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## *An Affirmation of the Lord's Human Personality*

### *Introduction*

Christians do say that “Christ is God and man in one Person.” However, what some believe concerning the meaning of “man” in that sentence varies, from what is truth to what is fundamentally evil teaching. Christians say that Christ’s manhood is spirit, soul, and body. That is true. But some may not understand that man’s soul has a will and an “I” -- an “I” of *identity*. Christ’s having a human soul means just that -- a human soul with a human will and a human “I.” Yet Christ is one Person. How this can be so is not within human capability to understand. But in an attempt to bring the person of Christ within human ability to explain and to understand the union of the divine and human in Him, fundamentally evil teachings have been taught.

Human personality has to do with the human “I.” That human “I” has a human will. In the garden, the Lord Jesus prayed: “not my will, but thine be done.” There was the expression of the human “my” and the human will -- but not, of course, apart from what He is as God, for all is said in accordance with that inscrutable unity of His Person as the God-man. Every word, work, and expression had a divine spring in it. <sup>1</sup>

I think all Christians can accept by faith these Scripture facts about Christ without thinking that they have to be explained; i.e., how this can be in one Person. They can believe that Christ is God in Person and that He is man in Person.

By the human personality of the Lord Jesus is meant that He had a human spirit, a human soul, a human will, and a human “I” (meaning a human ego), and a human body; i.e., that He is *fully* man. The result of denying that the Christ had a human will and a human “I” is, in effect, to assert an incomplete manhood in Christ; i.e., an *impersonal* humanity in Christ. To have a soul without the personal “I” and “will” would be incomplete manhood. Such was not our Beloved.

The truth is that being fully man does not make Him two persons. The incarnation prevented that from being the case. *The Son took humanity into His*

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1. “. . . every faculty in His humanity obeyed, and was the instrument of the impulse the divine will gave to it (*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 16:28). See more on this, *ibid.*, 15:147.

*Person so that there is one Person*, though there be two natures, the divine and the human. He is fully God and fully man in one Person. The human mind cannot fathom this wonderful truth. Nor is there some analogy by which it may be explained.

Human mental analysis may say, ‘that cannot be: therefore there was no human spirit and soul’ (**Apollinarianism**) – held by J. B. Stoney, F. E. Raven, C. A. Coates, James Taylor, Sr., and the Glantonite James Boyd, at least in the last five years of his life.

On the other hand, human mental analysis in divine matters may admit the two wills and two “I”s and say: there cannot be one Person, so there must be two *distinct* persons (**Nestorianism**).

But human mental analysis in this matter may say: ‘yes there was a human spirit and a human soul, but there was not both a divine “I” and a human “I” (two “I”s) and two wills in Christ, a human will and a divine will (this denial is **Monothelism**)’ <sup>2</sup> -- held by T. H. Reynolds (who remained with FER in 1908 at the time of the Glanton division). Subjection to the Word shows that there was human personality in Christ: spirit, soul, body, human will, and human “I,” yet one Person (**Orthodoxy**), without pretending competency to comprehend or explain how this can be.

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2. Here is a description of Monothelism from *The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*:

Closely connected with Monophysitism was Monothelism (see Monothelites), or the doctrine that Christ had but one will, as he had but one person. The orthodox maintained that will is an attribute of nature, rather than of person, and consequently that Christ had two wills -- a human will and a divine will -- both working in harmony. The Monothelite controversy lasted from 633 to 680. The Emperor Heraclius proposed a compromise formula -- one divine-human energy (*mia theandrikē energeia*); but it was opposed in the West. The sixth ecumenical council condemned the Monothelite heresy, and repeated the Chalcedonian Creed, with the following supplement concerning the two wills (cf. Schaff, *Creeeds*, ii. 72-73):

And we likewise preach two natural wills in him [Jesus Christ], and two natural operations undivided, inconvertible, inseparable, unmixed, according to the doctrine of the holy Fathers; and the two natural wills [are] not contrary (far from it), as the impious heretics assert, but his human will follows the divine will, and is not resisting or reluctant, but rather subject to his divine and omnipotent will. For it was proper that the will of the flesh should be moved, but be subjected to the divine will, according to the wise Athanasius.

