the Spirit of God. Now to do despite to the
Spirit of grace, to insult the Spirit of God, is indeed fearful sin. But what has
the Spirit of grace to do in the worldly sanctuary? There the great points are
the service of the ministering priest, and the duties of the suppliant people.
Grace is excluded in the whole order. Grace establishes the heart, but the
worldly sanctuary leads it back again to meats.

Hence, then, we worship God in the Spirit. Not in sentiment, not in
refinement of the imagination, not in fleshly wisdom or in fleshly power, but
in the Spirit. And this we are able to do, because the resurrection of Jesus
has set aside the order of the flesh and of the world, and introduced us into the heavenly things themselves, and because the Holy Ghost has come to dwell in the Church on earth, from Jesus its Head, exalted in heaven. Any return, therefore, to a worldly sanctuary now, must be as insulting to the Holy Spirit as it is contradictory of the finished work of Jesus.

But consider a moment longer how truly the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of grace. What is its blessed witness to us? Is it not to *grace, accomplished in glory in heaven?* Jesus by his own blood has entered in once into the holy place, “having obtained eternal redemption.” This it is which the Holy Ghost has revealed to us. Christ is there -- and there “having obtained eternal redemption”; and He “there appears in the presence of God for us.” What need we more than this? Can we not by faith see here the witness of our own present acceptance, and the pledge of our own glory. There then is the scene of our worship; there is our sanctuary--our only sanctuary. And it is into this scene of accomplished and abundant blessedness that the Spirit of God has come to lead our souls. “Set your affection on things above,” is His unceasing exhortation to us. May our hearts know more of the peace and glory of that heavenly sanctuary.

And what should be the characteristic of the worship of the heavenly sanctuary? Surely praise! praise for accomplished redemption. And this sacrifice will not be wanting, if our souls realize our heavenly portion. None, indeed, can withhold their tribute of praise, who really worship in that sanctuary. Fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, are at God’s right hand; and every heart led of the Spirit there, declares, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever.” Eternal redemption is the solid basis on which all such joy rests. Eternal redemption, found in the perfect work of Jesus -- that work which He himself ever presents on our behalf in heaven. “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

The worldly sanctuary knew nothing properly of praise. There was no ministry of song prescribed by Moses. He could sing with the children of Israel the song of redemption after passing the Red Sea (Ex. 15); but it was *grace* which had brought them over; they sung the triumph of grace. The worldly sanctuary had not then been ordered. In it there was nothing ever *once-for-all* *accomplished*, and therefore no ground-work of *praise*. There was the constant repetition of the same services; the worshiper’s conscience was unpurged, and hence he could never raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving. We speak of the tabernacle in the wilderness. But few even of the strains of the sweet Psalmist of Israel were adapted to the temple service -- that temple was a worldly sanctuary, and its blessings earthly; but the ministry of song went beyond all this, anticipating the full and accomplished blessing. Faith could sing then, only because reaching beyond the then
present sanctuary; but faith sings now because in its present sanctuary it finds the themes of everlasting praises. Grace and glory, deliverance and victory, the wondrous salvation of God himself, are there the subjects of unceasing praise, for their accomplishment is witnessed by the presence there in glory of our forerunner himself.

Can that heart be tuned to praise which is taught its need of a daily absolution from the lips of another? Can such a soul sing, in the Spirit and with the understanding, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs? Can an unpurged conscience {in reality} praise? Such things are impossible. For is not the very act of worship regarded as a duty required by God, and so rendered under a sense of law, instead of a blessed privilege arising from the perception and enjoyment of mercy from everlasting to everlasting? The apostle teaches us to give “thanks to him who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1). This shows the true ground of thanksgiving and praise to be what grace has accomplished for us in Christ. But if this is not seen and remembered, worship must become a burden instead of our highest privilege. And do we not see that Christians regard the teaching and preaching with which God blesses them far more highly than worship? This is a sure consequence of not remembering the sanctuary in which we worship. Let the soul realize this, and it will instantly perceive what are its grounds of praise, and what the character of its worship. But if a worldly sanctuary is established, or the order of a worldly sanctuary is introduced, our worship must be degraded, and our souls become lean. Such results must ensue if we take for our pattern the worldly sanctuary, instead of by faith and as led of the Spirit, entering into that which is heavenly. There all is done -- there we have subject for praise only.
Chapter 3.2

The Priesthood and the Law Changed

Following upon the last chapter, “A Worldly Sanctuary,” we continue the subject of the heavenly worship in the heavenly sanctuary. There is no room for any official Christian in the worship in the heavenly sanctuary. To have an official is Judaistic. Let us bear in mind that the Apostle Paul wrote from prison and the time of patience with ‘Messianic Judaism’ had come to an end, and told the Jewish Christians to go outside the camp, i.e., the mixture of Judaism and Christianity in which the early Messianic Jews were engaged (Heb. 13:13). Soon, the destruction of Jerusalem would take place, God thus governmentally removing the seat of Judaism. So, the Jewish saints had a short time to act in faith before that happened, obeying the Word of God by separating from ‘Christianized’ Judaism. Of course, Gentile Christians who have largely embraced Judaistic elements from the time of the so-called Apostolic Fathers should also be separated in the same way. From all this we must stand in separation, as going “forth unto Him, without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

The Priesthood and the Law Changed

Heb. 7:12

(From Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith 3:317-331.)

Among the various aspects in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us, it is well oftentimes to distinguish between that which He is properly in His own Person, and that which He is as constituted of God.

It is most legitimate to trace him from the manger of Bethlehem, to His coming in the clouds of heaven in fully manifested glory. The Holy Spirit delights in this theme -- in tracing the lowly rod of the stem of Jesse, growing up before the Lord as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, to the stately BRANCH in manifested beauty (Isa. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Luke 1:78). So, again, it is now the special office

72. See Thy Precepts 18:5, pp. 176-194, for the change that took place.

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of the Holy Ghost to glorify Jesus by testifying to us what He is, and is owned to be in heaven, whilst He is rejected on earth. In the reception of this testimony is found the great strength of the Church in its militant state here in the world.

But there is something before all this. There is the tracing Him down from heaven to earth, as well as tracing Him up from earth to heaven, to return thence in manifested glory. It is this character of testimony to Jesus which the Holy Ghost presents to us in the commencement of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is true that the prominent subject is the official dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle, Captain, and High Priest of our profession, elevated far beyond Moses, or Aaron, or Joshua. But this elevation, whilst true of Him officially, is far more true by reason of the essential dignity of his own person. God hath in these last days spoken to us by the SON {"Lit. 'in Son,'" JND, Heb. 1:2}. This is not an official title, it is his own real, proper, native standing {divine relationship}, -- belonging to Him in a sense in which it belongs to no other.

And herein is the grand characteristic difference between the Lord Jesus and all others. Many indeed are those of old upon whom the Lord hath put honor, who would have been nothing but for the honor thus put upon them. They were constituted, and appointed to various offices, and not to own them in those offices would be to reject God. So also God has made Jesus both Christ and Lord. But who is He who is thus constituted, or made, of God? He is the SON. These constituted dignities cannot excel His own real {personal, as distinguished from acquired} glory, that which He had with the Father before the world was {John 17:5}. His offices, dignified though they be, cannot in this sense exalt Him. But He can give, and does give, the power and character of His own divine person unto every office which He sustains, unto every work which He has done. If He could be stripped of all His official {acquired} glories, His own personal excellency and glory must remain untouched and undiminished. It is this which makes Him alone the fit one "to bear the glory" {Zech. 6:13} which God may put upon Him. When God put various glories on others, as on Moses, or Aaron, or David, or Solomon, their failure to sustain the glory was marked in them all. And why? They were but men, having no power in themselves to stand at all. But Jesus is the SON, and "in Him was LIFE." And let it be remembered, in passing, that the only security for the saints bearing the glory which grace has made theirs, is that they are in union with Him who is thus in His own person above all glory.

He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one {Heb. 2:11}. To have office conferred by God is indeed a solemn responsibility, both as it respects Him who is so honored, and as it respects others to acknowledge the honor conferred of God. It is thus our responsibility to acknowledge...
office in magistrates, and not to speak evil of dignities. To resist the power is to resist God. Those who bear the dignity may be nothing, the vilest of men, but the honor is put on them of God, and is to be acknowledged by us. If this be so, how fearful in the sight of God must it be to refuse to acknowledge any of the offices, styles, dignities, which God has conferred on His own Son. How fearful in any wise to trench on them by arrogating them to ourselves. This is the last form of manifested evil under the present dispensation, and that which will bring down the terrible judgment of God. It is the denial of “Jesus Christ, the only Lord God, and our Lord” (Jude); that is, the denial of Him both in His own essential glory, and His conferred mediatorial glory. Let us then beware of anything which derogates from the honor due to Jesus, the Son of God. For how infinitely elevated is He above all others on whom official dignity has been conferred by God. God will strip men of all the glories He has conferred on them, and then what are they? Nothing. Man being in honor is like the beasts that perish. But when man is thus abased, in that day the Lord Jesus Christ alone shall be exalted (Isa. 2).

I desire, because of the importance of the subject, to refer to the eighty-second Psalm for illustration of the truth, that any honor conferred by God on men brings them out of obscurity, taken away it sinks them into their own proper nothingness. On the other hand, honor conferred on the Son adds nothing really to Him {in His essential glory}: if it be taken from Him or disowned by man, it only leads to his exaltation by God to every office in which man has failed,

that in all things he might have the pre-eminence {Col. 1:18}

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand: they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you children of the Most High: but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O GOD, judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations {Psa. 82}.

The reference of the Lord Jesus to this Psalm, in the tenth chapter of John, is very remarkable. He had asserted, in the most unequivocal manner, His own proper divinity, “I and my Father are one” (v. 30). This, they said, was making himself God (v. 33). Afterwards in v. 38, Jesus again asserts this, and again they sought to take Him (v. 39). But he had previously (vv. 34, 35) referred to this Psalm, to prove that they ought at least to have owned Him in His official authority and power. His works testified of Him that He was the sent one of the Father. Not one “unto whom the word of God came,” merely, but Him whom the Father had sanctified and sent into
the world; He could say, “I am the Son of God.” They should have believed Him for His works’ sake, for He did the works of His Father, and He and the Father were one. To others the word of God has only come -- “I have said, Ye are gods.” They had no dignity at all in themselves, they were of the earth, earthy, raised in official dignity by God. But He was the SON; He had been “sanctified and sent into the world”; He was “the Lord from heaven.” How infinitely contrasted is Jesus the Son of God to all those of whom God has said, “Ye are gods.” The moment their conferred dignity was taken from them, they would die like the common herd of men. They had no essential, inherent power or dignity. But He was one with the Father, He was in the beginning with God; nothing therefore could really touch His dignity, for it was intrinsically divine. It was not the word coming to Him which made Him what He was -- though He had indeed been sanctified and sent into the world -- it was what He ever was in Himself, which enabled Him to be so sent, and to sustain and give efficiency to all that was laid upon Him. Hence, though in his humiliation his judgment was taken away, yet God would divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong. This shall be manifestly true when all official and delegated power shall be taken out of the hands to which God has entrusted it, and actually assumed by Jesus. Then shall that word be proved true of Him -- “Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations” {Psa. 82:8}.

The connection between the personal and the official glories of the Lord Jesus Christ, is indeed the prominent subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the first chapter the Son is presented to us as both in person and office far above angels. And it is the Son who is also the apostle of our profession. In the second chapter He is presented to us as our High Priest; and then we are exhorted, in the third chapter, to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus.” Moses indeed was great. God had magnified him before Pharaoh, yet he was but a servant -- one to whom the word of God had come -- although God humbled Miriam and Aaron before him. But, mark; Jesus was not only officially greater than Moses, but it was His personal greatness which gave Him the infinite superiority. He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he that hath builded the house hath more honor than the house; and every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God. Moses was faithful as a servant in another’s house, but Christ as a Son over his own house {Heb. 3:6}. So again as concerning the high priesthood. Aaron was the high priest, but Jesus is the Great High Priest, -- higher thus indeed than Aaron even officially. But this is not all; it is “Jesus the Son of God,” infinitely higher personally than He is officially. “Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Heb. 4:14).
Chapter 3.2: The Priesthood and the Law Changed

But yet further. It pleased God to constitute one individual a perfect type of the Lord Jesus Christ; that individual was Melchizedec. He stands before us typical of Jesus, both in person and office. The mystery with which God has so remarkably surrounded Melchizedec, makes him a fit type of the Person of the Son; for “no man knoweth the Son, but the Father”; and so, no man knoweth Melchizedec but God. And his being thus presented to us without genealogy, “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,” shows us also how truly he is “made like unto the Son of God.” 73 Thus, Melchizedec is so brought before us in the word of God, as to be made a most wonderful type of the divine and eternal Son of God -- he is thus the personal type. “Abideth a priest continually”; for we know not when Melchizedec’s priesthood began or ended; he had not as Aaron an official life -- “beginning of days and end of life,” -- in this he is the official type. Melchizedec is indeed the only individual mentioned in the scriptures, as one whose own person qualifies him for office. And in this respect how apt a type is he of Jesus.

With this general opening, let us meditate on the contrasts presented to us in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; that we may be able to draw the character of the worship from the order of the priesthood.

Most prominently do we here find the Person of the Priest set before us “the Son of God” (Heb. 7:3), in contrast with every office-bearing person. This might have been enough; but there are contrasts immediately resulting from the Person of the Priest, which must also be noticed. After the order of Aaron, they were men that die; but after the order of Melchizedec, it is He that liveth -- liveth because He is the Son -- because He has life in Himself. True, He has laid it down and taken it again, that He might enter on his priesthood, having first by Himself purged our sins.

Again. The order of Aaron was continued by succession. It was necessarily so. Aaron was a man in the flesh, and provision was made in case of his death for his son, that should minister in his stead; as it is written,

And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest’s office in his father’s stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments (Lev. 16:32).

This was the carnal “commandment,” by which the priesthood of the Aaronic order was to be perpetuated. Succession is the only mode which man knows of perpetuating anything; this is necessary human order. The king cannot die, we are told; why? Because his last breath is the placing his successor on the throne; so that the functions of royalty may never for a moment be suspended. Succession is necessarily after the law of a carnal

73. {Since he is made like unto the Son of God, clearly, he is not himself the Son of God.} www.presenttruthpublishers.com
commandment. We need not wonder, therefore, that men should have turned back to this order, as being that which is most natural and human. But God has made other provision for his Church; *His Church knows no successional priesthood.* The Son is made Priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. It is still what he is in Himself that gives the character to his priesthood. And that which is characteristic of this priesthood, is equally so of the whole order of priesthood in the Church -- it is unsuccessional. The Church’s position in this dispensation is in life and in power. There is no room for a carnal commandment in the matter of priesthood or worship either, because Christ’s Priesthood in heaven is perpetuated in Himself. No one succeeds to Him there; He is “a High Priest for ever”; and none is needed to succeed the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth; “he shall abide with you for ever” {John 14:16}. If man were to succeed man as the head of authority in the Church, a carnal commandment is necessitated -- the order cannot be maintained without it. And this is what man has introduced into the Church; thus putting the Church under human headship and carnally appointed authority. But how awful is this, when God’s order for his Church is the presence of the Holy Ghost dispensing gifts according to His will. Where, under this divine order, is there room for a carnal commandment?

I no longer marvel at the strength of the language of the preceding chapter, relative to the certain consequences of turning back from the proper order and hope of the Church. It must be subversive of the whole order of the dispensation. It must be virtually putting Jesus out of his priesthood, crucifying Him afresh, and putting Him to an open shame. Once admit succession, and, as a necessary consequence, union with Jesus in the power of an endless life is denied; for such union must be utterly incompatible with the law of a carnal commandment.

And let the contrast be distinctly marked; it is not after the law of an endless life, but *after the power* of an endless life. The kingdom of God is *in power*; the Spirit we have received is the Spirit of *power*; the peril against which we are warned is the form of godliness, but the denial of its *power*. It is not now form against form, carnal order against carnal order, place against place; but it is *power*, that is life, *against everything*.

We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice *in Christ Jesus*, and have no confidence in the flesh {Phil. 3:3} . . .

But to pursue the contrast. The priests after the order of Aaron were called indeed of God; but Jesus was constituted by an oath.

The Lord *swore* and will *not repent*, thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec {Heb. 5:6}.

The priesthood in Israel under the law, like all with which it was connected, stood on the ground of the competence of the priests to maintain their place
Chapter 3.2: The Priesthood and the Law Changed

in faithfulness to God. It was based upon a carnal commandment -- it was conditional. The word of the Lord to Eli was,

I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed {1 Sam. 2:30}.

And the oath to Eli was an oath of irreversible judgment on his house (1 Sam. 3:14). And this setting aside of the house of Eli was to raise up a faithful Priest, (1 Sam. 2:35; Heb. 2:17), to do according to all that was in the heart and mind of God, even the Priest who is made with an oath.

And how blessedly in keeping is the New Covenant with this new order of priesthood. It is a covenant of promise, of promise made sure by God’s having engaged His own power to render it effectual; and, therefore, to show the immutability of His counsel, He has confirmed it with an oath (Heb. 6:17). The New Covenant, therefore, belongs to the Melchizedec priesthood, and both are with an oath. And it is here written,

And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made Priest . . . by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant {Heb. 7:20 and 22}.

Once more; although it has been somewhat anticipated. Under the order of Aaron there were “many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.”

The high priesthood passed from one to another; there was succession. God in judgment had indeed set aside one family of Aaron, and brought in another; still, there was a succession of men through whom the high priesthood descended. This alone was enough to destroy all dependence on that priesthood; for though there might be a merciful and faithful priest, still he would die, and he might be succeeded by one who would make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, as did Eli’s sons, using their office for exaction of their dues, and more than dues, but not aiding the worshipper.

74. {The Lord Jesus is presently exercising a heavenly priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary. This is not the Melchizedec priesthood, which is the priesthood the Lord Jesus will exercise when He is priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13), reigning over the new Israel then under the New Covenant. Presently, He is on the Father’s throne with the Father (Rev. 3:21), not His own throne, which He will soon take (cp. Matt. 25:31; etc.). In the millennial order, the sons of Zadok will have a special place in the priesthood (Ezek 40-48), in accordance with God’s promise to faithful Phinehas, when he thrust through Cozbi and Zimri in the sight of Israel -- being jealous with Jehovah’s jealousy (Num. 25:11). The fulfilment of the promise of the priesthood to Phinehas was typified when Solomon thrust Abiather from the priesthood and made Zadok the priest. Abiathar came from the line of Eli, who came from the line of Ithamar, the brother of Eliazer, the son of Aaron. Phinehas was the son of Eliazer, the correct line, and Zadok was of the line of Phinehas. Thus did Jehovah correct the matter through Solomon, providing a type of how Christ will adjust everything for God’s glory.}

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This must always attend the connection of office with a succession of men appointed after a carnal commandment.

But Jesus, because he \textit{continueth ever}, hath a priesthood that passeth \textit{not from one to another}. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost [i.e., from the beginning of their career unto the end] those who come to God by him, seeing he \textit{ever liveth to make intercession for them} \{Heb. 7:25\}.

This necessarily, and most simply, perpetuates the perfectness of High Priesthood after the order of Melchizedec; one divinely perfect is for evermore consecrated thereunto.

How marked is it, that in everything which came under the law of a carnal commandment, there wanted perpetuity; it was so, whether we look at the persons, the sacrifice, or the intercession. But now that there is perpetuity in the Person, the like character attaches to the priesthood, the sacrifice, and the intercession.

Surely, the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity be a change in the whole law and order of worship. To go back to the old pattern now, what is it but virtually to deny the personal glory of the Son, as giving efficacy to His work and office? It is, as has been before noticed, to tread under foot the Son of God. It must necessarily transfer the thought from his order of priesthood to another order. It must introduce human copies of patterns and shadows once given by God, claiming for such things the value due only to the heavenly things themselves. It must sink the place of worship from heaven to earth. It must consecrate that which God has left out as profane. It must establish form, instead of leaving room for power: producing uniformity, to which the flesh can bend, but to the utter denial of unity in the Spirit, of which the flesh must be ignorant.

Let us then most seriously consider what Christian worship really is. Whether we look at our own standing, or at the change which has taken place in priesthood, there is necessitated an entire change in the order of worship. We have seen Aaron’s priesthood adapted to the law, and Christ’s to the New Covenant. Aaron’s priesthood was intercessional, so, also is Christ’s. The Church is alone sustained by the constant intercession of Christ. It is what our necessities require, beautifully and graciously adapted to them. But while this is most blessedly true, is there not another and very different sense in which it is said, “such an High Priest \textit{became us}”? The intercession of the Great High Priest for us, is only for us whilst the Church needs it, -- it has, so far as the Church is in question, a termination, and it may well be said to be an Aaronic service carried on after the Melchizedec.
75. I am aware that there is confusion in minds about this matter of the application of the Melchizedec priesthood, because some have thought that Hebrews seems to imply that there is a functioning of the Melchizedec order now. Not so. The Melchizedec order is for earthly Israel under the New Covenant in connection with an earthly sanctuary. Christ’s priesthood now is of a heavenly order in a heavenly sanctuary. Just as there was an Aaronic function of intercession in the Aaronic order, the heavenly order of Christ’s priesthood has an intercessory function also. As the Melchizedec order functions in the power of an endless life -- no succession -- so the heavenly priesthood of Christ functions in the power of an endless life -- no succession. But the orders of priesthood differ. Aaron’s priesthood was based on an unfinished work. Since the cross, priesthood must be based on the once-for-all finished work of Christ. Christ is priest in two different spheres, the earthly and the heavenly; an earthly, Melchizedec order of priesthood in the millennium, and a heavenly order of priesthood now. These must not be confused.

Surely when the Church needs not a priesthood of intercession, as it will not in glory, it will enjoy all the peculiar privileges proper to the Melchizedec order -- a constant reciprocation of blessing and praise. But our standing is really as high now as then -- “now are we the sons of God” -- and the saints are now to know the High Priest suitable to their greatness. We are “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” {Heb. 3:1} -- to such Aaron’s priesthood is not suitable. “For such an High Priest became us.” What is it that has constituted us holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling? Surely these two things -- that the Son has by Himself purged our sins, and that He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren {Heb. 2:11}. If there is not the same life in them as in Himself, He could not call them brethren. “Because I live,” says he, “ye shall live also” {John 14:19}. Is He anointed with the Holy Ghost? they too, in virtue of having been cleansed by His blood, and united with Him as risen, are anointed with the same. He indeed above His fellows, but they with the same blessed Spirit; for He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit {1 Cor. 6:17}. Now the High Priest suitable to such a standing as this must not only be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, but also “made higher than the heavens” {Heb. 7:26}.

The old order would necessarily keep the holy brethren out of the holy place, making those who are partakers of the heavenly calling mere earthly worshipers. And is not this present fact? Worship should so elevate the soul of the worshiper that nothing should be known between him and God, save the Great High Priest; but instead of this the ritual to which many saints are
subjected causes them to bow the head like a bulrush.

But to proceed. Such an High Priest became us,

who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law -- the Son, who is consecrated for evermore {Heb. 7:28}.

How unlike Aaron is Jesus our Great High Priest! All his present priestly ministration is based upon the one accomplished sacrifice of Himself. This entirely affects the order of worship and changes it; for our worship is just as truly based upon the already accomplished sacrifice as is his Priesthood. It is our starting point as worshipers. We are only in the profane place, if we approach not God on the ground of our sins having been for ever purged by Jesus; we cannot avail ourselves of his priesthood until this be acknowledged. The Great Priesthood is alone suitable for those who have come to God through Him. Into what an elevated place then has that one sacrifice brought us! No place under heaven is suitable for His {present} ministry or our {heavenly} worship. Both are properly heavenly. Worship therefore should ever lift us up to where Jesus is -- the Great High Priest who is passed into the heavens. Aaron was called of God to his priesthood in the tabernacle made with hands, but Jesus has been called of God to His priesthood in the heavens, the true tabernacle, and we are made partakers of the heavenly calling. The dignity of his Person, the groundwork of His priestly ministry, and the place of its exercise, all alike, proclaim the necessity of a change in the law and order of worship. The law with its ritual and worship all hang consistently together, but it made nothing perfect -- it bore on its front plain marks of infirmity. There is great strength of contrast in the last verse; it is not merely men contrasted with the Son, but men having infirmity. And so the word of the oath has its priesthood and order in beautiful harmony; but to attempt to blend the two, as the Church has done and is doing, is to introduce the worst confusion. Jesus has not his honor, and the saints have not their privilege.

Let us remember that under the Levitical priesthood there was no provision made for any, either priest or people, to follow Aaron within the veil. Aaron in this respect had no fellows. Now the Son also takes this place of Aaron’s. He has no fellows in any of His sacrificial work, or in offering the incense. But He has fellows within the place of His ministry. Under the Levitical priesthood there was no fellowship even as to place between the people and the priests, they worshipped in distinct places; but now all is changed, for that order is now introduced of which it is said,

He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one {Heb. 2:11}. 

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We are one in life, and therefore identified as to position with Christ Jesus. He can say in heaven itself,

Behold I and the children which God hath given me {Heb. 2:13}.

There was indeed the great principle of representation in the Levitical priesthood, -- Aaron bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart, -- but there was not the truth of union. There could not be; or even on the supposition that there could have been, what would it have availed -- union with a man having infirmity. But now that we have such an High Priest as the Son, in the power of an endless life; and that He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; to have such an One not only as our representative, but as Him with whom we are united, what an entire change must this effect as to the whole order of worship.

Aaron bore the names of the tribes as something apart from himself, but our High Priest as completely identified with Himself. How far all typical representation falls short of the reality! Just as in the sacrifices, one might see the innocent suffering for the guilty; but the reality -- the Holy Lamb of God suffering for sin, feeling the shame of it as His own, and enduring the wrath of God -- was incapable of being represented. So there might be some faint shadow of identity between the priest and the people; but the reality of living union with the Son, was incapable of being typically expressed. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus {Rom. 8:2} which is now the great order of God. It is not only through Him that we come, but now in Christ Jesus ye who were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus (Eph. 2:13).

There is now therefore the anointed High Priest, even Jesus, but He has fellows anointed also; those who worship through Him are not the people who stand without, but priests sanctified for the immediate presence of God. The law of worship now is entirely priestly.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name {Heb. 13:15}.

Can we find language so suitable to describe the danger of returning to ordinances, or the setting up again a priesthood on the earth between the Great High Priest and His fellows, as that found in the sixth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews? May not these passages well make the ear that hears them, in these our days, to tingle? And can we find any occupation so blessed whilst journeying through the wilderness, -- any so fitted to raise our souls out of the dust, and make us tread in spirit the heavenly courts, -- as to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus?

Holy brethren, does it appear to you that this paper is not strictly on the subject of worship? You will find it only so in appearance; for our power of
real acceptable worship is in allowing nothing to come in between our souls and our Great High Priest. It is what He is, not what we are, that we have to consider. And are we ever so truly exalted as when magnifying Him? Is it not most practically true in this sense also, that he which humbleth himself shall be exalted?
Chapter 3.3

A Minister of the Sanctuary

Following upon the last chapter, “The Priesthood and the Law Changed,” we will now consider “A Minister of the Sanctuary,” the new, heavenly sanctuary, a paper reprinted from Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith. There is no room for any official Christian in the heavenly sanctuary. To have an official is Judaistic.

A Minister of the Sanctuary

Heb. 8:1

(From Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith 3:331-347.)

It is profitable to seek to place ourselves in the circumstances of those to whom the New Testament scriptures were immediately addressed. Not that the same scriptures are not immediately applicable to ourselves; they are so because {of} applying to that which is essential and characteristic; but by placing ourselves among those first addressed, we shall the better discern the way in which the Holy Ghost regards and uses the circumstances of the saints in communicating truth unto them. Indeed when circumstances are thus duly regarded, we shall find perspicuity given to many statements which otherwise might be general or vague; and this will be found especially the case, when any direct contrast with the habit of thought and tone of feeling of those addressed is intended.

A Hebrew under the law moved in a religious atmosphere. From his childhood he had been accustomed to look with veneration on the goodly buildings of the temple. He was instructed concerning sacrifice and incense. He was brought up to revere the consecrated priesthood. The priest in his consecrated garments, coming forth to bless the worshiping people, must have been an impressive though familiar object to him. He must necessarily have

76. {In Heb. 8:2 we read that Christ is “minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle . . .” To say “a minister” could imply others, which would be false. He is minister of the holy places in the heavenly sanctuary. Moreover, the force of the wording indicates this is characteristic of Him.}
attached the most solemn importance to the unseen work of that priest within the holy place.

Now suppose such an one as this, taught of God, and so receiving His testimony concerning Christ; -- he believes on Jesus, owning Him as the Son of God, the Christ of God, and the Lamb of God. He finds peace in his soul unknown before; and he has confidence with God through Jesus Christ, by whom he has now received the reconciliation.

We know that thousands of Hebrews were thus brought into light and peace through faith in Jesus; to such was the Epistle to the Hebrews primarily addressed.

But how would such believers stand in relation to their former associations? Having personal peace of conscience through the blood of Jesus, would they continue worshipers according to the order of that economy, in which they had been brought up? No. That which gave them peace would destroy every old association. Having learnt the preciousness of the blood, by finding through it remission of sins, they would have to learn it as equally precious, because by it they were redeemed from the “vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers.” They would have access as worshipers to heaven itself and that too as a holy priesthood -- there to “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”

The consequence must be that in the city of solemnities itself such an one finds himself in the wilderness. He can no longer have fellowship with the multitude who keep holy-day. His temple and his High Priest are now in heaven; and if he went up to the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer, he there has to testify that Israel are blindly groping amidst the shadows, and that all the promises of God are yea and amen in Him whom they had slain, but whom God had exalted to His own right hand. But though thus full of heavenly communion and intelligence, such an one would appear to the eyes of those around him, as though he had been cut off from Israel; yea, he might actually have been put out of the synagogue (John 16:2). If he would speak of worshiping God, he would have it cast in his teeth, that he had neither sanctuary, nor altar, nor sacrifice, nor priest! Hard indeed must it have been to have maintained that he had all these, when apparently he could not point to one of them. Hard indeed to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end. But with a single eye to JESUS all this was possible. Yea: there ought to have been a confidence and rejoicing in the assertion of what he had found, as far superior to all that he had left. All he had left was visible and present indeed -- things which were palpable to sense -- and all he had found was known only to faith; but still he could say what he had. He could testify that the only value of all that God once established amidst Israel, was found in its representing that which he now in substance knew in heaven. And he could therefore say, “Taste and see that the Lord is gracious.”
But how strange and irregular must it have appeared to such to assemble for worship without any *single visible* essential of worship; no prescribed or consecrated place; no sacrifice; no ministering priest. But here came in the profession -- *that all these they had*. “We have,” says the apostle,

such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Throughout this Epistle, the apostle takes most lofty ground. He takes his place as one with us -- i.e. one of the Church -- and tells out what *we have*. He will not allow any pretension to interfere with ours. And he seeks to stir us up to the holding fast of our profession. But has there not been sad declension here? We have been false witnesses of the grace of God; as though he had not blessed us already so abundantly that we can, to the glory of his grace, challenge every pretension and assert our profession to be yet higher. Oh, that the Lord would lead our souls consciously to take this standing, that by it we might be able to contradict every pretension of the world and of the flesh, whether religious or otherwise!

*We have* a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens.

*We have* an hope as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.

*We have* an altar whereof those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

And, *we have* “a minister of the sanctuary” {Heb. 8:2; see note 76}.

Let us now turn to the consideration of the Lord Jesus, as this “Minister of the Sanctuary.”

The apostle Paul was not a minister of the sanctuary: he worshiped there through the ministry of another. He had as much need of this ministry as any of his converts. He stood on the same level with them, in relation to ministry in the sanctuary. He had indeed a most blessed ministry, in a peculiar sense his own, the ministry of reconciliation among the Gentiles. He had received the reconciliation through Jesus Christ himself, and by his preaching, others likewise received it; he could speak of it as special grace, that he should have been put into the ministry:

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled *me*, for that he counted *me* faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and persecutor and injurious {1 Tim. 1:12, 13}.

But he was not called out from the multitude of believers, as the priest was from the multitude of Israel, to minister for them before the Lord (Heb. 5); though he surely was a chosen vessel to bear the Lord’s name to the Gentiles, and though he had a certain place of authority and eminence in the Church itself. But however distinct may have been his ministry -- or even ministries -- he was one of a common priesthood. He well knew that there were but two
ranks in Christian priesthood; the Great High Priest and the priests. He was one of the priests; and therefore, though he could magnify his office as an apostle of the Gentiles, he could not magnify his priesthood. Hence he writes authoritatively as the apostle, while before the Great High Priest he is but a brother among brethren. The great subject of priesthood, which he so largely discusses in the Epistle to the Hebrews, demanded that the apostle should himself take the place of a worshiper; that thus his own peculiar office might sink into nothing before the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Thus does the apostle acknowledge and declare that Jesus, the Son of God, alone, is the representative priest on the earth. 77 Would that in this Paul had had more successors.

The apostle Paul then was a minister of the Gospel to every creature under heaven, and a minister too of Christ’s body the Church, on earth (Col. 1:23-25); but it was not by the intervention of his ministry that any worshiped. The disciples needed his instruction and guidance, and were to know that he had authority; but they were enabled to worship as well in the absence as in the presence of the apostle. He might have led their worship, or he might have followed others in it. His office was lost, so to speak, when they stood together in the attitude of worshipers before the Great High Priest: he might have prayed with the disciples (as Acts 20:36), or they with him (as Acts 21:55). It is indeed most important clearly to distinguish between the common standing of all regenerate persons as priests unto God, and diversities of ministry. Paul and Barnabas were set apart {by the Spirit} (Acts 13) for a distinct ministry to the Gentiles; but this was not setting them apart as ministers of the sanctuary. They could be ministers of the sanctuary in no other sense than that in which all saints minister there. If they presume to more than this, they must deny either the proper standing of the saints of God, or the alone place of the Son of God. For in the sense of being “ordained for men in things pertaining to God,” Jesus is the ONLY minister of the sanctuary. It is therefore no light matter to set up such a pretension as that which an ordered priesthood certainly does. It interferes with the prerogative of Jesus. It is a fearful instance therefore of human presumption or ignorance.

The sanctuary in which Jesus ministers is not on earth, as that was in which Aaron ministered, but in heaven itself. Even there He is pre-eminent; “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;” but all the redeemed saints of God worship there, through Him, as equal one with another. But it is nevertheless true that God has now a ministry on earth as well as a ministry in heaven. But these ministries differ most essentially. The ministry on earth goes forth from God to bring sinners to himself, upon the ground of His

77. {This sentence is misleading. Christ never had, and now has, no priesthood on earth. Perhaps the writer meant to say, ‘is the representative priest for those on earth.’}
manifested love in the gift and sacrifice of His Son. The ministry of the sanctuary is a ministry on behalf of those already brought nigh unto God by the blood of Jesus. In the former there is nothing positively priestly. The minister of the Gospel does nothing for the sinner -- for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord -- but he proclaims what the Son of God has done; what God has wrought, and what God declares. On the other hand, the minister of the sanctuary is actually occupied with doing something for the worshiper; for those who have come to God through Jesus, and who have free access into the holiest of all. The minister of the Gospel has to tell sinners of the work of sacrifice; a work done on earth, a finished work, never to be repeated: but the work of the priest is continuous; it is a work on behalf of believers alone; a work for the true worshipers, and which they still need. To confound these ministries is sad confusion indeed. To make the ministry of the Gospel priestly in its character is to deceive sinners into the thought that they are worshipers; and it is at the same time entirely to obscure the blessed ministry of reconciliation. Nor is that error less dangerous which has confounded the ministry of the Spirit, by gift, in the Church, with the true service of the one minister of the sanctuary. It is an awful invasion of His office, to suppose that any in the Church are peculiarly priests.

Now if this great truth has been sufficiently cleared, that there may be many ministers of the gospel, and many specially gifted to minister in the Church, but only one minister of the sanctuary, it remains for us to consider the Lord Jesus in this office. And there are three points on which I would rest. 1st, The minister Himself. 2nd, The place of His ministry. 3rd, The character of His service and our special interest in it.

1. “We have such an High Priest.” The person of our Great High Priest, and the connection between His person and His office, having been already rested on in a previous paper, I would now only say, that this language is in its character boasting. And it is rightly so; for we may glory in the Lord. It is right to challenge any comparison with Him; and to leave who will to draw the conclusion. But this is not all said of Him here: it is added, “who is set down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.” It has been noticed already, that the attitude of sitting down, contrasted with the standing of Aaron, shows that the one has completed the work of sacrifice, which the other never did. But there is this also to be noticed -- the place in which He is seated, “on the right hand of the throne of the majesty, in the heavens.” How every expression of honour and dignity seems to be collected together here. What a seat is this! There is our High Priest seated! And there is this other blessed truth: -- He has taken His seat there at the call of God.

78. {The glory, value, and virtue of the Person of Christ fills that office with His glory, virtue, and value.}
The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool {Psa. 110:1}.

Aaron was called of God, but he was never called upon to sit down even in the worldly sanctuary. He was never even spoken with as Moses, face to face by God. He was not up in the Mount with God in the glory as was Moses, he was below with the people. But what a value was stamped by God on the sacrificial work of Christ when He was thus called of Him. The exaltation of Jesus to the seat on which He now sits proves most abundantly the value of the blood He has shed. How precious that blood must be to God -- how perfect its efficacy in His sight! Let us often meditate on the dignity of our High Priest as shown, not only by His person, but also by the seat unto which He has been called of God; remembering that He has taken that seat in consequence of His having “by himself purged our sins” {Heb. 1:3}.

The word here rendered “minister” is not the word ordinarily applied to the ministry of the gospel. The apostle Paul does indeed once apply it to himself (Rom. 15:16) -- “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles”; but in that instance the apostle is not speaking of ordinary Gospel ministry, but of his own special ministry as the apostle of the uncircumcision. This instance therefore only serves to mark the peculiar force of the term. It properly means one who sustains some distinct and onerous office for the public good; and, in some instances, at his own cost: such, for example, as the sheriff among ourselves {England, 1860s}.

The word has been transferred to our language in liturgy; the public service of God. It might therefore be rendered -- “as soon as the days of his ministration (liturgy) were accomplished” (Luke 1:23). Zacharias, as a priest, performed divine service for the people. So it is said of the Lord a little below in this eighth chapter, “but now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry” (liturgy); more excellent than that of Zacharias or the Jewish priests. He alone performs divine service for others. He does this, as the great public minister of the Church in heaven. Any number among the saints might minister and fast before the Lord on earth (Acts 13), but they did not stand in such a relation to God as is involved in performing a service for others which they could not undertake. No saint stands towards God in such a relation to any other saint; -- if any assume it, they in this assume the exclusive prerogative of the Son of God.

I believe that our souls are little aware of the deadening effect of looking to any set of men to perform public service for us to God. It must necessarily take away the soul from immediate dependence on the great public minister, and His divine service in heaven. It is not that every one is qualified to lead the public worship of the saints, any more than that every one is qualified to

79. {There were no seats in the tabernacle because the work was not finished.}
teach the saints or to preach the gospel; but there are none who stand in the same relation to the Church that Zacharias did to the Jews (Luke 1). None who are called to perform service for them, so that if such a person was wanting, the saints could not worship. Let the saints ever remember this, and guard against any intrusion on that office solely belonging to the Great High Priest. Divine service is now performed in heaven by the one Great High Priest, and He is jealous of the intrusion of any into this His office; as He was, when Korah and his company intruded into the office of those whom He once ordained to perform divine service on the earth.

Divine service, then, is only performed for us in heaven. We may, i.e., all Christians may, perform it on earth before the Lord, as did they of Antioch (Acts 13). I do not at all doubt the antiquity of liturgies, nor raise any question as to their spirituality; but this I may safely affirm, that not a vestige is to be found in the New Testament of an ordered ritual; and that a liturgy could have had no place in the Church, till it had lost the sense of the One who performs divine service in heaven, by going back to the pattern of an earthly priesthood; and how all the systems, with which we now see liturgies connected, show that such declension there has been. That such was the tendency even in the apostle’s days, the epistle to the Hebrews abundantly proves. That some had drawn back and neglected the assembling of themselves together is distinctly stated. And as the Spirit of God in this epistle expressly meets such a condition of things, this epistle becomes of peculiar value to the saints in days like the present, when Satan is so plainly working in the same way.

Remember, it is no question between the comparative advantage of one ritual above another; or whether there may not be evangelical truth and spiritual breathing in a liturgy; it is a much more solemn question. It is a question concerning the assumption by men of an office belonging alone to the Son of God. Korah and his company might have intended to adhere ever so strictly to the directions for priestly service; but that was not the question; it was one of personal intrusion into an office unto which God had not called them. Indeed, they perished with censers and incense in their hands; the controversy of God was with them. And just so is it of all false assumption of office in the Church. It is not a question of what may or may not be done in the office; it is the intrusion into it which is so fearful a sin; for is not reproach cast upon the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven -- is he not trodden under foot, if the thought is allowed of the necessity of any one person, or any order of persons, to perform divine service for us on earth? “WE HAVE” -- blessed be his name! -- “a minister of the sanctuary” always performing divine service for us above. Be it our souls’ joy to know it more and more.

2. We must now glance at the place of his ministry; His more excellent ministry.
A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Moses was indeed faithful; he did everything, “as the Lord commanded Moses,” unto the most minute detail. Everything was made according to the direction of God; all the vessels of ministry were arranged in the order prescribed.

And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle, and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

This was the tabernacle which man had pitched; beautiful indeed and glorious, yet not the true tabernacle; it was only the shadow of that. And now the shadow is past; as it is said,

A shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ {Col. 2:17}.

But still, do not our minds linger around the earthly shadows, and become occupied with the things made with hands, instead of those which are made without hands?

In the true tabernacle there is no human instrumentality whatever; all is of God. The furniture and the vessels, all so curiously wrought, are now only to be found in the various graces and several offices of the Lord Jesus Christ -- “the body is of Christ.” And all these are now displayed and exercised in heaven for us; He can stand in the immediate presence of God, there presenting for us His own fulness of excellency. Moses, the servant, could not bear the glory conferred on the tabernacle he had pitched; he was much inferior to that which his own hands had reared; but Christ, as a Son, is over His own house {Heb. 3:6}, and is Himself its furniture and its glory.

What a solemn lesson are we taught here concerning earthly and human things. Human instrumentality -- that which is “made with hands” -- “of this building” (creation) -- whether respect to place, persons, or things, ever fails, and is all disowned of God. Nothing will stand but that which is “made without hands,” i.e., of God. Men may think they honour God by rearing magnificent buildings, and dignifying them with the name of temple, or house of God; but they cannot be the true, because man and not God has founded them. Their device and their order all show them to be of the earth. It is well indeed if the very appearance of our worship here testifies that it is not of the worldly order and pattern. And this will be so, the more we realize that the place of worship is now changed from earth to heaven. There it is that the minister of the sanctuary exercises His most blessed office. The Lord Jesus Christ exercised no such ministry on earth;
for if he were on earth, he should not be a priest {Heb. 8:4};
and therefore our place of worship must be heaven, because there are no
accredited priests of God on earth to offer gifts or to perform divine service
(v. 4).

3. And now briefly as to the ministry itself. For the Lord Jesus Christ
ministers unto God in the priest’s office; ministering for us in it, “we have
such an High Priest.”

The ministry of Aaron before God was in one of its parts representative;
he bore the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart,
“when he went into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord
continually.” This blessed ministry the Lord Jesus sustains for us. But not
occasionally, as Aaron when he went in, but constantly; He appears in the
presence of God for us {Heb. 9:24}. He ever presents the saints before God
as associated with all His own fulness of excellency and glory. And this in the
presence of God within the veil, as it is said, “whither the forerunner is for us
entered {Heb. 6:20}.” And again,

for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which
are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the
presence of God for us {Heb. 9:24}.

How blessed is this: our names written in heaven, not in precious stones, but
as “a seal upon his heart, and as a seal upon his arm.” In manifesting his own
perfectness and glory in the presence of God, Jesus appears for us! The real
identification of the Church with Christ was but faintly shadowed by the
garments of glory and beauty worn by Aaron.

Then there was also the ministry of incense. This was a most precious
ministry, because it was the medium of the worship of the people. But the
offering of incense -- all variously compounded as it was -- was only
occasional, and it might be interrupted. The fragrance of it was not
perpetually before God. The plague had begun among the people, destructive
judgment had come forth, when Moses bid Aaron take “a censer and put fire
therein from off the altar, and put on incense”; all this had to be done before
Aaron could run into the congregation and stand between the dead and the
living. “Behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people . . . and the plague was stayed
(Num. 16). But now the ministry of incense is perpetual:

He ever liveth to make intercession for us {Heb. 7:25}.

Hence he is able to save right through, from the beginning to the end. No
plague of destructive judgment can come forth against the Church because of
this. It is constantly upheld in perfectness by the power of the intercession of
Jesus. It is this which ever keeps it in its right place before God, however
infirm or erring here.
The blessedness of the ministry of Him who ministers for us in the true tabernacle, is, that it is entirely independent of us. It is by Him for us. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-judgment, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God; whether our souls are realizing the value of what He is doing or not. Every saint is upheld by the intercession of Jesus even in his most thoughtless mood. Priesthood is part of the work of grace -- grace that provides for the putting away our every sin, and aiding our every infirmity, and bearing our every waywardness, in order that we may never be out of the presence of God. Hence, the moment the conscience of a careless saint is reawakened, he may find full and instant access to God, because, though he has failed, the minister of the sanctuary has not. Long before he is alive to his failure, he is debtor to the ministry of Jesus for having been kept from falling. Little did Simon think of the sifting power of Satan, but the Lord, who had prayed that his faith might not fail, could point out to him his danger. And so with us oftentimes. We see our failures, or the might and craft of our enemies, and then how precious is the thought that the intercession of Jesus for us has been over all. We are led to value the intercession of Jesus after failure or danger is discovered -- as surely Peter was; but its real value is, that it is perpetually offered, and perpetually prevalent. However we may fail, therefore, the resources of faith can never fail; for faith reaches out to God, and God’s provisions of grace in Jesus, over every failure. If there be one deeper anguish of soul than another, it surely must be for a saint to become conscious of sin, but to be without faith to look to God’s gracious provision to meet it; but Jesus prays that our faith may not fail.

We are apt to regard the intercession of Christ only as occasionally exercised on our behalf, and exercised because we have applied to it; yea, we know that men have gone so far as to make it appear that the intercession of Jesus was only to be called out by a secondary intercession of others, such as the Virgin, or departed saints, or the Church. But how false is all this! No; His ministry is marked by the same grace now as when on earth. “I have prayed for thee” was his word to Simon Peter. And so when He saw the multitudes fainting, He well knew what He would do, and do without being asked. And so now, his intercession is of the same grace; it is according to his own divine and gracious estimate of our many needs. He knows how, in our practical danger, weakness, and foolishness, we look in the eye of God, and He ever makes intercession for us accordingly; maintaining us thus in His own fragrant perfectness. In the challenge of the apostle as to where a charge can

80. {We should keep in mind that Christ’s priesthood is to maintain us; His advocacy (1 John 2) has restoration in view}.
be brought against God’s elect, he winds up all with this, as though he could go no higher,

Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us {Rom. 8:34}.

In another aspect the present ministry of Jesus is one of offering; as it is said, wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer {Heb. 8:36}.

Or, as it is subsequently said,

in which were offered gifts that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience {Heb. 9:9}.

Under the law, the worshiper might bring his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, but then the priestly ministration began. The priest must lay it on the altar, where alone it could be accepted of the Lord. The worshiper himself could not offer immediately to the Lord. It was only through the priestly ministration that it was an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord. But now it is by the offering of Jesus Himself, once for all, that we are sanctified as worshipers. Jesus gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God of a sweet-smelling savour; and now whatever comes up to God through Him has the value of His own offering attached to it, and is of a sweet-smelling savour also. Thus God perpetually attests His own value of the offering of Jesus; even by accepting as precious, through Him, all done or offered in His name. To ask in the name of Jesus is therefore of unfailing efficacy, because God is always well-pleased in Him. We know, as priests, the divine estimate of Him through whom we draw near to offer. What a comfort then it is to be assured that our persons, our prayers, our thanksgivings, and our services, have all of them, before God, the sweet savour of the name of Jesus set upon them. Everything we desire or do, as having the Spirit of Christ Jesus, however mingled, or however feeble, is thus accepted for Jesus’ sake.

And remember He is a perpetual offerer, as well as a perpetual interceder. He Himself says of those who know not God in Him and through Him,

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips {Psa. 16:4}.

But to us, because of this His ministry for us, the word is,

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks (making confession) in his name {Heb. 13:15}. 81

It was the priest alone who knew how to appropriate the sacrifice; he only

81. {In JND’s translation this reads: “[the] fruit of [the] lips confessing his name.”}
knew what was for God, what for himself, what for the worshiper, and what was refuse. It is indeed most blessed for us that there is a minister for us which separates the precious from the vile; and which orders all according to God. Our Great High Priest thus ministers for us. He takes up that which seems to us so clogged with infirmity and so mingled with impurity, that we can discern no preciousness in it; and, separating the precious from the vile, He offers what is really of the Spirit in the full value of His own offering. If any soul is awakened to the desire of serving the Lord, what sorrow have they found in having to learn the wretched imperfectness of all that which they attempt. But if thus we are oftentimes dispirited and ready to grow weary in well-doing, let us remember this present ministration of Jesus for us; such should know its value, for their labor is not in vain in the Lord. How will “Well done, good and faithful servant,” gladden the heart of many by and by, who here have only deplored their constant failures. Think you, dear brethren, that the Philippians thought their trifling remembrance of the apostle Paul, would have found its way before God as an offering made by fire, of a sweet smelling savor unto God? But it did. The apostle, in communion with the Great High Priest, could see Him take it up and present it in His own name (Phil. 4:18). Thus they were producing fruit, through Jesus, precious unto God; even as just before the apostle had said to them,

being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God (Phil. 1:11).

Yes, let the saints as priests judge themselves and their works, and if they find, as they assuredly will find, but little of the precious, let them know the One who judges above, and who delights to take out the precious and present it to God in His own perfectness. Oh! if it were not for this ministry on high, how could we read the word,

To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased {Heb. 13:16}. 
Chapter 3.4

The New and Living Way; and Let Us Draw Near

Following upon the previous article, “A Minister of the Sanctuary,” we will now consider “The New and Living Way,” the new, heavenly worship in the heavenly sanctuary. There is no room for any official Christian in the heavenly sanctuary. To have an official is Judaistic. We are exhorted to draw near, for we are all priests.

The New and Living Way

Heb. 10:19

(From Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith 3:294-301.)

. . . we have found that all believers in Jesus are constituted perpetual worshipers, by the will of God, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. We have now to consider the sphere of their worship.

In Israel, under the law, the high priest being nearer to God than the priests, the priests nearer than the Levites, and the Levites nearer than the people, the sphere of worship was the tabernacle on the earth. But now, not only is all this relative nearness to God done away with, but the once-purged worshipers are introduced into “the sanctuary and true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,” because it is there that Jesus now ministers (Heb. 8:2).

