

Elements of Dispensational Truth The Seven Churches

Chapter 2.3

What the Spirit Said to Pergamos

Pergamos -- "from the beginning of the fourth to the seventh century, when Popery was established" (Andrew Miller).

Pergamos was what we may call the Catholic system; Thyatira brought in the Romanist. The first was the exaltation of the church in the world; it was what far and wide prevailed before the Pope set forth his aspiring and worst pretensions. The empire had become Christian in name long before. Thyatira, . . . gives us the Roman system . . . ¹

Introduction

First love had been lost and persecution had ended, looked at as the first two phases brought before us. The world, no longer hostile outside now, gains entrance inside, and correspondingly, the flesh is indulged.

The church found itself now in the public place of the world. Not a first action of the Spirit in living beauty, but unnoticed out of its little sphere of testimony; not a Gentile persecution, stirred up because it jostled old prejudices in its progress. It dwelt now, had a position and standing, in the world, of which Satan was the prince -- where his throne was. "Your fleets and armies are filled with us," says Tertullian. "If we leave your cities the empire will become a desert." Could Peter and Paul have said that, or those who were of one heart and one mind? It was another kind of testimony, not a first love. It had grown to this, in spite of martyrdom through Gentile persecutions. Then it had stood firm and weathered the storm. Now Christ's sword, not Nero's must be applied. Inward corruption, the seduction to association with the world, and to lead those who bore Christ's name to go in the public path of the world, away from God, when, as an enemy it could not curse and destroy them -- this was now the danger -- more than the danger. It was going on, and corrupt practice was

1. *The Bible Treasury* 16:287.

taught; deeds Christ hated had become a doctrine. The Lord would interfere if they did not repent, and apply His own *judicial* power within the church, giving His word judicial action in their midst, against those who sinned, no doubt, but so as to act on the conscience of all. It was His coming to the church in judgment though; His war, by the sword of His word, was made on the guilty. The word, despised as instruction and warning and correction, becomes judgment in the power of Christ. He is Son over His own house. But if the sword distinguishes in judgment, faith does in receiving the warning and word in the heart, and receives its reward according to this spiritual faithfulness. That word, which would come judicially to distinguish and sever in the church, wrought in the heart of the faithful; and the spirit and character of Christ was distinctively realized, and communion with Him in His separate path on earth enjoyed. To this the promise answers: they would have the hidden manna to eat; that is, Christ as known in His walk down here, though now in glory -- the corn of that heavenly land. The hidden manna was not the daily manna, but the manna which had been laid up in the ark and kept as a witness in Canaan. They would have the distinguishing white stone of Christ's own approbation, and on it a name, a term of relationship with Him in this approbation which they only would know. ²

Clericalism came in rapidly after this. The world's authority brought in worldly objects, and now the ministry became a clergy, a more or less profitable profession. The framers of this were those that held the doctrine of Balaam. Simultaneously with this of course there was the introduction of all kinds of compromise with the world. The clergy encouraged by a misuse of scripture every sort of commerce with the world's evil ways; as it is said here, "who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." I do not doubt that all this is symbolically expressed. But the drift is plain enough where the conscience is not blunted. Where the same evils exist, and all that which would keep the church as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ is gone, no wonder that these warnings are misunderstood. The world had got in, as it still remains, and alas! palliated most by those who owe their professional status to this frightfully corrupt and corrupting influence. And the same spirit of unbelief which let in the mischief keeps it in, decrying the true application of the two-edged sword now as then. The Christians were dazzled by the world's power and glory, which was put forth doubtless in protecting, not themselves only, but the public faith of Christendom in that day. At the same time they fatally compromised Christ by alliance with the world, and there followed the practical return to the world out of which grace had taken the church in order to union with Christ in glory. ³

2. *Collected Writings* 30:336.

3. W. Kelly, *Lectures Introductory to the Study of Acts, the Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation*, London: Broom, p. 417, 1869.

Presentation of Christ

And to the angel of the assembly in Pergamos write:

(2:12) These things says he that has the sharp two-edged sword:

HE THAT HAS THE SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD (2:12)

See Heb. 4:12. The Lord is presented in this way particularly in view of Pergamos having in the assembly those who held the doctrine of Balaam and those who held the doctrine of Nicolaitanes in like manner (vv. 14, 15). This called for repentance or else He would come quickly (“to thee,” i.e., the angel) and “make war with them” (those who held the evil doctrines) with the sword of His mouth (v. 16).

Commendation

(2:13) I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan [is]; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in the days in which Antipas my faithful witness [was], who was slain among you, where Satan dwells.

DWELLING WHERE SATAN’S THRONE IS (2:13)

The Lord’s “I Know” to the First Three Assemblies.

To Ephesus the Lord said “I know thy works,” etc.

To Smyra the Lord said, “I know thy tribulation,” etc.

To Pergamos the Lord said, “I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan is.”

Satan the God of this Age. Do you think that dwelling where Satan’s throne is means that Satan’s headquarters for his world-wide activities were located at Pergamos and the Lord is telling them, ‘I know you live where Satan’s headquarters is located?’

The Scripture did not designate the Enemy as the god of this age until after the Lord Jesus was rejected (2 Cor. 4:4). “The whole world lies in the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). This is the consequence of the rejection of Christ. The cross was the great turning point. The earth had been placed under man in the garden of Eden. He fell, and then began the testing of the first man -- which testing was concluded at the cross. They had both seen, and hated both the Father and the Son (John 15:24). Testing was thus over. The kingdom, and all the rest, was definitively rejected and consequently the Enemy has the title of god of this age. Thus, we are in the “present evil world,” or age (Gal. 1:4). The cross was the demonstration that the heart of the first man was actually subject to Satan. With

that final exposure of the heart of the first man, Satan is accorded the title.⁴ Here, the world is now looked at as the place where Satan’s throne is.

Compromise with the World. The Lord’s saying “I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan [is],” while recognizing the hostile environment, also has in view the inroads of that world into the assembly at Pergamos. This is seen by understanding that they had in the assembly those who held the doctrine of Balaam. Through Balaamism the world got into the assembly. Through the Nicolaitanes the flesh acts in corruption. It is a trial to the assembly to be a lightbearer in the world, a world led of the Enemy, that cast out Christ; a world that lies in the wicked one, its god. The Lord knows this is a trial. And, the two-edged attack of the Enemy was successful. This calls for the sharp two-edged sword in judgment.

Constantine the Great. This man became the senior ruler of the Roman Empire in 312 AD, consequent upon a campaign in Italy in which he defeated his rival, Maxentius. In connection with this campaign Eusebius claimed that Constantine beheld a cross in the clouds. And Lactantius said he had a dream that he should place a monogram of Christ on the soldiers’ shields.⁵ So God is thus made the source of what resulted in the marriage of the world and the church!

Since Constantine’s policy was to unite the Christian Church to the secular State by the closest possible ties, it was natural that even before he formally professed Christianity himself he should be concerned with the internal affairs of the Church. In 313 the Donatist schismatics in Africa appealed to him to settle their controversy with the Church of that province, and at their request he referred the matter first to a commission of bishops, then to a synod of Gaul and Italy (Arles, 314), and finally in 316 heard the case himself. In each trial the verdict went against the Donatists, who thereupon attacked not only their ecclesiastical opponents but also the State, encouraging rioting and brigandage. Constantine was therefore constrained to reinforce his verdict with repressive measures.

A similar appeal from the contending parties led Constantine to summon the Council of Nicaea (325) to settle the Arian dispute about the Person of Christ. The Emperor himself presided, though unbaptized, a circumstance which foreshadows the Byzantine theory of the emperors as supreme rulers of Church and State alike. The victory of orthodoxy which the creed of the council symbolized did not prevent Constantine from banishing prominent orthodox leaders in later years (e.g. St. Athanasius in 336) at the instance of their enemies. Constantine’s ecclesiastical advisers included men of various beliefs,

4. See *Collected Writings* 5:297.

5. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, article “Labarum” says:

In form it seems to have been an adaptation of the Roman cavalry standard, with the pagan emblems replaced by a Christian monogram, viz., the two Greek letters X and P (the first two of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, (‘Christ’)) intersecting.

esp. Hosius, Bp. of Cordova, Eusebius, Bp. of Caesarea, and Lactantius.⁶

HOLDING FAST MY NAME, NOT DENYING MY FAITH (2:13)

We see from this statement how God overrules unfaithfulness. W. Kelly remarked:

Yet the Lord owns whatever is good. "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." It is remarkable that after the greatest persecutions, when Christendom and even Christians had been seduced into accepting the patronage of the world, up to that point there remained real faithfulness in refusing all efforts to deny the deity of Christ. Under the same Constantine, who was the instrument of thus casting the world's shield over Christianity, was the battle fought and won against the Arian foe. It was under his authority, and indeed by his call, that the famous council sat at Nicea, and the faith of the Trinity was publicly established. I do not mean of course for Christians, who needed no such bulwark as this, but for Christendom. Thus the creed commonly called Nicene, which had for its object the assertion of Christ's consubstantial deity, was published at this same time. I cannot but think that this state of things is referred to here: "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." What a solemn conjunction, that there should be this close proximity between Satan's throne without, but withal the mercy of God still maintaining that fundamental faith of Christ's own personal glory!⁷

ANTIPAS MY FAITHFUL WITNESS (2:13)

He is not recorded in history though named in Scripture. It is difficult to believe that he accepted the elevation of the church in the worldly position it took. Observe that we read where he was slain: "where Satan dwells." I doubt this means that the city of Pergamos was where Satan lived. Rather, it was, as E. Dennett remarked, "in the presence of the power of Satan."

Judgment

(2:14) But I have a few things against thee: that thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat [of] idol sacrifices and commit fornication. (2:15) So thou also hast those who hold the doctrine of Nicolaitanes in like manner.

BALAAMISM (2:14)

His Error, Way, and Doctrine. There are three distinctive notices of Balaam in the NT:

(1) "The *error* of Balaam for reward" (Jude 11) indicates that he had the idea that religion is for personal gain rather than doing the holy will of God.

6. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, article "Constantine the Great."

7. *Introductory Lectures . . . in loco*.

(2) "Followed in the *path* of Balaam . . . who loved [the] reward of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15) indicates a course in which he carried out his error, the love of money overpowering any other consideration.

(3) "The *doctrine* of Balaam" (Rev. 2:14) indicates that he had teachings supportive of his error and his path.

The Way of Cain, The Error of Balaam, and the Gainsaying of Korah.

These three expressions are found together in Jude 11 as forming a moral whole. The way of Cain was to offer a *false sacrifice* to God. It had no blood. It is the sacrifice of man in the flesh. The error of Balaam is next: making a *false ministry* for personal-gain religion. That also satisfies man in the flesh. Finally, there is the perishing in the gainsaying of Korah, who presented strange fire -- *false worship* of man in the flesh -- which ends in destruction. This is the moral company where God classifies Balaam.

What Balaam Taught. The assembly at Pergamos had among them those that held the doctrine of Balaam. They were told what it was:

Who taught Balak

to cast a snare before the sons of Israel,

to eat [of] idol sacrifices and

commit fornication.