The same council condemned Pope Honorius I. (625-638) as a Monothelite heretic, and his successors confirmed its decision. Monothelism continued among the Maronites on Mount Lebanon, who, however, afterward submitted to the Roman Church, as well as among the Monophysites, who are all Monothelites.

Monothelism is leaven concerning the Person of Christ and requires separation from the evil fellowship that tolerates it. However, this will be resisted and rather than to separate from the evil, the messenger will be attacked, denounced, and accused of heresy, particularly of Nestorianism.

## *T. H. Reynolds' and F. E. Raven's Denial of the Lord's Human Personality*

It bears repeating that the manhood of Christ means that He had a human spirit, and a human soul -- with a human will, and a human "I" (*ego*) -- and a human body. This the Son took into His Person in the incarnation. F. E. Raven (FER) and his supporter, T. H. Reynolds (THR) denied this. Whatever else they denied concerning His Person, they denied that Christ had a human will and a human "I" (*ego*).<sup>3</sup> This denial is fundamentally evil. Those that refused fellowship with FER held that Christ did indeed have a human will and a human "I," else He would not be man. Such 'manhood' would be an *imagined manhood*, without human personality, thus not really human. Of course, In Christ's manhood there was not taint of, nor tendency to, sin, for He held humanity in a holy state, not in innocency as in Adam's unfallen state.

It is possible that THR was not an Apollinarian (denying Christ had a human soul and spirit). But he certainly did deny the human will and human "I" in Christ, and thus was guilty of the Monothelite heresy. After observing T. H. Reynolds' denial of Christ's human "I," we will consider some statements by the opposers of FER and THR, asserting the human personhood of Christ.

### *T. H. Reynold's Formula*

J. Hennessy pointed out this:

In the *Synopsis* {written by J. N. Darby} we read, "His complete person (5, 18).<sup>4</sup> Let the reader note the presentation of the Lord's divine person on earth, *assuming to be what he was not*, according to these teachers, who deny to Him a human "I." T.H.R. wrote (Letter of December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1895, circulated in Dublin):

The blessed Lord could say "I" as God -- before Abraham was "I" am. He could say "I" as Man -- "I will put my trust in Him (God)," but when we ask who was the conscious "I" the answer is, the Son of God speaking as Man on earth.

Thus the blessed Lord is represented as personating a human "I"!! . . .

Where is the Man Christ Jesus in this "I"? This is F.E.R. and T.H.R.'s Christ! The doctrine involves the denial of Jesus Christ come in the flesh

3. I have dealt with FER's Apollinarian doctrine in *The Eternal Relationships in the Godhead*.

4. {*Synopsis* 5:12; also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:101.}

(2 John 2:7), for it denies Him to be a perfect human *person*.<sup>5</sup>

This statement in the letter by THR is quoted also in N. Noel's History where he condemned it, writing:

That Christ was God, possessing an *impersonal humanity*, became the Christ of Mr. Raven, as well as of his lieutenants.<sup>6</sup>

## *Affirmation of Human Personality in Christ by J. N. Darby*

### THE LORD JESUS IS A HUMAN BEING

He was really and truly a human being.<sup>7</sup>

Of course He was a human being. He is "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:6).

### "WHAT IS REALLY DENIED IS CHRIST'S INDIVIDUALITY AS A MAN"

Let us emphasize this heading:

. . . 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 . . .<sup>8</sup>

5. *An Answer to . . . What is Ravenism?* pp. 22, 23.

6. *The History of the Brethren* 2:547.

7. *Synopsis* 3:202.

8. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:212.