Consequently the pattern of our worship, and of the sphere of it, is not found in the people’s worship under the law, but in the priest’s service (Heb. 8:4, 5). We have properly no people’s worship -- all is priestly now. Even in the holy city itself, we have prophetically presented to us the outer court, where the people worshiped as cast out -- those alone being owned by God who worshiped as priests in the holy or heavenly places (Heb. 11:2). We are, indeed, a peculiar people -- God’s own special treasure; and our privilege as such is, that we worship not in the distance of the people, but in the nearness of the priests; not in the outer court, but in the temple itself.

We know, indeed, that there are in the church those who teach, and
those who are taught -- those who minister, and those ministered unto --
those who rule, and those who obey -- those who feed, and those who are
fed; all this is most true, but this does not in the least degree interfere with
the blessing, common to one as well as the other, that they are priests unto
God.

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father
(Rev. 1:6).

Ye are a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9).

The apostle Paul was a priest unto God, but not more so than any of the
individuals he salutes in his epistles, or than the most uninstructed believer
in the whole church. The diversities among the members, formed by the
diverse gifts of the Spirit, must be carefully distinguished from their priestly
equality. Our worship, then, is priestly worship, and consequently the
heavenly courts are its sphere.

The fearful warning given by the apostle, which at one time or another
has made every awakened soul tremble (Heb. 10:28, 29), is a warning
against the fatal consequences of turning back to the old order of worship,
as if it were to be the pattern of our worship, instead of the contrast unto it.
To return, therefore, to the order of worship under the law, is to reject the
heavenly order for a copy of the earthly. It marks the apostasy of worship. 82
And is not this the peculiar mark of the professing church? It has followed
the old pattern of the law, instead of the heavenly pattern. It has made again
the difference in its priests and people, -- a distinction unknown to the New
Testament. Thus has the professing church put its priests in a place of
comparative nearness to God, and the people at a distance.

And what is this but to trample under foot the Son of God? 83 As if, after
all that He has suffered and done, we were at as great a distance as before;

82. [It might be well to point out that the “sin” in Hebrews is apostasy, i.e., abandonment of
Christ and a return to the old system. In Heb. 6 it is viewed as apostasy from the presence and
action of the Spirit in the assembly. In Heb. 10 it is viewed as apostasy from the blood
wherewith they had been sanctified -- this referring to external sanctification, or setting apart
to God regarding the Christian profession. The epistle is replete with warnings of the danger
of actual unbelief. Thus, when we read, ‘see if there be in any of you a wicked heart of
unbelief,’ he uses the word “be,” not “develop.” An earlier warning referred to the mixed
multitude coming out of Egypt -- the word of the report did not profit many of them, not being
mixed with faith. So, the subject is not about someone having faith, then apostatizing, but of
those who entered the Christian profession without having had vital faith at all, and returning
to what they had left for Christianity.]

83. [It needs to be pointed out that trampling under foot the Son of God and crucifying Him
afresh (taking the attitude that He deserved to be crucified), is apostasy. However, perhaps the
writer is abstracting the character of this, and using the tendency, applying it to the introduction
of Judaism into Christianity. So, the introducing Judaism into Christianity is, in its degree, of
that character, though not apostasy itself.]
and as if, with His priestly ministration, we still needed the intervention of others in our approaches to God? God has cast out the outer court, and will not regard worship offered therein; but men have profanely sought to sanctify it, and in so doing have trodden under foot the Son of God. We have already noticed the command given to Moses, to sanctify the people to meet God, and also that we, by the will of God, are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; but this return to the old form is characterized by the Apostle as accounting the blood of the covenant wherewith we have been sanctified as an unholy thing, as that which would still keep us without, instead of that which entitles us to enter into the holiest of all. And what an insult to the Spirit of grace, who witnesses to the soul of the wondrous grace of God and of Christ, and who is Himself in the once-purged worshiper the power of nearness of worship: for God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit {in spirit and in truth; John 4:23}. What an insult to that blessed Spirit to put ourselves back to the distance in which the flesh must ever stand before God. Hence, therefore, this solemn warning. Take heed lest, after having received the knowledge of the truth with respect to your priestly standing and nearness to God, ye wilfully sin {this refers to apostasy}. For to worship God as we think fit, is of the very essence of willfulness. God leaves nothing to our choice in the matter of worship; it is not allowed us to choose whether we will go back to the old pattern. God has set it aside, and to return to it is to choose the place of judgment. For nothing can await the outside worshipers but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin to bring you nearer, or to make you accepted. Jesus is not waiting to offer that -- for He has done it once for all -- but waiting till His enemies be made his footstool.

But even the priest’s service in the holy place, near as it was, is but partially the pattern of the service of the saints now. For now all relative nearness is done away with, and we must take the sphere of the ministry of the high priest Himself to complete the pattern of our standing now.

While the first tabernacle was standing, the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; i.e., laid open (Heb. 9:8). The priests, though able always to enter into the holy place, could proceed no further. The beautiful veil concealed from their eye the most holy place. The veil of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with its cunning work of cherubim, all open to their view, might indeed tell them of the glories concealed behind it; but the golden altar, the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, with the golden pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, were all concealed from their sight. The immediate presence of Him who dwelt between the cherubim on the
mercy-seat was inapproachable by them. That was accessible to the high
priest alone, and to him but once a year, and then not without blood, which
he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. Mark: the high priest
could not enter into the holiest of all at all times, as the priests could into the
holy place; he could not enter there as a once purged worshiper, for he went
there on the very ground of sin not being put away for ever.

But now all is laid open. By the blood of Christ the way is opened into
the holiest of all. How significantly was this marked by the veil of the
temple being rent in twain when Jesus hung upon the cross. Yea, Jesus
Himself is the way, the living way. If there be a veil, He is that veil; not to
conceal anything of God behind it, but to bring out all that may be known
of God to view. And here the worshipers once purged have constant liberty
to enter.

“Having, therefore, brethren.” The Apostle does not take the stand of
one in pre-eminent nearness himself to God, inviting others to draw nigh,
as though he had been the priest and they the people, he on the inside and
they without; but he classes himself with those whom he addresses, calling
them brethren, and three times repeating, “Let us.” How different this to the
order of old. Moses alone was to come near, the others were to worship afar
off; but now it was equal nearness, equal liberty of access into the holiest of
all.

What has the blood of Jesus left unaccomplished? In the shedding of it
we have remission of sins. By the sprinkling of it we are pronounced clean,
and sanctified as worshipers. It is ever on the mercy-seat, and before the
mercy-seat; for by it Christ hath entered in, having obtained eternal
redemption. His thus entering in is not an annual solemnity, nor one ever to
be repeated. The blood of the sin-offering, carried within the veil by Aaron
on the great day of atonement, was that he might

make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of
the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their
sins (Lev. 16:16).

This has now been done once and for ever. The atonement for the holy place
is unto continuance -- it is as much once and for ever purged as is the
worshiper himself. Yea, no worshiper entering there need fear lest he should
bring defilement there, because that blood that cleanseth all sin away is there
for ever before God. Why are we so distant in our hearts from God? Is it not
because we have so little sense of the real power of the blood within the veil
as the gracious provision of God Himself for our holy and unhindered
communion with Him?

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the
blood of Jesus.
But mark the way of access. At Mount Sinai all was distance.

Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourself, that ye go not up into the mount, nor touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death (Ex. 19).

This distance ever characterized the worship under the law; there were constant bounds set, to pass which would have been death. Even Aaron himself could not pass the bounds of the veil at all times, “lest he die.” The outside worshiping Israelite could not pass the bounds of the curtains which hung at the door of the tabernacle, “lest he die.” To see God and live was impossible under the law; but now Jesus is the way, the living way, into God’s presence. To see Him is to see God, and live. He is not the barrier between us and God, but the way to God. All the distance, and every bound, is done away by Jesus. Did an Israelite on the outside gaze on the beautiful curtain, and long to pass it -- but death would have been his portion had he attempted it -- let him look to Jesus, who says, “I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” Yes, the death of Jesus is become to us the living way into the holiest of all. But if, having proceeded within the curtains of the door, the veil seemed to forbid further entrance, let him again look to Jesus, and the veil, says the apostle, is His flesh. The very God with whom we have to do is thus brought before us as full of grace and truth. And if he perceived it rent, again let him look to Jesus and him crucified, and the holiness of God invited, instead of forbade an entrance. What words of blessing to the once purged worshiper!

By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

But farther. Not only the work of Jesus and his character inspire confidence, but He himself is the High Priest over the house of God. His ministry is never for a moment interrupted. He is in the holiest of all, on the very ground of atonement having been made both for the people and the place, and therefore the present is to us one continued season of worship. How needful is this promise to give us confidence in entering into the holiest! The High Priest has not to go into the house; He is there constantly, and has taken a place which Aaron never could take in the tabernacle; He is over the house as his own; He is master of it; He openeth, and no man shutteth.

It is literally a great Priest over the house of God, or “great High Priest,” as we have it in the fourth chapter. The worshipers themselves now enter into the privileged place of the High Priest, themselves taking the standing of High Priests in this respect, not simply of priests entering into the holy place. Hence they need a great Priest -- one who is over the house, even over them (Heb. 3:6). This must not be forgotten. We are not priests in our own right, neither are we free of the house in our own right; all hangs on the great Priest; and our entrance into the holiest of all, now by faith, and in due time actually, is that which declares to us how much we are debtors to His grace.
May we indeed, by these meditations, find fresh virtue in the blood of Jesus, and learn what its preciousness must be before God, when it can give us liberty to enter into the holiest of all!

And now pause for a moment to contemplate what has been done for us, -- what has been done for every one whose eye has been turned away from the things which are visible, and with which he himself is conversant, to see Jesus now hidden in the heavens from the sight of the world, but revealed to faith as at the right hand of the throne of the majesty of heaven.

The worshipers have been once and for ever purged by His sacrifice once offered. By the will of God they have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. A living way has been opened for them through the blood of Jesus into the holiest of all. The place of worship is as much prepared for them to worship in by the blood, as they by the same blood are prepared to worship in it. The great Priest is abidingly in that place of worship; no ministration is wanting, He is the minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. He, too, is over the house; and its gates are always opened -- entrance is always to be had, -- all things are ready without our having done anything. What then remains but for us to use our high privileges, and to listen to the word -- “Let us draw near” but this, the Lord permitting, shall be the subject of the next paper.

But is there not reason for deep humiliation on the part of Christians who own assuredly the preciousness of the blood of Jesus for remission of sins, but who do not regard its preciousness as having purged the place of worship for those whose sins are forgiven? An Israelite was taught two things by the blood of the sacrifice. “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.” Many a soul which has been taught the value of the blood in the latter sense has never regarded it in the former. Many a christian who would be alarmed at anything which would imply that something was yet to be done by Jesus for justification, is quite unconscious of nullifying a most important part of the work of Jesus, that affecting worship, by the ritual to which he is subjected. The truth preached cheers his soul and leads into happy liberty -- the ritual is submitted to as a point of decency, and in many instances tolerated only for the sake of the sermon. But what a fearful degradation of worship is this! What an undervaluing of the blood of Jesus. What a forgetfulness of our priestly place as worshipers once purged for the heavenly courts themselves!

The Lord pardon His saints for having so insulted His grace in the mode and character of their worship: and lead them by His Spirit into the only place of acceptable worship -- the holiest of all.
Let Us Draw Near

(Heb. 10:22)

(From Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith 3:301-313.)

It is indeed very blessed to be enabled to tell a poor awakened sinner, that in Jesus all things are ready which he needs for remission of sins, righteousness, and life. And it is not less blessed to be enabled to tell those who have so come to Jesus, that all things are ready for their worship in the holiest of all. That everything is there ordered by the blessed Jesus Himself for their entrance therein, and that He himself has consecrated the way for their approach.

The time is coming when

many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3).

But now is the time for believers to encourage one another to enter into the holiest of all -- even into heaven itself, because Jesus is there. Come ye, say they, and let us draw near with a true heart.

Under the law, much of the priestly ministry was outside the tabernacle, and open to the view therefore of the worshiper. If he brought a burnt sacrifice, he was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he was to kill it, and then the priests sprinkled the blood in his sight upon the altar that was by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This part of the priest’s work was visible to the outside worshipers. But he who could approach thus far was never satisfied as to his conscience. He came indeed to these sacrifices -- he saw them offered -- but they were utterly inefficacious as to the purging of the conscience.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin {Heb. 10:4}.

But now all on the outside has been once and for all accomplished; the priestly ministry is all within and invisible, and therefore only known to faith by the revelation of God.

Let us put ourselves in the place of a Hebrew worshiper, by God’s grace taught to know Jesus as the one sacrifice for sin, and as the ever-abiding High Priest in the holiest of all. What a struggle must there often have been in his mind when approaching God, because he had no sacrifice to offer -- nothing visible on which to lean -- no victim to lay his hand upon. It must, indeed have required real true-heartedness to Jesus to enable him to draw near -- and to look at everything with which he had been formerly
conversant as taken up in Jesus, so that all that he had seen before was now only to be discerned by faith as fulfilled in Christ. And are we not often false to Jesus in this matter? Do we not often harbor the thought that something yet remains to be done either by ourselves or by him -- in order to our drawing near? Do we not often thus become occupied with the circumstantial of worship rather than with Jesus -- the substance? Are we not often false to Him in questioning our title to draw near, because we find distance in our own hearts, as if it was the warmth of our affections, instead of the blood of Jesus, which brought near?

But oh, beloved, how false to Jesus has the Church been! The worshipers are often pressed down by a burdensome ritual, and allowed neither to know that they are once and for ever purged, nor that all is prepared for their entrance into the holiest. They are turned back again to that which is visible, and go through the daily routine of service, never getting farther than the door of the tabernacle! They are set in the place of distant Jews, instead of that of priests sanctified for heavenly ministrations and worship!

And how continually do we see souls led to put the act of worship in the place of Jesus. Surely this is not to draw near with a true heart. A doubt harbored as to the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice, or the perfect efficiency of His priesthood, or His tender sympathy and compassion, is not to draw near with a true heart. If we shrink back into a distant place after all He has done, are we true-hearted to Jesus? But what positive treachery to Jesus is it to set up an order of men as in greater nearness to God than others -- virtually putting them within, and virtually putting others without. To lean on priests, or ministers, in worship, as if they were needed to that end, is absolutely denying the virtue and the person and work of Christ. But such things are the necessary offspring of departure from the truth of a sinner’s justification before God, by the one sacrifice of Christ. Distant worship necessarily follows imperfect justification. And if a sinner’s justification before God by the blood of Jesus be not seen, much less will entrance into the holiest of all by the same blood for worship be allowed as the common portion of the saints. But even where the truth as to justification has been recovered and is preached, we still see a form and a ritual of worship altogether subversive of the truth. The access proclaimed in the gospel preached is not permitted to those who have believed that preaching. Thus the saints are practically kept in a place of distance, and thus taught to be false-hearted to Jesus! Surely we might say, if every church and chapel in the kingdom were closed, and all the ministers of the gospel shut up in prison, that true-heartedness to Jesus would lead His saints to assemble themselves together to worship, by faith, in the holiest of all -- knowing that there the ministry of the Great High Priest can never for a moment be
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suspended. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.

As to this expression, “full assurance of faith,” it by no means conveys
the idea of a certain standard measure of faith as a matter of attainment. The
reference is not to the measure of faith, but to its bearing on the right object.
The faith may be the weakest possible, but let that, weak as it is, be in full
bearing on its own proper object.

We have another form of the same word in the New Testament. It is said
of Abraham,

he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was
strong in faith giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded, that
what he had promised he was able also to perform {Rom. 4:20-21}.

So again -- “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” The
moment the soul has laid hold on Jesus it is delivered from itself, and ought
to be fully persuaded that all it needs is presented to it in the object before
it -- even Jesus.

It is this single eye to Jesus which we need in worship. The very things
which man in his wisdom has thought to be helps to devotion are really its
hindrances. Which of the senses do not men seek to gratify in the
circumstantial things of worship? Now the very object of the apostle here is to turn
away the worshiper from the things of sight and sense, to which he had been
accustomed, in order to concentrate his soul on one single object, in which
he was to find everything that he needed.

We can never look at our title to worship God, but we see our salvation.
How blessedly has God linked these things together, and how perversely
does man rend them asunder, either by calling on all to worship, believers
and unbelievers, or by binding believers to a form, which negatives the
sense of complete justification. What we need in order to happier and holier
worship is more simple faith in Jesus. Are we fully persuaded that Jesus has
done all that is needed to make an acceptable meeting-place between
ourselves and God? -- then let us draw near.

And what holy freedom and liberty attends this “having our hearts
sprinkled from an evil conscience.” The leper to be cleansed, in order to
restore him to the privilege of worship, needed to be sprinkled with blood
(Lev. 14:7). The Israelite, who had touched anything which made him
unclean, needed to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but it
only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9:13). The priests at their
consecration had the blood applied to them, that they might so draw near and
minister before God. But what is all this compared with a heart sprinkled
from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus? It is no longer a purifying of
the flesh, but a purifying of the heart by faith. The flesh purified for worship
might co-exist with an evil conscience, but a sprinkled heart never could.
How entirely is a good conscience alone maintained by that which is not of sight, even by the purging power of the blood of Jesus.

Before Aaron could put on the holy linen coat he must wash his flesh in water (Lev. 16:4); and so it is now -- “Our bodies washed with pure water.” We cannot put on our white robe unless we know what communion with the death of Jesus really is. How needful for us in our approach to our place of worship, even the holiest of all, habitually to remember that we have died, and that we are alive in Jesus. We have to do with the living God -- and He too a consuming fire. All that is contrary to life has been set aside by the death of Jesus. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” And it is as alive from the dead that we alone can approach him.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.” It is literally “of our hope,” not faith, and has reference to the sixth chapter -- that . . . we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil {Heb. 6:18-19}.

Our hope is that we shall be there actually, the holiest of all being our own proper place as priests unto God: but by faith we now worship there in spirit.

But it is hard indeed to maintain a profession contradicted, so far as sight goes, by everything in us and around us. Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that He was a king, without any mark of royalty about him. His confession seemed contradicted by His appearance. Timothy had confessed a good confession before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12), and he needed to be reminded of it. And so do we. For how constantly do we forget that we are what we are in hope. We could not give satisfactory proof to another that we are what we confess to be. We can indeed give the soundest reason of the hope that is in us, because the forerunner is for us already entered within the veil; but we cannot satisfy the restlessness of our minds, or the minds of others, by evidence. No; blessed be God, He has provided for our hope on surer ground than any evidences we could produce, even on the ground of His own immutability and faithfulness for He is faithful that hath promised.

The word is of great force, “let us hold fast,” -- let us tenaciously grasp. And why? Because our hope is that which Satan would try by all means to wrest from us. And has he not effectually done this in the Church at large by making that their hope, which is, in fact, the ground of their hope -- even their justification. Present righteousness is the ground of Christian hope. The holiest of all is alone open to those who have been once and for ever purged. If our hope springs not from that within the veil, where is our steadfastness?
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Everything short of that may be shaken -- and will be shaken. If therefore we know not accomplished righteousness, fitting us now for the holiest of all, the peace of our souls must be unsteady. An Israelite might approach the door of the tabernacle with a sacrifice to be offered, but that sacrifice had yet to be pronounced acceptable and to be accepted; but it was on the ground of an already offered and accepted sacrifice, that the holiest of all was entered by the high priest. Thus it is with our title to enter within the veil -- the one offering of Jesus has for ever given us liberty to enter there. How amazing is the craft of Satan in his devices against the truth! When he could no longer keep out of sight the doctrine of justification by faith, he has contrived to rob it of its real power, even where received, by having practically put it as the object of hope instead of the present possession of all who have come to Jesus. The peace of the gospel is thus practically unknown, although the gospel itself is truly stated. And this hope of justification by faith always opens the door for distant worship. In how many real believers is the peace of the gospel hindered by their very acts of worship.

Let us therefore, beloved brethren, grasp and maintain this confession as our best treasure -- *Having present righteousness by faith, our hope is nothing short of the holiest of all; and there we worship in Spirit now.*

Our hope is independent of ourselves -- it hangs on the immutable faithfulness of God -- it is secured by the blood of Jesus, and it is already made fast within the veil; for Jesus is there, and there for us. Beware of mock humility, which is only the cover of unbelief and self-dependence. Look at yourselves and you are hopeless; yea, nothing is before you but a fearful looking for of judgment. Look at Jesus and know your hope; for where is He? In the holiest of all as the forerunner! Let this check all wavering, and answer every doubt and every difficulty. In spite of all appearances, hold fast the profession of the hope without wavering.

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” Here we are reminded that we have also to perform our priestly work. The priest had to consider, in cases of leprosy, -- and so, as priests, we have to consider one another, not whether we are cleansed or not, for it has been authoritatively pronounced of us by the Great High Priest Himself, “now ye are clean,” -- but we are to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. The expression is remarkable -- “consider one another.” There is but One, even the Lord himself, who stands in the authoritative place of the priest to the church, therefore we are to consider one another. How entirely is this exercise of our common priestly function

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84. {It is true that we worship in the power of the Spirit of God, but when we speak of being in the sanctuary, we are there in spirit (small s).}
nullified by again setting up an order of priesthood to prescribe to us. What is the Confessional? What the Absolution? -- but the priest again pronouncing the leper clean! And how effectually does such a thought hinder our considering one another. We can only do this as standing in grace ourselves and recognizing others as standing in the same grace and the same nearness to God. It is as together standing in the holiest of all that we are to consider one another. There we are thus to help each other to detect what is inconsistent with that our high and blessed standing. There is no room for rivalry now -- all are priests; but abundant room for love; and our love for each other is to be measured by the love that has brought us where we stand. And as to good works, they also are to be judged by the same standard. No lower standard than the sanctuary itself must now be taken to determine what are good works. What becomes the holiest itself alone becomes those sanctified to worship therein. It is not what men call good works, but what God estimates as such, to which we have to provoke one another. The costly ointment poured on the feet of Jesus, wasteful and extravagant in the eyes of an ancient or modern utilitarian, was a good work in the eyes of Jesus. The two mites of the widow more costly than the splendid offering of the rich. How little of what men think good is really so before God; and how entirely what God esteems as precious is despised among men. Hence Christ was despised and rejected of men; and hence really Christian works are now despised of them. How needful then is it for us to be in spirit in the holiest of all, to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

But not only is there to be this constant provocation to love and to good works, it is also added, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”

When Israel came into the land, they were not to offer their sacrifices, or to worship, at any place they might select, but at the place where the Lord should put his name only. Jerusalem was the place whither the tribes went up. Put yourself in the position of a believing Hebrew on a solemn feast day in Jerusalem -- one of the three thousand converted by the first sermon of Peter. Multitudes from all quarters might be assembled around him -- Jerusalem filled with worshipers -- while he would be apart from all that which attracted them. But would not his soul have many a struggle in keeping away from the festive and religious throng? Would he not have almost appeared an enemy to his country and to the temple? But was it really so? Think farther of the contrast he must in his own soul have seen between the upper chamber, or any other unpretending locality, and the splendid temple. Must it not have needed much simple faith in Jesus, to meet together {rather, “are gathered together” by the Spirit; Matt. 18:20} to break bread and worship with a number as unaccredited as himself, without any visible priest to order their worship, any sacrifice, any incense, any altar, any
laver? Would not the multitude keeping holy-day give as it were the lie to the worship he had been engaged in, as if it had been no worship at all? Surely there is great force in the words, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”

Yes; some drew back from acknowledging that as worship, which was without the outward form -- some even who believed in Jesus. It cost too much to own Jesus as everything by disowning all the shadows. The assembling of themselves together thus was the great testimony against the religion of the world, and that Jesus was all. It was the profession that He was the substance of worship, and that worship must now be according to the place and power of His priesthood. The despised company in the upper chamber were feeding on the substance, while the religious world in their gorgeous temple were bowing before the shadows. That despised company had by faith access into the holiest of all; they knew that Jesus, as the forerunner, had entered there for them; and in this knowledge of Him, they could meet at any time and at any place, for the name of the Lord was recorded in the place of their meeting. They were worshipers in the sanctuary, let the scene of their gathering on earth be where it may.

Hence we find that

on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:7).

They might or might not have some one to minister the word unto them -- that was accidental; their coming together was for a positive and specific object. Paul came in among them and preached, but that was by the way. They came together as disciples . . . There is need of our exhorting one another as to this, for the danger is imminent of turning back to the old order. And the Spirit of God clearly saw the tendency of things that way, and that this would increase. That as the day approached when the Lord Jesus would be revealed, worship would become more and more worldly -- more and more after the ancient distant Jewish pattern. Hence the exhortation would in the progress of things be increasingly needed, to stand fast as disciples in the simplicity of grace. Nothing can be more gracious than the provision which the Lord has made against the increasing evil. Just in proportion as the thought in the minds of Christians has prevailed of a progression unto blessing in the world, has worship adapted itself to the world. But when it has pleased God to open the eyes of many of his saints to see the steady progress in evil, and the great assumptions of the flesh, He has thrown them back more on Christian simplicity. And our exhortation the one to the other, as we see the day approaching, is to test everything by the light of that day, and to see that nothing will then really stand which is not of Christ. Surely the Lord intends to make His saints sensible of all that they have lost; but in doing so to make them as sensible of the value of what
remains. If He had to say to His people of old,

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

This was not said to enfeeble, but to strengthen them. All the outward glory was gone, but still the Lord was there. And therefore it is said,

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

God remained unchangeably the same, and His original power in deliverance was real strength in the midst of weakness; so that out of weakness they became strong. And this is God’s provision for the comfort and strength of the saints, as they see the day approaching, and everything unprepared to meet it, to exhort one another to the use of what remains unto them; and whilst Jesus abideth in the holiest of all, and now appears in the presence of God for them, they can always draw near. Yes, it is our privilege to do so, now that the dispensation has well nigh run its course, equally as much as in the apostles’ days. Men indeed have, by their perverseness, put many things between themselves and God, but that which giveth nearness still remaineth, even the blood of Jesus. Let us then draw near.

Beloved, how much is this exhortation needed at this day! Simple worship, although our high privilege, is despised! Believers need something more than the presence of the Lord to induce them to come together. Jesus is not really to them the great substantial ordinance of God. They are not glad when they assemble themselves together. Let us not forsake this, for if we do we are in danger of forgetting that we are once and for ever purged worshipers, and that our place of worship is the golden sanctuary itself, also once and for ever purged (Heb. 10:2, 14). There we have such an High Priest, one who can bring us in at once to the throne of the majesty on high, to us a throne of grace, although He who sits thereon is holy, holy, holy.

Beloved, it is your place of confession to contradict all assumptions of priesthood, all repetition of sacrifice, and all repeated absolutions, by drawing near. Your worship is to be characterized no less by confident nearness to God than by reverence to his name. The day is approaching. Its approach is marked by a return to ordinances. Hold fast your profession, and let it be Jesus against every pretension. For be assured that whatever is not of Him is nothing better than a carnal ordinance, to be utterly disowned by the Lord when He appears.

If we look forward as to worship, what do we see there? All the shadows passed away, and only the substance presented.

I saw no temple therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are
the temple of it {Rev. 21:22}.

So again --

the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him (worship Him) : and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there, shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever {Rev. 22:3b-5}.

They shall serve and they shall reign at the same time. They shall then be manifestly priests and kings. But now in the acknowledgment that grace has already made them so, it is their privilege to approach by faith that glorious place in which they will {in} due time actually stand. Our best instruction is in gathered {sic} by looking forward. It is the reality which is to be our pattern now. Not things on patterns of the heavenly, but the substance known by faith stamping its impress on that which is present. Let us draw near

unto him that loved us; and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever. Amen {Rev. 1:5b-6}. 
Part 4:
Messianic Jews
in the Book of Acts

Chapter 4.1

Was Paul a Messianic Jew All His Life?

Concerning “Jewish practices,” Dr. David H. Stern 85 claims that Paul “observed them all his life (ac 13:9&N).” 86 So he claims that Paul remained a Jew all his life, indeed, an observant Jew (16:3, 17:2, 18:18, 20:16, 21:23-27, 25:8, 28:17; and see 21:21N), even a Pharisee (23:6, Pp. 3:5) . . . 87

Of course, Paul was an ethnic Jew all his life but that is not what is meant here. This list of references to the book of Acts means that he thinks Paul was a Messianic Jew all through that book. Messianic Judaism is based on the notion that Gentiles have perverted the meaning of the NT, and Messianic Judaism is the true representation of the meaning of the NT. Necessarily, then, the Apostle Paul, who wrote so much of the NT, must

85. While there are numbers of books supporting the Judaizing system, there are two that seem to be widely received, both by Dr. David Stern: The Jewish New Testament, his translation of the NT, as well as his Jewish New Testament Commentary, Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications (1996). The information in the rear of this 934 page book says of this Ph.D in economics:
   In 1972 he came to faith in Yeshua the Messiah, after which he received a Master of Divinity degree at Fuller Theological Seminary and did graduate work at the University of Judaism.
   In 1979 he moved to Israel and has been active in Israel’s Messianic Jewish community.
   We will also quote from some other books by those who adhere to “Messianic Judaism.”
87. Ibid., p. 267.
have been a Messianic Jew and must have lived like a Jew and all his life engaged in Jewish practices. So Messianic Judaism will rescue the NT from the Gentile distortion it has received and will show us that the NT is Jewish.

Thus, Paul’s avoiding giving unnecessary offense, his love for the Jewish people, his use of opportunity to speak in synagogues, his use of Jewish holidays to be able to evangelize crowds of Jews, and, alas, failure on his part regarding several lapses, are utilized by Messianic Judaism to affirm that Paul was Jewish all his life and observed Jewish practices all his life. The alleged proofs given are the above noted texts. Let us examine them.

Did Paul Remain a Pharisee All His Life?

(2) See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. (3) For we are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh. (4) Though I have [my] trust even in flesh; if any other think to trust in flesh, I rather: (5) as to circumcision, [I received it] the eighth day; of [the] race of Israel, of [the] tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew of Hebrews; as to [the] law, a Pharisee; (6) as to zeal, persecuting the assembly; as to righteousness which [is] in [the] law, found blameless; (7) but what things were gain to me these I counted, on account of Christ, loss. (8) But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filth, that I may gain Christ; (9) and that I may be found in him, not having my righteousness, which [would be] on the principle of law, but that which is by faith of Christ, the righteousness which [is] of God through faith (Phil. 3:2-9).

We Are the Circumcision

Let us first consider Phil. 3:2-9. The expression “the circumcision” is used in the NT to describe the Jews but in this passage Paul calls them “the concision.” This is a play on words, the thrust of which is to describe the circumcision as a mutilation. It had had a validity for the Mosaic Covenant, but the cross ended that covenant. Circumcision pointed forward to the cutting off of the flesh from before God. It was suitable for the trial of the first man (to show that he was not recoverable) in the persons of the favored Jews, under the Mosaic Covenant. As with the other shadows, for a heavenly people they have been displaced by the reality (“the body,” Col. 2:17). Any present spiritual value attached to circumcision in the flesh is false. Usually Messianic Judaism does not advocate the circumcision of Gentile believers, but does place spiritual value (not salvation) on circumcision of Jewish believers, and they insist it be done.
For we are the circumcision” speaks of a spiritual matter. Note that all Christians are the circumcision. That is, all Christians answer to the meaning of circumcision positionally -- for we all are dead with Christ (Rom. 6:8) and what we are in the flesh has been judged and dealt with on the cross (though in practice we may fail in living it out as we should).

For the present time, Christ’s work is to “form the two {Jew and Gentile} in himself into one new man” (Eph. 2:15). But Dr. Stern thinks that Gentile believers, as Christians, “become joined to Israel without becoming Jews.”

He does not speak of the newness of the “one new man.” And no wonder, because what he sees as the thrust of this is that Paul’s object is to assure Gentile believers that they are not second-class citizens of the Kingdom. His purpose is not to downplay Jewish distinctives, but to “up-play” what God now has done for Gentiles.

At bottom, then, Dr. Stern’s view means that Gentile believers have been elevated to the level of a Messianic Jew (well, not quite). But, Paul is not downplaying Jewish distinctives. Accordingly, the Gentile believer is a first-class citizen as is the Messianic Jew who is to retain his Jewish distinctives -- which distinctives, however, appear to have spiritual value for the Messianic Jew, yet not shared by the believing Gentile. So, in spite of ostensibly granting first-class status to a Gentile believer, there must be a super-first-class status for Messianic Jews, for they retain Jewish distinctives that have spiritual value for them, not shared by the merely first-class citizens of the kingdom (the kingdom is not the subject of Ephesians). The result is that there are indeed two status-classes, one superior to the other, despite any claims to the contrary.

The Gentile believer’s being made “nigh” (Eph. 2:13) is through the blood of Christ. Let us be sure that we understand that this nearness is so near that nearer we cannot be. The fact is that Jews had been dispensationally, externally, near to God (and the most of them were not born of God), and the Gentiles who were dispensationally far off, have now both been elevated into “one new man.” The meaning of the Jews having been dispensationally near refers to an outward thing, an external relationship, not a relationship of soul. It was the covenant relationship in the Mosaic system. Being nigh by the blood of Christ is vital reality. This was not the character of Israel’s nearness. But it is the character of nearness of all who compose the “one new man.” God has now acted beyond those dispensational distinctions and elevated both Jewish and Gentile believers into something that is not Israel, but something


new. Israel is not new. The body of Christ, formed consequent upon Christ’s exaltation (Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13), with Himself as Head in the glory above, is the “one new man.” This excludes distinctives and the thrust of Messianic Judaism to have, in effect, two classes, one of which has special distinctives of spiritual value. Actually, such views lower Christianity, refusing to see the force of being dead with Christ, mar the true character of the church, and fail to apprehend the true Christian position in Christ.

The “one new man” never existed before the Head was in heaven. The “one new man” is not Gentilish nor is it Jewish, nor any kind of mixture of them of them. It is new and excludes special distinctives of spiritual advantage.

We Christians, all of us, both Jew and Gentile, are the circumcision. Positionally, in Christ, we all answer to what it pointed to. We are dead with Christ (Rom. 6:8); we are dead to the law (Rom. 7:4); we are dead to sin (Rom. 6:2); we are crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20). We have no trust in flesh (Phil. 3:3). The fact is that the Messianic Jew does trust that his distinction in the flesh results in distinctive spiritual advantage -- while claiming that it would be Judaizing to push the Gentile into circumcision and other Jewish observances. This is a device to ward off the charge of Judaizing, because it is said that you cannot Judaize a Jew! Only a Gentile could be Judaized. This is a wonderful self-deception as we observe Jewish believers being Judaized. Jewish believers have been taken out of the Jewish position by circumcision with Christ while Messianic Judaism puts them back in a Jewish position, however more or less modified.

Notice that Paul did count as loss those things that were gain to him (Phil. 3:7); and does count as loss (Phil. 3:8). Among the things he counted as loss, and continued to count as loss was: “as to the law, a Pharisee.” No doubt Messianic Jews would regard Paul as still a Pharisee, but a new kind of Pharisee, different from the kind he was before being saved. We read, “as to the law, a Pharisee,” so for the new kind of Pharisee he will need this: ‘as to the new kind of law, a new kind of Pharisee.’ It was a Jewish distinction in the flesh, and Messianic Judaism insists on law-keeping (all 613 laws?) for such as have Jewish distinction in the flesh. If the Jewish distinction is not in the flesh, where is it? -- in Christ? But Paul nowhere makes such distinctions, though he sometimes failed in conduct to measure up to the inspired truth he taught apostolically. That Jewish distinctives maintained by Messianic Judaism should have spiritual benefits for Messianic Jews, while not so for Christian Gentiles, is a confusion of doctrine since both saved Jews and saved Gentiles are “the circumcision” (Phil. 3:3), a designation of both without distinction. The claim that the motives of Messianic Jews are different does not alter the principle of the matter. All such distinctiveness is under the ban as “loss” in Phil. 3.
I Am a Pharisee, Son of Pharisees

But Paul, knowing that the one part [of them] were of the Sadducees and the other of the Pharisees, cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, son of Pharisees: I am judged concerning the hope and resurrection of [the] dead (Acts 23:6).

It is with great diffidence, conscious of failures on my own part, yet necessary, to speak of the great Apostle not having always lived up to the height of the truth he taught. There was only One Who, when asked Who He was, could say:

altogether that which I also to you say (John 8:25).

There was no gulf, however small, between what He said and what He did. Regarding Paul’s being before the council another wrote:

He takes the ground of a righteous man under the law before them, and asserts his innocence. The high priest, without waiting for the decision of the council pre-judges the case, and commands him to be smitten on the mouth, contrary to the law (Deut. 24:1, 2). Paul was but human, and he broke down under the provocation. And here we do well to consider Him, “Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself unto him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:23; Matt. 26:67; John 18:22, 23). When He answered it was in the gentle firm consciousness that neither Satan nor man could bring aught against Him. Paul pronounces judgment from God on the high priest. He did not know him as such, and probably he was not robed; but when rebuked, he instantly reverts to the word of God, to which he desired to be obedient (Ex. 22:26).

And here we find a precious principle. Whenever we make a false step let us instantly revert to the word of God. It braces our loins again, and strengthens us for service. And now we find him taking advantage of his position by natural birth, and dividing the council in his favor by this means. It was a clever expedient, but hardly justifiable from one who was confessedly dead as to the flesh. Cp. Phil. 3:3, 7. 90

Moreover, he is not now merely a Jew and a Roman, but also a Pharisee. Such a title he counts no longer dross and dung, it has become once more a gain. 91

Therefore we ought to learn from this passage not to think or teach according to the spirit in which Paul here spoke.

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90. Words of Truth, New Series 3:76.

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Paul’s Avoiding Giving Unnecessary Offense

Him would Paul have go forth with him, and took [him and] circumcised him on account of the Jews who were in those places, for they knew his father that he was a Greek (Acts 16:3). It is true that this was done to avoid impeding the gospel. But that does not address the matter of Messianic Judaism. Should not Timothy be a Messianic Jew? He should have been circumcised because of Jewish distinctives allegedly properly maintained by Messianic Judaism and not “on account of the Jews who were in those places.” The stated reason was not because the law required it or that it was proper to Messianic Jewish distinctives which a Messianic Jew should observe. What was done is quite in accord with Paul’s teaching that circumcision meant nothing in Christ Jesus (Gal. 5:6; 6:16), and thus we see that this reason is actually contrary to Messianic Judaism.

Moreover, 1 Cor. 7:18, 19 says:

Has anyone been called circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised: has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but keeping God’s commandments.

Instead of bowing in heart to the words, “circumcision is nothing,” Messianic Judaism infers out of this that “circumcision is something” for Messianic Jews.

92. As the Jewish New Testament Commentary, p. 283, says. In Titus’ case, being a Gentile, circumcision was refused (Gal. 2:3).

93. Concerning v. 18 a, Dr. Stern writes:

From this we can reasonably infer that he should not assimilate into Gentile or so-called “Christian” culture but should remain distinctly Jewish. Instead of understanding that a Jewish believer converts from sin to righteousness (the same as a Gentile believer), it {the Church} has thought he converts from Judaism to Christianity. Members of every other ethnic group are encouraged to maintain their culture and express their faith within it. But when a Jew does so he may be accused of “legalizing” . . . “Judaizing” . . . and “raising again the middle wall of partition” . . . (Jewish New Testament Commentary, pp. 454-456).

Really, this is offensive against the place of vital nearness by the blood of Christ that saved Jews and Gentiles have (Eph. 2:13, 14). Such a position precludes the possibility of distinctive spiritual differences before God. Eph. 2:13 says, “but now in Christ Jesus . . .” That is where all believers are positionally; and that forms right Christian practice. Christian position forms Christian practice.

As to Christians in various cultures, it is obvious that there are religious practices concerning which a Christian is to stand separate. Take for example Hindu death anniversary ceremonies. Concerning Judaism, the Mosaic system is set aside by God, by the cross, and sealed in AD 70 by the destruction of the continued practice of the system.

(continued…)

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God’s calling leaves us where we are concerning our ethnicity but brings us to a new position before God that is the same for all “in Christ Jesus.” We all, Jewish and Gentile believers, answer to the meaning of circumcision (Phil. 3:3); and though we might have been near, dispensationally speaking, or far off, we are all now in the same vital nearness by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13, 14). In Christian position and privilege we do not have distinctions in the flesh. Well, but are there not Jewish believers and Gentile believers? Yes, concerning natural ethnicity, but all Christian position and privileges are the same, and all are to walk by the same rule (Gal. 6:16) -- for natural ethnicity does not set up several classes of Christians concerning spiritual privileges and distinctives. So, when called of God, whether having been circumcised or not having been circumcised, that matters not. Remain as one is when called; and, of course, attach no spiritual significance to it. Rather, attach significance to keeping God’s commandments -- and clearly circumcision is not one of those commandments for Christians. God was patient with Jewish believers until they were finally told to go outside the camp (Heb. 13:13) -- before God sent His armies and destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 (Matt. 22:7). But Messianic Judaism perverts God’s manifestation of patience during that epoch into sanction for their Judaistic system.

Concerning Timothy’s case, he was called of God when uncircumcised; and according to 1 Cor. 7:18, 19, should remain that way, there being no personal, spiritual advantage to being circumcised. However, in Timothy’s case, grace could act with a view to the spread of the gospel. And Timothy’s case serves as an example of what we read in 1 Cor. 9:19-21.

Paul’s Use of the Synagogue to Reach Jews

... where was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul’s custom he went in among them, and on three sabbaths reasoned with them from the scriptures . . . (Acts 17:1, 2).

It is asserted that Paul was an observant Jew and “it was his usual practice to attend synagogue.” 94 It appears, then, if this allegation is true, that Paul was practicing Judaism in non-Messianic Jewish congregations; i.e., he was engaging with unbelieving Jews in the unbelieving Jews’ continuation of the Mosaic system. Do Messianic Jews advocate doing this? Is this what

93. (…continued) Christianity is much, much more than converting from sin to righteousness. Will not such conversion be true in the millennium? Of course it will. Messianic Judaism strikes at the heavenly truth of Christianity and lowers things down to a millennial level. The truth of the church and the new creation is not understood, for the heart is fastened on maintaining Jewish distinctives.

Messianic Jews believe and do they advocate doing that?

At this time some Jewish hearers became Christians, as well as a great multitude of Greek worshipers, and also numbers of chief women (Acts 17:4, 5). This was the beginning of the assembly of God at Thessalonica. It must have been large and predominately Gentile. Do you think that it was a Jewish Messianic congregation? Or, do you think the Jewish believers set up their own assembly in Thessalonica so as to have a Messianic Jewish congregation separate from the Gentiles Christians? See Eph 4:3, 4.

At any rate, Paul was using the synagogues for the spread of the gospel, not to practice Judaism with unbelieving Jews. When he was in a place where there were believers he partook of the Lord’s supper on the Lord’s day (Acts 20:7).

**Paul’s Shorn Head and Vow and His Desire to Be at Jerusalem**

And Paul, having yet stayed [there] many days, took leave of the brethren and sailed thence to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow; and he arrived at Ephesus, and left them there. But entering himself into the synagogue he reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him that he would remain for a longer time [with them] he did not accede, but bade them farewell, saying, [I must by all means keep the coming feast at Jerusalem]; I will return to you again if God will . . . (Acts 18:18-21).

I think that the comment,

On more than one occasion even Paul judaized to a considerable extent, as at Jerusalem (Acts 26:26) and probably at Cenchrea (Acts 18:18) 95 is correct, whereas a Messianic Jew would see evidence here that Paul did not abandon the law. Details of what was involved are not given but the fact that he did this is recorded in the Scripture. But this was not a case such as the circumcision of Timothy and does not fall under 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

Regarding “[I must by all means keep the coming feast at Jerusalem],” it is in brackets because it is doubtful as being part of the original text though the Textus Receptus includes it. As to the textual matter, W. Kelly’s comments may be consulted; 96 and he notes that even if the words are true,
we do not know that he actually kept the feast.

And why is it that he “must by all means” do so? What was imperative? And if it was imperative to do so according to the law, why did he spend a year and a half at Corinth, and not visit Jerusalem? Well, Dr. Stern notes the fact that the prevailing view of scholars is that the words in brackets were added to the text later.

So, here we appear to have an example of the Apostle’s use of a feast-time for the work of the gospel. Such would be the case in Acts 20:16 also:

for Paul thought it desirable to sail by Ephesus, so that he might not be made to spend time in Asia; for he hastened, if it was possible for him, to be the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem (Acts 20:16).

We recall from Acts 2 how many Jews came to Jerusalem for that time and how it provided opportunity to Peter to preach to the people.

**Paul’s Following the Jewish Advice**

Thou seest, brother, how many myriads there are of the Jews who have believed, and all are zealous of the law. (21) And they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews among the nations apostasy from Moses, saying that they should not circumcise their children, nor walk in the customs. (22) What is it then? a multitude must necessarily come together, for they will hear that thou art come. (23) This do therefore that we say to thee: We have four men who have a vow on them; (24) take these and be purified with them, and pay their expenses, that they may have their heads shaved; and all will know that [of those things] of which they have been informed about thee nothing is [true]; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. (25) But concerning [those of] the nations who have believed, we have written, deciding that they should [observe no such thing, only to] keep themselves both from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. (26) Then Paul, taking the men, on the next day, having been purified, entered with them into the temple, signifying the time the days of the purification would be fulfilled, until the offering was offered for every one of them. (27) And when the seven days were nearly completed, the Jews from Asia, having seen him in the temple, set all the crowd in a tumult, and laid hands upon him (Acts 21:21-27).

This false position into which Paul entered was never fully consummated. As God prevented David from going with the Philistines to battle against Israel, likewise God overruled that just before the act of sacrifice was to take place, Paul’s opposers took hold of him. Blessed be God, Paul was prevented from joining in with the sacrifices to be offered by, apparently, Nazarites, at the end of their vows (Num. 6:14). Agabus’ prophecy (Acts
was true, but in bringing Agabus’ prophecy to fulfilment, God allowed His servant to engage in following that wrong advice of leadership at Jerusalem. We might wonder if Paul reflected on this when, consequently, later in a Roman prison he wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, saying that there was no more sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:18). We might wonder what these leaders thought upon reading that epistle to the Hebrews. Well, their compromising advice was prevented from full realization by God in His governmental ways. How gracious of Him when He stops us from the completion of a course that is not His will. Paul’s going to Jerusalem ended his public service, though God overruled what he did, and brought him to Rome as a prisoner, from where the so-called “prison epistles” were written. Thus, God both marked His displeasure at what His servant did, for which there were consequences, yet He sustained him, brought him to Rome under quite different conditions than Paul originally had hope to see the saints at Rome, and He brought blessing out of it in the inspired writings that issued from that very prison, from the Apostle of the uncircumcision. Indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written from prison telling those addressed to go outside “the camp,” i.e., outside Judaism (Heb. 13:13). God graciously gave this inspired direction before the awful judgment on Jerusalem fell in AD 70, prohibiting further having to do with the temple there. Grace called them to this separation from Judaism before His governmental blow fell on its capital seat. That call of grace to Hebrew believers to separate from “the camp,” followed by that signal blow of His government, is the guide for Hebrew believers ever since.

The appeal of Messianic Judaism to the practice of Hebrew believers before the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to justify what they do in observing Judaism, is contrary to the Word of God. The patience of God, up to that point, regarding those who came from a system once owned by Him, is not to be distorted into justification for its continued practice. Thus, having direction from the Word of God, and in addition His governmental blow against the seat of Judaism, Messianic Judaism stands in contradiction to His Word and His governmental ways. It is a man-made system of contradiction of the Word of God, a system that Judaizes ethnic Hebrew believers. The Messianic Jewish cliche that “you cannot Judaize a Jew” is shown by God’s Word to be false, for that is exactly what is going on. It is far, far removed from merely a “weak brother” in Rom. 14 -- i.e., a Jewish believer in the assembly who is not strong in Christian liberty and has scruples about some things Jewish -- it is a system that is divisive and pretends to special Jewish distinctives having spiritual values that Gentile believers do not have, and claiming the subjection of all Jewish believers to this Judaism.

W. Kelly has written a helpful sketch concerning God’s ways occasioned
by the Apostle’s course. There is much for us to learn in this. He noted the opinion of the Jewish believers at Jerusalem:

◆... they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.” This was a mistake. Such was not the course of the apostle.

What Paul really taught was the impropriety of putting Gentiles under the law: he did not interfere with the Jews at this time, Later a distinct and peremptory message came from the Holy Ghost; but the process of the Lord with them was gradual -- His method with His ancient people I deem of importance for us to learn and imitate. It is perfectly true that it was in the mind of God in due time to bring out fully the deliverance of both Jew and Gentile from the law; but this was not done all at once, at least as regards the Jew. What the apostle set himself decidedly against was the effort to bring the Gentiles under law; and this was precisely what Pharisaic brethren were zealous for. Whether Judaizing Christians or the Gentiles themselves took up the law, the apostle did most resolutely reject and condemn the fatal error. But as regarded the Jews themselves there was the truest forbearance, flowing from, not characteristic largeness of heart only, but tender consideration for scrupulous consciences. If God had not yet sent out the final word that told them the old covenant was ready to vanish away, how could he who so closely followed His ways be hasty? The early days were really a time of transition, where Christ was ministered first to Jew and then to Gentile. The Gentile, never having been under law, was far more simple than the Jew in appreciating the liberty of the gospel. The Jew was tolerated in his prejudices until the closing message came from God, warning them of the danger of apostasy from the gospel through their adhesion to the law.

Having dwelt on this in sketching the epistle to the Hebrews, there is the less reason to say more about it now. But that epistle was to the Hebrew believers the last trumpet which summoned them to renounce all connection with the old system. Up to that time there had been a gradual transition, the gap widening, the difference more pronounced, but still every tie was not broken till this the final call. Such a way strikes me as worthy of our God -- a way which to our precipitate minds might seem somewhat difficult, because we have been mostly trained as Gentiles. Since we have entered into the truth of God more perfectly, we have seen the enormous mischief of bringing in the law and mixing it up with the gospel.

Let us remember then that, whilst the Holy Ghost always maintained liberty for the Gentile, there was unquestionably a time of waiting on the Jew. Even the apostle Paul was no exception to patience with their prejudices. As to the twelve, they seem to have feebly enough entered into this liberty from the law. Doubtless Paul, as being apostle of the Gentiles, called from heaven by the risen Jesus, and witness of sovereign grace, apprehended it after a
different sort and richer measure; but we shall find that even he could warmly sympathize to a great extent with the feelings of a Jew. He is the one to whom, under God, we are indebted for knowing anything about Christianity in its full form and real strength; yet, for all that, it is quite evident that he had, if not Jewish prejudice, certainly the warmest Jewish attachments; and, in point of fact, it was the strength of his affection to the ancient people of God that brought him into the trouble recorded in these concluding chapters of this book, the Acts of the Apostles.