See Num. 25:1-3; 31:16. According to 1 Cor. 10:1-15 we are to learn from these OT things. They have a typical bearing and here in Rev. 2:14 use is made of Balaam's case in connection with the matter of *alliance with the world*. "We know that an idol [is] nothing in [the] world, and that there [is] no God save one" (1 Cor. 8:4). Does that give license to go to an idol temple or to eat of things sacrificed to idols? There are other considerations besides knowing that an idol is not real, and among them is the fact that demonic powers are behind the idolatry; and demons are very real. From this we keep a holy separation. Now, let us connect with this what we have considered above about Pergamos viewed as dwelling where Satan's throne is (i.e., the world ruled by him), and surely we must connect this with what is said here of Balaam's teaching regarding eating of idol sacrifices. The demonic powers are the servants of Satan. Alliance with the world brings into the church on earth, seen in responsible testimony, the power of the world-ruler. The whole world lies in the wicked one. Why, then, tolerate any alliance with such a world?

And as to committing fornication:

Adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

Whoever therefore is minded to be [the] friend of the world is constituted enemy of God (James 4:4).

How instructive it is that James uses "adulteresses," indicating that friendship with the world is spiritual fornication. Worldliness is such an attraction that more must be said about this:

This corrupt tendency to association with the world brought in persecution, but with it the suited promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It is quite true that the Lord causes trial, but never do you find that there is with Him any moral acquiescence in evil. He cannot tempt by evil doctrine. The Lord had taught them the evil of this corrupting association with the world, by turning it into a persecuting world; but He could not send Balaam's evil teaching; for it would be impossible to talk of Christ's sending moral temptation as a rod for the correction of the saints. He may permit it in His holy wisdom. The effort of the enemy in Pergamos would not like the tribulation spoken of in Smyrna. Balaam would associate them religiously with the world -- a sadder evil than Satan's openly persecuting power . . .

Thus there is an amazing and most instructive difference between the persecution of Smyrna and the seduction of Pergamos. In Smyrna the Lord says, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." "I have died for you, and now do you be faithful unto death for me." In Smyrna the Lord would not step in to hinder the consequences of the position they were in, but turned them to the maintaining the declining church in its own true character, giving the assurance of the everlasting and heavenly promise, a crown to the faithful. But in Pergamos, the fact of their dwelling in the place where Satan's throne was shows itself in another way. And the Lord could not, without judging the world itself, remove the snare by acting on the world itself. You have got satanic subtlety acting in concert with the world, and by its spirit in the church -- a false prophet leading it into association with the place of Satan's throne where it dwelt -- the world that had ceased to be a persecutor. You have got Balaam there; not Jezebel yet.⁸

A most terrible and frightful character is that of Balaam. The question had been already raised on the ground of Israel's failure, whether God would bring them into the land -- whether Satan, through his instruments, Balak and Balaam, could hinder Israel's entrance into Canaan. The effort was to get Jehovah to curse Israel, but they could not. For, as between Him and the accuser, "God saw no perverseness in Israel," neither was there any possibility of using Satan's power against the people of God, as Balaam said, "There is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." God held Balaam's lips and forced him to speak blessings instead of cursings, in spite of himself. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." When the devil comes as an adversary, he has no power; the secret of his power lies in coming in as a tempter and seducer. When Satan could not prevail in getting Jehovah to curse Israel, he seduced them into wickedness, leading them "to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication"; and then how could the holy God bring them in? (See Num. 25.)

In Pergamos, Satan comes within the church as a seducing Satan; while in Smyrna, Satan keeps outside the church as the persecuting Satan. Therefore in

8. *Collected Writings* 5:298, 299.

Smyrna they are exhorted, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Weakness is in "fear"; the danger is in fear. When the saint is out of the persecution, he often trembles as he looks at it and becomes frightened; but when once he is thoroughly in it, if he has faith, he looks out of it up to God and finds he never was so happy. Thus he is separated from the world and made to feel what his own proper portion is. But as the church of God is dwelling on Satan's territory, if he has not this persecuting character, then he gives her as much of the world as he can (for, as Satan says, "all that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it"); and if it can be said of the world, that "thou hast made the church rich," then the world will have the heart of the church, instead of her risen Head, "for where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." Balaam was a prophet, though a false one, and could use the name of Jehovah, and declare he must speak by His word only; and we find his spirit here coming within the church to make it at ease in the world. The wicked servant (who said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming, and began to eat and drink with the drunken") was treated as a servant still, though a wicked one. If Satan can only make a Christian comfortable in the world, his end is gained. Then they might go and eat in the idol temple, etc.⁹

Many helpful articles have been written concerning Balaam.¹⁰

THOSE HOLDING THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES (2:15)

A Counterpart to Balaamism. This is complementary to Balaamism. It is its counterpart, the two making an evil, moral whole. J. N. Darby nicely summarized the thrusts of the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes:

But when the church is on Satan's territory, he says, You shall have as much as you like -- as much as ever I can give you -- for I will seduce you into it. In enriching them with earthly things, he seduces them from God. Balaam was a prophet, but a false prophet, just as the evil servant who hid his Lord's money was a servant, though an evil one; and we find him coming in within the church (ver. 14), and if he can make it all ease in the world, comfortable in the world, his end is gained. Then they might go and eat in the idols' temples: doctrine of the Nicolaitanes follows -- internal corruption. In Nicolaitanism we see the flesh acting in the church; through Balaam the world had come in. It is very sad to see how the church declined after the tribulation had brightened it up for God, and our hearts ought to bear the burden. By being thus associated with the world, by being content to dwell where Satan's seat is, they had got the door open for evil doctrines -- Antinomianism, a fleshly religion of demons. Satan did not want to persecute when he could corrupt. Here it is only teaching false doctrine, in the next church {Thyatira} we see there are children born. The

9. *Collected Writings* 5:299, 300. See also the valuable comments in 34:159.

10. See *The Bible Treasury* 3:173; 8:97; 17:46 (excellent); 19:201, 218; *Notes and Jottings*, p. 367; *Voice to the Faithful* 11:209; there is one quite instructive in showing the wiles of the Enemy in what Balaam sought to do, connecting this with Rom. 8: *The Christian Friend*, 1880, pp. 74, 75.

promise to the faithful here is a very sweet and peculiar one.¹¹

Satan, the world, and the flesh form a triad that opposes the Christian. We have these three indicated regarding Pergamos. Having some among them teaching Balaam's doctrine of association with the world, in its aims and pursuits and sins, and also having some among them teaching the correlative indulgence of the flesh, these things indicate the work of Satan.

Meaning of the Names Balaam and Nicolaitanes. Balaam means "swallower of the people: confounding the people." That describes the consequence of his doctrine teaching association with the world. Nicolaitanes means "conqueror of the people."¹² *Laos* is the word for 'people' and it is said that the word *laity* is derived from *laos*. That is interesting but does not show that *laity* may be substituted for people here. What conquers the people is the flesh. The world and the indulgence of the flesh are co-relative forces, the two-edged sword of the Enemy.

TOLERATING THOSE WHO HOLD THE DOCTRINE (2:14, 15)

Guilt by Toleration. Ephesus hated the *works* of the Nicolaitanes, which the Lord hated (Rev. 2:6); but in Pergamos those who held the *doctrines* were tolerated in the assembly. Do you think that those who held Balaamism announced "we hold the doctrine of Balaam"? Hardly. It gets disguised in pious dress. Tolerating such things is very blameworthy. It is not enough to be personally sound. We see from this rebuke of the Lord that He held the assembly accountable for these persons being within. They were responsible for it. In v. 16 they are called upon to repent. They needed to repent of having those in the assembly who *held* such teaching. The assembly was already guilty of the grave sin of tolerating them. If they refused to repent that would further add to the sin. Repentance would be shown by excommunicating these evil persons. Would you break bread in an assembly where such persons were tolerated? A further question is, would you receive from an assembly where such persons were tolerated? -- acknowledge a letter of commendation from them? Today many answer yes they would, for they too have a doctrine concerning the church that allows them to do so.

By acknowledging the foreshadow view of Rev. 2 & 3, may we not see here how practice can form doctrine? A doctrine is developed to sanction what is wrong, to give the deeds a doctrinal underpinning and justification. It makes the evil sound like godliness. This way of dealing with the things of God is common.

Does Not Go Away. The loss of first love did not go away. Nor have those gone away who teach such things as noted above. Though the history of the

11. *Collected Writings* 34:160.

12. The meanings are taken from J. B. Jackson's *Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names*.

church seen on earth in responsible testimony has had these successive states, these evils do not necessarily disappear. Indeed, they have not. And Jezebel, who will be noticed when we come to Thyatira, also has not gone away.

EXAMPLE OF THE FOSTERING OF EVIL

Since, as A. C. Brown well said, "we are not here to please everyone," let us consider the 'Christian' celebrations of heathen holidays. An interesting personage is Damasus (c. 304-384), bishop of Rome (366-384). J. N. Darby remarked:

Already, in the fourth century, intrigues for the possession of papal power became a source of public trouble. In 366 Pope Liberius died, and contests for the see began. Damasus was elected by a majority, Ursicinus by a large party, both being consecrated bishops of Rome. The Emperor banished Ursicinus; but his partisans met in the churches they possessed, and refused communion with Damasus. The Emperor took away the churches. They met outside Rome, and were banished from the country. In the dispute the parties fought for victory, and a vast number of Christians were killed, even in the churches.¹³

This is the era when heathen holidays were made 'Christian' holidays:

Christians, so-called, would have festivals, and they tacked on Christian names to heathen ones. The great Augustine informs us that "the church" did it, that if they would get drunk (which they did even in the churches), they should do so in honor of saints, not of demons. One of the Gregorys was famous for this, and left only seventeen heathen in his diocese by means of it. And another Gregory, sending another Augustine to England, directed him not to destroy the idol temples, but to turn them into churches; and as the heathens were accustomed to have an anniversary festival to their god, to replace it by one to a saint. It was thus Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor at least were Christianized. Sicily, which in spite of all efforts had remained heathen, as soon as it was decided that Mary was the mother of God at what I must call the disgraceful and infamous general council of Ephesus, gave up all her temples to be churches.

It was as easy to worship the mother of God as the mother of the gods. But everywhere drunkenness in honor of the saints, and even in the churches, took the place of drunkenness in honor of demigods, the great Augustine and other fathers being witnesses. Such were festal anniversaries, Christmas having been (and it is still celebrated in heathen countries) the worst of heathen festivals, to celebrate the return of the sun from the winter solstice, without a pretense that Christ was born that day, but as they could not stop the revelry, they put Christ's birth there. Such, in real fact, is the church's celebration of

13. *Collected Writings* 18:207. The reader will find this confirmed in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, article "Damasus." See A. Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, New York: Loizeaux, pp. 249-251, 1953. The church historian Phillip Schaff wrote:

The Roman prefect, Praetextatus, declared jestingly to the bishop Damasus, who had obtained the office through a bloody battle of parties, that for such a price he would at once turn Christian himself (*History of the Christian Church* 3:267; see p. 371 also).

anniversaries and saints' days. This is certain, that the apostle declares that it was a return to heathenism, so that he was afraid his labour was in vain -- avowedly turning the great and mighty parts of Christianity, by which God acted on souls, to bring them into blessed and divinely-wrought relationship with Himself, individually and collectively, into certain outward events, or outward facts, and exclusively to their announcement as occurring at particular times. "I am afraid of you." ¹⁴

See 2 Cor. 6:16, 17.

