

Erratum

A reader drew attention to a mistake in *Thy Precepts* 16, #6 (Nov/Dec) 2001, p. 228, line 8 from the bottom. The word “first” should be “second.”

The reason this is the second power is because when the Assyrian has attacked Israel and gone down to Egypt, etc., the Beast and his armies will go to Palestine to aid the Antichrist, the false prophet. The Lord comes, as in Rev. 19 and takes them. The Assyrian, i.e., the king of the North, hears the tidings of this and returns to Israel (Dan. 11:44) where the Lord deals with him (see Dan. 8:25).

It is morally fitting that the Beast and the Antichrist be dealt with first. That is in accord with 1 Pet. 4:17 where we see that judgment proceeds in the order of that which is closest to God and reaches out to its objects.

Ed.

Elements of Dispensational Truth The Seven Churches

Chapter 5.6

What the Spirit Said to Philadelphia

Introductory Notes

It seems universally acknowledged that the word “Philadelphia” means brotherly love, which it surely does. Really, we ought to learn from what the Lord says to Philadelphia that brotherly love receives its true and holy character from the way in which the Lord presents Himself here. “Brotherly love” is often enough pushed into the path of separation from evil unto the Lord, to stumble and block saints from taking such a path.

Philadelphia recognizes the end of the first man; but Laodicea boasts in him, sets him up, under the guise that it is Christ.

Pergamos tolerated it, Thyatira embraced it, Sardis is dead to it, Laodicea is indifferent to it, but Philadelphia repulses it. What? **Evil.** Philadelphia has “a little power.” How much? Enough to be separated from evil unto the Lord. This

is not Pentecostal/Charismatic “power,” which is really an instrument of evil.

When we come to Philadelphia, the character of Christ is that of the holy and the true, but there is nothing here of the characteristics of Christ as seen in the first chapter. It is altogether outside of what is ecclesiastical . . . in Laodicea, He takes the whole character of substitute for the church; that is to say, the witness is gone, and He presents Himself as the witness instead of the church. It is Christ Himself at the end of the dispensation. ¹

IS PHILADELPHIA REVIVALISM, OR THE REVIVAL OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH?

Wm. Easton thought so:

Philadelphia seems to have commenced, I judge, with that Evangelical movement which began in the eighteenth century with Whitfield and Wesley, and others; waking up souls out of the deadness of Sardis. ²

(Whitfield and Wesley were part of Sardis.) Not surprisingly, that is what H. A. Ironside also thought:

This, I believe, brings us to what we may call the revival period . . . in the 18th and 19th centuries there came over all those lands where the Reformation had gone a great wave of blessing . . .

Now I do not mean to imply that we are to understand any special movement or association of believers to be in itself Philadelphia, but just as Sardis sets forth State churches of the Reformation, so I believe Philadelphia sets forth those in Protestantism who emphasize the authority of the Word of God, and the preciousness of the name of Christ. For any particular company to claim to be Philadelphia is but detestable ecclesiastical pretension, and God has evidently blown upon all such conceit. ³

If there has been “detestable ecclesiastical pretension” in some claiming to be Philadelphia, does that provide grounds and excuse for his view presented here? Is not what he said an excuse for not being humbled before God and seeking to go on with the truth recovered during the 1800s? -- instead of going from the “Grant group” to be “the pastor” of the Moody Church, Chicago?

Substitute the word Sardis for the word Protestantism in this quotation. Are there none such in Sardis? He has made a distinction without a difference. He hid the truth here.

William Hoste (Open Brethren) was more careful and said:

Perhaps we may say that “Philadelphia” represents Evangelical revivals since National Protestantism became largely formal and dead. ⁴

Note the use of the word “since.” This seems to allow that the Reformation

1. *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 371, 372.

2. *Gleanings in the Book of Revelation*, London: Pickering and Ingliss, p. 22, n.d.

3. *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, New York: Loizeaux, pp. 66, 67, 1930.

4. *The Visions of John the Divine*, Kilmamock: John Ritchie, p. 31, n.d.

itself was an Evangelical revival, but Philadelphia is numbers of evangelical revivals since. So these evangelical revivals took place in Sardis but were Philadelphia? When did Philadelphia begin? -- when the first or last of the evangelical revivals took place, or somewhere in between? No, I do not think that we have been helped in these quotations presented to find what Philadelphia represents.⁵

5. Here are some other views of Philadelphia by some who hold to the foreshadow view.

Open Brethren:

The revival of Bible Truth 1750+ (*Believer's Magazine* Feb. 1999, p. 49, from a chart).

F. A. Tatford wrote:

From a prophetic point of view it has been suggested that the church foreshadowed the Puttin and Quaker movements, the Methodist revival, the Brethren awakening and a variety of other evangelical movements of the same period (*The Patmos Letters*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, p. 121, 1969).

John Heading holds this partly :

Evangelical movements, with a return to what the New Testament teaches about church order and prophecy (*From Now to Eternity - The Book of Revelation*, Toronto: Everyday publications, p. 37, 1978).

On the other hand, Hector Alves wrote:

Philadelphia represents another great work of the Holy Spirit in the early part of the 19th century, when out of the dead formalism of denominations many gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Truth and Tidings* 32:227, 1981).

He means of course, in independency of assemblies.

Concerning Scofieldians:

Charles Lee Feinberg wrote:

This church is the church of the faithful remnant. The reference appears to be to no distinct church period . . . may cover the times of revivals and missions which began in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries . . . (*A Commentary on the Revelation*, Winona Lake: BMH Books, p. 44, 1985).

David L. Cooper claimed:

This church was recognized as reflecting the period of modern missions. It is considered that it began about 1648 (*An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, p. 50, 1972).

Charles C. Ryrie said:

This church may picture the modern missionary era of church history (*Revelation*, Chicago: Moody Press, p. 28, 1971 reprint).

And similar to these writers there are Herbert Lockyer, L. Sale-Harrison, etc.

J. Dwight Pentecost (*Things to Come*, Findlay: Dunham, p. 152, 1958) calls Philadelphia "True church of the last days" and Laodicea is "Apostasy," though he previously quoted Walter Scott's summary (p. 152).

Arnold Fructenbaum views each of the seven as strictly displacing the previous one and thus Thyatira is 600-1517, Sardis is 1517- 1648, Philadelphia is 1648-1900 (missionary movement, and Laodicea is 1900-present (apostasy) (*The Footsteps of the Messiah*, Tustin: Ariel Ministries, p. 36, (continued...)

J. N. Darby was asked if Philadelphia was the revival of evangelical truth. It is a notion used by some to avoid what Philadelphia really is. JND replied:

It is more. Protestantism was that {the revival of evangelical truth}, but it has dropped down into the mere abstract notion of private judgment; and, as opposed to this, the Catholics have been clever enough to put up church authority, but neither of these is to be found in the word of God. A man has no right of private judgment. If God has spoken, I have no right of judgment; I have nothing to do with private judgment, but to sit at Christ's feet like Mary, and to obey.⁶

Of course the Reformation was a revival of evangelic truth. Is it going to be denied that the reformation was an evangelical movement?

The advent of what is foreshadowed by Philadelphia is actually quite clear -- perhaps more so than Laodicea. And the truth about that advent is sought to be hidden, even by those who hold some elements of dispensational truth.⁷ The truth

5. (...continued)

1995 [1983]. Of course, the final apostasy has not yet begun while He who restrains is still here in His special capacity as indweller of the church. Surprisingly, T. Ice and T. Demy accept this view (*Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy*, Eugene: Harvest House, p.191, 1977).

6. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 372.

7. Here we will note a few more views of Philadelphia by some who hold to the foreshadow view.

Open Brethren:

William MacDonald said:

The church of Philadelphia is often taken as a symbol of the great evangelical awakening in the early nineteenth century, the recovery of the truth concerning the church and Christ's coming, and the world-wide missionary outreach (*Believer's Bible Commentary, New Testament*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, p. 1175, 1990).

Notice how the real recovery is swamped here. Observe that "the recovery of the truth of the church" was not his view concerning independency of assemblies, for independency existed before this recovery.

An answer to a question appeared in *Truth and Tidings* that touched on Philadelphia. This periodical is an organ of those who claim Donald Ross, etc., as the originators of the independent assemblies that they recognize. Here is what was said:

In Philadelphia, we have another work of God in the past century, marked by a great revival of missionary effort, and a return to the simplicity of church testimony after the pattern of the New Testament (vol. 32, p. 244, 1981).

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

J. Allen wrote about exercises "to return to the simple NT pattern of gathering . . ." and said:

Men like J. N. Darby (1800-1882), George Muller (1805-1898) and William Kelly (1821-1906) were but representatives of godly men that God raised up to teach these principles

(continued...)

is that Philadelphia foreshadows the recovery of assembly truth, the operations of the Spirit in the assembly, the mystery of Christ and the assembly, the end of the place of the first man and the unfolding of new creation truth, dispensational truth and the pretribulation rapture, the true place of the law of Moses, etc., etc. The fact that Christians reject this is not at all surprising. For example, some in Sardis might accept a few elements of dispensational truth and try to show how J. N. Darby merely systematized dispensational truth, and implicit in this is that what he systematized was present already in Sardis.⁸ This implicitly requires a denial of what Philadelphia really foreshadowed.⁹ One result of this presently is the danger of being drawn into Laodicean Charismaticism! How foolish it is to reject truth and expect we would not be correspondingly harmed by doing so.

Excellent comments on Philadelphia appeared in *The Bible Treasury*, vol. 16 and I shall liberally incorporate them in this chapter on Philadelphia.

IS PHILADELPHIA THE REVIVAL OF THE SOUL'S INDIVIDUAL COMMUNION?

The reader may be surprised to hear such a thing and even more surprised to hear it was proposed by A. H. Burton:

7. (...continued)

of gathering . . . (*Ritchie New Testament Commentaries: Revelation*, Kilmamock: Ritchie, p. 159, 1997).

George Muller was a posttribulationist and he certainly had different views of the church than the other two named!

8. I suggest that such notions have been refuted in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, available from the publisher.

9. Here is what **Scofieldians** believe:

Gary G. Cohen, Bible Presbyterian (associated with Carl McIntyre), thinks this:

From 1730-1900 A.D. . . . The Great awakening on both sides of the Atlantic with its Whitfield and Wesley (c. 1730-1800), etc. (*Understanding Revelation*, Collingswood: Christian Beacon Press, p. 58, 1968).

Clarence Lakin's view is this:

It is the "dead" Sardis Church "revived," and Revivals have been characteristic of the Philadelphia Period. These Revivals began with George Whitefield in A.D. 1739, followed by John Wesley, Charles Finney and D. L. Moody (*The Book of Revelation*, Glenside: Clarence Larkin Estate, p. 26, 1919).

James Combs, Baptist, wrote:

Philadelphia, the Loving Church (1600 until . . .) *The Age of Evangelization (Rainbows from Revelation*, Springfield: Tribune Publishers, p. 41, 1994).

Arno Gaebelien saw a little further, though not far enough:

Philadelphia has been variously applied to Methodism, the evangelical movements, missionary efforts and to the revivals of the nineteenth century. But it is more than that. It is a complete return to the first principles (*The Revelation*, Chicago: Van Kampen Press, p. 40, n.d.).

Very true, but why, then, did he not throw off the clerical system?

It is . . . the recovery of the soul's individual communion with Christ, personally known as the Holy and the True.

