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Mar/April 2001

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The Seven Churches Revelation – Division 2: The Things that Are

***What the Spirit Says to
the Seven Assemblies***

Chapter 3

Misuse of Rev. 2 and 3 in Avoiding Responsibility for Evil Associations

I have no individual direction in the seven churches, except to listen. I may, of course, draw consequences . . . The thing people so frequently insist on, is to be allowed to go on with evil, and I have sometimes said, Well, then, go on with Laodicea, and be spued out of His mouth. ¹

Of course, no one says “I want to be allowed to go on with evil.” But that is what the opposition to godly separation from evil unto the Lord amounts to. J. N. Darby wrote:

The Seven Churches exhibited churches formed thoroughly on sound principles -- principles of not allowing evil; and because they did not act upon them, they were to be judicially removed out of their place, which they were accordingly. They formed the next step in church history to the epistles of the apostles, the parting warning from the Lord. The Epistles afford the example of apostolic energy in maintaining churches rightly planted in their right position of separation from evil, the apostle warning that he knew, that after his decease things would go wrong, and evil arise. The Seven Churches' epistles are the judgment of Christ on this subsequent state of things, . . . Removal for practical corruption of a holy thing is the tenor of these epistles, the setting aside the church as standing in its first planting. But they were “things that are” . . . It is a perverted attempt to apply “things that are,” as if it applied to ‘the things that shall be,’ which is a perversion of scripture. Christ’s judgment was on ‘the things that

1. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 371.

are’; His prophecy of ‘the things that should be.’ ²

The seven churches do not treat the subject of discipline by them, because they speak of Christ’s judgment pronounced on them . . . It is Christ’s judgment of the churches, not the means they were to employ, already well known, of dealing with evil when in their regular state as a church; if they were out of it, and incapable of remedy, the candlestick would be removed. The body of Christ is in no way the subject of the seven churches. It is not the subject of judgment and removal. No communication of grace is ever found in the seven churches; responsibility is what is treated, threatenings, promises, all that acts upon responsibility, but nothing of communicated grace. The Holy Ghost directs the church according to the mind of Christ: Christ judges that which bears His name. ³

Your general reasoning is this: you are to judge the evil individuals, but in no case the body. Suppose, as in Sardis, very few to be such as will walk with Christ in white, and the mass to be unconverted -- never mind, you are not to separate, however degenerate they are become. Now how is an ordinary mind to distinguish this from the Establishment? And you carry this so far, that you go through the churches, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and press that the Lord even never acts against the *body*, but only against those that have sinned -- an argument without any force, because it omits Ephesus, whose candlestick is to be removed for the smallest departure, and Laodicea, which is wholly vomited out of His mouth. Now whatever use you make of this, it makes your deduction of no value; because according to your way of putting it, Ephesus would be wholly rejected for “a fall which no eye marked but His own”; and Pergamos and Thyatira would not, for the grossest allowed evil. The conclusion I draw is, that your manner of reasoning about it is unsound . . .

I do not think you can justly reason from Christ’s dealing with a church to my dealing with it . . . because God can bear with evil with which I ought not: witness His bearing with the world, Babylon, from out of which I am called to come. Secondly, because in many cases He can judge the wicked only by a discriminating judgment in power, as in the cases you refer to in Rev. 2, 3, and as He will do at the end of the age, which I cannot. Hence a conclusion from His judgment to ours is unsound. ⁴

There are three particular points regarding Rev. 2 and 3 which I would here address. They are: (1) why, with all the evil in some of the seven assemblies, are they called assemblies? (2) do the seven golden candlesticks indicate independency of assemblies? (3) and does Rev. 2 and 3 warrant staying in fellowship with known evil?

2. *Collected Writings* 14:169.

3. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:103.

4. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:190, 191.

Why Do You Look for Teaching on Church Order Here?

WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE CANDLESTICKS ARE GOLD?

J. N. Darby warned:

In the Acts of the Apostles we have the founding of the Church on the principles on which Christ established it; in the epistles, the sustaining it by the apostolic energy of the Spirit; in the epistles to the Seven Churches, the judgment of Christ upon their subsisting state, as not continuing upon the ground on which they were planted . . . ⁵

And if He was walking among the candlesticks judging, it was clear it was not the candlesticks as the divine type of what they were in God*s mind that He would judge. The candlesticks were God*s idea of them. The report is of things that are -- what man had actually made of them here below. Christ judicially brought what the Spirit saw to bear on what man had produced. ⁶—

It is well to see the difference between the church as seen in Christ, and as on earth representing Christ. She partakes of His glory, as united to Him; and as a vessel contains His glory, and represents it on earth -- the “epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.” Responsibility down here does not touch salvation in any wise. He had promised, in His faithfulness, to carry them on towards the fulness of His glory, and He judges them for failure in the use of the responsibility He laid upon them. God’s own people are profited by it, but the “simple pass on, and are punished,” and at length, as a body, they are “spued out of his mouth.” ⁷ —

This is not About The Body in Unity with the Head

We shall find, however, on entering into details, that different parts of the professing church with distinctive characters are spoken of as partially subsisting at the same time. So that we get this: each description does apply, in one sense, to the church at large, yet all do not to the whole church at one and the same time. And therefore you get in these churches, either a successional picture of the condition of the church upon earth, as responsible to God from the beginning to the end of this dispensation, in a prophetic way, or a particular state of a part necessary to complete the whole picture -- the different aspects that it has presented in the world until the Lord spued it out of His mouth.

Then, you will say, “How can the church be spued out of Christ’s mouth, when the church is the body of Christ, and must be with Him in the glory?” That is true, if you speak of the body of Christ, but the church as an external

5. *Collected Writings* 14:170.

6. *Collected Writings* 8:25.

7. *Collected writings* 34:154.

body on earth never loses its responsibility, whatever its characteristics may be. Looked at as on earth, it is responsible for its conduct. If the unworthy servant did not do his master’s will, he was to be treated, not as being not a servant at all, but as a hypocrite according to the position in which he was found, though not as being really such, for servant he was none really. It was not said to him, “You are no servant”; but, “Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness . . . and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.” Thus he was taken up and condemned on the ground of his profession.

. . . The question here is not as to the certainty of individual salvation, but about the vessel God is using to bear His name before the world. Individuals who believe will go to heaven, but the vessel of testimony, having failed, must be broken. God has long patience with it; but if, after all that has been done, it only brings forth wild grapes, it must be cut off. Doubtless there is a faithful remnant taken to heaven, but the vessel is cast off as a visible public testimony on the earth.

In Rom. 11 we see how God puts what He has formed at present on the earth to bear His name, in the position of a public visible system on the earth, as He did Israel. “Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt be cut off.” God can cast off the professing church in perfect consistency with what He has revealed Himself to be, because it is not a question of His grace and goodness, or of individual salvation, but simply and only of responsibility. And this it is which makes His dealings with these churches a deep and positive warning to us, as the very same principle applies to Gentile as to Jewish testimony. God will accomplish to the very word every promise He has made to Israel. Yet we all know as a plain fact that God has cast off Israel as visible witnesses to bear His name to the world. And He will, in the same way, cast off the church, if it fails in its responsibility on the earth. Thus we see how God maintains His government in respect to the testimony which His people ought to bear under every dispensation, and that, while individual salvation is for ever secured to individuals in Israel and the church, both will be set aside as to their public visible testimony. Thus we get not only responsibility but the results of failure. ⁸

This church of Laodicea, as all the other six churches before, is addressed as having the character of the church of God (that is, as holding before God the position of acknowledged testimony of Him for the world); and as such it is threatened with rejection. This is important in connection with other parts of scripture. It is not the history of that which has been accomplished, but the warning and threat of that which is coming. Hence its character is prophetic. And as the whole book of Revelation is judgment, so likewise, in these addresses to the churches, we get the judgment of the professing church, standing under God’s eye, as holding this position. And I would here recall to your memory what I have said before, and what it is important to remember, that what is before us in all these churches is not the work of God’s grace in itself;

8. *Collected Writings* 5:278-280.

for these addresses to the churches would have no place if it were -- nor yet Christ the Head of the body, as the source of grace to the members -- nor yet is it the work of the Spirit of God, as that of course is never the subject of judgment; as also the grace which flows down from the Head to the members can never fail. This can never be the subject either of warnings or threatenings. It is the condition and state of the church which is here shewn forth, as holding the place of responsibility under the eye of God, and the consequent dealings of Christ with it, in the expectation of fruit.

Further, these addresses are not to individuals, but to churches; still there is a great deal to be gathered from these addresses by individuals who have an ear, through the instruction of the Holy Ghost: I trust that we even now have gathered a little of such instruction. The promises also are to individuals, "to him that overcometh" in the midst of evil circumstances, but the dealing is with the body.

It is not then the supply of the Spirit of grace from the Head, nor yet the directions through the Spirit of the Father's love dealing with the children within, because that supposes the church to be in an accepted and healthy state, and gives them directions suited to that state, and answering to the purpose for which it was called into church position.⁹

Why Are Those with Such Evil in Them Called Assemblies?

Here is some help by J. N. Darby:

Laodicea, which is spued out of Christ's mouth, is called 'assembly;' . . . God's building may have wood and hay and stubble in it; God's servant may find his place with unbelievers; the branches that partook of the root and fatness of the olive tree may be removed. But it is remarkable how false principles throw mere activity of mind into confusion. No one pretends that the assembly on earth exists no longer, he tells us (p. 5); he does not mean to say that Christendom is the assembly of God, but he insists that what was once God's assembly has "degenerated into what we call Christendom."

It will be said, I understand, it is an assembly, not God's assembly. Whose then? It was so: when did it cease? Will it not be judged as such? When wood and hay and stubble had been built in it, it is still God's building, God's temple; and on God's house judgment comes, on "that servant"; and there profession is spoken of. If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel? In the great house of 2 Timothy all the vessels to dishonor and honor are -- that into which the assembly has degenerated, the vessels are in *that*. If an assembly exists, it must be that, or they are in no assembly at all, they are not in God's assembly -- have nothing to do with it. There is none such -- no responsibility connected with it; or are they in another assembly which is responsible? Where is their responsibility as to any assembly

9. *Collected Writings* 5:362, 263.

if it be not God's? Man has not ceased to be a creature responsible to God because he is fallen and in that sense apostate from God. If the assembly of God has fallen, has its responsibility ceased? and if it be responsible, on what ground is it so? Is it not as God's assembly, though it has ceased to be so really in heart and way? When and how did God's assembly cease to be such as to responsibility as such on the earth?¹⁰

Independency and Fellowship with Evil¹¹

Independency and fellowship with evil are generally interlocked and this is disguised as faithfulness to the Word (and as loving Christians). An answer to a question appeared in *Truth and Tidings* that touched on Philadelphia. This periodical is an organ of those who claim Donald Ross, et al., as the originators

10. *Collected Writings* 20:215, 216.

11. Here is an example of the inability to understand the thought of acting on the truth that there is one body:

The Seven Churches rebuke the idea of a confederacy of assemblies. The confederation idea is, that when one assembly, or set of assemblies in a given locality, takes any action, right or wrong (of course, those who do take it, believe it to be right), then it is argued that in order to remain in fellowship, every other assembly must do likewise. And the threat of being "cut off" swings them into line; so coerced by the danger of being cut off, they do that, which if left to their own conscience before the Lord, they would not do, and so an outward semblance of unity (but not the unity of the Spirit, Eph. 4:1-3), is maintained (*The Overcomers of Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3, Who Are They?*, W. J. M'Clure, Kilmarnock: John Ritchie, p. 21, n.d.).