Admonition

(2:16) Repent therefore: but if not, I come to thee quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of my mouth.

I WILL COME TO THEE QUICKLY (2:16)

The Lord wants response, wants the evil judged and expelled, wants repentance. Repentance would mean taking God's view of themselves and sitting in judgment on themselves. They needed not only to expel the evil but deal with themselves in the presence of God concerning how the evil was tolerated in the first place. He does not want delay.

WAR WITH THEM WITH THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH (2:16)

It is not that war is made with the saints. He will make war with those who hold such teachings.

The Word from His mouth will go forth in judgment. Cp. Isa. 11:4.

14. *Collected Writings* 29:331; see also 14:69, 70; 18:125, 126; 24:246; 29:236; *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 221, 222. Phillip Scaff noted:

Chrysostom, who delivered the Christmas homily in Antioch on the 25th of December, 386, already calls it, notwithstanding its recent introduction (some ten years before) the fundamental feast, or the root, from which all other Christian festivals grow.

The Christmas festival was probably the Christian transformation or regeneration of a series of kindred heathen festivals -- the Saturnalia, Sigillaria, Juvenalia, and Brumalia -- which were kept in Rome in the month of December . . . (*op. cit.*, 3:396).

F. C. J., *An Open Letter*, wrote:

When in 1877 I first came into fellowship with those called Brethren, they were practically a unit in abstaining from all complicity with the observance of Christmas and similar abominations . . . tracts were written against it . . . But now with all those witnesses to divine truth gone, other generations have come upon the scene, and there are now few who regard with the same abhorrence these heathen, aye Satanic, for who would dare to commit this heinous wickedness of attaching His Name to a lie? But beloved brethren, have you not been "keeping Christmas"? Have you been wishing each other to be "merry," even whilst thus bringing Christ into full accord with Belial? That seems to me to be unspeakably terrible, am I wrong my brethren?

A pamphlet, *Christmas or Linking Christ and Belial* is available from the publisher.

Call to Hear

(2:17) He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

Promise to the Overcomer

(2:17) To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna; and I will give to him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives [it].

In tracing the promises and their connection with what the first man (1 Cor. 15:47-49) has forfeited, another wrote:

The promise to Pergamos carries us into the world *since* the flood, and connects us historically with Israel's journey out of Egypt. "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Man had eaten angels' food, as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven." Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, but Jesus said, "he that eateth of the bread that I shall give him, shall live for ever." The names of the twelve tribes had been engraved, by the skill of the cunning workman, upon all manner of precious stones; and set in the breast-plate of the great high priest of Israel. But these have become things of the past, like the garden which the Lord planted in Eden. Hosea had stood in the midst of a guilty people, and prophesied "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." But forfeited blessings are again gathered up by Him who has *since* trodden this path (as the son called out of Egypt) and substantiated in Himself for this same people in the future day of their history: when they shall say "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In the meantime, while all is hidden between the Lord and His heavenly ones (for *our* life is hid with Christ, in God), we get *in himself* the hidden manna, and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, "which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." And this is given out to us by Himself in the *new* associations in which by grace we "have been circumcised by the circumcision of Christ," as one with Him in a new and heavenly position, while hidden from all below. We, as new creatures in Christ, can well understand, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, what these secret interchanges mean; and what the white stone records -- "as Christ is, *so* are we in this world." Paul was familiar with the stone, and with the new name, and was teaching the Galatians the lesson by it, which they were so slow to learn, that our purification is by death, when he said, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me." ¹⁵

15. *The Bible Treasury* 8:366.

TO HIM I WILL GIVE OF THE HIDDEN MANNA (2:17)

It is discouraging to read expositions that refer such a thing as eating of the hidden manna to a “Messianic banquet” of Rev. 19. It is no such thing. What Christ was for the eye of God in humiliation here is like the manna in the pot in the Ark (Ex. 16:33).

Israel ate of the manna, but not of “the hidden manna.” God loved to feed His people, pilgrims in the wilderness; loved, in doing it, to tie Himself by His own law of the Sabbath; but that display of His love was a passing one -- one not needed in the land. But there was a portion not to pass away, a portion treasured up, not for Israel, not for the priests, it was a record to God! If Israel rejoiced in the manna, God delights in Him who was the manna. Did His delight in Christ cease when Israel needed the manna no longer? No! He loved to have the memorial of it laid up for Himself. Here is manna day by day; I take and feed on it; but how little does my heart enter into the preciousness of it to what it will do there! There will be, to those who overcome, the power of tasting God’s delight in Christ as the Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God. Christ, the One who can give back life to poor sinners, is the ornament in the midst of that garden of delights of God; He adorns it . . .

There is a special truth connected with the manna. It brings before us Christ as our food for the wilderness. And it was put into the ark, and laid up before the Lord for a memorial. God has a delight of His own. It is Christ’s competency to carry His people through the wilderness, and God’s positive delight in it. If our thoughts of Christ come short, God’s never come short. If He cares for the people of His Father, the Father delights in Him as the One who is their supply the whole wilderness course through. He, “the first and the last,” He is the Christ who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Think of it! Let the saints’ joy be perfect, let all hindrances be removed, yet what is their joy compared to what *God’s* is? When God gets all His martyrs home, when they get their full joy, yet the joy of God will be greater. Christ says, If I know your heart I know my Father’s also; I know the joy that He has; He has the manna in its vessel of Gold. And this delight of God, this provision, is for you as you pass through the wilderness. And when Christ has supplied the needs of all His people, is He exhausted? No; He is ever the same; in Him is the fulness -- in Him who is the delight of God. I would not lose the thought that God has a better portion than I have in Christ for a thousand worlds! Has God got down to the depth of that Christ? No, and never will! If God says to a creature, Give me, it soon comes to an end; but in Christ there is no end.

God purposely makes us pass through difficulties, in order that we may learn what we have in Christ. God has Him there in the vessel of gold, in divine glory; and down here I have His power; I may be an overcomer, and the over comer shall taste of that manna. “I will give him to eat of the hidden manna.” It is the hard unbelief of the soul about eternal things that lets it down so about temporal things.¹⁶

16. G. V. Wigram, *The Addresses to the Seven Churches*. My copy was bound in a book and (continued...)

The word of God is the resource of the faithful, and the promise is more individual. In the sorrow and pain of seeing those belonging to God not departing from iniquity, there is bound up in the heart this link of secret fidelity to God which associates them with a suffering Christ. They shall have to eat of the hidden manna. It was hidden faithfulness which was to be rewarded with this hidden manna; the fruits, indeed, would be manifest to all around, but it was a secret between God and the heart, an inward link with that which never changes in its character. What is this hidden manna? We find manna spoken of as the bread which cometh down from heaven: “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.” The manna for the Israelites was spread about the camp, not hidden. Christ is the provision for daily walk. But besides this they were to take a pot, and lay it up before Jehovah: when they had got into the land, they were to have the memorial of what they had enjoyed in the wilderness. So we in heaven shall have God’s eternal delight in what Christ has been down here as the suffering Christ. The memory of what Christ has been in the wilderness is God’s eternal delight. With us, he that has been faithful with Christ in rejection from this world will have the everlasting joy of fellowship with God in the delight in Christ as the suffering Man, which He had and has and will have for ever. It will be the same kind of delight, though of course always in different measure. If we are walking faithfully with a rejected Christ, instead of letting Balaam into our hearts, we shall enjoy Christ down here now; but we cannot enjoy Him while we are going on with the world. If we so pretend, it becomes Nicolaitanism or Antinomianism. Even in the Gospels what enjoyment can we have if walking in the spirit of the world? The imagination may be fed, but the soul is not satisfied. God has not given His Son to be played with, but to be fed upon.¹⁷

I WILL GIVE TO HIM A WHITE STONE (2:17)

A word in connection with this stone. There were two ways in which a stone was made use of among the ancients. The first was in the trial of a person; the second in the election of any one to office. The stone spoken of here is for trial, and was large enough for the judgment to be written on it. We find that we are not black-balled: the *white* stone is put in for us by Christ; and that is enough, were my accusers far more bitter than they are. And on this stone there is a new name -- a new character. A master gave his slave a new name, indicative of his character.¹⁸

The “white stone” gives the general idea of a vote in favour of any one; it is the secret mark of approbation from one to another. There are public joys in heaven common to all, thousands and thousands of voices in communion and praise, echoing the song of praise. And there are joys we share in Christ together here; but He must have our individual affections as well as our common affections. My own peculiar joy in Christ you can never know, neither can I ever taste yours; and this is true of the highest affections. “A new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” That name would have no meaning for

16. (...continued)

removed and I do not know who the publisher was.

17. *Collected Writings* 34:160. See also 5:302 and *Notes and Jottings* p. 368.

18. G. V. Wigram, *The Adresse to the Seven Churches*.

anybody else but him to whom it is given. Christ reveals Himself to the soul in such sort that a stranger intermeddeth not with its joy. Individual joy, personal communion, is distinct from, though it enhances, the universal joy; and that individual joy which we know down here will never be interrupted. This promise, as do all those to the churches, relates to the future time of heavenly blessing; but it is also the source of joy and strength now. The Spirit of God makes us anticipate the day. We may have now in spirit this "white stone" from Christ, this secret expression of His grace and love, which others cannot have for me, neither can I have it for them. How this makes this "white stone" worth everything else! What a secret source of strength it is, even though all the world think me wrong, if I have the white stone of Christ's approbation, acquired in following the word, but known in the heart! But, I say again, I must judge all by the word, that sword of His mouth that disarms and purges all the workings of Balaam. Then I do not mind -- let the world talk about things as it pleases, Christ has talked to me, and in the coming day of glory will own all He has said to me.¹⁹

A NEW NAME WRITTEN WHICH NO ONE KNOWS BUT HE WHO RECEIVES IT

And it is very precious to have thus the guidance of the Lord, and the promise of His peculiar approbation, when we are thrown much on individual responsibility, as must be the ease when the professing church has become mingled with the world. For then individuals who seek to be faithful must often have to walk alone, and endure the charge of folly and self-will, even from their brethren, for refusing to follow the beaten path. The natural tendency, indeed, will be self-will and the only safety will be to bring the soul under the sense of direct responsibility to the Lord, by means of such warnings and promises as these, which both guide and supply strength to stand free from all around, whilst the consciousness that Christ marks and owns our ways will sanctify as well as encourage our hearts. For it *must* be joy to any one who loves the Lord to think of having his peculiar approbation and love -- to think that He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none may know of His approval but ourselves. But, beloved friends, are we content with the approbation which Christ only knows? or are we not too desirous of men's commendation for our actions, or at least that they should give us credit for our motives? Are we content, as long as good is done, that none should know but Christ even our motives? Are we content, even in the church, to be thought nothing of -- to seek nothing but the white stone, and the new name which no man knows, save he who receives it?