All the great revivals have partaken of this character . . . Society of Friends . . . The Methodist revival . . . Then, too, the early days of the Brethren movement . . . the memorable 1859 awakening . . . the Keswick conventions, and, now, the Advent Testimony and Preparation gatherings {of which A. H. Burton was president for a while!}.

It is rather the true and real in contrast with the mere professing body.¹⁰

So, it is, after all, *all* Christians. The stunning thing is how blind one can be to his evacuating Scripture of its meaning. Do you think that he might have been trying to get rid of Philadelphia, even though it is "the recovery of the soul's communion with Christ"?

. . . we believe that Philadelphia is passed never to return, but as a movement it has affected the whole world, and influenced the spiritual life of the whole Church . . . Philadelphia must cease in order to give place to Laodicea.¹¹

Why "must"? So all is Laodicea? But he believed Thyatira and Sardis continue on. Do we not see in these comments an agenda rather than exposition? Let us pass on.

IS PHILADELPHIA ALL CHRISTIANS?

W. R. Newell was definitely a reader of the writings of J. N. Darby. Right below his quoting JND about something, we read his undermining the truth about Philadelphia:

Now who are the Philadelphians? We believe they are all Christ's faithful through the dispensation. If these promises were made to such saints *then*, they cover all saints *since*. Philadelphia was a local assembly at the same time with Ephesus and Smyrna. Let us not forget in viewing these seven messages, in their prophetic succession, that all *existed together*. Remember also that *all have existed through the dispensation*, so that not only is the hope of the *imminent coming* of the Lord preserved to all, but the promises to the overcomers are for *all* the saints. For example, *no* saint shall be "hurt of the second death," -- not Smyrna saints only! Those in Christ are already new creations, their history in Adam having ended at Calvary (Romans 6); and they, made alive together with Christ, raised up with Him, made to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: but it is "not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is." We have, *now*, "newness of life" in Christ. But what *His New Name* is, or will be, remains yet to be revealed!¹²

10. *The Apocalypse Expounded*, London: Advent Witness Office, p. 70, 72, 1932.

11. *The Apocalypse Expounded*, London: Advent Witness Office, p. 75, 1932. So had he written in 1910 in *The Christian's Library*, v. 12, p. 219, London: Holness.

12. *The Book of the Revelation*, Chicago: Grace Publications, p. 74, 1945.

IS PHILADELPHIA ACCORDING TO WALTER SCOTT'S VIEW?

Walter Scott, who wrote a popular book on Revelation, is an anomalous case. In smaller book on the Revelation, he wrote:

The life, the vitality of Christianity is absent in Protestantism, hence *another* Reformation was needed.

Philadelphia contemplates a state of things which had its origin in the early part of last century [1800s]. Several things characterized the movement: the revival of genuine godliness; the true nature of the Church as the body of Christ, consequently our vital association with Christ in heaven; the personal Return of the Lord from heaven as the true Christian Hope; and the study of the prophetic word. All this forms the Reformation of the true complement to the work of the Reformation. The Reformation of the nineteenth century is just as important as the Reformation of the sixteenth century.¹³

There is truth in this but I would not call the recovery of these precious truths a Reformation. Moreover, W. Scott finally went with Open Brethren¹⁴ and necessarily the words “the Church as the body of Christ” became different in meaning to him. Hence he took up the language of misrepresentation, such as:

The mystical body of Christ is composed of the aggregate of saints (1 Cor. 12:13). A confederation of assemblies may display a certain external unity, but only for a season . . . The Spirit's unity is that of *all saints*, not of many, or even of all assemblies.¹⁵

Usually the word “aggregate” is used pejoratively regarding assemblies of saints that believe the local assembly is the expression of the whole, and recognize the action of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5) as binding on saints everywhere (Matt. 18:18). “Aggregate” means a collection of disparate elements, a word hardly applicable to 1 Cor. 12:13. Is this an example of what happens to the mind when the truth is abandoned? The use of the word “aggregate” to describe assemblies expressing the truth of the one body is simply ignorance, or worse. It is the

13. *Expository Outline of the Revelation*, London: Pickering and Ingliss, p. 26, revised ed.

14. He went from the Stuart group, having imbibed C. E. Stuart's doctrine that Christ made propitiation in heaven, in the disembodied state, with His blood, and propagated this in a number of his books. W. Kelly dealt with this in *The Bible Treasury*, pronouncing it fundamental evil. Acknowledgement for help from Walter Scott is given in the *Scofield Reference Bible*.

15. *Expository Outline of the Revelation*, London: Pickering and Ingliss, p. 18, revised ed. In his larger, more popular book, his independency views are found on pp. 37 and 42.

Interestingly, in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, p. 313, 1996, we read this short designation of Philadelphia:

Another Reformation, equally the work of God, characterized the beginning of last century [1800s].

Well, that “Reformation” threw off clerisy, as well as much more, and included such teachings as the end of the testing of the first man at the cross, the recovery of the free action of the Spirit in the assembly, etc

imposition of the notion of local independency to wrongly explain what others practice. Actually, a circle of independent assemblies that regard themselves as gathered similarly and receive from each other, is an aggregate; an aggregate of independent assemblies. And, they may thus have unity of spirits, but that is not expressing the unity of the Spirit.

WHAT ABOUT J. N. DARBY, GEORGE MULLER, AND WILLIAM KELLY?

While I can appreciate some of J. Allen's remarks, who makes the period be 1800 to the rapture, yet he brings in names from the 1700s (which is really Sardis), he wrote:

Ecclesiastical Truth: . . . Men like J. N. Darby (1800-1882), George Muller (1805-1898) and William Kelly (1821-1906) were but representatives of a multitude of godly men that God raised up to teach these principles of gathering based on the Scriptures without all the additions of tradition.¹⁶

Before comment we must take note of another matter he believes recovered:

Eschatological truth: It is to be observed that Christ makes direct reference in His message to the church in Philadelphia that the saints were to be kept out of “the hour of temptation” which the exposition has shown to be the tribulation period. It must not be forgotten that it is in this Philadelphian period of church testimony that, following the evangelistic preaching and the emphasis on the scriptural mode of gathering, the truth of the Lord's coming for the church at the rapture was rediscovered.. Associated with this recovery of truth was a new appreciation of the teaching concerning the end-time events centered around the pre-tribulation rapture . . . The Lord has foreseen this very fact in this message to the church in Philadelphia.¹⁷

The second quotation is quite true. How is it, then, that in the first quotation he included George Muller, who was a posttribulationist? G. Muller rejected the recovery of the “Eschatological Truth.” And when faced with the issue of reception of those coming from under the ministry of B. W. Newton,¹⁸ G. Muller acted on independent principles, and with nine other leaders at Bethesda, signed the infamous *Letter of the Ten*, espousing the denial that evil associations leaven a Christian. Thus these things in 1848 marked the public

16. *Revelation*, Kilmamock: John Ritchie, p. 159, 1997.

17. *Revelation*, Kilmamock: John Ritchie, p. 159, 1997.

18. B. W. Newton was a posttribulationist who had set himself against the recovered truth in virtually every aspect of it. His prophetic system was shredded in vol. 8 of J. N. Darby's *Collected Writings* in 1845. Subsequently, it came to light in 1847 that he held evil doctrine concerning the Person of the Lord. After withdrawing one point, he continued to teach this evil of what he called Christ's “unspeakable circumstantial distance from God” in His life. How this teaching resulted from his posttribulationism is documented in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 2. The history of the discovery of his clandestinely-spread evil concerning the Person of the Lord, and Bethesda's response, is fully documented in *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2. These books are available from the publisher.

beginning of Open Brethren.

ABUSE OF THE NAME PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia means “brotherly love.” Is brotherly love the cause, or is it the result, of what we read concerning Philadelphia? Such statements as this are most objectionable:

Philadelphia, the revival produced in the midst of this state of things, which, on the basis of brotherly love, as the name indicates, keeps the word of Him that is true and does not deny the name of Him that is holy, while having little strength

. . .¹⁹

This is brethrenism. This is sentimentality, not the love found in Scripture. The reverse is the truth. The true *basis* is holiness and truth. Did the writer ignore the description in v. 7, “the holy, the true”? Saints walking together on *that* basis will be in the good of true brotherly love. Philadelphia answers to the way in which Christ is presented (read v. 7). He has inverted the truth of this matter. And with Laodicea, its state is just the opposite to the presentation of Christ. There He is the faithful and true witness. Laodicea was the unfaithful and false witness. We must not ignore the presentation of Christ in the address to each assembly, but learn from it.

Moreover, Philadelphia does not mean:

The gathering in of those who believe the love of Christ to be a stronger bond of union than the ties of any sect.²⁰

First, the “*bond* of union” is the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), as Christ is the *center* of union (Matt. 18:20). Separation from evil is the *principle* of practical unity; and *grace* is the power of practical unity and gathering. These things were understood in the Philadelphian recovery.

Second, the statement seems to me to allow of staying in sects, which by their very existence hinder the expression of the one body, the true expression of which depends on the practice of the things noted in the above paragraph.

Presentation of Christ

And to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write:

These things saith the holy, the true; he that has the key of David, he who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open (Rev. 3:7):

Here the Lord is not presented as He was in Rev. 1. Rather, He is before us in moral character, plus there is the insignia of His authority and power as seen in His possession of the key of David. Another wrote:

19. *The Christian Library* 11:42, London: James Carter, 1909.

20. T. Ice and T. Demy, *Fast Facts on Prophecy*, Eugene: Harvest House, p. 190, 1997.

The first notable feature is Himself -- His own person -- and His own person judging according to the truth; His own self so revealed as to act practically, to insist on genuineness, to allow no longer a mere acknowledgment of truth that was not carried out. He will have moral reality. This is what I think the Lord intimates in saying: “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true; He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.” He looks after all.

And when did the Lord distinctly thus work in Christendom? When did He make His own feel how useless it is to acknowledge truth that we do not live? When did He thus recall His saints back to His word, and to own the power of the Holy Ghost in making that word living? Where is this found? We all know that there are those in Christendom that have set up for the Spirit of God without the word; and we are not ignorant of others who have set up for the word without the Spirit; and in both cases with results the most disastrous and withering. But where is it that the Lord has recalled His own to His word, insisting also on that sovereign place and liberty which is due to the Holy Ghost?

It is freely granted that there is another thing calculated to cause distrust in connection with this, among the children of God -- namely, mere assertion of the rights of the Holy Ghost. And for this reason, that the Holy Ghost is here to glorify Christ; and, therefore, if it were but the revival of long lost privileges of the church, there is only partial recovery here. If it were people seeking to set up the church again on its own foundation, we ought to hesitate, not as if it were not a right desire; but it is hardly a becoming aim in the present state of things. Ought we not also to feel its sin and ruin?

Supposing a man were to receive, for instance, the truth of the church of God in all its fulness of privilege and power, do you think, blessed as this is, that this alone -- where the recognition of the church of God filled his soul -- would make him an adequate witness of God at this moment? Very far from it indeed; not because the thing itself is not true, but because alone it would be accompanied by high thoughts and hard measures. It would inflate the soul, and be no better than an utterly impracticable theory, too, as far as that goes.