How concisely this extract states the standard independency view about this! The word "confederacy" shows that the writer has foisted his notion of independent units on to what he rejects. Assemblies acting on the truth that all saints are members of one body reject the idea that assemblies are independent units that can confederate. They profess to accept local responsibility, not local independency. It seems that the objectors are incapable of understanding what they reject, hence the talk about "confederacy." Moreover, "the unity of the Spirit," as W. Kelly remarked, is not the unity of the spirits.

Why do some who hold to independency of assemblies even hold the foreshadow view of Rev. 2 and 3? What is it that is foreshadowed in, say Pergamos? Is it the foreshadow of something on earth that is larger than a local assembly? -- called the church on earth viewed in responsible testimony?

Another adherent of independent brethrenism wrote:

The seven letters depict different aspects of the Church and of the professing Church as its testimony and history is reviewed over the whole period from John's day to the time when its witness is ended when Christ shall call the true Church to Himself . . . (W. G. Broadbent, *The New Testament, Part 9, The Revelation*, Paeroa, New Zealand: Eldon Press, p. 15, 1979).

And so F. A. Tatford also:

. . . it requires the conditions of all seven churches to compose the complete picture of the universal church (*The Patmos Letters*, Grand rapids: Kregel Publications, p. 20, 1969).

of the independent assemblies that they recognize. Here is what was said:

In Philadelphia, we have another work of God in the past century, marked by a great revival of missionary effort, and a return to the simplicity of church testimony after the pattern of the New Testament.¹²

Open Brethren formally began in 1848 at the Bethesda division. Before that saints acted as one body. It was held that the church was in ruins and that New Testament churches could not be set up again. Here, we see exactly a pretension to set up New Testament churches, and claiming they were independent. Another answer to a question stated:

The autonomy of the New Testament assemblies is plainly taught in the Bible. Each of the seven churches in Rev. 2 and 3 was an independent lampstand. Smyrna was not told to put Pergamos right; nor Philadelphia to correct Laodicea. However, *these assemblies were responsible to maintain fellowship the one with the other*. The seven letters, one to each assembly, were to be written in a book, and a copy sent to each assembly (Rev. 1:11). We do not read of any coalition or coming together to consider the wrongs found in any of these assemblies.¹³

The emphasis is mine. What we read in Rev. 2 and 3 is what those who have an ear are responsible to do, which is not at all like this absurd and evil conclusion.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THYATIRA AND LAODICEA

Who Are You to Judge? Alex Munro wrote:

Here observe that it is not the prerogative of a man to pass judgment upon whether or not a company has ceased to be an assembly of God.¹⁴

So, say, Philadelphia should maintain fellowship with Thyatira and Laodicea. See what independency involves? In a correspondence during 1998 and 1999 with a Christian in one of these independent 'New Testament assemblies,' who supports these views, he wrote that Laodicea was "a true local assembly," as shown by the call to repent. I asked if he would use letters of commendation to and from assemblies as Laodicea and Thyatira if they were in neighboring towns where he lived. He replied:

Definitely we would, I hope, receive commended persons from either.¹⁵ Their

12. Vol. 32, p. 244, 1981.

13. Hector Alves, *Truth and Tidings*, vol. 29, p. 97, 1978.

14. "God's Message to Laodicea," *Truth and Tidings* 15:29, 1963. According to this evil principle, when J. N. Darby withdrew from Plymouth at the end of 1845, it was not his prerogative to pass judgment on Plymouth that it had ceased to be an assembly of God! Hector Alves wrote:

They were lukewarm because they broke bread and attempted to worship in a very cold way (*Truth and Tidings* 32:326, 1981).

Rather, lukewarmness to what is due to Christ's honor tolerates evil rather than separating from it.
15. And so Bethesda, Bristol, England, received persons coming from under the ministry of B. W. Newton (1848) when it had been shown that he was teaching evil doctrine concerning Christ's alleged 'unspeakable circumstantial distance from God,' and Bethesda's infamous "Letter of the (continued...)

reception might be with some conditions attached such as not being permitted to preach false doctrine.

The caveat does not hide the fact that independency and fellowship with evil are connected, and here it is, plain as day. These notions are evil! You may count on it that by one means or another, views against evil, and evil associations, are mitigated. It is built in, constitutionally.

We can see in the seven golden lamps local responsibility. On the other hand, it is a mistake to see seven "independent" assemblies, thus looking to Rev. 2 & 3 to teach the *constitution* of the church, which is really Paul's line of teaching particularly. Local autonomy is not taught in Scripture, but local responsibility *is* taught, and here it is part of the picture. But there is much more than that in Rev. 2 & 3. Indeed, while local responsibility is important, that is not the main matter in Rev. 2 & 3.

It is the prophetic character of the book, the critical condition of the churches, which accounts not only for the angel representatives, but for the separate view of the churches. For the unity of the body of Christ is a wholly distinct truth, and stands on the basis of divine counsels now and for ever made good by and in Christ the Head. "The seven churches" have their own moral bearing as introducing God's future dealings with the world when they vanish from the scene. All effort, from this special aim, to set aside unity, and to supplant it by independency, is as unintelligent as it is vain and evil. To deduce from the stars and the candlesticks new officials and congregational independency would be to overthrow the nature of ministry and the unity of the church, as already taught wherever the Holy Spirit reveals either truth. But what does man's will not essay? "The things that are" abide still, though going on from danger at the beginning to utter rejection at the last: a strange time and state to organize the church anew, and an unheard of function.¹⁶

Looking through these epistles we meet with nothing of church order, nor have we any fresh doctrinal revelation. The circumstances and form in which they were written would preclude both. For, as the church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, when church order has to be treated of, an apostle is selected to be the mouth-piece of the Holy Ghost by virtue of his apostolate. And since to Paul, not to John, was it given to fulfil the word of God (Col. 1:25), it is from the former's writings alone that we learn anything about church order. Again, had fresh doctrinal revelations been made in these epistles, since they were written after the decease of Paul, Peter, James, and others of the apostles and prophets, it would have proved that all the truth needful for the edifying of the body had not been communicated in their day, in which case Paul could not have declared all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27), nor could Peter surely have written in the terms he did (2 Pet. 1:3). In fact these epistles endorse the language of both Peter and Paul, as they call on those by them addressed to be

15. (...continued)

Ten" was issued, formally denying such a thing as leavening by such association.

16. W. Kelly, *Exposition of the Revelation*, p. XXX

faithful to the truth already received, not to expect anything more. (Ch. 2:25; 3:3). Faithfulness in the time of declension and persecution is what the Lord here enjoins, and individual faithfulness He desires, if the majority around them have got wrong. And this is to be attained by keeping fast hold of what they have, or returning to that from which they have departed; whereas the reverse of faithfulness would be indicated by refusing to conform, whether in doctrine or practice, to that which had once been accepted amongst them. But though we meet not with rules for church order, we learn that when apostles, and elders, and deacons appointed by them, should cease to exist upon earth, there would be always in the different assemblies those, whom the Lord would hold responsible to care for the due order and welfare of His saints: a solemn fact surely. And though none can now lay claim to be obeyed on the ground of appointment to office, there were, there are, and there will be, those who should care for the local assemblies throughout the world, this responsibility never terminating till the Lord's rejection of Christendom by spueing it out of His mouth.¹⁷

As we noted previously, the candlestick in the tabernacle was one candlestick with seven branches. It speaks of the person of Christ. In Rev. 2 and 3 there are seven individual candlesticks.

It is an interesting fact that Christians go to this *judgment* upon what was originally set up through Paul's instrumentality to find support for their doctrine of the constitution of the church. We would think that Paul's epistles are the place to look, rather than in John's writings, among whose themes is the family of God, not the constitution of the church, and especially not so in Revelation, where even those things taken up in His gospel and 1 John are not the subjects.

There was *only one* candlestick in a city. It suggests local responsibility, in one view of it -- a responsible light bearer. While there is very definitely such a thing as local responsibility (which is judged by the Judge) we must find the subject of the one body and the unity of the Spirit in Paul's epistles.

There was *only one* candlestick in a city; not two or five or ten. One candlestick in a city does not support the idea of a number of independent assemblies in a city. The address is to the assembly (not assemblies) in such and such a place. So is it in the epistles no matter how many gathering points there were in a city or town. No matter how large in number the saints grew in Jerusalem, and however many places they may have met, the Word speaks of the church in Jerusalem -- but speaks of churches in a district, of course. It is not my point to develop this here. The reader may consult *Letters of J.N. Darby*, index entry, "Assembly -- in a city." My purpose here is served by pointing out that there is only one candlestick in a city or town, as far as Scripture speaks of it; and what else do we want other than Scripture?

Is Rev. 2 & 3 Warrant for Staying

17. *The Bible Treasury* 9:236.

In Fellowship with Known Evil?

A wise [man] feareth and departeth from evil (Proverbs 14:16).

Let everyone who names the name of [the] Lord withdraw from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19).

2 Timothy was written when the ruin had already set in.

It is said that we find much evil in some of the assemblies noted in Rev. 2 and 3. And, in an effort to hinder separation from evil, it is pointed out that there is no command in Rev. 2 and 3 to separate from the said evil. The reply to this terrible and unholy argument is given in the following extracts from others.

W. Kelly said:

Moreover, the argument is singularly unhappy, if judged by that view which, to you, "appears the correct one." For on the protracted scheme of the Apocalyptic churches, Thyatira gives us Popery under the symbol of Jezebel; and you have yourself strongly and repeatedly insisted on the Christian's separation from THAT unclean thing. If, therefore, the epistle to Thyatira forbids not to come out from this evil, the other epistle cannot be said to bind us up with evils elsewhere, when remedy is refused and the godly, if they abide, must do or sanction that which is, in their eyes, false and iniquitous. I entirely coincide with you that to stay in communion with Romish error is to lose all power for witnessing. Why should it be a virtue to stay in communion with that which we account Protestant error? In either case, it would be heartless indifference to truth and holiness. On the scheme you accept, Popery has a place in these churches, prophetically viewed quite as much as a national Establishment; and if it be right, as you own, to separate from Popery, spite of no command from the Lord to Thyatira, it cannot be wrong to separate from nationalism because of no such command to Sardis or Laodicea.¹⁸

Even if one does not accept that Rev. 2 and 3 gives a foreshadow of church history, if separation from evil is wrong he should go back to Rome.

It is instructive to note that there WAS a separate number of saints in the city of Thyatira. "But to you I say, the rest who [are] in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I do not cast upon you any other burden; but what ye have hold fast till I shall come" (Rev. 2:24, 25). Another has said this about the faithful in Thyatira, who refused connection with the doctrine of Jezebel:

A question may here arise. Does this epistle sanction the continuance of God's people in that which is wrong, for there is no hint for them to leave the assembly? Other scriptures point out what the action of God's people should be with reference to evil in doctrine and practice (1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:10; 2 John). Here however we have the whole local assembly addressed, from which according to God's thoughts we can never get free, as long as we are in the place where it exists. For the assembly at Thyatira comprehended every soul in

18. *God's Principle of Unity*, pp. 35, 36.

that city which professed to be a disciple of Christ. To separate from the church there would have been to unchristianize themselves, which they could not do, though separation from evil is a positive Christian duty. This those termed by the Lord “the rest” had clearly done. They were apart from the evil and because they kept aloof from participation in it, they received this token of His approval, whilst enduring the odium of those from whose ways and doctrines they dissented. A new church they did not attempt to form, nor could they, for there was but one in the place, however many might have been the houses in which the members of it met. To have attempted to form one would have manifested their want of intelligence about the church of God. To have acquiesced in the evil, because there was but one church which God owned, would have indicated ignorance as to the nature of God, and of that which should characterize His children.¹⁹

Actually, we thus see that good and sufficient reason to leave (not the assembly of God in Thyatira, but) the evil is given in the words addressed to “the rest.”