How terrible must the evil and selfishness of that heart be which is not satisfied with the Lord's special favor, but seeks honor from man instead! I would ask you, which would be most precious to you -- the public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual owning of His love? We shall have both, if faithful; but the heart that is specially attached to Christ will prefer the latter, and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on in our course as the anticipation of this. I would therefore have you to rest especially on this promise. Whatever glorifies Christ is what we have to do with. We are to be as much separate from and above the world as Christ is -- as He says, "My ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts." So

should ours as united to Him. All our conduct should be ruled by this: we are united to One who is made higher than the heavens, we therefore are so too. Most sublime truth! but most practical too -- where it is realized, it must tell in every detail of life. How could one made higher than the heavens be seeking earthly things, riches, &c.? As some one has said, "If an angel were to come down here, he would be as willing to sweep the streets as to be a king." Much more, then, one who has this personal intimate consciousness of union with Christ. The more of a servant the happier he is, because it would be more like his Master. But in seeking to be like Jesus, we must remember that there is much difficulty: we have Satan always to resist us, we have to overcome in various circumstances and trials -- not only to contend with, but to overcome; so that it is not all joy, though we are set in so blessed a place.

To keep the flesh mortified is the great thing in these practical difficulties, and nothing will do this but living communion with the Lord. We must be watching its first strivings, or, before we are aware, the flesh will be giving a handle to Satan. If we are holding fast (as the faithful ones in Thyatira were commanded) that which we have in the Lord, then Satan will lose his power over us, and then all is joy -- even suffering for the sake of Jesus will be joy. But if there be not the every-day commonplace diligence to break the power of the every-day commonplace difficulties, we shall have to contend with the flesh instead of Satan, with whom our conflict ought to be; while it will also give him power to come in, and then we are not ready to meet him, but have to get the armor in order before we have to begin to fight. I pray you, beloved friends, to attend to this, for if we fail in this daily judging and keeping down the flesh, we lose the power of overcoming Satan, and at least only stand our ground, and prevent his gaining advantage over us, instead of gaining ground on him. We are unfaithful to Christ when it is so, for we have the victory in Him, and we owe it to Him to gain ground upon the world; where Satan reigns, to stand in such a position as to be able to go forward and win souls from Satan, instead of only standing on the defensive.

I ask you, in the name of the Lord's love to you and because of the privileges that belong to *you*, to judge yourselves, to look if the flesh be so judged in you, that you are ready for the battle; or whether Satan would find the flesh so alive in you, that it would be a handle he could use against you.

But while thus judging yourselves, remember that your souls, in the midst of whatever failure and humiliation, are to rest on the joy of *His* perfect righteousness, though to have overcome will add to our joy on the day of His appearing, and bring more glory to Him now. The Lord give us to find Him in all circumstances to be just what we need, and so enable us to walk in the Spirit as to discern all the grace and suitability which are in Him for our every necessity, and to understand and feel in our own souls the fitness and power of His promises.²⁰

19. *Collected Writings* 5:303; see also 34:161. You must read *Collected Writings* 17:355-358.

20. *The Bible Treasury* 11:205, 206.

*Elements of Propitiation, Substitution,
and The Righteousness of God*

Chapter 11

Propitiation Completed on the Cross

Propitiation

{This paper, while not designated as by W. Kelly, nonetheless bears the imprint of his style and knowledge. It has much to say about the evil notion that propitiation by blood was made in heaven. However, what is brought to bear on that matter has application to other theories of atonement involving something subsequent to the cross.}

It may help souls, in danger of being perplexed by words as unintelligent as they are confidently uttered, it be clearly understood that the same Hebrew expression for “atonement” is used throughout Lev. 16, and that this finds its counterpart in the Greek verb which the Revisers {1881 Revised Version} correctly render “make propitiation” in Heb. 2:7, and its derivative substantive “propitiation” in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10.

It is a characteristic of the NT that there alone do we find “reconciliation” in the sense of divine grace. The Septuagint never uses καταλλάσσειν with any such force. Indeed the verb only occurs in Jer. 48:39, the substantive in Isa. 9:5, the one meaning “changed” and the other exchange or “restitution”: so remote is the application from its NT usage. We can easily understand that, as with other words, so Christ’s presence and work of grace gave κ. an entirely new and blessed character. God was in Christ reconciling, not merely the Jews, but the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them -- the very thing the law must do. But the world, though made by Him, knew Him not: its wisdom was its darkness. The Jews more guiltily received Him not. In result both crucified Him. On that cross Him Who knew no sin God made sin for us. This is atonement; for no ignorance can be more pitiable than only looking for the bare word. God has graciously revealed the thing in all variety of forms, for

which faith praises Him. On the cross the Savior was charged with sin and our sins, and bore the judgment of all unsparingly, that we might become God’s righteousness. Thus the reconciliation which unbelief and hatred refused is now made good; and God has not only reconciled to Himself us who believe, but given us the ministry of reconciliation. Grace reigns through righteousness here also. What do we not owe Him?

Now the fact already stated as to Lev. 16 proves the utter fallacy and sheer heterodoxy of denying that propitiation applies to the blood of the cross, and of limiting it to putting within the sanctuary. For in that chapter, which is the main ground of course of the NT references, call it atonement or propitiation, *one and the same term is used of all the work of that great day*. So we find it employed in general, Lev. 16:6, as none can deny, without the least restriction to the sanctuary. It is striking that it is next expressly said of the scape-goat, Azazel (Lev. 16:10), where such a limitation is manifestly absurd. Again in Lev. 16:11 it occurs with presenting the bullock for sacrifice. Afterward it is said, as all agree, of the sanctuary in Lev. 16:16, 17, whatever be judged of Lev. 16:18. What is more, the same term is applied as elsewhere to the burnt offering for the high-priest and for the people. In short the Holy Spirit applies the word for making atonement or propitiation to all the sacrifices of that day, and to each part *without no less than within {the sanctuary}* (Lev. 16:30-33), so as completely and without the least arguing to demolish the human theory that restricts propitiation to the sanctuary alone, and thus excludes the work on the cross from that expression.

The NT speaks with no less largeness; and “to propitiate” or “propitiation” there means that God-glorifying work as a whole, not a part only. To limit it to an act in the heavenly sanctuary, to deny propitiation to Christ’s work on the cross, is therefore flying in the face of the truth of scripture without the smallest warrant, and to the deep dishonor of that which gave its righteous efficacy to the blood before God, or to the dismissal of all sins into the land of forgetfulness.

If any one were to say that the Lord on the cross failed to make good the type of the blood put within the holiest, &c., such teaching on Lev. 16 ought surely to be refused as unsound. To set forth the efficacy of Christ’s blood in figure, Aaron had to bring in some of the atoning blood, as well as when he came out to lay the sins on the scape-goat for their total removal out of sight. But the substance of the atonement or propitiation was the sacrifice offered to God. The slaying of the victim, the carrying in of the blood, the dismissal of the confessed sins (to say nothing of the incense at an early point and of the burnt offerings at the close), were each and all aspects of the same one work. What is so painful and new to most of us (certainly to myself in general fairly informed) is the singling out the intermediate portion of this instructive ritual as alone propitiation or atonement, in the face of the scripture which itself so speaks of all the parts composing it. To me this is an irreverent anatomy of

atonement, as dangerous to faith in His work as the severing of His person in which other speculators have unholily indulged. All sound in the truth hold that the propitiation or atoning work of Christ is a whole, and “finished” here below as Himself said. And a most serious slight of His infinite sacrifice I cannot but regard it to deny that to be propitiation wherein sin was judged and God forever glorified as to it.

But the new doctrine goes farther, and by a mischievous putting together of Heb. 2:17, 8:4, and 9:12, assumes that Christ went on high after death and before resurrection (of course therefore in the disembodied state) to effect propitiation; *and that this alone did it*. NOT His sacrifice on the cross instantly owned before God, as the rent veil testified on earth! {What this doctrine of Christ making propitiation in heaven means, is} Propitiation was not even begun then {on the cross}, whatever the Lord cried! The new doctrine boldly tells us that He in the separate state and in heaven alone made propitiation for our sins. Is this the truth of God? or a cheat of the enemy? He that rests in the simplicity of faith on the atoning sacrifice of Christ as prefigured in Lev. 16 rejects the hypothesis of these separate stages of life, and death, of earth and heaven. The true force of the types he sees in their combined value, as the inspired text carefully impresses on every soul subject to the word. The interpreting of the blood taken within, as alone propitiation, and never verified till after Christ died and was a separate spirit on high, not only shocks the spiritual sense but dislocates scripture, disparages the cross, and invents a strange unheard of propitiation in lieu of that which God’s elect have hitherto believed in. Familiar as perhaps one may say I am with what has been written on propitiation since the church began, it has not been my lot to hear a whisper of the kind till some four or five years ago.

But what say the NT scriptures whence we are entitled to look for the fullest final light from God? Does Heb. 2:17 give a hint of a work done after death to propitiate? We hear very simply of Christ “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation (or atonement) for the sins of the people”: a clear reference to Lev. 16 and as clearly fulfilled in that complete work in which He stood representatively on earth for the exceptional work of atonement, the basis of all that blots out sin, and glorifies God, before interceding for the saints in their temptations and sufferings. But not the most distant hint of a disembodied priesthood before He was made perfect, saluted of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and for ever set down on the right hand of God.

Does 1 John 2:2 or 4:10 give cause for the scheme? The first text simply declares Christ the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the whole world. Thus the essential requirement, the foundation of all the rest based on it, is the death and blood-shedding of the victim; for apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. Now the truth *includes* what is meant by putting the

blood before God, but it insists on the sacrifice as the absolutely necessary and most integral part of propitiation. This spurious novelty on the contrary as absolutely excludes it from being *itself* propitiation, which is conceived to be a special action by Christ’s presence in heaven for a little while after His death. Just think of the boldness of trusting a bit of reasoning. against the plain and large bearing of God’s word in order to pick out, not Jehovah’s lot nor the people’s, nor yet the bullock, but a manifest result however interesting, instructive and momentous, and contending that this alone is propitiation! Certainly 1 John 2 is ominously silent on any such point.¹

Still less does 1 John 4:10 help the desired inference. It appears distinctly and decisively adverse. The love of God was manifested in our case, that God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Such was the first want of man morally dead, even life Godward; and this life is in His Son. But however precious and eternal, it is not all we want, for we were guilty and lost sinners. Therefore another proof and gift of His grace: --

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son as propitiation for our sins.

He *sent* Christ to be such. The heterodoxy to gain the least show requires His *going* to heaven after death, for that purpose. As far as it speaks, the intimation here is altogether in favor of the large, full, and sound view of propitiation, and against the notion of a retreat to heaven to effect it. And scripture cannot be broken. Whatever added light may be from other texts (and I am dead against limiting our view to where the mere word literally occurs), no other can undo the certain and simple intimation to our faith that God sent His Son to be propitiation, instead of the dream that He went back to heaven after He died and before He rose for any such purpose. We know that He was that very day of His death in Paradise, and the converted robber too; but what scriptural link has this with making propitiation? If ever a time and place could be supposed to forbid such an association, Lev. 16:17 excludes it. The triumph of grace is seen in such companionship in Paradise. Whatever the importance of our Lord’s passing through the separate state, nowhere does scripture connect it with effecting propitiation. And as for Heb. 9:12, what can be stranger than to lower that grand entry *once for all* into the holy place, *having* obtained eternal redemption, to the imagined brief errand *to make* propitiation? To say that it is not ascension is the merest assumption.