This, we must remember, to a certain extent, may be viewed as an answer to the love found in our blessed Lord Himself; but then there were striking differences. In our Lord, love for Israel was, as all else, perfect: there was not, nor could be, the faintest admixture of a blemish. We know well the bare hint of such a thought would be repulsive to our faith and our love for His person. To the Christian it is impossible to conceive it for an instant. At the same time, we know His love for that people was felt and expressed up to the last. It was His persistent love which brought Him into the circumstances of utter rejection when God’s time was come, and He suffered all the consequence of their hatred (though infinitely more also for sin in atonement, which was His alone). Now the apostle knew what it was to love Israel and suffer for that love. Not only among the Gentiles, but among the saints, the more he loved, the less he was loved. This was true; but, if in general true there, emphatically was it to be verified among the Jews. Thus stands the wonderful fact in the history of the apostle Paul: the very man who brought out the church distinctly, and showed its heavenly character as none other approached; the very man that proved the absolute abolition of the old ties and relations, swallowing up all in Christ exalted to the right hand of God: -- he is the man whose heart retained the strongest attachment of love to the ancient people of God. And I have not the smallest doubt that God gives us in this case a grave but gracious warning of its danger. Were it an apostle, were it the greatest of the apostles, still Paul was not Christ, and what in Christ could be and was absolute perfection, in Paul was not. Yet Paul was a man who puts all that have been since that day into the shade.

If I may express my feelings here, let me say that I felt nothing a greater trial to my own spirit than touching on this very theme. I could not point out any one thing I shrink from more than having the appearance of reflecting on such a servant of Christ. Yet God has written the history of all this, and He has written it surely not for sentiment and silence, but for utterance and common profit. He has written it, no doubt, that we should feel our own great shortcomings, and that we should beware of our spirit in setting up to condemn such an one as the great apostle of the Gentiles.

Still, I repeat, the Holy Ghost has recorded here His own warnings on the one side, and on the other the refusal of the apostle to act on them, if I may venture so to say, though it were through fulness of tender love, and an
ever-burning affection for his brethren after the flesh. Alas! when we think of our faults; when we reflect how little they spring from anything that is lovely; when we recollect how much they are mixed with worldliness, and impatience, and pride, and vanity, and self; when we observe that he was so deeply chastened, and met with such a distressing stop to the world-wide work which God had given him, in what a light do our faults appear! He had a pressure of trial such as few men ever knew beside himself; and, what might embitter it to him, all this the natural effect of slighting the admonitions of the Spirit of God by yielding to his undying love for a people out of whom, after all, he had been divinely separated to the work the Lord had given him to do. God having given us the account, whatever may be one’s own feelings, can it be doubted that we are bound to read, and by grace to seek to understand? Yea, not this only, but may we apply it for the present blessing of our souls, and for our progress in the path of Christ here below, whatever it may be. We may have the smallest possible sphere; but, after all, a saint is a saint, and very dear to God, who magnifies Himself in the least of those that are His.

It is assuredly for our profit and to God’s own glory that the Holy Ghost has written this remarkable appendix to the history -- the onward history -- of the Acts of the Apostles. Here we have a check which brings in new things, the fruit of persisting in going up to Jerusalem spite of the Spirit’s testimony against it. The more blessed the man, the more serious the miss of firm footing. There is one step outside what the Spirit enjoined, whatever may be the mingling of that which is beautiful and lovely; at the same time, it was not the full height, so to speak, of the guidance of the Spirit of God. This exposed the apostle to something more, as it always does; and, indeed, so much the more, because it was such an one as Paul. The same principle is plain in David’s life. The lack of energy, which might have been comparatively a little hurt to another, became the gravest snare to David; and, found out of the path of the Lord, he soon slips into the meshes of the devil. Not that I mean anything in the least degree tantamount in the apostle Paul; far from it; for, indeed, in this case the apostle was mercifully preserved from anything that gave the smallest activity to the corruption of nature. It was simply a defect, as it appears to me, of watching against his own love for Israel, and thus setting aside, consequently, the warnings that the Spirit gave. The tears and appeals seem to have rather stimulated and strengthened his desire, and accordingly this exposed him to what was a snare, not immoral but religious, through listening to others below his own measure. He took the advice of James.

“What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee. We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads” -- what a position for the apostle to find himself in! -- “and all may know that those
things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing.” Without pretending that there was nothing in the previous line of Paul tending to this (cp. Acts 18:18), it is evident that the object was to give the appearance that he was a very good Jew indeed. Was this warrantable, or the whole truth? Was he not a somewhat ambiguous Jew? I believe that, as we have seen, there was an undisguised respect for what once had the sanction of God. And here was just the difference in his case from our blessed Lord’s perfect ways. Up to the cross, we all know, the legal economy or first covenant had the sanction of God; after the cross, in principle it was judged. The apostle surely had weighed and appraised it all; he did not require any man to show him the truth. At the same time there was no small mingling of love for the people; and we know well how it may intercept that singleness of eye which is the safeguard of every Christian man.

The apostle then listens to his brethren about a matter in which he was incomparably more competent to form a sound judgment than any of them. Accordingly he suffers the consequence . . . 97

**Did Nothing Against the People or the Customs of the Forefathers**

Paul answering for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar, have I offended [in] anything (Acts 25:8).

And it came to pass after three days, that he called together those who were the chief of the Jews; and when they had come together he said to them, Brethren, I having done nothing against the people or the customs of our forefathers, have been delivered a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans (Acts 28:17).

In Acts 28:17-29 we have arrived at a momentous juncture. The time of God’s patience with the Jews (and His patience with the Jewish believers’ hanging on to the Temple and the Judaistic system) was rapidly drawing to a close. Paul called to him the responsible Jewish leaders at Rome and told them that he had done nothing against the customs of the forefathers. That was true (though the principles in his teaching would have led Jewish believers to turn from their Judaism -- see Rom. 14 for example). What he somightily, and directly, inveighed against was any effort to bring Gentile believers under the law of Moses. Yes, the practices of the Jewish believers were tolerated; and Paul himself had several lapses in this regard. But the

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time of the destruction of Jerusalem was rapidly approaching. In view of this, God had overruled Paul’s course so that he was now at Rome; and arriving there as a consequence of his rejection at Jerusalem, he now renders a final testimony to the Jews. The turning point had arrived, in the ways of God, to apply Isa. 6:9, 10, in fresh, judicial sentence to the Jews; and to announce to them the words of Acts 28:28, which indicate that the work of God in salvation would predominately be a Gentile work -- though myriads (tens of thousands) of Jews had believed in Christ, besides Gentiles who already had believed.

We must bear in mind that God’s sanction of Jewish worship had been spiritually set aside by the cross, yet God suffered the form of it to continue to AD 70, at which time it was judicially set aside, as the Lord Jesus had said (Matt. 22:7). During the interval between the cross and AD 70, myriads of Jews turned to Christ but not away from the Jewish forms. God bore with it in patience and the Apostle of the uncircumcision did not attack that directly, though he strenuously resisted bringing Gentiles into such a course. But the time to end this anomalous state of affairs was fast approaching. The mass of the Jewish people rejected the Lord Jesus. The judicial sentence against Jerusalem was about to be executed. And so we read in Acts 28 of the change taking place. Moreover, before that judicial sentence against Jerusalem was to be executed, God in grace would send an Epistle to the Hebrews, written by Paul in the Roman prison, that the Hebrews were partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), though their practice showed that they neither understood that nor walked in the good of it. The Epistle to the Hebrews set before them the superiority of everything Christian compared to Judaism, and then in Heb. 13:13, they were told to go outside the camp -- outside Judaism. Thus, they were to leave Judaism.

The thrust of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that they were not any longer to walk before God according to Messianic Judaism, or any other form of Judaism. Judaism had in view an earthly calling. That will be made good to the new Israel under the New Covenant and the new temple, under the order of a new priesthood, the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ. The Hebrew Christians were partakers of the Heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Another prison epistle, Ephesians, made plain the participation of both Jewish and Gentile believers in being lifted out of their former spheres into “one new man” (Eph. 2). The worship of all such believers was properly in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 2:12; 8:2; 10:19-22), not on earth. And, indeed, God removed the earthly sanctuary at Jerusalem shortly after the Epistle to the Hebrews was written.

The destruction of Jerusalem has its place in prophecy. But what we are considering here is the moral bearing of it with respect to the work begun at Pentecost. W. Kelly said:
The worst of man, and the best of God, never came clearly out till the crucifixion of the Savior. The cross of the Lord Jesus was morally the end of probation {the end of the testing of the first man to see if he was recoverable}. The whole of the Old Testament had been given long before that; people who alone were familiar with Law, Psalms and Prophets were indifferent learners of the New Testament. They liked the Old better. They said the old wine was good; and they stuck to it, as the Lord told them when their refusal of Himself came out more and more. It was very fate {sic, late?} when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to set those of them who believed on their proper ground intelligently {about AD 61}. They had been but partially on Christian ground, pretty much as most professing Christians are now. They had only vague notions about the gospel, Christian walk, worship, and hope. All was indistinct, not to say incorrect; and that is the state not only of Christendom, but of the children of God in it. Believers from among the Jews ought to have been teachers when Paul wrote to them his great Epistle. They had to learn better the very elements, “the word of the beginning of Christ.” They had not arrived at “perfection” or full growth, the due and definite truth of Christianity. There was not only a shortcoming, but a veritable muddle in their minds; consequently their conduct as Christians was mixed and vacillating.

Among those who are upright, how much depends upon their real hold of what scripture actually teaches! The Christian Hebrews feebly understood anything distinctive. Without denying that Christ died, rose, and went to heaven, the great truths that came out consequently were not developed as they should be, so characteristically different from what the Old Testament led people to expect. With Christ confessed they looked for everything grand, honored, prosperous, and delightful here below. But how did the cross of Christ and His going away to heaven consist with the expectation of Israel being now at the head of the nations and in the enjoyment of earthly glory? Even believers had that idea still. You will recollect that when the risen Lord was about to go to heaven from the Mount of Olives, they asked, “Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” {Acts 1:6}. They had little idea of the thorough break with Israel; still less that God was bringing in a wholly distinct purpose, and associations new and heavenly. This is what we find very fully in the Epistle to the Ephesians and elsewhere: an absolutely fresh revelation. The believers in Jerusalem were slow to learn. Nor does the Epistle to the Hebrews rise to the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church. Even the heavenly calling therein treated was imperfectly known. Yet it was written late, though somewhat before the destruction of Jerusalem. It speaks of Mosaic Covenant, ritual, system, tabernacle, altar, priest and offering, superseded by what was far better, earthly shadows by the heavenly realities. This was strange not only to the unbelieving Jews but to the Christian remnant. They thought that the old forms were rather to be filled with new power, and that
grace would be given to make them living. 98 They had not realized that the old divine service must pass away, and be succeeded by entirely heavenly things in accordance with Christ seated at the right hand of God on high. He is the truth, and must be brought not only into the heart by faith as He is now exalted, but wrought into the worship of God and into the practice of men that believe as a living reality here and now. 99

What is helpful to understand is God’s bringing to pass a two-pronged, outward breach of Christianity with Judaism. One is doctrinal in character, namely, the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the other is the judicial setting aside of the capital seat of Judaism, AD 70. Moreover, we should observe that God’s judicial act against Jerusalem involved the removal of the assembly at Jerusalem. History records that believers removed from Jerusalem to Pella before the Romans prevented all egress from Jerusalem, but in all such things God was working, and that working of God included that the assembly at Jerusalem should be removed. Concerning this, in introductory thoughts to the book of Revelation J. N. Darby wrote:

The destruction of Jerusalem formed a momentous epoch as to these things, because the Jewish assembly, formed as such at Pentecost, had ceased (nay, it had even before); only the judicial act was then accomplished. Christians had been warned to leave the camp {Heb. 13:13}. The breach of Christianity with Judaism was consummated. Christ could no longer take up the assembly, established in the remnant of the Jews, as His own seat of earthly authority.* But alas! the assembly, as Paul had established it too, had already fallen from its first estate -- could in no sense take up the fallen inheritance of Israel. All seek their own, says Paul, not the things of Jesus Christ. All they of Asia -- Ephesus, the beloved scene where all Asia had heard the word of God -- had forsaken him. They who had been specially brought with full intelligence into the assembly’s place could not hold it in the power of faith. Indeed, the mystery of iniquity was at work before this {2 Thess. 2}, and was to go on and grow until the hindrance to the final apostasy was removed.

* This was morally true from Acts 3, where the Jewish leaders refuse the testimony to a glorified Christ who would return, as they had rejected a humbled One. Acts 7, by the mouth of Stephen, closes God’s dealings with them in testimony, and the heavenly gathering begins, his spirit being received on high. The destruction of Jerusalem closed Jewish history judicially. 100

What we have seen will, of course, be rejected by Messianic Judaism and we

98. {Is not this the false notion at the heart of Messianic Judaism?}
99. The Purpose of God for His Sons and Heirs, Eph. 1: 3-7.
100. Synopsis 5:367, 368 (Stow Hill ed.).
may expect distortion of the Epistle to the Hebrews in order to parry its thrust. Be that as it may, we conclude otherwise than the Messianic Judaistic view that the Apostle Paul remained an observant Jew all his life (even a Pharisee) and that he attended the synagogue on the Sabbath for the Jewish observances.

Paul Was not a Messianic Jew When He Wrote the Epistle to the Galatians

Paul wrote to the assemblies of Galatia, where there was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 1:2, 3; 3:23 - 4:1-7):

(1) Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I, Paul, say to you, that if ye are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) And I witness again to every man [who is] circumcised, that he is debtor to do the whole law. (4) Ye are deprived of all profit from the Christ as separated [from him], as many as are justified by law; ye have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-4).

While this has Gentile believers primarily in view, present day Messianic Jews could learn from it concerning themselves. Surely there were believing Jew among the believing Gentiles in the assemblies in the province of Galatia. Any professed Christian who takes the position of being justified by the law comes under the sentence of v. 4. Nor has Christ died to make up deficits in performance.

The perversion of what God has said in v. 3 is a remarkable thing. Observe:

{Gal. 5:3} This verse from Galatians must be recognized for its far-reaching implications. It suggests that Paul continued to live an observant life even after his experience on the road to Damascus 101

“Suggests”? The Torah-observant position is that Paul, as having once been circumcised in the body was required to keep the law, as such. The title of the book from which that is taken tells the tale. Messianic Jews, abetted by some Gentile Christians, tell us of our necessity to read the NT through Jewish eyes and thus see that it is Jewish. This example shows how it is done. Put your transmuting glasses on! Gal. 5:3 is transmuted into meaning that Paul continued to observe the law all his life.

Perhaps the next example will make more clear what is at work. Mark


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S. Kinzer, after quoting 1 Cor. 7:17-20, Gal. 5:3, and Gal. 5:11, wrote:

When linked together, the first two texts form a striking syllogism.

**Major premise:** All those who are circumcised should remain circumcised (i.e., should affirm their circumcision and its consequences).

**Minor premise:** All who are circumcised are obligated to observe the Torah (i.e., live according to distinctive Jewish practice).

**Necessary conclusion:** All those who are born as Jews are obliged to live as Jews.

With this conclusion established, the third text makes sense (i.e., Gal. 5:11). “Paul was accused by . . . other missionaries of being inconsistent: that although he preached a circumcision-free gospel to the Galatians, he continued to ‘preach circumcision’ among Jews.” *

In other words, Paul urged Jewish Yeshua-believers to live as faithful Jews and Gentile Yeshua-believers to remain non-Jews. His early Jewish opponents found this two-fold message inconsistent and untenable. His later Christian adherents found it incomprehensible.


I do not desire to address the arguments in any detail; but the alert reader will discern that the “conclusion established” by this author is the direct opposite of the passage.

Where it must be admitted that Jews are included as regarding being made dead to the law (Rom. 7:4), such things are explained so as to leave the Messianic Jew alive to the law in some way, and regard Christ as having paid the penalties for breaking it. Christ is added to the law. In this way, Scripture after Scripture is force-fitted into Torah-observant, Messianic Judaism.

“Legalism” also has its new definition -- so as not to mean Torah-observance. Thus:

God’s giving the *Torah* was itself an act of grace which the New Testament compares with His sending Yeshua (Yn 1:17&N). God’s people, the people who are in trust relationship with him are always under grace and under Torah (a gracious subjection) but never under

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102. {How absurd is the Judaizing of this text! As W. Kelly said, *in loco.*, “It is no longer a question of distinctions in the flesh.” Messianic Judaism is the *institutionalizing* of distinctions in the flesh.}


105. {This is another perversion. In John 1:17 it is a contrast.”}
legalism (a harsh subjection).  

So, for Jews in the OT, to be under law was to be under grace, thus for a Messianic Jew to be Torah-observant is grace, not legalism. Such is the defiance of Messianic Judaism to God’s Word. Gal. 4:3 shows that in the OT:

when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world . . .

And 2 Cor. 3:7, speaking of the law, says:

But if the ministry of death, in letters, graven in stone . . .

Dr. Stern’s view is that they were under grace. On and on goes the spinning of the web to catch the Jewish believer, claiming that the NT needs to be looked at through Jewish eyes in order to be rightly understood.

An answer to a question regarding Gal. 3:24, given by W. Kelly, regarding the change from the law, might be helpful here.

Q. -- Is the A. V. [and Revised] “to bring us unto Christ” a correct translation? or does the text mean “until” or “up to” Christ?

A. -- The Geneva V. by the English refugees (1557) seems to have suggested first, in our tongue at least, the words printed in italics. Cranmer’s Bible in 1539 gave merely the literal “unto”; but Tyndale (1534) has “unto the tyme of,” which is in sense equivalent to “until.” So is sometimes added to lend strength or precision; sometimes ἐσ is used alone, as are ἔχρι and μέχρι, as more definite, though each has its own propriety. “Unto,” “for,” or “up to” appears safest, though the temporal meaning is often legitimate, whether an epoch or point as “until” or a period as “for.” But it is even more frequently used ethically for aim, state or effect, and result, as the case may require. So it means here: certainly not “in” Christ, as Wiclif and the Rhemish following the error of the Vulgate: εἰς never really has such a force. Nor is it correct to confound the “child-guide” with the “schoolmaster” or teacher. Even 1 Cor. 4:15 uses the word disparagingly, though the apostle be not contrasting the law as in Gal. 3 with the promise and the gospel. Severe dealing is implied in both, not parental love. The law shut up and kept in ward; but Christ sets free. Law may alarm and distress the soul; it cannot deliver; yet how often God has used it to drive the laboring and heavily burdened to Him Who alone gives rest! a use rather negative than positive; for indeed its ministry is of death and condemnation {2 Cor. 3}. But what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God has done; for He, sending His own Son in likeness of flesh of sin and [as offering] for sin, condemned [not
us, but sin in the flesh {Rom. 8}, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us that walk not after the flesh but the Spirit. Our Savior annulled death and brought to light life and incorruption through the gospel.  

Was Paul, then, a Messianic Jew when he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians? “Yes” can only be said if one takes that book to mean the opposite of what it so plainly teaches.

Chapter 4.2

Acts 20:7: Its Bearing and How It is Judaized

Messianic Judaism is a general designation for numbers of congregations composed mainly of Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Their view of the New Testament (NT) is that it has been distorted by Gentile converts and they are correcting that distortion, showing how “Jewish” the NT really is. And so they find that the NT (viewed through the distorting lens of their Jewish presuppositions) actually supports their Judaism, including observation of Jewish feasts. They are Sabbath observers and hold their services on the seventh day. They meet in synagogues (Gentile believers are welcome). The NT is made to support these things. Thus “the Lord’s Supper” held by early Christians on the first day of the week, is turned into something observed on the seventh day of the week.108

Acts 20:7 refers to the great, central privilege that the Christian has of remembering the Lord Jesus in His death for us, on the first day of the week, the day on which He rose from among the dead:

And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread . . . (Acts 20:7).

Let us consider some extracts from an article by W. J. Hocking that appeared in three installments in The Bible Treasury.

Breaking Bread at Troas

by W. J. Hocking

It is of no inconsiderable importance to seek to arrive at a clear understanding, not only of the real intention of the saints at Troas, but of God’s mind in the record of their assembling together on the occasion made memorable by the presence of the great apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 20:7).

For the practice of the early saints recorded thus by inspiration affords a certain guide for the observance of the church from that time onward; because in as far as their example is approvingly cited by the Holy Ghost, so far may saints follow with boldness and confidence . . .

And on the first [day] of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed to them, about to depart on the morrow, and prolonged the word till midnight 109 (Acts 20:7).

What is the teaching of this Scripture and its context as to the breaking of bread? Was it the general usage of the disciples to assemble on every first day of the week to break bread? In other words, had the breaking of bread such a paramount claim upon the disciples that it was the specific object before them in gathering together? On the other hand, was the breaking of bread deemed by them of such minor importance that the presence of Paul was a sufficient pretext for setting it in the background in favour of the apostle’s ministry? The latter view is held by the apologists of ecclesiastical tradition, as well as by the upholders of all but universal modern practice; both of whom unite to rob the Scripture before us of its plain unequivocal meaning by using it to place the Lord’s Supper in a subordinate position utterly unknown to either the Gospels or the Epistles. We do not now speak of those who pervert it into a sacrifice for the living and the dead, and the accompanying horrors of that unbelieving and superstitious system.

Let us consider the interesting and instructive circumstances of the breaking of bread at Troas, and notice the unobtrusive way in which they are woven into the texture of the narrative.

The voyage of the party from Philippi occupied five days (Acts 20:6). This was probably longer than it might have been calculated that the vessel would take. At any rate we know that, when they crossed into Europe on a former occasion, the journey between the same towns was accomplished in two days only (Acts 17:11,12). The extension of the two days to five proves pretty conclusively, that in this instance the progress of the ship must have been considerably hindered by contrary winds or the like, to account for the wide difference.

It would appear that the party landed in Troas during the latter part of the first day of the week, or the early part of the second; for they abode in that place seven days (Acts 20:6), which brought them to the next first day of the week. The fact of this lengthened stay is highly significant.

For what reason did Paul protract his stay in Troas at a time when, as we know, he was hastening if possible to be at Jerusalem by the day of

Pentecost (Acts 20:16)? He deliberately avoided Ephesus because he would not be delayed on his journey. Yet here at Troas he spends no less than seven days. And it was immediately after leaving Troas that he asked the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus, a distance of thirty miles, that no time might be lost. Are we not bound to gather from these facts, that some important consideration was of sufficient weight with the apostle to cause him to tarry so long in Troas?

But the narrative supplies another circumstance which sheds considerable light on the motives of Paul and his companions. When the first of the week did come and the disciples had broken bread together, the apostle was so unwilling to lose another moment that, though he spent the whole of the night in the company of the saints, he set off (we are told) at break of day on foot to Assos. It is clear therefore that Paul remained the seven days in order to be present at the meeting of the church in Troas.

That the period of this stay should be just seven days and no more could hardly escape comment. And it is the more to be remarked upon, since we find the mention of the same period at a later stage of this very journey to Jerusalem, and in like manner immediately followed by the departure of the travelers. Luke records that at Tyre,

finding disciples, we tarried there seven days.

And when we had accomplished these days, we departed and went our way (Acts 21:4, 5).


we came the next day to Puteoli, where we found brethren; and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome" (Acts 28:13, 14).

This then is the third recorded occasion in the Acts when Paul and his company after a sea voyage remain in the place of landing with the saints just seven days, and then at once recommence their journey.

The explanation that lies on the face of the narrative in Acts 20 supplies the key to the other cases, since no other is given, and the ground or motive is constant. The travelers through unexpected delays on the voyage landed at Troas just too late to join the usual weekly assemblage of the disciples to break bread. In order therefore to partake with them of the customary eucharistic remembrance of Christ, it was necessary to stay a week for the next occurrence.

There would be no such necessity to tarry until the first of the week in order to discourse to them. Of this he could and doubtless did avail himself as far as it was practicable on other days: so we know he subsequently did with the Ephesian elders. But the object of gathering at Troas, &c., was
certainly not to hear Paul, though this was of deep interest and a very sufficient reason at other times for such as could be gathered. Here the standing or habitual purpose is expressly declared to have been “to break bread.”

At the same time it is noticeable that the purpose is stated without special emphasis or any word of enlargement. This indicates the all-importance, not the unimportance, of the motive of the disciples in so assembling. It attests not only the veracity of the historian but the divine design of the history to those that seek the truth. For there stands written the instructive fact that breaking of bread on the first day was the then established and regularly recognized institution of the Lord for the assembled saints in the apostolic age.

It therefore appears from the account in Acts 20 that the saints on that particular occasion came together in their ordinary and customary manner for the purpose of breaking bread on the first of the week . . .

It must however be observed that the first of the week affords the most suitable occasion on which to celebrate this feast. What can be more fitting than that the Lord’s Supper should be eaten on the Lord’s day? To both the supper and the day the Lord has prefixed His title in a distinctive way, thus marking them out as His in a special sense (1 Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:10). If the use of this term (κυριακά) elevates the supper above any ordinary meal, as the apostle argues in 1 Cor. 11, contrasting the “Lord’s supper” with “their own supper,” it is none the less true that the Lord’s day is in a similar manner distinguished from every other day of the week. Notably it was upon this day that the Lord arose. How salutary therefore that the joyful associations of His resurrection should be mingled with and tempered by the solemn remembrance of His death. It was also upon the first day of the week that the Lord twice appeared to the apostles when gathered together (John 20:19, 26); while upon the same day of the week the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost to form and indwell the church of God on earth. So that there is no lack of reason for the settled custom of breaking bread on the Lord’s day as shown to exist at Troas.

So much for the occasion or time upon which it was usual for them to gather together; let us now consider their intention in so assembling. This is lucidly and definitely expressed in the scripture before us,

and on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed to them.

Their professed object is thus specifically declared to have been “to break bread.” And this is stated without word or comment, which would certainly have been added had there been anything peculiar in this celebration.

It is well to note that, though Paul himself was there, his presence was
not allowed to overshadow the claims of the Lord. For it was avowedly
the breaking of bread that brought them together, showing what supreme control
it had over their hearts, and that even the ministry of the great apostle
himself ranked but as a secondary matter. No doubt the bulk of the saints
were there; and after announcing the Lord’s death, advantage was taken by
Paul to discourse to them in a farewell fashion, “being about to depart on the
morrow.”

It cannot but be believed that, in the previous week, the active and
zealous servant of Christ used every opportunity to impart the truth to the
brethren both in public and in private. But now he was on the point of
leaving them -- perhaps to see their faces no more. And the apostle loved
them every one as a father loves his children. As he spoke, his heart swelled
with that tender anxiety for their spiritual welfare peculiarly characteristic
of Paul; so that he prolonged the word till midnight. Blessed season of
refreshing without doubt! But the Holy Ghost is particular to record the facts
in such a way as to leave it unmistakable that the saints, without in the least
undervaluing apostolic gift, met together, not to hear the farewell discourse,
but to break bread.

But another point deserves consideration. The correct reading, without
question, is as already quoted, “when we were gathered together” &c., not
“when the disciples came together” &c. The emendation is by no means
unimportant and rests on ample authority. The action of gathering together
is not referred to the local saints only, but the expression implies that the
visitors also joined. Paul and his company were as much concerned in the
assembling together as the disciples in Troas. In the revised form of the text
there is not the slightest ground for the unworthy assumption that the band
of laborers were themselves relieved from the responsibility, not to say
privilege, of breaking bread, nor for the equally baseless inference that the
Lord’s Supper is a mere matter of local arrangement. On the contrary, the
coming together was the united action of the whole assembly of God in
Troas including the travelers . . .

In Acts 20:7 therefore, as it stands in the corrected text, it is taught
that it was the established custom of the assembly of God to come together
on the first of the week for the express purpose of breaking bread. The
words can mean nothing else; for none will seriously contend that “we”
includes only Luke and those with him and that it was the party of travelers
who came together to break bread, while the others gathered to hear Paul’s
discourse.

It has already been noted that the gathering together of the saints at
Troas (Acts 20:7) was the united action of the assembly in that town. And
the phraseology employed is such as indicates a common and habitual
custom of the church of God. This indication is certainly obscured in our
ordinary version through the use of the third person for the first. But the revised and other critical translations restore the true force of the passage by rendering a better text “when we were gathered together to break bread” (v. 7), and again, “in the upper chamber where we were gathered together” (v. 8).

These words are sufficiently precise to establish that we have here a spontaneous action in concert of the assembly; while not a syllable implies that they were specially summoned to hear Paul’s parting instructions and exhortations. In further confirmation of this view, it may be not without profit and interest to refer briefly to similar expressions used in this very book.

The assembly in Jerusalem was certainly not specially convoked on the occasion recorded in Acts 4:31. On the contrary it was so much the habitual arrangement for them to be together at that particular time, that Peter and John, on being dismissed with threats by the Jewish council, went direct to their own company where united prayer was made to God.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together (συνηγμένοι as in Acts 20:7, 8: cf. Acts 4:31).

In contra-distinction from this instance of formal and customary meeting we find that, when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch after their tour of service in the gospel, they “gathered the church together” and “rehearsed all that God had done with them” (Acts 14:27). Again, when Barnabas and Paul with Judas and Silas returned to the same place with a certain communication from the assembly at Jerusalem, it states “when they all gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle” (Acts 15:30). In like manner, Paul calls together the Ephesian elders to Meletus (Acts 17:17).

Here then are three instances of special gatherings of the saints by invitation, and each is distinguished by that form of expression we might expect from the stated and usual gatherings of the saints in their corporate capacity.

At Troas therefore we are undoubtedly taught that the visitors gathered together along with the whole assembly to break bread, just as Barnabas and Paul had previously done for a whole year at Antioch (Acts 11:26); and those who deny this wrest the scripture to the damage of their own souls and of the souls of others.

But turning to another kind of perversion of the truth there are those who will have it that breaking of bread has reference to the love-feast or the

110. Such as Bengel in loco, “Itaque credibile est, fractione pantis hic denotari convivium discipulorum cum eucharistia conjunctum, praeertim quum esset tam solennis valedictio.”
social meal eaten by the early Christians and not to the Lord’s supper except as a minor adjunct; but not so those who are bound by the clear and unequivocal language of scripture.

The usage of the phrase “breaking of bread” in the Acts is surely convincing in itself. Speaking of the Pentecostal assembly, the record is

and they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers (Acts 2:42).

This use of the term along with “the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” and the “prayers” forbids our reducing the breaking of bread to common social intercourse or even the lovefeast. Indeed it is expressly distinguished from ordinary meals in the verses that follow.

And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people (vv. 46, 47).

So that breaking of bread cannot be confounded with eating meat on this occasion; and it is the evident intention of the Spirit that they should not be so confounded.

In the passage, Acts 20, the same distinction is maintained. In v. 11, after the Eutychian episode, Paul returned to the upper chamber, broke the bread, ate, and conversed till break of day. This does not sound like the Eucharist as it is often supposed to be, which is invariably referred to as the action of the whole assembly. Compare v. 7, “when we come together to break bread”; and 1 Cor. 10:16, “The bread which we break.” But in v. 11 it is Paul who breaks the bread, as he does in Acts 27:35, after the fourteen days’ fast on ship-board. Here the apostle, after his discourse and before his long journey which was to commence at dawn, partakes of the

111. “The bread . . . points to the Eucharist” says Canon Cook on this passage in the *Speakers Commentary*. London, 1880. [The article {the} has no such force there if anywhere, being inserted or omitted on its regular principles. If the writer present aught objectively before the mind, the article is used; if predicatively, it is withheld. “The” bread in Matt. 26:26, if rightly read, would have meant what was there on the table; but the best edd. with the best MSS have it not, which then conveys simply that the Lord took “bread.” So it is in Mark 14:22, Luke 19:19, and 1 Cor. 11:23. It is yet more pertinent to notice that in Acts 2 where the Lord’s supper is twice referred to (42, and 43), one statement has, while the other has not the article. Our English usage here is like the Greek. We speak of “the breaking of bread” when it was a supper to make Himself known, not the Eucharist. Indeed it is expressly distinguished from ordinary meals in the verses that follow. Ver. ll simply shows that, after the incident, Paul made a meal of “the” bread. It was the same loaf; but γεύσεως would not be used of the Eucharist, nor would the singular follow that solemn act. On the other hand we see “the breaking of the bread” employed, and “the breaking of the bread” as the phrase (Luke 24:30, 32) where it was a supper to make Himself known, not the Eucharist. In every way the statement of Canon Cook and of others too is indefensible. *Ed., B.T. [W. Kelly]*].

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loaf to satisfy his hunger; so that eating in this case is not participating in the feast of remembrance, but taking a meal as in Acts 10:10; in connection with which “conversing” is appropriately used, in distinction from the more formal discourse that had gone before.

Page’s note on the passage therefore is quite groundless.

They had come together “to break bread”; this would have taken place naturally at the end of Paul’s discourse but for the interruption; he now therefore resumes the interrupted order of the meeting by breaking the bread.

This comment contains at least two assumptions which are without the slightest scriptural warrant. He assumes (1) that although the saints came together expressly to break bread, the act of remembrance was as a matter of course put aside for the purpose of listening to Paul’s farewell discourse; so that, according to such exposition, to eat the Lord’s supper was but a nominal reason for gathering. And it was quite “natural” too for the feast to be supplanted by ministry of the word, not necessarily introductory to the solemn observance, but as in this case a final charge in view of the apostle’s immediate departure! Such a theory is without the support of a single word of scripture. It is never of the Spirit of God to displace the claims of the Lord by the claims of the church, or of the very foremost of the apostles. If the ministry of Paul was needful to the saints, the breaking of bread was due to the Lord. Nor would the apostle himself be a party to setting aside in any way what he had insisted upon in his recent epistle to the Corinthians.

He could find no word of praise for the assembly at Corinth in respect of their observance of the feast; indeed he sharply rebukes them for the very thing for which misguided men contend as the truth. For it was at Corinth not at Troas where we find the saints allowing social intercourse to stultify if not to destroy the solemn character of the remembrance of the Lord.

What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? (1 Cor. 11:22).

They truly came together in one place, but it was not (in effect) to eat the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 11:20). For, although their professed object in gathering was as at Troas to eat the Lord’s supper, on account of the flagrant disorders that prevailed that object was nullified. So that, as the apostle tells them, they came together “not for the better but for the worse” (ibid).

It is true that there were in the young Corinthian assembly the excesses of drunkenness and gluttony but the principle enforced is that the Lord’s desire on the night in which He was betrayed is paramount to all besides. And this principle effectually disposes of every human arrangement that


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tends to enfeeble the transcendent claims of the Lord’s supper, whether it be
an agape or a liturgy or a sermon apostolic (or otherwise).

The second assumption in the quotation made above is (2) that as a
matter of course Paul breaks the bread -- that is, in an official capacity. This
likewise is without scriptural support. We have seen that the reference is to
eating to appease hunger, and not to the feast of remembrance at all
(v. 11) . . .

The truth is that the breaking of bread is the action of the whole
assembly of saints at which the Lord and none else presides, not even Paul
or Peter. For the same one who declared himself not one whit behind the
very chiefest of the apostles also confessed himself as less than the least of
all saints. When it was a question of communicating the truth of God, he did
so as an apostle and a prophet, as a teacher and a preacher. When it was a
question of remembering the Lord he mingled with the rest. But it was the
carnal desire for formalism that introduced the figment of ministerial
administration in sub-apostolic days to the immeasurable loss of all
concerned. What the Lord designed to bring the souls of His own in contact
with Himself (“This do in remembrance of Me”), man thus perverts by
setting up a medium between the soul of the saint and the One he
remembers. Surely every child of God should resist such an innovation and
all else that would hinder or mar the true character of the hallowed
fellowship at the table of the Lord.

W. J. H.

[NOTE. Is it not instructive to notice that the correction of abuse (which the
apostle effected by recalling the Lord’s supper in its true order, aim, and
character as revealed expressly to himself) is introduced and closed, before
the subject of the Holy Spirit and of His varied action in gift is entered on?
No one would think of so treating either the one or the other according to the
traditional practice of Christendom. For men are apt unconsciously to read
and interpret scripture according to their ecclesiastical habits day by day. It
is clear that God has written His word so as to be a standard of truth, to let
us know what His mind was from the beginning, and thus to counteract that
slipping away from His will, which is even more easy and inveterate in the
Christian profession than it was in the previous Jewish one. The leveling of
God’s order is religious rebellion. This was at work actively at Corinth
against the apostle himself. Similar evils have developed more and more to
this day. All the more are the faithful called to own and honor His good
pleasure.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets,
thirdly teachers, &c. God has not abdicated His rights. But this other weighty matter is
distinctly and designedly separated from the due and divinely appointed celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The disorder therein was not made the charge of elders even, or of any other official, but pressed home on the conscience and spiritual feelings of the saints themselves. Meanwhile the Lord, Whom they forgot, did not forget to chasten the guilty that they might not be condemned with the world.

The fact is that few of God’s children are conscious how great and wide the departure is from the only standard of authority. Thus do we often hear of the church teaching this or that. How opposed to scripture! The church is taught and never teaches. The word of God comes to the church, and to all the church (not to one only), never from it: and for this God employs His servants. It is ministerial work, not at all the church’s place. But the Lord’s supper is essentially the church’s feast, wherein ministers, however eminent, merge as saints, and the Lord alone is exalted in the communion of His infinite love and the incalculable indebtedness of each and all to His death.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not communion with the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread  (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).

Sin once leveled all where difference vanished; so does grace now in the remembrance of Him. It is good and right to own the Lord in every servant He sends; it is as least as good, if not better still, even here below to enjoy that blessed and holy supper, where such distinctions disappear in remembering Him Who died for our sins, and Who deigns to give His real presence in our midst.

[Ed. B. T. {W. Kelly}]. 113

Further Remarks on the First Day of the Week

One would think that in Acts 20:7, “the first day of the week,” is plain enough for anyone to understand. One would think that “the first day of the week” means something different than “seventh day of the week.” The Messianic Jew, Dr. David Stern, wrote:

But what was meant by “the first day of the week”? (p. 297)

This is really an unbelieving question. He does not want it to mean exactly what the words explicitly state. He really wants it to be the seventh day, the Sabbath. He is a Sabbath-keeper and therefore undermines the Lord’s day. In Acts 20:7 we see what the practice of the early Christians was and this

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sets aside a major element of Messianic Judaism, and so the text must be
Judaized, transmuted into the seventh day. It hardly seems credible that
persons do such things, but this has had a long history among non-Jews also.
So he discusses whether Saturday night is meant or Sunday night is meant.
The fact is that it does not matter because the text explicitly states:

And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread . . .
(Acts 20:7).

What night it was is not the issue. The issue is: what day of the week did
they assemble to break bread? Whatever night it was, it was the first day of
the week, not the seventh day. If it had been the seventh day, the text would
have said:

And the seventh day of the week, we being assembled to break bread.

Had that been said, it would be pressed that that is what the text explicitly
states. But it explicitly states otherwise and so Messianic Judaism will not
have it that way. He says:

In various places this commentary notes the Christian Church’s
tendency to expunge Jewish influences, and I think an instance arises
when the present verse is understood to refer to Sunday night (p. 298).

He claims that “the Christian Church” has expunged Jewish influence in this
text. The inverse is true. Judaizing Messianic Judaism is influencing his
mind to place the Jewish Sabbath into the text. And this is a remarkable
sample of the thrust of his whole book. It represents a major, systematic,
Judaizing distortion of the NT. Acts 20:7, he says, in effect, refers to the
seventh day. Thus we see that in this system, no text will stand in the way
of the program of Messianic Judaism.

We may quite assuredly understand Acts 20:7 to refer to “the first day
of the week”! The Spirit of God expressly directed us to which day of the
week it was that the disciples broke bread, but this does not suit the
Judaizing. Not surprisingly, he thinks that Rev. 1:10 means the Day of the
Lord (of Jehovah). That conveniently gets rid of any connection of “the
Lord’s day” being the first day of the week. Let us hear a little more of his
reasoning on Acts 20:7:

A Saturday night meeting would continue the God-oriented spirit of
Shabbat, rather than require believers to shift their concern from
workaday matters, as would be the case on Sunday night.

I do not find the New Testament commanding a specific day of the
week for worship. There can be no objection whatever to the practice
adopted later by a Gentile-dominated Church of celebrating “the Lord’s
Day” on Sunday, including Sunday night; but this custom must not be
read back into New Testament times. On the other hand, Messianic
Jews who worship on Saturday night rather than Sunday can find
warrant for their practice in this verse (p. 298).
First, he has rejected the statement of the Holy Spirit in favor of his own reasoning; namely, that Scripture teaches that the practice of the early disciples was:

And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread . . .
(Acts 20:7).

Do you really have trouble understanding so simple a sentence? Dr. Stern’s Judaizing alchemy cannot transmute the Spirit’s statement into the seventh day of the week. He has read his desire into the text; and necessarily so, otherwise a main pillar of his system is gone. No one found the seventh day in the text and read “the first day of the week” back into the text. Really, this is pitiable and distressing. To allege that Messianic Jews have warrant from Acts 20:7 to have the Lord’s supper on the Sabbath is as utterly absurd as to say that breaking bread on “the first day of the week” has been read back into this text when the text states that:

And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread . . .
(Acts 20:7).

Regarding a “Saturday night meeting,” if we suppose this was in the dark hours of our Saturday night, that would actually be the start of a new day if Luke was using Jewish time where the day is from sunset to sunset. If this is the case, then it was, from the Jewish reckoning of time, the first day of the week.

Second, where and when did the Spirit of God authorize him to pronounce that “There can be no objection whatever to the practice adopted later by a Gentile-dominated Church . . .”? when, according to him, such a practice is not found in Scripture. Messianic Jews have warrant, he alleges, from Acts 20:7 for a Sabbath celebration of “the Lord’s supper,” but it is alright for others to do so on a different day -- without God’s warrant, but he gives his permission. When did God authorize him to be generous with His matters? Is that faithful stewardship? (1 Cor. 4:1, 2).

Third, what is his Scripture authority for speaking of some as “celebrating ‘the Lord’s Day’ on Sunday,” when he holds that Rev. 1:10 refers to the day of Jehovah spoken of by the OT prophets? -- thus eliminating from the NT any reference to “the Lord’s day.” On Rev. 1:10, see below.

Fourth, his words, “whatever the practice adopted later by a Gentile-dominated Church,” are false for two reasons:

1. His words assume his false view of Acts 20:7; and thus, with the truth of the early practice in the apostolic days transmuted into Sabbath observance, he incorrectly states that the Lord’s day observance “was a practice adopted later by a Gentile-dominated Church.”

2. The historical record was fully and carefully reviewed by the ex- Seventh
Day Adventist, D. M. Canright, in his chapter, “Why Christians keep Sunday,” tracing back to Justin Martyr (AD 140) and Barnabas (AD 120) to John on Patmos (AD 95) and the early disciples (Acts 20:7) the observance of the Lord’s day. \(^{114}\)

The practice of the observance of the first day of the week, then, is an unbroken chain from the apostolic era to the present. Yes, Paul used the occasion of the Sabbath day in his evangelizing (Acts 13:14-43, 44-52). This does not prove the notion that Paul was a Sabbath-keeper, or that he partook of the Lord’s supper on the Sabbath. The allegation that it does prove that rather indicates the lack of evidence to prove what is alleged.

**The Lordly Day and the Lordly Supper**

**THE LORD’S DAY IS NOT THE DAY OF THE LORD**

Dr. Stern alleges that Rev. 1:10 speaks of the day of the Lord. W. Kelly remarked:

I am aware that the late Dr. S. R. Maitland, followed by a very few others, ventured to deny that the expression ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ refers to “the Lord’s day,” and to argue that it means “the day of the Lord,” into which he supposed the prophet was carried forward in spirit. The fact is, however, that, first, the expression is pointedly distinct from the prophetic phrase, ἡμέρα κυρίου with or without the article (for it is used either way according to the exact shade of thought intended); secondly, it is the form constantly and regularly used from the earliest ages to express, according to Christian feeling, the first day of the week, as Jews would say, or Sunday, as Gentiles said. Hence Justin Martyr, wishing to defend Christians and their faith before heathen, uses their term, but in a sort of apologetic way, τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λειμόμενη ἡμέρα. (Apol. i. 67, ed. Otto, 1842, i. 268-270). Where no such motive operated, the phrase of St. John is employed, as in the alleged Epistles of Ignatius to Magnesians, ix., μηκέτι σαββατιζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακήν ζωήν ζώντες; so also in Clem. Alex. Strom. v. vii. 12; in Iren. Fragm. vii., ed. Bened. 342, and in Euseb. H.E. iv. 23, 26; v. 23. There is no need to multiply later references, nor to prove that it was so understood by the Latins or by those who spoke in other tongues. It is as certain as any such matter can be that the meaning is “the Lord’s day,” and nothing else. \(^{115}\)
DISPARAGING THE LORD’S DAY

The effect of Sabbath-keeping is the disparagement of the Lord’s day. It is worse than that, but it has that effect. W. Kelly wrote:

For the “Lord’s day” is not at all the same thing as the day of the Lord (ήμέρα Κυρίων).” The same expression (κυριακός) was used with regard to the Lord’s supper, because it was not a common meal, but a holy and divinely instituted memorial of the Lord. So the Lord’s day is not a common day, but one specially set apart, not as a command, but as the expression of the highest privilege, for the worship of the Lord. The sabbath was the last day which Jehovah claimed out of man’s week; the Lord’s day is the first day of God’s week, and in a sense, we may say, of His eternity. The Christian begins with the Lord’s day, that this may as it were give a character to all the days of the week. In spirit the Christian is risen, and every day belongs to the Lord. Therefore is he to bring up the standard of each day that follows in the week to that blessed beginning -- the Lord’s day. To bring down the Lord’s day to the level of another day only shows how gladly the heart drinks in anything that takes away somewhat from Christ. The man who only obeys Christ because he must do so has not the spirit of obedience at all. We are sanctified not only to the blood of sprinkling, but to the obedience of Jesus Christ — to the obedience of sons under grace, not to that of mere servants under law. The lawlessness which despises the Lord’s day is hateful; but that is no reason why Christians should destroy its character by confounding the Lord’s day, the new creation-day, with the sabbath of nature or of the law.

The Lord’s supper is the Lordly supper and the Lord’s day is the Lordly day. It was even the day to which the Apostle directed the saints to prepare their giving of their substance unto the Lord (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). Indeed, the sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of giving are found together in Heb. 13:15, 16. This does not surprise those who know what the words “the first day of the week” in Acts 20:7 mean. Actually, anyone who has learned to count knows what “first” is and that it does not mean “seventh.”

116. We do not accept the spiritual alchemy of Christendom that transmutes the Sabbath into the Lord’s day so that the Christian is to keep the Sunday-Sabbath. This comes from theology that wants to apply the 10 commandments to the believer and therefore having to account for the entire 10, the Christian theological alchemist spiritually alchemizes the seventh day into the first day. It is Judaizing! The Christian is dead to the law (Rom. 7:4), not under law (Gal. 5:18), but he is under the law of the Christ (Gal. 6:2) and is to walk according to the rule of the new creation, whether he is a believing Gentile or one of the Israel of God (an ethnic Jew who is saved). See Gal. 6:15, 16. Both are to walk according to the rule of the new creation.

Several Feasts of Jehovah
Point to the First Day of the Week

The Lord’s day, the first day of the week, was the day Christ fulfilled the type of waving of the first fruits waved before Jehovah on the next day after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:11) by rising from among the dead on the day after the weekly Sabbath. Pentecost was also the day after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:15, 16). Thus was linked together the day of Christ’s resurrection and the day on which the omnipresent Spirit came in a special capacity, sent from both the Father and the exalted Christ consequent upon His exaltation in glory, come to form the body of Christ (John 16:13; Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13). This points to a new order of testimony (the two wave-loaves, made of the same grain as the sheaf of the first-fruits, Lev. 23) before God takes up Israel in the future when He brings them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20). Israel is not now, nor are Christians, in the bond of the covenant. The New Covenant is for the new Israel when they have the new priesthood under the new Melchizedec order of Christ when He is priest upon His throne and builds the new temple (Zech. 6:13).

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Where the Messianic Judaizing of the Lord’s Day and the Lord’s Supper May Lead

In a book by Barney Kasdan, a leader of “one of the largest Messianic {professed Jewish Christians} congregations in the world,” we read:

How often one should celebrate the “Lord’s supper” has been debated. The key phrase for understanding the answer is contained in 1 Corinthians 11:26: . . . Some churches interpret this to mean as often as you drink a ceremonial cup. That could be every Sunday, once a month or any other designated time of celebration. My personal view is that the most natural interpretation from the context is to partake of the cup every Passover . . . Our Messianic congregation celebrates the Lord’s supper every year at our Passover Seder.

The “most natural interpretation” is nothing less than blatant eisegesis (placing into the text) to force Judaism into such Scriptures. As someone said:

Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
Things that are put there by you and by me.

The taking of what some call the Lord’s supper once a year even on a first day of the week is very deplorable. But here, even the day itself is switched to suit Judaizing, their “service” being held on whatever day of the week Passover may fall. In Rom. 14, the weak brother is one who has scruples about some things Jewish, scruples concerning some things from a system once sanctioned by God for the first man (in the persons of the Jews) while under trial. With that, patience is called for. Not so with this most reprehensible Judaizing. It is not a scruple, or a mistake. It is part of a Judaistic system, warned against in Gal. 4:10. There is but one day, and one day only, presented in Scripture for the Christian. It is the Lord’s day, the first day of the week, the day upon which He rose from among the dead. Just imagine how it would be brought forward by supporters of this Judaizing if the apostle had written, “I became in [the] Spirit on the Passover.” But I do not say that all Messianic Jews do this.

Mitch Glaser, “minister-at-large with Jews for Jesus, San Francisco,” misused Gal. 2:24 and Col. 2:16-17 this way:

The feasts and laws of the Lord were a tutor (Galatians 3:24) to lead the Israelites to the Savior. The apostle Paul described the Hebrew calendar as a “mere shadow” of what was to come . . . (Colossians 2:16-17). The apostle was not condemning those Jewish Christians who wished to continue celebrating the Jewish holidays. Rather Paul

asserted that the festivals lead to Christ.\textsuperscript{120}

None of this quotation is true. Let us read the passage itself:

But before faith came, we were guarded under law, shut up to faith [which was] about to be revealed. So that the law has been our tutor up to Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith. But faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor; for ye are all sons by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:23-25).

The law was not for the purpose to lead Israel to Christ. That is not the teaching in these verses. The law was a tutor \textit{up to} a certain point. The law is no longer that tutor. \textit{Faith} has come. That is, a new way of God’s dealing with man has been introduced. The tutor has been displaced. The law said \textit{do} and \textit{do not}. Faith says \textit{Christ has done} what I need for salvation. This is appropriated by faith. Col. 3:16-17 says:

Let none therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in matter of feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.

The writer must think this is the apostle’s authorization to engage in those things. The writer wants it that way, because he wants the shadow. He may say that he has “the body” also; but as the shadow is used, it affects the apprehension of the body -- which has displaced the shadow. The fact is the apostle is here condemning the use of the shadows. The way to have no one judge him (of Judaizing) is for him to avoid the use of the shadows.

W. Kelly remarked:

Verse 16 deals with a Judaizing character of evil.\textsuperscript{121}

“The body [is] of Christ” means that He has brought in a new order to which those shadows point. It is true that there is something also for the new Israel under the New Covenant, which covenant will be put into force in God’s appointed time for Israel in the future, when Messiah reigns before His ancients in glory. Meanwhile, Jewish converts need to take their place in a practical way with the order in force now, just as Gentile converts need to do.

\textsuperscript{120} The Fall Festivals of Israel, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 11 (1987).

\textsuperscript{121} The Bible Treasury 6:102
Part 5: Messianic Judaism and Paul’s Epistles

Chapter 5.1

Judaizing Paul’s Warnings Against Jewish Observances

Col. 2:16, 17: Its Bearing; and the Distortion of It by Messianic Judaism

Let none therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in matter of feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of good things to come; but the body [is] of Christ (Col. 2:16, 17).