Another has pointed out a lesson from the address to Pergamos:

A. But does it seem Christlike to exclude so many for the faults of a few?

B. It is for their own sin they are excluded; but you are also seriously wrong in your ideas of our blessed Lord, and -- abusing His blessed character in His personal grace to sinners -- make Him tolerant of evil in His Church, which He never can be -- He would deny His own nature were He to be so. Have you forgotten the scourge of small cords with which He drove the intruders out of the temple? Was that grace? Surely something else was required when the condition of God’s house and the “holiness which becomes it *forever*” were at stake. Again, what is His sentence upon the church at Pergamos?²⁰ Does He not *condemn the whole body* for the selfsame conduct for which you are now arraigned, because they had those among them who *held* (He does not say taught) the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes? They allowed these persons among them though they did not accept their evil doctrines as a body, and the Lord calls on them to repent of their indifference, threatening that otherwise He will come to them quickly in judgment, besides fighting against the individuals in question. They did not hate the evil, but He did, and “*the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.*” Did you hate these things as you ought, you never could allow such connection with them, or plead for it.²¹

Thus it is a false idea that asserts that Rev. 2 and 3 indicates that God sanctions or condones or excuses our being associated with known evil. From where do such unholy and antichristian notions come? Rev. 2:14,15 teaches us, in effect, that we may not allow among us those who HOLD evil doctrine. It does not say anything about teaching it. Persons must not HOLD doctrine which is leaven. Also 2 Tim.

19. *The Bible Treasury* 9:240.

20. His words are, “I have *against thee*, that thou hast them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I *hate*. Repent, or I will *come unto thee* quickly,” etc (Rev. 2:14,15).

21. A. C. Ord, *Is There Not a Cause?*, p. 18. This paper is included in *Collected Writings of A. C. Ord*, available from the publisher.

2:19, 20 requires separation from iniquity. Nothing alters that fact though wickedness may try to take it away or mitigate its force.

In agreement with Rev. 2 and 3, another has said:

To have among us those that hold false [evil] doctrine and those that teach false [evil] doctrine is in either case as strongly rebukable as to have those that do the evil things which result from false doctrine, and the allowing any such thing among us is here rebuked of the Lord.²²

The call to us is to “hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. Many Christians have a hearing problem which results from a heart problem. There is a state of soul that precludes a true and faithful hearing. Our Lord Jesus has warned us, “Take heed therefore HOW ye hear” (Luke 8:18). We do not see the force of Scripture for some moral reason and state of soul. We must be careful about not only what we hear, but HOW we hear, i.e., in what state of soul and with what attitude we hear. The diligent application of Luke 8:18 and 1 Cor. 3:10 would preserve us from ungodly notions and ways.

Another has written:

A. But the Lord does not hold one Church responsible for the rest, and it does not seem to me that we are at all involved in what is done elsewhere.

B. You forget that here (in Rev. 2,3,) the Church is not seen at all in its unity, or as the body of Christ, of which He is the Head, for He is *outside* it, -- judging of its state as His candlestick or light-bearer on earth, which it was set to be. Your remark shows ignorance of what the Church of God is, in its nature and constitution. The moment the existence of a divine Person, the Holy Ghost here on earth, is understood as the essential characteristic of the Church, its unity, fellowship, and the judgment of evil necessarily follow. The Holy Ghost cannot act differently in different places, for He is ever one and the same, and forming the body of Christ, a unity such as subsists in the natural body; thus only do the epistles ever treat of the Church of God. “There is one body and one Spirit.” (Compare Eph. 4:15,16; 1 Cor. 12:12,13.) The presence of God necessarily gives unity, and the corporate responsibility of which we have been speaking. It was so in a lower sense even in Israel of old in the passage to which we have referred, so that God said after the sin of Achan, “*Israel hath sinned and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen and dissembled, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you*” (Josh. 7:11,12). The whole nation was charged with the guilt which existed among them; the whole nation suffered for it, and was held responsible for its extermination. The unity which the Holy Ghost produces now in the Church of God (though flowing from the same cause -- the presence of God) is not national as it then was, but of a much deeper and closer character. It is two-fold: we are *living* stones of the temple in which God dwells, as the

22. *The Present Testimony* 15:397.

Apostle Paul says, “built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit,” and thus the whole building grows unto a “*holy* temple in the Lord”; secondly, there is the unity of the body of Christ, which also results from the presence of the Holy Ghost, forming the one body united to its Head in heaven; this unity is still closer and more intimate, as my body is much nearer to me than the house I live in; moreover, there is a responsibility which flows from connection or association at the Lord’s table, and fellowship in His death, and being united in His Name, so that what is done in that Name in one place is done, as to the principle of it, for all, and is binding on all; reception, discipline, and other acts done in any given place are valid for the whole, and gifts are common to the whole. If this is not recognized, the unity of the Church of God is denied, and the presence of a divine person in it is entirely disowned . . .

It is evident that the Lord gives the sanction of His presence and authority to even two or three met in His Name (Matt. 18:17-21), and to their acts, for they are in His place and represent Him in what they do. Solemn and blessed thought! Though the Church is in ruins, this principle remains ever true to faith, for Christ cannot fail in what He has promised, whatever the ruin; so that the essential privileges, action, and discipline of the Church of God remain untouched, though but two or three are there to enjoy or carry them out, and though apostolic authority, appointment, and office, as well as the (so-called) sign-gifts are wanting. It is a wretched plea, that the ruin of the Church is a reason for submission to evil, and subversive of all moral principle and sense of what is due to Christ. Scripture, when contemplating the disorder and confusion that would ensue in the Church, says, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19). Besides, if you are not upon the true ground of the Church of God, you are a sect, the word of God ceases to be applicable, and have no direction to guide you as to discipline or anything else; without pretending in any exclusive sense to be the Church of God, we can meet together as forming a part of it, and acting in the unity of the body of Christ, seeking to carry out the principles laid down in Scripture for its guidance; whilst the Holy Ghost remains on earth, it would be impossible to do otherwise, notwithstanding the ruin, without ignoring His presence.²³

J. N. Darby wrote:

I have no doubt that in Thyatira is the Spirit’s picture of popery. Do you think people should continue in that? I do not enter into the Seven Churches, because adducing such passages of obscure interpretation to judge the path of plain separation from plain iniquity, is at once condemnation of those who do so, but as you do, I ask you this: do you think you should remain in Laodicea to be spewed out of Christ’s mouth? It proves too much and therefore nothing. You must not be surprised if others decline principles which lead to such a course.²⁴

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil (Prov. 16:17).

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

23. A. C. Ord, *Is There Not a Cause?*, pp. 16-18.

24. *Collected Writings* 20:208.

Elements of Dispensational Truth

Romans 9-11

Chapter 9.3

Romans 11

Continued

Rom. 11:22-29

God’s Governmental Ways Consistent With His Election

- 22 Behold then [the] goodness and severity of God: upon them who have fallen, severity; upon thee goodness of God, if thou shalt abide in goodness, since [otherwise] *thou* also wilt be cut away.
- 23 And *they* too, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able again to graft them in.
- 24 For if *thou* hast been cut out of the olive tree wild by nature, and, contrary to nature, hast been grafted into the good olive tree, how much rather shall they, who are according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree?
- 25 For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in;
- 26 and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.
- 27 And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins.
- 28 As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers.
- 29 For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance.

THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD (v. 22)

The Jews who believed, for instance, were indeed in the goodness of God, according to the order of things introduced by Christ; but they were not grafted into the good olive-tree in the sense in which this is said of the Gentile. He speaks of *their* olive-tree, which is another proof that he speaks of the administration of things here below, and not of salvation nor of the cutting off in the simple sense of loss of salvation. If the question were about the promises of life eternal in Christ risen, in contrast with the death of the soul, there would

be no difference; it would be no more their olive-tree than that of the Gentiles. "Goodness unto thee" is not the state in which an individual finds himself, but the relationship in which God presents himself as being towards those who, according to the principles of the economy,¹ are the objects of that goodness. Consequently he speaks not of goodness towards the Jewish believers, although they were in the same goodness of God as the rest, because the Jews were there as branches by nature, although cut off, for the greater part, this time, for their unbelief. So true is this, that the Apostle speaks of grafting them in *again*. If it is simply an individual warning, could he that had been cut off (according to Heb. 6 which may contain an allusion to the fate of this dispensation)² be grafted in again? And if the Apostle speaks of individuals only, why says he that they can be grafted in again?³ Is it not evident that he speaks of Jews as Jews, and that this would be accomplished if the Jews were admitted to the enjoyment of the promises at the end of the ages, although the Apostle says *they* (that is to say, of quite other individuals than those of that day, but yet Jews) *can be grafted in again*? Is it not further evident that although they partake not in the enjoyment of the heavenly blessings, that would still be true, because they will be upon their own olive-tree, enjoying the promises made to Abraham? They will be grafted therein again.⁴

It is the stubbornness and stupidity of the flesh not to take account of the severity of God. We have had Pharaoh's case before us in Rom. 10; and here we have a cut-off nation to consider. An insipid profession, without salt, without true holiness, without true separation from evil unto the Lord, loudly trumpeting about love, will experience the severity of God in being likewise cut off.

THOU ALSO WILL BE CUT AWAY (v. 22).

The fact is that as the old Israel did not abide in the goodness of God as expressed towards them, so Christendom, the professing church, will not abide in the

1. {The word "economy" is used for 'dispensation.' It might just as well have been said, "according to the principles of the administration of present privilege."}

2. { By "the fate of this dispensation" no doubt the writer is referring to the period of time during which God has been pleased to bring the Gentile into the Olive Tree. It is the time when the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) is interposed into the earthly calling of Israel. We might just as well use the expression "the fate of the present form of the administration of privilege" if we wished to be more exact in expression than using the word dispensation in a conventional sense.}

3. {The reference the writer made to Heb. 6 is instructive. It depicts a case of apostasy (from the presence and action of the Spirit in Heb. 6; from the blood of Christ in Heb. 10), something definitive in character, and irrevocable -- as the words "For it is impossible to renew again to repentance . . ." (Heb. 6:4) expressly shows. Such a one is like a cut-out branch. Such cannot be grafted in again. This shows that the grafting in again is not about the individual. It is about the nation of Israel! Moreover, the writer quoted sees in this what will happen to the Gentile profession now occupying a place in God's administration of privilege. For the apostasy of Christendom, 2 Thess. 2 may be consulted.

We may add that the old Israel is irrevocably cut out of the Olive tree. The Israel in the Olive Tree in the millennium will indeed be of natural descent from Abraham, but it will be the new Israel, all saved and under the covenant (Rom. 11:26, 27.)

4. *The Present Testimony* 4:128.

goodness of God as expressed now.⁵ The mystery of iniquity was already at work in Paul's day (2 Thess. 2) and John declared that it was the last hour (1 John 2:18). Failure is the occasion of prophecy and the book of Revelation is the witness that the ruin had already come about. The cutting off will come, and Christendom will be given over to believe the lie, and to the worship of the evil Triad.