I am not ignorant that some complain because I do not set out other views of the author, such as his faith in the Lord’s sacrifice, bearing the curse and judgment, and dying for us. This seems to me wholly unreasonable. I did allow

1. I leave it to the reader to find out what there is in Rom. 3:5 and Heb. 9:5 to support the new theory.

of much truth, and truth altogether inconsistent with his error. The statement that "expiation was made on earth, for Christ suffered on earth, died on earth" (Help, 63, 4), overthrows his system completely. For every scholar knows that expiation means at bottom the same thing as propitiation, and that any real difference is imaginary. In Greek and Hebrew it is the same word.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, by those who feel a difficulty of seeing how the dismissed live goat fills so weighty a place in the rites of atonement, that Aaron was expressly to take the "two he-goats for a sin-offering," and to set both before Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting (Lev. 16:5, 7). Indeed it is added, as if to forestall any objection of this kind, that "the goat upon which the lot fell for Azazel shall he set alive before Jehovah, to make atonement over (or, with) him, to send him away as (or, for) Azazel into the wilderness. The removal of our sins, though thus typified, as truly hung on our Lord's death on the cross as the witness to the efficacy of His blood in the sprinkling of the sanctuary. To deduce separate acts of *Christ*, at distinct times and different places, and even in another condition of His person, is foreign to Christian truth.

What I affirm (in the face of all special pleading to minimize a mere fable which lowers the cross by denying its propitiatory value, and draws the mind away to itself from the solid truth of God's word) is that all which is peculiar to Mr. C. E. S. {Stuart} on the most solemn of subjects is unquestionably false. Therefore I envy not the human feeling that essays to put forward other things that are true in order to weaken the just indignation which rejects and resents such an error. An outcry from any beguiled by the heterodoxy is natural. What can one think of an apology for it from any that reject it? With such human liberalism one cannot sympathize. God is light and God is love. To predicate of Christ as propitiation a false scheme which diverts from the revealed truth is to my conviction beyond measure grave, though I do not expect to convince all that may read this protest. To palliate it by a show of argument in order to justify fellowship with those in such error one can leave the Lord to judge.

When we are subject to the scriptural testimony to Christ and His work, there is no difficulty. If we take it up in a human way, there is nothing to save us from error one way or another. But it does seem marvelous that one imbued with NT truth should fail to see that what gives character to all the accessories of Lev. 16 is the offering to God, the great sin-offering of Aaron, not more the center of the book than of the entire Jewish system. No doubt therein were many measures and many manners; but it formed, specially to the Christian eye, a unity without parallel among these types. We may study with profit the distinction of the goats from each other, and of the bullock from both (Lev. 16:5-11); so also the censer with its burning coals causing the cloud of incense to cover the mercy-seat, the witness of the personal acceptance of Christ when ever so tried by divine judgment (Lev. 16:12, 13); again, the sprinkling of the blood, not only of the bullock but of the goat upon the mercy-seat and before it,

and the cleansing and hallowing of the holy places and altar (Lev. 16:16-19). We may weigh the dismissal of all the confessed iniquities on Azazel to a land of separation (Lev. 16:20-22). We may consider the resumption of the ordinary garb of the high-priest instead of what marked the exceptional action in the previous verses, and the offering of the burnt-offerings as well as the fat of the sin-offering (Lev. 16:23-25). But not even a pious Jew would have singled out one of these many parts as exclusively atonement or propitiation, whilst he would simply, unequivocally, have viewed the sacrifice as not only the grand basis but that which in the highest way gave an atoning character to all that followed.

That Aaron had to enter the sanctuary in order to put some of the atoning blood there according to the word of Jehovah is true. That Christ had to enter heaven before He rose to do something analogous is to beg the question altogether; just as it is to overlook the type of Aaron's coming out again for the transaction of the scape-goat. The force of this last is evaded by making it solely prophetic of future dealings with Israel at Christ's appearing. For it figures what Christ did adoringly, as the ground of that mercy to guilty but repentant Israel by-and-by. It is the removal, rather than the forgiveness, of the iniquities confessed. The two goats are regarded together as a sin-offering.

And when the Christian looks at Christ on the cross given in infinite love, yet withal abandoned of God, His God, drinking the cup His Father gave Him, suffering infinitely for sins, sin itself judged on His person, -- there it is that both conscience and heart rest by faith according to the fullest revelation of the word. He believes without hesitation that all was made good there and then. He does not limit the work any more than the person of our adorable Savior: it immediately penetrated heaven, and is the ground of a reconciled universe for eternity. He gladly interprets the shadow of the incense, and of the blood put in the holiest as the highest witness to Christ vindicating God for His own presence, but this solely because the essence of the propitiation was in the sacrifice. He does not admit for a moment another act in the Antitype for the necessarily separate and the subsequent stages of Aaron; and he points not only to the scape-goat as the manifest disproof of it, but to the burning of the fat of the sin-offering as well as the burnt-offerings as assuredly fulfilled in the one great sacrifice of Christ. All were parts of the atonement, as the chapter clearly shows save to a reasoner bent on his own will and indifferent to the NT key which God graciously affords us in our weakness and ignorance.

It is this holy and beautiful and solemn unity which is infringed by the delusion lately broached of the blood in the sanctuary being alone propitiation; and this in the face of the express statement of the chapter itself which applies the same word, call it atonement or propitiation, to the entire work of the high-priest on that day. So arbitrary a restriction has the effect of denying the sacrifice itself, the ground of what follows, to be propitiation. And this not only

does the greatest wrong to Christ's work on the cross, but opens the door for the will-o'-the-wisp of a distinct action of Christ in heaven after death and before resurrection which alone claims to be propitiation.

It is by more than one said that in pointing out the unscriptural temerity of this false teaching *I am attempting to fasten heterodoxy on its author*. But this seems wholly unfounded on their part. Nor am I in the least unfair or one-sided, as they are who set the true things the author says to screen the error from the abhorrence of all who glory in the cross of Christ. Nothing is easier than for a partisan, if he will, to give good excuses for a bad thing. It is the invariable way of human alliance faithless to Christ and the truth. I have briefly enough exposed a novel intrusion into a foundation of the faith, which is refuted by the scriptures alleged and would supplant the revealed propitiation by a fable. Nor has the author or any friend title to complain of its summary and decided exposure, after venturing in his "Recent Utterances" to attack the faith of all save his own small following, as if they denied propitiation or made it impossible.² For in this respect Mr. P. {B. F. Pinkerton} differs not substantially from all saints known to me. The aim of the enemy is plain. If the only propitiation be something that followed Christ's going to heaven after death, the sacrifice is robbed of that value which scripture gives it in the faith of all outside the Reading {England} fraternity, and must sink into a subordinate place. Some who accept the dream may continue in a measure old habits of speech notwithstanding; better still some having real faith underneath their new creed may retain honor for the cross of Christ. But inevitably where souls are formed only on this notion, they must

2. Neither the author nor his apologists have a just plea against hard measure from others in presence of such words as these, still uncanceled -- the first hint of the dogma that came before me (in 1886, I believe): --

Now as propitiation by blood could only be made in the holiest, and the Lord never entered that on earth, for He was not a priest on earth, where and when has propitiation been made by Him? The answer is simple -- in heaven and after death. Mr. Pinkerton affirms all was done in this world not in heaven [and in this I should have thought all saints concurred unhesitatingly]. *If so, propitiation by blood the Lord has not made, nor can He make it. The doctrine we are asked to accept* [and I never to my knowledge heard other from an orthodox believer of any age, land, or confession] *sweeps away all hope of salvation*, for atonement is not complete without propitiation, and this Mr. Pinkerton really denies that the Lord could and did effect [a monstrous conclusion and simply from his own delusion]. His doctrine is in flat opposition to the word of God" (*Recent Utterances* by C. E. S. {C. E. Stuart}, p. 42).

Either people do not believe such reprehensible language, and then what can one think? or, if they do, they are bound to have the courage of their convictions, and to act as they speak. If the saints at large, who differ as to this from Mr. S. wholly, and not from Mr. P, "sweep away all hope of salvation," and deny true propitiation, are they not in deadly error? or are they condoned by the author, as so ignorant of the truth that their error is a small matter, and quite unworthy of raising a question of fellowship or discipline?

eventually sink to the level of the heterodoxy that Christ's sacrifice is not the essence of the propitiation, which last is a mysterious and subsequent sprinkling of His blood by Himself in heaven after His death and before His resurrection. To state the view is its truest and strongest condemnation to all single-eyed believers. And any effort to fritter away its seriousness by putting forward other things the author states is in my judgment not of God.

It is a fact that the NT does not expressly *say* that God was propitiated, but speaks of Christ expiating our sins, of His being a propitiation for them and sent for this purpose by God. Admiring the wisdom that avoids language which heathen, ignorant of divine love and holiness, might from their old habits seriously misunderstand, I believe it quite another thing to *deny* that God needed propitiation. For herein the offended majesty and violated will and outraged nature of God were vindicated. It is therefore profoundly erroneous to confound it with reconciling love. The gift of the Son in God's love in no way negatives the necessity of Christ's blood as a propitiation: it is unbelief to array them in opposition. Therefore one hails these words of C. E. S. in Dec., 1888 (only just seen),

God requires propitiation to be made, because men have sinned, that He may in righteousness be propitious to them,

even though the NT may not so express itself. But they seem quite inconsistent with, and surely corrective of, the expressions reprobated in "Help and Instruction," which shocked souls by setting the letter against the spirit of all scripture. For the essence of propitiation is Godward, on man's behalf indeed, but in the unsparing judgment of his evil, the ground of divine righteousness as we see so plainly declared in Rom. 3:25 and elsewhere. Nowhere was it said, thought, or implied, that the author believed not in Christ's sufferings on the cross. But *this* doctrine was judged, whatever else was right, to be ruinously wrong, first, in eliminating propitiation from the sin-offerings of atonement to confine it to the blood carried and sprinkled within the sanctuary; secondly and worse, in insisting that Christ only made this type good, and Heb. 2:17 true, by going into heaven after death and before resurrection, to make propitiation for our sins.

. . . But it seems unobjectionable and called for to say, now that his name is so often invoked for what he detested, that J. N. D. has repeatedly left on record under his own hand (what his life-long ministry proved to all that knew it) his distinct faith that Christ's making propitiation for our sins was here below on the cross (Heb. 2:17), and by no means after death and in heaven as an action of His priesthood there.³ Any one who has access to his *Collected Writings* can

3. {W. Kelly also said:

(continued...)

verify this without doubt by examining Doctrinal 3:484, 5; 4:325. From this conviction I never knew a single godly man in or out of fellowship, still less a teacher, dissent; and if it be true that the Reading {England} error appeared ten or twelve years ago, I can only presume that no man of discernment had read the articles, almost all such at that time being absorbed in the then impending or current sorrow.