Beloved friends, there are two things necessary -- real faith in what the church of God is, as God made **it**; and, along with this, the sense of the utter ruin that has come in. For such is the state of soul that suits the man who feels he is part of the ruin as well as of the church. And how are these conditions produced? Not by looking at the church only, but at Christ. And this is the very thing that the Lord brings in here. It is the re-awakening of the heart to the place of Christ -- to Christ as the Holy and the True. The effect then would be judgment of the present by the past -- ah! how changed. Nothing is more needed than judgment of what man has made of it, by what God Himself set up in His own incomparable grace. There will then be no pretension to recover; no thought of setting up what once was, or rather no attempt, on a little scale, at what once was in all its fulness. This would be a denial of the ruin of the church.

No; there is a true path for faith; but it is a lowly one. There is a path that uses what God has given, what is imperishable and unchangeable -- what God always makes to be the portion of faith. But then, it is in the sense of deep dishonor done to Him, and the going out of the heart to every member of that body, with the patient waiting for Christ's coming.

Now, the only way in which this is wrought in the soul is by looking not at the church or the Holy Ghost either, but at Christ. Hence you will observe here that He brings in no powers of the Spirit of God; it is “He that is holy, He that is true.” I am sure there is a power deeper than miracles; but then it is a power that works morally. It is a power that effects self-judgment in the Christian, even as repentance is to the soul under conviction when being brought to God. “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.” One may perfectly confide in His resources; He has got all under His hand. He opens; who shuts? He shuts; who opens? But the way in which He uses His power is to set before them the open door; and surely the man must be blind who does not own that it is precisely in this way that grace has been at work. Nor can one doubt that concurrently God has been working providentially in this way; for how often, while the Lord may exercise faith by difficulties, He also shows His own power by surmounting them all in a thousand different ways!

Thus there is nothing more ordinary in the way of God, than that He works in His own power providentially at the same time that the Holy Ghost works morally. And so it is at this present time. There is the greatest possible indifferentism growing up, breaking down the barriers on all sides; and though man misuses grace for his own licentiousness, the Lord, in every sense of the word, sets before His saints an open door.²¹

THE HOLY, THE TRUE

This description does not speak of official place; rather, it denotes moral perfection in Him. The soul of the Philadelphian delights in this character of Christ and this has an effect upon his state of soul. He desires to so reflect Christ, in himself, in his walk, in his family, and in the assembly. He desires that his associations, his fellowship, reflect this also. Philadelphia means brotherly love, and this love receives its character from Him who is holy, Him who is true.

The Holy. The Lord Jesus said:

. . . the ruler of this world comes, and in me he has nothing (John 14:30).

Adam held humanity in an innocent state; i.e., ignorant of good and evil. However, having acquired that knowledge through sinful disobedience, he then held humanity in a sinful state. The Lord Jesus was holy; i.e., He held humanity in a holy state. He was conceived and born holy (Luke 1:35). He was not holy only because He was God, but the manhood He took into His person was holy. He was impeccable. In Him, in His walk here below, this holiness received full expression. See also 1 Pet. 1:15, 16.

A Philadelphian recognizes that the assembly must not allow evil within, and not allow evil associations

The church, the saints, have to think of Christ, not of themselves. Faithfulness to Him, however, is noticed. His word had been kept, His name not denied, the word

of His patience also kept, that is, of the way in which He awaits the time of His glory and power, through the long-protracted evil of the professing church, in the accomplishment of God’s ways.

In this also they are specially associated with Christ. This association characterizes all the promises made to him that overcomes also. Hence what Christ is personally with respect to such relationship, and His availableness, so to speak, for those seeking so to walk, is presented in the revelation of Him. He is “holy.” This character must now specially be responded to. It is individual conformity (though in the common body and walk of all) to Him that is looked for in this near personal relationship. He is “true,” the one who is truthful in all; the true Son of God, the truthful revelation of what He is, and we are sanctified by the truth; true in His word, so that it can be counted on. But “true” especially here refers to the power of the truth, but the truth seen in Christ’s nature and person, and so known to us. “Sanctify them through thy truth; Thy word is truth . . . and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” So is He the Holy and the True One; and it is especially where all has failed, that this character of Christ has its application, but a people are yet called to be faithful in special connection with Him.

So it is in John’s Gospel, as regards Christ Himself in the midst of Israel; and in his Epistle, where seducers were leading men astray, and piety became individualized. Not, of course, as if brotherly love and union were not to exist, but that personal adhesion to Christ, the Holy and True One, was needed for it. Out of twenty-six times the word *true* is used, it is used twenty-one times by John, as a kindred word is sixteen times out of twenty-five. It is the personal character of Christ separated to God from all evil, and the true and living expression of all that He presented Himself as; as that manifested also the nature of all that was not it.²²

The True.

They said therefore to him, Who art thou? [And] Jesus said to them, Altogether that which I also say to you (John 8:25).

There was no space between what He said and what He was, as often is the case with us. His every word was the expression of Himself, as were all His works. This comes out in His varied characters as given in the four gospels. Moreover, as “the true” He was the test of *everything*. As “the holy” He is the standard for *everything*. As the One who opens and shuts He is in control of *everything*.

KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND SHUTS (v. 7)

The Lord’s having the key of David signifies His authority over the house of David with respect to the millennial reign. He will have the highest authority in the kingdom. Christ is the possessor of power. He will administer it in the kingdom, but there is an application of His administration meanwhile. The order of presentation of Himself is profitably observed by our souls and is instructive for our consciences. He was presented first in moral character as “the holy, the true.” It is fitting that only such an One be entrusted with the power denoted by

21. *The Bible Treasury* 16:298.

22. *Collected Writings* 30:344, 345. See also 5:347.

the key of David.

He has power over evil and expects us to judge it in the assembly. It is true that the assembly at Philadelphia had only “a little power.” But He has great power and sustains.

And we also find Him disposing of means in favor of the church, in such a way that, if He opens a door, none can shut it, or if He shuts a door, none can open it. Thus there are the two things: He is the holy and the true, to those who trust in Him; and He has also, not here indeed the display of power, but the key of power (as Jehovah said of Eliakim to Shebna in Isa 22:22: “The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open”). So that, where there is this weakness, He encourages the church to look to Himself as the holy and the true, and trust Him; and where there is this resting on His title to open and shut, and this trust in His Person, and conformity to His character, the church is perfectly secure, no matter what may happen. Let all the power of man or Satan do their worst, if I am resting in Christ, who is perfectly true, and He has opened a door, neither man nor devil can shut it.²³

Commendation

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3:8-10).

I KNOW THY WORKS, AN OPENED DOOR, AND A LITTLE POWER (v. 8)

An Opened Door. This is often taken to refer to the missionary efforts of the 19th century²⁴ or an opened door to gospel testimony.²⁵ That is not the door

23. *Collected Writings* 5:347.

24. For example, James L. Boyer, *Grace Theological Journal* 6:2 (1985), p. 271.

25. So W. E. Vine (of Open Brethren):

... has reference to Gospel testimony may be confirmed by several passages . . . (Acts 14:27) . . . 2 Corinthians 2:12 . . . Colossians 4:3 . . . (The Witness 73:109, 1943).

Every door is not the same door, just as Noah was in an ark and Moses was in an ark. Moreover, “the mystery of the gospel” (Col. 4:3) is not “Gospel testimony.” Besides, the opened door in a day of ruin is not necessarily what might be an open door before the ruin. That an opened door for testimony includes the gospel is not denied, but what we have here is an example of making the whole out of a part. Now, W. E. Vine accepted the foreshadow view. Hear how he accounted for Philadelphia in this article:

Certain it is that in the early part of last century a movement took place under the guidance of the Spirit of God with a view to spreading the Gospel throughout the world.

(continued...)

opened here.

The opened door is connected with the works, “I know thy works.” The opened door are for these works. The works reflect the character in which Christ is presented in v. 7. The works reflect “the holy, the true,” and are conducted in the consciousness of, and subjection to, His authority, walking in the pathway of His rejection. Religious arrangements and control tend to close such a door.

In an unsigned letter, in J. N. Darby’s handwriting, found in a drawer, composed just before his death, and addressed to “My beloved brethren,” he wrote:

It is not merely doctrine, but activity guided by doctrine, and a path formed on that of Christ.²⁶

Another wrote:

How analogous is this position of the Philadelphian church to that of Christ when He was on the earth! Everybody sought to shut the door against Him; Pilate, Herod, Scribes, Pharisees, and the whole nation of the Jews were all trying to shut the door against Christ. Christ, like the Philadelphian church, was in the midst of an order of things which God had once instituted, but which had entirely failed; for in Christ’s time there was no ark, no Urim and Thummim, no Shechinah (the glory of God’s presence in the temple). All that had really constituted the sensible display of power and testimony was gone, and, instead of Jehovah having a throne in Jerusalem, they themselves had fallen under Gentile power

and were slaves to man’s throne. And hence arose the exceeding subtlety of the question the Jews put to our Lord. “What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?” If the Lord had answered No, it would have been the denial of God’s chastisement for their sins; and if He had said Yes, then it went to the denial of His title as Messiah. But (the Lord perceiving their wickedness), His reply to them amounted to this, “You have brought yourselves under this dominion because of your sins, and therefore now you must submit to its authority.” Not only “the powers that be are ordained of God,” and as such we submit to them; but in Israel’s case it would have been denying God’s chastisement upon them for their sins (as it is said, “we are slaves this day because of our sins”).

So the Lord Himself submitted to paying the temple tribute. But though Israel, as a body, failed in their faithfulness to God, yet God could not fail in His faithfulness to them, for His Spirit remained among them, as we learn in Haggai; and therefore we find there was a little remnant in the Annas and Simeons, who were waiting for redemption in Israel (as it is said in Malachi, “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another”). Thus we see it was a condition of thorough darkness, and when He who was the Light comes in, He is at once rejected. Well, what then? Was the door shut to Him? *No*: “to him the porter openeth.” Christ came in at the door, not, like all the pretenders that came before Him, climbing up

25. (...continued)

That movement has gathered momentum ever since, until to-day missionaries have gone through the opened door to practically every country in the world.

26. *Words of Faith* 1:255 (1882).

some other way; but while working in divine power Christ came in by God's own appointed way, and no man could shut it. He is become God's appointed way to us; He said of Himself, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Whatever links our position with Christ, as an example and pattern, is in truth a blessing to us; for was there ever one that went through all with such unflinching, lowly faithfulness to God as He did? Note the contrast of His lowly path with that of Elijah's; and what do we see? Elijah was going on ministering with great outward power, bringing down fire from heaven to destroy the prophets of Baal, and thinking himself to be the only one that was left that was true to God; whereas God had seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal, whom Elijah had not found out. Christ was content to be nothing in a world where man was everything and God was shut out. He was content to be treated as the very off scouring of the earth; and yet, at the same time, there was not a single lost sheep of the house of Israel that His voice did not reach as the voice of the good Shepherd (let them be the vilest of sinners, a woman of Samaria, an adulteress, or a publican), that His eye did not discover. Thus, in virtue of His very humiliation, He puts those who now have but this "*little strength*" into the very same place which He Himself took, and then, as the porter did for Him, He opens the door for them, which none can shut.²⁷

Thus there is nothing more ordinary in the way of God, than that He works in His own power providentially at the same time that the Holy Ghost works morally. And so it is at this present time. There is the greatest possible indifferentism growing up, breaking down the barriers on all sides; and though man misuses grace for his own licentiousness, the Lord, in every sense of the word, sets before His saints an open door. It is not a question of preaching the gospel (one can understand the importance of it for the service of God); but the church does not preach any more than teach. We must not think of narrowing it to evangelization. In that respect there may be an open and an effectual door; but here it is an open door simply, by which one understands that the Lord makes clear the path in the midst of all obstacles -- opening a way for what is for His own glory in the doing of His own will. Will any one maintain there ever was a moment since the church fell into disorder, when the Lord has made the "open door" a characteristic of His working so much as at the present moment? "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." All mankind cannot open it; nor can all the power of Satan shut it.