It is most important to see the distinction between the true church, the body of Christ, and the professing body which is depicted here as subject to being cut off:

. . . I read that in the last days perilous times will come . . . there will be a form of godliness denying the power; from such, turn away. That is, the ostensible body is wholly corrupt, so that the obedient Christian is to turn away. And in Romans 11 this responsibility of the professing body is definitely pressed on the conscience, comparison is made with the cutting off of the Jews, and, it is added, Upon thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. To say that the body of Christ will be cut off from Christ, would be simply monstrous; but the external system which supplanted Judaism will. That is, scripture contemplates an external thing connected with the responsibility of man, as well as the true body of Christ, and the house which the Lord builds; and to appropriate the conferring the possession of the privileges of the one to the forms of the other is to falsify all the teaching of scripture, as to the body of Christ, and the substance of these privileges, the true force of being born of God and partaking of the divine nature, and union with Christ the head, and to falsify the true character and import of the forms themselves. None are more ignorant of what the church is than the Anglicans who talk so much about it.

The body is always real; there can be no false members of it. It is formed by the Holy Ghost and not by sacraments at all, though the Lord's supper symbolizes its unity. The house is building by Christ, and in this there is no bad building, but it is only growing into a temple. But there is a building in which man builds, in which wood and hay and stubble have been built in, and which will be cut off, where apostasy sets in, which is become as a great house, in which are vessels to dishonor as well as to honor -- vessels from which the obedient Christian has to purge himself. We must not confound what Christ builds and what man has built. Against the former the gates of hell shall not prevail; in the latter we may expect wood, hay, and stubble. We may expect to find a great house in which are vessels to dishonor, from which we have to purge ourselves -- a form of godliness in the last days, denying the power, from which we have to turn away -- and, having found it, know that the Gentile branches have not continued in God's goodness, and that it will be cut off. Solemn testimony to Christians. Is there anything which we ought more to lay to heart, anything more deeply affecting, than the ruin of that which was planted in grace, in glory, and in beauty?⁶ --

God can cast off the professing church in perfect consistency with what He has

5. See *Collected Writings* 11:286ff.

6. *Collected Writings* 15:348.

revealed Himself to be, because it is not a question of His grace and goodness, or of individual salvation, but simply and only of responsibility. And this it is which makes His dealings with these churches a deep and positive warning to us, as the very same principle applies to Gentile as to Jewish testimony. God will accomplish to the very word every promise He has made to Israel. Yet we all know as a plain fact that God has cast off Israel as visible witnesses to bear His name to the world. And He will, in the same way, cast off the church, if it fails in its responsibility on the earth. Thus we see how God maintains His government in respect to the testimony which His people ought to bear under every dispensation, and that, while individual salvation is for ever secured to individuals in Israel and the church, both will be set aside as to their public visible testimony. Thus we get not only responsibility but the results of failure. ⁷ —

I repeat, the question is not about reception but about cutting off; there are three cases distinct, and in a measure contrasted, which are involved in three questions, and which we must distinguish in speaking of them: the World, Christendom or profession, and Believers. In repeating that man is responsible for the privileges he enjoys, add to Acts 17 and Col. 1:6; 1 Tim. 2:5-7 (an abstraction well-known to the Apostle) and, John 1:11 and 15. He was in the world, but the world knew him not -- the light shined in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. In order to confirm the principle, I would press also what I have said, that the world, the Gentiles, are placed in a new relationship toward God, and that there are privileges for which the Gentiles will be held responsible, as the Jews have been for theirs. They who have enjoyed these privileges will be beaten with many stripes, if they have not profited from them, whilst they who professed them not will be punished with few stripes. I speak of the world as in a new relationship to God, of the Gentiles who enjoy certain privileges, and of those who have not had that advantage. Can it be denied that the world or any given part is responsible for the privileges which it possesses? I do not speak now of the responsibility of those called of God, but of a universal principle, of any privilege men may enjoy, and even when the called are spoken of, the question would not be of those "standing by faith" in the sense of true believers. Is not the Christian professing body *called*? This is the essential point at issue; only to say more of it here would be needful to enter upon the second subject proposed. Further, it is no question about Gentiles who have had the gospel preached to them, but about that which is called the Church of baptized Gentiles, and consequently the conduct of true Christians from the commencement. ⁸ —

But many Gentiles will believe the gospel of the kingdom. They are outside Christendom. They are not cut off -- they will not be in the olive tree. The cutting off of the Gentiles and the grafting of the Jews shows that millennial Gentiles will not be in the olive tree. They are blessed through Israel.

God spared not the natural branches (v. 21) from their own olive tree (v. 24).

7. *Collected Writings* 5:279.

8. *The Present Testimony* 4:133.

The Gentile profession better take warning.

The cutting off of Israel has been the reconciliation of the world. All the baptized are under the responsibility, in general, of the privileges of the economy, and will be Judged *accordingly*; believers find their enjoyment therein, according to their faith. I add, that it is a great error to suppose that the world⁹ can lose nothing. It is true that the world will enjoy other advantages during the Millennium, far greater it may be; but the world now has the enjoyment of great advantages, which will be taken from it when the judgment takes place -- when the Master of the house rises up and shuts-to the door. If, by an act of Divine judgment, the gospel can no longer be preached in any country, that country has lost a privilege; so it will be with the world. The world has not been grafted in, but the world has been placed in a new relationship towards God. Farther on, I will return to this point; in the meanwhile, I will cite a remarkable passage which applies to this subject (Luke 2:32) -- Christ has been a light to lighten the Gentiles, that is, that they should be brought to light (or, literally, for the revelation of the Gentiles). They were before so entirely in obscurity, that they were as if not in existence in the sight of God, not as to the judgment of the secrets of the heart, but as to the government of the world on the part of God. "The times of this ignorance," says the apostle (Acts 17), "God winked at; but now He calls all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He has given a testimony, worthy of the faith of all, in raising Him from the dead." Is not this to change the position of the world before God? And if God has proposed to use His church as an instrument for this, and that she has failed, that will bring with it its result, even as to the world in reference to the government of God, although each one shall bear his own burden as to the eternal judgment (cp. Ezek. 33).

That God will be justified, when He shall judge and condemn the world, I cannot doubt; that He will send the gospel of the kingdom at the end, the church having failed in its duty, I believe; but this changes nought as to that which God has revealed concerning His relationship to the world, as we have seen in Acts 17:30, 31.

It is the government of God which is the subject of these chapters in the epistle to the Romans, and not the salvation of the individual, properly so called. In the second chapter, the apostle speaks of that of perishing without law, of being judged by the law, etc.; but to say that a sovereign disposition by God imposes no responsibility upon those to whom it is not known, is to misconceive the whole subject, although such a thought may have to the natural heart an air of great justice. Men sometimes find themselves, without excuse, under the effect of a judgment of God, occasioned by the fault of their fathers, themselves persevering in the moral consequences of the fault, though they may not have individually committed the very fault itself. See, for example, the judgment of the Spirit upon the state of the Gentiles (Rom. 1.) -- Having known

9. {The *world*, note. The Christian has far greater blessings than any millennial saint.}

God, they glorified Him not as God, etc. The Gentiles, of whom he speaks, had never known Him; their fathers, Noah, etc., had known Him. If fresh light came which made manifest that state, they are held responsible to quit it according to that light, and guilty, also, according to the light, of all which they do as individuals afterwards; but there is then another thing: the light enables us, I say us, to see where they are who are without the light which we enjoy, and they are without excuse. On the other hand, if great privileges have been granted to a people, and they have lost the knowledge thereof, they will yet be responsible (see what Josiah said when he found the book of the law), because, according to the government of God, one is responsible according to the place in which one is found, and not according to our capability of fulfilling it. If it be not to the world that Paul addressed himself; that is not the question. Even if it were true that Paul spake only to believers, still, equally, since it is to a special class of believers which he supposes (a distinction which is impossible, if the question were about the fundamental idea of the church), he can speak to that class under a peculiar aspect, all the while that he calls them brethren (and he does that), and gives them instructions upon all that which concerned the subject on which he treats, and that is what he does. He can, at the same time, include other persons who are found in the same position without true faith, and he suggests this; he can also speak of the consequences of his doctrine on the world, as also he does. To suppose, as some have, that because he speaks *to* brethren he speaks only of brethren, and concerning those that are really such, seems futile; and one can see, indeed, that to verse 25 he reasons in an abstract manner, according to the train of thought which the Spirit suggests to him; and having explained all the consequences of the ways of God, using the expression, "I say, then," he then declares, addressing himself to his brethren, that he does so because he would not have them ignorant of this mystery. ¹⁰ —

"Behold then the goodness and severity of God: upon them who have fallen, severity; upon thee, goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness*; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." That is to say, the Christian system among the Gentiles is subject to the same judgment as the Jewish system. If the Gentiles, who stand only by faith, do not continue in the goodness of God, they will suffer a like fate with the Jews. Is Romanism the "continuing in the goodness of God"? Are "perilous times" the result of "continuing in the goodness of God;" or is the "form of godliness, denying the power of it" from which the Christian must "turn away" (2 Tim. 3)? If the apostle could say, "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ" -- is that "continuing in the goodness of God"? If the apostle foresaw that after his departure, evil would immediately intrude itself, the strong hand of the apostle being no longer there to keep the door shut against the adversary; if Jude was compelled to say that those who were the subjects of judgment had already crept into the church; if John had said they had left the Christians, had gone out from them -- a step beyond that of which Jude speaks -- that there were many antichrists, and that by this they might know that it was the last times; if Peter announces to us that "the time was come that judgment should begin at the house of God" -- does all this lead us

10. *The Present Testimony* 4:129-131 (JND).

to believe that the Gentiles have continued in the goodness of God, or that the Christian system established among the Gentiles would be terminated by judgment, the terrible judgment of God; that as to outward profession it is a question of drinking of the cup of His unmingled wrath, or of being spued out of His mouth as nauseous because of its lukewarmness? This is what is so solemn for our consciences. Shall we, as a system, come under God's judgment? The faithful will assuredly enjoy a far more excellent portion, a heavenly glory, but the christian system, as a system on the earth, will be cut off for ever.¹¹ —

He says that, in order that the cutting off of the dispensation may take place, the Jews as well as the Gentiles must be found in it. Has he never heard, in a word, of the churches of the Gentiles; of an apostle of the Gentiles; of a reception of the Gentiles as a body when the Jews had been cut off; of Gentiles upon whom the name of God was to be invoked? . . . It is true that, as to the fundamental principle of the church, there was in it neither Jew nor Gentile, because all were looked upon as risen together with Christ; but as to the earthly dispensation of the church, there was an apostle of the Gentiles and an apostle of the circumcision. There was this distinction -- "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek;" and it is of this earthly dispensation that we are speaking.¹² —

W. Trotter has a great chapter in his book, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects* called "The Doom of Christendom; or, Why are the Judgments Coming?" that sketches the development of evil in Christendom and the resultant judgment that shall fall. Read it. ¹³

Next we will make a few observations on an error-packed paragraph by the posttribulationist, J. Barton Payne, using the superscripts (a)-(e) to reference the comments:

Darbyite arguments based on the difference of status that is prophesied as existing between "Gentiles" in the millennium and between "Jews" (cf. Isa. 61:5, 6) prove nothing; for, as previously pointed out, the church *is* Judah, no longer Gentile but engrafted into the stalk of Israel. ^(a) Dispensationalists make the unfounded assertion that, just as Israel after the flesh is presently cut off and the Gentiles grafted in, so before the millennium the Gentile church ^(b) will be cut off and Israel grafted in again. Now it is true that Scripture teaches the eventual conversion of the Jews and their reingrafting into the church, which is the real Israel (Rom. 11:23); ^(c) but it says nothing about a future, collective cutting off of the church. Quite to the contrary, it states in so many words that faithful Christians continue in a joint service to Christ, identical with that of the readopted Jews (v. 22). ^(d) Prior to the conversion of these latter, God will naturally have special dealings with the Jews so as to bring about their restoration (cf. Zech. 13:1); but this provides no justification for the pre-tribulationist assumption that "It may be expected that God will fulfill His

11. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:96.