The Bible Treasury 18:81-85.

3. (...continued)

After examining carefully all the passages we are now referred to, I affirm that Mr. S.'s heterodoxy finds no countenance from the writings, any more than from the oral ministry, of Mr. D. How then account for this confident but baseless reference? The very passage cited at length *distinguishes* the high-priestly action on the day of atonement from the whole of the priesthood carried on in heaven itself. The propitiation was on the cross of Christ, Whom God set forth a mercy ~ seat through faith in His blood; and when He set Himself down on the right hand of the majesty on high, it was as having Himself made the purification of sins. It is mere fiction that He had to make propitiation there. It is true that Mr. D., like everybody else, has allowed himself, from the Aaronic type, the figurative language of Christ's "carrying in the blood," &c. just as he elsewhere speaks of burying the remembrance of our sins in the grave of Christ. Is it possible that any are so "unlearned and unstable" as to take such words in a literal and material way?

In not a vestige of his *Collected Writings* does Mr. D. teach propitiation after death, in heaven, and in the disembodied state, consequently, before resurrection, as Mr. S. teaches: all which things are false, and no truth, but the undermining and supplanting of revealed truth by a really revolting dream from the enemy. Readers who are not leavened will see that Mr. D.'s doctrine was no other than that which has been now, as always, maintained in these pages, if they weigh his Doctrinal 4:325, where he says, "save the fact of propitiation in Chapter ii. [Heb.] in which the high-priest represented the people (not a proper act of priesthood, though of the high-priest on the day of atonement)." Now the pith of Mr. S.'s theory is the *putting together* of Heb. 2:17, 9:12, and 8:4, which results in deadly error annulling the cross, and inventing a ghostly priesthood; whereas Mr. D. expressly discriminates Heb. ii. 17, and thus maintains the holy balance of the truth, giving the cross its fundamental value, and showing the true distinctive character of priesthood on high. Mr. D. expressly calls the propitiation "an exceptional case." It was here below and by the blood of the cross, though the right hand of God in heaven alone adequately expresses its moral glory and efficacy.

But if plain scripture is so gravely perverted, we must not wonder at the misunderstanding of a dead saint's words. If he had been alive, they would probably have been let alone. But it is well, if error be at work, that it should come out plainly, and that we should know who seriously stand for the truth (W. Kelly *The Bible Treasury* 16:207). See also *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:176.}

Wrath:

The "Wrath Revealed from Heaven" and Governmental Wrath

Part 1: The "Wrath Revealed from Heaven"

Introduction

The title of this article indicates that there are two categories of wrath. It is important to our understanding of the ways of God with man to have some understanding of the difference.

Before examining the difference in detail, we may briefly note the main difference between these two categories.

1. The "**wrath revealed from heaven**" (Rom. 1:18) is that wrath which will abide on the sinner eternally, having to do with eternal punishment. It was revealed along with God's righteousness (Rom. 1:17). The revelation of such things are a consequence of the finished work of Christ on the cross. And that work of Christ on the cross is directly connected with the closing of the testing of man -- i.e., the first man (1 Cor. 15:47), man in fallen, Adamic responsibility -- under testing (probation) to see if He was recoverable. This testing was not to enlighten God about man's state -- that could hardly be -- it was for our enlightenment, demonstrating that man is unrecoverable under testing. The final, and most heinous sin, was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24). In the cross God is seen as both light and love. And consequently His righteousness and His wrath from heaven is revealed. All of this required the end of the testing of the first man; i.e., the end of his standing before God, under trial, to see if he was recoverable.

2. The phrase "**governmental wrath**" is not an expression found in Scripture. It does not follow from that fact that therefore one may say that the phrase is unscriptural. Take an example. The word "trinity" is not found in Scripture but that fact in itself does not mean that the word is unscriptural. It is a word that refers to what is taught in Scripture regarding the Godhead of three distinct Persons, yet one in will, power, omniscience, omnipresence, etc. Just so, "governmental wrath" is a phrase that describes certain of God's temporal dealings. For example, in the seven Bowls (Rev. 15:7) there is the pouring out

of the wrath of God. Subsequently, there will be the Lamb's wrath (Rev. 6:16, 17). This illustrates that governmental wrath has several aspects and applications. The objects of governmental wrath are varied. For example, we learn in 1 Thess. 2:15, 16 things that the "Jews" did, the result of which is that "wrath has come upon them to the uttermost." Here there is an application of governmental wrath to the nation of Israel. This will continue on, and the final phase of this wrath upon Israel is called the "indignation."

The subject of governmental wrath has a bearing on the understanding of events in the 70th weeks of Dan. 9 as well as the connection of wrath with "the day of the Lord." Moreover, there is present controversy over "the pre-wrath rapture" position, as well as how the matter of wrath bears on the time of the rapture. Besides this, there is a contrast of wrath and *providential judgments*, as in the seals in Revelation, and the *warning judgments* as in the trumpets in Revelation. The seven trumpets come out of the seventh seal. Then, out of the seventh trumpet come the seven bowls of God's wrath. Thus, the seals, trumpets, and bowls present a sequential, escalating character of temporal judgments, the bowls having the distinctive character of being *the wrath of God*. The wrath of the Lamb comes within the pouring out of the seventh bowl of God's fury.

The "Wrath Revealed from Heaven"

For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings; for it is God's power to salvation, to every one that believes, both to Jew first and to Greek: for righteousness of God is revealed therein, on the principle of faith, to faith: according as it is written, But the just shall live by faith.

For there is revealed wrath of God from heaven upon all impiety, and unrighteousness of men holding the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:16-18).

This passages brings before us two things that are revealed: God's righteousness; and, wrath from heaven. These are revealed in connection with Christ's work on the cross. In Romans, God's righteousness does not refer to Christ's righteous law-keeping being put to our account. There is no such thing. God's righteousness is *God's own consistency with what He is in His nature as light and as love*. For us, righteousness is consistency in relationships that we are in. For God, His righteousness is consistency with what He is *in Himself*; and He is stated to be light ("God is light," 1 John 1:5) and love ("God is love," 1 John 4:8). He always acts according to what He is in Himself. It is the cross which has manifested what God is as light and love. The revelation of God's righteousness awaited the work of Christ. As an example of this, consider Rom. 3:25. Clearly, it was the cross that showed God to be righteous "in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God." That speaks of the sins of the OT saints. Christ's work on the cross took

care of that. Justice was done. And Rom. 3:26 gives us another example. God must be just in justifying the sinner. The cross is the basis of God righteously justifying the sinner. The righteousness of God is a large subject and this will point to the bearing of the truth about it,⁴ and we pass on.

We need to bow in heart to Rom. 1:18 also, that a revelation of wrath from heaven has also been revealed. When? Why, it is revealed on account of the cross. That is the great turning point. Why was wrath from heaven, as spoken of here, not revealed before the cross? It was not revealed before the cross because lost man in Adamic standing of responsibility was under probation/testing to see if he was recoverable. Each person in the world is naturally ranged under fallen Adam and is like him. Hence we read of the first man and the second man (1 Cor. 15:47). And thus we speak of the first man being under testing to see if he was recoverable. Between the fall of Adam and the flood, man was left to himself. After the flood man was given government. Subsequently, a people was set apart for testing, as representative of the first man. Thus Israel was favored very much, standing in covenant relationship under the law. No matter what God did, they failed. Finally, He sent His Son (Matt. 21:37). This was the final test. Of course, God knew what the outcome would be. The Heir was killed, as we have it in Matthew. In John, we see that which is even deeper. The Lord Jesus could say, "He that has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:8). They rejected the revelation of the Father in the Son, hating both (John 15:23-25).

He that hates me hates also my Father. If I had not done among them the works which no other one has done, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

This does not mean they would have been sinless but they would not have had such a sin on them as rejecting the revelation of the Father in the Son. This was the concluding sin. There is no higher test. There is no further test of the first man. The first man crucified the second man. The Lord Jesus was, as to His person, the second man when walking here in holy manhood. But He took the special *place for the second man* when He rose from the dead. He has displaced the first man. The first man then had no more standing before God, under probation/testing. The testing is over and the first man is declared to be (totally) lost. He was proven to be not recoverable. It is not dispensational truth to carry the testing of man beyond the cross.

Consequent upon the work of the cross being completed and Christ having risen from the dead to God's right hand, glorified above, many truths were brought out, too numerous to comment on here. But, for example, the

4. For an examination of the subject of the righteousness of God, see *Thy Precepts* 15:6, pp. 217-226 (2000) and 16:2 (2001).

conclusion is that “the whole world lies in the wicked [one]” (1 John 5:19). The testing of the first man, climaxed by casting out the sent One of God, demonstrated this. Consonant with this fact, everyone, everywhere, is “now” directed to repent (Acts 17:31). And do not the early chapters of Romans show that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God? Certainly. All the world is under judgment to God (Rom. 3:19). These are among the Scripture teachings in view of the conclusion of the testing of man. Do not suppose that God is not finished testing man. He is done with the first man and with testing him at the cross.

Hopefully, this brief discussion will help us to see that as a consequence of the completed testing of the state of the first man, namely, that he is not recoverable, wrath is revealed from heaven. The revelation of that wrath awaited the cross. At the same time as it was the final test of man who was worthy that divine wrath from heaven should fall on him, God poured out wrath upon the Son hanging there in the three hours of darkness, when those waves and billows of judgment rolled over Him. There He bore the sins of believers in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24), taking upon Himself the full weight of the divine judgment against those sins. There He was our substitute and we shall not be subjected to the wrath revealed from heaven.

There are many things in the gospel of John that the Lord said *anticipatively* in view of the finished work on the cross. He spoke of some things as if the work was already finished when He spoke. Thus, we read of the wrath of God abiding on the unbeliever (John 3:36). This declaration anticipates that the work on the cross is accomplished and the time for making this known had arrived. If the unbeliever does not flee to the rock of ages, that wrath shall abide on him eternally.

In Rom. 2:5 we read:

But, according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath, in [the] day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God . . .

God “now” commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). The word “now” has reference to the work of the cross being accomplished and the testing of the first man, to see if he was recoverable, as concluded. He was proved totally lost. So, God “now” commands all men everywhere to repent. Instead, man’s hard and impenitent heart is treasuring up wrath which will be displayed at the great white throne. The works will be manifested and it will be revealed that God is righteous in consigning the eternally unrepentant to eternal punishment. Yes, eternal punishment is a horrible thing to contemplate, but because it is so repulsive to the sinful human mind, it is therefore not true that God will punish the eternally unrepentant with eternal punishment? What solemn words are these:

But to those that are contentious, and are disobedient to the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [there shall be] wrath and indignation, tribulation and distress, on every soul of man that works evil, both of Jew first and also Greek (Rom. 2:8, 9).

If the soul is annihilated at the great white throne, this hardly has any meaning. Some seem to sense that and say that they will be punished for a while and then annihilated. Why, such persons are more gracious than God Himself! are they not?