In replying to the evil Apollinarian doctrine held by F. E. Raven, that in Person He is God, in *condition* (i.e., not in Person) 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" ("*The Man Christ Jesus*" 1 Timothy 2:5, *Remarks on a Tract Entitled "The Person of the Christ,"* available from Present Truth Publishers).

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, in FER's scheme, 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 {FER's teaching} allows *only* that He is a Divine Person in human "condition" as opposed to "person" (*ibid.*, p. 5).

(continued...)

Denying that the Lord had a human will and human “I” is denying Christ’s individuality as a man. Without that human will and human “I” there is no true manhood -- “the man Christ Jesus.”

#### IN CHRIST THERE IS BOTH DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURE

If there is the divine and human nature in Him, there is only one Person.<sup>9</sup>

There is no human nature without a human will and a human “I.” These are in the soul.

#### THE CONSCIOUS “I” IS PERSONALITY

It is true concerning humanity that:

As regards personality, the conscious “I” is personality . . .<sup>10</sup>

#### CONTRARY TO MONOTHELITISM, THE LORD HAS HUMAN PERSONALITY -- A HUMAN “I” (EGO)

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,<sup>11</sup> 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,<sup>12</sup> which is really heresy (though God and man were united in one person), and the mere folly of

8. (...continued)

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 is body, soul, and spirit; and that soul has a human will. Since our Lord Jesus has a human soul, there is a human “I” (a human ego), and a human will. Without this there would have been no true manhood, no human personality.

9. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:107.

10. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:43.

11. {Take note that JND is refuting the idea that Christ had no human “I.”}

12. {Take note that JND equates the human personality of Christ with having an ego, i.e., an “I.”}

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.<sup>13</sup>

\* I am quite aware of and accept the ordinary orthodox statement of two natures in one person,<sup>14</sup> 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 {emphasis added}.

So, JND rejected **Monothelism**, and affirmed that Christ had human personality, a human *ego*, i.e. “I.” Who is going to charge him with being a Nestorian?

We see the same rejection of Monothelism in his reply to Mr. Sen:

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<sup>15</sup> . . . 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.<sup>16</sup>

13. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:212.

14. {Later, some of the orthodox on the two natures will be quoted.}

15. {It should be clear that JND refers to Mr. Sen’s view as Monothelism and the Monophysite heresy, which JND rejects. That is, JND rejects the idea that there was only one will in Christ.}

16. *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).

Here again JND rejects the idea of only one will in Christ.

Andrew Miller gave a concise statement of the issue in the **Monothelite** heresy:

. . . the so-called **Monothelite** controversy, may be described generally as a revival, under a somewhat different form, of the old Monophysite, or Eutychian, heresy . . . 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 (*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.

## CHRIST HERE PERSONALLY AS MAN

He is made flesh, is full of grace and truth as a living Person down here as a Man, and of this have we all received. The former part was nature, witness, and how received; this fulness communicable as a source to others, and the Object of their faith, declaring God, withal the only-begotten Son as in the bosom of the Father. This is important in John, for while showing He was I AM, **yet we always find Christ personally as Man**, the recipient of all from God . . .<sup>17</sup>

## MAN TAKEN INTO UNION WITH GOD IN ONE PERSON

He who had this place {as eternal Son} with the Father was made flesh -- God's delight down here, God manifest in flesh; grace to man, grace in man, man taken into union with God in one person . . .<sup>18</sup>

The union of man and God is the sole prerogative of the Word made flesh. It is incarnation, and that is true of none but Him. And when the Word was made flesh, it was in a divinely ordered and miraculous way, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost so that that born of the virgin was a holy thing, true flesh and blood surely, but untainted by sin. And this is true now of no other humanity. All are born in sin, and there is no question of any union or reunion with God, or is the idea in any way scriptural, nor is there union with the Lord in incarnation. He was among them "the holy thing;" but He was alone, God and man in one person, but not united to men, to sinful corrupt man; but, having miraculously-formed sinless manhood in His own person. The union with Godhead was now, for the first time, and only here.<sup>19</sup>