12. J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings* 1:279. {Read *Letters* 2:96 for an excellent summary of the Christian system not continuing in the goodness of God.}

13. See also *The Bible Treasury* 10:318; 5:285, 310; 20:78, 79; New Series 1:110; 6:74.

program for the church by translating the church out of the earth before re-summing His program for dealing with Israel . . . in the period of the tribulation.” The church was very much on earth while God dealt with Israel between A.D. 30 and 70, and only Darbyist presuppositions would suggest any different procedure for the time of the great tribulation. ⁶⁾

(a) Paul addressed the Gentile, “a wild olive tree” as graft in among the natural branches (v. 17, 24). Those graft in are warned that they might not be spared either (v. 21), and be “cut away” (v. 22). And to whom did Paul address these warnings? “For I speak to you, the nations” (v. 11). We are told that they are no longer Gentiles, but Paul says otherwise. He is addressing the Gentiles professing Christianity, not the saints in their church position and character. “The church is Judah” is a transmutation by spiritual alchemy. A ‘true Jew’ is an ethnic Jew who is a saint. Rom. 2:17-29 is especially for the Jews and tells us who is a true Jew:

For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in 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).

There is nothing in the passage that indicates that a Gentile can be a “true Jew.” That is one of many myths of theology. True it is that we Christians are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3), meaning that we answer spiritually to the meaning of circumcision (the cutting off of the flesh) in a spiritual way; but for all that, that is not saying that we are a “true Jew,” which is a saint who is an ethnic Jew. And concerning the “Israel of God”:

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)

Two groupings are noted here, one saved Gentiles and the other is the Israel of God, the true Jews. In *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, “Part 5: The True Jew, The Israel of God, and the Seed of Abraham,” these matters are fully examined.

(b) “Gentile church” is a vague term. What is meant by the notion that the olive tree is the church? Do you mean the *true* church? Does it mean true believers are cut out of the true church? Say the *professing* church (which obviously is filled with multitudes of persons who are not true believers) and we see clearly that *thou* also wilt be cut away” (Rom. 11:22). Note the word **also**. It refers to being cut away like Israel was cut away. Note the singular *thou*. It means “*thou*, being a wild olive tree, hast been grafted in amongst them” (amongst the natural branches). The *thou* is the Gentile profession. The *thou* is not the genuine church but the professing church, and all that is false will be “cut away.” This *thou* will form the apostasy of 2 Thess. 2.

(c) The notion of Israel’s “regrafting into the church, which is the real Israel (Rom. 11:23)” is quite incorrect.

(1) “Regrafting into the church” means that Israel was broken out of the church. What church? That must be the OT church (a theological figment in the imagination of covenant theology).

(2) If the church is the real Israel, how was Israel broken out (Rom. 11:17) of the church which is the real Israel?

(3) Obviously, the olive tree is not a figure of speech for the real church. Saints are not broken out of the real church. The olive tree is a figure of something else, not the “real church.”

(d) “It says nothing about a future, collective cutting off of the church.” That is a defiant contradiction of the text. First, he spiritually alchemizes the olive tree into “the true church,” thus being able to say that the “true church” will not be cut off (which no one denies), by which he evacuates the text of its warning. The truth is that Israel was cut out (Rom. 11:17) and those consequently grafted into the olive tree (v. 17) are warned that they might not be spared (v. 21) and might be “cut away” (v.22). Of course the text speaks of cutting away of the Gentile profession.

(e) The proof, which is no such thing, that he uses against the truth that God will remove the (true) church before he takes up the Jews after the pretribulation rapture is the fact that the church was here while God dealt with Israel between AD 30 and 70.

(1) His notion is that the church will be on earth while God deals with Israel in the tribulation period. It happened in the past – so there is his evidence that it will happen in the future. Well, that is merely baseless assertion.

(2) Between AD 30 and 70 saved Jews became part of the church. Is that what will happen in the tribulation period? Does he deny a distinct Jewish remnant during that period? And if they are the Lord’s, are they not the “real Israel”? There cannot be such a distinct Jewish remnant if the church is the “real Israel.” B. W. Newton postulated two remnants in that period, one Christian and one Jewish. This is examined at length in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 2, where it is seen how this led him into evil doctrine concerning Christ’s person.

(3) It is his posttribulation and covenant theological presuppositions that have led him to impose these notions on Rom. 11 and on the tribulation period.

ISRAEL GRAFTED IN AGAIN (v. 23)

We noted before that this does not denote the addition of individuals, merely, again, but rather judgmental removal from the place of privilege. The grafting in again is a restoration to the place of privilege; only we must keep in mind that this will take place on an entirely new basis for the nation. The old Israel was a nation of unbelief with a few believers. The new Israel will not be such. Indeed not!. God will have purged the rebels out from among them (Ezek. 20:XXX). He will bring them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20:XXX). They shall all know the forgiveness of sins under the new covenant (Heb. 8:XXX; Rom. 11:27). They shall all be righteous (Isa. XXX0. They shall all be saved (Rom. 11:26). Thus, the new Israel will have its character from the sovereign work of God in them, while the old Israel had its character from the first man -- failure in lost, Adamic responsibility. The covenant for the old Israel was a covenant of works. The connection of the new Israel with the old Israel is only the natural descent from

Abraham. There will be no spiritual connection with the old Israel under the old covenant. The covenant for the new Israel will be a covenant of grace -- God graciously, sovereignly, undertaking on their behalf for His own glory in Christ, manifested in the earthly sphere.

See Zech 12:10; Isa. 2:2, 3; 61:9; Zeph. 3:19, 20.

NATURAL AND UNNATURAL BRANCHES IN WHOSE OLIVE TREE? (v. 24)

The Gentile Branches not Natural to the Good Olive Tree. Here the Gentiles are likened to branches in a wild olive tree. There is more description of them in Eph. 2:12. The grafting of the wild on to the good is, as stated, contrary to nature. Good branches are normally grafted on to a stock that does not bear the good fruit.

Branches Natural to the Good Olive Tree. The natural branches are ethnic Israelites. The Olive Tree represents the administration of privileges on earth, by God, and this belongs to Israelites as being the natural offspring of Abraham in the line of privilege. They are naturally in the line of privilege by birth, though set aside by God now because of the great trespass, the rejection of Christ. But the time will come when Israel will be grafted in again. Observe how this is expressed in v. 24, that if God has grafted in from the wild olive, contrary to nature, then:

how much rather shall they, who are according to nature be grafted into their own olive tree?

Israel's Olive Tree. Not only is it quite clear that a grafting in of Israel to the Olive Tree will take place, "*how much rather*" is it in order for the natural branches to "be grafted into their own olive tree"? It is not a Gentile olive tree. But, do grafted in Gentiles become Jews?

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

Elements of Propitiation, Substitution, and The Righteousness of God

Chapter 9

The Showing Forth of The Righteousness of God

Romans 3:19-26

(Continued)

The Actings of God Are in Accordance with His Righteousness

IMPUTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

In covenant theology there has been much writing about *imputed righteousness*, but in an erroneous way. The phrase is used to designate a transfer of righteousness of Christ's righteous law-keeping to the believer -- and that is supposed to be the Christian's righteousness. Thus the phrase "imputed righteousness" is loaded with much freight from covenantism. While the phrase 'imputed righteousness' is not found in Scripture, in Romans we find God imputing righteousness to the believer. What it does not mean is the transference of *a quantum of righteousness* outside the believer that is transferred, or credited, to the believer.

What is meant by God imputing righteousness is that God accounts a man righteous before Himself. This is what Romans treats of. Do not bring 2 Cor 5:21 into the treatment of righteousness in Romans, and particularly so into Rom. 1 - 5:11. Rom. 5:1 - 5:11 is about *sins* and guilt, *not sin*, which 2 Cor. 5:21 addresses. The failure to distinguish what Scripture teaches about sin (the root) and sins (the fruit) is the source of much confusion and jumbling together things that differ. It is true that Rom. 5:12 - 8:39 deals with sin, standing and state, but the righteousness of God is not unfolded there, though noted in Rom. 10:3.

An analogy to what is meant by God imputing righteousness to a believer, and

thus accounting him righteous, was given by JND regarding circumcision:

An analogous passage (Rom. 2:26) gives the same sense -- the uncircumcision is counted for circumcision. That is, the man is accounted circumcised when he is not. Thus, though a person is reckoned to be in a state which he is not de facto in, a quantum of righteousness, ready outside himself, reckoned to him, is not the meaning of imputed righteousness. It means the state in God's sight of the person so accounted righteous. Righteousness imputed to a man is the same as the man's being accounted righteous.¹

It is necessary to understand this matter. The teaching in Romans is about how a man is righteous before God, and that righteousness is imputed to a person; so he is accounted righteous before God, as JND taught:

. . . the writer's mistake here arises from his not understanding what imputed righteousness means. It does not mean a quantum of formal righteousness outside us, imputed to us, but our being accounted righteous. Righteousness being imputed to a man simply means the man being accounted righteous.²—

. . . {that} the term "imputed righteousness" is not found in scripture, a concordance will prove.

Imputing righteousness, or righteousness being imputed, is found; the question is what it means. Does it mean a given quantum of righteousness transferred over to a man's account; or holding a man to be righteous -- reckoning or accounting him such? I affirm that in scripture it always means the latter. Thus in Rom. 4:11 it is abstract -- "that righteousness might be imputed to them also;" that is, that they might be held or accounted righteous though not of the circumcision. There is no question at all of a quantum of righteousness subsisting and then put to their account; but that righteousness itself should be reckoned to them. And this is the more clear, because the sentence on which all the apostle's reasoning on the point and his whole use of the phrase rests is, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness"; "faith was reckoned to him for righteousness," i.e., he was accounted righteous before God because of his faith. The meaning of the phrase is, Abraham was held for righteous on this ground. That is clearly the meaning of the passage; but this passage is the governing passage -- that from which the use of the phrase is drawn in every instance.

A sober mind, taught of God, subject to the word of God, has only to read the passages in which imputing righteousness is spoken of in scripture to see at once the force of the expression.³ —

A man's being righteous is his standing in the sight of God, not a quantum of righteousness transferred to his credit.⁴ —

1. *Collected Writings* 7:277.

2. *Collected Writings* 10:41. See also 7:275.

3. *Collected Writings* 10:58.

4. *Collected Writings* 23:254. Here is another helpful extract from JND, to which I have added the bold emphasis:

(continued...)