It is but for a little while. The Lord has opened the door to His people, and they are using it. They see the way clear before them, and they act on His grace. And the reason, too, is remarkable: "Thou hast a little strength." He does not say so to Sardis or Thyatira. They might boast outwardly. Not so Philadelphia. And anything that takes us out of our weakness, anything strong, is incompatible with the mind of the Lord at the present time. Whatever is a seeking of greatness in any one way does not suit the testimony of the Lord or the church's state. "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name."

I should like to put it to the conscience of any Christian person here, who doubts the soundness of what has been said, to answer me -- Where do you find the word of Christ kept in any remarkable way? where do you find it treasured and carried out? One might ask even the enemies of the Bible, whoever they may be,

where that word is heard and prized in a way comparatively unexampled? Would any one say -- without wishing to utter a word in disrespect of the Wesleyans -- would any one say that it stamps that society? I do not care to be personal, and shall not go round the compass of the different Protestant bodies; but we ask any person who has a conscience, and who knows the facts of what God has been working, where they find Christ's word really kept. You may tell me of the extension of missions, and of the conversion of souls; and I do not deny it. Would to God there were far more zeal in spreading the gospel in foreign parts, and seeking the conversion of souls at home! But one asks, Where is it that you find the characteristic so marked, that the Lord Who weighs all could say of them, "Thou hast kept My word?" Where is the reproach of bibliolatry cast most, if we may put it in another form? Where in Edinburgh, or in any place whatever you choose around you, is this stigma to be seen?

Remark, that our Lord is not here speaking of the old bodies of the Middle Ages -- that is to say, of Thyatira. We must leave them behind: it is not among such; nor, again, in the Protestantism of Sardis. It is a new action of God, distinct from both. Where will you find, then, those that love the Lord -- disclaiming any kind of kindred in an ecclesiastical way with Romanism and Protestantism -- who are content with Christ in His moral glory, and characterized by keeping His word here below?²⁸

Because Thou Hast a Little Power. Above we considered that key of David, denoting great power in the hands of Christ in His moral character, "the holy, the true." Philadelphia has only a little power. The church originally was marked by much power, but Philadelphia only has remnant character, hence "a little power." Anna and others were marked by lovely remnant features in their day, though of little account to the mass.

There is always strength in looking to God; but if the mind rest upon the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes unbelief. Difficulties may come in. God may allow many things to arise to prove our weakness; but the simple path of faith is to go on, not looking beforehand at what we have to do, but reckoning upon the help that we shall need, and find when the time arrives. The sense that we are nothing makes us glad to forget ourselves, and then it is that Christ becomes everything to the soul. There is real strength in pursuing the simple path of obedience in what we may have to do, whatever the trial may be. So it was with David when he had to fight. "The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the bear, and out of the paw of the lion, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." It was no matter to David whether it was the lion, the bear, or this giant of the Philistines; it was all the same to him, for in himself he was as weak in the presence of one as the other; but he went on quietly doing his duty, taking it for granted that God would be with him. *This is faith.* Mark the contrast with this in the unbelief of the spies sent by Moses to spy out the land. They trembled and said they were but as grasshoppers in the sight of their enemies, thus quite forgetting what God was for them, and making it a question between themselves and the Anakims, instead of between the Anakims and God. But where there is a simple reference to the Lord, then "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." When trouble

27. *Collected Writings* 5:347-349.

28. *The Bible Treasury* 16:299.

comes in, we must not be looking at ourselves, but, knowing that we are nothing but weakness, simply look to the Lord as everything in the way of strength for us.

The case of Philadelphia was one of decided weakness, but faithfulness . . .²⁹

(To be continued, if the Lord wills) Ed.

Second Chance

Dr. Tim LaHaye's "Left Behind" series of books and motion pictures has now added *Left Behind: The Board Game Adventure*. These all teach a "second chance" for those left behind at the rapture. An advertisement for this children's game says:

The action packed contest between good and evil continues in this exciting family game inspired by the hit movie! Correct answers during the pre-rapture section earn redemption tokens, which are of great value once the post-rapture play begins. Players then band together in the Tribulation Force to defeat Carpathia -- or face elimination. For two to six players, ages 10 and up (CBD Christmas catalog #150250, 2001, p. 61).

So these children thus are schooled in the idea that there will be a second chance for them after the rapture takes place. And meanwhile there is money to be made in such books, movies, and games. Oh, but, reportedly, many are being saved!

Such has also been said over the years while the ever-increasing fraternization and fellowship with modernists and others has been fomented by Dr. Billy Graham and his 'crusades' and the 'new evangelicalism.' What the effect this has had on evangelicalism is another matter.

We wait to see if God will vindicate His word:

And Samuel said, Has Jehovah delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, As in hearkening to the voice of Jehovah? Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, Attention than the fat of rams. For rebellion is [as] the sin of divination, And selfwill is [as] iniquity and idolatry (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).

The paper advertised on the back of the front cover should be read.

Ed.

The Set Feasts of Jehovah

Chapter 2

The Feasts of Firstfruits and Weeks

Feast of Firstfruits

THE MEANING

The feast of firstfruits signifies the resurrection of Christ. As raised from the dead, He is called the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20). This indicates that all others who were raised from the dead before Him were restored to natural life -- and therefore it is not accurate to refer to those restorations to natural life as resurrection. It is a resuscitation, so to speak.

The firstfruits is the first of a harvest. This harvest is called "the first resurrection" in Rev. 20:4, 5 (denoting its *order*), "the resurrection of life" (denoting its *character*) in John 5:29, and "the resurrection of the just" (denoting the *class of persons*) in Luke 14:14. Christ and all of the redeemed who have been raised, and/or who have been changed, form the first resurrection. The first resurrection is not a point of time; it refers to a class of persons, irrespective of when raised and/or changed. The class of persons is called *the just*.

Another said:

The sheaf of firstfruits was, typically, Christ risen. "On the morrow after the sabbath" it was waved, and that was the first or resurrection-day.

In the ordinance of waving it we observe the following particulars: --

1. The Jew, i.e., Israel as a nation, was to bring the sheaf to the priest.
2. The priest was to wave it before the Lord, to be accepted for Israel.
3. Israel was, then, to offer a burnt offering with its meat and drink offering.
4. Israel was not to eat of the new corn, in any shape, till this was done.

This ordinance, very simple in its materials, was very significant of the way of a believer or of the Church touching the resurrection of Christ, as we see that way presented to us in Luke 24:44-53.

1. The disciples bring the sheaf, i.e., they apprehend and believe the fact of the resurrection (vv. 44, 45).
2. Christ, the true Priest, teaches them that this resurrection was *for them*, that the sheaf was accepted of the Lord *for them*, and He gives them a

29. *Collected Writings* 5:346.

blessed pledge of this (ver. 46-51).

3. They make their offerings, because of this, offerings of worship and joy (ver. 52).
4. They know of no eating, no feast, no communion, but in connection with the waved sheaf, or risen Christ. They occupy the temple only as in company with that very story (v. 53).

Such is the simple and direct illustration of this beautiful type, which the earliest moment, I may say, in the experience of the saints after the resurrection of the Lord affords us.

The principal point of attraction, at least, at present with me, is in Luke 24:53, connected, as it is, with Lev. 23:14.

The disciples can do nothing but rejoice in the wave sheaf. *It affords them their one commanding, absorbing thought.* They fill the temple, not as worshipping Jews, with sacrifices and remembrances of sins, but as believing souls with thanksgiving for the resurrection and the remission of sins.

It was the first day of harvest with them. They have lost sight of the temple, save as the due spot for *rendering offerings on the waving of the firstfruits.*

And in all this we have another form of owning, as David did in his day, a new place of service (1 Chron. 20). The wave sheaf or Christ risen tells us, like Ornan's threshing-floor, that "mercy rejoices over judgment." David, therefore could not seek the former altar, or the high place at Gibeon; and so the disciples here forget the old temple, or the temple in all its wonted services, except that which belonged to the first day of harvest.

The resurrection had already done much sweet service for them. It had removed their fears, cleared up many a doubt and perplexity, gratified their poor wounded affections, anticipated the toil of their hands at the great stone of the sepulchre, and the value of their spices for the body of their Lord. But now it does the sublimest service of all for them: *it changes their religion.* As it had already rolled away the heavy stone for them from the door of the sepulchre, so does it now roll away a yoke which neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear. It builds a temple for them fairer than Solomon's. They serve now in the sense of the victory of Jesus, in the waving before the Lord of the sheaf of firstfruits accepted for them. "They returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." Their's was now, as the Church's still is, the religion of the victory or resurrection of Christ.¹

ACCEPTED FOR YOU

The first fruits was waved before Jehovah on the day after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:11). The sabbath signifies the old, Jewish order. Christ was raised on the first day of the week and introduced a new order -- resurrection order.

And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you (Lev. 23:11).

Israel's blessing is founded on an accepted Christ in resurrection. Our blessing is

1. *The Bible Treasury* 5:342, 343.

founded on this also. Indeed, His acceptance is the very measure of *our* acceptance (Eph. 1:6) because we have received the Spirit of Sonship (Gal. 4:6, 7).

THE ACCOMPANYING OFFERINGS

Let us briefly summarize the meaning of the offerings that accompanied the waving of the firstfruits.

1. **A male lamb**, without blemish, a yearling for a burnt offering. Here is a figure of perfection and energy of devotion to the will of God even unto the death of the cross. See Heb. 9:14. There is that in the work of Christ which is wholly for God's appreciation, as the burnt-offering signifies (see Lev. 1).
2. **A meal offering**, or oblation, of two-tenths of fine flour, mingled with oil, an offering made by fire, a sweet odor. The two-tenths, I believe, signifies what He was Godward and what He was manward as to the perfection of His Person, energized by the Holy Spirit (oil), as the faithful and true witness. There was no hypocrisy and no worldliness in Him (cp. John 8:28). See John 6:17. All the trials (fire, testing) through which He passed only brought out a sweet odor to God.
3. **A drink offering** of one-fourth of a hin of wine.

His food was to do the will of God (John 4:34). It was a *joy* to Him to delight the Father and pour Himself out in obedience and devotion.

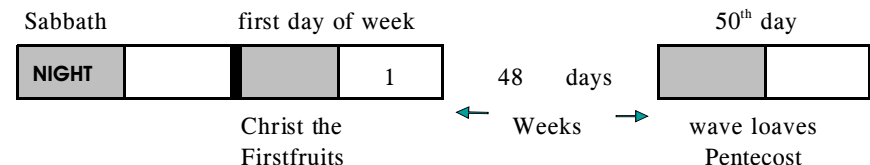
GOD GETS HIS PORTION FIRST

Lev. 23:14 teaches us, what other Scriptures also show, that God's portion comes first. This is only right. There are three things noted:

1. Bread -- Christ descended from heaven as the bread of life (John 6:41).
2. Roast Corn -- Christ given in death.
3. Green ears -- Christ in all the freshness and vigor of His life.

These were meant to be food for a redeemed people, walking by faith, in holiness; but after God was satisfied with His Christ.