. . . the union of Godhead and manhood in one Person.<sup>20</sup>

A wondrous and blessed thought! He who had this place with the Father was made flesh- God's delight down here, God manifest in flesh; grace to man, grace in man, man taken into union with God in one person-the pledge of peace on earth . . .<sup>21</sup>

## HE TOOK OUR NATURE

He did not take sinful flesh but was "in likeness of flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3). He had humanity in a **holy state** (Luke 1:35). In Heb. 2:14 we read:

Since therefore the children partake of flesh and blood, he also, in like manner, took part in the same . . .<sup>22</sup>

17. *Notes and Comments* 5:179. Emphasis has been added.

18. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 30:151.

19. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 15:347.

20. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:358.

21. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 30:152.

22. See the footnote in JND's translation of this verse. Answering some questions, W. Kelly wrote:

(3.) To bring about this relationship to Himself incarnation was requisite with a view  
(continued...)

It would be, of course, absurd to say that Christ's humanity was only a body (Apollinarianism). As JND says:

He took our nature that He might die . . .<sup>23</sup>

Man's nature includes a human will and a human "I," else there is no human personality.

## CHRIST'S HUMANITY IS OF ITS OWN ORDER: SINLESS, IMPECCABLE, AND IN CHRIST'S PERSON

His humanity, it is said {by B. W. Newton}, was not *sui generis*. This too is confusion. The abstract word humanity means humanity and no more: and, being abstract, must be taken absolutely, according to its own meaning. But, if the writer means that in fact the state of Christ's humanity was not *sui generis*, it is quite wrong; for it was united to Godhead, which no one else's humanity ever was; which, as to fact, alters its whole condition. For instance, it was not

## 22. (...continued)

to redemption. Since then the children partake, or are partakers of (κεκοινωνηκεν) blood and flesh, He Himself also similarly participated in (μετέσχευεν) the same. The former verb supposes a common share in what belonged to the children, as indeed to all men. For there is no difference in the human nature of godly and of ungodly. The latter verb means to take or get a share in anything (in this case, humanity).

(4.) "Likewise," "in like manner," "similarly" (as I have rendered it), is the true force of παραπλησίως. It is not correct to say that the rendering in our common Bible is not sufficiently strong. Bengel gives *similitier* and remarks, not that it is equivalent to but "idem fere atque mox *κατα πάντα per omnia* v. 17, c. iv. 15." The Docetae may have perverted the word to their own wicked folly; but no scholar who examines the matter can deny that *π.* does *not go as far as* δυοίως or ἴσως; but as Alford justly remarks, it expresses "a general similitude, a likeness in the main: and so not to be pressed here, to extend to *entire identity*, nor on the other hand, to imply, of purpose, *partial diversity*; but to be taken in its wide and open sense -- that He Himself also partook, in the main, in like manner with us, of our nature." The Docetae did not believe that Christ really μετέσχευεν τῶν αὐτῶν, which words do predicate sameness in essence. It is ignorance to found this on παραπλησίως, which simply asserts similarity of manner: while on the other hand, even this could not have been truthfully said, had not the Word been made οὐ δοκητῶς ἀλλ' ἀληθινῶς, οὐ φανταστικῶς ἀλλ' ὄντως. (Cp. Phil. 2:27.)

(5.) Christ took human nature most really, though not in a state identical with ours (as is more fully explained — strange that it should be needed by the believer! — in Heb. 4:15); but He took it to die, that through death He might destroy (annul, render void) him that has the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver, etc. To avail for God's glory or even for us, it was into *death* that grace led the Savior. There only could Satan's might be brought to nought; thus only could redemption be wrought, a ruined creation be reconciled to God, guilty souls be atoned for effectually and for ever. All this and more was done by the death of Christ, though its power be displayed in resurrection alone. All else fails to vindicate God, annul Satan, or deliver man (*The Bible Treasury* 6:79).

23. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 27:343.

only sinless, but in that condition incapable of sinning;<sup>24</sup> and to take it out of that condition is to take it out of Christ's person.<sup>25</sup>

#### "THE PERSON IS NOT CHANGED"

For the Person is not changed.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, JND held that the Son took humanity into His person, yet he says that the Person is not changed. That is, He remained the Son and He remained the Word. JND did not mean by such a statement that there was no union of the divine and human in Christ. The fact is, then, by saying the Person did not change, JND did not mean that there was *not* something added to His Person, for he held that the Son took humanity into His Person, yet he remained the Son and the Word. The fact is that there was addition to His Person, but He remained the Son and the Word and the eternal life. That is the sense in which is meant "the Person is not changed."

The reader is specifically warned about the abuse of the words, "the Person is not changed" because FER and his followers say "the person is not changed" and use those words with a different, new meaning from JND; namely, they use it to deny the Son's taking manhood into His Person. It is well to observe how heresy changes the use and meaning of words and phrases. Thus, the reader may find words such as that the Person is not changed -- and there was no addition to His Person. That is a denial that the Son took manhood into His Person and is

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24. {On the other hand Jesus had no sin. Although perfectly man, every thought, feeling, and inward motion was holy in Jesus: not only not a flaw in His ways was ever seen, but not a stain in His nature. Whatever men reason or dream, He was as pure humanly as divinely; and this may serve to show us the all-importance of holding fast what men call orthodoxy as to His person. I shall yield to none in jealousy for it, and loyally maintain that it is of the substance and essence of the faith of God's elect that we should confess the immaculate purity of His humanity, just as much as the reality of His assumption of our nature. Assuredly He did take the proper manhood of His mother, but He never took manhood in the state of His mother, but as the body prepared for Him by the Holy Ghost, who expelled every taint of otherwise transmitted evil {cp. Luke 1:35}. In His mother that nature was under the taint of sin: she was fallen, as were all others naturally begotten and born in Adam's line. In Him it was not so; and, in order that it should not be so, we learn in God's word that He was not begotten in a merely natural generation, which would have perpetuated the corruption of the nature and have linked Jesus with the fall; but by the power of the Holy Ghost He and He alone was born of woman without a human father. Consequently, as the Son was necessarily pure, as pure as the Father, in His own proper divine nature, so also in the human nature which He thus received from His mother: both the divine and the human were found for ever afterwards joined in that one and the same person — the Word made flesh.

Thus, we may here take occasion to observe, Jesus is the true pattern of the union of man with God, God and man in one person . . . The Christian never has union with God, which would really be, and only is in, the Incarnation (W. Kelly, *Lectures introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, pp. 214, 215.

25. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 15:147.

26. *Synopsis* 5:230 note. Also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 25:2. So W. Kelly, *F.E.R. Heterodox*, p. 124 (and *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:78).

a fundamentally evil denial of the truth of Christ's Person.

#### DISCUSSING THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Sorry to say, there are persons who warn about "discussing" the Person of Christ when His Person has been under attack. Perhaps those who do this are trying to ward off the implications of fellowship with evil teaching concerning His Person. They are resisting that souls should be preserved from evil teaching. A balanced view of this matter was stated by JND:

We must take care not to pretend to know all that concerns the union of humanity and divinity in the Person of the Lord. This union is inscrutable. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Jesus grew in wisdom. What has made some Christians fall into such grave errors is, that they have wished to distinguish and explain the condition of Christ as man. We know that He was and that He is God; we know that He became man, and the witness to His true divinity is maintained, in that state of humiliation, by the inscrutability of the union. One may show that certain views detract from His glory, and from the truth of His Person; but I earnestly desire that brethren should not set to work to dogmatize as to His Person: they would assuredly fall into some error. I never saw any one do it without falling into some unintentional heresy. **To show that an explanation is false, in order to preserve souls from the evil consequences of the error, and to pretend to explain the Person of the Lord, are two different things . . .**<sup>27</sup>