We must pursue this important matter just a little more. JND called attention to the eleven passages which speak of God imputing righteousness:

So, blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sin is covered: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin. It is not merely that He does not impute the sin done, but he does not view him as in sin, but as in righteousness; for innocence there is no question of. Hence it is not *dikaïoma* when imputed righteousness is spoken of, but *dikaïosune* -- not an act or sum of things done, but a state. He is reckoned to be in the state of *dikaïosune*: *dikaïosune* is imputed to him . . .

There are eleven passages in scripture which speak of imputing

4. (...continued)

No attribute of God is imputed; but a man who is a sinner is accounted righteous according to that attribute, according to all its perfection and all its exigencies, because of Christ and His work. If only a man who was truly righteous was accounted righteous, there would be no ground for imputed righteousness at all. Imputed righteousness has all its value and meaning in this: that a man who cannot pretend to be righteous in himself is so accounted for another's sake. It is God's justifying the ungodly. I repeat, the work of God in us is needed that we may have a part in divine righteousness; but Dr. C.'s statements are a denial of the whole gospel, and nonsense to boot. For a man who is truly righteous does not want imputed righteousness; and if he is accounted so for another's sake, it is because he is not truly so in himself in God's sight. It is a denial of the gospel; for the essence of this is, that God justifies the ungodly. ***No one who knew what scripture means by imputed righteousness could for a moment speak of imputing the righteousness of God;*** not only, as I have said, because imputing an attribute is a contradiction in terms, but because it is denying the proper sense of imputing righteousness. Clamor and abuse are no argument.

I affirm that scripture never speaks of imputed righteousness as of a sum of righteousness first existing in itself and then imputed. The truth is, it never speaks of imputed righteousness at all, but of imputing righteousness; and the difference is very great indeed. Imputed righteousness may carry with it in the mind the sense of a substantive quantity of righteousness first existing and then imputed; imputing righteousness cannot. It is an act of the mind accounting the person something at the moment the act of the mind takes place. If it is God's mind, it is perfect, and does not change, no doubt; but when I say God imputed his faith to Abraham for righteousness, it is plain that He held Abraham to be righteous in His sight on account of faith; that is, imputing righteousness means, in scripture, to hold a person to be a righteous man, to reckon or account him such.

Theologians may torture themselves, and abuse those who state it, and quote clouds of doctors like themselves. They advance nothing. When scripture says Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, it means Abraham was accounted righteous on account of his faith. Hence imputing God's righteousness could not be employed or thought of by me, because I deny all such previous sum of righteousness made out and then imputed to be the meaning of righteousness being imputed. Imputing righteousness (for, I repeat, imputed righteousness, as a compound term, is unscriptural) is the estimate of the man's relative state to God. The man is righteous in the sight of Him who judges (*Collected Writings* 10:55, 56). See also 7:276, 302, 379, 380; 10:41, 108-110, 138, 139, 145, 166; 31:344.

righteousness or for righteousness; in nine of them faith is imputed for righteousness; so that here it does not mean the value of the thing done which is imputed, or our faith would be the merit. They are Rom. 4:3, 5, 9, 10, 22-24; Gal. 3:6; and James 2:23. The others, where it is said righteousness is imputed, are Rom. 4:6, 11. In Rom. 4:6, it is, God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Here, clearly no positive external thing is imputed or put to another's account, but a man is reckoned to have *dikaosune*. Verse 11 leads us to exactly the same result. The Gentile believers were to be reckoned righteous, because faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness when he was uncircumcised.⁵

Towards All, and Upon All Those Who Believe

. . . righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all⁶ those who believe: for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:22, 23).

GOD ACTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

It will be seen in all that follows (Rom. 3:22-26) that it is maintained that God has acted consistently with His righteousness. It is very important for understanding the Scriptures that follow, that we see that the *actings* of God are what is shown to be consistent with the righteousness of God. In Rom. 3:22, 23, we see that He acts *towards* (*eis*) unbelievers and acts *upon* (*epi*) believers. Keep in mind that the subject in Romans, regarding righteousness, involves God accounting a person righteous, and He does so consistent with His righteousness, the righteousness of God. There is also the important truth in Rom. 3:22, 23 that there is an aspect of this *towards* the unbeliever -- let me say, towards the world. We must keep in mind the mercy-seat of v. 25. Recall that in Lev. 16, the blood of the goat that spoke of propitiation was on and before the mercy-seat. This is not substitution for sins, as depicted by the scape-goat. It relates to what we are told in 1 John 2:2, that there was propitiation for the world. Obviously, the righteousness of God is involved in this entire matter. The fact is, there is something *towards* the world in the work of Christ, but it is not efficient upon unbelievers -- it is not made good in their souls. The acting of God in accordance with the righteousness of God is made effective "upon all those who believe."

RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BY FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST

5. *Collected Writings* 7:276, 277.

6. W. Kelly has numerous remarks about the words "upon all," the meaning as well as textual Criticism: *The Bible Treasury* 6:376; 13:350; New Series 6:264; 3:264, 265. These notes are available in D. Ryan, *Two Nineteenth Century Versions of the New Testament*, Morganville: Present Truth Publishers.

"Faith of Jesus Christ" does not refer to some imagined faith that Christ had. It refers to faith that lays hold of His person and work on the cross. This statement is also exclusive: it excludes law.

The righteousness of God is upon the believer "by faith of Jesus Christ." That righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is *towards* unbelievers, but if he has no faith, then it is not upon him.

ROM. 3:22: TOWARDS ALL, AND UPON THOSE WHO BELIEVE

Towards All. In the statement, "towards all, and upon those that believe," we have a difference between propitiation and substitution, in that order; the difference too between purchase and redemption; the difference between the two goats of Lev. 16. The gospel itself is preached to all, but only effective for those who believe. Concerning the aspect of the work of Christ that is propitiation, we are told that Christ died for all:

. . . having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died; and he died for all . . . (2 Cor. 5:14).⁷

. . . [the] man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony [to be rendered] in its own times (1 Tim. 2:6).

This is parallel to the righteousness of God *towards* all. It answers to propitiation, not substitution. Propitiation is typified in the goat of Jehovah's lot in Lev. 16, not the goat for the people's lot (substitution).

Upon Those Who Believe. However, the righteousness of God . . . *upon those who believe* refers to substitution, the people's lot, the transference of sins:

. . . who bore our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. 1:24).

. . . Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many (Heb. 9:28).

Of course the Scripture does not state that Christ bore the sins of all. He is the propitiation for the world (1 John 2:2), but the substitute for some:⁸

7. Why does the Scofieldian age-ism system say that the testing of man continues when God has declared that all are dead? That all are dead is a statement of the conclusion of the testing. God is not now testing dead men. Before the cross man was not treated by God as dead, but as alive in Adamic responsibility to see if he was recoverable from the fall.

8. In the blood which is put upon the mercy-seat, it is not a question of those who are saved or of election, but of the majesty of God, which demands this satisfaction for sin. I can address all, and declare to them that this satisfaction has been made, and that God the Father has perfectly accepted it. But I cannot say to all that Christ bore their sins, because the word does not say it anywhere. If He had borne *their* sins, they would certainly be justified, and consequently saved by the life of Christ, and glorified.

Thus in Rom. 5:18, the gift has come "towards" -- not "upon" -- literally it reads, "So then as by one offence, towards all men to condemnation" (it is the direction *towards* which a thing would go if left to itself, not its *coming upon*), "so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life." This is why he says "all." But in v. 19, "For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man

(continued...)

The thing we do not find in Scripture is substitution for all. On the great day of atonement, there were two things in the sin-offering of the people -- the Lord's lot and the people's lot. The Lord's lot was killed, because it met the whole character of God; God was completely glorified in Christ, and the gospel goes out to the whole world. Then with the people's lot, the sins of the people were confessed on its head; that is the scapegoat; in that I find Christ for His people, and in the other atonement, Godward. That, of course, was for those whose sins he confessed. In Rom. 3 we hear of the "righteousness of God unto all, and upon them all that believe." It goes out toward all, and is upon believers. Many a one will say that Christ bore the sins of the world; but if so, how can God ever impute them? He could not, nor does Scripture ever say so. Then the Calvinist only takes the blood upon the mercy-seat; really he denies the propitiation. We have the satisfaction to God's glory, and then the gospel goes out and says, "We beseech you to be reconciled to God: come in." When they come I can say, I have something else to tell you; Christ bore all your sins, and it is impossible God can ever impute them or any one of them. An evangelist would not be right in saying, "Christ bore all your sins." If he makes it personal, God of course knows His own elect from all eternity, but we can

8. (...continued)

the many have been constituted sinners; so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous"; here it is the effect, not the tendency, therefore he says "many." The thing is not limited to the one who accomplished it, but extends in its efficacy to those who are interested in it; the many are constituted sinners or righteous in virtue of these two works. So it is said, Rom. 3:22,

[The] righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ *towards* all, and upon all those who believe.

It is one thing to put the blood on the mercy-seat, this was God's lot; another to confess the sins of the people on the head of the goat Azazel. On account of the one, God can act in the testimony of love towards all, His righteousness being satisfied; on account of the other, He owes it to Christ never to find those sins again; they have been borne into a land not inhabited. Now this is not true of the sins of the wicked: therefore it cannot be said that it is not on account of the fruits of Adam's sin that men are condemned, for it is said, "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." And "If ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins." Thus I quite believe that Christ died for all, but I cannot say that He bore, as a substitute, the sins of all. The word, it seems to me, is very clear on this point in its doctrines, in the consequences that it draws from them, and in its types. So that I take •<J48LJD@< ßB¥D BV<JT< in the simplest and widest sense. Satisfaction has been presented to God for men, but here (1 Tim. 2 6) it is evident these words refer to the desire to make of Jesus, at least of the Messiah, a mediator of the Jewish nation. No, says the apostle, He is so for all. God 2X8,4 (not \$@b8, J"4) that all, not the Jews only, should be saved; He has given, therefore, one Mediator for all, who has made the propitiation which was necessary, and demanded by the majesty of God, so that the door is open to all through the satisfaction that He has made to the outraged majesty of God. But God has predestinated His own: He calls them; He quickens them. For if the matter rested there (that is to say, at an open door) no one, not even the elect, would come. But Christ has confessed the sins of those thus brought as if they were His own. He "shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities" (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:97, 98).

only know them as they are shown out in life.⁹ –

The Textual Criticism of "And Upon All" Those that Believe. W. Kelly has repeatedly denounced the textual criticism which omits these words.¹⁰ This omission is of great doctrinal importance, so a part of one of his criticisms follows, where he has also commented on the doctrinal bearing of the words:

No doubt four or five of the oldest uncials with two cursives and some ancient versions and fathers leave the words out; and they are followed by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort. But the Homoeoteleuton simply and satisfactorily accounts for the slip, aided as it may have been by the inability of many to see the double bearing of the truth enunciated. For how readily the mind swerves to Calvinistic views, or to Arminian; and how few accept the truth in its fulness, of which extreme partisans see but one part, unintelligently opposed to the other part! The main body of uncials, cursives, versions, and fathers declares for the text as rendered in the Authorized Version {KJV}. Even the mutilated form of some of the best Latin copies ("super omnes") bears witness against that abbreviation which has found favor. And though the expositions of Greeks and Latins have little worth or point, they show the fact; for it is no question of Jews and Gentiles, but of God's righteousness manifested unto all, going out *toward* all indiscriminately, and taking effect actually *on* all those that believe. To overlook the difference of the prepositions is unworthy, and yet more so to confound "all" with "all that believe." The old writers who state but misapprehend the difference were certainly not the men to foist in a clause which, giving both comprehensiveness and precision, falls in as strikingly with this epistle in particular as with all scripture generally. God's righteousness could not but be for all; but in fact none but believers profited by it through faith in Christ. Its direction was towards all, not merely all believers, but all mankind; its application was upon all that believe. To take away the former is to deprive it of breadth; to blot out the latter is to deny its depth and strength. "Unto," not "upon," all that believe is far short of divine truth.¹¹

W. R. Newell's Problem. W. R. Newell saw a false implication in the words, "and upon all" who believe:

I have found Mr. Darby's explanations of "God's righteousness" more clear and illuminating than those of any other. It is therefore unfortunate, as it seems to me, that he adds to verse 22 the confusing phrase, "and upon all." I ask, what is "upon all"? If, as Mr. Darby holds, the act of justification is a forensic one, a declaration about a sinner who believes, accounting him righteous (although he is not intrinsically so), then why add that this righteousness is "upon" him? For the human mind is unable to conceive of a meaning for such a phrase other than something that a man does not possess being placed upon

9. *Collected Writings* 26:337.