Illustration of Firstfruits, Weeks, and Pentecost



Feast of Weeks

THE MEANING

The feast of weeks, ending on the 50th day, typifies the Spirit energizing a new *testimony* to the true character of the wave-sheaf. This testimony received its character from the wave-sheaf as seen in its being from the same harvest as the wave-sheaf.

THE NAMES OF THIS FEAST

There are three names whereby this feast is designated.

1. **The feast of harvest** (Ex. 23:15,16). This denotes that the first of the harvest of their fields was to be offered to Jehovah. It is well to remember that God's portion comes first. What is due Him should always be before us. It was an attitude that characterized our Lord.
2. **The feast of weeks** (Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10,16; Num. 29:26; 2 Chron. 8:13). This denotes that the time of fulfillment was 50 days after the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits (Lev. 23:15,16). It is a *period* of exercise. Compare Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:14.
3. **The day of firstfruits** (Num. 29:26). This refers to the 50th day itself when the wave-loaves were waved before Jehovah (Acts 1:1-4).

THE TIME

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

Lev. 23:15 says of the period, "they shall be complete." This is seven sevens. It signifies, I believe, the spiritual exercises of the Lord's people during those days that they were awaiting the descent of the Spirit. See Luke 24:29; Acts 1 and 2:1-4. This was a time during which exercise for *testimony* was prepared. This is typified in bringing the *two* loaves out of their dwellings. This was done on the morrow after the seventh sabbath.

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

See how God has set aside the Sabbath. And as we saw that the first-fruits of the harvest was waved on a Lord's day, so the two wave loaves were brought out on a Lord's day, 50 days later.

A NEW MEAL-OFFERING

There is a reason why this is called a NEW meal-offering.

1. The meal offering of Lev. 2 typifies the perfection of Christ in His holy walk

for God's glory, as energized by the Spirit (the oil).

2. Hence this is a *new* meal-offering. It had leaven in it, which was strictly forbidden in the meal offering which speaks of Christ. Leaven denotes evil in Scripture usage of it, as we saw in 1 Cor. 5 in connection with celebrating the feast of unleavened bread.

THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW MEAL-OFFERING

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

1. It is brought "out of your dwellings." To be a testimony to the true character of the wave-sheaf (a resurrected Christ) there must be an exercise of heart in our dwelling. Where, and in what condition of soul, do we spiritually dwell?
2. There are two wave-loaves. Two is the number of testimony in scripture. The Holy Spirit formed a testimony, to the resurrection of Christ, at Pentecost. And these loaves are wave-loaves. They were made from the same grain as the wave-sheaf.

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

His grace has identified us with Him in His victory over death. As the sheaf of firstfruits was waved before Jehovah, so were the loaves. It signifies something for the enjoyment and pleasure of God.

3. The wave-loaves were of two-tenths (of an ephah, probably) of fine flour. The quantity of the wave-sheaf was also two-tenths. It means that we ought to maintain the character of Christ Himself as the faithful and true witness, for He has made us partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
4. It was baked with leaven. There was no leaven in the meal offering (Lev. 2) which typifies Christ. Evil is present with me, said Paul (Rom. 7:21). The leaven in the wave loaves signifies the difference between Christ and His people. But fire, representing judgment, stops the action of leaven. Hence these are baked loaves. Do we judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:31)? Self-judgment will stop the working of leaven. There is, then, a treasure that we have in these earthen vessels. But in the earthen vessel there is sin, and this refers to our fallen nature. The prince of this world had nothing in Christ (John 14:30). In us, alas, he has material upon which to work. But fire, judgment, self-judgment will stop the (action) of the leaven which is in us.

THE ATTENDENT OFFERINGS

There were many offerings with the two wave loaves.

1. A burnt offering was composed of:

seven he-lambs --	the perfection of Christ's active submission to the will of God.
one young bullock --	the strength of Christ's service to God.

- two rams -- a testimony to Christ's active devotion.
2. The burnt offering was accompanied by its meal offering (the value of the life of Christ) and its drink offering (His joy in the will of God).
 3. And now note what we did not find accompanying the wave-sheaf: a sin offering. Why? Christ had no sin, but leaven is in the wave-loaves. The sin offering met the defect signified by the leaven in the wave-loaves. The sin-offering typifies the judgment of God upon what we are by nature, judged on the cross.
 4. There are also two yearling he-lambs for a peace-offering. This witnesses to the work of Christ as the ground of communion with God.
 5. The two yearling male lambs of the peace offering and the two loaves were waved before Jehovah and were for the priests. This was a different practice than normal for the peace offering, of which the offerer ate.

THE BREAD OF THE FIRSTFRUITS

James 1:18 says, "According to his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a certain first-fruits of *his* creatures."

Numbers 28:26 refers to the 50th day (Pentecost) as "the day of the firstfruits."

There is a special connection between the wave-loaves as firstfruits and the Firstfruits Himself. It is a testimony to His true character, like Himself. Hence, we -- we Christians -- who form that testimony are a firstfruits of His creatures, firstfruits of His finished work. Others will subsequently be blessed also.

THE GLEANINGS OF THE HARVEST

It was a gracious provision of God for the poor and the stranger to tell Israel not to entirely reap the field. It was because of this that Ruth and Naomi were sustained (Ruth 2:3-7, 15, 16). See also Lev. 19:9,10 & Deut. 24:10. No doubt many were helped by this provision.

Perhaps the harvest signifies God taking to Himself those who will be caught up at the rapture; and the gleanings would signify those gathered in after the rapture. It is something that occurs after the waving of the wave loaves: i.e., after the time of testimony to the character of the wave-sheaf.

SOME LESSONS FROM THE OBSERVANCES RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE

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

However, a record of its being kept is absent. Also, it is absent in Ezek. 45:21-25. It will have no application in the millennium because it was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. What took place as recorded in Acts 2:1-4 is the formation of a new testimony to the character of the wave-sheaf. The testimony of the Jewish remnant

during the great tribulation is the preaching of gospel of the kingdom, which John (Matt. 3:2) and our Lord (Matt. 4:17) preached. This is the testimony to the coming of the kingdom in power, as drawn nigh. The kingdom offer was rejected. Why would that be so when a Jew would want the kingdom? *The kingdom offer took a form which was a test for the nation.* It was offered in the Person of our meek and lowly Lord Jesus and required acceptance of Himself as thus presented and also required their repentance. Himself they did not want. "The first man" did not want "the second man." And the rejection of Him was therefore the rejection of the kingdom, though they knew it not. Israel will one day be willing (Psa. 110:1-3) and then they shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:26). Then shall Zion's King reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

He was rejected and went to the cross. There in those three hours He was made sin, (2 Cor. 5:21) and also bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). He poured out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12) and then the soldier pierced His side after He was dead, there came out blood having all the atoning value of the atoning sufferings and the atoning death as its value, blood for expiation; and along with it, water -- signifying the power for moral cleansing in His death. The blood cleanses from the guilt and the water cleanses from the dirt, the moral defilement of sin.

Now, such a One stood forth in victorious resurrection, "marked out Son of God in power, according to [the] Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of [the] dead" (Rom. 1:4). This is the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. Of necessity, there followed His exaltation, "above all the heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. 4:11). He fills the throne without wrong. He fills the very heart of the Father. Oh, that He might fill your heart and mine!

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

The wave-loaves do not typify a little Petrine dispensation alleged to be found in the book of Acts by some who will not have it that the body of Christ began at Pentecost (though, of course, the truth of the one body was not doctrinally expounded until after Paul was saved). The wave loaves typify that testimony which began at Pentecost and will continue until the Spirit that formed it by His coming here in a special capacity is removed, in that special capacity, along with that testimony, at the rapture.

It is infatuation with a false system that objects to the removal of the Spirit at the rapture. The Spirit was here in OT times, yet there is a special sense in which He came. Scripture says He came at Pentecost. Compare John 7:39 where we learn that the Spirit's coming depended, not merely on Christ's resurrection, but on

Christ's glorification. Now see Acts 2:32, 33. See also John 14:26; 16:8. He came in a special capacity, though in another sense He always was here as omnipresent God. Just so, He will *leave* concerning that special capacity, though as omnipresent He will still be here working sovereignly in the new birth. The objections arise in minds when the distinctive features of the present time are not apprehended.

This testimony formed by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost will continue until the rapture. There will be no application of this feast for the Jew in the millennium and this accounts for its omission in Ezek. 45.

The formation of the wave-loaves and the coming of the Spirit are once-for-all events, though the effect abides. There was only ever one Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Christ. All Pentecosts alleged since, by Pentecostalists and Charismatic renewal advocates, are delusions.²

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

Our Lord's Human Will

Father, if thou wilt remove this cup from me: – but then, not my will, but thine be done (Luke 22:42).

The Lord's Human Will Expressed in Gethsemene

Here in Gethsemene we see the perfect submission of the Lord's human will to the will of the Father. His will was a part of the perfection of His perfect humanity; He shrank from being made sin, and bearing sins in His own body on the tree, and bearing wrath. His perfection includes that He shrank from it. It was in accordance with His holiness to do so.¹ Indeed, the Son took *holy* humanity into His Person. Luke 1:35 expresses this:

[The] Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of [the] Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing that shall be born shall be called Son

2. See my *The Word of God Versus the "Charismatic Renewal,"* available from the publisher.

1. W. Kelly wrote:

In Him there was the absolute surrender of every thought and feeling to the will of God. There was but one apparent exception, where He prayed in His agony, "Let this cup pass from me." But how could He, who ever enjoyed the unbroken sunshine of God's favor throughout His career on earth, desire to be forsaken of God? It would have been indifference and not love, it would have been to despise the blessed fellowship between the Father and Himself. Therefore was it a part of the perfectness of Christ to say, "Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will but thine be done." His humanity because perfect (may I say?) could not wish for that unutterable scene of wrath: but here too He was, as in all things, subject to the will of God. "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" (In *Christ Tempted and Sympathizing*).

of God.

Son of God eternally, He must be Son of God in holy manhood also. Though become man, He remained the same Person, the Son of God. And though Godhead and manhood united in Him, there was but one Person, not two persons -- one of which was the Son of God and one of which was a man. He took holy manhood, body, soul (with a human will), and spirit, into His Person. *The manhood entered into His person* and there was but one Person. The finite mind, seeking to explain how this could be, falls into evil teaching, as it seeks to make this inscrutable truth comprehensible to the finite mind. We, as taught by the Spirit through the Scriptures, may *apprehend* that there is the unity of the two natures in Him, the human and the divine, one Person, but we cannot *comprehend* how this can be.

Concerning the expression of His human will in Gethsemene, W. Kelly wrote:

It was impossible that He who was life could desire such a death from His Father -- from God in wrath against Him. It would have been hardness, not love; but although He felt it perfectly according to God His Father, yet He entirely submits His human will to the Father's. "Abba, Father," He says, "all things are possible unto Thee. Take away this cup from Me; but not what I will, but what Thou [wilt]." He had a real soul, what is dogmatically called a reasonable soul, not a mere principle of vitality. He could not have said this, had it been true, as some have asserted, that the Divine nature in our Lord took the place of a soul. He would not have been perfect man had He not taken a soul as well as a body. Therefore could He say: "Not what I will, but what Thou [wilt]." ²

In a book that appears to have had the evil teachings of F. E. Raven in view, F. W. Grant remarked:

He shrank from it and could not take it as of His own will, but only as the divine will for Him. Here, surely, we have a perfect and therefore a real, human will. He is as true man as any man can be; and personally man, as such a will must prove Him. ³

Again:

To realize the subject of prayer is not to solve the mystery of it. It certainly gives us to see how true, while perfect, the humanity of the Lord Jesus was. In the seventh century, the words "Not My will, but Thine be done" were used against the Monothelites to prove the distinctness of the human from the divine will in Christ. But while we recognize their competency {of the words quoted} for such a purpose, it is for us to acquiesce in the Lord's own assurance that "No one knoweth the Son but the Father," and to refrain from seeking to penetrate beyond what is ours to know. The truth of His humanity, and its personality (without which it would not have been true) we may thank God for showing us in so clear

2. *Exposition of the Gospel of Mark*, London: Race, pp. 197, 198, ed. by E. E. Whiffeld, 1907. This is also found in *The Bible Treasury* 6:138.