The Structure of Colossians

The First Part: Col. 1: Sets out the fulness in the Firstborn from among the dead reconciling us to Itself through Paul’s gospel and placing Christ in us, the hope of glory (the mystery). Paul, minister of his gospel, brings us to the Father and into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Col. 1:1-8: Concerns faith, love, and hope, bearing fruit.
Col. 1:9-14: Concerns growing by the true knowledge of God.
Col. 1:15-23: Concerns the glory of the Head and its results.
A. The glory of two headships:
   (1) The creator and sustainer of all, as Man He is the firstborn of all creation -- HEAD of creation -- and,
   (2) is also firstborn from among the dead --
HEAD of the body.

B. The glory of two reconciliations:
Moreover, He in Whom all the FULNESS was pleased to dwell is the Reconciler:
(1) of creation eventually; and,
(2) already of the Colossians: who are holy, unblameable, and irreproachable before the FULNESS:

C. The glory of two ministries:
(1) (v. 23) according to Paul’s gospel; and,
(2) (vv. 24-29) Paul, minister of the assembly, completer of the Word, making known the mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The Second Part:  

Col. 2 - 3:4: The subject is the Christian’s completeness in Christ in Whom the FULNESS dwells bodily.

Col. 2:1-7: The full knowledge of the mystery of God produces a walk consistent with it.

Col. 2:8-15 We are complete in Him in Whom all the fulness dwells -- circumcised in His death; buried; raised; quickened together with Him; the law’s sentence against us taken out of the way; He in triumph over principalities and authorities.

Col. 2:16-23: Therefore, being complete in Christ and holding fast the Head:

Col. 2:16-19: Paul allows of no ordinances (vv. 16, 17) or intermediaries (vv. 18, 19), between the Christian and the Head;

Col. 2:20-23: And, if dead with Christ from the elements of the world, why act as alive in the world, practicing asceticism?

Col. 3:1-4: Rather, seek the things above where our life is hidden.
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The Third Part: Col. 3:5 - 4:

There are practical consequences of the doctrinal unfoldings of Paul’s gospel and the mystery that Christ is in us, the hope of glory.

Col. 3:5 - 4:1: Our consequent practical state and relationships governed by the new man in us.

Col. 5-11: Having put off the old man and having put on the new man. V. 5 is corruption; v. 8 is violence.

Col. 12-17: How Christ, the new man, Who is in us, exhibits Himself in us.

Col. 18- 4:1: How Christ, the new man, Who is in us, exhibits Himself in our relationships in this world.

Col. 4:2-18: Practical exhortations

Col. 4:2-6: The new man’s concern for those outside: in a posture of prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving, praying for the propagation of the mystery of Christ; and looking for the blessing of those in whom Christ does not dwell.

Col. 4:7-18: In Paul, the new man’s concern about the saints.

God’s Setting Aside the Validity of Observing Jewish Ordinances

Concerning Col. 2:16, as part of his judaizing, Dr. Stern wrote:

Don’t let anyone pass judgment on you in connection with optional matters. Gentile believers are free to observe or not to observe rules about dining and Jewish holidays, as is clear from Romans 14&NN, 1 Corinthians 8&NN (p. 610).

Yet, Dr. Stern does not believe that these assumed “optional matters” for Gentile believers are optional for Messianic Jews. For Messianic Jews they are obligatory. His handling of this text is to get rid of its bearing on Messianic Jews but to allow it as optional for Gentiles. 122

122. Concerning his reference to 1 Cor. 8, that passage explicitly speaks of things sacrificed (continued...)

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Not only will he have it so that Col. 2:16 refers to allowable practices for believing Gentile, but that also they must resist having anyone judge them for doing so. Why does he say this? because he will have it that believing Gentiles may participate with Messianic Jews in these observances. Thus, he must reverse the point in v. 16 by making it state a permission -- yet, note, it is in a context of other things (occupation with intermediaries (v. 18) and asceticism (vv. 20-23)) that are condemned. If v. 16 actually does not allow the Gentile Christians to do these things, then the Gentile Christians must not participate with Messianic Jews in observing these things. The divisiveness of such a situation becomes thus too glaring for Dr. Stern. He systematizes the NT around his Judaization and informs others that the NT is Jewish!

In v. 16 we see the word “therefore.” The “therefore” has in view the teaching that precedes v. 16 regarding our completeness in Christ. In view of that teaching, “therefore,” a Christian ought not to be engaged in these observances (also regarding intermediaries and asceticism), for to do so is to say that the Christian is not complete in Christ without engaging in these practices. This means that Gentile believers should not engage in any of these things and that “Let no man judge you” refers to being rightly judged on account of doing wrong.

In Phil. 3:1, Paul addressing “my brethren” and warning them of the “concision” in v. 2 (a play on words indicating that circumcision in the body, for spiritual reasons, is a mutilation), says in v. 3:

For we are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in the flesh.

Presently, all circumcision in the flesh (for a spiritual reason) is a trusting in the flesh. There is something regarding the flesh that is at work. Contra Dr. Stern, then, Col. 2:16, 17 applies to all Christians and is condemnatory of engaging in any of these practices because doing so -- “therefore” -- is saying that the practitioner is not complete in Christ and something fleshly is being practiced. No fellow Christian should have occasion to rightly judge another for engaging in these prohibited practices.

Some objections to these observances are:
1. They are condemned here.
2. A shadow has no substance. These observances were only shadows, not to idols, as does 1 Cor. 10. It is not relevant. Observance of Jewish things as found in Col. 2:16, 17 is not noted in 1 Corinthians. Concerning Rom. 14, that will be examined below, here noting that in that text those who had Jewish scruples about some things are there called “weak in the faith.”
the substance. As shadows, they were *anticipative* -- not commemorative. The Lord’s supper is the Christian *commemorative* observation of his death, held on the resurrection day, “the first day of the week,” as the disciples did in Acts 20:7.

3. These shadows were anticipative as sanctioned by God during the time that the first man was under trial, in the persons of the Jews, under the conditional Mosaic system, to show that the first man was not recoverable. The outcome of that trial is stated in John 15:24. As pointing forward, these observances of shadows were suitable to man in the flesh (man in his fallen, Adamic responsibility to show that man in the flesh was not recoverable).

4. These observances of shadows came in conjunction with God’s choice of Jerusalem as the divine center. It was at the appointed altar that sacrifices were to be offered. The passover was kept there. The passover lamb was slain there. The males in Israel were directed to appear before the Lord three times a year. These and other things are arbitrarily set aside by Messianic Jews. There is no divine authorization for their Judaistic observances and for their doing certain things which they think they were commanded to do, outside of Jerusalem, without a High priest and without a priestly order. Messianic Jews, like so many non-messianic Jews, arbitrarily substitute their own order for God’s order.

5. The Jewish feasts are under the judgment of God:

> And I will cause all her mirth to cease: her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemnities (Hosea 2:11).

These are presently under God’s judgment and observing them is not of God. Moreover, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple has never had its right impact on Messianic Jews.

6. There was patience shown by God with some Jewish prejudices up until the book of Hebrews was written. After setting out the superiority of things brought in by Christ (“the body” rather than “the shadow” that the Jews had before the cross), the Hebrew Christians were told to go outside the camp (Heb. 13:13). The camp is a reference to Judaism in the form it took among the early Messianic Jews. Thus, God gave opportunity for godly separation from such things before He sent His forces (the Romans) and destroyed the city (Matt. 22:7), thus bringing to an end the Jewish system of worship. This governmental, judgmental, physical crushing of the Jewish system, centered in the originally-appointed city, in AD 70 by the Romans, should be acknowledged (by all who confess Christ as Lord and Savior) as God’s outward setting aside of Judaism. So we ought to have discernment that Judaism was *governmentally set aside* in AD 70 -- *besides* being *spiritually set aside*.
by the work on the cross, as the rending of the veil signifies. Before the book of Hebrews was written, the early Jewish converts were very slow to discern the spiritual setting aside of Judaism. Today, most Messianic Jews do not apprehend the force of God’s spiritual setting aside of the Mosaic system at the cross, nor His governmental hand on the seat of Judaism in AD 70, publicly setting it aside. Thus, Messianic Jews now conduct things according to their own thoughts (as do many Jews who do not profess faith in Christ), modifying God’s directions on account of their circumstances; and, worse still, judaize the New Testament to have it say what they are looking for in order to claim divine sanction for hanging on to what our text call the shadow.

7. The Messianic Judaistic idea that the NT is Jewish is utterly absurd. The mystery of Christ and the church is not found in the OT (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3) and cannot be Jewish.

A quotation from W. Kelly will be helpful here:

A Christian man who knows the victory of Christ for us should not surely entertain the idea of going back to these elementary forms of working good. Hold fast your actual place in Christ, act consistently with it. As to eating and drinking or ordinances relative to the year, month, and week (and the apostle takes particular care to speak not merely of feast or new moon but of sabbaths) remember that these things but prefigure the body or substantial good found really and only in Christ. In fact, these times and seasons point chiefly to what God will give His people by and by. The new moon was a remarkable type of Israel, being renewed after fading away; as the sabbath was the type of the rest of God which He will yet enjoy and share. But whether it be peace or drink-offerings or the feasts in general, they are connected as the shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. This we have. The Jew had the shadow, and he will have the things to come by the grace of God under the new covenant by and by. We are given the substance of Christ now. It is a question here of Jewish days. The Lord’s day has nothing to do with Judaism, it is not only apart from but in contrast with that system. The Lord’s day is as distinctly a christian institution as the Lord’s supper, the Jew having nothing to do with either. It is very important to see that God has put honor upon the day of resurrection and grace. When people are radically loose or begin to slip away from the Lord, an early symptom is carelessness about this day. There ought to be an exercised conscience about it, not only for our own selves, but also as to servants within and others without our houses. It is of very great consequence that sense of liberty and grace should not even have the appearance of laxity or
Now let us observe how Dr. Stern handles “the shadow of things to come” in v. 17.

**The New Order Introduced by God --**

**The Body [Is] of Christ**

. . . which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ (Col. 2:17).

**WHAT WAS THE STANDING OF THOSE TO WHOM THE SHADOWS WERE GIVEN?**

The shadows were given to a people standing in (fallen) Adamic responsibility to show that the fallen, first man was not recoverable from the fall. The law made no distinction between who was a child of God and who was not. Indeed, the children of God had no authority to form a visible, manifested community of children of God before the cross. The Lord Jesus died for the nation (John 11:52) to provide the righteous basis for God to bless the new Israel under the New Covenant and new priesthood in “the age to come,” i.e., the millennium.

**The New Nation, New Covenant, and New Priesthood.** In the future, the nation will be the new Israel under the New Covenant, all saved (Rom. 11:26). They will be in the good of the earthly calling (in contrast to believers now who are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Certain feasts and sacrifices will be observed in a commemorative way under the priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13; Ezek. 40 - 48), i.e., Christ, who will function as priest according to the order of Melchizedec, a priesthood founded on the once-for-all finished work (Heb. 9:12, 26, etc.). The specified Jewish observances carried out under the new order of priesthood founded on the once-for-all finished work (cp. Heb. 10:12) make them look back to that work. Therefore they are commemorative of that work and its results insofar as they apply to the new Israel under the New Covenant and the new order of priesthood in the new temple. That is an entirely distinct character from the shadows in the Mosaic system of good things to come.


124. John 11:53 shows that the cross laid the foundation for the children of God to be gathered together into one. This is oneness in manifestation of their common eternal life in the Son. What results in, or tends to, a virtual setting up of a Gentile church and a Messianic Jewish church is not of God. It is contrary to the work of Christ on the cross.

125. Not surprisingly, Messianic Jews claim that Christians are under the New Covenant (as Reformed Theology does), whereas Scripture clearly shows it is to be consummated with the two houses of Israel, united as one, under Messiah’s reign before His ancients in glory.
The commemorative observances are for the future Israel, an earthly people of God, having the earthly calling. To engage in these observations now is to practice what will be suitable for an earthly people in the future. It is for an Israel distinct from the millennial nations even if composed of children of God. It is part of their earthly calling, with a temple and priesthood re-established. *It is earthly to engage in such observances now!* Insofar as such things are done, it undermines the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) and heavenly position (Eph. 2:6) of the Christian now. It is at best a deplorable, unscriptural mixing of heavenly and earthly things, and at worst, as seen most fully in Judaism itself, the refusal of the heavenly entirely. It is, at the very least, a dispensational hodge-podge of some Judaism and some Christianity. It is corruption of Christianity.

**The New Approach to God of the New Israel in the Millennium.** This is not the place to enlarge on the millennium, but let us note that approach to God will then have a very much higher character than under the Mosaic system of shadows. It is a great upward step from the situation with the old Israel under the old covenant and the old, Aaronic priesthood. Lift the church above the ages, into the heavens, as not part of God’s ways in the earth with an earthly people of earthly calling, and then you can observe the great step upward concerning God’s ways with man in the earth. The vail was rent and never will be reinstated, but Israel will have an earthly temple with two-leaved doors and an intermediary priesthood. It is important to observe that there is a two-fold bearing of the rent veil. There is a heavenly bearing of the rending of the veil for those who have the heavenly calling, and there is an earthly bearing for those who have the earthly calling. *Now*, we have access to the sanctuary above (Heb. 10:19) where the heavenly high priesthood of Christ is presently exercised (Heb. 8:2), and where Christ sings in the midst of the assembly (Heb. 2:12) in connection with the heavenly calling. In the millennium, in connection with Israel’s earthly calling and place, the earthly temple will have two-leaved doors (Ezek. 41:24). In contrast with our entry into the heavenly sanctuary, without intermediary priests, they worship here below. The two-leaved doors of the millennial temple signify much more access than the unrent veil in the case of the Mosaic system, but not the access of those who go directly into the presence of God in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 10:19). Moreover, there will be an intermediary priesthood in the millennial temple (Ezek. 40 - 48). At that time, when there will be God-sanctioned observances, there is an intermediary priesthood, all this authorized by God. We Christians have no intermediary priesthood, all Christians being priests (Rev. 1).

Where did God authorize Messianic Jews to engage in their observances of shadows (cp. Heb.)? Where did He authorize them to set aside the divine order He has given in His Word? Not only do they transgress His written word, they engage in twisting, spinning, and distorting the NT to support
their observances of the shadows, as is made clear in Dr. Stern’s *Commentary*. The time for Jewish observances is future for the *earthly* people of God; observances not of the shadows, which pointed forward, but observances of memorials, founded on the once-for-all finished work, under the priesthood of the order of Melchizedec.

Presently, for the heavenly people of God, there is another order. And if I may so express it, the Spirit of God has labored to make the setting aside of the Mosaic system very clear in the letter to the Hebrews -- unless one is refracting it through the lens of Messianic Judaism. The Hebrews were hankering after the shadows (if not worse) and the objective in Hebrews is to lead them away from that into what is proper for those who are partakers of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). It is a dispensational hodge-podge for any professed Christians to engage in what was ordained under the Mosaic system, or in what is reserved for an earthly people in the millennium. It is an undermining of the heavenly calling and its thrust is divisive in the church, tending to make a Gentile church and a Jewish church, though, of course, it is affirmed that Jews and Gentiles “have been joined together into a single people of God” (Dr. Stern, p. 580).

Illustrative of how to explain Scripture from the viewpoint of Messianic Judaism, Dr. Stern wrote this concerning Col. 2:17:

> The festivals do *indeed* have value; since God commanded the Jewish people to observe them, they remind Jews of God and of what he has done. They are one of God’s ways of bringing the Jewish people closer to himself . . .

> For Gentiles, however, Jewish practices are in most cases nothing more than a shadow, insofar as they do not arise out of their own national experience. 126

God did not “command” 127 present day Jewish believers to observe these days, whether they be from the Mosaic system or the coming millennium. If he refers to the OT, you may observe how he regards himself in continuity with Jews of that era.

And since Dr. Stern asserts that these practices are one of God’s ways of bringing Jewish persons closer to God, the Gentile Christian is disadvantaged by not having them -- unless he immerses himself in Messianic Judaism and “has involved himself with Jewish life on a daily basis.” None of this is really Christianity. *It is an institutionalized denial*

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127. It is claimed that Paul “observed them all his life (ac 13:9&N, ” *ibid*. So he claims (p. 267) that Paul “remained a Jew all his life, indeed, an observant Jew (16:3, 17:2, 18:18, 20:16, 21:23-27, 25:8, 28:17; and see 21:21N), even a Pharisee (23:6, Pp. 3:5) . . .”

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Moreover, Jewish practices are (at least “in most cases”) nothing more than a shadow for Gentiles, implying that they are something more than a shadow for a Messianic Jew. But as Col. 2:17 shows, there is the shadow and there is the body -- but not something in between -- i.e., something more than the shadow but less than the body. The believing Gentile can have the shadow, but in those practices the Messianic Jew has neither the valid shadow nor the body, but something else!

The Judaization as Dealt with in Several Epistles

Judaization supposes that the first, fallen man, still has a place before God, be it more or be it less. It is not a matter of what Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, think or know, but what Judaization actually means in God’s sight.

In Galatia, the danger was adding the law to the gospel for justification. Thus, Christ’s work would not be sufficient. In Galatians we are crucified with Christ (Col. 2:20). Thus, the first man (man viewed as in fallen Adamic responsibility) is dealt with. Placing Christians under the law says that the first man is not really gone, but that we must have Judaism. Concerning circumcision, W. Kelly wrote:

It is evident that in the handling of men of philosophic tone, the rite of circumcision might be made a much more spiritual thing than any man could work out of the law as a rule of life. For they might say, as men have said, that circumcision was pressed only as the emblem of what we have in Christ, an ancient and divine though of course outward sign of spiritual grace. But the step was fatal; for if they admitted that sign, it was a recurrence to shadows when the substance was come; it was a relinquishment of grace too for the principle of law. The fathers had circumcision, no doubt, before Moses, which was then especially connected with promise. Still, although it was originally before the nation’s responsibility to the law was pledged at Sinai, it was after that so embedded in the law that they cannot be separated. Take up circumcision now; and if you do not put yourself, the law puts you, under its whole system, and separates you, in principle, from Christ as an exalted heavenly Head who has accomplished redemption. Thus, if there was one ordinance that more than any might symbolize with promise and grace, it was circumcision; yet so strong was the apostle, that he tells the Galatians, that, admitting it at all, they became debtors to do the whole law. To the Colossians he goes farther, and shows how it contradicts and sets aside the work of Christ, and the place of association with Him, into which we are thereby brought before God. Hence he here intimates what sort of circumcision we already have as Christians; it is of divine operation and not human: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting
off the body of the flesh,” &c. 128

In Paul’s prison epistles (AD 60-62) we have the same subjects under different aspects. In Colossians the danger was of Mosaic things, and Gnosticism, added so as to be complete in Christ. Our completeness in Him as dead and raised with Him, circumcised in Him, is not enough. If not the law itself, as in Galatians, at least ordinances should have a place so that the first man has something as if still alive in us, before God. Circumcised in Christ, yes; but not that circumcised! We must have some Judaism that fore-shadows Christ.

In Hebrews, says W. Kelly, the issue is Christ’s appearing in the presence of God for us in glory, founded on the perfect work:

In Hebrews we have another thing; it is not our death and resurrection with Christ, but Christ now appearing in the presence of God for us in glory, which is founded upon the perfection of His work, His one offering, which has for ever put away sin. He is there, at the right hand of God, because He has by Himself purged our sins. The law as a code or system for us is inconsistent with Christ’s place in glory as the bright exhibition of our triumph through God’s grace; and such is the Christian way of looking at Christ. We do not, it is true, find our association with Christ dead or risen in Hebrews; still less is it the display of our union with Him above; neither is it justification, as in Romans and Galatians, but the value of His work measured by His position in heaven shines there with special luster. Any allowance of ordinances now {as, for example, circumcision} is proved to be a gainsaying of His work and of the glory He has in heaven, in danger, too, of leading to apostasy. 129

In Philippians the Apostle tells us we (i.e., Jew and Gentile) Christians are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3) and that the circumcision made with hands is “concision” (Phil. 3:2), a mutilation.

In Galatians the Mosaic things are added to the gospel for justification. Christ’s work is not enough. In Colossians the Mosaic things are added so as to be complete in Christ. Our completeness in Him is not enough. Combined, Christ’s death and Christ’s resurrection are not enough for Messianic Jews.

In Galatians we are crucified with Him; in Colossians we are raised with Him. Neither is sufficient for Messianic Jews.
Died to Elements of the World, 
or Died to Elemental Spirits of the Universe?

Keeping the Law Now Is as Heathenism

It is very regrettable that so many Christians are not taught what the trial of the first man (1 Cor. 15:47) and how the cross ended that trial. That trial showed that the first, fallen man was not recoverable (of course he was not). The institution of the law under the Mosaic system was part of that trial of the first man, man in the flesh. The following from J. N. Darby relates “the elements of the world” to the law in the Mosaic system, and observes, as Galatians teaches, that to engage in the things of the law now is actually heathenism -- a most solemn consideration.

The institutions of the law were adapted to man in the flesh. A magnificent temple, beautiful vestments, a God present to the senses upon earth, though man was not permitted to draw near to Him; trumpets, visible sacrifices -- all these things were ordained that man in the flesh might be in relationship with God, according to the elements of the world, which are suited to man in the flesh. Christians are a heavenly people; they see not the objects they adore, except by faith. God is worshiped in spirit and in truth, not with bulls and goats. The Spirit reveals to them that which they see not; they know that Christ is ascended into heaven, having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do; and the heart rises up into the heavenly temple, by the grace of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, there to adore God. Thus the heirs themselves {OT saints under the law} were as children, bound to accomplish an external worship, to offer beasts. The cleansing was an external purifying of the body by water; the sacrifices -- types for the time then present -- could not purify the conscience from sin; they were not offerings of praise, and thanksgiving, and adoration, founded upon the accomplished sacrifice of Christ. It was all “the elements of the world,” which were adapted to man in this world.

Every religion accomplished in external ceremonies, and composed of such things, is but “the elements of the world,” and resembles heathen worship. The favor of God is sought by means which an unconverted man can use, quite as well as, or even better than, one that is converted; for his conscience does not make him feel that these things cannot cleanse the soul. Those who seek to obtain righteousness by works are greatly irritated against those who have peace with God through faith, for this declares all their labor to be in vain. There was but one city where the Gentiles persecuted Paul in which the Jews did not stir them up to do it. They {the Jews} boasted in what man could do, and maintained their own glory; they were not willing to see it trampled under foot. But faith gives the glory of salvation to God,
and seeks in a new life, the spring of which is love, to glorify Him by obedience and the fulfilment of His will.

The law was then a schoolmaster until Christ, the promised seed. In its forms and in its ceremonies, it resembled the religion of the Gentiles. God, while ever maintaining the perfect rule of conduct of man and the unity of the Godhead, yet condescended to adapt Himself, in the worship He ordained, to the ways of the spirit of man, coming near to Him, in order to make manifest whether it were possible for man in the flesh to walk with God . . .

But the apostle takes up a still stronger ground. The Galatians were Gentiles, and had been as heathen under these same elements of the world. Not knowing God, they did service to them who by nature were no gods. Their worship was necessarily according to the elements of the world -- what man in the flesh could offer: they could not conceive of anything else but a worship of ceremonies, the observance of days and the offering of beasts. The true God condescended to place Himself upon this ground in His relations with man, as has been said. He drew near to man where man was. Nevertheless, upon this footing He did not reveal Himself. He hid Himself behind the veil, though He made a covenant with man: He gave a law which was to be observed, while He remained behind the veil, and He ordained sacrifices, most beautiful and instructive types of the true sacrifice of Christ, which is of eternal value . . .

Yet these poor Christians now desired to return to the weak and beggarly elements from which, when heathens, they had been delivered, through the knowledge of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! Mark well that all their ceremonies are but the same thing as paganism, the elements of the world. Even if those who subject themselves to them be Christians, yet the principles according to which they walk are the elements of the world, and their practices are heathen practices. We learn this here as doctrine, but the history of the church shows it to us as a fact. Holy days and holy places were taken from the heathen, who had holy places and days on which they held festivals in honor of deified men, such as Theseus, Hercules, and others. The names of saints were afterwards attached to these places and days, and the saints celebrated instead of the demi-gods.

St. Augustine has told us what was done, and how it began. He sought to put an end to these evil habits, not to the days, but to what was practiced upon them, for they got drunk in the churches. This occurred in Africa, and the same thing was done elsewhere. The feast of the Nativity was the worst of all the pagan festivals, and it is still celebrated among the heathen in the East. Not being able to prevent those who, emerging from paganism, called themselves Christians, from continuing the disorders practiced at this festival, the leaders of the church decided to put in its place the Nativity of
Christ. Augustine also says, respecting the memory of the saints who took the place of Theseus, etc., that the church thought it better for people to get drunk in honor of a saint, than in honor of a demon. It is certain that Christ was not born in December. The time at which Mary went to visit Elizabeth proves this, if compared with the order of the twenty-four courses of the priests. Zacharias was the eighth course.

In taking up again from the Jews these elements of the world, the Galatians were returning to their former heathen practices. Until the coming of Christ these things had an important meaning; they were figures of that of which Christ has been, or is now, the reality: moreover they tested man, and showed that he cannot walk with God as man in the flesh. But when once Christ was come, the substance was there, and the figures had no more ground of existence, the test had been already applied. What is done in fulfilment of the law is but the denial of the fulfilment of all in Christ -- heathen elements of the world, in which the Galatians walked when they lived as heathen in the world.  

“Elements of the world” refers both to OT Judaism and to Gentile philosophy. However, this phrase is said to refer to “elemental spirits” from which Jewish and Gentile believers have been delivered; and that leaves Jewish believers free to practice Messianic Judaism. Three passages we will consider, are:

See that there be no one who shall lead you away as a prey through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the teaching of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ (Col. 2:8).

If ye have died with Christ from the elements of the world, why as [if] alive in [the] world do ye subject yourselves to ordinances? Do not handle, do not taste . . . (Col. 2:20).

(1) Now I say, As long as the heir is a child, he differs nothing from a bondman, though he be lord of all; (2) but he is under guardians and stewards until the period fixed by the father. (3) So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world; (4) but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law, (5) that he might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship. (6) But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (7) So thou art no longer bondman, but son; but if son, heir also through God (Gal. 4:1-7).

This is translated by J. N. Darby. W. Kelly translates similarly, but using

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“infants” in Gal. 4:1, 3. Alfred Marshall in his interlinear translation translates substantially the same, also using ‘infants.” It refers to the state of a minor compared to one having reached his majority -- i.e., sonship status.

The word elements (stoicheion) is translated by some as “elemental spirits.” And so “elements of the world” becomes “elemental spirits of the universe.” This comes from heathen Greek thought, of course; and Greek philosophy and vain deceit, according to the teaching of men, has made inroads among some Christian scholars and teachers. Can this (Greek) notion serve Messianic Judaism in its effort to maintain the law, or whatever part of it they want -- since they would not really want the Christian to be really dead to the law (see Rom. 7:4)? Since the law, as part of the Mosaic system, falls under the expression “elements of the world,” and since Col. 2:8 says, “If ye have died to the elements of the world,” that would set aside the law for a Christian because the law is not for a dead man to practice. But, Messianic Judaism has the NT use of “elements” (stoicheion) mean “elemental spirits,” and their problem is thought to be solved because they can die to the “elemental spirits of the universe” but stay alive to the law! But Rom. 7:4 says:

So that, my brethren, ye also have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ . . .

Therefore, “elemental spirits of the universe” does not really help them.

Moreover, Gal. 4:9-10 does not refer “to those weak and miserable elemental spirits,” as Dr. Stern translates. J. N. Darby translates:

but now, knowing God, but rather being known by God, how do ye turn again to the weak and beggarly principles to which ye desire to be again anew in bondage? Ye observe days and months and times and years.

The only thing elemental about this is the obvious reference to Judaism. The observation of days, months, and years is engaging in beggarly principles, and where do they come from? Clearly, from Judaism, as “again anew in bondage” shows. In principle, there are so-called Christian holidays that also come under this ban.

Now, he does not deny that the warning is against observance of Jewish practice, but limits this warning only to Gentile Christians observing Jewish practices (in most circumstances):

But when Gentiles observe these Jewish holidays neither out of joy in sharing what God has given the Jewish people nor out of spiritual identification with them, but out of fear induced by Judaizers who have convinced them that unless they do these things, God will not accept them, then they are not obeying the Torah (the law) but subjecting themselves to legalism; and legalism is just another species of those weak and miserable
elemental demonic spirits, no better than the idols left behind. 131

This is nothing other than a bald-faced way to get rid of the passage as having application to all Christians, Jew and Gentile. The book of Galatians was not written to Gentiles, but, as Gal. 1:2 says, “to the assemblies of Galatia.” It would be absurd to claim that there were no Jewish Christians in any of them. And such Jewish believers are among “the Israel of God” noted in Gal. 6:16, who are to walk by the same rule as the Gentile Christians (Gal. 6:15, 16). Besides whatever might be common to Jewish and Gentile believers, Messianic Judaism has two sets of rules, one set for Jewish Christians and one set for Gentile Christians. It thus institutionalizes divisiveness; and we see this divisiveness also in his statement “nor out of spiritual identification with them.” Note also that it is implied that Jewish Christians obey the Torah. Gentile Christians need not do so, but if they do it in fear, that is a “legalism,” “just another species of those weak and miserable elemental demonic spirits.” 132

When Scripture says,

when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world (Gal. 4:3),

the we means the Jews under the law. Dr. Stern translates:

when we were “children” we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. 133

Christ came and redeemed those who were under the law (Gal. 4:5). It is clear that those “children” were Jews under the law; and, it follows from Dr. Stern’s statements, that they were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe (not merely some of them). That is quite a stunning implication inherent in his notions. And his view is that Messianic Jews should engage today in those Jewish practices that were practiced while the Jews were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe, which he lets us know were demonic. No doubt he believes that Christ has set the Jewish Christian free from these elemental spirits and can practice the Torah!

We should note that Dr. Stern will not face the meaning of what he says. Gal. 4:3 said:

So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world.

The text does not say it was true only sometimes. The text does not say that it was true for only some of the them. It was true concerning all of them,

132. How does a non-elemental demonic spirit differ from an elemental demonic spirit?
133. *Jewish New testament*, in loco.

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true for the entire time. All, at all times, were held in bondage under the principles, or elements, of the world. It is just those whom Christ came to redeem from under the law (Gal. 4:5). It was noted above that we in Gal. 4:3 refers to Jews under the law, looked at as minors (Gentiles never were under the law). Not so, says Dr. Stern, who works to mitigate the real, implicit result of his notion about elemental spirits:

We, both Jews and Gentiles, were slaves to them. Gentiles served these demonic spirits as gods, Jews, knowing the one true God, were sometimes led astray by demonic spirits, including the demonic spirit of legalism. Jews served this spirit whenever they perverted the Torah into a legalistic system . . .

So, sometimes, he claims, the Jews were not led astray! He is perverting the all-inclusive thrust of the passage; its true meaning is all under the Mosaic system, all Jews.

Without in the least denying that Gentiles served demonic spirits as shown elsewhere in Scripture (1 Cor. 8, 11), this is not the issue here in Galatians. Moreover, Gentiles are not included in the we of Gal. 4:3. Concerning the Jews, Dr. Stern flatly contradicts Gal. 4:3 with his “sometimes.” His system forces him to say “sometimes.” The law as under the Mosaic system, really given to man in the flesh (in the persons of the Jews) to show that he was not recoverable from the fall, is bondage. It applied to all under the Mosaic Covenant. All were in bondage under the elements of the world, Dr. Stern notwithstanding.

Happily, all Christians, Jew and Gentile, have died to the elements of the world, whether in its pagan form or in its Jewish form. Moreover, all Christians are dead to the law (Rom. 7:4). All Christians are under “the law of the Christ” (Gal. 6:2) and all Christians are under the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:14-16), and rightly walk only by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). Note that all of this is stated in the book of Galatians. All this excludes the system of keeping Jewish observances as well as excluding the observing so-called Christian holidays (which are only “baptized” heathenism -- idolatry). The Christian has no holidays among the holidays of this world or of Judaized Christianity. Nor is the Lord’s day a holiday among the holidays of the world.

While Galatians repudiates the system that was proposed to the assemblies of Galatia, there is such a thing as bearing with some Jewish

134. “The demonic spirit of legalism” reminds me of the Pentecostal notion of a “demon of eternal security.” Both are imaginary demons, but the phrases serve a false purpose to support the respective false systems.

scruples that some Jewish believers who are “weak in the faith” observe (Rom. 14). But in the case of Messianic Judaism we are considering a divisive movement of institutionalized Judaism in the church on earth, which is quite another thing. However, since Messianic Judaism uses Rom. 14 falsely, let us briefly consider its bearing.

**The Bearing of Romans 14**

Heathen holidays were never sanctioned for observance by God. Nor because a Christian name has been put upon them, and Christian elements added to them, are they acceptable to God. In Gal. 4:10 the “days and months and times and years” means things Jewish, as the meats and drink and days in Rom. 14 refer to Jewish practices, part of the Mosaic system at one time sanctioned by God. The reason for the directions in Rom. 14 is that the Mosaic system had not been heathenism, but rather at one time had been sanctioned by God. In the assembly there were both Jewish and Gentile believers, as was the case at Rome when Paul wrote this. Some of the Jewish believers might be strong in the faith while other Jewish believers might be “weak in the faith” (Rom. 14:1). The “weak in the faith” have scruples about some things concerning Jewish practice.

In practice, many Christians are set on doing their own will. However, in this passage God graciously regarded all consciences as in exercise before Him and each’s intention to please Him. Supposing that to be the case, and there being some “weak in the faith” (Rom. 14:1) in the assembly at Rome, who have Jewish scruples about some things because of being Jewish, and because God had sanctioned the Mosaic system, what was to be done?

Clearly, what the Apostle wrote does not support Messianic Judaism, which system in the Torah-keeping class, no doubt, supposes its adherents to be, not only strong in the faith, but under obligation to practice these Jewish observances. In no way can that be gotten out of this passage. Actually, this passage shows us that true believers on Christ who are adherents of such elements of Messianic Judaism are “weak in the faith.” Worse still, in effect, and in other cases overtly, Messianic Judaism supports an institutionalized divisiveness in the church on earth. And this gives occasion to point out the difference in the Apostle’s approach to these matters in Romans compared to Galatians. Galatians addresses the matter from the aspect that a system was being set up -- and Messianic Judaism is a system (whatever differences it may have from the Galatian form of the system) -- while Rom. 14 deals with Jewish believers, still “weak in the faith,” in the assembly. Nor does Rom. 14 contemplate such a thing as those “weak in the faith” having meetings (or fellowships) for the observance of those very practices that show that they are “weak in the faith.” Moreover,
the observances of those “weak in the faith” are not to be imposed on the assembly, or give character to the assembly. No, there is no option for them to have Messianic, Judaistic meetings, or assemblies.

Here are some thoughts from W. Kelly on Rom. 14.

◆ The apostle now proceeds to treat of a question exceedingly delicate and critical, especially in days and places where the saints consisted of any considerable mixture of converts, brought out of systems so opposed as those of Jews and Gentiles. What to the strong in faith is an indifferent matter may trouble the conscience of those who are weak, as the apostle here distinguishes them. The weak were such Christians as were still shackled in conscience by their old Jewish observances, as to days, meats, etc., by distinctions not moral but ceremonial; the strong were those who saw in their death with Christ the end to all such bondage and enjoyed liberty in the Spirit. Carefully must we guard against the offensive misinterpretation that the weak mean those who tampered with evil. Contrariwise so fearful were they of sin that they were needlessly burdened and thus cherished a conscience not tender only, which is of the utmost moment for all, but scrupulous. But they were in no way lax, which is an evil of the greatest magnitude and only exaggerated, not diminished, by increase of knowledge. The weak were really ignorant of the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, and hence apt to burden themselves continually where they might have found rest for their souls. They knew not that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

The practice to which brethren are called in such matters is mutual forbearance (Rom. 14, Rom. 15:7), all agreeing in doing what they do to the Lord, spite of difference in judgment of what should be done. Room is thus left for growth in knowledge as the word of God opens to our faith, while conscience meanwhile is respected . . .

It is obvious that the Gentiles, as having been outside the law, would be least affected by such scruples. But the apostle puts the difference on a ground far deeper and holier than any such accidental and circumstantial distinction after the flesh. A believer whether a Jew or a Greek might freely realize his deliverance from questions of meats or days. Not a few Gentiles in those days knew the law and could not but feel the immeasurable superiority of its institutions as compared with the abominations of the heathen. So we might have difficulty in understanding that those regulations given by the true God through Moses to His people could vanish away, null and void for the Christian. Hence therefore we hear of him that is weak in the faith, as the next chapter opens with the conduct which becomes us who are strong in bearing the infirmities of the weak, the apostle identifying himself of course with such as see earthly restrictions at an end. But while grace alone produces strength in the faith, there is far more behind in the
grace which produces it, and what savors more characteristically of Christ. The knowledge of faith is good; the love that is of God, of which Christ was the perfect expression, is still better; and he who has that knowledge is above all called to walk in this love, as indeed every one who is born of God must be. The question of eating and days may concern the least things, but it can only be rightly solved by the deepest truth and the richest grace. Both come through Jesus Christ, and are the portion really of the Christian. But how little Christians appreciated Christianity then, how much less now!

Undoubtedly then he who believed that he may eat all things is far more right in thought than he who makes a point of eating herbs. Still there was no ground in such prejudices or in their absence for making little of the weak and for judging the strong; for there was a double danger of fault -- to him who knew his liberty, of despising the scrupulous; to him who was scrupulous, of judging censoriously the free. But such weakness is no more folly than such strength is laxity; even as divine love is always holy while always free. God has received the believer; and this is said emphatically of him who was judged licentious by the weak; as the brethren on the other hand are called to accept, but not to the determination of controversial questions, him that is weak in the faith. How much ignorance the Lord bears with in the most intelligent! “Who art thou that judgest another’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” He beautifully adds (in answer doubtless to many a bitter anticipation of what would be the end of their liberty) “and he shall be made to stand; for the Lord is able to make him stand.” For the strong have no strength of their own, but grace will hold them up. Would we wish it otherwise, if it could be? Do we not delight that all is of Him?

In speaking next of a day regarded above a day the apostle enlarges. Giving up idols the Gentiles saw nothing in one day more than another. The Jew was naturally disposed to cling to old religious associations. But in this the Lord’s day is in no way included; for it rests on the highest sanction of the risen Lord (John 20:19, 20), confirmed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10), and is no open matter as to which each is to be fully assured in his own mind. For a Christian not to regard the Lord’s day would be a direct dishonor put on His own special meeting with His disciples on that day, an open slight to that witness of grace and of the new creation (as the sabbath was of the old creation and of law). Only we must bear in mind that, while some lower the ground on which the Lord’s day is observed by reducing it to the mere practice or authority of the church, others unwittingly foist into Christianity what properly belongs to man and Israel. But the Christian is not a mere son of Adam or Israel. He is called out from both into an incomparably higher relationship. He is dead and risen with Christ; and to this change the Lord’s
day is not the least striking testimony. On it the Lord proclaimed His brethren set in the same place with His God and Father as Himself risen from the dead. To confound the Lord’s day with the sabbath is to confound the gospel with the law, the Christian with the Jew, Christ with Adam. The very absence of a formal enactment in its case is admirably consistent with its nature as contrasted with that day which sanctified from the beginning, entered so prominently into God’s dealings with Israel as to be a sign between Him and them.  

Besides all this, let it not be forgotten that Romans was written before Paul wrote Hebrews during his first Roman imprisonment. The Messianic Jews are under the direction of the epistle to the Hebrews and are obliged by it to abandon Messianic Judaism. Still, we may learn from Rom. 14 patience in the assembly where there are Jewish believer’s who because of scrupulosity are not yet delivered from Jewish observances.

**Messianic Judaism’s Keeping the Law in Force**

**Concerning the Mosaic Covenant**

Dr. Stern (*Messianic Jewish Manifesto*, Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications (1991)) wrote:

> Meanwhile, the Mosaic Covenant is here to be observed and not broken from our side . . . (p. 102).

> However, the *Torah* supplied under this covenant was given forever and never abolished, and that Torah is still in force (p. 101).


> The Gospel with an Ended Law Is No Gospel At All (p. 51).

**Concerning Feast-days**

Edward Chumney (*The Seven Festivals of Messiah*, Shippensburg: Destiny Image, pp. 3, 11, and 21 (1994). wrote:

> The apostle Paul (*Rav Sha’ul*) wrote to the Gentile believers in Colossae  that the feasts of the L-rd, the new moon, and the Sabbath (*shabbat*) days were *a shadow of things to come* to teach us about the

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136. *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, in loc.*

137. This is a patently false statement that warps the meaning of Col. 2:16-19. Moreover, Paul wrote to the assembly (Col. 1:1), whatever its composition of Jewish and Gentile believers.
Messiah (*Maschiach*) (Colossians 2:16-17). 138

Secondly, the festival are *G-d’s feasts* and *His* appointed times that *we* are to observe (Leviticus [Vayikara] 23:1-2, 4). 139

G-d gave the feasts so we could learn and understand G-d’s plan of redemption for the world and our personal relationship to Him (Rom. 15:4). 140

The feasts, as part of the Torah (which means “instruction”), are as a school master or tutor that leads us to the Messiah (Galatians 3:24). 141

### Concerning Circumcision


The two-fold issue is this: first, circumcision is a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant for the Jewish descendents of the patriarch. Hence, it is a non-issue for the Gentile community since technically they are not related to the physical aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant (p. 20). 142

Although ritual circumcision does nothing to justify one before a holy God, it is still a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant for Messianic Jews (p. 20).

### Some in Fundamental Evil

#### Regarding the Trinity

In a book, *How Jewish is Christianity: Two Views on the Messianic Movement*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2003), the only Gentile Christian, William Varner, raised a concern regarding Messianic Jews slipping into heresy regarding the Trinity and the deity of Christ (as did the ancient

138. Actually, Paul wrote that there be no participation in such things, i.e., the shadow, for the body has come.

139. Thus, Messianic Jews are under obligation to keep the feasts.

140. The NT is given to Christian’s for this purpose. Not only is this a gross misuse of Rom. 15:4, it serves as a typical example of how Judaism is imposed on the NT -- leaving out the heavenly things. His table on the feasts of Jehovah (p. 21), shows considerable lack of understanding of the bearing of the feasts.

141. This is a use of a wrong translation of Gal. 3:24 -- as Covenantists also do in their system. Quotations are from *The Seven Festivals of Messiah*, Shippensburg: Destiny Image, pp. 3, 11, and 21 (1994).

142. Then, “technically,” the Messianic Jew is related to the physical aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant -- and therefore he is under an earthly covenant. He does not know that he is heavenly; or, he contradicts being heavenly.
Ebionites, who were of the Nazarenes, as the Messianic Jews were called (p. 43). In the same volume Arnold Fructenbaum shares W. Varner’s concern, observing

that elements in the Messianic movement are moving toward a heretical theology that would include a denial of the Trinity and a denial of the deity of the Messiah (pp. 70, 71).

Yes, looking at some Messianic Jewish websites points to this also.

**Even Critics of Messianic Judaism Sometimes Promote Jewish Practices**

A book, *Judaism is Not Jewish, A Friendly Critique of the Messianic Movement*, published by a Reformed publishing house in England, is written by Baruch Maoz, a Jewish clergyman in Israel. Much can be learned about the practices and views of Messianic Judaism which he critiques.

Concerning the keeping of feasts, etc., early in his book he makes a potent statement, but he uses the erroneous word “insist” in it which shows allowance for keeping Jewish feasts anyway. Here are some quotations:

Some claim that Paul remained zealous for the Torah, as were the thousands of Jews in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus (Acts 21:18-23). This is incorrect, although Paul certainly maintained his Jewish identity. Fealty to the Torah could not sit well with one who did not hesitate to be a Gentile to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 9:20). Why else would he insist that the observance of days, holy days, months, weeks and years is a matter for the flesh and for the now-defunct rudimentary principles of the world (Col. 2:16-19)? He goes so far as to say that those who insist upon the Jewish festivals are not holding fast to the head (Col. 2:19). This raises the uncomfortable question as to whether or not those who claim a faith in Messiah and, at the same time, seek to achieve in the realm of the Spirit by Torah-keeping, might have heard the gospel in vain (Gal. 4:10) - no small issue! (p. 108).

Rightly noting that:

By determining to be as a Jew to the Jews as a Gentile to the Gentiles, Paul demonstrated a freedom from the cultural obligations of all kinds (p. 206).

Then he waters down Col. 2:16, saying:

... none has the right to criticize, look down upon or boast in comparison to another of his national culture or tradition (Col. 2:16).
Dietary laws, holy days and the like are at best mere shadows, which find their substance in Christ (Col. 2:17; cf. Heb. 8:5; 10:1) (p. 207). That appears to me to contain an implicit misunderstanding of the words, “Let none therefore judge you in meat,” etc. You are not to be in the position of coming under judgment for doing such things -- partaking in the shadow now that we have “the body,” i.e., the substance. That mistake, along with his use of “insist” in the first quotation above, then results in it being permissible to engage in what the Word of God has brought to an end:

In relation to our discussions, Jewish Christians may choose to form Jewish Christian fellowships {here we have multiplicity of fellowships} outside of yet perhaps alongside their respective congregations, where they celebrate their feasts, give expression to their shared Jewishness and reach out to their own people. But such fellowships should never be allowed to supplant the role of the church in their lives (pp. 207, 208).

Israel’s feasts were religious in nature in the past, and they will be so in the millennium. Where they are mentioned in the NT, the context is always against their present observance. On the positive side, the only observance we Christians have been given is the Lord’s day and the Lord’s supper -- no Jewish days and no heathen days with something Christian mixed in. The observance of meat or drink, or feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, is not New testament neutral; it is NT judged. The attempt to make the NT references apply to Gentiles only is Jewish ethnicity controlling Scripture, Judaizing it.

While it is not the purpose here to examine this book in any detail, we may note a confusion regarding the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant:

The covenant at Sinai was a very important exposition of the Abrahamic Covenant (p. 290).

Of course the Mosaic Covenant was no such thing. It placed the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant in suspension, and took up Israel on the basis of conditions. These two covenants are as opposite as are the words unconditional and conditional.

A second book, by Stan Telchin, also published by a Reformed publishing group, takes a similar position to the above book. In it he quotes C. H. Spurgeon, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles Hodge regarding the future conversion of all Israel. Included in the quotation from Jonathan Edwards is the statement:

They shall be gathered together into one fold, together with the
Thus, these two writers do not believe what the prophets of Israel have stated regarding Israel’s distinctive future.

Concerning observing days, books by numbers of Messianic Jews often state that observations of Jewish feasts must not be imposed on Gentiles, then some say that they must not be insisted on for Jewish believers but recommend them anyway as does Stan Telchin:

What about holding Passover Seders every year, or every few years? Great idea. . . . (p. 141).

Paul wrote:

Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened. For also our passover, Christ, has been sacrificed; so that let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:8).

The feast we are to celebrate is the seven-day feast of unleavened bread that followed immediately on the Passover. This means that as soon as we are Christians, we are to begin a walk of holiness, unleavened, for all our life, likened to the seven-day freedom from leaven, a complete period, as the number seven indicates. Moreover, we ought to remember Christ in His death for us every first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
Chapter 5.2

Dr. Stern’s Messianic, Judaistic, Posttribulational, “Olive Tree Theology”

“Olive Tree Theology,” or, How to Judaize the NT

Dr. Stern’s view is that “Christianity is Jewish,” and his intention is to show that the NT throughout proves this. He wrote, “the main characters and authors were Jewish, and the New Testament itself must be understood against its Jewish background.”

Those who understand the mystery of Christ and the Church (which he does not), understand that Jewish background stands in contrast to this mystery, and this leads to very great difference in understanding Paul’s writings. He characteristically imposes Jewishness on what Paul has written, systematically going through the New Testament to accomplish this. As an example, he understands the words in Rom. 9:4 to say of Israel, “They were made God’s children,” points out that the same word is used in Rom. 8:15 (which is true), and that this was “stated explicitly at Exodus 4:22” (which it was not). That there be no doubt about his confusion concerning “God’s children,” elsewhere he wrote:

. . . the people of Israel were made God’s Children . . .

quoting Rom. 9:4. We are quite content with J. N. Darby’s translation:

. . . whose [is] the adoption . . .

which, of course, refers to sonship, or son-placement, which will be made good to Israel in the millennium. This adoption is something corporate, referring to status. In the past, concerning Israel’s status of being Jehovah’s son, most were not God’s children. Most were unbelievers (Heb. 3:8-11,

etc.), not children of God:

   But the word of the report did not profit them, not being mixed with
   faith in those who heard (Heb. 4:2).

Yet Moses had said to Pharaoh:

   Thus saith Jehovah: Israel is my son, my firstborn (Ex. 4:22).

   The national adoption will be made good to them in the millennium, as the
   new Israel, under the New Covenant, the Deliverer having come from Zion
   and having turned away iniquity from Jacob (Rom. 11:26), and they shall all
   be righteous (Isa. 60:21). This stands in stark contrast to the old Israel under
   the Old Covenant (the Mosaic). Under the New Covenant they will all be
   God’s children (meaning spiritually, of course, for there is no other kind of
   child of God).

   His sweeping assertion after such remarks as we have noted, is:

   Thus the entire context of Messianic faith is nothing but Jewish. 149

You know already that he will not understand the force of Rom. 16:25, 26;
Col. 1:26, and Eph. 3 concerning the mystery of Christ and the church. This
need not detain us.

   Dr. Stern’s Jewish New Testament Commentary speaks of the necessity for
   an “Olive Tree Theology.” 150 He appears confident that the “olive tree
   analogy” in Rom. 11 teaches Messianic Judaism. He translates ekklesia
   (usually translated “church,” but meaning “assembly”) as “Messianic
   Community.” Already we have two connotation-loaded expressions: “Jewish
   New Testament” and “Messianic Community.” Though his burden is to
demonstrate it, there is no such thing as either of these things as he means
them. He has not merely disobeyed Heb. 13:13:

   . . . therefore let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his
   reproach . . . ,

   but not unexpectedly, explains it so as to not contradict his system. So he
   makes this a sharing of Messiah’s disgrace but remain part of the Jewish
   people as he does. 151 Like Him, the pain of exclusion is felt and no inclusion
   {?} is to be sought except on God’s terms. 152

   For the Hebrew Christians to whom Paul wrote, the going outside the
   camp had arrived in the ways of God, the destruction of Jerusalem
   impending (Matt. 22:7). The going out was not for the purpose of sharing

149. Messianic Jewish Manifesto, p. 252.
150. Chapter 5.2 herein speaks of the olive tree of Rom. 11.
151. {The “Jewish people,” as such, i.e., Israel, as such, has no present standing with God,
as Rom. 9 - 11 make clear to any who will see.}
Chapter 5.2: Dr. Stern’s “Olive Tree Theology” 225

Christ’s reproach. The going out was to leave the camp, i.e., to leave Judaistic observances and practices, to leave the very practices we see in the Acts carried on by early Messianic Jewish mixing of Judaism with a little Christianity, and in doing so, bearing His reproach. Modern Messianic Judaism is not about leaving Judaism. Its concern is to see how much of Judaism can be retained while believing that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah.