Is God unrighteous who inflicts wrath? (Rom. 3:5).

Well, we are “saved from wrath” (Rom. 5:9). It is God’s will, His sovereign choice.

And if God, minded to shew his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared for glory, us, whom he has also called, not only from amongst [the] Jews, but also from amongst [the] nations? (Rom. 9:22-24).

The vessels of wrath fitted for destruction fitted themselves for it. On the other hand the “vessels of mercy” were *before prepared* for glory -- by God Himself, of course. No man, left to himself, prepared himself for glory.

“Destruction” does not mean annihilation. The Lord Jesus warned:

And be not afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but fear rather him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28).

The resurrection of the body is implied in this statement. Yes, the resurrection of the unjust will be after the millennium, and the person will stand before the great white throne. It is the “resurrection of the unjust” and they will stand, body and soul, to be destroyed in hell -- not annihilated. The beast and the false prophet will have been in the lake of fire for the preceding 1000 years:

Alive were both cast into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Rev. 19:20).

1000 years later we know Satan will be put there:

And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where [are] both the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages (Rev. 20:10).

We do not read such words as ‘where *were* both,’ as if they had been annihilated. No, they were still alive.

Persons joke about having plenty of company in hell. Yes, indeed, plenty of company -- but alone, gnashing teeth (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51) against God as the hatred of God never dies, as the eternally unrepentant are in eternal punishment where the fire is not quenched:

And if thy hand serve as a snare to thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having thy two hands to go away into hell, into the fire

unquenchable; [where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched]. And if thy foot serve as a snare to thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life lame, than having thy two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire unquenchable; [where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched]. And if thine eye serve as a snare to thee, cast it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire, where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44-49).

Children of Wrath

We observed that in John 3:36, the Lord Jesus, speaking anticipatively of what is brought out concerning wrath, as a consequence of His rejection on the cross, said:

. . . and he that is not subject to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

All those before the cross who died in their sins will never be subject to the Son as is meant by that here. They also will appear at the great white throne judgment, having had part in the resurrection of the unjust. The sinner is by nature a child of wrath:

. . . the sons of disobedience: among whom *we* also all once had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh, doing what the flesh and the thoughts willed to do, and were children, by nature, of wrath, even as the rest (Eph. 2:2, 3).

Thus the state of man is declared consequent upon the end of the testing of the first man. He is a child of wrath by nature, for he is fallen and (totally) lost. It is a horrible state to be in, and such will be the state eternally -- eternally an unrepentant child of wrath, gnashing his teeth. Eternal punishment is for the eternally unrepentant.

We Are Delivered from the Coming Wrath

. . . how ye turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to await his Son from the heavens, whom he raised from among the dead, Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath (1 Thess. 1:9, 10).

. . . but *we* being of [the] day, let us be sober, putting on [the] breastplate of faith and love, and as helmet [the] hope of salvation; because God has not set us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has died for us, that whether we may be watching or sleep, we may live together with him. Wherefore encourage one another, and build up each one the other, even as also ye do (1 Thess. 5:8-11).

WHAT COMING WRATH IS THIS?

There are Christians who believe that the reference here, to deliverance from the coming wrath, refers to wrath connected with the pouring out of wrath in Daniel's 70th week and/or wrath in connection with the appearing of Christ in glory. There is a wide range of views on this matter and discussion of when wrath falls in the book of Revelation is deferred until we consider governmental wrath. And so the question in terms which this article uses is: are these references to *the wrath revealed from heaven* or references to the temporal, governmental wrath? In other words, is the deliverance and the salvation spoken of referring to deliverance and salvation from the wrath revealed from heaven, which will abide on the children of wrath eternally; or, does this mean deliverance and salvation from the wrath spoken of in the book of Revelation regarding judgments poured out on earth? Here is a comment by W. Kelly:

But, first of all, take notice that the first description which is given of them, in relation to the coming of the Lord, is simply awaiting the Son of God from heaven. We do not well to fasten upon this expression more than it was intended to convey. It does not appear to me to mean anything more than the general attitude of the Christian in relation to Him whom he expects from above. It is the simple fact of their looking for the same Saviour who had already come, whom they had known -- that Jesus who had died for them and was raised again from the dead, their Deliverer from the wrath to come. Thus they were waiting for this mighty and gracious Saviour to come from heaven. How He was coming they knew not; what would be the effects of His coming they knew little. They of course knew nothing about the time, no soul does; it is reserved in the hands of our God and Father; but they were, as became babes, waiting for Him according to His own word. Whether He would take them back into the heavens, or at once enter on the kingdom under the whole heaven, I am persuaded they did not know at this time.

It seems therefore a mistake to press this text, as if it necessarily taught Christ's coming in order to translate saints into heaven. It leaves the aim, mode, and result an entirely open matter. We may find ourselves sometimes forcing scripture in this way; but be assured, it is true wisdom to draw from scripture no more than it distinctly undertakes to convey. It is much better, if with fewer texts, to have them more to the purpose. We shall find ere long the importance of not multiplying proof-texts for any particular aim, but of seeking rather from God the definite use of each scripture. Now all that the apostle has here in view is to remind the Thessalonian saints that they were waiting for that same Deliverer, who was dead and risen, to come from heaven. It is likely that as His coming is presented in the character of Son of God, it may suggest more to the spiritual mind, and probably did suggest more to them at a later day. I am only speaking of what is important to bear in mind at their first conversion. It was the simple truth that the divine person, who loved them and died for them, was coming back from heaven. What would be the manner and the consequences they had yet to learn. They were waiting for Him who had proved His love for them deeper than death or judgment; and He was coming:

how could they but love Him and wait for Him? ⁵ ♦

Salvation here means complete deliverance not yet come -- the redemption of the body and not that of the soul alone. For Christ “died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”

Carefully remember that waking or sleeping here has reference to the body; it has no reference at all to anything of moral state. It is impossible that the Spirit of God should say that, whether in a right state or wrong we should live together with Him. The Holy Spirit never makes light of the condition of sin. Nor is there anything more foreign to the tone of scripture, than that the Spirit of God should treat with indifference the question whether a saint was in a good or a bad state. He had no doubt just used the words “wake or sleep” in another sense; but he seems to me to assume the impossibility of a saint applying them in a moral sense when he pursues the subject farther. In verse 6, for instance, the sleeping and watching are moral states; but when we come down to verse 10, they refer to the question of life or death in the body, and not to the saints’ ways. In fact this manner of taking up words, and applying them in another sense, will be found to be one of the characteristics of the abrupt, animated, and forcible style of the apostle.

I should not make the remark if I had not known excellent men sometimes in considerable danger from overlooking this, and taking scripture in a narrow and pseudo-literal sense. But this is not the way to understand the Bible. It is one of the great misuses to which a concordance exposes those who are caught by verbal analogies, instead of entering into the scope of thought real meaning. ⁶ ♦

For a survey of the way that the coming of the Lord is presented in 1 Thess., see the *Synopsis* 5:72, 73.

WHAT IS THE WRATH TO COME MENTIONED IN MATTHEW AND LUKE?

Here we have a verbal analogy to 1 Thess. 1:10 and we will bear in mind the warning just given by W. Kelly about the concordance and verbal analogies.

In keeping with the fact that wrath was revealed from heaven consequent upon the rejection of Christ on the cross (though the Lord spoke of it anticipatively in John 3:36 ⁷ the “wrath to come” spoken of in Matt. and Luke is temporal, governmental wrath upon Israel. Of course, those who fall under such wrath are, in addition, subject to the wrath revealed from heaven. Let us

5. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, London: Broom, pp.328, 329, 1869.

6. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, London: Broom, p.348, 1869.

7. It may help to see this more clearly if it is kept in mind that the rejection of the Lord Jesus is assumed at the very beginning of John’s gospel -- in John 1:11. This differs from the first three gospels where that rejection is traced in its development of intensity. But in John, that rejection assumed, there are many anticipative statements. For example, John 17:4 is clearly anticipative.

look at the Scriptures in these two gospels.

. . . [the] word of God came upon John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the district round the Jordan, preaching [the] baptism of repentance for [the] remission of sins, as it is written in [the] book of [the] words of Esaias the prophet: Voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of [the] Lord, make straight his paths. Every gorge shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked [places] shall become a straight [path], and the rough places smooth ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. He said therefore to the crowds which went out to be baptized by him, Offspring of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce therefore fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say in yourselves, We have Abraham for [our] father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And already also the axe is applied to the root of the trees; every tree therefore not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into [the] fire (Luke 3:2-9).

But seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, Offspring of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce therefore fruit worthy of repentance. And do not think to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for [our] father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And already the axe is applied to the root of the trees; every tree therefore not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. *I* indeed baptise you with water to repentance, but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not fit to bear; *he* shall baptise you with [the] Holy Spirit and fire; whose winnowing fan [is] in his hand, and he shall thoroughly purge his threshing-floor, and shall gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable (Matt. 3:7-12).

It is clear that this refers to wrath upon Israel as a people. Subsequent to the cross, this is what the Apostle Paul wrote:

For *ye*, brethren, have become imitators of the assemblies of God which are in Judaea in Christ Jesus; for *ye* also have suffered the same things of your own countrymen as also *they* of the Jews, who have both slain the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and have driven us out by persecution, and do not please God, and [are] against all men, forbidding us to speak to the nations that they may be saved, that they may fill up their sins always: but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thess. 2:14-16).

This refers to the same wrath which was impending when John the Baptist sounded his warning about wrath to come. It refers to governmental wrath upon Israel. Notice that in the quotation from Matt. that the purging of the chaff from His threshing floor is one matter, i.e., governmental wrath; but there is another thing to be faced and that is the fire unquenchable, for eternal punishment of the eternally unrepentant is unquenchable.

The word “elect” is applied in Scripture to angels (1 Tim. 5:21), to Jewish saints (Isa. 65:22; Matt. 24:22, 24, 31) and Christian saints (Rom. 8:33; Col.

3:12). We must consider the context in which such a word is used. We must not read somewhere a reference to the elect and say, Ah, there are Christians; for example, 'see, elect are in the great tribulation (Matt. 24), so Christians must be in the great tribulation.' Thus, also, with the use of the word "wheat," care must be taken concerning contexts. The wheat in Matt. 3:12 refers to the godly remnant of Israel. The garner into which they are gathered is the safe and blessed millennial position Israel will have under the new covenant in the earthly kingdom of the Son. This is not the same thing as the wheat and the granary of Matt. 13:30, 36-43. Matt. 13 has to do with Christendom and the wheat shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). The kingdom of the Son of man refers to the earthly part of the kingdom and the kingdom of the Father refers to the heavenly side of it. The "granary" is the safe and blessed place of the heavenly side of the kingdom. Subsequent revelation to Matt. 13 shows us detail of how this will come about.⁸

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We have come to the end of our examination of Scripture uses of the word the wrath referring to the *wrath* of God revealed from heaven. "The wrath to come" in Matt. and Luke, as well as 1 Thess. 2:16, refers to temporal, governmental wrath on Israel. The wrath spoken of in John 3:36, the wrath of God spoken of in Romans, the wrath of God in Eph. 2:3 and 5:6, and in Col. 3:6 (which will fall on the sons of disobedience), and the wrath to come in 1 Thess. 1:10 and 5:9, all refer to the wrath of God revealed from heaven. Now we will turn to the use of the word "wrath" in the book of Revelation. These all refer to temporal, governmental wrath. Also, we shall observe the use of the word "fury" of God.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

8. The reader should keep in mind that "the end of the age" is an epoch larger than Daniel's 70th week, beginning a little before the 70th week and ending a little after the 1260th day from the middle of the week. The "harvest" (Matt. 13:39) is the completion of the age. The harvest of the wheat in Christendom (the saints) takes place before the opening of the 70th week. The end of the age is not the end of a supposed "church age." It is the end of the Mosaic age which still runs on right now (see *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1). It will be displaced by "the age to come," i.e., the millennium. Christianity is not an age. The church is not an age. The church is above and outside of ages, which are earthly, though the church is here on earth in responsible testimony.