3. *The Crowned Christ*, Kilmarnock: Ritchie, p. 54, 1945 reprint.

a manner; and we must hold it fast as essential to the proper Christian faith. Analysis of His inscrutable nature we should not venture upon.⁴

We shall touch on the Monothelite heresy below, which, of course, J. N. Darby also rejected. Let us look at some remarks by him regarding what transpired in Gethsemane:

. . . and without entering into it one moment as a temptation which might have for its effect in Him to awaken His own will. Such is Gethsemane; not the cup, but all the power of Satan in death and the enmity of man taking their revenge (so to speak) on God (“the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me”): all perfectly and entirely felt, but brought to God in an entire submission to His will. It is the Christ -- marvelous scene! -- watching, praying, struggling in the highest degree; all the power and the weight of death pressed upon His soul by Satan, and augmented by the sense He had of what they were before God, from whose face nothing then hid Him. But He always kept His Father absolutely before His face, referring everything to the Father’s will, without flinching for a moment, or trying to escape that will by giving way to His own. Thus He takes nothing from Satan or men, but all from God.⁵ ♦

As regards our obedience, it is essential for the true character of our path as Christians that we should lay hold of what this obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ was. Legal obedience in us is a different thing. We have got a will of our own: this was not true of Christ. He had a will in one sense, as a man, but He said, “Not my will, but thine, be done.” But we have got a will of our own; it may be checked and broken down. But if the law is applied to us, it is as stopping this will, but it finds it here, and such is our notion of obedience constantly. Take a child! there is a will of its own; but when the parents’ will comes in, and the child yields instantly without a struggle, and either does what it is bid or ceases to do what it is forbidden, you say, This is an obedient child, and it is delightful to see such an obedient spirit. But Christ never obeyed in that way. He never had a will to do things of His own will in which God had to stop Him. It was not the character of His obedience. It is needed with us, and we all know it, if we know anything of ourselves; but it was not the character of His obedience. He could not wish for the wrath of God in the judgment of sin, and He prayed that this cup might pass from Him. But the obedience of Christ had quite another character from legal obedience. His Father’s will was His motive for doing everything: “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.”

This is the true character of the obedience of Jesus Christ, and of ours as Christians.⁶ ♦

This reflective self-consciousness is man’s distinctive prerogative, as having a spirit. “I” has the power of using the upper faculty {i.e., the spirit} to reflect on the workings of “I.” I reflect, but the capacity is in the spirit of man. “There is,” says Elihu, “a spirit in man.” But how was this before the fall? I mean as to

4. *The Numerical Bible, The Gospels*, p. 251.

5. *Collected Writings* 29:319.

6. *Collected Writings* 16:175; repeated in 28:175. See also *Notes and Comments* 2:256.

“will.” And here I have to remark that I think “will” is used in two ways -- intention, the tendency of nature or “I,” towards something, and the determination of “I” to go out towards that something, and where this question is raised in a moral ground.

All will is sin, because it is not obedience, i.e., is assumed independence of God, and much more. Now unfallen Adam had no such will as this. It was tested in the tree, and he ought to have said “I can have no will -- I obey” -- but he distrusted and willed. But in the place where God had set him, as dressing the garden and keeping it, nature was free in the sphere God had given it authority in; and so as to animals. Here God had given authority, and will was in its place while the whole man was subject to God. But he used a will in the sphere of testing obedience and was lost -- Christ in the most perfect testing said “Not my will but thine be done.” His tendency of nature and “I” to escape suffering was right -- that suffering eminently so. He had, being a perfect Man, a will of nature and morally too, but no will which willed when God’s will was there. This is commonly, in its grosser form, called “Self-will.” It is the determination of “I” to have its own way.⁷ ♦

The Perfect Manhood Had a Human Soul and Thus a Human “I” and Will

Commenting on what constitutes manhood, W. Kelly pointed out that the soul is the seat of personal identity and that soul is the *ego*, that is, the *I*:

Again, our Lord in Luke 24:39, compared with 37 (and see Matt. 14:26), explains “spirit.” “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have,” even when risen. He had a “spiritual body,” and was not a mere “spirit,” though a quickening spirit. Granted that angels are spirits, but so is man when disembodied, whether the Lord Himself before He rose (Matt. 27:50; John 19:30), saints (Acts 7:59; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 22:6, as rightly read), or the unbelieving (1 Pet. 3:19). Soul (ψυχή) is the “ego” or “I,” the seat of personal identity, and therefore predicable of men alive or dead, as in ver. 20, etc., for the former; or Rev. 6:9; Rev. 20:4, for the latter; while πνεῦμα expresses the spiritual capacity, inseparable from the soul, wherein is the working of the will. They compose the inner man, as the body is the outer.⁸

And, of course, where the seat of personal identity is, there, he pointed out, is the will as well as personality:

In man, personality, self-consciousness, will, is in the soul; capacity is by the spirit. Each has his own soul, and so is personally responsible. The spirit is faculty or power; and so John Baptist was to come in the spirit and power of

7. *Notes and Comments* 2:315, 316.

8. *The Preaching to the Spirits in Prison*, London: Race, pp. 120, 121, n.d.

Elias, not in any other's soul but his own.⁹

That is man's constitution. Such was he in innocence, as in Adam unfallen, and such was man's constitution after the fall -- only that there was added to him the knowledge of good and evil as well as what we call the old nature, called "sin in the flesh" in Rom. 8:3. The constitution of manhood is true of Christ's manhood, but we must bear in mind that He had manhood in a holy state intrinsically, free of any taint of evil; and, in fact, impeccable -- that is, He could not sin, not only because of the Godhead in Him, but also because of the state of that holy humanity (cf. Luke 1:35). Now we will turn to a lengthy quotation from W. Kelly's *F.E.R. Heterodox on the Person of Christ*:

Now who does not know that a person among men consists of both parts and unity? There are spirit and soul and body; and yet they constitute the person. There may be temporary dissolution of the outer tie by death; there will surely be their unity in one person for eternity. But for the true believer Christ's Person is distinguished from every other by the infinite fact of God and man united thus. These are in Him for ever indissoluble, though no saint doubts that He is Son of God and Son of man. Whatever His profound emotion in spirit, whatever the conflict when He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became as great drops of blood, that Man was inseparably God; and as from His conception, so fully in His death and resurrection. Thus had His every word, work, thought, and suffering divine value. It is not the Son alone, but "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The man Christ Jesus is not only the one Mediator, but the true God and eternal life; the sent Servant, and the "I AM"; Christ of the fathers as according to flesh, yet He that is over all, God blessed for evermore. Amen . . .

F.E.R. talks of . . . "two totally different *ideas* coalesced in one person!" Yes, it is not truth, but "ideas" for F.E.R. Is this to "abide in the doctrine of the Christ"?

It is to join Apollinarius of Antioch (the son). He too made the Logos simply form Christ's Person, as F.E.R. does, and was therefore justly branded as an antichrist; so Nestorius was for dividing the Person, and Eutyches for confusing it: all of them, strict Trinitarians. For if the Logos had not been united to the soul as to spirit and body in the Christ, Christ was not and is not very Man as well as very God. Without that union there must have been two distinct personalities, the divine and the human. It is the union of both in one Person which alone secures the truth according to scripture. F.E.R. with shameless self-confidence vaunts his idea, which is plain heterodoxy. He does *not* "bring the doctrine" of Christ. The Son did not change His Person, but took up manhood into unity, and this in soul as in body.

In some such way deadly false doctrine befalls such as venture to pry into what is only known to the Father and immeasurably above man's ken. The Apollinarian heterodoxy prevails largely at present; as the error which led to it

9. In *The Soul - Neither Mortal Nor to Sleep*.

is a relic of heathen philosophy, accepted by early Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, and exceedingly common among "thinkers" now as at all times. It pervades Franz Delitzsch's *Psychology* and its English analogue, *The Tripartite Nature of Man*. They (and F.E.R. follows them) make the self-conscious "I" or individuality to reside in man's spirit. But scripture abundantly proves its seat to be in the soul. The spirit is inner capacity *as to* which man is responsible to God; but the soul is that *in* which he is so; and the body is the outer vessel which displays the result, whether by grace for God's will or by self-will in Satan's service.

To the soul belongs the working of the will, and now also since the fall the instinctive knowledge of good and evil; so that one is enticed into fleshly lusts which degrade man, as well as into reasonings of the spirit and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God. Hence we read of soul-salvation or "salvation of souls" as in 1 Pet. 1:9. Hence Ezek. 18:4, "Behold, all souls are Mine," and the regular use of "souls" for persons in both O. & N. Testaments. For the self-conscious individual, the responsible person, is in the "I." It is the "I" in self-will without God; the "I" when converted to God, but in bondage of spirit; and the "I" when Christ's deliverance is known in peace and liberty; as for the latter we see in Rom. 7, 8. Read also Gal. 2:20 . . .

Beyond doubt the union of God and man in one Person is the wondrous and unfathomable One revealed, not for our comprehension, but for unquestioning faith, love, and honor as we honor the Father. He is thus at once the weary man and the only-begotten Son that *is* (not "was" merely) in the Father's bosom; the Son of man here below that *is* in heaven, and the "I am" on earth threatened by the Jews with stoning because He told them the truth. He must have been the Logos to have been what He was here as man. His soul was united to the Logos: else the Person had been doubled or severed, and He could not be true and complete man. He cried, Let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. There was His holy will; and it was right to lay it before His Father, but in entire submissiveness to His will and glory; of which none but a divine Person was capable. It was not therefore the Logos superseding the spirit (still less the soul), but perfectly associated with the soul in His one Person. He was true man and true God in the same indivisible Person. In Him dwelt and dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Yet it is deep pain to feel compelled to speak out plainly, on such a theme not only before others liable to stumble, but in the sense of one's own danger of offending against God's word in defense of what is dearer than life, and far beyond man's thought . . .¹⁰

J. N. Darby Rejected the Monothelite Heresy

CONCISE DESCRIPTION OF THE MONOTHELITE HERESY

10. *F.E.R. Heterodox*, London: Weston, pp. 122-127, 1902. This may also be found in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:78-80, "F.E.R. Heterodox on the Person of Christ."

A very concise statement of the issue involved in this controversy is given by Andrew Miller:

. . . the so-called **Monothelite** controversy, may be described generally as a revival, under a somewhat different form, of the old Monophysite, of Eutychian, heresy, Under the name *Monophysites* are comprehended the four main branches of separatists from the Eastern church, namely, the Syrian Jacobites, the Copts, the Abyssinians, and the Armenians. The originator of this numerous and powerful christian community was Eutyches, abbot of a convent of monks at Constantinople in the fifth century. The Monophysites denied the distinction of the two natures in Christ; the Monothelites, on the other hand, denied the distinction of the will, divine and human, in the blessed Lord.¹¹

It is error to suppose that because the Person of Christ has a human will and a human "I," therefore He was two persons. He remains one Person, having taken true humanity into His Person. This is not subject to analysis and scrutiny by the human mind, and it is the attempt to solve how this can be which has led to so much evil doctrine concerning His Person. We confess Him as true God and true man united in one Person -- and as true man, having a human will and a human "I," else He would not be true man.