This disobedience to Scripture must needs have a theology, and thus he calls for an “Olive Tree Theology” for the disobedient, the Messianic Jews. It necessarily, consciously, involves a rejection of the fact that God is doing a distinctively heavenly work now, outside His purpose for Israel on earth. The figure of the olive tree is pressed into serving this Judaizing agenda. The importance of the olive tree being thus called upon for this agenda is evidenced by the suggested naming of the Messianic Judaism’s theology as the “Olive Tree Theology.”

This requires defining who the people of God are, for it will not be allowed that God has an earthly people, Israel, and a heavenly people -- those composing the church. The notion is that the olive tree will not allow that. It should be added that replacement theology is rejected (that the church has replaced Israel) as well as the dispensational truth brought out through J. N. Darby. Dr. Stern presents the fundamental requirement for the Olive Tree Theology as including three groups:

1. The natural branches are Messianic Jews.
2. The grafted in “Gentile Christians” wild olive branches.
3. Natural branches that fell off the olive tree are non-Messianic Jews. These, he says, can be grafted in again.

For considering the past, present and future of God’s people olive tree theology must take into account all three groups -- three kinds of branches.

Observe the false presentation of group (3) as “natural branches which have fallen off.” Scripture states:

Now if some of the branches have been broken out (Rom. 11:17);

God indeed has not spared the natural branches (Rom. 11:21).

The rest have been blinded (Rom. 11:7).

For the judicial cutting out of Israel, as a nation, he has toned this down to “natural branches which have fallen off.” This is how theology works and builds a system contrary to Scripture. He really, as so many Gentile theologians do, makes Rom. 11 about individuals only, or mainly, and about

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salvation of individuals; whereas it is about God’s cutting out the nation of Israel (with the exception of some Jewish branches) and the grafting in of a Gentile profession (called “thou”). The passage is about, not salvation, but a place of special privileges with its root in Abraham being called to that place of privilege -- with the Gentile profession being cut out in the future and the nation of Israel being grafted in again.

On p. 416, rejecting displacement theology (the idea that the church has replaced Israel), he expressly rejects the true dispensational view of Rom. 11 as wrongly separating the futures of Jews and Christians. The truth is that that the church is heavenly and Israel is earthly and this distinction is true in the future millennium, each being distinct and in their respective spheres.

“Olive Tree Theology” is a theology that does not grasp what God was teaching through the figure of the olive tree in Rom. 11.

Dr. Stern is what we call a posttribulationist, for he sees the Messianic Community (read, church) going through the great tribulation. Without going into any extensive refutation of Olive Tree Theology’s posttribulationism, we note on p. 803 that he holds to a church age extending through the tribulation, thus placing the “Messianic community” (read “church”) into the tribulation period.

Let us pause here to note that the present work God is doing in forming a heavenly people will end at the pre-Daniel’s 70th week rapture of the saints. Thereafter God will form a godly remnant of Israel, and, no, it is quite erroneous to say that their faith is identical with that of the church. See Elements of Dispensational Truth, vols. 1 and 2 for more on this.

The reader will find his reasoning on why the church must be in the tribulation on pp. 803, 804. This issue has been addressed repeatedly as in J. N. Darby’s magisterial refutation of B. W. Newton’s book on The Apocalypse (1844). I only desire to say concerning believers, that Jewish and Gentile alike, all will be caught up together to be taken to the Father’s house, already prepared by Christ’s entry there. Absurd Olive Tree Theology objections are fathered by a false theological system of Messianic Judaism

154. The thou, speaking of the Gentile profession, does not mean all Gentiles in the world, but only the profession is looked at corporately, as a thou -- as if a main branch of the wild olive tree with many branches on it, was grafted on to the good olive tree. This has its importance as will be shown in another book in this series on the subject of Rom. 9 - 11.

155. No doubt the Olive Tree Theology is far-reaching. For example, there is a book, Growing Your Olive Tree marriage, A Guide for Couples from Two Traditions. It is supposed to answer, for example, “Do they celebrate Hannukah, Christmas, or both?” How about the true Christian answer -- celebrating neither.
Jewish Importance

Not apprehending, or not accepting, the heavenly character of the work God is presently doing in forming a heavenly people is the root of so much error among those who accept Christ as Savior. The mystery of Christ and the church (while the words get used) is not apprehended. This has its baneful effect in Christendom in general, and certainly on Messianic Judaism, where it leads to so much false understanding of Scripture coupled with elevating Messianic Jews into a special class. Israel will have the prominent place under the reign of Christ in the millennium. (Presently, this is not so, though the Jewish Christian is what we may call a true Jew (Rom. 2:29), and is part of the present election of grace among the Jews (Rom. 11:15), as well as being “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16).

This results in at least two salient features of Messianic Judaism:

(1) the present effort to make the NT epistles Jewish in character; and,

(2) to put Messianic Judaism in a prominent place presently.

The books of David H. Stern illustrate both point (1) as well as the following. As additional illustrations of point (2), consider the following quotations, taking note of the bearing of the titles of the books. First, let us see the self-important, confusion confounded by Mark D. Nanos:

The “rich root of the olive tree,” which appears to signify the remnant of restored Israel that Paul in his ministry to the gentiles represents (cf. vv. 1-10), “supports” all the branches, both the gentiles who are grafted in from a “wild olive tree” and the natural branches of “the cultivated olive tree.”

No remnant was “restored,” but rather maintained. But let that pass, and note that the root of the olive tree is understood to be not Abraham. No, here the Jewish remnant is the root, and the Jewish remnant supports all the branches!

Now a few quotations from Joseph Shalum:

He further chose Israel so that the nations could then become part of the commonwealth of Israel.

Interestingly, he mis-applies Hosea 1:10 to Gentiles:

Paul describes the Gentiles, who were not God’s people (cf. Hos. 1:10) . . . God has turned them from being “not-my-people” and as it were “naturalized” them into being “fellow-citizens,” “fellow-heirs,”


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and “fellow-members” of the “commonwealth of Israel” (cf. Eph. 2:12, 3:6). \(^{158}\)

Also, for him, the root is Israel, and receiving life is the notion put forward (instead of profession) in spite of the fact that branches are cut away, and the wild olive graft is threatened with excision from the good olive tree.

The root and its (original) branches are Israel. Moreover, the root has not been cut off. The stump remains, and only from its root may new branches – even those which have been “grafted in” – receive life (cf. “life from the dead” [verse 15]). \(^{159}\)

. . . “the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body [Israel] . . . (Eph. 3:6).” \(^{160}\)

\(^{158}\) Ibid., p. 373.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., p. 374.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., p. 377.
Part 6
The Hebrew Christian Distinctives Examined

Chapter 6.1

Dr. Fructenbaum’s Scheme

Dr. Arnold G. Fructenbaum is Jewish by birth and has received the Lord Jesus as Messiah. Among many other studies he has been at Dallas Theological Seminary for a Th.M in Hebrew. Supporters of Torah-keeping, Messianic Judaism (as the case of Dr. Stern) have very seriously erred. But Dr. Fructenbaum knows that the Christian is not under the law. Indeed, he holds the pretribulation rapture and would place himself among ‘dispensationalists’ (i.e., of the Scofieldian class). Nonetheless, he holds to Jewish distinctives in the church by coming to them through the Abrahamic Covenant rather than the Mosaic Covenant (which he knows was ended), claiming the Abrahamic Covenant has always been in force since it was made.

He advocates, then, “The Hebrew Christian Distinctives,” and among other writings has written Hebrew Christianity. Likely, he would be more comfortable with some such designation rather than Messianic Judaism. “Hebrew Christianity” appears more mild; moreover, that term has the advantage of having had a long history, whereas the “Messianic Judaism” movement is of recent origin and is growing rapidly. 161 It is well named,

161. A paper, The Ascendance of “Messianic Judaism” in the Context of “Hebrew Christianity,” by William Greene may be found on the Internet. It surveys the changes -- involving the formation of Messianic congregations. There is also a paper by Mark Kinzer and Dan Juster, Defining Messianic Judaism, saying, “The following statement was affirmed by the Delegates to the 23rd annual UMCJ Conference on July 31, 2002.” Under the heading “Basic Statement” we read:

Messianic Judaism is a movement of Jewish congregations and congregation-like groupings committed to Yeshua the Messiah that embrace the covenantal
being a form of Judaism, with some Christianity added so as to have it appear to be a form of Christianity (indeed, actually claiming to represent valid early Christianity, allegedly distorted by Gentile Christians). Taking Dr. Fructenbaum’s views as toward the end of the spectrum of views that is more mild, it will be nonetheless evident that his position regarding Jewish believers is quite Judaized in spite of what he holds of Scofieldian dispensationalism. Moreover, in beginning this examination of his form of Hebrew Christian distinctives, I do not class him with the Torah-keeping Messianic Judaism spectrum of views, as if to paint every one of those adhering to Messianic Judaism as exactly alike. Thus, as we see how far his view is from the Christian’s heavenly calling, place, and privileges. We will see that even his view is false, Judaizing, and a departure from Christianity.

The fact that he calls for the boys of Jewish believers to be circumcised, is in fact Judaistic. He seeks to escape this by basing it on the Abrahamic Covenant allegedly being in force, instead of on the law of Moses. Whether under the Abrahamic Covenant or under the Mosaic Covenant, circumcision stands for a separation from Gentiles (whatever else it means). He claims unity with Gentile believers but for spiritual distinctives puts on the body the mark of separation from Gentiles. The fact is, it is a mark of separation, but from whom? From Gentiles merely? Our positional circumcision by our identity with Christ’s death accomplishes that separation. The real meaning of what he advocates is a separateness from Gentile believers. We want to understand from Scripture the meaning of this and not his justifying explanations of the meaning of this unscriptural and divisive practice, while speaking of unity with Gentile believers. Our examination of his views will show where this leads him.

Dr. Fructenbaum has written an interesting and irenic book, Hebrew Christianity: Its Theology, History, & Philosophy. In it, there is a chapter, “The Biblical Basis for the Hebrew Christian Distinctive.” In this chapter he rightly shows that a Gentile Christian is not a “spiritual Jew” (as “covenant theology” claims the Christian is) with which we heartily agree. We have long been aware that “a true Jew” is a Jew who is saved (Rom. 2:29), and as such he is of “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16), and a natural

161. (...continued)

responsibility of Jewish life and identity rooted in Torah, expressed in tradition, renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant.

The word Judaism in the designation Messianic Judaism is very appropriate. It is not Christianity.

162. Published by his organization, Arial Ministries Press, Tustin, CA, 1992 [1983]. All the errors in this book will not be reviewed as that would require a book longer than his 142 pages.
branch in the olive tree of Rom. 11. Such things were taught by J. N. Darby in the 1800s in opposition to the views of covenant theology. This teaching was accompanied by much else that bears on the subject of the Christian’s heavenly calling, place, and privileges; and how the Christian has died to the world and died to the law (not that the law died). But Dr. Fructenbaum has moved (likely unconsciously) against numbers of aspects of the recovered truth of the 1800s. 163

Besides rightly showing the falsity of the notion that a believing Gentile is a true Jew or that he is part of the Israel of God, his book, *Hebrew Christianity*, may be considered as having two parts to show “The Hebrew Christian Distinctives.”

A. First, he shows that there are differences among Christians and then assumes from that fact that there is a spiritual distinction between Jewish believers and Gentile believers concerning spiritual function and practices.

B. Then he examines four subjects that he believes warrant his claim that the NT supports spiritual distinctives for Jewish believers:

1. The Abrahamic Covenant.
2. The Doctrine of the Remnant.
3. The Doctrine of the Olive Tree.
4. The Doctrine of the Israel of God.

We shall not only examine statements from the book *Hebrew Christianity* but from others of his, as well. Dr. Fructenbaum’s general scheme is to:

1. have the Abrahamic Covenant in force ever since it was made with Abraham, requiring circumcision for the present Jewish remnant as being under the Abrahamic Covenant;

2. have the present Jewish remnant be a part of the nation of Israel (though, we will note, the nation of Israel, as such, is excised from the olive tree, i.e., from the special place of privilege);

3. thus having a “dual-citizenship” for the remnant now, meaning that in 1 Cor. 10:32 he is in the “Jew” category for spiritual purposes, while at the same time being in the “Church of God” category; and,

4. have the present Jewish remnant, when in the resurrected state, receive a special Jewish place in the millennial reign of Christ.

164. He does this even though this creates the absurdity of placing Israel under an unconditional covenant and a conditional covenant at the same time, regarding the obtaining the promises. It falsifies the true character of the trial of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall.
Before leaving this chapter let us observe that “The Hebrew Christian Distinctives” raises the question of what the “Gentile Christian Distinctives’ are. Well, none really, for the Jewish believer has the blessings of the Gentile believers, but he has more than that. The truth of the matter is that in Dr. Fructenbaum’s system, the Jewish believer has more than the Gentile believer -- which will be true in the millennium, in earthly blessing -- and this is not only false, it is divisive in thrust as well as earthly-izing the Christian position.
Chapter 6.2

Are Jewish Believer’s Under The Abrahamic Covenant?

Distinctions Only Removed in Certain Areas

Dr. Fructenbaum wants to show that the distinction between Jew and Gentile is only removed in certain areas and not in others. Thus, he comments on 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Gal. 3:28, and Col. 3:11. He then says that there are areas without distinction such as justification and membership in the body of Christ, but there are distinctions that are not forever erased between the two. 165 The conclusion is correct concerning the words, but not concerning all the things he intends to pack within those words. Concerning the earthly distinction between Jew and Gentile, that distinction subsists. The conclusion that therefore the Jewish believer is free to engage in OT practices and observances does not follow, any more than the believing Gentile is to, or may, engage in religious practices of his pre-salvation days. The Jewish Christian has, of course, the handy excuse that what God instituted in Judaism was (at one time) sanctioned by God, but heathen religion was not. When we come to the subject of the Jewish days and months, etc., we hope to show that engaging in them now, is engaging in the elements of the world.

Christians Are Not Under the New Covenant

In the millennium, the Jewish nation, all saved (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 60:21), and under the New Covenant (Heb. 8), will have the law written in the heart by the sovereign action of God. The observances given in Ezek. 40-48 will be commemorative, under the Priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13) when Christ exercises the Melchizedec priesthood, a priesthood founded on the once-for-all sacrifice, as Hebrews shows. Thus, all such specified

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observances will be *memorial* in the millennium, deriving their character from the Melchizedec high priest. Present observance (the Lord’s day and supper) is not under the New Covenant. The church is not under any covenant. Nor is it the case that in the church Jewish believers are now under the New Covenant while Gentile believers are not under it. No such distinction exists. The New Covenant is not in effect now, though Covenant Theology claims it is, and many Messianic Jews may say so also.

If the New Covenant is in effect now, then the law is written in the heart, and everyone under the New Covenant should keep the Sabbath. There are Messianic Jews who do so; while Covenantists with their hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy transmute the seventh-day Sabbath into a first-day-of-the-week Sabbath. The only Christian day of observance is the Lord’s day. And it is Christ that is written in the Christian’s heart, not the law. Christians are under “the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2), under the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:15, 16). How fitting to find this stated in the epistle to the Galatians!

**What Are the Distinctions That Are Maintained?**

In proof of his system Dr. Fruchtenbaum shows us distinctions among Christians. Of course, we recognize those distinctions, but they do not prove what he uses them for.

**Bond and Free.** Five passages are quoted: Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22 - 4:1; 1 Tim. 6:1, 2; Titus 2:9-10; and 1 Pet. 2:18. The fact that “in Christ” these distinctions do not exist, but in earthly relationships they do exist does not show that Hebrew believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant, and that they may take up with circumcision, Jewish feasts, etc. There may be Jewish Christians who are slaves and others who are not. Bond or free among Jewish believers is no support for his thesis. He has referred to something that is the same for Jewish and Gentile believers.

**Male and Female.** For this 1 Cor. 11:3-10, 1 Cor. 14:34, 35, Eph. 5:22-25, Col. 3:18-19, 1 Tim. 2:11-12, Titus 2:1, 3-5, and 1 Pet. 3:1, 7 are quoted to show a distinction. These are Scriptures that we all ought to obey. But the distinction in this earthly relationship does not show that Jewish believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant, and may take up with circumcision, or Jewish feasts, etc. That is the thing to be proved from

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Scripture, not what we all know already, namely, that there are earthly differences distinguishing one flesh from another. And there are Jewish believers who are female and others are male. The male/female distinction among Jewish believers is no support for his thesis. He has referred to something that is the same for Jewish and Gentile believers.

**Differing Gifts.** In his conclusion to his arguments for distinctiveness, he mentions differences in spiritual gifts (p. 34). Jewish believers have differences of gifts. So do Gentile believers have differences of gifts. Gifts as expressive of the Spirit’s power (*charismata*) are found in 1 Cor. 12; as services to God, in Rom. 12; and as gifts of Christ (*domata*) to the body, in Eph. 4. This fact is the same for both Jewish and Gentile believers. This sameness of distribution of gifts hardly serves to illustrate that there is a distinctive Jewish Christian spiritual position and function. He has referred to something that is the same for Jewish and Gentile believers.

**Conclusion.** That is the evidence brought forward for spiritual distinctions. His conclusion, not heretofore unknown to us, is that Scripture shows that there are kinds of distinctions. It remains for him to demonstrate that while the NT shows there are Jewish believers and Gentile believers, the NT also shows that Jewish believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant, subject to circumcision, and that they may engage in Jewish observances.

*The Abrahamic Covenant -- and Present-day Circumcision of Jewish Christians*

The NT shows that there are earthly distinctions among believers that are recognized in the NT. Indeed, we have instructions concerning the relative Christian duties in these things. But it is still necessary for Dr. Fructenbaum to show why Jewish Christians are under the Abrahamic Covenant, subject to circumcision, and may engage in Jewish feasts, have Jewish Christian fellowships, etc. This he attempts to do under four heads. His method is to avoid an imposition of his scheme upon Gentile believers, also avoid basing the matter on the law, and thus avoid the charge in Galatians -- of Judaizing -- while maintaining Jewish, spiritual distinctives within Christianity. What results, therefore, is not the kinds of distinctions we looked at above -- which are really all true of both Jewish and Gentile believers, which apply equally to Christians, whether Jew or Gentile -- but the attempt to make a spiritual distinction that differs in kind between Jewish and Gentile Christians. This is a Judaizing and divisive system. Of course a Jewish Christian can be Judaized! Saying, but they are “the Israel of God” and that is a difference is beside the real issue. The Israel of God and Gentile believers are to walk by the same rule (Gal. 6:15, 16). In Dr. Fructenbaum’s
judaising system, the Jewish believers are made to walk under the rule of the Abrahamic Covenant.

**Are Jewish Christians under the Abrahamic Covenant?**

Referring to Gal. 3, Dr. Fruchtenbaum wrote:

Paul stated that the law of Moses was an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant (verses 15-18). . . . It was a temporary addition until the seed (Messiah) would come; now that He has come, the law is finished. The addition has ceased to function with the cross.  

While the Mosaic Law, coming 430 years later, added to it {i.e., to the Abrahamic Covenant}, the Law could in no way change it. Through the cross, however, the Mosaic Law (the addition) was rendered inoperative, but the Abrahamic Covenant (the Original) is still very much in effect.

His view is that the Abrahamic Covenant was in force and the Law was joined (added) to the Abrahamic Covenant. This is a way of having believing Jews now be under the Abrahamic Covenant. How? Consequent upon the cross, the law is dis-joined from the Abrahamic Covenant, leaving Jews under the Abrahamic Covenant now.

Rom. 5:20 says:

But the law came in, in order that the offence might abound . . .

And J. N. Darby has a footnote to the word “in”:

Came in as an extra thing, or by the by.

The only correct thing in the above quotations is that the law came in 430 years later and could not change the Abrahamic Covenant. The rest is false.

1. No Scripture shows that the law added to the Abrahamic Covenant so that Israel was under it and the Mosaic Covenant at the same time. The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant and the covenant of the law is a conditional covenant. The two cannot be added together, nor mixed. Israel took up the promises conditionally under the law. They cannot have been under an unconditional and a conditional covenant, simultaneously, regarding obtaining the promises. The Mosaic Covenant suspended the Abrahamic Covenant (which will be made good by

168. *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Tustin: Ariel Ministries, p. 644 (1992)). This has been repeated in *How Jewish is Christianity*, p. 118. Long ago, Israel’s place had been ably expounded by J. N. Darby.

2. Moreover, his assertion is a direct contradiction of the Apostle’s explicit statement that is against the notion of adding the law to the promises:

   Brethren, (I speak according to man) even man’s confirmed covenant no one sets aside, or adds other dispositions to (Gal. 3:15).

Dr. Fructenbaum’s system flies in the face of Paul’s statement. The warning is about adding law to the promises, which is exactly what Dr. Fructenbaum has done in claiming the law was added to the Abrahamic Covenant. **And this is essential to his system.** The word for “adds” in v. 15 is ἐπιδιατάσσεται, meaning “to arrange in addition.”  

This is the refutation of the explicit addition of the law to the Abrahamic Covenant that he advocates, here denounced by the Apostle. Commenting on Gal. 3:19, directly contradicting what the Apostle stated, he claims that:

   In the context, Paul is pointing to the Law of Moses as an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant.

The context includes v. 15 which explicitly contradicts his assertion. As to v. 19:

   Why then the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions

   “Added” here is προσετέθη, and means “to add, or to place beside (the primary meaning)”  

The fact is that in the ways of God in dealing with the first man as under trial to see if he was recoverable, God brought in the law. The law came in to make sin come out as transgression of prohibitions. Both the context and the words show that Dr. Fructenbaum’s notion is false, but this false notion is fundamental to his system, which cannot stand without his idea that the law was actually added to the Abrahamic Covenant, rather than the fact that the Abrahamic Covenant is in suspension until made good in the millennium. It is a desire to have Hebrew Christian spiritual distinctives that is the father of the Judaizing error. Hence he boldly mischaracterized the book of Galatians:

   But this book clearly states that the Abrahamic Covenant is still very much in effect with all its features, and this includes

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171. *Hebrew Christianity, op. cit.*, p. 84.
circumcision. 173

Galatians does not “state” this, much less “clearly state” it. It does not even show this to be so in some veiled way. In fact, *Gal. 3:15 states that you cannot add a conditional covenant to an unconditional covenant.*

And why was the covenant of the law added to the Abrahamic Covenant? Why was a conditional covenant added to an unconditional covenant? What sort of mongrel is that? What is this absurdity (excuse me) about? Why, it is a ploy to get Jewish Christians under the Abrahamic Covenant now, without being under the law, and yet engage in things that are Hebrew Christian distinctives.

Note that the law is not presently inoperative (neither is it dead, as some claim). The Mosaic system, the covenant of the law, is set aside, but for all that, the law has its own force and may be used lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8, 9). The Christian, whether Jew or Gentile, is dead -- dead to the law (Rom. 7:4).

I suppose Dr. Fructenbaum knows that the Christian is dead to the law? The Christian is alive in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11). His system makes Jewish Christians alive under the Abrahamic Covenant. Not only has he not shown this to be so from Scripture, he defies the explicit statement of Gal. 3:15. It is merely framing a Judaizing system that he imposes upon Scripture.

God set up matters to show that man could not gain the good of the promises by a covenant of law, a covenant of works, a covenant of do and thou shalt live. *The first man* was under trial on that basis, in the persons of the Jews under the Mosaic system, to show that man was not recoverable from the fall. So, the covenant of the law was not added to the covenant of promise. The covenant of the law could not add to or disannul the promises. The promises remain in the purpose of God, remain in God’s good time to fulfil them to the new Israel under the New Covenant, in the millennium. Dr. Fructenbaum has not shown from Scripture that the Abrahamic Covenant is in force now. He merely asserts that it is so, actually doing so directly against Gal. 3:15. And as we proceed, we shall repeatedly see that the passages brought forward by him actually show the inverse of that for which he contends.

Really, the Abrahamic Covenant is in suspension, waiting on sovereign grace to make the promises good to Israel in the future. 174 No Christian, Jew or Gentile, is presently under any covenant.

Just think of the divisiveness of the Judaizing notion that Jewish

174. When the Abrahamic Covenant is in force by God, *all Israel* will be under it.

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believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant and that Gentile believers are not!

The covenants are for the earth, and those we are speaking of are for an earthly people, with an earthly calling -- but we are heavenly and have a heavenly calling. His system is an undermining of the true character of the Christian’s heavenly position.

Speaking of some four features of the Abrahamic Covenant, he states implications for Jewish Christians, which we need not review, but there is one more matter. He says:

Finally, there is the matter of circumcision. Since Hebrew Christians still fall under the other provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant, they fall under this one as well. It is my conviction that Hebrew Christians should have their sons circumcised on the eight day.  

Yes, he says that circumcision for justification, or on the basis of the law, or for a Gentile, are wrong. But on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant circumcision is “proper,” and “in effect” now for Jewish Christians. Moreover, he says, Paul taught the Gentiles not to circumcise, but Paul did so with Jews (Acts 21:17-26) and had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3).

Paul, who taught the Gentiles not to circumcise, did not do so with Jews; this is clear from Acts 21:17-26, and from Acts 16:1-3 when he had Timothy circumcised. It was not circumcision per se that was ruled out, but rather circumcision on the basis of the Mosaic law.  

175. Hebrew Christianity, op. cit., p. 29.
A ‘Dispensationalist’ Messianic Jewish View of the Abrahamic Covenant and Circumcision

This Messianic Jewish view is that the Abrahamic Covenant has always been in force (so as to have it in force presently, and justify circumcising the boys of Messianic Jews). This involves the absurdity of placing Israel under an unconditional and a conditional covenant simultaneously. It presently puts the Messianic Jew under an earthly covenant, undermining the heavenly position of all Christians. It is a view driven by Jewish ethnicity.

Actually, Dr. Fructeinbaum views the Abrahamic Covenant as always continuing in force, but the illustration is meant to fasten the eye on the absurdity of placing persons under and unconditional covenant and a conditional covenant simultaneously regarding the same promises.
The Truth Concerning
The Abrahamic Covenant
and
Circumcision in the Body

CIRCUMCISED IN CHRIST
Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3

CIRCUMCISION
AS
SPIRITUAL
ANTICIPATION

SEATED TOGETHER IN THE
HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS
Eph. 2:6

CIRCUMCISION
AS
SPIRITUAL
***
COMMEMORATION

PROMISES

CIRCUMCISION
AS
THE FLESH
UNDER TRIAL *

CIRCUMCISION
AS
SELF-WILLED
CONCISI ON **

FOR THE
EARTH
UNDER THE
ABRAHAMIC
COVENANT
(conditional)

FOR THE
EARTH
UNDER THE
MOSAIC
COVENANT
(conditional)

FOR THE
EARTH
WITH
NO
COVENANT

FOR THE
EARTH
UNDER THE
4 COVENANTS
OF PROMISE
(unconditional)

* FLESHLY: the flesh endeavoring under law to practice the meaning of circumcision as part of the testing of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable. The cross ended the testing of the first man.

** CONCISI ON (PHIL. 3:2): indicates that circumcision in the body for a spiritual purpose is a mutilation.

*** SPIRITUAL COMMEMORATION: for the earthly people it is circumcision; presently, for the heavenly people, the Lord's Supper is commemorative.
W. Kelly seems to have anticipated something like Dr. Fructenbaum’s view when he said:

But there is another point of view, which it is especially the Apostle Paul’s to bring out, that Christ has wrought a work by virtue of which even those who were under the law are completely brought outside its domain; and those not previously under it, i.e., the Gentiles, are proved to sin against their own mercies, if in any way they pass under its yoke. To this the Apostle Paul has come in our epistle: “Stand fast,” he says, “in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Bear in mind this, too, that, among the Galatians, the character of the bondage was not so much what is called the moral law as the ceremonial. I am aware that many would think the latter much more serious than the former. But, on the contrary, the Christian’s subjection to the moral law argues a far deeper departure from the truth than if it were the ceremonial; because the ceremonial law, every Christian must feel, derives its whole meaning and value from being a type of Christ. Not so the ten words {i.e., the 10 commandments}, which are not a type of Christ, but the direct demand upon the strength and righteousness of man, if he have any. And, therefore, one can understand a Christian’s getting entangled with types and shadows. A reasoning mind might say, Is it possible to believe that circumcision, on which God insisted so much with Israel, is to be given up now? If there were no value in it ever, why was it enjoined on Abraham’s seed? And if it were so significant and obligatory then, why not now? Besides, does not Christ teach that it was not of Moses, but of the fathers?

All this might furnish a plausible platform for human feeling and argument; but the apostle was led of the Holy Ghost to deal with the question of introducing the thinnest wedge of the law. Take circumcision, the type of having our nature mortified: every believer has this verified in the death of Christ. But believers might have said, There ought to be the outward acknowledgment of it too: why not retain the rite which connects us with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! We are feeble and forgetful; why should we not keep up that which “the elders” prized so deeply, while we also enjoy the blessing that is new? But the apostle deals with it decisively in this epistle. Whatever the use to which God applied circumcision before Christ, it vanishes now. 177

The only outward mark for a Christian is baptism.

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**Does Scripture Say That the Abrahamic Covenant Is in Force for Jewish Christians?**

If Paul did practice circumcising Jews, where did he say to the Jews that it was on the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant and not on the basis of the law of Moses that he did it? Do you think the Jews in the passage (Acts 21:17-26) were told that by Paul? Not so; the notion is a modern invention, read into these texts. Scripture does not say that Paul approved circumcision of Jews, and certainly did not say anywhere that the Abrahamic Covenant is in force for Jewish believers today. There is no Scripture for his system but Dr. Fructenbaum takes advantage of these texts to read into them what he wants to find, and also therefore fails to note the difference in the two cases of Paul’s judaizing error and the case of the circumcision of Timothy for another reason.

The summary of what Paul did was correctly and concisely stated in the following answer to a question:

Q. Did Paul act according to Col. 2 in having Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3)?

A. This answer was more in accordance with 1 Cor. 9:20 {perhaps, perhaps not 178}. On more than one occasion even Paul Judaized to a considerable extent, as at Jerusalem (Acts 26:26) and probably at Cenchrea (Acts 28:18). 179

We might notice before passing on that no Christian stands in relationship to God under the names of God by which God revealed Himself to Abraham. But being under the Abrahamic Covenant does place a person in that standing, and that is not the Christian standing that is true of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. Our standing is *that Christ’s place is our place before God*. God has “taken us into favor in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6). We stand before God in the Beloved. His acceptance is the measure of our acceptance. The effect of Dr. Fructenbaum’s system to is to place the Jewish Christian on two standings before God, one of which is lower than the standing of all Christians. The lower standing mars the true standing and it Judaizes. It adds something to the Jewish Christian. In effect, it says that Christ’s place being our place is not enough for a Jewish Christian. Something more must be added to Christ’s place being our place. But the effect is even more than adding the lower to the higher. It hinders the right apprehension of the higher. It is clear that the immensity and exclusiveness of Christ’s place being our place has not laid hold of Dr. Fructenbaum.

178. {Abstaining from pork when eating with a Jew, or from meat itself, if eating with some Hindus, are examples of the intention – not placing oneself under Hinduism or under Judaism.}


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Regarding the Jewish Christian, he adds something to Christ’s place being our place, and Christ alone, in an analogous manner to what was going on in Galatia, though the form of it differs -- in one case it being the law and in the other the Abrahamic Covenant. And so Dr. Fructenbaum’s system is one of division between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, though saying all are saved alike.

**Are Any Christians Under the New Covenant?**

While considering the Christian and the covenants, we ought to note that Scripture expressly states that the New Covenant is with Israel when regathered (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13) and Ezek. 20:33-38 tells us that Jehovah will purge out all the rebels and bring them into “the bond of the covenant.” The new Israel under the New Covenant shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). All Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26). This is the time when it will occur that:

> I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their heart (Jer. 31:33).

> Giving my laws into their mind, I will write them also upon their hearts (Heb. 8:10).

To have the law written in the heart means that seventh-day Sabbath keeping is written in the heart. Take note of that fact! Now, the Christian, as such, is not a Sabbath keeper. In “covenant theology” the law is regarded as the rule of life. So, by the theological, spiritual alchemy of covenant theology, the seventh-day Sabbath is transmuted into a Sunday Sabbath, i.e., the Lord’s day Sabbath, i.e., the first day of the week Sabbath -- so as to have the law, *as the law*, apply as the rule of life for a Christian. Obviously, nine commandments cannot be used and one commandment (keeping the Sabbath) ignored. There must be 10 commandments. Therefore this stratagem is used to have the Lord’s day be the Sabbath -- thus maintaining the ten commandments. Every Christian should reject this spiritual alchemy of “covenant theology” for the sham it really is.

What is in our inward parts and in our hearts, as Jewish and Gentile Christians, is Christ and the Holy Spirit, and God and the truth.

> For Christ, see: John 17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17.
> For the Spirit, see: Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:1; James 4:5.
> For God, see: 1 John 4:12, 15.
> For the truth, see: 2 John 2; cp. Col. 3:16.

What is so noticeably absent is a statement in Scripture that the law dwells in the Christian’s heart. The tendency of coupling something that is not true
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(e.g., Sabbath-keeping for the Christian) with what is true (the above four things in the heart) is to lower what is true.

Consider Paul’s contradiction of law-mongering (Galatians). He wrote:

I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me; but [in] that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith, the [faith] of the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

And in Romans he wrote:

So that, my brethren, ye also have been made dead to the law by the body of the Christ, to be to another, who has been raised up from among [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God (Rom. 7:4).

Why have we been made dead to the law? It is “in order that we might bear fruit to God.” But covenant theology wants the law to help fruitfulness and restrain lawlessness. Law is not the teacher; Titus 2:11-15 shows that grace is the teacher. But this could be developed into a lengthy paper in its own right. Only a few thoughts have been given.

We have note that both believing Gentiles and the Israel of God (believing Jews) are to walk by the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:15, 16) of which Christ in resurrection is the head. It is not true that Gentile Christians are not under the New Covenant, while Jewish Christians are under the New Covenant. If so, Jewish Christians must be seventh-day Sabbath keepers. The notion would be another divisive teaching and practice in the Christian profession. It is Judaizing. The Jewish believer would be a seventh-day Sabbath keeper, while the Gentile observes the first day of the week (Acts 20:7)?

The New Covenant is for the new Israel when Christ reigns in the millennium. It will not then be as was the Mosaic Covenant for the first man, in the persons of Israel, under trial to see if he is recoverable. Such was the case before the cross. The cross ended that trial, which extended from Adam as fallen until the cross. But before the new Israel under the New Covenant is formed, God has brought about the formation of a people with a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), etc.; a people whose place before Him is Christ’s place (Eph. 1:6). This is not true of any millennial saints, Jew or Gentile. Concerning Israel, Israel has an earthly calling. The thrust of covenant theology is to make a kind of millennial saint out of the Christian

180. Devoting the Lord’s day to Him is another matter, and certainly not of the character of seventh-day Sabbath keeping. Do you devote the Lord’s day to Him?
181. In another chapter we saw how Dr. David H. Stern manages to find a seventh-day in Acts 20:7.
(having its earthly overtones, while it Judaizes both the Christian’s place and the heavenly hope). In a different way, such is the thrust of Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s system. In Judaizing, it is limited to Jewish believers, but it results in making of Jewish Christians something like a millennial Jewish saint.  

The Christian and Circumcision

Is Paul Correctly Represented by Dr. Fruchtenbaum?

TIMOTHY’S CASE

W. Kelly explained the reason for the circumcision of Timothy:

“And I, brethren, if I preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?” They had made the Apostle Paul to be a sort of evidence in their favor. They may have taken advantage of his circumcising Timothy, in order to make a show of inconsistency between his acts and his preaching. But St. Paul was not acting contrary to these principles when he circumcised Timothy. It was the elasticity of a man who could stop the mouths of objectors; and Paul, to silence Jewish slander, ended that question most unjewishly -- by having Timothy circumcised. But he would not suffer it in the case of Titus, (who was a Greek,) whom he took up to Jerusalem with himself. This might appear capricious, but grace knows the time to be firm as well as to bend. There seems here to be an allusion to this, in his argument with the defenders of the law. It requires the wisdom of the Spirit of God giving one to know where one may use our liberty, or where it is a duty to stand as firm as a rock; and Paul did both. If Timothy had been circumcised, it was grace stopping mere fleshly questions, and not law, for his father was a Greek. But as to preaching it, such a thing was far from his mind. Had he ever pressed circumcision, he would have had their favor and countenance in every place that he visited. On the contrary, he was persecuted because he would not allow the flesh nor the title of circumcision.

Commenting on Acts 16:1, W. Kelly wrote:

He was therefore not converted at this time, but, doubtless, during the former visit of the apostle, who speaks of him as his “true child in faith.” Timothy he had begotten in Christ Jesus through the gospel. The circumstances were peculiar. He was the son of a believing Jewess, Eunice, but of a Greek father, with an exceptionally good testimony from the brethren in those parts. This led to a remarkable step on the part of the

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apostle: he circumcised him “on account of the Jews” there, “for they all knew that his father was a Greek” or Gentile.

Now this was in no way the requirement of the law, which, on the contrary, in strictness placed Timothy by his birth in a painful and outside position. It was really an act of grace on the part of the same apostle who would have utterly repelled the circumcision of Titus; for Titus was a Gentile. Still less is it inconsistent with the recent council at Jerusalem; for the question there was whether the Jewish yoke was to be placed on the Gentiles that believed. It was decided, we have seen, that no such compulsion was authorized or desirable. Here, it was the child of a Jewess against whom Jews would have had a feeling because of his father. In all probability the father was now dead, of whom we never hear as alive, and who in that case, might have perpetuated the uncircumcised condition of his son. If the father no longer lived, Paul could act the more freely, and the same champion for liberty who refused compulsion in the case of Titus, himself took and circumcised Timothy.

Why did Paul circumcise Timothy? “on account of the Jews that were there,” not because Timothy was under the Abrahamic Covenant. Indeed, as W. Kelly pointed out, the law would expel him from among the Jews on account of his father being a Greek. The Abrahamic Covenant would not be for Timothy either. Timothy’s case does not support the notion that Christian Jews are now under the Abrahamic Covenant.

Paul’s Judaizing Error

Remembering one’s own failures, it is painful to speak of this failure on the part of the model Christian, Paul. Nonetheless, the following words from W. Kelly need to be brought to bear on this matter:

The glory of Christ on high is the answer to His humiliation below, whatever else may follow. Nor is there any witness to it so bright. Hence the apostle speaks of ‘my gospel’, and ‘our gospel’ where he names his companions along with himself. The gospel of the glory of Christ was given him to preach it in all its height of blessedness; and hence the danger of letting it slip, if even one that once knew it begins to preach grace at a lower level only, true as it may be. Nothing so completely lifts above the tradition and the thoughts of men.

Hence the danger even to the apostle himself when in Jerusalem. Another atmosphere was breathed there. It is not that they did not confess Jesus to be the Christ, and look for His kingdom and glory; but out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. “And they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many myriads there are among the

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Jews of those that believe, and they are all zealous for the law. And they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs” (vv. 20, 21). This witness was true as far as they themselves were concerned; but what they were informed about Paul was an exaggeration. Whatever his sense of Christian liberty, none was more tolerant of Jewish conscience, on the other hand, none more resolute to teach the Gentile believers that they had nothing to do with law, but with Christ dead and risen. What could Gentile believers have to do with circumcision or the other institutions and customs of Israel? For heaven, as in heaven, all this was unknown.

As the full grace of God preached by the apostle startled not a few of the saints in Jerusalem, a gloss was sought to prove that he was a good Jew notwithstanding. “What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come. Do thou this that we say to thee: We have four men with a vow on them; these take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges over them, that they may shave their heads, and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee but that thou thyself also walkest orderly keeping the law” (vv. 22-24).

This was not strange advice for the Christians in Jerusalem to give, but it seems a descending path for the apostle Paul to follow. No one knew better than he to walk as dead with Christ and risen with Him, no one better than he to please the Lord without fear of the opinions of men, or even of his brethren. With him it was a very small thing to be examined of others or of himself. Had he looked to the Lord for His guidance now, perhaps he would have advised James and the rest to judge nothing before the time till the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall each have the praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5). Indeed it is doubtful whether anything done as a witness to ourselves (and this seems the gist of James’ counsels to Paul) is ever blessed of God or satisfies man. We shall see what the issue was in this instance.

In their past dealings with the Gentiles who believed (Acts 15:22-29), the apostles and elders had acted with divine wisdom. So it is here added, “But, as touching the Gentiles that believed we wrote [or, enjoined] giving judgment, that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols and blood and things strangled and fornication” (v. 25). These injunctions were clearly understood before the law was even given to Israel. It was not natural religion which ignored sin and the fall. For God man needs revelation; but in such things Christianity only confirms the broad principles God had laid down before Israel existed.

“Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with
them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of the
purification until the offering was offered for every one of them” (v.
26).

The apostle yielded to his Jewish brethren. It was in no way a
step which flowed from his own judgment before God; and we shall
see that it was wholly in vain as far as the Jews were concerned. No
doubt there was misunderstanding on their part; but we can scarcely
say, whatever one’s reverence for the apostles, that the light of the
Lord shone upon the course that was then recommended or pursued.
Their conduct might not be without failure in this or that particular;
whilst their teaching, beyond all doubt in what was written in the Spirit
for the permanent direction of the church, was perfectly guarded from
the least error. “We are of God” (said one of them): “he that knoweth
God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. By this we know
the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). This is
stringent, but it is the truth; and, if so, it is really grace to let all saints
know that there is such a standard -- not Christ’s person only, but the
apostolic word. If we truly confess Him, we shall surely hear them: if
we refuse them, we do not really own Him Who sent and inspired
them. If we reject Him and them, we are irretrievably lost, guiltier
than Jews or heathen, who had not such privileges. For the true light
now shines. God is fully revealed in Christ, and the written word
makes both known.

It was a singular sight: Paul purifying himself to show that he
walked orderly and kept the law. He was evidently walking according
to the thoughts of others, which no more glorifies God than it satisfies
man . . . (vv. 27-36).

No more devoted servant of the Lord than Paul ever lived. This
however did not hinder the effects of a mistaken position. He had
departed from those to whom the Lord sent him, out of his excessive
love for the ancient people of God. At the instance of others he had
sought to conciliate them to the uttermost, but the effect in no way
answered to the desire either of James or of Paul. Can we say that, in
going up to Jerusalem there was such a following of Christ as he loved
to commend to the saints? “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am
of Christ.” 185

Later in his book Dr. Fructenbaum quotes Acts 21:17-26 and italicizes
the words “thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law.” After quoting
the passage he says that a believer is free to keep parts of the law though
free from the law. 186 He is using Paul’s failure in an effort to support his
system but the quoted part, from James, in italics, says “walkest orderly,

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186. Hebrew Christianity, op. cit., p. 89.

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keeping the law,” not “walketh orderly, keeping parts of the law.” Besides, elsewhere he says there are 613 laws and they are a unit. He should supply a list of which parts of the 613 that Jewish believers are free to keep -- as law. But what appears contradictory to keeping parts of it is that he says a Jewish believer is free to refrain from eating pork if he feels the need to do this. Then he adds:

The same is true for all the other commandments. 187

So if the Jewish Christian feels the need to keep all 613 commandments, he is free to do so. Why, on that basis he may feel free to have little to do with Gentiles! What Judaism this is! 188 This astonishing result we leave to the reader to try to digest. I note here that in Rom. 14, the Jewish believer who feels the need to refrain from pork on the basis of the law is called a weak brother! Dr. Fructenbaum tries to reverse this and we hope to consider Rom. 14 below.

**Paul’s Teaching Concerning Circumcision**

Now let us compare some things Paul wrote, by inspiration of the Spirit, that stand in contrast to the Judaizing thing he fell into.

**WHY WAS PAUL PERSECUTED IF HE PREACHED CIRCUMCISION?**

But I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why am I yet persecuted?

(Gal. 5:11)

Paul did not make a distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers regarding circumcision. He did not preach circumcision -- period. This is an unqualified statement. The NT contains no such idea that Jewish believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant and therefore ought to be circumcised. That is, in fact, preaching circumcision, a thing Paul did not do.

**CIRCUMCISION IS NOTHING AND UNCIRCUMCISION IS NOTHING**

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; but keeping God’s commandments (1 Cor. 7:19).

How could Paul make such an unqualified statement if circumcision was something for Jewish Christians? It will not do to say that he meant this only as far as circumcision under the law is concerned, not with respect to the Abrahamic Covenant. No such distinction, or exception, is made anywhere in the NT. It is all imagination driven by Jewish ethnicity.

187. *Hebrew Christianity*, op. cit., p. 82.

188. I am not saying that a Jew should not eat Matzoh, if he likes it, or gefilte fish, etc. or that he should not eat in Jewish restaurants, or that he should not speak Hebrew or Yiddish. That is all beside the point. If a person’s conscience is under law, he is insofar not in practical Christian liberty.
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CIRCUMCISION OUTSIDE OF CHRIST?

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation (Gal. 6:15).

Perhaps Dr. Fructenbaum acknowledges that “in Christ” circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing. If so, since he attaches a “religious” or “spiritual” value to circumcision as claiming to be under the Abrahamic Covenant, he must find value for circumcision outside of Christ. He teaches that there is a God-approved circumcision for Jewish Christians -- well, this circumcision must be outside of Christ. Let us state it in its true import. In effect, this is a denial of completeness in Christ.

Elsewhere, Dr. Fructenbaum shows that he cannot find out that it was Paul who wrote the epistle to the Hebrews. Indeed, regarding Peter’s statement that Paul had written to those to whom Peter was writing (i.e., Jewish believers in the diaspora) he says Peter referred to Paul’s writing to the Galatians. Supposing that to be the case, Paul was writing Gal. 6:15 to Jewish believers.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF JEWISH CHRISTIANS DENIES THEIR COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST

(8) See that there be no one who shall lead you away as a prey through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the teaching of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.

(9) For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; (10) and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and authority, (11) in whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ . . . (Col. 2:8-12).

This applies to all Christians. All have received this circumcision and all are complete in Christ. You cannot add anything to a Christian, though putting Jewish Christians under the Abrahamic Covenant is an attempt to add something to them that has merit before God. To do so not only comes under the condemnation of being “concision” (Phil. 3:2), it finds its company in Col. 2:8.

THE TRUE JEW IS CIRCUMCISED INWARDLY

For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he [is] a Jew [who is so] inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:28, 29).

Here again there is no hint that a Jewish Christian needs outward circumcision to be pleasing to God. Dr. Fructenbaum’s notion about Christian Jews being under the Abrahamic Covenant is a fabrication, foreign to Scripture. There is no hint of it. A Jewish Christian has the inward circumcision, and that is sufficient. Likewise, the Gentile believer has the...
inward circumcision.

**WE ARE THE CIRCUMCISION.**

See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:2, 3).

The *we* must be understood of all believers, and certainly of Paul and the Philippians, i.e., of Jewish and of Gentile Christians. We are all classed together as “the circumcision.” Here, Paul calls the Jews the “concision.” This word means a cutting, a mutilation. Circumcision in the flesh, for religious reasons, is at the present time only a mutilation, like the prophets of Baal who cut themselves in their religious fervor. The Apostle goes much further than saying that circumcision in the flesh has no value before God. Circumcision has no place now since the covenant of the law was set aside. Nor is the Abrahamic Covenant in effect. Indeed, that covenant was displaced by the law, not the law added to it (Gal. 3:15). Now, all is in suspension while God forms the heavenly company. When that work is concluded He will take up with Israel again. But it awaits the coming of Christ in glory to inaugurate the New Covenant -- with which the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenant will be put in force for the new Israel. The Abrahamic Covenant is no more in force now than is the Davidic Covenant. That also was an unconditional covenant as is the Abrahamic Covenant.

Moreover, in circumcision in the flesh there is a “trust in flesh” as doing something of merit before God. All our merit is Christ Himself. His place is our place (Eph. 1:6). Nothing can be added. We are complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

**THE ISRAEL OF GOD IS NOT EXEMPT FROM THE RULE OF THE NEW CREATION**

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

The Israel of God is composed of believing Jews, here spoken of along with Gentile believers. However, both come under the “rule” of the new creation, where there is neither circumcision or uncircumcision. That means that there is no distinction in the flesh, as circumcision and uncircumcision, as having value before God. We are all to *walk by this rule*. Our walk, note. Our walk is formed by the new creation. There is a practical walk in this


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world that is thus formed. The Israel of God is to walk by this rule. Not so, says Dr. Fructenbaum, in effect. The Israel of God is to be circumcised the eighth day under the Abrahamic Covenant -- that is a rule that the Israel of God is under. Thus we have noted that it is a circumcision outside of Christ and a denial of completeness in Christ. It is an adding to a heavenly people, who are circumcised with a circumcision not made with hand, that which is only an external circumcision. And, it is divisive in thrust, making a distinction in the flesh not recognized by God. It has nothing to do with such a distinction as “bond or free.” Whether or not a Jewish Christian or a Gentile Christian is “bond or free” in his circumstances of life, he has nothing to do with circumcision in the flesh.

Circumcision in the Flesh Is Not for Those with a Heavenly Calling

The book of Hebrews speaks of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Among other reasons, Hebrews was written to direct Jewish Christians away from what was Judaistic. Israel had an earthly calling. And though Abraham did indeed look beyond this, by faith, and looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, yet his calling was earthly, to be separate in the earth. Circumcision was the token both of the righteousness of his faith in Jehovah and of the covenant God graciously made regarding him and his seed.

The law did not address believers, as such. It made no distinction between who really belonged to God and who did not. Under the Mosaic Covenant, circumcision signified the people’s agreement to keep the law (vain expectation). It gave a character to the people such that they were “the circumcision” while all others were “the uncircumcised.” It was a mark of separation from the Gentile. While circumcision has a typical import and meaning for the Christian, as having been circumcised in Christ’s death, concerning its use as circumcision in the flesh, it is a mark of separation in the world. It was so with Abraham as well as with Israel under the Mosaic Covenant. It will be so for the New Israel under the New Covenant. In no case was it in order, or will it be in order, for those with a heavenly calling. It was for those who had, and will have, an earthly calling. Thus in Hebrews, the Jewish Christians were directed to the heavenly calling and the sanctuary above, where Christ, our high priest, is minister of the holy places (Heb. 8) and where we have boldness to enter by His blood (Heb. 10:19-22). It was particularly appropriate to have such truths brought before those who were hankering after the OT order. There were holy places on earth, in the tabernacle and in the temple. This is not true now. There will be holy places in the millennial temple (Ezek. 40 - 48) with a priesthood of the offspring of faithful Phinehas (the sons of Zadok) between the new
Israel under the New Covenant and Jehovah.