Progress of Democratic Power, and Its Effect on the Moral State of England

by J. N. Darby

{The editor is not sure if the first appearance of this article was in G. V. Wigram's magazine *The Present Testimony*, New Series, vol. 1, 1867, pp. 282-286, but it seems likely. It is found in *Collected Writings* 32:333-336. The editor would not have included it if he did not think it is timely. There are helpful observations for us in this paper.}

I need hardly assure your readers that I have no desire that they should meddle in politics; I do not do so myself, nor do I think that a Christian ought. He believes that God governs, and governs with a view to the glory of Christ, and that He will infallibly bring about His purposes. But it seems to me to be well that Christians should apprehend what they have to look for, and be prepared for it, if the Lord tarry. Did it not concern them religiously, you would have no word from me on such subjects.

What I purpose doing is to review briefly the course of events, and state what seem to me their results. Parties are all alike to me; they are all alike guilty, and have all alike had their part in what is going on. Lord Derby it was who banished the scriptures from Irish schools and set up the Irish national (really, Popish) school system. He stated that there was no proselytism, but that "the use of scripture" was a fatal objection, because it was displeasing to the Priests. We must remember that politicians have no idea of principles, but only of existing influences to which they must be subject.

The next step was that of that most short-sighted man, however great a general he might have been, the Duke of Wellington. I take no side with any party-I distrust them all; but he was a Tory as they call it, aristocratic in principle. He, with Sir R. Peel, passed the Catholic Emancipation bill, so called, which admitted some sixty or seventy violent democrats into the House, and by that party (as it is well known) the Reform bill of 1832 was passed; the majority of English members were against it. Now, for a State with a political machinery like that of England to work smoothly, a large portion of influential masses must not be outside its institutions. The Duke of Wellington declared the system perfect which did shut them out, after introducing elements which made it impossible to hold that ground. He thought to stem it by the House of Lords, and nearly brought on an open revolution; and Lord Harrowby and the waverers (as they were then called), gave a majority to the Reform bill in the House of Lords.

That bill was a revolution. That is, it was not an admission of excluded influences into existing institutions, but a total change in the institutions themselves. Democracy became ascendant, and possessed the power. The Lord's

House became insignificant, and populous boroughs acquired the power once wielded by the land. Old habits modified the effect, but every one knows that this is what took place. The ancient institutions of the country were in principle overturned.

With this, railroads and the commercial movement, and the refusal of landlords to increase the population on their lands, concurred to throw the population into the towns. Vaunted education ministered immensely to general infidelity, Satan in that being let loose in that respect, and by the growth of this and of dissent, which predominates in the great towns, the clergy were, on the one hand, thrown into ritualism and popish principles, or, on the other, adopted infidel or semi-infidel principles; and (the bands of the Establishment and its general hold on the population of the country loosened) infidel notions acquired a powerful influence over the mental activity of the country, and exercised a very great power in the governing body, the House of Commons. Morally speaking, the Protestant church was gone, and rationalism and popery, in principle, divided the country. Evangelicalism became practically null in the Establishment.

In this state of things the democratic influence has acquired an immense accession of power by the new Reform bill. It is an immense stride in legally revolutionising the country; checks, and balances, and reckoning on the English character and history is all nonsense. Power is put into hands which will use it. The forms are immaterial; they will probably be changed immediately or ere long.

But my object is to notice the effect on the state of society. God cares for the poor. But the poor have ceased to be so in the scriptural sense of the word. They are masters. The effect on the masses and on the active minds of the country will be infidelity, exalting man. Even popular religious preaching will take this character. It will keep up the name of Christian, but will exalt man in its statements, not Christ-despising government, says the apostle, presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Human reason, not God, will be the arbiter of good and evil. What already prevails so largely, will be open to a vast party in the country. The will of the people, confidence in man, his rights, his general perfectibility, will be the banner of all this class. The aristocracy, on the contrary, having lost power will seek to compensate themselves (vexed and dissatisfied in heart) by luxury and pleasure. To maintain quiet (principle having gone in both classes), and some influence -- some barrier against the strong will of the people, they will rapidly seek to increase the influence of the clergy -- the only one remaining over those that constitute the bulk of those around. In the country it will be the body of the poor subject to priestcraft, and in the towns a very large increase of popery, so as to have an integral place in the population (the bulk of those who are not so, or who do not side with them, being infidel).

It may be thought that I have not sufficiently allowed for the influence of religious dissenters. It is, really, next to nothing, and will be always becoming less. Already exalting man is the system that most widely prevails, going on with the age. But there is another thing, they will join with the Roman Catholics in putting down the Establishment, which has little or no political hold on the country. The Episcopalian must then, as against dissenters, base itself on its distinctive character, in alliance with (if not in the form of) popery, successional grace and sacraments, and the clergy the only channels of it. I do not expect Protestantism nominally to cease, but it will be really infidel. You may find individual ministers, Independent or Episcopalian, preaching Christ, but the disruption that is taking place is a disruption into infidel radicalism or popular will, and popery in the aristocracy and in all that they can bring under its influence, as a check upon that will. I have no doubt that God will keep every faithful soul, and maintain every needed testimony; but it is well that Christians should know what is before them, as time goes on more rapidly, perhaps, than we are aware.

I do not look for violence, because I believe there is no courage anywhere to resist the course of events. I do not pretend to say how long it may take to bring these things about. God knows, and God holds the reins or looses them; but I have no doubt as to what is coming on. The Christian may walk in peace through it all, waiting for God's Son from heaven, and keeping the word of His patience; yea, he may have a specially blessed place of testimony in the midst of it all, but a lowly one, content to be nothing in a world which has rejected Christ and is ripening for His judgment. Our part is to keep His word and not deny His name.

The result as to the western world will be, as known to students of prophecy, that the Babylonish or idolatrous power, with which the kings of the earth had committed fornication, will be utterly destroyed, and the popular will in the same sphere will give itself to the beast destroyed, with the false prophet, by the Lord Himself coming from heaven.

The present result of what is now enacting will be: the aristocratic part of the community giving itself up to luxury and pleasure, and, with the dependent part of the population, to Popery; the independent and mentally active part, to infidelity. The opposition to Popery will be infidel, not Protestant. The general public effect will be a great and rapid increase of centralization or despotic power, and loss of personal liberty. Individual personal independence of character will disappear almost entirely. Men must go with others to be anything. Protestantism having lost its integrity and energy, God allows infidelity as a check on Popish power.

If things go smoothly, I apprehend the first move towards centralization will be the substitution of a paid for an unpaid magistracy; to set aside, nominally, local

territorial influence and gain efficiency, but throwing a vast increase of power into the center of government, and being the first move towards despotism or central power, as a counter-balance to multitudinous self-will or anarchy (personal liberty and independence being proportionately set aside). Other social questions, as primogeniture, will soon come in; the importance of money and luxury, the necessary consequence of its abolition, will rapidly increase, and the moral degradation and dissipation which go with it. All this will be modified by existing habits, no doubt, and the love of something aristocratic is inherent in the human mind,* but this will not materially affect the result.

*In New York, liveries and armorial bearings are coming in, and carefully studied genealogies where there are any.

The Perfection of the Lord's Humanity Displayed in Shrinking from the Cup in Gethsemene

Whatever pressure there may have been by Satan in the garden of Gethsemene, it is clear from our Lord's own words that the cup He was given to drink was given to Him by the Father:

. . . the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it? (John 18:11).

In John's gospel we do not have the garden of Gethsemene scene as in the other three gospels. In the first three gospels the Lord is presented to us in a human office or station: as we may know, in Matthew as King, in Mark as Servant/Prophet, and in Luke He is presented in a special way in the perfection of manhood. In Luke only do we read:

[The] Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of [the] Highest overshadow thee, wherefore that holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God (Luke 1:35).

Son of God in deity, He must be Son of God in incarnation also, of course. The Son took humanity into His Person! Surely He did. And in Luke 1:35 we read what the state of that humanity is: holy. Yes, his humanity was not as Adam's before the fall: innocent; nor as after the fall: fallen. It was holy humanity He took into His Person. And now in glory it is also glorified humanity.

In John we see the Son of God come down to accomplish the Father's will and then ascend up where He was before. Hence the way the matter of the cup is spoken of by Him in John 18:11. Not so in the first three Gospels that present Him in human office or station. There we find the garden scene in which He shrinks from the awful cup of bearing our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24, and being made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), and to sink in the deep mire where there was no standing (Psa. 69). And what was it for Him to be forsaken

of God (Psa. 22)? and to have divine judgment poured out upon Him, the alone worthy one? Such things our Beloved saw in the cup He was about to drink.

In Luke, not surprisingly, we have brought before us in a special way the feelings which swept over His holy soul as He contemplated the cup. There we read of an angel strengthening Him. There we read of the conflict in which He prayed more intently, and His sweat became *as* great drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22:44). It overwhelms our souls to think of the Holy One looking at that cup and considering all its horror, a thing which we can but so little enter into. But He contemplated it in all its immense horror, and His holy soul shrank from it.

It was right that He shrank from it. It was of the perfection of His Person that He shrink from it as He contemplated that fearful cup. God's wrath upon the Holy One? Yes, and He felt all that this meant as He alone could do. Had He not shrunk from it, He would not have been the Holy One. And this brings out the excellency and perfection of the manhood in Him. And having prayed to the Father about it He says: "not my will, but thine be done."

Let us note that the only recorded instance of the Lord Jesus saying "Abba, Father" was in Gethsemene (Mark 14:36), said by the perfect Servant, the Son. As every word, work, and way of our Beloved was wrought in the power of the Holy Spirit, so was this utterance by the Spirit. By the same Spirit we do so also:

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father (Gal.4:6).

It was the ever obedient Son that said, Abba, Father. What about myself?

A brother suggested the following regarding the distance of "about a stone's throw" (Luke 22:41):

As to the "stone's cast," the penalty of the law for sin was to be stoned to death. Thus, the Lord was at a distance that had reference to the penalty of the law upon the sinner for his sin. Perhaps, this may help a little.

Ed.

Do ye not know that your body is [the] temple of the Holy Spirit which [is] in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own? For ye have been bought with a price; glorify now then God in your body (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).