In replying to the evil Apollinarian doctrine held by F. E. Raven, that in Person He is God, in *condition* He is man, A. C. Ord wrote:

To insist upon "Christ's *individuality* as a man," is not to teach "two individualities," nor does "the simple faith that Jesus was *God and Man* in *one person*" in any sense involve "a dual personality." In Him Godhead and Manhood are united in His holy Person; God in person and Man in person; yet but one Person -- "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever."¹²

F. E. RAVEN'S USE OF THE WORD *CONDITION*

FER's doctrine of Christ means that Christ had no human soul and spirit. In his view the Son filled the place of the human soul and spirit and was thus the spirit of the body. A. C. Ord likened this, quite correctly, to a gem being placed in a casket. Thus, there really is no union of the human and divine in the Person of Christ. Of course, there being no human soul, there was no human will and no human "I," the supporting idea being that if there were, then Christ would be two persons (Nestorianism). A. C. Ord wrote:

It allows *only* that He is a Divine Person in human "*condition*" as opposed to

11. *Miller's Church History*, Addison: Bible Truth Publishers, pp. 340, 341, 1980 reprint. For some detail on these controversies, see *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* 7:474-484; Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* 4:490-500, "The Doctrine of the Two Wills in Christ"; and for exhaustive detail, see I. A. Dorner, *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ* 3:120-240.

12. "*The Man Christ Jesus*" 1 Timothy 2:5 Remarks on a Tract Entitled "*The Person of the Christ*," available from the publisher.

"*person*."¹³

THE WORD *PERSON* IS NOT THE SAME AS THE WORD "*CONDITION*"

Having the unity of the Godhead constantly asserted in scripture, the manner of the divine existence is a subject of mere revelation. There I find that the Holy Ghost wills and distributes; the Father sends; the Son is sent; and yet He and His Father are one. I find that the "Word is God," that the Son is "the true God," that "all things were created by him." If it is said of the Holy Ghost, "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit," I read in the same passage, "It is the same God that worketh all in all." Now, I have no better word than "person" for one who is sent, who wills, who distributes, who sends, and so on. It cannot give me that circumscribed idea of "person" which the word applied to man does (for then one existence excludes another); but I have no reason whatever to impose the limits of my manner of being on God's, but rather the contrary.¹⁴

Well, this is true also concerning the Person of Christ. When we speak of some person, we cannot deduce from that how the incarnation could be, or how the union of the human and the divine in Him is. Yet, He is one Person, though God and man. How the human entered into the Person of the Son we cannot know, but it is the fact. And that humanity was body, soul, and spirit; and that soul has a human will. And if our Lord Jesus has a human soul, then there is a human "I," a human ego, and a human will. Without this there would have been no true manhood.

J. N. DARBY REJECTED THE MONOTHELITE HERESY THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE WILL IN CHRIST

Mr. Sen's statements are old workings of the human mind mixed up, as was not unnatural, with Hindoo pantheism. As to Christ it is what was in early Christianity called "Monothelism," or really the Monophysite heresy -- one will, or one nature, and a new form of Arianism with what was called the word *eu-diatheos* (well disposed) and *prophorikos* (set forth) i. e., in God, as a quality or part of His nature or coming forth personally, with this difference, that those who went by these Greek names held He became personal at Creation, not at His birth as Mr. Sen does. I do not at all suppose Mr. Sen borrowed these ideas -- probably knew nothing of them; but they show the same workings of the human mind. Our business is with the Person of the Lord.¹⁵

THE LORD JESUS HAD A HUMAN EGO AND HUMAN PERSONALITY

The Lord Jesus prayed in Gethsemane:

. . . not what *I* will, but what *thou* wilt (Mark 14:37).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

14. *Collected Writings* 6:46.

15. *Notes and Comments* 2:278. "Eastern Christendom was always discussing points, Rome pushing its power. In the East they got a new point, on which it is surely not my purpose to dwell here: -- Christ had only one will, or at any rate His divine and human will coalesced, though He had two natures" (*Collected Writings* 22:145. See also p. 86).

The “I” is the I of the holy manhood. There would have been no complete manhood without this. The “I” is the ego. This is “the seat of personal identity.” The “will” in the words “not what I will,” is the *will* of that very I; the human will. Were this not true, there would have been no human personality. J. N. Darby wrote:

As regards personality, the conscious “I” is personality . . . ¹⁶

But as I am on this point, I add, they have no true Christ at all. I read, “How such human nature, as body, soul, and spirit, including a human will, could be held in personal union with the divine, so that this humanity was complete, without a human personality or ego, we cannot understand, but we believe it is a mystery revealed for faith.” Where? Why does the blessed Lord say, “Not my will but thine?” Why does He say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” if there was no ego, no human personality? Why does Hebrews quote, “will I sing praise,” and “will put my trust in him,” “behold I and the children which God hath given me,” if there was no I (ego)? Why does He say, “My God and your God, my Father and your Father” (not our), if there was no personality? * And this last remark, that Christ never says “our” with His disciples, I borrow from a European minister of some note, thoroughly imbued with the German system, where it is at home, not borrowed, and itself spoiled, as it is at Mercersburg. And this last statement, that Christ had no human personality, no ego, which is really heresy (though God and man were united in one person), and the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the mystery of His Person, when He has said, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father,” is found in the Article of one by no means the worst of their doctors. His antecedent respect for the blessed Lord has not been destroyed, as in others of them. But all hold it was corrupt fallen human nature which He took and had; not that He took human nature from a fallen mother but without sin, miraculously, by the power of the Holy Ghost. But he is the least bad on this point.

[*I am quite aware of and accept the ordinary orthodox statement of two natures in one person, though what was at first insisted on as orthodox as to *upostasis* was afterwards condemned, and the meaning of the word changed; but the statements quoted in the text are really Monothelite. It shows the danger of those early discussions, for the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one Person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied is Christ’s individuality as a man, as it is in terms elsewhere.] ¹⁷

Every Word, Work, and Way of the Lord Jesus Had a Divine Spring in It

Replying to an evil paper on the Lord’s humanity (written by B. W. Newton)

16. *Collected Writings* 32:43.

17. *Collected Writings* 29:212, 213.

J. N. Darby wrote:

Mr. N. goes beyond scripture in saying (p. 35) that “To say that there was in His humanity a divine spring of thought and feeling, is to deny His real humanity.” Was His humanity then without a divine spring of thought and feeling? Had he said it was not of or from His humanity, I should have nothing to say; but to say there was none in it unsettles the doctrine of Christ’s person. There was the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and the divine nature was a spring of many thoughts and feelings in Him. This is not the whole truth; but to deny it is not truth. If it merely means that humanity has not in itself a divine spring, that is plain enough; it would not be humanity. I am equally aware that it will be said that it was in His person; but to separate wholly the humanity and divinity in springs of thought and feeling is dangerously overstepping scripture. Is it meant that the love and holiness of the divine nature did not produce, was not a spring of, thought and feeling in His human soul? This would be to lower Christ below a Christian. Perhaps this is what Mr. N. means in saying He was dispensationally lower than the church. If so, it is merely a roundabout road to Socinianism . . .

To turn, then, to scripture, we are told of the sinless infirmities of human nature, and that Christ partook of them. Now, I have no doubt this has been said most innocently; but, not being scripture, we must learn in what sense it is used. Now, that Christ was truly man, in thought, feeling, and sympathy, is a truth of cardinal blessing and fundamental importance to our souls. But I have learnt, thereby, not that humanity is not real humanity, if there is a divine spring of thought and feeling in it; but that God can be the spring of thought and feeling in it, without its ceasing to be truly and really man. This is the very truth of infinite and unspeakable blessedness that I have learnt. This, in its little feeble measure, and in another and derivative way, is true of us now by grace. He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. This is true in Jesus in a yet far more important and blessed way. There was once an innocent man left to himself; the spring of thought and feeling being simply man, however called on by every blessing and natural testimony of God without: we know what came of it. Then there was man whose heart alas! was the spring, “from within,” of evil thoughts and the dark train of acts that followed. What I see in Christ is man, where God has become the spring of thought and feeling.* And, through this wonderful mystery, in the new creation in us, all things are of God. That, if we speak of His and our humanity, is what distinguishes it . . . Sinless humanity, sustained in that state by Godhead, is not the same as sinful humanity left to itself. If it be said it was in the same circumstances, this is a question of fact, and to what extent? And here we have to guard against confounding relationships and circumstances. Thus deprivation of paradise is stated by Mr. N. as one thing which the blessed Lord had in common with ourselves. As to circumstances, it is quite clear it was so; but as to relationship to God -- was Christ deprived of paradise as we are as guilty outcasts from it? Clearly not.

[*Did He hereby cease to be man? not at all. It is, though “according to God,” in man and as man these thoughts and feelings are to be found. And this extends itself to all the sorrows and the pressure of death itself upon his soul in thought. He had human feelings as to what lay upon Him and before Him, but God was the spring of His estimate of it all. Besides, the manifestation of God was in His ways. We had known man innocent in suitable circumstances; and guilt, subject to misery; but

in Christ we have perfectness in relation to God in every way, in infallibly maintained communion in the midst of all the circumstances of sorrow, temptation, and death, by which He was beset, the spring of divine life in the midst of evil, so that His every thought as man was perfection before God, and perfect in that position. This was what marked His state as being down here this new thing.]¹⁸

Thus, though Christ's death on the cross was a human death, we do not separate it from the value and glory of His Person. His sufferings, death, and bloodshedding had all the value and glory of His Person as their value and glory. This is because of the unity of the two natures in Him. Indeed, it is so precisely stated in 1 John 2:2:

and *he* is the propitiation for our sins . . .

Thus, the propitiation is commensurate with the value and glory of His Person. Every word, work, and way had a divine spring in it, and could not be human words, ways, and acts as if apart from the unity of the two natures. All that He did and said had a divine spring, and all was done in the power of the Spirit. There was no, and could be no, exception. Christ was not two persons. Fully man, and of course fully God, yet there is one Person. This the mind cannot comprehend, cannot scrutinize, yet by faith we receive the truth into our souls that He is God and man (fully so) in one Person, and our souls bow in worship.

Did Humanity Enter Into the Person of the Son, or Did the Person of the Son Personally Enter Into Manhood?

Christians confess that the Son of God existed eternally. The Person of the Son existed eternally. That Person took manhood into His person. Manhood personally entered into His Person. F. E. Raven's Appollinarian teaching that the Son took a "condition" was noted by A. C. Ord to mean that the incarnation was like a jewel that was put in a jewel box. The Jewel was a divine Person and the jewel box was the humanity (without the human soul and human spirit). Thus the Person took a "condition"; i.e., the jewel box. The person entered a condition -- i.e., entered into the jewel box.¹⁹ One could not say that the jewel box entered into the jewel. Thus, the Ravenite doctrine concerning the incarnation required that the Person assume a condition, or enter into a condition. It should be clear how opposite this is from saying that the humanity entered into His Person. Why would someone quite aware of the Raven controversy say that "He personally entered into manhood." Why would he choose to state his belief in such a way? Why, if sound in the faith, would he not say that manhood entered into the Son's

18. *Collected Writings* 15:147-150.