Yes, the veil has been rent once-for-all, and now we have boldness to go directly in (in spirit) into the holy places above. Not so with the new Israel under the New Covenant. There will be an intermediate priesthood and the temple will have two-leaved doors (no veil, of course). Yes, that is greater access, much greater, than Israel had under the Mosaic Covenant, but it is still on earth, consistent with the earthly calling. There are no two-leaved doors for the Christian. The Jewish Christian now has no intermediate priesthood (he is a priest!) anymore than he has two-leaved doors when going into the holy places above (Heb. 10:19-22). In doing so, he has no intermediate priesthood. This unspeakable privilege is unique to Christians. Requiring circumcision for Jewish Christians, whatever the scheme to justify it, is, at its very best, the importing into Christianity the earthly position of a Jewish, millennial saint, who has an earthly calling, priesthood, and sanctuary. It is imposition upon one who ought to be in the good of the heavenly calling to which none of this attaches. It is Judaizing; or if you prefer, it is Israelite-izing. The spiritual circumcision we have in Christ, as identified with Him in death and resurrection, etc. separates us spiritually from the world, even as He is not of the world (John 17). We are one with Him, whether Jewish or Gentile believers. We are of a new creation though our walk in responsibility is in this present creation. Scripture does not teach that millennial saints will be positionally in the new creation. It is true that they will all be righteous, all saved, all circumcised in heart. And outward circumcision will have its place, distinguishing them from Gentile millennial saints. It has no place now, and when practiced as if under a covenant, shows lack of laying hold of the heavenly calling and the Christian’s position before God. It is Judaistic and divisive in the assembly of God.

**The Seal of Circumcision and the Seal of the Spirit**

Abraham was reckoned as righteous before he was circumcised. There came a point in his life when he received circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith:

(9) [Does] this blessedness then [rest] on the circumcision, or also on the uncircumcision? For we say that faith has been reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. (10) How then has it been reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. (11) And he received [the] sign of circumcision [as] seal of the righteousness of faith which [he had] being in uncircumcision, that he might be [the] father of all them that believe being in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned to them also; (12) and father of circumcision, not only to those who are of [the] circumcision, but to those also who walk in the steps of the faith, during uncircumcision, of our father Abraham (Rom. 4:9-12).
God has so ordered matters that there might be Gentiles included in the spiritual race begun in Abraham. He was reckoned righteous before receiving the seal of his faith, namely, circumcision (Gen. 17). Thus, circumcision was not the source of his righteousness. Circumcision was a covenant:

And he gave to him [the] covenant of circumcision . . . (Acts 7:8).

The Christian, who is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48), is not under a covenant, for covenants are for the earthly. Neither is a Jewish believer now under an earthly covenant for the earthlies, for he has a heavenly calling:

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of [the] heavenly calling . . . (Heb. 3:1).

That was written to Jewish believers!

Presently, all who are in Christ are seed of Abraham without physical circumcision, having circumcision in a higher way as being one with Christ, the great Seed of Abraham. Abraham received circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith; while those who are circumcised in Christ are also sealed, but not with physical circumcision, of course:

(12) that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ: (13) in whom ye also [have trusted], having heard the word of the truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is [the] earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession to [the] praise of his glory (Eph. 1:12-14).

Our having “pre-trusted” refers to trusting now, ahead of the millennial blessing of which the prophets of Israel spoke. But we have vastly greater blessing than Israel and Gentiles will have in the millennium, each in their respective spheres. It is the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise that connects us with the blessing we have in Christ now, and He is the earnest, the down-payment, of what is yet before us. All those in Christ, Jewish and Gentile believers, resting on the Person and finished work of Christ, have this seal. This is not sufficient for Dr. Fructenbaum, who wants also the physical circumcision that was the seal of the righteousness of Abraham’s faith. He wants both -- the circumcision that connects with the earthlies and the seal of the Spirit regarding the heavenlies.
Chapter 6.3

Dr. Fructenbaum’s
Doctrine of the Jewish Remnant

The Remnant’s Dual Citizenship

Is the Present Jewish Remnant in the Nation of Israel?

One of Dr. Fructenbaum’s bases for the “Hebrew Christian distinctive” is found in Rom. 11:1-7. His point is that the present Jewish remnant is “in the {Jewish} nation.” Yet, Rom. 11 shows that the nation, as such, has been broken out of the olive tree. His reasoning regarding this is that throughout Jewish history:

1. there has always been a believing Jewish remnant {true};
2. there is a Jewish remnant now {true};
3. and then he falsely alleges this:

   The remnant is always in the nation, not outside of it; the Hebrew Christians, the present-day remnant, are part of Israel and the Jewish people. Their Jewishness is distinct. 190

His intent is clearer in another book:

The remnant, theologically, is always part of the nation, not detached from the nation. 191

The present Jewish remnant, he says, is, theologically, in the nation -- in Israel -- Israel that we know was broken out of the olive tree (Rom. 11:1-15). Where does that place the remnant then? The remnant must have a dual place -- remaining in the olive tree, yet that remnant also remains in the nation that is broken out of the olive tree.

Moreover, it could not be because they are in the olive tree that they are

190. Hebrew Christianity, op. cit., p. 31.

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'theologically' (does that mean 'spiritually'?) in the nation, for Gentiles are in the olive tree also and therefore, 'theologically,' Gentile believers would be in the nation also. What does "theologically" mean other than his imagination in order to have the Abrahamic Covenant in force for Jewish believers so they can circumcise their eight day old boys, have a 'dual citizenship,' and have Jewish observations?

This is not the place for a detailed exposition of Rom. 11, but it calls for some comment because he misuses it to warrant his conclusion. He claims that the nation has not been cast off -- there has always been a remnant and there is one now. 192 The point Paul is making in Rom. 11:1 is that Israel has not been definitively cast off in the final sense, as if there was no hope of restoration. The fact is that Israel, the nation, as such, has been excised from the olive tree (Rom. 11:15). That is Israel’s present condition. It means, in fact, that they are, for the present, put away. Dr. Fructenbaum’s teaching is that the remnant is maintained in the olive tree and is at the same time in the nation which has been excised from the olive tree because of their trespass. The remnant is in the blinded nation (Rom. 11:8). The remnant-branches in the olive tree are among the branches that have been broken out (Rom. 11:17, 19). The remnant is part of the fallen nation upon which the severity of God rests (Rom. 11:22).

The fact is that Paul does state in Rom. 11:15 that Israel is cast away. Paul does speak of “their casting away.” Verse 1 shows that the discussion is about “his people.” This refers to the nation, not to individuals. Because Dr. Fructenbaum finds some Jewish individuals now who are saved, he concludes that “the people,” i.e., the nation, is not cast away. The conclusion is false. Rom. 11:15 expressly contradicts him. The subject is about the fallen nation, as such, and its future in relation to the national election (Rom. 11: 26). Rom. 10:21 shows that Israel is the people; i.e., it is the nation that is in question, not the reception of individuals.

The word in Greek for cast away in Rom. 11:1 is different than in v. 15. In v. 1 it involves repudiation, rejection, refusal -- as if this is Israel’s final position before God. No, that is not the case, and Paul cites himself as a proof that Israel is not definitively rejected in a final sense and that as God has had a remnant in the past He has one now. In v. 15 the thought is that Israel is presently put aside from present, national favor. Of course that people is put aside as a nation. But that is not such a casting away as an utter and final rejection; and, there is a remnant meanwhile. That is the point in Rom. 11:1, 2 concerning “cast away.” It would be absurd to base on vv. 1, 2 a notion that Israel, as a nation, is a recognized people of God at present. Rom. 11:11 helps us here. The word for “fall” in v. 11, in this context, has the thought of

falling so as not to regain the former place. The answer to the question, ‘Did Israel stumble so that they should irrevocably lose their national place?’ is no. The second time the word “fall” appears in v. 11, it means a trespass, a moral trespass, a misdeed -- that trespass is the occasion on which salvation is brought to the nations at the present time.

Rom. 11:15 is clear: the casting away refers to the nation, certainly not to all individuals. Verse 15 speaks of the nation’s reception again. Verse 26 shows that this reception involves all Israel being saved. That will be the new Israel. Presently it is a time of “blindness in part is happened to Israel” (Rom. 11:25).

Dr. Fructenbaum’s unscriptural assertion is:

The remnant is always in the nation, not outside of it.

That serious error puts the remnant in the blinded Israel. In the OT, Israel had a position before God under the law, and the remnant was in the nation. Not so now; the nation has no position before God. It is a mere dictum to say that the remnant is always in the nation. It is another missing link in the chain of his system. It is clear that an unscriptural system is being espoused by Dr. Fructenbaum. God does not recognize Israel as having a standing now. The nation is cast away (Rom. 11:15). The believing Jewish remnant now is not part of that; they are part of the presently recognized people of God (see 1 Pet. 2:10; Heb. 11:25; Titus 2:14). The believing remnant is not today a part of Israel though ethnically they are of Jewish origin. Believing Gentiles are not part of the Gentiles though ethnically they are goyim concerning their origin.

Give no occasion of stumbling, whether to Jews, or Greeks, or assembly of God (1 Cor. 10:32).

All Christians are in the third group in this text, and only there, spiritually, though they are in one of the other ethnically. No, he says, the remnant is in two groups, for he claims that the Hebrew Christians, the present-day remnant, are part of the nation of Israel. This leads to his doctrine of the dual citizenship of the Jewish Christian. With the formation of the body of Christ, a third entity was created, as he knows, i.e., the church. With which of the three in 1 Cor. 10:32 does Dr. Fructenbaum identify himself? Why, with two of them:

What this means then is that Jewish believers are dual citizens of both Israel and the . . . ekklesia. Therefore in this age, certain obligations that would not be mandatory among Gentiles are mandatory for Jews -- such as the obligation of circumcision as required by the Abrahamic Covenant. This dual citizenship has ramifications for the present as
well as the future. 193

The fact is that he does not have Scripture for saying that the present Jewish remnant is “in the nation,” but he asserts that the case is always so and he asserts the “dual citizenship,” of which 1 Cor. 10:32 is no proof either. His system is assertion and assumption.

“The Outworking of the Dual Citizenship”

Such is the title of a heading in an article by Dr. Fructenbaum in Voices of Messianic Judaism. 194 He wrote:

It should be noted that the Land promise was made to both the Patriarchs and to their seed. The seed includes Jewish believers -- even of the Body. In this present age, this means that Jewish believers should look upon the Land of Israel as being their homeland. By the same token, it will have ramifications in the Messianic Kingdom. Hence, a simple solution to deal with the fact that the Jewish believers are dual citizens in both Israel and the k’hillah/ekklesia, will be as follows. While the Gentile believers of the Body will serve as co-rulers over the living Gentiles, the Jewish believers will be assigned to live in the Land of Israel and have a co-ruling position within the borders of the Millennial Israel. That would help to explain why the twelve Apostles have a special role concerning Israel in the Kingdom and why their dual citizenship works out as follows. On one hand, the twelve Apostles are clearly said to be the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20). That is their unique role as citizens of the k’hillah/ekklesia. However, in the Messianic Kingdom, the Apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30). That will be their role as citizens of Israel. Jewish believers have the same dual citizenship and their millennial future should be viewed in the same way.

His last words, “should be viewed in the same way,” point to how he force-fits Scripture concerning the reign of the saints with Christ into two branches:

(1) “The Gentile Branch of Government,” of which “the Church and the Tribulation Saints” are the head, 195 involving:

(a) meaning only Gentile believers by these two designations, a forced division of the church, and a false view of tribulation martyrs, with
an erroneous view of Rev. 20:4-6; 196 and,
(b) These saints will be scattered over the earth during the millennium engaged in directing government.

2. “The Jewish Branch of Government,” involving:
(a) that the literal David will be over the twelve apostles, who will be over (Jewish) princes, and so forth 197 and,
(b) these “will be assigned to live in the Land of Israel and have a co-ruling position within the borders of the Millennial Israel.”

The purpose for which this is presented here is not to engage in refuting it but to show where Dr. Fructenbaum’s, ethnically driven, Messianic Jewish system, built on mis-representations of numbers of scriptures, leads him regarding the reign of the saints with Christ. Much about the practical carrying out of this reign is not told us in Scripture, nor has Dr. Fructenbaum’s ethnically driven view told us believable things. He is not the first to place the risen saints on earth for the 1000 years, but I suppose his ethnically driven part is novel. 198 I should say that we certainly do not doubt that the 12 apostles shall have a special place in Christ’s reign, as indeed the Lord said to them. On earth, saints will have a place in the kingdom of the Son of man, while saints in heaven, including the 12 apostles, shine forth in the kingdom of their Father.

A long time ago William Kelly remarked:

Nevertheless as heaven is higher than the earth, so is our hope incomparably better beyond theirs {i.e., of the martyrs of the tribulation period}. From ignorance of this and confusion many a christian was stumbled by those who insisted that the risen saints dwell with Christ on earth in the millennial reign. For who that has the sense of heavenly glory could give it up for all the blessings of the earth? 199

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196. The subject of the first resurrection has been discussed in *Elements of Dispensational Truth* vol. 1. It was shown there that Rev. 20:4-6 comprehends all saints of all ages. This is implicit in calling it “the first resurrection,” which contrasts with the raising of “the rest of the dead” after the 1000 years. There are no other resurrections than these two. Elsewhere they are called the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, a denotation of the respective characters of the two resurrections.

Thus, it was shown also that the first resurrection is not one point in time but a class of persons. Here everyone of the just are seen, but Dr. Fructenbaum, in accordance with his Jewish Dual Citizenship doctrine seems to contradict, finding in Rev. 20:4-6 only Church and tribulation saints, which tribulation saints it appears that he holds to be Gentiles.


198. I have not looked into his views about the saints in the Father’s house, or in the eternal state, as not relevant to our present enquiry.

The Doctrine of the Olive Tree

Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s objective is to have Jewish believers under the Abrahamic Covenant. He has even worked the Abrahamic Covenant into Rom. 11.

The root of this place of blessing is the Abrahamic Covenant. Paul makes the same point that he made in Ephesians 2:11-16 and 3:5-6. The Gentiles, by their faith, have now become partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings as contained in the Abrahamic Covenant. 200

Eph. 2 and 3 make no such same point as that believing Gentiles have become partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings, nor does Rom. 11 -- but this is again evidence of Judaizing Scripture.

Gentile Christians, he says, are partakers of “Jewish spiritual blessings as contained in the Abrahamic Covenant.” I suppose that is a guarded expression, something not being told us here. Be that as it may, he does not tell us what those blessings are, nor does he tell us what Jewish, non-spiritual blessings, if there are such, Gentile Christians partake of. There certainly must be one of them for Jewish believers, namely circumcision -- a non-spiritual blessing for Jewish believers, because if it was spiritual, the believing Gentiles would participate in it. Or is his view that there is nothing spiritual in being circumcised under the Abrahamic Covenant? Is there nothing spiritual in obeying a command of God?

Specifically, he did not say something here about circumcision. We, with the Jews, he says, are together partakers of the spiritual blessings contained in the Abrahamic Covenant. Note that he did not state that Gentile Christians are under the Abrahamic Covenant. How could that be so? -- because it calls for circumcision in the flesh. But he wants to get the Abrahamic Covenant into this, for he holds that the Israel of God (the present Jewish election of grace) is actually, presently, under the Abrahamic Covenant as in force for them. Elsewhere Dr. Fruchtenbaum says that the sons of Jewish believers should be circumcised since the Israel of God is under the Abrahamic Covenant. Do we detect a scheme here to set up a system of non-circumcision for Gentile Christians while at the same time having a basis for Jewish Christians to continue with Jewish particulars, including circumcision? Circumcision in the flesh is a mark of separation for the Jew (as well as circumcision’s pointing forward to Christ’s death). Dr. Fruchtenbaum keeps up the mark of Jewish, earthly separation while attempting to set up a system to avoid separation from Gentile Christians. Not only does this foster Jewish particularism, it violates true Christian

circumcision which applies equally to Jewish and Gentile believers. We Christians (Jew and Gentile) are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3):

For we are the circumcision . . .
The *we* is even emphatic. As befits a heavenly people, we are circumcised in Christ (Col. 2:11):

. . . in whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand . . .

We, Jewish and Gentile believers, are thus circumcised with the same circumcision. This is for those who form the heavenly company (1 Cor. 15:48; Heb. 3:1). All other circumcision for an alleged spiritual reason falls under the apostle’s rejection of it, calling it “concision,” i.e., a mutilation (Phil. 2:2). Circumcision made with hands is what Dr. Fructenbaum advocates and practices for Jewish believers. Col. 2:10 shows that we Christians are complete in Christ, yet he adds something necessary for Jewish believers by placing them under the Abrahamic Covenant (which actually was suspended by the Mosaic Covenant, under which the flesh assayed to carry out the precepts of God). The circumcision in Christ, the appointed circumcision for the present heavenly people of God, is not enough for him. The Jewish believer is not complete before God without physical circumcision in the flesh. Physical circumcision is for the earth and the earthly people of God -- an earthly people not presently owned of God.

“The root of this place of blessing,” he says, is (not Abraham, but) “the Abrahamic Covenant.” The Abrahamic Covenant was enacted in Gen. 15, after Abraham was in the place of privilege already for some time. Circumcision was given in Gen. 17, thus included in the covenant, but not given earlier when Abraham was already in the place of privilege. Neither the Abrahamic Covenant, nor circumcision, is the root of the olive tree. The root is Abraham as called into a separated place of privilege.

Appealing to Rom. 11:16-21 and 24, finding there two sources of branches, he concludes that:

There is an obvious composite difference between the two which makes them distinct from each other. 201

The distinction concerns where the branches came from. I do not know what he means by “composite difference.” Were I arguing his point I might have pressed for a “constitutional difference,” but that is not true either. The word “composite” would better fit the tree itself in the present time because “composite” means to be made up of different parts -- blended. All the branches are branches though of a differing origin. There is no support here

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201. *Hebrew Christianity*, p. 32.
that Jewish believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant. Nor does the tree itself mean the Abrahamic Covenant because then all branches would be under the Abrahamic Covenant. It does not mean the body of Christ either because no members of the body of Christ get amputated (cp. vv. 17, 21). The tree represents blessing and privilege -- into which it was not natural that Gentiles be brought (v. 17). It involves profession, whether real or merely words, as among the Jews before the nation was cut out; and now before the wild olive is cut out. The Gentiles have been brought into this sphere now but the time will come when we believers will be caught up to be with Christ (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; etc.) and the empty profession that is left will be judged (Rom. 11:20-22). In this way the nation of Israel will be brought into what the olive tree represents (Rom. 11:22-32) -- Israel the nation, but then the new Israel under the New Covenant. The entire nation will then be composed of saved ones. The nation will enjoy the national adoption noted in Rom. 9:4, as well as “the covenants” (Abrahamic, with Phinehas, with David, and New Covenants), and the other things noted in Rom. 9:4, 5, seven in all. Millennial Gentile believers will not be in the olive tree. The distinction will again be made, though the blessing will be very much higher than under the Mosaic Covenant, and the Gentiles will also be blessed. Now, there is no such distinction made, though Dr. Fructenbaum labors hard to make some kind of distinction.

In reality, the distinction in the olive tree at present regards the source of the branches, one natural to the good olive tree and the other from a wild olive tree. That is the only distinction. Indeed, it is actually this sameness of the branches in the tree which is pointed out:

... hast become a fellow-partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree (Rom. 11:17).

Both partake of the same root. Both enjoy the same fatness. So, similarity is thus pointed to. Another similarity is that the branches grafted in are threatened with the same removal from the tree that some of the natural branches experienced (Rom. 11:17, 21).

The conclusion is that, concerning being in the olive tree, all alike are responsible in the same way, yet Dr. Fructenbaum uses the olive tree of Rom. 11 to find a reason for Hebrew Christian spiritual distinctives, whereas we see sameness in position and responsibility.

It is recommended that the reader read W. Kelly’s Notes on Romans on this chapter for more help on the olive tree. The passage deals with the subject of Israel as a nation, presently cast away (Rom. 11:15), the

202. An outline may be found in Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 8:381, 382. See also the Synopsis, in loco. Present Truth Publishers is planning a volume on Romans 9 - 11.

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ingrafting of Gentile profession now, and the present work of God ending, and then all Israel being saved (Rom. 11:26). The nation is not cast away in the sense of finality (cp. Rom. 11:11), but in the interim there is a predominately Gentile work going on before God forms the new Israel under the New Covenant. The present work among the Gentiles is independent of the nation of Israel.

**The Israel of God**

It seems that Dr. Fructenbaum’s fourth point is based on the idea that there are two Israels, one made up of all Jews which included the present Jewish remnant as a remnant *in the nation*, and the other Israel is composed of Jewish believers -- “the Israel of God.” But the Israel of God essentially differs from Israel the nation which is presently cut out of the olive tree. That nation is rejected, blinded judicially by God, while the Israel of God is accepted by God. It is terrible confusion to think that Jewish believers are within both.  

The Jewish believer is in only one of the groups noted in 1 Cor. 10:32. But he contradicts this thought and appeals to Rom. 9:6-8, saying that Jewish believers are a part of the whole Israel and are in a distinct group called in Gal. 6:16, “the Israel of God.”

His point is that Jewish Christians have a distinct position -- and that distinct position justifies distinct practices, such as being circumcised, because the distinct position involves Jewish believers being under the Abrahamic Covenant now. However, in the wisdom of God, where the phrase “the Israel of God” appears, just there it is said that both they and the believing Gentiles are to walk by the same rule!

Claiming that Jewish believers are a distinctive element in Christ’s body, he wrote:

> It is clear then that the Hebrew Christian is a distinctive element in the body of Christ . . . This distinctive feature involves position (Jewish nationality, membership in Israel the whole, the Israel of God [the remnant], the natural branch in the olive tree) and function (circumcision, loyalty to Israel, the remnant that is keeping Israel alive, Gentile relationship in blessing and cursing).

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203. This reminds us of how his system requires that OT Israel be under both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant simultaneously. Notions such as these show the exigencies of a manufactured system.

204. Hebrew Christianity, p. 33.

205. Hebrew Christianity, p. 33.

206. Hebrew Christianity, pp. 33, 34.
1. We find that the body of Christ has many members (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4) who, as members, have various functions for the edifying of the body. This is true of all believers. Scripture does not teach that there are distinctive groups in the body of Christ and that such distinctive groups have different group-functions. It is a divisive notion.

2. Jewish believers have a distinct characteristic as being saved Jews, not a “distinct position.” Others who are saved are saved Gentiles. Yes, Gentiles are not the Israel of God. “Gentiles are not in this group.” So, therefore, it follows that Gentile believers must have their own distinct group, position, and function? This teaching is divisive in the assembly of God on earth. Well, Gentiles do not have any more a distinct position than does the Israel of God, but they have a distinct characteristic as being saved Gentiles.

3. The true, Christian, distinct position is stated in 1 Cor. 10:32:

   Give no occasion of stumbling, whether to Jews, or Greeks, or assembly of God.

The nation of Israel has no standing before God now. As a believing Jew, Dr. Fructenbaum has a standing before God of the same acceptance that is Christ’s acceptance (Eph. 1:6) and is complete in Him (Col. 1:10). You cannot truly add anything to that, not a thing that has any merit before God. But he expressly regards himself as having “membership in Israel the whole”; i.e., in that which God has rejected (Rom. 11:15). He places himself in the first group of the three named in 1 Cor. 10:32. It is as if he has one foot planted there and another foot planted in the assembly of God. With feet so placed he is not walking in the good of being distinctively of the assembly of God.

4. Dr. Fructenbaum acts partially like a millennial Israelite. He wrote:

   In Christ, the two are one in unity, but not in uniformity. Before God, we are equal in terms of salvation but distinct in position and function (p. 34). 207

He lowers unity to common salvation. This tells us that unity, or rather we should speak of it as union, in one body in Christ, is not understood. Practical unity should be the outworking of that union of the members to one another and to the Head in Heaven. This union is so profound that in 1 Cor. 12:12 we read:

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207. He says it is not biblical to form a “local church composed only of Hebrew Christians” but in order to retain Jewish identity and engage in Jewish distinctives and functions, “Hebrew Christian Fellowships” can be formed where outreach to unbelieving Jews can take place, as well as a place where “Hebrew Christians can gather to study Scriptures in a Jewish context and perform functions involved in various Jewish celebrations” (Hebrew Christianity, op. cit., p. 97). On pp. 107-110 he gives counsel regarding participation in Jewish festivals.
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.

The statements in Scripture concerning the body not only do not say anything of the sort that he says, its statements exclude his system. The body and the Head form this which is called “the Christ.” It is not a local body, as if there are many bodies (there are many members, not many bodies), and as if there are many Christs. It is union of all sealed with the Spirit, in one body, of which Christ is head of that body -- constituting “the Christ.”

It is not being saved that constitutes one a member of the body of Christ, but the action of the Spirit that formed the one body (1 Cor. 12:13), a distinct operation from salvation. In the millennium there shall be salvation based on the finished work of Christ but no incorporation into one body. However, Dr. Fructenbaum has “equal in terms of salvation” governing his thoughts, regarding Christians -- true in itself -- and what he says would apply when the nation of Israel is pronounced Ammi (my people) and has a distinct position under the New Covenant. There will be many Gentiles saved in the millennium, but Israel will be distinct from the saved Gentiles. So he is dragging down the Christian’s position, at least for Jewish believers, to something similar to the position of a millennial Jew. However, what he says involves not understanding the truth of the one body rightly, nor the Christian position. He reads distinctiveness into passages which really teach sameness. He reads into passages what is not there, and misses what is there, as illustrated in his handling of the alleged fourth proof of “the Hebrew Christian Distinctives,” Gal. 6:16. But, with v. 15, the text expressly contradicts him:

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

Of course, I hope that Dr. Fructenbaum believes that Jewish Christians ought to walk by the rule of the new creation. Both Gentile and Jewish Christians are to walk by the same rule. How can he say that Gal. 6:16

208. The distinction may also be seen in Eph. 1:13:

in whom ye also [have trusted], having heard the word of truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

When we are saved, then God seals us with the Holy Spirit of promise. The body of Christ was formed at Pentecost. We are joined to an already once-for-all formed body when we are sealed. The Spirit is called “the Holy Spirit of promise” to point to the fact that we are joined to that body formed at Pentecost, the believers at that time having waited for the promised Holy Spirit to come.
shows for the Israel of God that this “is a matter of position which here acts out a definite function,” i.e., a *difference* in practice, when the passage itself places both Gentile and Jewish Christians under the *same* rule of the new creation concerning the walk? His notion is truly astonishing. Gal. 6:15, 16 brings before us the acting out of the *exact same thing*, whether Gentile or Jewish believer, but Dr. Fructenbaum finds in this passage support for some distinctive function for the Israel of God. The only function given is the same for both: *the walk by the rule of the new creation*. But he wants two classes of function. Ethnicity appears to be the real driving force behind his scheme.
Chapter 6.4

The Seed of Abraham

The Presently Suspended Abrahamic Covenant Will Be Fulfilled in the Millennium

In the millennium, the new Israel under the New Covenant will be the seed of Abraham both ethnically (Rom. 9:3-5) and spiritually (Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:26), and there will be the distinctive difference between Israel and the nations, with Israel under the New Covenant. The OT prophets show that it is sovereign action and grace that brings about the establishment of the nation. Many Jews will not enter the kingdom because the rebels will be purged, as Ezek 20:38 plainly declares. Concerning those that are left, Jehovah declares, “. . . I will bring you into the bond of the covenant” (Ezek. 20:37). That is how He will turn ungodliness away from Jacob (Rom. 11:26).

And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins (Rom. 11:27).

Clearly, this refers to a one-sided covenant, from God’s side unconditionally, as we see is the case with the Abrahamic Covenant, the covenant with Phinehas, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. These are all unconditional and will be sovereignly secured in grace to Israel. To Israel belong the covenants (Rom. 9:4) and these are referred to as “covenants of promise” to which Gentiles, including we saved Gentiles, are “strangers” (Eph. 2:12). This raises the question in our minds, how is it, then, that we Gentile believers at the present time, are “children of promise” (Gal. 4:28)? It is because we are one with Him to whom Isaac, the son of promise, pointed.
The Blessing for Believers Meanwhile

The phrase “the seed of Abraham” is used in several different ways in Scripture. There is a natural seed and there is a spiritual seed. The natural seed (ethnic seed) is in the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 209 Paul was such (Rom. 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5-9). But the claim of the seed according to the flesh is of no avail (John 8:33-37). It only brought increased responsibility on them. The law addressed the nation of Israel as part of God’s trial of the first man, man in fallen Adamic responsibility, to show that he was not recoverable. 210

There is another use of “seed of Abraham” and that regards the Lord Jesus:

But to Abraham were the promises addressed, and to his seed: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed; which is Christ (Gal. 3:16).

This points to Gen. 22:18 where one seed is meant. Christ is that seed. Addressing Jewish and Gentile believers in the assemblies in the province of Galatia, Scripture says that they are Abraham’s seed. How can that be?

. . . but if ye [are] of Christ, then ye are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:29).

All the seed of Abraham need to be circumcised. No one can be seed of Abraham who is not circumcised. However, presently a saved Gentile is not physically circumcised and thus seed of Abraham. Rather, Gentile believers are circumcised in Christ’s death (Col. 2:11). Of course, Jewish believers are also circumcised in Christ’s death. This circumcision cuts us off from our former status; yes, both Jew and Gentile. Concerning Jewish and Gentile believers together:

We are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:3).

The we is emphasized in Scripture. But there are always ways in which we think we can work around something so as to continue in our self-chosen ways. Why say that this text only refers to trusting in flesh for salvation? Do you mean it is God’s mind for you to trust in flesh for something else, other

209. Rom. 9:6-13 shows that natural descent does not in itself impart salvation or privilege. Those things are subject to God’s sovereign working.

210. This was not to educate the omniscient God, of course, but was part of the trial of the first man under varied conditions, finally including the presentation of the Father and the Son (John 15:22-24). The cross ended the trial of the first man, and the second Man has been established in resurrection, displacing the first man altogether. Meanwhile, before bringing all under Christ’s universal Headship in the millennial era (Eph. 1:10), He is forming a heavenly people to be the heavenly bride of Christ.
than salvation? If not, why say anything to limit this?

We Christians, Jew and Gentile, are one with Christ, the great Seed of Abraham, and it is in this way we, Jew and Gentile believers, are spiritual seed of Abraham. That is the greatest, the highest possible way to be seed of Abraham, greater and higher than the earthly seed of Abraham in the millennium. In the millennium, the saved Israelites will not be “in Christ.” But they will be the spiritual seed of Abraham. This will be for the earth and the enjoyment of the promises to Abraham.

Presently, the situation is quite different. We are heavenly seed of Abraham as being one with Christ in death and resurrection. To claim a present, special and distinctive recognition as seed of Abraham, based on ethnicity, is earthly, at best millennial, certainly not Christianity. To claim “dual citizenship” is not Christianity. To claim a valid circumcision in the flesh is fleshly, not Christianity, but rather it is “concision” as the Apostle said (Phil. 3:2). To bring an earthly covenant into this, meant for an earthly people, is at the least watering down the heavenly to the earthly, and may entirely obfuscate the heavenly.

Yes, it is our connection with the great Seed of Abraham in death and resurrection that makes us Abraham’s seed. There was not a single believer in the province of Galatia, whether a Jewish or Gentile believer, who was not Abraham’s seed in that way. They were the seed of Abraham in exactly the same way with the same position. True, being seed of Abraham is not the Christian’s highest blessing, but it is a blessing from God, held in common by all present believers, because of being in Christ. 211 There is nothing distinctive in this for a Jewish believer. He is the spiritual seed of Abraham now in the same way a Gentile believer is -- by being in Christ. In effect, Dr. Fructenbaum says not so! Jewish believers, because of their ethnicity, are under the Abrahamic Covenant, and are to be circumcised. If he says it is not by being the spiritual seed that Jewish believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant, then by what, if not ethnicity? But if it is by being spiritual seed, then Gentile believers must be included because they also are spiritual seed of Abraham. It may be replied that two things are required, being spiritual seed and also being natural seed. Well, first, there is no Scripture for this invention; second, the notion comes down to resting on natural ethnicity -- which will be true in the millennium when the Abrahamic Covenant is in force, which it now is not. It is bringing the earthly, for an earthly people, into Christianity, which is heavenly.

What we are reviewing is an attempt to establish in Christianity, as part of it, the prerogatives of Jewish ethnicity before God, something of

211. See remarks by W. Kelly in The Bible Treasury 20:32.

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distinction in flesh. The true force of such Scriptures as 1 Cor. 7:19 and Gal. 6:15, 16 is not understood. In the new creation, by which rule both the Gentile believers and the Israel of God are to walk, “neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision.”

Those Near, and Those Far Off, Now One New Man

In the administrative ways of God (or, if it is helpful, the dispensational ways of God), Israel was in an external position of nearness. In the nation there were many who were not saints of God (Heb. 3, etc.). But they all stood in covenant relationship under the conditional covenant of the law. And this left the Gentile far off as described in Eph. 2:11, 12.

The Gentile blessing of which the OT spoke will be fulfilled in the millennium -- when the Jewish-Gentile distinction will be in force again. Meanwhile God is doing another work, a work called the “one new man” (Eph. 2:15). This is new, not having existed before. It is not an earthly work because in an earthly work the distinction of Jew and Gentile is maintained. The present work concerning the one new man does not bring Gentile believers into the (external) nearness of Israel spoken of above. Rather, presently, both the believing Jew and the believing Gentile have been elevated, brought into a spiritual place of nearness, in Christ, before God, as “one new man.” They are removed out of their respective places (Jew and Gentile; 1 Cor. 10:32) into a new place (the assembly of God; 1 Cor. 10:32). And this involves fellow-citzenry of saints, and of the household of God (Eph. 2:19). All this denotes equality and sameness, not distinctiveness of place and ethnicity for certain of the fellow-citizens of the saints. See also Eph. 2:21, 22.

So, this is an extraordinary work of God. It is of a different character

212. They were in a place of special privilege, and this is what the olive tree (Rom. 11) is a figure of. Most of the natural branches were broken out, and Gentiles were brought into this place of privilege. While there are Jewish branches and Gentile branches that are really saved, many Gentile branches, particularly, are not; and God’s judgment will come on the wild olive graft. In fact, the Gentile, wild olive graft, i.e., the profession, will be removed from the olive tree (Rom. 11:21), the special place of privilege, and the new Israel under the New Covenant will be reinstated into the olive tree (Rom. 11:25-27). The olive tree does not figure reality of salvation, but rather special privilege. It is figurative of what is external. However, there are branches who are saved. In the millennium both things will be true of the nation of Israel; namely, that they will be in the place of special privilege (Rom. 11:24) and at the same time all Israel is saved (Rom. 11:26).

213. Contrast this verse with the amazing words of Dr. Fruchtenbaum about a “dual citizenship” of Jewish believers.
than what will be true in the millennium concerning the saved Gentiles and the saved Jews, where the Jews will have Jewish distinctives and place, which they do not have now.

The present work of God concerning Jew and Gentile in one body is not a subject in the prophecies of the OT prophets. This work involves the mystery, the secret concerning which silence was kept in the past (Rom. 16:25, 26). It was hidden from time-periods and from people (Col. 1:26). It was hidden throughout the ages in God (Eph. 3:9), not hidden in the OT. And this explains something said in Eph. 1:12:

. . . who have pre-trusted in the Christ . . .

This refers to our trusting before the millennial time (spoken of in Eph. 1:10). It is pre-trusting. This includes all who now are believers.

**What Is the Basis of God Doing These Things?**

The believer taught of God will answer that these things are done on the basis of God’s acting in sovereign grace. Grace is “God for us in all that He is, in spite of what we are in ourselves” (A. C. Brown). The OT promises and the unconditional covenants are all expressions of God’s grace. It is clear in Galatians that being Abraham’s seed is connected with promise.

Gentile believers being Abraham’s seed is because of God’s grace. Jewish believer’s being Abraham’s seed is because of God’s grace. Ethnicity is not part of being the present seed of Abraham because of our being in Christ.

In considering the following texts attention is directed to the omission of the word “the.” Take for example the difference between being “under law” and being “under the law.” Being “under law” means being on that kind of basis before God, in one’s conscience. It does not necessarily involve being under the law of Moses. However, being “under the law” is a reference to being under the Mosaic law. So, being “under law” means one is under law in principle, in his conscience, concerning his relationship to God. Let us observe this distinction in these texts regarding “promise”:

But if ye [are] of Christ, then ye are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:29).

It does not say “the promise,” or, “the promises.” This does not point to every detail of what Abraham was promised; rather, it points to the basis,
or principle, on which we are heirs. And what is that basis? It is the basis of promise, i.e., that principle, i.e., sovereign grace. Christ is the great Son of promise, to whom Isaac pointed, typically. We are one with such an One. So this concerns how God is operating, not the content of promises and heirship. This is seen also in Gal. 4:28:

But ye, brethren, after the pattern of Isaac, are children of promise.

Besides the fact that again the word “the” does not appear in front of “promise,” an additional matter is brought to bear: we are children of promise after the pattern of Isaac. Sonship is also on the basis of grace! Well, the great fact is that every blessing we have is ours on that basis.

All of this Is for Jewish and Gentile Believers Equally

Notice in both texts just quoted the word “ye.” No Christian in the province of Galatia was excluded. Let me rephrase that. All believers in the province of Galatia were heirs and children of promise in the same way. None of this involves “Hebrew Christian distinctives.” Actually, the truth bears against, resists, and refutes, such a notion. We are all of Christ, all children of promise, and all are Abraham’s seed. Jew and Gentile believers are Abraham’s seed on the very same basis. However, none of us are under the Abrahamic Covenant (nor under the New Covenant either). It is not true that some of the seed are under a covenant(s), and the others not. In the millennium the seed of Abraham will be under the covenants of promise. Christians are under none of them. It is necessary to maintain dispensational distinctions, else our walk is adversely affected.

Let us keep in mind that the occasion of writing the epistle to the Galatians was the Judaizing that was going on. We all being Abraham’s seed and children of promise was meant to counter the Judaizing. Yes, the Judaizing was meant for Gentile believers -- but as well for the Jewish believers. There was to be no Judaizing, period.

Well, says, Dr. Fructenbaum, that was a Judaizing on the basis of the law. What I want is Hebrew distinctives based on the Jewish believers being under the Abrahamic Covenant, not as if they are under the law of Moses.

I hope we all see this for what it is: Judaizing, and lowering Jewish

215. I am quite aware that when Paul spoke of being under the law he used “we,” meaning ‘we Jews’ -- for Gentiles never were under the law -- maintaining the accuracy of Scripture statements. But he wrote to the assemblies of Galatia (1:2) and the “ye” refers to all in those assemblies, Jew and Gentile.

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believers that are in Christ downward in practice towards the position of a millennial Jew -- which is not of God. And this must necessarily affect how one views the Christian place and privileges.

The reader is urged to read one of J. N. Darby’s early (1839) outlines: ”The Purpose of God.” 216
The People of God

The following is from W. Kelly:

But ye [emphatically, are] a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession, that ye might set out the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness unto his marvelous light; who once [were] no people but now God’s people, the unpitied, but now pitied (1 Pet. 2: 9, 10).

It is true that as “a holy priesthood,” the exercise of the heart by faith is toward the God who brought us to Himself by His grace in Christ, and could righteously bring us thus near by His blood. We hence approach within, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What the sons of Aaron did in the sanctuary after a material sort, which derived all its value from being a shadow of Christ and His acceptance to God as a perfect and constant odor of rest, the saints are now exhorted to do. As the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, “By Him therefore let us offer sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, fruit of lips confessing to His name” {Heb. 13:15} Can any privilege be higher or more intimate than to be in His presence, walking in the light as He is, delivered from the egotism which breaks out into the variance of separate will, and cleansed by the blood which effaces every sin? to adore the Father, the only true God? to pour forth our thanksgivings for all the grace that has reached even to us? to praise Him, in spirit with all saints, for all that He is and has done, and given us to receive and know?

Christ is the ground and substance of it all, and hence without cloud or change, and the Holy Spirit given, that a divine power and character might be in vessels though still earthly. This is a wondrous assimilation to the everlasting worship which shall be in heaven and throughout eternity; but we own it now and are invited to it now, not as a title merely but as a joyful occupation, especially as gathered to His name. It will be perfectly without alloy in the day of glory to which we look on; but it does become us to abound in it here, seeing that the light and the love and the known accomplishment of that work which secures the blessedness of all to God’s glory are already ours, and Christ is revealed to us in that glory as the fullest
witness and pledge that it is ours.

Never should we confound worship with the ministry of the word. Precious as this is, it is but the means of conveying to us the truth, which received by the Spirit fits us for the praise and adoration of our God. It is rather the service of the Levite than the approach and the offering of the priest. But no communication of blessing from God to our faith, however essential as the basis, has the same nature, character, and effect as worship; for this is the return of the heart, when made free of His presence and strengthened by His Spirit, to present our thanksgivings and praises in the communion of all saints, acceptable to God through the Savior.

Yet it is not all. The believers are also viewed on another side. They, and they only, are “a chosen race,” at the very time when the elect nation had proved itself more than ever guilty to its own ruin. Now to a remnant of the Jews is this word primarily addressed; not as if it were not true of all who believe, but that those might be comforted who were saved from that perverse generation, over which a fresh judgment was suspended, about to scatter them once more, and more than ever. If Israel’s place was for the time forfeited, the believing remnant get the blessing and are pronounced “a chosen race.” The distinction in Christianity acquired a higher character and more personal.

Next, they were “a royal priesthood” (which the Aaronic was not), but rather after the pattern of Melchizedek in its display of the blessing. In the day that is coming He will exercise that priesthood, sitting as Priest upon His throne {Zech. 6:13}, instead of bearing us up as He now does within the veil. Meanwhile those who are His are even now said to be a royal priesthood to manifest His praises before the day of His power. It is not of course preaching the gospel to the lost that they might be saved, but telling out His virtues or excellencies, as our testimony to Him who alone is worthy and exalted of God in the highest.

Then again they are “a holy nation,” when the nation, who ought to have been so, stood with the stamp on it of evil to the uttermost, not of idolatry alone but of disdaining the Holy One of God, the Messiah. Had they not cried in their blind and mad hatred, His blood be on us and on our children? The remnant, on the contrary, who owned Him and were washed from their sins in His blood, were now “a holy nation” accepted in His name.

Finally they were “a people for a possession.” If God was morally bound to discard at length the people who were always resisting the Holy Spirit, as their fathers had done, those of them who believed on Christ became “a people for a possession.” They were the more dear, because their faith broke through the manifold hindrances by which unbelief, pride, and
judicial darkness encompassed the Jewish nation. Few as they were, compared with the mass hurrying on to destruction, they were “a people for a possession” to God, that they “might tell out the excellencies of him that called them out of darkness unto his marvelous light.”

Such is the Christian position here below. By-and-by Israel shall have the place in power and glory before all the nations, where the blind people see and the deaf people hear in the rejected Messiah the Lord Jehovah, the only Savior. Then will it be plain that “this people have I found for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” And men shall know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides Him, who is Jehovah, and none else; and the heavens from above and the skies shall pour down righteousness, and the earth shall open and bring forth salvation, and righteousness shall spring up together. But even now, while the rejected Christ sits on the Father’s throne, and the Spirit is sent forth to glorify Him after a spiritual sort in a world of darkness and rebellion against God, those who confess Christ are to tell out His excellencies. And well they may: seeing that He called them out of darkness unto His marvelous light. If these should hold their peace, as He said, the stones would immediately cry out. They were once as dark as any. So were all who now believe, darkness itself as the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, but now light in the Lord. And truly the light is wonderful unto which He called us, Himself the genuine light which never deceives nor grows dim. Though it has not yet arisen to shine on Zion, as it will surely come, it has shone in our hearts who believe, the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Now it is only from heaven and for heaven, as we wait for Him. But He will return and appear in manifest and indisputable light for Zion and repentant Israel; and the earth, which darkness still covers, shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah and of His glory as the waters cover the sea.

Meanwhile those He called out of the Jews are consoled by the assurance that in Christ all that can be theirs, consistently with walking now by faith and not by sight, is their assured portion. The failure of the ground (their own obedience), taken in Ex. 19:5, 6, Ex. 24:3-7, does not compromise those who believe. Christ suffering for their disobedience established what could not fall. Their faith rests on Him, not on themselves; whosoever believeth on Him shall not be confounded; and they did believe on Him who secures all for the weakest that is His. Hence they anticipate Hosea 2:23 before it can be verified to Israel, as v. 10 clearly proves. They are warranted to appropriate now the prophet’s words. It is due to Christ whom God delights to honor. But it is full of interest and instruction to apprehend that Paul, writing to both Jews and Gentiles that believed, quotes Hosea 1:10 no less than 2:23; whereas Peter, writing to the believing Jews of the dispersion, does not go beyond the latter. Each inspired writer was perfectly
guided of God for the divine aim in view. This Wiesinger totally failed to
discern, and Alford, who endorses his error, confuses the two truths, and
thus destroys a distinction of all moment for spiritual intelligence. The once
“no people” were now God’s people; the unpitied as to their settled state,
which the perfect implies, were now pitied. How truly great His mercy now!
And it is good and wholesome for the soul to feel habitually that it needs
nothing less in the day of temptation in the wilderness. So the apostle Paul
reminds the believing Hebrews in the close of 1 Pet. 4. Indeed it is what the
priesthood of Jesus constantly implies. All saints should cherish His
sympathy and God’s mercy throughout our earthly path. 217

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Chapter 6.6

Some Jewish, Spiritual Practices

The Bearing of Romans 14

Dr. Fructenbaum treats this passage in ch. 11 under the title “Legalism.” While realizing that the Christian is not under the law, he wants to find a way to allow Messianic Jews who are not of the Torah-keeping class to be able to engage in observances that were given under the law. In fact, he is certain it is advantageous for Messianic Jews to do so. In a previous section on the bearing of Rom. 14 we saw that the “weak” brother was a Messianic Jew. It follow that at best, his system fosters being a weak brother. He may tell us that dispensationalist Messianic Jews regard the observance of their OT practices as amoral. Perhaps in the assembly at Rome there were Messianic Jews who were observing, who were “weak in the faith,” while other Messianic Jews were strong in the faith; so that while observing the same things as the “weak in the faith,” they were regarding their own observances as amoral. On the basis of his system, this could be. But let us pass on.

Let us observe that:

(1) the abstainer from certain things (Rom. 14:2), and the observer of special Jewish days (Rom. 14:5), is one “weak in the faith” (Rom. 14:1). This has to do with Jewish matters.

(2) there is to be mutual respect (Rom. 14:4, 10, 13);

(3) yet Dr. Fructenbaum falsifies the passage by stating:

Those who are free to do certain amoral things are not to look down on those who have problems with them. At the same time, those who refrain are not to condemn believers who feel free to participate. 218

(a) The passage is not about amoral things. It treats the subject as if all consciences are in exercise before the Lord. So, “he that does

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not eat, [it is] to [the] Lord that he does not eat” (Rom. 14:6).

(b) “He that regards the day, regards it to the [the] Lord” (Rom. 14:6) does not regard that Jewish feast he is observing as if it is an amoral matter.

Is something the conscience regards as of spiritual value “amoral”?

Let us note that there is no supposition, hint at, or room in Rom. 14 for setting up Messianic Jewish assemblies. The statement that Gentile Christians are free to come and worship with them not only does not change anything, rather it confirms the setting up of such congregations.

It is true that the distinctions in Rom. 14 are of a ceremonial character. Dr. Fructenbaum is regarded as a “dispensationalist.” His system of “Hebrew Christianity” is quite inconsistent with dispensational truth. Rom. 14 speaks of patience in the assembly of Gentiles and Jews regarding Jews who trusted Christ, in the case where some things from a system that had once been sanctioned by God were clung to, and patience with such is the order given in this chapter (while, hopefully they learned their liberty in Christ).

The “days” referred to are Jewish days, not ‘Christianized’ heathen holidays upon which the name of Him Who is holy, Him Who is true, has been placed by an unfaithful Christendom.

**Col. 2:16 Violated**

Let none therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in matter of feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.

**Inversion of the Meaning**

As do other Messianic Jews, Dr. Fructenbaum, with his system of “Hebrew Christianity,” inverts the meaning of this instruction. In the verse, “therefore” refers to what was said before this text -- regarding our completeness in Christ and our circumcision in Him. “Therefore,” on the basis of the truth presented up to this verse, the Colossians were not to practice these observances. The Christian is complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). They were not to be led astray by “elements of the world” (v. 8), which were taken up in Judaism while the first man was under trial to see if he was recoverable from the fall. Indeed, we Christians, Jew and Gentile, are circumcised by the circumcision not made with hands (v. 11). We are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3) as answering to what circumcision had pointed to, having been circumcised in Christ’s death. But Dr. Fructenbaum sees the
need to circumcise with the circumcision made with hands, because, he claims, Jews are under the Abrahamic Covenant.

And in accordance with this serious error, he wants feasts and Sabbaths. He may call them things amoral, or whatever; that does not in the least set aside the strictures of the Apostle. Thus, Col. 2:16 must be made to concur with what he wants. So the meaning is imposed upon the text that it supports the Messianic Jews doing such and he is not to allow himself to be judged by others when he engages in these things but to continue in them:

. . . since all amoral issues are clean in and of themselves, the person who has liberty is never to allow himself to submit to judgment in amoral things but is to continue in the superior way of living. 219

They are not amoral because he says they are. None of the things found contravened in Col. 2:16-19 are for any Christian, be he ethnically Jew or Gentile.

First, as is a usual order found in Scripture, separate yourself, clean your house (Col. 2:16-19 and 20-23); then, do as it says in Col. 3:1-4. Act like you have died with Christ from the elements of the world noted in Col. 2:16-23.

If we have died with Christ from the elements of the world, why do Messianic Jews act as if alive in the world as was the case with Israel under the law? Seek the things above.

Moreover, the Jewish feasts are under the judgment of God:

And I will cause all her mirth to cease: her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemnities (Hosea 2:11).

These are presently under God’s judgment and observing them is not of God. His patience with such things came to an end, as we have traced previously. Note also, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple has never had its right impact on the Jews -- nor on Messianic Jews, neither in the early centuries or presently.

In Col. 2:16 - 3:4 we learn that Jewish observances, intermediaries, and asceticism is not for the Christian, and that we are to seek those above and not have our mind on the things on the earth. Messianic Judaism is ethnically driven to mind Jewish things on the earth and even to be under an earthly covenant.

219. Ibid., p. 128.
The Passover

Consider how he handles the Passover observance. Arguing that those who are “Torah observant” do not obey Deut. 16:6, and also do not travel to Jerusalem three times a year (points well taken), “he is not observing Torah but is practicing grace.” Such are not practicing grace. They are practicing self-will! He wants to help his agenda with that “grace” notion and so, concluding that there is no requirement for him to keep the Passover, yet:

Grace permits a Messianic Jew to observe Passover anywhere.

Now we see where his attributing the practice of grace to self-willed Torah-keepers is leading.

Then, pointing out that at every Messianic Jewish seder he ever attended, they all served roasted chicken, he points out that the Torah requires roasted lamb, which is what he serves “in my own seder at home.” He is pointing out the inconsistency of the Torah observant who serve chicken at their seder. Yet, he says, “grace allows you to serve any type of meat at Passover.” 220 Well, then do it anywhere, do it with any meat -- and this kind of “grace” also sounds like: do it any day, and do it any hour. I suggest that something other than grace is characteristically at work in all this.

The Day of Atonement

He is quite aware that the work of atonement is complete, so Yom Kippur is made a service of thanksgiving for the atonement and for the forgiveness of sins received. 221 It is at the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s Day that the assembly gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ does this – and the Christian individually gives God such thanks every day.

Why Are These Feasts Observed?