10. *The Bible Treasury* 6:376; 13:350; 16:277, 278; New Series 3:264, 265; 6:264. The reader who will do himself the kindness to purchase *Two Nineteenth Century Versions of the New Testament*, available from Present Truth Publishers, will have such information readily accessible in this volume.

11. *The Bible Treasury* 13:350.

his person. But this is the exact meaning that Mr. Darby so constantly and justly wars against!

The very thing Mr. Darby so assiduously avoids, that is, the bestowal on a person of a quality, (or of, as he says, “a quantum of righteousness”), he opens the way to, in retaining the phrase “and upon all.” Bishop Motile, for example, remarks: “As to ‘unto all and upon all,’ the Greek phrases respectively indicate destination and bestowal. The sacred pardon was prepared for all believers, and as actually laid upon them as a ‘robe of righteousness.’” We would expect such a comment as this from a churchman, or any one of the Reformation theologians, but it is the very thing that Paul does not say; and it darkens all counsel concerning justification.¹²

1. Here is a comment from W. Kelly regarding what he thinks of the *Revised Version’s* (of 1881) rendering of the verse, which WRN thinks superior:

... “the righteousness of God unto all them that believe.” Such is the form in which it is given in the Revised Version. What is the consequence? That they give us an unscriptural platitude. They unwittingly take from Scripture its edge and fulness . . . They have mixed up two forms of the truth, so that one cannot get at either. The hotch-potch of both destroys the exact sense of each.

The change means that there is not a word “unto all” sinners as such, whilst all believers receive a mere offer of the gospel. “The righteousness of God is unto all believers,” if they like to accept it. Thus is effaced the effect of the gospel *upon* all that believe, while the mercy to unbelievers vanishes away, because His righteousness is only “unto all them that believe.” If the words omitted be read, the double truth is given in perfection.¹³

The stunning thing about WRN’s complaint regarding JND, coupled with his own support of a false reading of the text, is that he really did not explain the end of the verse¹⁴ as he prefers it translated. Here it is:

God’s righteousness, moreover, through faith concerning Jesus Christ unto all them that believe.

Be sure to understand WK’s pointing out that what this really means is:

“The righteousness of God is unto all believers,” if they like to accept it.

2. W. R. Newell said:

For the human mind is unable to conceive of a meaning for such a phrase other than something that a man does not possess being placed upon his person.

It would have been better if he had confined his remark to his own mind’s inability to conceive the truth about this. For him, “and upon all” cannot be “accounting him righteous” (which is a phrase WRN approves). His mind could not conceive that. But in truth, “And upon all” indicates the positive effect of the righteousness of God upon the believer. The believer is accounted righteous. Apparently JND,

12. *Romans Verse by Verse*, Chicago: Moody, p. 111, note, 1938.

13. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:264, 265.

14. *Romans Verse by Verse*, p. 110, 111.

WK, and many others find no difficulty about that. JND wrote:

Moreover it was upon all . . . those that believe; they stood in that righteousness.¹⁵ –

Next comes the question, How and why is the man accounted righteous? It is God’s righteousness, by faith in Jesus Christ, towards all, Jew or Gentile, and upon all them that believe.¹⁶ –

It is “unto all,” as much for the Gentiles as Jews, “and upon all that believe”; though presented to all, it is by imputation (made real by grace, and not by accomplishment) on them only that believe.¹⁷ –

No one who knew what scripture means by imputed righteousness could for a moment speak of imputing the righteousness of God; not only, as I have said, because imputing an attribute is a contradiction in terms, but because it is denying the proper sense of imputing righteousness.¹⁸ –

Clearly, then, JND understood the words “and upon all” to indicate that the believer was accounted righteous -- and not as having some quantum of righteousness transferred to the believer, or that the righteousness of God, or whatever, was put upon him as a hat is put on someone’s head.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

Evangelicalism Divided

A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000

by Iain H. Murray

Such is the name of a book recently published by The Banner of Truth Trust. The author has written a number of books among which is *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*, in which he blames J. N. Darby for the eclipse of postmillennialism. The author holds Reformed Theology.

My impression from reading this latest book is that he finds Christian unity expressed in evangelicalism. However, a new problem has arisen among evangelicals because so many evangelicals have taken into their hearts the old question “Is it even so that God hath said . . .?” (Gen. 3:3). This leads to doctrinal impurity and vagueness, a giving up of fundamental truth, and an openness to the inroads of worldliness in thinking and conduct. Connected with this is the fact that ecumenicalism is rapidly accelerating. When inerrancy of Scripture is abandoned, man’s judgment and ways become the criteria of understanding Scripture. Man

15. *Collected Writings* 13:11.

16. *Collected Writings* 7:277.

17. *Collected Writings* 21:238.

18. *Collected Writings* 10:55.

judges God instead of God judging man.

This book well chronicles the resurgence of evangelicalism and the permeation of it with compromise in doctrine and practice, from 1950 to 2000. I will here quote the well known Carl F. H. Henry from the dust jacket of this book:

Iain Murray's historical overview of the fortunes and misfortunes of evangelical Christianity, especially in England, between 1950 and the century's end-time, will stir up both an approving and a dissenting readership. But no-one can contend that it ignores some of the most vital theological issues of the time and the conflicts surrounding them. The narrative is well documented, and it details not only conflicts of perspective but inconsistencies and alterations of views by some of the leading participants in the events of the day. The names best known to Americans -- Billy Graham, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, James Packer, John Stott among them -- are evaluated, commended and critiqued as contributory to the present-day evangelical outlook and predicament.

Billy Graham, one of the persons leading the ecumenical charge, said:

I feel I belong to all the churches. I am equally at home in an Anglican or Baptist or a Brethren assembly or a Roman Catholic church . . . (p. 69).

. . . a Graham interview with Dr Robert Sculler on 31 May 1997 put the matter beyond doubt. Schuller has attained fame as the promoter of a liberal 'self-esteem gospel which he preaches in his Crystal Cathedral in California. In the course of a discussion with Graham, by means of a television link-up, Schuller asked for the evangelist's view on the future of Christianity. Graham answered by giving his belief about the final make-up of the body of Christ. That body would be made up, he affirmed,

from all the Christian groups around the world, outside the Christian groups. I think that everybody that loves or knows Christ, whether they are conscious of it or not, they are members of the body of Christ . . . James . . . when he said that God's purpose for this age is to call out a people for his name. And that is what he is doing today. He is calling people out of the world for his name, whether they be come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world or the non-believing world, they are all members of the body of Christ because they have all been called by God. They may not know the name of Jesus but they know in their hearts that they need something they do not have, and they turn to the only light they have, and I think they are saved and they are going to be with us in heaven (pp. 73, 74).

Leaving this appalling matter, the fact is that "evangelical unity" is not the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 3:3). It may be a unity of spirits but does not answer to what God requires.

In Britain, an *Evangelical Alliance* was formed in 1846. It was in view of that formation that J. N. Darby wrote "Separation from Evil: God's Principle of Unity" (*Collected Writings* 1:353-365). Read it!

The first two papers in the series on the holiness of Christian fellowship each contain an Appendix on the failure of evangelicalism regarding the subject of the respective paper. These two are:

An Exposition of 2 John with Some Comments on Gal. 5:9 and Rev. 2 & 3.

An Exposition of 2 Timothy 2:16-26: Purging Oneself from Evil Associations

and Its Consequences.

The false unity of "evangelical unity" includes association with fundamentally evil doctrines. In the last 10 years the doctrine of annihilation of the wicked is increasingly spreading among evangelicals.

I have no doubt an annihilatonist should be put away: it always really denies the atonement, responsibility, the immortality of the soul, and every just sense of sin (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:91).

. . . but I should gladly help you in this to the utmost of my power, for **this doctrine is a deadly and demoralising heresy, or, rather, infidelity**. I ever refuted it, but I never saw so much of it as latterly, at New York and Boston. It issues in denying responsibility and conscience, enfeebling in the most deadly way the sense of sin, the value consequently of the atonement, and ultimately the divinity of Christ. All do not go this length, and are unaware of it, but it has led thousands in America there (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:403).

Ed.

C. A. Coates: A Thorough Ravenite

C. A. Coates held the same fundamentally evil teachings that FER held. Recall that J. Taylor, Sr. had referred to:

. . . the form in which the truth has been currently expressed in England. ¹

This "form" and "line of teaching" introduced by FER, with its new phraseology and new meanings for old words, propagating ancient, fundamentally evil doctrine, was absorbed by JT, Sr. and C. A. Coates. These men were true moral successors of FER.

CAC's books have been, and are being, spread far beyond the Raven-Taylorites. As we shall see, numbers of these books contain fundamentally evil doctrines. CAC often expressed these doctrines in "the form" of words introduced by FER.

DENIAL OF THE ETERNAL SONSHIP

Two pamphlets by C. A. Coates attack the truth of the eternal Sonship. One of them states:

The Names Father and Son are ever presented in Scripture in relation to the divine mediatorial system. They belong to the sphere of revelation, and not to that of God's essential Being which no creature mind can ever know. ²

In CAC's book on Luke, advertised in 1980, he wrote:

1. *Letters*. . . 1:29 (Nov. 25, 1905).

2. *Remarks on a pamphlet by A. J. Pollock, entitled, "The Eternal Son,"* p. 21.

. . . but now we see what He would be in relation to God -- the Son of God.³

CAC's denial of the eternal Sonship is also expressed in the book, *Outline of Hebrews, Thessalonians, Titus and Philemon*, pp.4-8, sold by the above publisher in 1980. His use of "mediatorially" comports with his use of it in the two pamphlets written to deny the eternal Sonship. In this book on *Hebrews* . . ., he wrote:

As soon as He was born He inherited every title that belongs to the Messiah; and among those titles was the glorious name of Son (p. 4).

"The Son" is a mediatorial title (p. 6).

The idea of one person acting on behalf of others is mediatorial (p. 7).

The relations which subsist between divine Persons as such are not revealed, but there are some that are (p. 8).

In this book not only is FER approvingly mentioned (pp. 53, 194), so is J. Taylor, Sr. (p. 203). Elsewhere he said:

Satan would connect His sonship with His deity. Scripture always connects Christ's sonship with His humanity . . .⁴

The truth is that the hand of Satan is in the writings of CAC.