19. We can see from this that there was no union of the jewel and the jewel box. F. E. R.'s teaching was that if there was a union of the divine and the human, there would be a change in the Person, and there was no change in the Person. The truth is that the Person did not change because manhood entered into His Person. He remained the Son of God.

Person? It is a form of FER's doctrine, even if one who so speaks says that Christ did indeed have a real human soul and spirit. No, "He became man" is not the same as "He *personally* entered into manhood." Saying that he took manhood into union with His Person is not the same doctrine as "He *personally* entered into manhood." Such talk is not acceptable in view of the Raven controversy. And when, in connection with such a statement as "He personally entered into manhood," the word "*condition*" is brought into the discussion, the Raven influence becomes even clearer. "The Person in a condition" is the hallmark summary statement of FER's evil teaching.

There may be this difference from FER. If coupled with the expression, "He personally entered into manhood," i.e., into a condition, it may be believed that the Lord had an actual human soul and spirit. There is thus opportunity for such a person's defenders to claim soundness for him and that the two ways of stating the matter of the incarnation are really the same, only a matter of preference of wording. Saying the Lord had a real human soul and spirit makes the matter more subtle, but for all that, the same Ravenite teaching of the Person entering a condition may thus be taught. The jewel (i.e., the divine being) has personally entered into the jewel box (i.e., the human), the box being defined differently, as to its constitution, than as held by FER. "He personally entered into manhood" is quite consistent with FER's teaching of *the Person in a condition*. Ed.

Some Questions Touching Our Lord's Humanity

A correspondent has sent us some questions upon this subject, the importance of which seems to claim a more distinct notice than could be given under the usual heading. The letter containing them is too long for insertion here, but all the questions will be found taken up in the order in which they are proposed.

With regard to the first quotation, that "the second Adam was, as to his manhood the Lord from heaven," it was a hasty expression put forth by one who as far as could be from holding the error implied in it and who, when it was pointed out to him, publicly withdrew the statement. It was laid hold of to prove that the writer had the views of certain Gnostic heretics who denied the Lord's real humanity, -- a charge so much the more unjust because in the book, only a little further on than this quotation, there was a direct denial of this error by name.

But the inaccuracy of this expression no doubt for many might bring in question the real and valuable truth with which it was connected. I cannot find the quotation as to the Lord's body being called, a "heavenly vessel," but I do find it stated that it was "free from every seed and principle, not merely of sin, but of *mortality*." Surely that is true, and most important. If the Lord had had in His

body a “seed or principle of mortality,” He would have been a poor, dying man like any of us. Such an expression does not imply simply a body that *could* die,” but a body that must die, at least according to the law of its nature. But the wages of sin is death.” “Dying thou shalt die” was the penalty of the transgression of the first Adam, and the last Adam was not under it. He could die, and so could Adam innocent; but inherent tendency to die he had not, any more than Adam. Even when “found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.” It was a further *humbling* to Him, even after becoming a ,to die; and a voluntary obedience for which the Father has highly exalted him. So He presents it as a thing the “title” to which was His. “Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power (title) to lay it down, and I have title to take it again” (John 10:17, 18). Was it, I ask, a thing the sentence of which was already working on Him, of which He thus spoke? I have read in a so-reputed orthodox book, that perchance the blessed Lord suffered in mid-life because it would not have done to see the Savior with grey hairs! It is the natural fruit, I own, of the doctrine of His life being vicarious from His birth, but it is as baseless as that doctrine. Scripture disowns it altogether. Even on the Cross It is not His suffering there from which he dies. Crying with a loud voice, in witness of His unexhausted strength, He gives up His own spirit to the Father.” In Matthew it is expressly said, “he *dismissed* His spirit.” The centurion, when he “saw that He *so cried out*, and gave up the ghost,” said, “Truly this man was the Son of God.” When Pilate heard He was already dead, he marveled. Every circumstance shows and is designed to show, that to the last He had authority (according to His own saying) over death, and *not death over Him*. I repeat it, that death is the wages of sin, -- passed upon all men for that all have sinned. If the blessed Lord was not of this class, as He was not, He could have no seed of mortality in Him. He could stoop to death, and did, but then only when He “bare our sins in His own body”; and that was “on the tree,” and nowhere else (1 Pet. 2:24). And there we have the most distinct evidence what a voluntary surrender of His life it was. The question of vicarious life suffering I must reserve for another paper.

The next quotation, if it be one, is made ambiguous (I should suppose,) by the want of its context. To say simply and alone, that “the incarnation was not Christ taking our nature into union with Himself,” naturally perplex, if it did not mislead, though what follows (if in connection) would suggest the explanation “that between humanity as seen in our Lord, and humanity *as seen in us*, there could be no union.” Our correspondent asks, “How does that agree with Heb. 2:14-17?”

I have said that the first sentence (or part of a sentence) *standing by itself*, is ambiguous, and therefore objectionable. The expression “our nature” might be under, simply as humanity, or as the text in Hebrews puts it, “flesh and blood.” Then, I need not say, it would be downright heresy to speak so. But on the other

hand “our nature” is commonly used for “fallen nature” and this is what is evidently intended. It is not the Lord’s taking humanity that is denied, but “humanity *as seen in us*.” Certainly, the Lord did not, and could not, take *fallen* human nature into union with Himself. He took flesh and blood, -- was true man; *truer* man, if I may so speak, than any of us, just because humanity in Him was without fracture.

“Forasmuch then as the Children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death,” etc. He took flesh and blood, the nature of man as God made it, not as sin made it. But He took it that He might suffer and die. Of suffering and death He was capable, and in grace suffered and died. But there was nothing in His nature even as man, that necessitated this. The translation of Heb. 2:16 is wrong, and might mislead. Any one may see by the italic letters that there is nothing about “nature” there. It reads really as in the margin, “lie taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.” So when it is added, “wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren,” it is not that He was “made like” them in all things *by incarnation*. We were shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. He was “that holy thing” conceived through the supervention of the Holy Ghost, and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High. Certainly that is not being “in all things made like.” But these words apply, not (as the mistranslation of the 16th verse would seem to make them) to His taking flesh, but to what, when made flesh, He needed to pass through. This Holy One was taking up not an angel’s cause, but that of believers, the seed of Abraham. They were not holy ones He laid hold of, but sinners under the consequences and exposed to the dread penalty of sin. Therefore taking up these He must be made like them, must put Himself into all their circumstances, make Himself at home in all their condition, that He might know how to meet it and minister to those in it.

But I apprehend there is more than this involved in the statement, that “between humanity as seen in our Lord and humanity as seen in us, there could be no union.” I apprehend that it refers to a very common misstatement, that in incarnation Christ became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Many have taken this up without weighing it, and find it too cheering and comforting a thought, perhaps, to be willing to give up. Many, I fancy, even believe it to be Scripture. Not only is it not that, but involves a serious error. The Scripture statement is that as united to the risen and glorified man, “*we* are members of *His* body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Or take it as in the type in Genesis, from whence people no doubt take the expression. It was Eve of whom Adam said (and he was “the figure of Him that was to come,” Rom. 5:14), “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” It was the woman “taken out of the man,” during the mysterious “deep sleep” which fell upon him. And plainly if there be figure there; it is not that of the Lord coming into Union with mankind on the ground of k common humanity, but that of the Church. (whom, Eve, according to Eph. 5, represents), taken out of the second Adam, fruit of Divine power

working by this mysterious death-sleep, and united to Himself raised from the dead.

The difference is most important. He Himself speaking of His death and its result, assures us, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24). He could not unite Himself with man as man, but only, upon the basis of, His work with those who believe in it, and take the ground of it before God, who are partakers of eternal life, of the Divine nature. And *their* union is not with One down here in the flesh and in the world, but with One dead out of it., and risen, and in another sphere. As the apostle says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more; therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," or as the words mean, "a creature new in kind," (2 Cor. 5:17). People refer this to simple moral transformation; it is more: "Christ after the flesh" was perfect, morally, -- as perfect as now: but it is a risen and ascended Christ we have to do with, and in whom we are.

All that the soul finds precious, His nearness, sympathy, oneness with us, is here maintained, but set upon true, and therefore immeasurably higher ground. His sympathy is manifested as with the new man, not the old. All that suits not with the new condition is judged, not sympathized with; but weakness and the trials and difficulties of the path below, sufferings and trial as the result of being in the midst of things contrary to us and to God, met perfectly in the grace of Him who came to know and minister to our condition, but ever as the One come from God, and going back to God, heavenly in character all through.

But to return now to the quotations. The next we think our correspondent has misunderstood. It *is* an error "to suppose that the reality of the incarnation involves the condition of either Adam fallen or Adam unfallen." This is not a question of "nature" but of "condition," as the quotation itself shows. The condition of Adam fallen was that of a dying sinner in a world spoiled and suffering from the sin introduced into it. The condition of Adam unfallen was that of an innocent, unsuffering man in Paradise. Was either of these conditions the Lord's? Clearly not. His was that of the Holy One in the midst of a sin laden and groaning world. Surely that is widely different. The quotation says that the reality of the Incarnation does not involve either of the former conditions: that is, that while the Lord became true man, was really, not seemingly incarnate, that does not imply His being in either. It is a very needful caution not to make the suffering He in grace passed through an argument for his being One in whom all through His life the curse and wrath upon sin were working. On the Cross He was "made a curse," but only there He met "indignation and wrath." The Cross stands out in unmistakable contrast thus with His life as man up to it: just as the "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," with the outspoken witness of God elsewhere, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Yet even on the Cross, as we have seen, we find distinctly One over whom personally death had no, title, but One

who had title (as no creature could have) to "dismiss His spirit" and to die.

I turn now to the question of His resurrection-life. Our correspondent quotes, "In His resurrection-life He had not assumed into His sacred person the blood shed on the Cross. The 'life of the flesh is in the blood,'" and asks, "What other sense can One make of that, than that Christ did not live again as man?" But that is not at all its sense. A risen man is a man, surely; yet is it expressly said, that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. 15:50), and that with regard to resurrection. Therefore, for the living. When the Lord comes, the necessity of being "changed"; "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (v. 51). We shall be still men, but not "flesh and blood." He, whom we look for, "will change the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory," ¹ (Phil. 3:21). Now, if our "spiritual body" is to be thus like His, not "flesh and blood," and yet we find Him claiming for Himself "flesh and bone" (Luke 29:39), what can we gather but that the "blood" -- the vehicle of change as we know it to be, "the life of all flesh," as Lev. 17:14 declares it, -- is that which He as risen did not take up again, and which the spiritual body will not possess?

As to John 10:17, I8 being against this, it could only be made to do so by a narrowness of interpretation which Scripture itself rejects. Certainly He laid down His life, "dismissed his spirit," and as certainly took it again in resurrection, but not in its old conditions. Life is a many-sided, complex thing, and according to the aspect in which we regard it we might say, He took it again, or that He never took it again, or even that He never laid it down, for "all live unto God," even the dead.

Other questions raised will more naturally come up in connection with the enquiry, which we must reserve for another paper, Was our Lord's life vicarious, according to the common doctrine of the day?

From *Helps by the Way*

1. So the revised translations, as Alford's and the Bible Union, change the "vile body" and "glorious body" of our common version.