As given in How Jewish is Christianity?, for Dr. Fructenbaum, there is great importance for the Jewish rituals. He lists five reasons:

1. “Opportunity for the Jewish believer to express and identify with his Jewishness and the Jewish people.” Why? “... very important as a testimony to the Jewishness of the faith” (p. 125).

The mystery of Christ and the church must be outside his alleged “Jewishness of the faith,” since nothing was said about this mystery in

221. How Jewish is Christianity? p. 126.
the OT. This mystery was made known through Paul “for obedience of faith to all the nations” (Rom. 16:26). There is nothing specially Jewish about the mystery. His allegation about the Jewishness of the faith is quite in serious error. The driving force is also quite revealed here: 

**ethnicity** is controlling His Jewish view of Christianity.

2. These feasts provide opportunity for teaching Jewish history and culture, “especially important for instilling Jewishness in the children of Messianic Jews” (p. 126). **Ethnicity** is controlling this.

3-5. These Jewish observances “provide opportunities to worship God, both individually and corporately” for God’s accomplishment in Jewish history and in fulfilling the holy days; provide opportunity to share the faith with unbelieving Jewish persons; and, “Fifth, they provide the Jewish believer with practicing his Jewishness” (p. 126).

The fifth comes full circle back to the first point: **ethnicity** is the driving force, not God’s holy will expressed in Scripture to the Christian concerning what God is doing regarding the heavenly people.

Regarding the comments on ethnicity, Dr. Fructenbaum advocates and supports a Messianic Jewish culture that he believes is not Torah-observant and is “New Testament neutral,” and observing things “amoral.” To obtain this ethnically driven objective underlies what he does and writes. Undergirding all is his being under the Abrahamic Covenant with the necessity of circumcision in the body.

**Dr. Fructenbaum’s Comment on Christmas and Easter Observance**

In what appears to be an attempt to counter criticism of ‘dispensational’ Messianic Jews observing traditional Jewish days, while critiquing William Varner, Dr. Fructenbaum wrote:

I would love to see him write an article that discusses the church’s traditions around Christmas and Easter. Would he defend some of these practices or not? If he would, what would be the basis for doing so? If he would negate them, would he call for removal of these practices from the church. 222

Nothing seems quite so good as to implicate a critic in hypocrisy, is there? Is that the way a Christian arrives at the truth of God? i.e., show the objector an inconsistency, so as to make yourself more consistent in your own error than your objector is in his error?

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Hear the Word of God!

Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14).

Had those in the Christian profession done that with the evil, heathen celebrations that took place around the 25th of December, do you honestly think the ‘sanctification’ of that date would have taken place by making a Christian holiday out of it? So entrenched has this idolatry become that those that stand apart from it are considered weird and even unfaithful. Thus is untruth put for truth, and darkness for light. Had the one and only day of observance for the Christian, i.e., the Lord’s day, been carefully adhered to, along with fleeing from all idolatry, the ‘Christianized’ heathen holidays would not have taken over the profession of Christianity. These so-called Christian holidays are a standing witness to unfaithful Christian profession.

In connection with the truth recovered in the early 1800’s and the right understanding of dispensational truth (which I mention because Dr. Fructenbaum considers himself to be a dispensationalist and is the standpoint from which this present book is written), those who identified themselves with that truth stood apart from these holidays which have their roots in paganism. Listen:

When in 1877 I first came into fellowship with those called Brethren, they were practically a unit in abstaining from all complicity with the observance of Christmas and similar abominations... tracts were written against it... But now with all those witnesses to divine truth gone, other generations have come upon the scene, and there are now few who regard with the same abhorrence these heathen, aye Satanic, for who but Satan, the one great foe of our Lord, would dare to commit this climax of heinous wickedness of attaching His Name to a lie? But beloved brethren, have you not been “keeping Christmas”? Have you been wishing each other to be “merry”, even whilst thus bringing Christ into full accord with Belial? That seems to me unspeakably terrible, am I wrong my brethren?


Why did he refer to Christmas in such terms? J. N. Darby wrote:

Christians, so-called, would have festivals {they were Judaizing}, and they tacked on Christian names to heathen ones. The great Augustine informs us that “the church” did it, that if they would get drunk (which they did even in the churches), they should do so in honor of saints, not of demons. One of the Gregorys was famous for this, and left only seventeen heathen in his diocese by means of it. And another Gregory, sending another Augustine to England, directed him not to destroy the idol temples, but to turn them into churches; and as the heathens were accustomed to have an anniversary festival to their god, to replace it by one to a saint. It was thus Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor at least were Christianised. Sicily, which in spite of all efforts had remained

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heathen, as soon as it was decided that Mary was the mother of God at what I must call the disgraceful and infamous general council of Ephesus, gave up all her temples to be churches.

It was as easy to worship the mother of God as the mother of the gods. But everywhere drunkenness in honor of the saints, and even in the churches, took the place of drunkenness in honor of demigods, the great Augustine and other fathers being witnesses. Such were festal anniversaries, Christmas having been (and it is still celebrated in heathen countries) the worst of heathen festivals, to celebrate the return of the sun from the winter solstice, without a pretence that Christ was born that day, but as they could not stop the revelry, they put Christ’s birth there. Such, in real fact, is the church’s celebration of anniversaries and saints’ days. This is certain, that the apostle declares that it was a return to heathenism, so that he was afraid his labor was in vain — avowedly turning the great and mighty parts of Christianity, by which God acted on souls, to bring them into blessed and divinely-wrought relationship with Himself, individually and collectively, into certain outward events, or outward facts, and exclusively to their announcement as occurring at particular times. “I am afraid of you.” 223

**Dr. Fructenbaum Does Not Practice What the Heavenly Calling Is**

Thus, it comes as no surprise that he empties “the heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1) of its meaning:

The term *heavenly calling* refers to the effectual calling to salvation, and they are partakers of that calling. 224

Millennial saints will have salvation but no such heavenly calling as Christians have. No doubt the Hebrew Christians were partakers of salvation, but that is not the calling here. In Scripture, there are four descriptions of the calling mentioned here, each designated according to the line of truth given in the respective epistle where it is found.

1. In Eph. 1:18 it is “his calling,” i.e., *God’s calling*, and we are to walk worthy of it as being God’s calling (Eph. 4:1), it having, also, one hope (Eph. 4:4).

2. In Phil. 3:14 we may consider it as an *upward calling* — in view of our awaiting the Lord Jesus to come for us.

3. In 2 Tim. 1:9 it is a holy calling -- in view of all the unholy departure from the mind of God traced in 2 Tim.

4. In Heb. 3:1 it is a heavenly calling -- in view of the heavenly things into which we are brought and which are repeatedly noted in sharp contrast to what was of the earthly tabernacle, and what was part of the trial of the first man, seen in Israel as under trial, having an earthly calling. The early Messianic Jews were now to turn from the things connected with the trial of the first man in the persons of Israel, things earthly.

If the heavenly calling was controlling Messianic Jews there would not be the engaging in what was “a shadow of good things to come.” What is earthly, “elements of the world,” controls their practices and observances. Regarding the heavenly calling, J. N. Darby remarked:

We want {i.e., need} the heavenly calling to give power to take up the cross; and it is at the same time in proportion as we are dead to things down here, that the heavenly things are realized. When the blood was taken within the veil, the sacrifice was taken without the gate: so we are to go “without the camp, bearing his reproach” {Heb. 13:13}; and if we apprehend the value of the blood, and go within the veil {Heb. 10:19}, we get to the place of being where the burning outside the camp was {Heb. 13:12}; for while we are in spirit where His blood has been carried in, our bodies are where His body was burned. Judaism only put men between the two {places}: for they did not go in within the veil, His blood not having been shed; and they never went without the camp (v. 18-22). 225

W. Kelly’s Comments

Dr. Fructenbaum calls observances of Jewish distinctives from the Mosaic Covenant “New Testament-neutral” and “amoral.” I suggest the true view was given by W. Kelly, who remarked:

A Christian man who knows the victory of Christ for us should not surely entertain the idea of going back to these elementary forms of working good. Hold fast your actual place in Christ, act consistently with it. As to eating and drinking or ordinances relative to the year, month, and week (and the Apostle takes particular care to speak not merely of feast or new moon but of sabbaths) {Col. 2:16} remember that these things but prefigure the body or substantial good found really and only in Christ. In fact, these times and seasons point chiefly to what God will give His people by-and-by {i.e., in the millennium}.

225. Collected Writings 25:94.
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The new moon was a remarkable type of Israel being renewed after fading away, as the sabbath was the type of the rest of God which He will yet enjoy and share. But whether it be peace or drink offerings or the feasts in general, they are connected as the shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. This we have. The Jew had the shadow, and he will have the things to come by the grace of God under the New Covenant by-and-by. We are given the substance of Christ now. It is a question here of Jewish days. The Lord’s day has nothing to do with Judaism; it is not only apart from, but in contrast with that system.

The Lord’s day is as distinctly a Christian institution as the Lord’s supper, the Jew having nothing to do with either. It is very important to see that God has put honor upon the day of resurrection and grace. When people are radically loose or begin to slip away from the Lord, an early symptom is carelessness about this day. There ought to be an exercised conscience about it, not only for our own selves, but also as to servants within and others without our houses. It is of very great consequence that the sense of liberty and grace should not even have the appearance of laxity or selfishness.

It is not exactly said the body is Christ. It is said “the Lord is that spirit,” not that body, which was within the letter of the law. “The body” is used in contrast with “the shadow.” There is no substance in a shadow, but we have the body which is of Christ. The twofold idea is that, while the substance is of Him, He is the spirit of all. Verse 16 deals chiefly with a Judaizing character of evil; but verse 18 goes farther and shows a kind of prying into the unseen, not so much the religious use or misuse of the seen, which was the Jewish snare, but dabbling with philosophy, specially of the Orientals.

Concluding Remarks

Dr. Fructenbaum system depends on his erroneous scheme that the law was added to the Abrahamic Covenant and now the law is done away (which it is not; the Christian is dead to it, Rom. 7:4, and he leaves the Jewish Christian under the Abrahamic Covenant, which continues in force for Jewish believers, giving them Hebrew Christian distinctives of position and function. That means the Jewish males should be circumcised, etc. In fact, the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional and the Mosaic Covenant is conditional. So Dr. Fructenbaum has the OT nation of Israel under two mutually opposed principles of covenants at the same time, concerning obtaining the promises. One is conditional and the other is unconditional. It is a kind of covenantal schizophrenia regarding the promises. It is confusion.
confounded, actually ignoring the character of the trial of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall.

Moreover, here is the present truth:

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation (Gal. 6:15).

But Dr. Fructenbaum says that “the Israel of God” is under the Abrahamic Covenant, and that means the Jewish boys should be circumcised -- so circumcision is something spiritual to please God! He may say that Gal. 6:15 applies to those who base circumcision on the law of Moses, but the text gives the “new creation” as the rule for “the Israel of God”:

... but new creation. And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 5:15, 16).

It is the same rule for both Jewish and Gentile believers! That Jewish believers are under the Abrahamic Covenant is an ethnically-driven fabrication of Dr. Fructenbaum in order to keep up Jewish distinctives.

Moreover, in effect, it denies our having died with Christ and risen with Him, and being new creation (cp. Col. 3:1-4). In effect, it denies our heavenly position, and rather connects “the Israel of God” with an earthly order (the Abrahamic Covenant is for an earthly people). This is the meaning of his teaching, whether he intends that or not. It is a mixture of the heavenly and the earthly, if not entirely earthly.

Though he does not base matters on law-keeping, seeking thereby to avoid the condemnation of the book of Galatians, his system is hardly in accord with Eph. 2:11-22, while at the same time opposed to the Scriptures that we have reviewed. Practically speaking, his system produces results that come under the word Judaizing as well as divisiveness in the assembly of God. Moreover, it is the camp that the Hebrews were instructed to leave; i.e., the mixture of Jewish practices and observances connected with the tabernacle, in which the early Messianic Jews engaged, as we see recorded in Acts. His system is not found in Scripture and certainly is not dispensationalism.

Not surprisingly, he necessarily eviscerates the true force of Heb. 13:13 by not having it refer to the practice of the early Messianic Jews of mixing Jewish practices and observances with some Christianity. Certainly Judaism itself is the camp, but the camp stamps its character on his Messianic-Judaistic mixture, earning for this mixture the same designation: the camp. We are to be outside the camp, and this is not being outside of it. Hebrews is a general call to Jewish believers in Christ to separate from the practices and observations connected with the tabernacle system.

But Dr. Fructenbaum wants to drag parts of the camp along with him while professing to be outside the camp where the Lord Jesus is outside the
camp.

Thus, all he really can say is:

Jesus is outside the Camp of Judaism and they should \textit{go forth unto him} 
. . . The reader must identify with His rejection. \textsuperscript{227}

Were the Jewish believers as we find them in the book of Acts in the “Camp of Judaism” as he means those words? Or, were they viewed by the writer of Hebrews as really outside the camp in spite of having dragged with them practices and observations from the tabernacle system?

Dr. Fructenbaum has deceived himself with a system of mixing the Abrahamic Covenant and the church, while professing to be a dispensationalist. He really mixes Israel and the church:

1. Confuses the heavenly calling with salvation; which clouds the heavenly calling and mixes it with the earthly calling for Jews.

2. Claims a “dual citizenship” for the Jewish believer, placing him in the class of Jew and of the Church (1 Cor. 10:32), but only the Church for Gentile believers.

3. He has projected his “dual citizenship” notion into the reign of Christ, assigning Israel and Jerusalem to Jewish believers and the rest of the world to Gentile believers -- to be present on earth for the 1000 years.

4. Adds blessings of an earthly order for Jewish believers (as if under the Abrahamic Covenant) beyond the spiritual blessings that Gentile believers have.

5. Observes feasts of Jehovah set up under the Mosaic Covenant.

6. Mixes physical (earthly) and heavenly, spiritual circumcision for Jewish believers, but only the heavenly, spiritual circumcision for Gentile believers.

7. In effect, makes two rules for Christians; one in Gal. 6:15, 16 for all, but additional rules for believing Jews, placing them under an earthly covenant, evacuating the “new creation” of its meaning.

8. Makes physical circumcision have a meaning for believing Jews, whereas 1 Cor. 7:19 and Gal. 5:6; 6:15 show it means nothing spiritual for a Christian, while Phil. 3:2 refers to it as concision.

\textsuperscript{227} Hebrews - 1 & 2 Peter - Jude, Exposition from a Messianic Jewish Perspective, Tustin: Ariel Ministries, p. 193 (2005). It is interesting that he does not know who wrote Hebrews:

While it is unknown \textit{who} the author was . . . (p. 3).

The reader of his volume will find how he harmonizes 2 Pet. 3:15 with this on p. 420, which need not detain us.

9. Has two seals for Jewish believers, the earthly seal of circumcision made with hands, and the heavenly seal of the Spirit of promise.

10. Has two circumcisions for believing Jews. A person of Jewish extraction who had never been circumcised, upon trusting Christ would have to be circumcised as becoming one of the Israel of God. His newborn son would have to be circumcised the eighth day.

11. Has two marks of death to the flesh: physical circumcision and baptism, though the figure of baptism goes further than circumcision.

12. Puts the mark of separation from Gentiles (and thus, Gentile Christians, since he keeps up the distinctives) on believing Jews.

"Ye are complete in him" (Col. 2:11). This is sufficient for a believing Gentile’s completeness, but not a believing Jew’s completeness in this false system. The completeness of Col. 2:11 must not be completeness for a believing Jew because Dr. Fructenbaum can add something to the believing Gentile’s completeness in order to make the believing Jew complete. This really is a denial of completeness of Jewish believers who are “in him,” because Gentile believers are complete “in Him” without being under the Abrahamic Covenant, which is necessary for the believing Jew.

The Jewish believer has every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3) that a Gentile believer has, but the Jewish believer has more, as under the earthly, Abrahamic Covenant. Since the Gentile believer has every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (and so does the Jewish believer) these additional spiritual blessings are outside of every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. They must be earthly and outside of Christ, i.e., not as being “in Christ.”

This is a Judaistic system for believing Jews and is a doctrinal, institutionalized division in the Church. Ethnically driven, its object is to keep up Jewish distinctives while being part of the church of God, seeking to sanction the system as if taught in Scripture. Read Eph. 2:11-22 and see if Scripture allows of this system.

**Dr. Fructenbaum’s system is not dispensational truth.**
Chapter 6.1

Positional Circumcision in Christ

Positional Circumcision in Colossians

In Col. 2:16-19 we read:

(16) Let none therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in matter of feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, (17) which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. (18) Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize, doing his own will in humility and worship of angels, entering into things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, (19) and not holding fast the head, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God.

The Messianic Jews’ notion is that “Let none judge you” means go right ahead and do those things of v. 16 and do not let anyone judge you for it. First of all, that argument admits that Jewish things are referred to in v. 16. Next, that is the same as saying you may do the things named in v. 18 also. The Apostle rejects the whole of vv. 16-18. It is clear that one who is complete in Christ, and spiritually circumcised in Christ, should not be found engaged in these practices, for such practices are contrary to the Christian’s position in Christ. They involve “not holding the head”; i.e., something has come between a member of the body and the Head. Moreover, such practice is disruptive of the practical expression of the body united together by the joints and bands. It is divisive. Furthermore, “the body” (i.e., the reality) has displaced the “shadow of things to come.”
is no allowance of Jewish and gnostic distinctives. What is wrong is the refusal to be heavenly, for that is what this amounts to. It is a denial, in practice, that we are complete in Christ (Col. 2:10).

The Colossians were giving ear to Jewish things, philosophy, gnosticism, etc. That is the background of Paul’s writing to them that they were complete in Christ and they were circumcised in Christ.

We Christians answer to the meaning of circumcision without the circumcision made by hands on the body. And what is our circumcision?

(10) . . . and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and authority, (11) in whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ;

(buried with him in baptism) 228

in which {or, in whom} ye have also been raised with [him] through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead . . .

(Col. 2:10-12). 229

The putting off ‘the sins of’ the flesh is quite erroneous here, as some translations include. Not sins, not what I have done, but what I am as standing in the flesh, standing in (fallen) Adamic responsibility, has been cut off. Not sins, not what I have done, but I as identified with Adam fallen, am cut off -- not the physical body, but the flesh; morally speaking, the whole of it. “The putting off the body of the flesh” means the whole of our

228. The parenthesis was suggested by F. G. Patterson; and, along with “in whom” rather than “in which,” thus disconnecting the raising from baptism, and leave baptism simply pointing to death and burial, while the raising is in Christ. See the interesting note in Synopsis 5:22.

There is no thought of raising in circumcision, nor is there in baptism.

229. In Col. 2 we have vv. 10-12 because the Colossians were in danger of adding something to Christ. And in Colossians we have Judaism set aside. We are complete in Christ and Judaism (also philosophy, etc.) can add nothing to the Christian because the Christian is complete in Christ. Not only so, but all that is incompatible with that position is removed by the spiritual circumcision.

There was a good state at Philippi and Paul could notice such a thing as Euodia and Syntyche. He also speaks to them of things to think upon (Phil. 4:8). Paul did not say such things to the Corinthians. There were other things for them to think about and he told them quite pointedly. Philippi was like a white sheet of paper with a spot on it, and he desired to see the spot removed. Corinth was a dirty place needing a powerful purging. Yes, every Scripture is perfect in its place. And Phil. 4:8 was not for Corinth. Sorry to say, I have often observed a Christian try to rebuff the judgment of evil by citing Phil. 4:8, just like those who use “judge not that ye be not judged” out of context for the purpose of hindering holiness to the Lord, while using such texts as if that self-serving use was a holy use. Such is the flesh; and what is needed is the mortification of the members spoken of in Col. 3, so as to answer to our circumcision in Christ. In Philippi, where there was a state substantially answering to our circumcision in Christ, the Apostle says “we are the circumcision” (Phil. 3:3). Every Scripture is perfect in its place.

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position as fallen; i.e., our identification with the fallen position of the first man is gone from before God, but gone as having died with Him, and we are now identified with Christ. The flesh is likened to a body, for a body has members, and in Col. 3:5 (practice/experience) where we are exhorted to be practically in the good of Col. 2:11 (position), we read of members to be mortified, i.e., put to death, killed.

What shall we do with “the body of the flesh” that is put off in the circumcision of Christ? Bury it (figuratively, in baptism)! For the Jew, circumcision was the mark of death on him. For Christians, we are spiritually circumcised. Does the Christian have an external mark of death? Yes, it is in v. 12: baptism. Baptism signifies the judgment of God on the first man. That is the outward thing regarding a Christian whether Jew or Gentile. In Rom. 6:3 we see that we are baptized unto Christ’s death -- identified with His death as the removal of the first man from before God. Thus, in an outward way, the baptized are identified with His death. And in Col. 2:12 we see that the baptized are “buried with him in baptism”: yes, both dead and out of sight -- entirely gone. Thus speaks the outward mark now. For a believing Jew now to circumcise his children, even if claiming to be under the Abrahamic Covenant in order to do it, is having two marks, one suitable for an earthly people of God when owned of Him in the millennium, and one for a heavenly people now. As circumcised in the body, one is not viewed as buried with Christ. Circumcision in the flesh is suitable for this world, not for the heavenly ones (1 Cor. 15:48). We are not of this world and are crucified and buried; and then another truth, we are raised with Christ; and, in Ephesians, we are seen seated together in the heavenlies in Him. This is true of believing Jews and Gentiles, now one body. Circumcision for religious reasons is now a denial of the heavenly position of a Jewish Christian, regardless of any claim to have both the heavenly and the earthly.

The function of circumcision in the OT is complete. It looked forward to the work of Christ. Now, circumcision is spiritual -- in Christ, as having died with Him. All sealed saints now are in a heavenly standing where circumcision in the body does not apply. In Christ we answer to the meaning of circumcision and are in the moral power of its meaning, being over Jordan, in the heavenlies. In the millennium Israel will be in an earthly standing and circumcised as looking back to the completed work of Christ. Israel will be in the spiritual meaning of circumcision in the body, but not as being dead with Christ and in Christ. They will not be in the dead and risen way in which we are now; but, rather, connected with being seated in
the earthlies -- alive towards God, here on earth. 230

By saying that he is under the Abrahamic Covenant, Dr. Fructenbaum makes himself one with the earthly, Jewish expectation of the Abrahamic Covenant. Circumcision in the Abrahamic Covenant pointed forward to the work of Christ. Practicing rites and days that in the OT pointed forward to Christ, now when the work of Christ has been completed, is a seriously erroneous mixture. Circumcision in the flesh for religious reasons in effect means that we are not complete in Christ. You cannot add to what is complete; the attempt implicitly denies the completeness.

Moreover, while professing to be under the earthly, Abrahamic Covenant, thus attempting to circumvent engaging in Jewish observances as if under the Mosaic order, Dr. Fructenbaum nonetheless observes feast days prescribed under the Mosaic Covenant.

Our Completeness in Christ

(The following extract is from F. G. Patterson.)

Why are we said to be “risen” with Christ before we are said to have been co-quickened with Him? (Col. 2:12, 13). Let me draw your attention to it for a little. I must leave full details aside in doing so, interesting though they are. One first thought in his mind is to establish their souls (as all others whom he had never seen in the flesh, Col. 2:1) in conscious union with Christ in glory, and this without naming the bond -- the Holy Ghost. He saw the danger in the want of this; and how the soul was open to every device of the enemy; and he would unfold the glories of Christ as he never had before, and give them the consciousness of “completeness in him.” To have even named the bond of union -- the Spirit of God, to such a state would have been to occupy them with the Holy Ghost rather than Christ Himself, and damage their souls. Instead of this he would lead them most blessedly, as in Col. 1:9-14, into the true experience of the Spirit in the soul which is at peace -- i.e., the thoughts begin with God, and flow downwards from the light of His glory into the conscience of him who is their recipient. The Spirit of God reasons ever from God to us; and when the soul is at peace and the heart free, the reasonings and experience of the soul flow in the same direction. How strange, and yet how lovely, then, to find the apostle in the one passage praying to God, writing Scripture, teaching the saints, and giving the true experience of the soul who stands in grace, by the same words! In Col. 2:12-14, he begins in the light of the Father’s presence with praise, and by seven steps he reasons downwards from His heart, to the


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conscience of the worshiper, giving them the true direction of thought, when the soul is right with God.

1. “Giving thanks unto the Father.”
2. “Which hath made us meet.”
3. “To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”
4. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,”
5. “And hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,”
6. “In whom we have redemption,”
7. “And the forgiveness of our sins.”

We learn this in the inverse way, from us to Him: from the depths of the need of conscience, to the light of the Father’s presence. We see this in the order of the offerings, and in their application. How in the unfolding of the doctrine of them He begins with God, and in their application to the sinner he begins with him, and so on constantly.

I allude to the first chapter of Colossians, because it helps us in the second. It gives us our apprehension, experimentally known, what we have through grace. Col. 2 gives us God’s side rather. He looks at Christ Jesus, the Lord; He beholds Him in whom dwelleth all the completeness (πληρωμα) of the Godhead bodily, as man. In Him “we are complete.” From Him he reasons in the same way as in the first chapter -- from God downwards to our depths of need. Here Christ and His identification with His people, that they may be thus “complete in Him,” is his theme. Again we find seven steps in the train of thought:

1. “In Him dwelleth all the completeness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him.” “God is complete in Christ for us; we are complete in Him for God,” as one has said.
2. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” He has left the scene, given up His life here below, and all that connected Him to this scene and Israel His people. He is gone on high, the beginning of the creation of God.
3. “In whom also ye are co-risen through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” [Remark here that in v.12 I have omitted the first clause -- “Buried with Him in baptism.” I would read that clause as a parenthesis]. Just as Rom. 6 was the link forward with Colossians (see also Ex. 15:16), so this parenthesis is the link backwards with Rom. 6. (See also Josh. 4:23.) This, too, relieves us from any controversy as to whether εν ουδ ουδ should be translated “in whom” or “in which”; either translation being possible from the original words; the
spiritual sense alone determines the true translation. Read vv. 11 and 12 for a moment, omitting the parenthesis, and the meaning is plain. “In putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ . . . in whom also ye are co-raised through the faith of the operation of God,” &c. This leaves baptism its own true meaning, that of the person baptized being buried to death. It does not, in my mind, go farther than that, and just ends there; the person is buried to death, as we read in Rom. 6, “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death.” Read the first clause of Col. 2:12 as a parenthetic link connecting us with Rom. 6, and read what follows as in connection with “Christ . . . in whom ye also are co-risen,” &c., and all is plain. Faith in God’s operation comes in there and clears baptism of the thought of resurrection, though it follows where there is faith in God’s operation.

4. “And you being dead in your offences, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He co-quickened us together with Him.”

5. “Having forgiven us all the offences.”

6. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us . . . nailing it to His cross.”

7. “And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Thus we see the reason why the co-raising us up with Christ should come before the co-quickening; because the Spirit of God reasons in the true divine order -- from God in Christ to us, and down to all our ruin in which we lay, by the seven steps of His truth.

(1) Complete in Him;
(2) circumcised in Him;
(3) co-risen with Him;
(4) co-quickened together with Him;
(5) forgiven through Him;
(6) the law nailed to His cross; and
(7) the whole power of Satan destroyed.

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231. {The reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that no Scripture says that the law itself was nailed to the cross. The handwriting in ordinances was nailed to the cross, meaning the sentence of judgment of the law against us. Christ took that sentence against us on Himself. Christ’s death left the law just where it was. Cp. 1 Tim. 1:8. The law has not died; the Christian is viewed as dead, and is dead to the law (Rom. 7:4). If you say the law is dead, you are saying that we are dead to what is dead. We are dead to the law because it still remains, though the Mosaic system, the Mosaic Covenant, was ended by the cross.}
Now let me notice another thing which is very fine. The seven steps of Col. 1 give us our subjective consciousness, what we possess and know in our own soul’s experience, what we have from God. Those in Col. 2 give us rather the objective unfolding by revelation -- what is in Christ for us, apart from our experience, though known to faith, of course. Both lines of thought reasoning from God to us, whether in a revelation objectively presented in Christ, or what our own souls consciously possess in Him.  

**Positional Circumcision Typified at Gilgal**

It is noteworthy that Israel was not circumcised in the wilderness. It is at Gilgal Israel was circumcised. Gilgal is the entry point for Israel into the land of promise. The conflicts of Israel in the land typify our conflicts in the heavenlies. Circumcision is connected with entry into the land, pointing to our entry into the heavenlies, in Christ. We all, believing Jew and believing Gentile, must be in the heavenlies as circumcised ones, not as earthly ones under the Abrahamic Covenant.

The command to “Circumcise again the children of Israel the second time” (Josh. 5:2) is in reference to the circumcision that took place preparatory to the passover of Ex. 12, as Ex. 12:43-50 suggests. Previous to that, there had not been the faithful following of the practice of circumcision as is illustrated in the case of Moses’ children (Ex. 4:24-26). He was to be the leader in Israel’s deliverance and had not obeyed the charge of circumcision. Israel was as Jehovah’s firstborn, and Pharaoh would not acknowledge the call of Israel. Therefore, the firstborn of Egypt came under judgment. How could Moses bring these things before Pharaoh without having had his sons circumcised?

So, preparatory to the passover and crossing of the Red Sea they were circumcised at that time and then again at Gilgal, the entry point for Israel into the land. In the interim between these two circumcisions, the nation had rebelled at the report of the spies (Num. 14) and thereafter stayed in the

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232. “The Red Sea and Jordan” in *Collected Writings of F. G. Patterson*, p. 39, available from Present Truth Publishers. In this paper, emphasizing what J. N. Darby taught regarding the fact that the purpose of God was to bring Israel out of Egypt and into the land, the wilderness comes in as part of His ways; FGP directed attention to Psa. 114 where we see clearly implicit the coalescence of the Red Sea and the Jordan -- and God’s purpose is seen in Ex. 3:8; 6:6, 8; 15:13, 17; Deut. 6:23.

233. Jordan does not signify, or typify, physical death and then our going to heaven. That is a practice-efteebling view. Typically, the conflict in the land of promise, and the conflict we Christians have in the heavenlies in Eph. 6, answer to one another.
wilderness until those 20 years and older at the Exodus had died in the wilderness, except Joshua and Caleb, who, of the 12, gave a good report. The refusal to go into the land violated the meaning of circumcision; they did not circumcise in the wilderness.

The wilderness is not part of God’s purpose. His purpose was to bring Israel into the land (Ex. 3, 6, 15). The wilderness is part of His ways with His own to teach them what He is in spite of what we are. Physically, of course, Israel had to go through the wilderness first before entering the land; but we Christians are both in the wilderness and in the heavenlies at the same time. The Red Sea (Christ’s death and resurrection for us) led to the wilderness. The Jordan (our death and resurrection with Christ) led into Canaan for Israel, the heavenlies for us. When God brings us into the good of Christ’s death and resurrection for us, He simultaneously brings us into the good of our death and resurrection with Christ. We are both in the wilderness and Canaan at the same time. The Red Sea and Jordan coalesce, i.e., become one, so that we may be viewed as having gone through the Red Sea, right on through Jordan, up the bank of Jordan, right to Gilgal, the entry point of the land (and into the land (Eph. 2:6)). If you will look in Ex. 14-15 you will see that it is not expressly stated that Israel came out of the sea as compared with Israel coming out of the Jordan (see Josh. 4:17).

234. Subsequently Israel was in the wilderness some 38 years, the time that the man of John 5:5 suffered under his infirmity until the Lord Jesus delivered Him from it by the word of His power.

235. God has used the failures and disobediences of man in forming the types in Scripture. Another example is that Moses failed in smiting the rock when he should have spoken to it. Indeed, that was the marring of a type, and he was not permitted to go into the land. In Josh. 1:2 we read, “Moses my servant is dead.” He is replaced by Joshua, a type of Christ leading His people in the heavenlies. Moses was connected with the law. However, it is not that the law is dead but we Christians are dead to the law (Rom. 7:4), dead with Christ (Col. 2:20), and risen with Christ (Col. 3:1). Thus, concerning what Canaan typifies, Joshua, not Moses, is the leader. And we must not mix Moses and Joshua. Thus, the law is not written in the heart of the Christian; Christ is written in our hearts, the old corn of the land. The law will be written in the hearts of the Israelites under the New Covenant. The law is not our rule; the new creation is our rule (Gal. 6:15, 16).

Covenantists place the Christian under the law for practical sanctification. It is mixing Moses with Joshua and much at Joshua’s expense. It necessarily lowers the higher to the level of the lower. Mixing Moses and Joshua, so to speak, and knowing the Lord’s day is the Christian day, and that there are 10 commandments, they must have a Sabbath day, so by spiritual alchemy they transmute the seventh day Sabbath into a first day of the week sabbath in order to have 10 commandments, for nine will not do. This also is Judaizing.

236. Israel marched to the Red Sea “arrayed” (Ex. 13:18), meaning five in a rank. No doubt that is how they went through the Red Sea (hardly only a single column of five, but in parallel columns, orderly). They were commanded to go over Jordan in this same “array” (Josh. 1:14; 4:14), 2000 cubits (perhaps both to the left and to the right) from the Ark standing in the middle (continued…)
Of course Israel came out of the Red Sea physically, but it is not noted. Romans does not give us the typical teaching of Jordan (it does, of the Red Sea) but Rom. 6:8 brings us as far as into the Jordan and stops there. But over Jordan, up the bank, and to Gilgal is where Colossians takes us -- Colossians, where we read of how we were circumcised (as Israel was circumcised at Gilgal) and where we read about mortifying our members, i.e., answering to our circumcision in practice.

Looking at the Red Sea and the Jordan as coalescing, we see that at Gilgal, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Those born in the wilderness did not have the mark of death to the first man on them. It was a mark of separation from the world. In Scripture typology, Egypt signifies the world. Those born in the wilderness did not have the mark on them of separateness from Egypt, separateness from the world. This is a reproach to Israel, i.e., their bondage, their connection with Egypt -- the reproach of Egypt. As we saw above, when considering Col. 2:10-12, we are circumcised in Christ. That is positional. There is no other basis to truly enter the land, the heavenlies. God has separated us from Egypt, typically speaking: i.e., from our identification with the world. Just think of what I am in the fallen, Adamic position as if that could enter the heavenlies. Positionally, He has fitted us to be there.

Our understanding the matter of rolling away the reproach of Egypt might be helped by keeping in mind, when considering what redemption means, that the Red Sea and the Jordan coalesce; so we see, as it were, that Israel comes out of Egypt and goes right on through the Jordan to Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt is rolled away for the first time, as our positional circumcision. The Red Sea delivered them from the power of the taskmaster, “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Speaking typically, Canaan changed their place, their citizenship, or better, associations of life. Accordingly, in Phil. 3:3 Paul emphatically declares:

236. (...continued)

of Jordan.

237. Romans does not bring before us the doctrine that we are risen with Christ; Colossians does that, and Eph. 2 speaks of it. In keeping with the presentation of truth in Romans we are told that Christ was raised again for our justification. That is the Red Sea: Christ’s death and resurrection, for us. Colossians is Jordan: our death and resurrection with Christ.

W. T. Turpin has some excellent observations concerning the Red Sea and Jordan: it is a very important thing to see where they are separated and where they are connected, because they are connected for redemption, but they are separated for experience. Where it is a question of our experience of the thing, that is Jordan alone. Where it is a question of redemption being accomplished, Jordan and the Red Sea go together {i.e., really, they coalesce} (Collected Writings of W. T. Turpin, p. 91, available from Present truth Publishers).
For we are the circumcision, true of all believers, including himself, and emphatically tells the Philippians (who were walking in the moral power of their positional circumcision in Christ) that:

our commonwealth {associations of life} has its existence in [the] heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ [as] Savior (Phil. 3:20).

In our practical walk there is practical circumcision -- which we will also consider below regarding Col. 3.

Suppose you see one who is a Christian running after the world, and the fashions and follies of the town: Well, you say, you may be dead and risen with Christ, but you had better go to Gilgal and have that reproach to His name rolled away by practical putting to death your members. 238

Gilgal, then, is over Jordan, Jordan typifying our death and resurrection with Christ, and what we were in our fallen Adamic condition is removed from before God by the circumcision of Christ (our death with Him) and we are risen with Christ. We are circumcised in Him and we are raised in Him (Col. 2:10-12, 20; 3:1).

If in Christ and we do not want to answer in our walk to our positional circumcision, then we do not want to be heavenly. On the other hand, if we do not know what our spiritual circumcision means, how can we be heavenly? And why would we not want to know what it means? Col. 2:20-23, for example, gives an exhortation based on our spiritual circumcision in Christ.

Israel went back to Gilgal after victories. What does that typify? As Gilgal was the starting point for their taking possession of the land, so it was to be the starting point for all their conquests, giving character to those victories from the character of the starting point -- hence also their return to Gilgal after victory. 239 For victory we must be in the good of what Gilgal points to: judgment on the flesh. Recall that Ehud and some others visited the king of Moab, returned to Israel when their mission was completed, but as they came to Gilgal, Ehud turned around and went back to the king of Moab and killed him. This victory took its character from Gilgal (i.e., from what it signifies). Observe also that in Judg. 2, after Israel failed so much in Judg. 1, they were at Bochim (means “weepers”) and the Angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal (where they should have been) and left them with a word for their consciences. They were not in the moral power of

238. Words of Truth 7:20, F. G. Patterson.
239. See The Bible Treasury 7:356.
Gilgal, pointing first to positional circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11), and then in returning there to the mortification of the flesh (see Col. 3:5). Observe that none of this points to Canaan as signifying our being in heaven someday. Jordan does not point to physical death and going to be with the Lord. It points to practical lessons for us to be in the good of self-judgment in our walk as those who are heavenly. Do you want to be heavenly? Christ is.

Gilgal is the entry point of the land for Israel, and in Colossians which views us as over the Jordan and just at this entry point, we look into the land. Thus, in Col. 3:1, 2 we are to seek the things which are above, in effect, looking up to where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Ephesians views us as sitting there (Eph. 2:6). In Ephesians, we in the land and there are spiritual forces opposed to practical possession (Eph. 6:10-20) of what we have title to. But title is not the same as possession.

There is a song which says that “Each victory will help you some other to win.” This is unscriptural, substituting a victory for a return to Gilgal, leaving out the place of Gilgal. The truth is that each return to Gilgal will help us some other victory to win.

After the victory Israel returned to the camp of Gilgal. But the return thither of the conquerors of the Canaanitish kings contains the instructive lesson that, whatever our victories and our conquests may be, we must always return to the place that becomes us before God in the annihilation of self; to the application of the knowledge we have of God (the resurrection of Christ having set us in the heavenly places), to the judging and the mortifying of the flesh, to spiritual circumcision, which is the death of the flesh by the power of resurrection. There is a time to act and a time to be still, waiting upon God that we may be fit for action. Activity, the power that attends us, success, everything, tends to draw us away from God, or at least to divide the attention of our fickle hearts.

Notice that in Josh. 5:1 we read that the heart of the inhabitants of the land melted when they heard that Israel had passed over Jordan. In the case of Rahab, we learn that 40 years after the Exodus, the knowledge of what had transpired at the Red Sea was known by these inhabitants. Now this people was camped at Gilgal in the plains of Jericho and fear gripped the inhabitants -- their hearts melted. Was that a good reason to immediately begin the conquest of the land? No. There were prerequisites to victory. The rest of Josh. 5 gives those prerequisites. There was to be the circumcision

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240. In Col. 3:1, 2, we are told, in effect, to look up; in Ephesians, we are not told to look down.

241. The Bible Treasury 12:304. See also 13:18, 19.
the second time, the passover to be observed -- on resurrection-ground, typically speaking -- and the old corn of the land, typifying Christ in resurrection, fed on, and the Captain of the Lord’s host come forward for them. These things, not the enemies’ weakness, are the basis of victory. The later failure of the people is given in Judg. 2.
Chapter 7.2

The Practice of Our Circumcision in Christ

Answering in Practice to Positional Circumcision
Col. 3:5-11

It has been said that we spare the flesh in others because we spare the flesh in ourselves. This is true; and to this may be added that those who spare the flesh are likely to turn on those who would judge the flesh.

Following is an extract from an Address on Josh. 5 by W. T. Turpin.

... We read that “the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal” -- the spot which got all its characteristic and definiteness from this -- “and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.” Now that is beautiful. When they were in the full results of redemption, in God’s own land, the territory that God had purposed in His own heart for them -- He had brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea and brought them into Canaan through the open waters of the Jordan -- and when they were there, circumcised, they sit down to celebrate the Passover. See what a wonderful thing this is. They kept the Passover on the fourteenth day at even in the plains of Jericho. They celebrated redemption when they were in God’s own land. I know nothing more touching than that. What a different sort of celebration that was from the night of the Passover in Egypt, and from the time when they kept it in the wilderness. On the night of the Passover itself, in Ex. 12, there was the terror, and fear, and anguish that connected itself with Egypt attaching to them. When they kept it in the desert, as we know they did {Num. 9}, there were the circumstances

242. Collected Writings of W. T. Turpin, pp. 93-95, Present Truth Publishers, 1999. See also, “This Side the Jordan and Beyond,” ibid., pp. 242-244.
of the wilderness attaching to them. But when they kept it in Canaan, in the plains of Jericho, I believe it answers exactly to God’s normal thought to us in the Lord’s supper. It is a heavenly remembrance of the once crucified Jesus, whose blood has settled everything for God and for us. That is what that keeping of the Passover here answered to, not the Passover in Egypt, not the Passover in the desert, very blessed, though they were in their place, but the Passover now, when they were in the full results of the redemption which God had accomplished, by His own power, and were brought into the land which His own heart had designed and purposed for them. Circumcision first, the celebration of the Passover next.

Then there is one thing more, and that is, that now God feeds them, the circumcision knife is most important, but it is not food. The knife will remove the excrescences and the practical manifestations of all that God has really got rid of before Himself, and I believe in my soul what Christians want is this knife. That is to say, it is this practical abnegation to death of all that judicially has been condemned. It is a grand thing to keep that clear in our souls, that God has got rid of it, and does not see one bit of it before Himself. But then, on that ground God says, I will not permit you to allow a bit of it. And therefore the apostle says, “Our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin,” that is, the principle of sin, “might be anulled, that henceforth we should not be the servants of sin.” We were sin’s slaves before, we are not to be sin’s slaves now, we are free. “Free” in scripture never means that the thing is not there, but that we are not under its dominion. There is the great mistake that many beloved people have made with regard to it; when they talk of being free from sin, they think that sin is not there. No; the meaning of it is I am no longer under its dominion: I have got the flesh in me, and always shall until I drop this poor vile body, but God has got rid of the whole principle of that as standing before Himself, He has judicially condemned and put it in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ out of His sight; and He says to me, as it were, “The flesh is in you, but I do not want you to allow one motion of it; on the contrary I insist on your practically accepting what is true really of you.” And this is where the sharp knife comes in. There would be no force in circumcision if the flesh was not there. If God says to me, “You must take a sharp knife and circumcise,” it is as much as to say the flesh is there. And if people say they have got rid of it they are denying the word of God. You do not want a sharp knife if it is not there or if it is changed; it is there unaltered, and therefore you want the sharp knife to reduce it practically to silence as God
has judicially condemned it. Now that is most important, and I believe in 
this lies the secret of the weakness in Christians, that they are not using the 
circumcision knife. Thank God, every Christian is in a sense circumcised, 
but they do not practically circumcise; the knife has got blunt somehow or 
other, they do not use the sharp knife in faith and liberty. There are those 
who try to bring the law in, but instead of the law it should be the knife. 
Beloved brother or sister, if you are trying the law, try the knife instead. 
Never forget this -- the law allows the flesh; it is the flesh it puts under 
restriction. I suppose no one here to-night would say you would put the new 
life under restriction. You would not say to the new life, -- Do not touch 
this, or that, or the other thing. But then, if you say that to the flesh, you are 
giving the flesh a position, allowing it as a living thing, giving it a status. 
You see restriction is quite a different thing from the knife; the knife is that 
which disallows the thing, the law is that which allows it. The law allows it, 
but says, “I will not let you move”; but still there it is. I will tell you what 
it is -- handcuffs; I will allow you, but I will handcuff you. But the knife 
says, I disallow you, I abnegate you to death, I totally and completely refuse 
you; I do not put you under any restriction, but I totally disallow you. 
“Mortify your members”; putting them under restriction is the very opposite 
to “mortify,” it is really giving them a life.

Now I want you to look at this a little further. That is the negative side 
of the truth -- the getting rid of practically all that God in His infinite 
wonderful grace has got rid of judicially. But now we come to what is 
positive. God says, as it were, “To fight you must be fed, and I have got 
food for you.” And therefore we read,

And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the 
Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

Now that was the food that was suited to the new position God had brought 
them into. It has been said, and I have no doubt truly, that the meaning of 
the old corn of the land was -- it was the food that grew there -- Christ in the 
new heavenly blessed place and circumstances He has gone into, a heavenly, 
victorious, triumphant Christ, who passed through everything and has gone 
into heaven; that is the old corn of the land, food suited to Canaan. It is very 
beautiful to see all these little points in the types of scripture with regard to 
the different ways in which the Lord Jesus Christ is set before us.

And now mark this -- the manna ceased. But then it is interesting to see 
that they had manna into Canaan, at any rate. I suppose that is the reason 
why some people think we do not want manna now, because it says here the 
manna ceased; indeed, that passage was brought up to me as supporting that 
objection. But it is a very stupid objection, because you know very well the 
people of Israel were not in the wilderness and in Canaan at the same period 
of their life as we are. They were in the wilderness one part of their life, and
they were in Canaan another part of their life; whereas we Christians are passing through the desert and yet at the same time seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus during the same term of our natural life down here though the experiences of the two are distinct, and do not go on at the same moment. Our position is that we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ, and yet we are down here in this world, and if we are according to God’s mind it is a desert to us, and therefore we want manna. But the children of Israel did eat manna after they went into Canaan; no doubt it ceased, but still they had it in the land. And you will find, as a matter of fact, if it is a question of our heavenly joys, or conflict, or place, if it is a question of what we have to meet in heaven, we want the heavenly food for that; nothing will nourish our souls but that; we want the heavenly Christ to sustain us, we want the heavenly food to strengthen our hearts. If I have to contend against this awful foe, this wily enemy, I want the heavenly food. And therefore God says, you cannot fight if you are not fed; you must have the knife to take away the power from the enemy, you must have food to strengthen yourselves to fight the foe. The circumcision knife disallows what the enemy would profit by; the food is the strength of the new life to enable me to meet the foe. But then I am going through this world here, and I find sorrows in it and trials -- I have got a sick wife, or a sick child, or a weak body, or trying circumstances, do not I want manna for that? I have got the lowly Christ for the circumstances here, that lowly sweetness and gentleness that characterized Him, that manna, like the small hoar-frost, that was, as has been beautifully said, on every rose and every thorn, and they gathered it, and it was sweet, and they fed on it. You and I want that as we pass through this desert scene. I say, thank God I have got Christ in both, I have got Him in Canaan and I have got Him in the desert; I want manna as my food as I go through the desert of this world; I want the old corn of the land to sustain me in my true position in heaven.

{The following is an address by W. T. Turpin on Joshua 1.}

**Across the Jordan**

Notes of an Address

Everything we find in Joshua is on the other side of Jordan. The different accounts the Spirit gives are connected with the other side. Numbers speaks of the wanderings of the children of Israel on this side, Joshua of the possessions God had given them, and of the conflict in connection with taking possession on the other side. Jordan represents not Christ dying for our sins, but Christ putting an end to us, as to our history connected with the flesh, and introducing us into another place. In the Red Sea we have a type
of Christ dying for our sins. Jordan is our dying with Christ, having passed in spirit out of this world as quickened, raised, and seated together in Him. In the truth of Jordan we get two different aspects of Christianity; first, the standing of the believer in Christ: in this sense, every believer has passed over, in the other very few have; i.e., practically and consciously passed over. As to standing, if you are a Christian at all, you’ve passed Jordan, you have died with Christ. Of how many of us is it true as to our state? How can it be, when there is such self-seeking, worldliness, ease, slothfulness, such want of devotedness and affection towards Christ among us? If we have not taken possession of Canaan, Jordan is still rolling practically between us and the land of promise. It is terrible to boast of our standing if our state is low. There is not that conservative power among us, so that it should be said, “I cannot bring in the world there.” I do not wish to depress any true heart. If we condemn ourselves, we have exercised consciences about it; the truth has reached us. There is so little divine energy to lay hold of what is ours! Joshua tells us what God has given us; but our feet must tread it, or we have not practically got hold of it. The very fact that it is yours in Christ gives energy and power to take possession, otherwise you are taking something you have no right to. The moment you begin to tread it you will find conflict every step of the way, but the whole power of God is pledged in order to maintain you in the place you have put your foot on. On every side of us Christians are settling down this side Jordan. Take care you do not lower the truth of God to suit yourself. Perhaps you say, “I shall never reach up to it”; then self is before you. If you have communion with God about heavenly things which are yours, you must give up things here. What are you going in for? If for this world and heaven, you will get neither. It is for us to take possession of what God has given us in Christ; then we must turn our back on things here, and seek -- set our “mind on things above.” Are these the things that command you? I am amazed when I observe how we allow our minds to be occupied with such trifles, and to be troubled about such worthless things as depress many of us, when such a wonderful place and portion is opened out before us. The two and a half tribes did not go over; and in 1 Kings 22 we see the very country they settled in was the very spot that first fell into the hands of the enemy, so they lost everything; and we see the same thing in the history of God’s people when it is a question of heavenly things. God never forces any one into them. He, as it were, lets us take our choice. If we go in for them, we shall find they richly compensate for all we may have to abandon.

Observe Josh. 1:3 and 4. Knowledge of the boundary is not possession of the territory practically. We have it all in Christ; but it must be made good to us. Nothing is more terrible than trading on heavenly truth. God has given us all on the other side; He has opened it all out to us. Have we practically taken possession of it? There must be energy, dependence,
obedience, purpose of heart; not slothfulness, indifference, self-seeking. We shall find we never enter into or enjoy these things except when we begin to practice them. Whatever my circumstances or position, I am to be the exposition of one who has everything in heaven in Christ. The reason why we do not realize it is, because the sole of our foot has not trodden it. If I think of myself when I was a sinner, I remember how I received everything without money and without price; all was free -- no toil or labor or tears on my part. But as a saint, I get nothing as to realization or communion without trouble and practical possession, because heaven is in contrast to everything here; the Father is against the world, and the Holy Ghost against the flesh. If you are thrown that side, you will find all against you this side. Christ is here by the power of the Spirit to lead His people on to victory. This is our encouragement; for the moment you go in for heavenly things you will find opposition from every quarter, not a feeling of your nature but will oppose itself, as well as everything outside. It will be conflict every step. We often get weary of it. When a person sets out to be practically what is true of them in Christ, all are against them; like the blind man in John 9, Pharisees, parents, neighbors, &c., all were opposed to him.

People are more perverted from God through their friends and relations than almost anything. Relationships are God-given relationships; but when they take the place of Christ and Christ’s things, nothing is a greater hindrance; the truth of God is often compromised to please them. We see it in Scripture. John Mark left Paul and went to Cyprus, his native place. Jacob’s wife and mother were his snare. Those nearest and dearest in the flesh are those we suffer most from; if we are not on our watch, they well know, and best know, where our weak points are, and where to touch us. If the heart be simply set on pleasing Christ, His things and His interests will be before us -- everything will be in reference to Christ, and everything will have the mark of Christ upon it. He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to His parents; but when it was a question of interference with the rights of His Father, it is, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” The enjoyment of heavenly things is hindered when our relationships are not taken up in a divine manner.