In July 1931, CAC wrote:

If any Scripture could be adduced which attaches the title {*name* – John 3:19} as in absolute deity, and with no reference to His mediatorial glory, it would settle the matter at once. But I must confess that after considering this subject carefully and prayerfully for 30 years, I have not been able to find one.⁵

He had written on April 10 of that year (1931) to someone who was having difficulty with the teaching:

I think I can understand the exercises expressed in your letter of March 25th, with reference to such terms as "the eternal Son," and the "everlasting Word," for mine was a similar attitude when the subject was suggested for our consideration over thirty years ago.⁶

"About 30 years" brings us to 1901 or 1902 even well before 1908). Interestingly, when FER was in America in 1902 he had stated a denial of the eternal Sonship. James Taylor, Sr, said he had learned it from FER. N. Noel, in *The History of the Brethren* 2:605, 606, cites a reading at Barnett, England, 1929, in which J. Taylor, Sr. brought out the denial of the eternal Sonship; and then on p. 607 cites the following:

Concerning the subject of the above extracts, Mr. James Taylor said afterwards:

It is a most weighty subject and I have no doubt the spiritual intelligence of the (Barnet, 1929) meeting warranted attention being called to it. What I

3. *An Outline of Luke's Gospel*, p. 12.

4. *Outlines of the Books of the Chronicles*, p. 86.

5. *Letters of C. A. Coates*, p. 201.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

expressed has been on my mind for at least twenty-five years; it came to me through Mr. Raven, when he was in America in 1902. It came out in a Reading, but was not included in the *printed* notes.

It was omitted through the influence of Mr. T. H. Reynolds, who was screening Mr. Raven, as a number of others had done before him.⁷

So the indications are that certain leaders had absorbed the denial of the eternal Sonship during the 1902-1905 era (including CAC) but it was not pressed generally until 1929. What FER had taught in a reading in America was not dealt with. Thus, the heaven worked.

CAC's APOLLINARIANISM

In common with FER, CAC was an Apollinarian; i.e., he denied that the Lord Jesus had a human spirit as we have. In this evil, the *Logos* fills the place of the human spirit, and then such tell us that is a human spirit!

In his book, *An Outline of Mark's Gospel and Other Ministry*, Stow Hill, 1964, we read:

Christ as having come into the condition of flesh and blood . . . (p. 182).

. . . a divine Person come into manhood . . . (p. 185).

He was the Son come into manhood (p. 276).

In *An Outline of Luke's Gospel* we read:

A divine Person has come into manhood . . . (p. 293).

. . . the Son of God, a divine Person in manhood . . . (pp . 283 , 286).

The Lord's spirit went to paradise the moment He died . . . (p. 291).

It shows, too, how entirely He has taken the place of man, because **His spirit was Himself** (p. 292) {emphasis mine}.

"**His spirit was Himself**" is language used by FER, JT, Sr., and CAC.⁸ That is why he uses the language about "condition" and a divine Person coming into that condition. A. C. Ord has dealt with this in his paper, "*The Man Christ Jesus*," available from the publisher.⁹ That is a sample of the new form of language -- it clothes the Apollinarian doctrine that the Lord did not have a human spirit but that the *Logos* filled the place of the human spirit in man. J. B. Stoney held this also.¹⁰

J. Taylor, Sr. wrote:

His spirit was Himself¹¹ {emphasis mine}.

CAC said, "**because His spirit was Himself.**" Regarding the Lord's dismissal of His spirit, F. E. Raven said:

7. The statements by JT, Sr. are also found in *Letters of James Taylor* 1:263, Stow Hill, 1956. See also pp. 260, 342, 390, 394; and, 2:181.

8. *The Eternal Relationships in the Godhead*, p. 107.

9. See also, *The Eternal Relationships in the Godhead*, p. 100.

10. *The Eternal Relationships in the Godhead*, p. 105, 106.

11. *Letters of James Taylor* 1:272.

But it is the Person who left the condition.

All three agree; the spirit that left the body was only a divine Person and did not involve a true human spirit. All three were Apollinarians. The doctrine is Satanic. The truth is that the human spirit and soul of the Lord Jesus remained united to the Deity when the body lay in death. Thus was the incarnation maintained, though the body lay in death. In the Raven system there is a dissolution of the incarnation involved if the Logos filled the place of the soul and spirit of manhood, and then **dismissed Himself**. It means there was no atonement. Indeed, **the Son is a false God in the Raven system and Christianity is swept away**.

It seems incredible that a man who believes the spirit of Christ was "the divine Person" could explain Luke 2:48 thus:

{Christ's answers} were not what He knew as God, but what He had learned from God in the place of an instructed One.¹²

Since his view is that the immaterial part of Christ was only the divine Person, this involves a divine Person learning. We might think it is difficult to know whether the stupidity of these notions exceeds the blasphemy or not; but observe what leaven does to the mind.

But if one can speak so approvingly of FER ("... particularly since we were so much helped by F.E.R.'s ministry...")¹³

we can understand this perverted view of Christ, which leaves us with no Christ, no Kinsman-Redeemer, no salvation, no Man in the glory; leaves us yet in our sins.

CAC SEPARATED ETERNAL LIFE FROM THE GODHEAD OF THE SON

CAC also held FER's doctrine that separates Eternal Life from the Godhead of the Person of the Son. How could he not do so if He denied the eternal Sonship? He also denied the eternal Word.

Mr. P. says that "the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us" was before time began. (Page 17.) How does Mr. P. know this? Certainly John did not tell him so. I have no doubt that eternal life was with the Father in the Person of the Son in Manhood, and as being there was manifested to the apostles. The scripture quoted does not prove what Mr. P. says it does. And where did Mr. P. learn that eternal life was a Divine Person? That God's Son as a glorified Man "is the true God and eternal life" is the truth of Scripture. But to say that eternal life is a Divine Person is so unscriptural and untrue that one wonders how he ever came to write it.

On page 18 there are some remarks on our Lord's precious designation, "the Word." Mr. P. says that John 1:1 says "that the Lord was the Word in eternity." Mr. P. may be assured that if John 1:1 did say so, the brethren whom he criticizes would fully believe and assert it.¹⁴

12. *Letters of C. A. Coates*, p. 300.

13. *Letters of C. A. Coates*, p. 108.

14. *Remarks* . . . , p. 26.

CAC DENIED THAT THE SON IS ETERNALLY THE WORD

In the last paragraph quoted above, we see that CAC denied that the Son is the Word in His divine Person from eternity. He evilly wrote:

. . . to say that He was the Word in eternity only raises questions . . .¹⁵

To say that He was "the Word" in eternity, raises questions as to what was expressed in Him in eternity, and *to whom* was it expressed; questions impossible to answer, for Scripture is silent on the matter.¹⁶

RAVENITE MODE OF SPEECH

His books have not only FER's fundamentally evil teachings, he also uses the Ravenite mode of expression. As illustrative of the Ravenite mode of expression that contains FER's evil teachings, take CAC's *Outline of the Minor Prophets*, p. 146, commenting on Zech. 13:7:

Beware of those who would use such scriptures (Phil. 2:7) to take away from the Lord of Glory what pertains to Him as a divine Person in manhood.

The poison of Apollinarianism is in the sentence. Do not shut your eyes to it. On p. 96 he wrote:

. . . "The Angel of Jehovah." I believe that when this term is used in Scripture it always has reference to Christ.

He could not bring Himself to say "it always has reference to the Son," or, "to the Son of God," which is the correct thing to say. But He did not believe that the Son was Son before the incarnation. It illustrates how the evil permeates teaching -- diffusing itself -- how leaven works.

CAC UNSOUND ON ETERNAL LIFE

Some of CAC's Ravenite views on eternal life may be seen in:

Leviticus, p. 123 (the divine nature);

Numbers, p. 281;

Deuteronomy, pp. 62, 64, 77, 95, 348, 349, 365, 390 (eternal life and "the land");

Chronicles, p. 232.

Luke, p. 11, par. 2.

Ed.

15. *The Personal and Mediatorial Glory of the Son of God*, p. 30.

16. *An Outline of John's Gospel*, p. 2.

The Four-fold Presentation of Christ in the Gospels

| THE GOSPEL | MATT | MARK | LUKE | JOHN |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Christ in this Gospel | King | Servant | Man | God |
| The sprout | a righteous branch unto David Jer. 23:5; 33:15 | My servant the branch Zech 3:8 | a man whose name is the branch Zech. 6:13 | a branch of Jehovah Isa. 4:2 |
| The four living creatures, symbols of the judicial power of God invested in Christ | lion (strength) | ox (steadiness) | face of a man (intelligent) | flying eagle (rapidity) |
| characteristic word | quotations from OT ¹⁷ | straightway | certain | I am |
| Colors of the robe put on Him | scarlet (kingly glory) | purple (imperial glory) | gorgeous (perfection) | purple (imperial glory) |
| Offerings | trespass (Psa. 69) | sin (Psa. 22) | peace (Psa. 85) | burnt (Psa. 40) |
| | meal | | | |
| sweet incense | onycha | galbanum | stacte | frank-incense |
| anointing oil | cassia (500) | cinnamin (250) | calumus (250) | |
| | myrrh (500) | | | |

I suggest that the reason for the purple robe in both Mark and John to be in accord with this:

17. The perpetual quotation of and reference to the Old Testament scriptures is evident to the most careless reader, with *ina* when it is the object of the passage cited, *opos* when it is an accomplishment of it, *tote* when it is only an instance of the thing (*Collected Writings* 29:118).

. . . Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God did nor esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God {John’s gospel}; but emptied himself taking on a bondman’s form {Mark’s gospel}, taking his place in the likeness of men; and having been found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, and [that the] death of [the] cross. Wherefore God has highly exalted him {to be the wearer of the purple} . . . (Phil. 2:5-9).

No doubt it is significant that the largest offering for both the sin-offering (Mark’s gospel) and the burnt-offering (John’s gospel) was the bullock (the ox), signifying the servant character. But that servant (Mark’s gospel) is very God (John’s gospel) and into the hands of the Son of God become the Son of Man has been committed authority to execute judgment (John 5:27). The Lord Jesus shall discharge perfectly the millennial reign as Servant and Son.

The sweet incense typifies the unspeakable glory and value of Christ’s person that rose up from the hot coals taken from the altar; rose up in connection with the blood sprinkled on, and before, the mercy seat on which was the Shekinah of glory. Indeed, the cloud of the incense enveloped the Shekinah -- and He that sitteth between the cherubim looked out through that cloud of the incense upon His people. It typifies the glory and value of Christ’s person imparting that value and glory to the blood. It was only the glory of His person that could so meet the glory of the Shekinah. See Lev. 16.

Ed.

French Protestants Reject Halloween as Satanic

. . . In recent years Halloween has been introduced into France by businesses seeking to imitate the American model and increase sales. (In the U.S., Halloween is the second most financially profitable holiday after Christmas.) French Protestants, though, have wisely spoken out against it, properly labeling Halloween as a “satanic festival” and “a resurgence of druidical beliefs.” The Protestant Evangelical Committee for Human Dignity said “all of France should be alarmed that Oct. 31, a day dear to fans of witchcraft, will be observed in public schools . . .”

From *O Timothy* 17:12, 2000.

* * * * *

The West is being prepared for the revelation of the next Avatar, the greatest occultist and Satanist, the Director of Religious Affairs for the West: the final Antichrist of prophecy (Rev. 13:11-18; 2 Thess. 2).
Ed.