Verse 5. The assurance God gave to Moses, He renews to Joshua. Christ puts Himself at our head to lead us on. This is a great cheer; none ought to be disheartened with such a Captain and Guide, such an arm to lean on. Before the first conflict He appears as Captain of the Lord’s host. What an honor to be following Him. What is wanted is a true heart and a single eye -- the single eye which takes in only one object; if you have two objects before you, you have not a single eye. It is gazing only on our mighty, heavenly Joshua, who fills the vision of the soul that we are strong and courageous. In Josh. 1:7 and 8 we see what gives strength and courage -- we are well
commanded, so that we are entitled to have full confidence. What gives confidence to an army is knowing the ability of its general. His skill and power inspires courage and confidence. Obedience follows courage; the reason we do not obey is because we are cowardly; this is the secret of disobedience. Though all were against him, the sense of Who he was come out to, gave the blind man courage, and he says, “Will ye also be His disciples?” Will you throw your lot in with Him? He was not thinking of the relief there was to be got from Him, but will you give yourself to Him? This is one reason of so much weakness among us, the testimony that goes out is so much more on the side of relief, than the Person in whom it is found.

Verse 7. There is nothing so important as simple allegiance to the word of God. The tendency of the day is to judge the word of God, instead of letting it judge you. People have their own thoughts and are opinionated; it is not what we think, but what God says. Has God been at pains to give a revelation, and am I not to be obedient to it? Every one is ready to give their opinion in the present day. What is wanted is the word of God. “Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.” We need to have it more distinctly under our feet, to have divine sanction for everything we do, and put our hand to. Conscience is no guide, but if it is enlightened it is a good witness. Paul could say, “I have lived before God in all good conscience,” &c.; if it is not informed by the word of God, it gives a false witness. If every man’s conscience is his guide, it will be chaos over again; it is sure to mislead if it is not guided by the word of God. Conscience is the avenue through which God reaches the soul. The word of Christ rings on the woman’s conscience in John 4, “Thou art a prophet”; a prophet is one who brings the soul into the presence of God, the effect of the word is to bring the conscience into the light of God’s presence; it is the avenue through which God lets His light into the soul.

Verse 8. Implicit obedience leads to prosperity (Psa. 1:1, 2). How do you read Scripture? Do you meditate? It furnishes us with the mind of God; we need to get the habit of thinking of things as God thinks of them. “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,” &c. No sign of autumn’s tint, but ever fresh. Of course Psa. 1 speaks of Christ in His perfection as man down here; we are to follow Him. “Have not I commanded thee?” This imparts courage. If we are not certain that we are doing the will of God, we are like reeds shaken with the wind. It imparts a quiet, steady dignity. I am not to be moved by what people say. I have only to place my character in the right hand of God, and go on in endurance. We must hold the truth in communion with the Father and the Son. Christ is the truth. All radiates and flows out from Him.

Verse 9. I will be with you, you shall have my presence. Many seem not to know what the presence of God is. We have His word, and we have
Himself, the two things we get in 2 Tim. 3 and 4.

The Lord lead our hearts into the full and conscious blessedness of our place in Christ in heaven at the other side of Jordan, in God’s own land, on which His eyes continually rest.

**Morality, Self-judgment, Conflict, Religious Practices, Etc.**

(From *The Bible Treasury* 3:218-219.)

We may thank God that we are delivered -- we are not going to be cast into hell. But is that enough? It is not. If we stop short there, if we do not enter further into our blessings, Satan will be sure, at one time or another, to gain a complete victory over us, as he did over the Israelites. For instead of their conquering and driving out their enemies, we read of Canaanites, Perizzites, Jebusites, &c., who kept their possessions in peace, in spite of Israel. And so it is with many a child of God. They are kept in evil that does not appear to be such, and is not considered so, because it is not moral evil. For even a mere man is bound not to sin morally. But a Christian is a person who has his eyes upon the Lord. Any one can judge an outwardly immoral thing, but very few know that what even godly people are doing, is entirely contrary to the Holy Ghost and to God Himself. There are many so-called religious practices that are sins, and these are sins that the Christian ought to have his eyes open to. The Lord works this in us by giving us to know that we have got a heavenly inheritance. The Lord Jesus, by His death and resurrection, not only has brought us out of Egypt and into the wilderness, but into heaven itself in spirit. We are even now seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:6}. We have got now the stamp of heaven upon us, and God is looking that we may walk in the sense of this great privilege, making advances, gaining victories, and wresting what Christ has given us out of the hands of the enemy. Supposing a person truly converted to God, and made happy in the knowledge of his sin being for ever put away, the next thing is -- he does not know what to do to please God, or how to worship God. If he simply goes on as he was before, assuming that what he did when he was unconverted as to these things, is what he is to do now (save only, of course, with a new aim and power), he cannot make any progress; and it is thus that the devil keeps possession of the place of blessing, and shuts out the heir of glory from his calling and inheritance. Of course, I only speak of the matter of practical enjoyment. The enemies are still undisturbed in the land. But we
ought to be seeing what the inheritance is that the Lord has assigned to us, and whether our worship and our walk are really according to God, and suitable to the place in which He has set us. If you make morality your standard, you will be sure to fall below what you propose. Whatever we put before us as our criterion, there will always be a falling short. If we have Christ risen and Christ in heaven as our object we shall prove the power of His resurrection, not only in lifting us up when we are conscious of our exceeding shortcoming, but in strengthening us “to press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

In the beautiful scene before us, we find that the people passed dry-shod over Jordan. And what made it so remarkable was, its being the very time when the river was overflowing its banks; it was fuller then than at any other season. So in the death of Christ there was the fullest possible outpouring of God’s wrath; and upon His beloved Son, sin -- our sin -- has been judged to the uttermost. And, as in the type, they passed over as if there had been no Jordan at all, so, in the reality for us, there remains no judgment, but fulness of blessing. We are passed from death unto life, and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

And now, when they have entered the land, what do we find? The manna ceases -- they must eat of the old corn of the land. The food that had sustained them in the wilderness does not any longer suffice {i.e., for the heavenlies}. And what is the old corn of the land? It is Christ, as the manna also was; but Christ in another way: it is the food of resurrection. The corn of the land was the fruit of the seed that had been sown in the land, and that had died and sprung up again. It was Christ in resurrection. The Lord grant that our souls may feed upon Him thus! To say that Christ thus known is too high for us, -- to be content without enjoying Him thus, is thus far to be content without Christ. 245

Chapter 7.3

The Practice of Our Circumcision in Christ

(Continued)

The Twelve Stones, The Passover,
The Old Corn of the Land,
The Captain of Jehovah’s Army

It was previously observed that the melting of the hearts of inhabitants of the land (Josh. 5:1) was not the basis for immediately beginning the conquest of the land. The things done in Josh. 5 are prerequisites to victory and we will consider them here except for circumcision (already considered).

The Twelve Stones

There were twelve stones placed in the bed of Jordan and 12 stones taken out of the bed of Jordan. These stones represented the 12 tribes even though some of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh did not go over (Josh. 1:12ff). The 12 stones signify all Israel. It typifies that all believers today have passed over Jordan. This is positional truth. These two sets of stones speak of our death with Christ (the 12 into Jordan) and our resurrection with Christ (the 12 out of Jordan).

At Gilgal there was the memorial, the 12 stones:

. . . that this may be a sign in your midst. When your children ask

246. After the division of the kingdom through Jeroboam, the priests at the divinely appointed center for all Israel kept putting 12 loaves on the table of show-bread. It is a matter of how God views Israel according to how he constituted them. Thus, two or three that are gathered together unto Christ’s name {Matt. 18:20}, by the Spirit, place one loaf and one cup on the table. In spite of the divisions of the Christian profession, they do not put a small piece of a loaf on the table. The one loaf symbolizes the one body of Christ; the 12 loaves symbolize the national unity of Israel composed of 12 tribes; the 12 stones symbolize the entire nation as having passed over the Jordan.

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hereafter, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall say to them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; when it went through the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever (Josh. 4:6-7).

Over my life I have often heard Ex. 12:26, 27 considered, or reference to it made, but not so concerning Josh. 4:6. Is that not significant? Yes; because many Christians have realized in their souls the truths that the passover in Egypt and the Red Sea signify, but not the truth that the Jordan and Gilgal signify. Indeed, the truth signified by the Jordan, Gilgal, and the 12 stones in the bed of Jordan, and the 12 stones set as a memorial at Gilgal, may be shunned. It is a refusal to be heavenly. It makes allowance for the flesh in us. We refuse to judge the flesh in others because we refuse to judge it in ourselves, instead placing labels on those who refuse the flesh.

And how are the children to ask what the stones mean if they do not see them? And how do they see them if we do not go to Gilgal? If parents are not walking in the moral power of the meaning of the Jordan and Gilgal, the children will not see the stones so as to ask what they mean.

In Col. 2:20, we have died with Christ. What we were, in the fallen, Adamic position, was thus put into the place of death. Twelve stones are in Jordan. They are a memorial of the moral character of death with Christ. In Col. 3:1, we are raised with Christ. We are in a new position, on resurrection-ground, and there are 12 stones at Gilgal, for we are risen out of death, with Christ. And every return to Gilgal is a return to this memorial. Gilgal and this memorial are connected. When we return to Gilgal, when we consider our positional circumcision, we remember also going through death and resurrection with Christ. In 1 Cor. 3:22 we see that death is ours:

But death has much more than passed away. Death is ours, says the apostle, as all things are. By the blessed Lord’s entering into it for me, death and judgment too is become my salvation. The sin, of which it was the wages, has been put away by death itself. The judgment has been borne for me there. Death is not terror to my soul; it is not the sign of anger, but the blessedest and fullest proof of love, because Christ came into it. The very power of the law against me, I am freed from, for it has power over a man only as long as he lives; but in Christ I am dead to the law already. God has, by death, met sin and judgment already. In a word, Christ, the sinless One, having come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, my whole condition, as in the first Adam, has been dealt with -- dealt with so that all its consequences have been righteously undergone; and by death the old man, Satan’s power, sin, judgment, mortality itself, which are connected with the old (or sinful) man, are passed and done with for ever. I live before God now in the One who is risen, after enduring all
that belonged to the old for me. God has dealt with the old man, and all its fruits and consequences for me, in the new, who has taken even the natural consequences attached to it, and gone through its power as in the hand of Satan. Death has freed me for ever from everything that belonged to, and awaited the old man, as alive.  

Some additional remarks by J. N. Darby are apropos here:

A memorial of twelve stones is set up in Jordan, and as many are taken out of it and set up on dry ground in Canaan. It is the witness that through death I get into heaven, and I look back constantly at Christ’s death. The ark went down into Jordan and stayed till the people crossed over. I am out of death; and yet my privilege is to look back at Christ’s death in everything. This makes all the gain to us. He has turned all to the greatest blessing. I get the old man judged, and gone to faith. Is not this much for the soul? What was the judgment of God is the very ground of all blessing -- first, as to Christ Himself, and then as to my being in it with Christ. As to my place, I have done with the old creation. The fact that blessing is by death, the death of the Son of God, tells a great deal that nothing else can. Till I take death as the end of everything here, of all that Adam was, what part have I with God? In the present day they are trying to reform and improve Adam by schools, societies, etc. The Christian, alas! joins with the infidel in mending up the old thing. It is casting contempt on the death of Christ; a totally different thing from my doing good as a Christian, because this is the spirit of Christ. In Israel God wrought the experiment before all eyes of doing everything possible to reclaim man, if it could be; but it could not be, as He of course knew from the beginning. Man is irremediable, but God can save one, or any, out of that state. Yet all was tried first. “I have one Son.” The cross was the final moral judgment of man.  

Having died with Christ, I am not in the flesh, having put off the old man, and put on the new. In going now through the world I have to manifest the life of Christ. If Satan comes to tempt me, I am entitled to say that I am dead. When I get into Canaan, everything is for me or against me. Supposing I have even an amiable nature, it is a snare; in walking through this world, as, for instance, in the young rich ruler. But before God all are pronounced out of the way altogether. Affection is lovely as a creature thing; but one sees the same in a dog, save that man boasts of it, and the dog does not! There is nothing moral in that. Which is best -- an amiable man pleased with himself, or a cross man crying to God to give him grace? Amiability will not do at all -- you must have Christ, and you will be cross because you are denying that which you were priding yourself upon. When we get into heavenly


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things, the question is, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”

The circumcision here is the application (so to speak) of Jordan; for until you get into heavenly places you never can judge yourself -- you judge sins. If I began so, I should be hopeless, because I could not get rid of it till I am dead with Christ. This is Jordan. The flesh is never anything but thoroughly bad. I must have death with Christ before I can have circumcision, or mortifying it. Pleasures? I am dead puts an end to all question of these things. The moment one gets the truth of being heavenly, one sees the inconsistency of all that. We are never in scripture called to die to sin; Christ died, and in that He died, He died unto sin once. Of course He had no sin; but for this reason God could make Him to be sin for us in grace, that we might become God’s righteousness in Him. As for me, I have sin, and therefore cannot die to it; but He did; and I, being dead with Him as a believer, am called to reckon myself dead unto sin, and alive unto God in Him. So much for death first.

That getting into heavenly places in Christ is exactly what brings me into conflict with Satan. In the wilderness one is apt to be impatient, and exercises and dealings come from God; but, passed into Canaan in spirit, I am competent and called to fight the enemy. Circumcision means that I disown and mortify the flesh, I will have nothing to do with it and put it off. It is the practical realization of what I have in title in Christ (Col. 2:11), being a figure of having put off the old man, not that one has to put him off. Having Christ as my life, Christ dead and risen, I can say that this is not I, but sin in the flesh; but then I am bound, if it be so, that sin never acts; I am inexcusable if I allow it to appear. As it is, then, I need the circumcision or mortification of it. “Mortify, therefore, your members which are on the earth.” This supposes power in Christ; for it means, not that I am to die, but to put to death. I am to act in power, to kill or put to death what is working in myself; I am to spare nothing in me that is contrary to God, but use power to put these things down. Not being called to die to sin makes it very plain. See the realization of it in the apostle (in 2 Cor. 4) -- “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,” the daily making it good. I get my place in holy liberty when I can say that I died with Christ, and am crucified with Him; but being also risen with Him, and having in Him the power of life in resurrection, I can take the place of being circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, as the condition of soul inwardly henceforth; and now I must be always carrying out the true meaning of the cross. If the flesh attempts to crop up, I can say, I do not own you, being dead and risen with Christ.

We need to connect all this also with the thought of rolling off the
Circumcision took away from the people the last trace of the bondage from which they had been redeemed. They are now manifestly no longer the slaves of Egypt; but the citizens of Canaan, bearing in their own persons the mark and seal of separation to the Lord. In like manner, that which corresponds to a heavenly position is that we put aside all that marks our character as belonging to this world. This does not consist in throwing off all natural affections, or in the negligent discharge of natural obligations, under the pretense of the heart’s occupation with higher things. It is not asceticism; though it is the putting aside of the habits and tastes which connect us morally with the world, in order to be under the power of those objects which address themselves to the heavenly life, as risen with Christ into another sphere, where He Himself is.

Gilgal is the place of the enjoyment of accomplished redemption; of feeding upon a heavenly Christ; of the witness of the power of His death and resurrection, as bringing us into heavenly places; as well as the place of strength for spiritual conflicts. The camp of Israel was at Gilgal, to which Joshua and all the people returned after their conquests in Canaan. So, whatever spiritual victories we may gain they will soon cease, or be exchanged for discomfiture and dismay, if there be not the constant, habitual mortification of the flesh.

The consequence of Israel’s leaving Gilgal is seen ultimately in the condition of the people in the Book of Judges, where it is said (Judg. 2:1), “The angel of the Lord came from Gilgal to Bochim”—the place of weeping. And how surely has the humbling parallel been brought out in the history of the Church! The enjoyment of Canaan exchanged for bondage to the Canaanites! The place of victory and joy surrendered for the place of vanquishment and tears! It was not said in the history that the Lord and His strength were linked with Gilgal; but it came out too clearly when, through departure from it and unfaithfulness, His presence and sustenance were lost. And if, in application to a narrower circle, it be asked, How is it that heavenly truths have so little power, in those by whom they are professed, to produce a heavenly life, and are so little accompanied by spiritual power and separation from the world? the reply must be, Because there

250. The water was a wall on both sides of their passage through the Red Sea.
251. It appears that the waters were stopped so far up-stream that they did not see them. It certainly was not a wall on both sides of the passage through Jordan. At any rate, the moral power of death is gone for the believer.
is so great an estrangement from Gilgal. It is impossible to live a heavenly life, or to enjoy the heavenly portion in which grace has set us, if we neglect to "mortify our members which are on the earth." The Lord Jesus Christ has converted death into an instrument and means by which we may disengage ourselves from the claims of the flesh and all that is a hindrance to our heavenly life . . . If I am dead to the world, the world will become dead to me. All that makes its appeal, and makes it successfully too, to one who is "living in the world," becomes powerless in regard to one who is using the death of Christ so as to reckon himself to be dead. But this is common-place, every-day work. It makes no show, and brings no credit. The mortification of the flesh is not outward activity. Neither is it the display of spiritual energy. But it lies at the basis of all true spiritual strength, and is a sine qua non to all real service for Christ, and all possible enjoyment of our place as risen with Him.

There are two lives, if I may so speak, that the Christian is called to live by virtue of his association with Christ. There is the life of faithfulness here amidst the trying scenes and circumstances of this world, in which he is to walk as Christ also walked. In this he may be doing the same things as other men, but doing them from an entirely different motive and with an entirely different end. No doubt it is by the heavenly life that the true character is impressed upon our life of faithfulness here in the world. For the Lord Jesus was always a heavenly man in circumstances which marked His sojourn here on earth. Still this life, of which we speak, has a necessary connection with the world, and its energies are called into action by the circumstances that characterize the world. But there is another life that is specifically and essentially heavenly. This life owes nothing to this world. Its source and origin is heavenly. Its springs of enjoyment, its resources and objects, its sphere and final end are all heavenly. There is nothing of this world that enters into this life. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Now there are a thousand things that the heart may get entangled with, which are not exactly the evil lusts of the flesh, which, if they do not outwardly mar the faithfulness of our walk in the world, do entirely prevent the realization of that heavenly life to which we are raised, and in the sphere of which we are set by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If then we have so by the power of the Spirit passed through death as to have our life in heaven, with the Jordan as our frontier and Canaan as our home, let us not forget that our conflicts must be there too. Gilgal was Israel’s camp; but while circumcision stamped its name upon it, and gave it significance, there were grouped around it the stones of memorial out of the midst of Jordan; the keeping of the passover in the plains of Jericho; the eating of the old corn of the land;
and the wondrous presence of “the captain of the host of the Lord.” 252

The world is under judgment and is behind us. We are on the resurrection side, having risen with Him. We are not merely dead to this or that thing, true as that is in itself, and in its place, as in the wilderness; it is true of us positionally that we have been

circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ (Col. 2:11).

The Passover

The passover brings before us the foundation of all blessing. Israel began with a passover (Ex. 12). Its character at that point in time was not a celebration of having left Egypt, for they had not yet been delivered. It had more the character of laying hold of protection from judgment. Typically speaking, the passover was not held in view of being dead with Christ and raised with Christ as it was after crossing the Jordan, at Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho. This reminds us of the institution of the Lord’s supper before the Lord Jesus went to the cross of judgment. It was after the cross that the Lord’s supper was connected with the truth of the one body, the body of Christ on resurrection-ground. The body was formed at Pentecost consequent on Christ having taken His heavenly position (John 7:39; Acts 2:33; 1 Cor. 12:13). Subsequently, through the ministry of the apostle Paul, the truth of the one body was connected with the one loaf (1 Cor. 10:17). The body of Christ is a heavenly thing, because united to the Head in heaven by the Spirit sent down in a special capacity and function to form that body and unite the members to the Head in heaven. Typically speaking, the passover on the other side of Jordan is observed by those circumcised in Christ. Viewed as in the wilderness, we are not viewed as crucified with Christ.

Previously, we noted that Josh. 5:2 tells us that they were circumcised the “second time.” This circumcision preceded the observation of the passover in Canaan. The Lord’s supper is only for those circumcised in Christ.

For we are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:3).

And while it is for those positionally circumcised in Christ, it is clear that we ought to eat the Lord’s supper as in the practical application of circumcision in Christ to ourselves (1 Cor. 11:27-29; Col. 3:5). We need to judge the flesh according to our heavenly position; “the body of the flesh,” its entirety, gone from before God. What a relief to know it gone in its entirety from before God!

252. The Girdle of Truth 7:205-211.
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The Old Corn of the Land and Unleavened Cakes

The old corn of the land means the corn from the previous year’s planting. In John 12:24 we see the Lord Jesus speaking of Himself as the grain of wheat falling into the ground, dying, and coming up as the stalk with many grains. The risen stalk is Christ in resurrection and the grains are believers now. The risen life of the stalk flows in the grains, and the grains form one plant with Him. This is not the unity of one body in Him — though that is another truth concerning these grains. The grains on the plant has to do with the character of life we have: eternal life in the Son, life in abundance (John 10:10; 12:24). J. N. Darby coined a word to describe this life — resurrection-life. We have resurrection-life in connection with Christ’s risen manhood. We see Him on the day of His resurrection breathing into His disciples the Holy Spirit as the power of life in resurrection (John 20:19-23). They were already “clean” (John 13:10; 15:3), i.e., born again, but now the life from God that they had as born again was brought into an association with Christ in resurrection and thus He no longer abode alone (cp. John 12:24). Soon thereafter He would ascend above and unite them to Himself as one body with Him as head. They would be seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, and they could eat the old corn of the land.

Observe: the character of the life we have is life in the Son, life in abundance. The place where we have it is in Christ, life in Christ. All this is connected with Christ in resurrection. He is the old corn of the land, the food suitable for the heavenlies, our Canaan. When we are looked at as in the wilderness, there is the manna for us as food for the wilderness journey, for the manna speaks of the bread come down from heaven (cp. John 6:33),

253. At Pentecost, the Spirit came from the Father and the Son (Acts 2:32, 33) and coming He baptized them into one body, thus uniting them together as members of one another and as members of Christ in glory. This is distinct from John 20. Subsequent to Pentecost persons “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13) are joined thereby to the body formed at Pentecost composed of those who were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, 5; Luke 24:49; John 14 and 16). The designation of the Spirit as “the Holy Spirit of promise” in Eph. 1:13 connects the sealing with what took place at Pentecost when the one body was formed by the once-for-all baptism in the power of the Holy Spirit of promise. The body can only be formed once; we are joined to that body by sealing with that same Holy Spirit of promise.

254. We do not have life in the deity. We are in the Son and He is in us. This could only be because He took manhood, died, and rose again. And John 12:24 shows that no saint had this character of life before He rose from among the dead — before that He abode alone.

255. We are seated together in the heavenlies in Christ,” i.e., in spirit; the being seated together with Christ awaits His coming for us. On the other hand, we are already quickened with Christ, and this is true of our being raised up with Christ. This is already true as with Christ, while the being seated together is in Him.
Christ as He was for God here in His walk. But the Christ we know is the One above in resurrection-life.

The corn was roasted; roasted on the morrow after the passover, and eaten with unleavened loaves. It was the 15th of the month, the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of seven days which points to the believer’s holy walk (unleavened). Such a walk is the result of Christ our passover being sacrificed for us, and that forms the character of our walk. And we do this as now on resurrection-ground before God. The rule concerning our walk is found in Gal. 6:3, 15, 16.

As J. N. Darby remarked:

In the spiritual conflict we have to carry on, holiness is as much a question as redemption; and when we come to have conflict, we must be as holy as we shall be when we are with Him. Thank God, redemption has done this.

We need to remember that the Christian is both in the land and in the wilderness at the same time, so that he does eat manna as well as the old corn of the land, each being proper to its respective sphere. W. Kelly remarked:

There is, however, a needed remark to be made along with this. In our case (for the Christian enjoys the most singular advantages) it would be a grievous mistake and a real loss to suppose that Christ as our manna has ceased. For Israel there could not be such a state of things as the eating of the manna and eating of the corn of the land continuously going on together. The Christian has both unquestionably. And for this very simple reason: Israel could not be in the wilderness and in the land at the same time; we can be and are. Thus, as we have often seen, the Christian stands on altogether peculiar ground. It is not only the wilderness and its mercies we now have to do with, but also the heavenly land and its blessings and glory. Hence therefore we have to be on our guard in looking at such a type as this. There could scarcely be anything more dangerous than to suppose that we had passed out of the circumstances of trial, or that the gracious supply of the Spirit of Christ was no longer needed. Here below we are ever in the place of weakness and danger and sorrow. Here we are but passing through temptation. Emphatically this is the wilderness. Here the daily manna is vouchsafed to us, and we own and feel that only the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ever living and interceding Priest, could bring us safely through. I do not mean the power of resurrection alone: this we have; but the grace that brought Him down, and that enters into every daily need and want, and that sustains us in all our infirmity. But this is not Canaan; and in such pitiful and tender consideration we have nothing at all to do with the characteristic blessings of Canaan. We have then to do with power: here

256. The Bible Treasury 7:357.
the manna meets us in our need and weakness.

The Lord Jesus then ministers to His saints in both ways. Everywhere we have Christ. Take the same epistle to the Philippians already used for the present force of circumcision. We have not only Christ according to Phil. 3, but according to Phil. 2; for the second of Philippians shows us the very trait that I have been referring to -- the grace of the Lord coming down where we are; whereas ch. 3 would fix our eyes and hearts on Himself where He is now. Surely we need both, and we have both. So here we find not that which takes away the manna, but the new condition and place of Israel, and the due provision of God for it. The old corn of the land points to Christ risen from the dead; and so the apostle Paul loved to present Him, though never to the disparagement of the Lord in His grace and mercy toward us in all our circumstances of exposure as His saints. We are more indebted to the same apostle for this than to any other of the twelve; but then Paul does associate us truly and distinctly with Christ risen from the dead and in heaven, as no one else does. This he was specially called to make known. Not that he exclusively gives us the heavenly place of Christ, but that he, above all, brings us into it, while he magnifies the grace that watches over us here below.

This then is the eating of the corn of the land. It is what spiritually answers to the apostle's word in 2 Cor. 5:16 --

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

This is our form of relationship to Christ the Lord in what is peculiar to us now as Christians. What distinguishes us is that we have Christ risen and glorified; we are entitled to take all the comfort of knowing old things passed away, all things become new; we are brought triumphantly into it ourselves, and have Him in all His heavenly glory as an object before us; nay, more, as One to feed upon. The Spirit of God brings out the Lord Jesus particularly in the epistle to the Ephesians, where His first introduction is as One dead, risen, and exalted in heaven. In Colossians, in a similar way, we have our Lord there. All this then is the old corn of the land. But then if we take the Gospels, and, further, if we look at John's epistles, it is not thus we see Him. We behold our Lord here below particularly thus indeed as the object of the Spirit. It is clear then that all is brought out to us. We have Christ everywhere, and cannot afford to do without Him anywhere. What saint would have a part only of our blessing? God gives us a whole Christ, and in every way.  


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The Captain of the Jehovah’s Army

The rebellion of Israel came out in the form of wanting a captain to lead them -- back to Egypt (Num. 14:4). God had in mind to give them a Captain Who would lead them in conquest in Canaan and He appears in Josh. 5:13-15, in the God-appointed time. We see in Scripture certain things that the flesh wants but regarding which God has something far better, and we need to learn to wait on Him, His time, and His providing, which is always better than our thought. The captain to lead back to Egypt was to avoid God’s dealings and provision, and indulge the flesh in us with what it craves. The name of that captain is flesh and he has no drawn sword.

For crossing the Red Sea there was Moses’ rod of judgment. For crossing the Jordan there was the Ark. And for conquest in the land there was the drawn sword. Each is exactly right for the circumstances and for the typical meanings. I suggest that we ought to think that the drawn sword in Canaan is never sheathed.

And remark, that on the entry into Canaan, as depicted in the Book of Joshua, the portion of Israel was not rest. Their combats for the enjoyment of the land began then. Jordan was doubtless the figure of death, but properly of death with Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost; so as to be risen in spirit, in the liberty with which Christ sets us free, that we may realize and live in the heavenly things into which He is entered as our risen Head. As soon as Israel had crossed the Jordan, before a blow was struck, they ate of the old corn of the land. They were, as to title, in full possession of the country. But to possess it actually they must combat with the enemy. The principle of the Christian warfare is the same. “All things are ours.” As regards our title we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, eating the corn of that land. But conflict then begins, to hold our ground against the enemy, and realize the sum of our privileges through every attack he makes upon us. For in holding good our ground against his attacks, there is continual progress in the realization of that which God has given to us, though in the conflict itself we have only to hold fast faithfully. If we sit in heavenly places as to title and our place with God, as to possession we must make it good; for spiritual wickednesses are there {Eph. 6}.

The conflict in Canaan typifies the spiritual warfare against spiritual powers in the heavenlies, not warfare with fellow human beings. W. Kelly remarked:

When God enters on a fresh action, or calls His people to a new kind of activity, He reveals Himself accordingly. The same God that made Himself known to Moses displays Himself afresh to Joshua, always, it need scarce be said, (for could it be otherwise?) manifesting Himself...


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in the way which establishes His glory, and binds it up with the new circumstances of His people. There is no repetition of Himself -- the very same One, unchanged of course, but withal real in His ways, and occupied with us in order to identify us with His glory. Hence therefore there is now no burning bush. Nothing was more admirably suited to the wilderness; but what had this to do with Canaan? What was wanted there? A witness not of One judging, but of one that would preserve, spite of appearances, the emblem of utter weakness yet of all that weakness sustained. Was not this suited to the wilderness? But how or what in Canaan? As the captain of Jehovah’s host. Here it is a question of conquering the foe, the power or wiles of Satan. God forbid that we should have any other foe! Others may be foes to us; but these emissaries of Satan only we have to count foes, and to deal with as such. It is not so with men. These may become our enemies, but never we theirs; while we have nothing to do with Satan, save to treat him, when discovered, as an enemy. We are entitled, steadfast in the faith, to resist him who only seeks in his workings and ways to dishonor the glory of God in Christ our Lord, and so ruin all that are blinded by him.

This then is the revelation that Jehovah makes of Himself for the new work to which His people are called -- a man of war to lead those who have henceforth to fight.

But there is another remark to connect with a previous part of the chapter. Joshua was not given to see a sword in the hand even of the captain of the host, till the knife was put in the hand of each Israelite to deal with himself. The call to circumcision had done its work before there was a moral fitness to have to wield the sword against others.

Further now, just as much as in the wilderness -- more, I think, we shall see as we go on -- the solemn word, even to Joshua, is this --

Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.

There was the more need to insist upon this, because the task in Canaan was one of putting down the enemy. This necessarily calls for severe blows, continual watchfulness, incessant opposition. So much the louder call to begin and go on with reverence and godly fear.
Chapter 7.4

The Practice of Our Circumcision in Christ

(Continued)

The “Old Man” and the “New Man”

(The following is from F. G. Patterson’s, A Chosen Vessel. 259)

The New Man

Created in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. 4:24)

We now come to the New Testament, where we find a gradual unfolding of God’s ways as to the “new man”; indeed, we may say a new kind of man altogether from the first man. I would just draw attention to some of the salient points which are found there in the three great epistles, which, taken together, would give us the completeness of God’s thoughts, and His purposes in the new creation in Christ. I refer to Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians.

The first of these epistles unfolds in detail, the moral closing up of the history of the first man, as fallen, under every advantage, and after every trial from God whether without law, as being proved lawless; or under law, as a law breaker, and this, subsequent to the possession of privileges and advantages, which were before the special dealings of God took place in a separate people. The end of the trial and time of testing was, when Christ came and was refused. “All (now) had sinned,” in looking back, and “come short of the glory of God” -- the measure now, and standard by which all would be judged. Man had been set up in perfection as a creature, and had fallen; could he now meet the burning rays of God’s glory? On this, as on all other grounds, all was now over, with the old man for ever. God must now either end that man, whose will was set up against Him, by judgment in righteousness: or reveal Himself in sovereign grace through righteousness, in virtue of the work of Christ. I do not here, of course, enter


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upon this work of the cross, and the death, and resurrection of Christ; only looking at it, as the means, whereby God would close morally for faith the history of man in righteousness, and begin His new creation in His Son -- as head of a new race.

The section of the epistle in which God first shows how the race was all under judgment, and guilty before Him, ends in verse 19 of chapter 3. We then find, immediately following, in Rom. 3:20, &c., how the righteousness of God is now manifested for the sinner, in God’s raising up His Son from death and setting Him on high; and not against him, as standing in his own responsibility. And this, too, “by faith in Jesus Christ,” personally; and “by faith in his blood,” as the means by which the righteousness of God was vindicated against sin. He thus stands in perfect justification from all his guilt.

But his state as a sinner in the first Adam is not thus ended. When we pass that section which deals in all details with his guilt, and which ends at Rom. 5:11, we are introduced to the manner, in which our whole state is dealt with, and closed in the death of Christ. We read in Rom. 6,

Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

There is nothing in the Romans about the “new man” in any wise. But there is the crucifixion of “our old man” fully set forth, in order that the body, or totality, of sin might be set aside. The nearest approach to anything positive on this head is found in the expression of Rom. 7. “I delight in the law of God after the inner man,” but it goes no further. While fully closing up the questions of our guilt and state, it goes no further, but while showing Christ risen, the believer is not said to be risen with Him. For this, we must have the next step, in the Epistle to the Colossians.

There is in Romans a new will shown as either struggling against the old -- the flesh, in Rom. 7; or else, when the soul is set free, walking in “newness of spirit,” and “newness of life.” Romans gives us therefore, the crucifixion of “our old man” with Christ.

Now Colossians stands between Romans and Ephesians in doctrine. In the former, man is seen as alive in sins; the heart is going out after all its lusts unhinderedly. What then, must be done? He must be brought down into death -- the death of Christ -- to have his history closed: “Knowing this, that our old man is co-crucified with him.”

In Ephesians, we have man “dead in trespasses and sins,” and consequently another kind of dealing must come in. Unlike the Romans, where he must be brought down into death, because alive in sins, life must come in positively to quicken a dead soul in that condition, and to raise him up out of it; and all must be a new creation in Christ Jesus, who is in
Colossians, therefore, as we might suppose, would take in both sides—dead in sins, and alive in them. This it does, looking back on our Romans condition, and looking forward to our Ephesians condition in Christ Jesus. Therefore we read, “In the which (sins, &c.) ye walked when ye lived in them” (Col. 3:7). And we also read, “And you, being dead in your sins,” &c. (Col. 2:13). The saint therefore, is looked upon as “dead with Christ” from the elements of the world, as well as dead to sin, and dead to the law; and also risen with Christ, and though not sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, he is seeking those things “above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” He is, therefore, down here on earth.

This being so, he has not reached his new place with God in Colossians, though he is suited to the place as in life, and as risen with Christ. He has a new status, but not a new place. We would not therefore find, here in the epistle, the “new man” spoken of as in Ephesians. Indeed it is remarkable, that when it is apparently spoken of in Eph. 3, it falls far short of the full thoughts of Eph. 4:24; different words being used in the Greek original; and the word man ( ὁ νέος) being omitted altogether (Eph. 3:9).

We have, therefore, a different word for “new,” used in Colossians, as compared with Ephesians. In the former it is νέος; in the latter καινός: the latter signifying what I may term familiarly by the graphic expression ‘brand new!’ a kind of man never seen or heard of before; 260 while the former would be entirely new, but does not imply a new kind or genus, as the latter would.

We find, however, that the knitting up of both scriptures, Eph. 4 and Col. 3 is done by the Spirit of God in remarkable wisdom, by the use of these two words, being found in the construction of the verbs, “renewed “ in Eph. 4:23, and Col. 3:10; that in Ephesians being compounded with the “new” of Colossians; and that in Colossians with the new of Ephesians. 261 Wondrously wise are the scriptures of our God!

We may also here notice what is still the more striking and instructive, namely, that the word “putting off” is quite different in each epistle; in fact, there is no affinity at all between the words in Greek. In Colossians we have a word which signifies “passing out from under,” or, “being divested of”

260. It is not Adam innocent, nor Adam fallen, and righteousness under law, but a positively new creation.

261. It has been noted that the καινός of Eph. 4:24, and the νέος of Col. 3:10, are characteristic of each epistle. In Ephesians it is a new creation in contrast with an old; in Colossians it is a practical new life in which we live; though the care is taken to show that it is a new thing entirely, formed of God.
something; as a garment. In Ephesians we have not this, but its being absolutely “laid aside,” or “laid down.” I might take off my garment in one action; and I may also, by another action, lay it aside when I have taken it off. We shall presently understand the reason why it should be thus in each epistle, coupled with what we have seen already.

There is an illustration of the use of these two words in the LXX of Lev. 16:23, where Aaron, having finished the work of the great day of atonement, clothed in the white linen garments, first “cuts off” those garments, and then leaves them in the tabernacle of the congregation. I would also refer the English reader to Acts 7:58, here the verb of Eph. 4:24 and translated “putting off” -- which should be, more correctly, “laying aside” -- is used by Stephen’s murderers, who “laid down” their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul; and also to Heb. 12:1, where the same word is translated “lay aside,” as to “every weight,” &c.

In fact, while Colossians gives us the *subjective* side of the “new man” (what is practical life in which the saint lives here while walking on earth), Ephesians gives us the *objective* side of the “new man,” as showing us what he is on high. Colossians being rather Christ in us.

In Romans, therefore, we find “our old man *crucified*”: in Colossians the “old man parted with,” and the *subjective* side of the “new man.” While in Ephesians we have the old man wholly “laid aside,” where we are seen as all that we are in Christ -- the objective presentation of the full ‘brand-new’ man: an absolutely new creation in Christ.

We may read vv. 21-23, thus:

If so be ye have heard him, and in him have been instructed, as is truth in Jesus (namely) your having laid aside, according to the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the lusts of deceit. But be made new [that is, absolutely new] in the spirit of your mind. And your having been invested with the new man [that is, the brand-new thing] which is after God, [or, according to God] having been created in righteousness [not innocence] and holiness of the truth.

This “holiness of the truth,” stands in contrast with the “lusts of deceit” of v. 22. The deceit of the serpent having produced the lusts of the heart at the beginning; and righteousness being the basis of God’s new creation, he is formed -- created -- in it, and in holiness (absolute separation from evil) of the truth, which has begotten him.

As to the passage in Colossians corresponding and filling up on the practical side, we may read: “Your having been invested with the new” (νεωτης) he does not write “man” (ανθρωπος) -- this word only being used of the full absolute thing in Eph. 4 -- “which is continuously being made new toward perfect knowledge, according to the image of the Creator of
him."

Now remark again, that in Colossians we have “Christ” as the example of all for the new (man). Your life is hid with him in God (v. 3). The characters of Christ as the elect of God, presented as forming and practiced (vv. 12 and 13). The word of Christ is to dwell in him richly (v. 16). In fact, as v. 11 states, “Christ is all, and in all.” While in Ephesians it is “God,” and the nature of God is presented as the standard of all. The “new man” there is created after God (v. 24). He is to be an imitator of God (Eph. 5:1). To walk in love (which Christ showed fully) and walk as children of light -- God’s two essential characteristics, what He is (Eph. 5:2 and 8).

Again, we have more: we have in Colossians the “image of him that created him.” In Ephesians we have rather “likeness” to God Himself pressed (κατά θεόν).

Here, therefore, we come back to these words as at the first, “likeness” and “image”; the new man of Ephesians being morally like God -- seen in his true place as in Christ in heaven and as objectively presented to us there in Him. Therefore, when we come into the practical life -- the subjective side, in Col. 3 we have “image,” because there he walks on earth at the present, but is morally to represent God, who was fully represented in Christ Himself, and who is “all.”

Then again, as to the exhortation of each epistle connected with the “new man.” We find in Col. 3:9, “Lie not one to another.” There it is the practical life. But in Eph. 4:25 we have, “Wherefore having laid aside lying, speak truth” to each other. Here, with the old man who has been laid aside, goes the thing itself -- lying. Not merely is the exhortation, as in Colossians, to refuse the practice of it; but the thing is looked upon as gone here, and the exhortation takes the positive side, exhorting to speak the truth, &c., as in the other parts of the context in the epistle. There alone, too, have we the conflict of the saint in its true and only measure. Satan is again on the scene in a special way, to oppose this man of a new creation, as at the first he did in the old. On this I do not enter here.

A Walk in the Moral Power of Circumcision in Christ

The Philippians

. . . but if ye [are] of Christ, then ye are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:29).

Christ is the great Seed of Abraham and we are one with Christ, and in that
way we are seed of Abraham. Ethnic Gentiles who are seed of Abraham, along with ethnic Jews now who are true seed of Abraham, are together called the circumcision in Phil. 3:2, 3:

See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh.

We is not only emphatic, it includes the believing Jew, Paul, and believing Gentiles. All believers are the circumcision. Messianic Jews who are circumcised for some alleged spiritual reason are trusting in flesh and boast in it, not boasting in Christ Jesus. Moreover, they are mutilating themselves.

In v. 2, the concision 262 refers to those who are circumcised in their bodies 263 (i.e., physically the seed of Abraham) for religious purposes but

262. J. N. Darby wrote:

He says “concision,” treating the Jewish thing with contempt. We have no confidence in the flesh; he does not say, wickedness, but flesh, and that which he here calls “flesh” is religious flesh, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, etc. He will not call it circumcision. This is a great thing to get hold of. In Corinthians, it goes a great deal further, for besides the new creature, we have there a new creation, which means that the old thing has been dealt with; now all is of God. Of course, we are of God, but this is as belonging to the new creation; He has created us again in Christ Jesus (Notes and Jottings, p. 199).

The glory which he had seen, his contests with these false teachers, the state into which they had thrown the assembly, Jerusalem and Rome, his liberty and his prison -- all, had gained him the experience of what Judaism was worth as to the assembly of God. They were dogs, evil workers, that is workers of malice and wickedness. It was not the circumcision. He treats it with profound contempt, and uses language, the harshness of which is justified by his love for the assembly; for love is severe towards those who, devoid of conscience, corrupt the object of that love. It was the concision.

When evil without shame, and laboring to produce evil under a disgraceful veil of religion, is manifested in its true character, mildness is a crime against the objects of the love of Christ. If we love Him, we shall in our intercourse with the assembly give the evil its true character, which it seeks to hide. This is real love and faithfulness to Christ. The apostle had certainly not failed in condescension to the weak in this respect. He had carried it far; his prison testified it. And now the assembly, deprived of his energy and that spiritual decision which was full of love to all which is good, was more in danger than ever. The experience of a whole life of activity, of the greatest patience, of four years’ reflection in prison, led to these forcible and urgent words, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.” The doctrine of the epistle to the Ephesians, the exhortation of that to the Colossians, the affection of that to these Philippians, with the denunciation contained in Phil. 3:2, date from the same epoch, and are marked with the same love (Synopsis 5:362).

263. W. Kelly wrote:

“It is not likely that he would speak of the sheep thus, but the

(continued…)

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know not Christ. *Concision* is a term meant to convey that their circumcision is a mutilation of the body. That is what it amounts to, and they trust in flesh. When Paul said that (emphatic) “we” are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3), he included himself, Paul the ethnic Jew, one of the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). His physical circumcision meant nothing before God.

The physical side of circumcision is presently set aside while God is doing a heavenly work in Christ, and physical circumcision is denounced by Paul as *concision*. Circumcision in a higher sense is in force now. The seed of Abraham must be circumcised, and *in Christ* we are circumcised (Col. 2:11). Dr. Arnold Fructenbaum says that Jewish Christians are under the Abrahamic Covenant now and advocates that male children of Jewish Christians be circumcised. This partakes of the character of concision. Is he not *complete* in Christ? What did we read in Col. 2:10, 11? “Ye are complete in Him.” Is he not blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3)? Dr. Fructenbaum is engaged in adding something of spiritual significance (from his imagination -- not found in the NT) to Christ and all his reasoning on Scripture does not change that fact. He is Judaizing, and causing division in the Church.

Not only is concision denounced by Paul but so is “trust in flesh.” In Phil. 3:4, 5 Paul points out that if any had a thought to trust in flesh, “I rather.” Among the things enumerated he says that he is “of [the] race of Israel.” And so is Dr. Fructenbaum of the race of Israel. Let him take Paul’s attitude and position about that. True, he does not trust in flesh for salvation, but nonetheless he is making something of Jewish flesh, making something of being of “the race of Israel” -- such that, as being of the race of Israel, he has distinctive Israelite blessings from God and stands related to God in a way that Gentile believers do not. As one of the Israel of God, let him do what it says in Gal. 6:15, 16:

_for [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God._

There is the same rule for believing Jews and believing Gentiles. Dr. Fructenbaum claims to have what in effect is an additional rule for the Israel of God (i.e., believing Jews).

263. (...continued)

vigilant eye of this under-shepherd had detected those creeping in whose worldly-mindedness made it too evident that they were “enemies of the cross of Christ,” although they might be extremely zealous of religion. “Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision” -- a play upon the word “circumcision.” We know how the idolatrous priests cut themselves with knives and lances (1 Kings 18:28), and this may refer to that practice. It is astonishing how far the flesh may go in its religious energy, entirely opposed to the mind of God (*The Bible Treasury*, New Series 7:373).
Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; but keeping God’s commandments (1 Cor. 7:19).

It is clear what the NT states about circumcision, along with the clear silence of the NT concerning Dr. Fructenbaum’s exception, i.e., having the sons of Jewish believers circumcised. I suppose his teaching might be that circumcision now would be concision unless you are a Jewish believer, and thus under the Abrahamic Covenant. But the NT teaches no such thing, nor does it imply that. He has spiritually transmuted a Jewish believer who is heavenly, in Christ, into a Jewish believer under the earthly Abrahamic Covenant. It is a way to keep up Jewish distinctives, claiming Scripture sanction for this as being of “the race of Israel.”

It is instructive to note that there was a good spiritual state in Philippi, answering to circumcision in Christ, in practice. They were walking in the moral power of what circumcision in Christ means. Thus, the matter of circumcision is not brought up in connection with correcting giving ear to such things as we read of in Col. 2. Their commonwealth, or associations of life, was in heaven from which they were looking for the Savior (Phil. 3:20). They were in the moral power of having passed over Jordan and having gone to Gilgal, etc. They were in a state so that the apostle could write those wonderful words to them:

we are the circumcision!
Concluding Remarks:

Responding to the Lord’s prediction of The Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70

Matthew’s gospel traces the presentation of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, as entailed with the acceptance of the King come in humiliation instead of power and glory, and that presentation was rejected. In Matt. 11 we see the rejection under way and in Matt. 12 the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was committed, in effect calling the Holy Spirit working in Christ Beelzebub, the prince of demons. At the end of Matt. 12 we see the Lord morally withdrawn from the nation, pointing out who His mother and brethren are. In Matt. 13 He takes the position of sowing rather than seeking fruit from the Old Israel. In a parable He predicted what God would do with Jerusalem:

And [when] the king [heard of it he] was wroth, and having sent his forces, destroyed those murderers and burned their city (Matt. 22:7).

The cross was the final rejection of our Lord on earth. However, the work on the cross was the basis for the rending of the veil, through which, by His blood, we have access into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 10:19) where our great high priest is (Heb. 8:1, 2).

There was a further year for Israel (Luke 13:8) and then we see the “embassy” (Luke 19:14), i.e., Stephen, giving testimony to seeing the Son of Man in Heaven, upon which he was stoned (Acts 7). The citizens did not want that Man ruling over them down here on earth, and they were having none of Him in the glory either.

Next, Paul is saved and subsequently sent to the Gentiles. Christianity spread among myriads of the Jews and also Gentiles were saved in many places. During this time God had patience with the Jewish believers who had come out of Judaism. Finally, this patience of God came to an end with Paul’s testimony in Acts 28, when in his second imprisonment. The prison epistles were then written, including the Epistle to the Hebrews (AD 60-62, during his two years in prison). The Hebrew believers were told to go unto Christ outside the camp (ca AD 61), i.e., outside Judaism. They even had a little time to leave Jerusalem physically before God sent His armies (Matt. 22:7) and had Jerusalem burnt. This happened in AD 70, the armies being Roman.

C. H. Mackintosh noted this in God’s dealings with Israel:

Jesus suffered without the gate. This fact is the basis on which the
Concluding Remarks

apostle grounds his exhortation to the Hebrew believers to go forth without the camp {Heb. 13:12, 13). The cross of Christ closed His connection with the camp of Judaism; and all who desire to follow Him must go outside to where He is. The final breach with Israel is presented, morally, in the death of Christ; doctrinally, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; historically, in the destruction of Jerusalem. In the judgment of faith, Jerusalem was as thoroughly rejected when the Messiah was nailed to the cross, as it was when the army of Titus left it a smouldering ruin. 265

The capital seat of Judaism was thus manifestly judged as our Lord had said in the parable. Let each Christian seek to be outside the system which has been so markedly set aside and judged.

What Is Our Response to Our Being the Circumcision?

We have noted that the book of Hebrews was written the Apostle Paul while in his second imprisonment (c 60-62 AD) and he told the Hebrew Christians to go outside the camp. That is, he regarded the early Jewish believers as inside the camp, inside Judaism, else he would not have told them to go outside it. Are you clear of such connection, as a Jewish believer, or as a Gentile believer?

The Apostle Peter, a Jewish believer, writing to the Jewish believers in the dispersion (i.e., the diaspora, (1 Pet. 1:1)), several years after Paul wrote Hebrews,) is the only Christian writer in Scripture that calls his fellow Jewish believers Christians (1 Pet. 4:16), as is in keeping with, consonant with, Paul’s inspired direction for Messianic Jews to go outside Judaism. How good it would be if modern adherents of “Messianic Judaism” would do as Peter said, by inspiration, and suffer as Christians rather than as Messianic Jews! We are to suffer in the character of being Christians, not as being Messianic Jews. How good it is if Gentile believers separate from things of the camp!

Gentile Christians, along with Jewish Christians, need to cast off all elements of Judaism. Paul’s words to go outside the camp, while written to professed Jewish believers, do not therefore leave permission for Gentile believers to partake of the camp.

How can a Christian have an altar on earth and refuse to respond to the call?

How can a Christian have a worship on earth and refuse to respond to the call?

How can a Christian be in an assembly that participates in Judaistic practices and refuse to respond to the call?

How can a Christian have a sanctuary on earth and refuse to respond to the call?

How can a Christian be circumcised in the body for a spiritual reason, when we all are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3), and refuse to respond to the call?

What is the appropriate, spiritual, obedient response? Heb. 13:13 tells us:

*let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach . . .*  
Do you think we do that while calling ourselves Messianic Jews?  
Do you think we do that when holding on to “Hebrew Christian distinctives”?  
Do you think we do that when we substitute celebration of alleged Christian holy-days instead of Jewish holidays?  
Do you think we do that while we have a worldly sanctuary?  
Do you think we do that while we have an intermediary in collective worship?  
Do you think we can do that without ever moving our feet or changing our connection with the institutionalized Judaistic forms in Christendom?  
Do you think that we can do that without paying a price for doing so?

*But the God of peace . . . perfect you in every good work to the doing of his will, doing in you what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] glory for the ages of ages. Amen (Heb. 13:20-21).*
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