So, when JND states that the Lord had a human will and a human "I," was that dogmatizing (or "discussing," or "dissecting") concerning Christ's Person? -- and JND is self-condemned? Hardly! Let us continue with his warnings:

I have not entered into the discussions on {Henry} Craik's doctrines. I dread dissecting, if I may venture so to speak, Christ, it is not the way to honor Him. Very few will speak so as not to commit themselves; "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." We may know many precious things of Him which enable us to condemn error, but nice definitions of what He was, and how He was it, human language and human thoughts are not competent to, I judge. I do condemn many things I have heard said . . .<sup>28</sup>

. . . Our precious Savior was Man, as truly as I am, as regards the simple abstract idea of humanity, but without sin, miraculously born by divine power; and more than this, He was God manifest in flesh.

Now, having said so much, I entreat you with all my heart not to try to define and to discuss the Person of our precious Savior; you will lose the savor of Christ in your thoughts, and you will get in its place only the barrenness of the human mind in the things of Christ, and in the affections which belong to them. I have begged the brethren to refrain from this, and they are all the better

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27. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:310. Boldfacing is added.

28. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:262.

for it. It is a labyrinth for man, because he works from his own resources. It is as if one were to dissect the body of one's friend, instead of delighting in his affections and his character. In the church, it is one of the worst signs I have met with. It is very sad to get into this way, very sad that this should be shown in such a light before the church of God, and before the world. I would add, that so deep is my conviction of man's incapacity in this matter, and that **it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus**, that I am quite ready to suppose that even while desiring to avoid it, I may have fallen into it, and thus may have spoken in a mistaken way in something which I have said to you.

That He was truly Man, Son of man, dependent on God as such, and without sin in that condition of dependence -- truly God in all His ineffable perfection: this I hold, I trust, dearer than life. To define everything is what I do not presume to do. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." **If I find anything which weakens one or the other of these truths, or which dishonors Him who is their subject, I shall oppose it with all my might, as God may call me to do so.**

May God grant you to believe all which the word teaches with regard to Him -- Jesus. It is our food and sustenance to understand all which the Spirit has given us to understand, and not to seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define, but to adore on the one hand and to feed upon on the other, and to love in every way according to the grace of the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup>

Since JND taught that the Lord had a human soul and a human "I," did he violate what he said here and did he, in fact, "seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define"? Certainly not! That is among the things the Spirit has given us to believe. This is not defining, or discussing, things not revealed concerning His Person. **It is a matter of a true confession of His Person as the God-man.**

#### WHAT IS THE ISSUE IN "DISCUSSIONS" OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST?

The Confession of the True Humanity of Christ is not What is Meant by "Discussing His Person." The warnings about discussing the Person of Christ has to do with speculations on the union of the two natures in one Person. Men want to understand the inscrutable, the how it can be. Thus, they use reasoning and logic to bring the union into scrutiny of the human mind. This is what has fathered the host of evil teachings concerning His Person. And this has fathered **Monothelitism**, the denial of human will in Christ's person, thus denying human personality in the Person of Christ. To insist on the Scripture teaching that Christ had a human will and "I" is not "discussing" Christ's Person. JND wrote:

The questions you put make me feel deeply all that there is sorrowful in the

29. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:282. Boldfacing is added.

walk of one whom nevertheless I love very sincerely, our friend M. G. To enter upon subtle questions as to the person of Jesus tends to wither and trouble the soul, to destroy the spirit of worship and affection, and to substitute thorny enquiries, as if the spirit of man could solve the manner in which the humanity and the divinity of Jesus were united to each other. In this sense it is said, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father." It is needless to say that I have no such pretension.<sup>30</sup>

We have seen above that he asserted the human will and the human "I" in Christ.

To this these observations about discussing the Person of Christ may be added:

. . . (John 14:9) . . . Clearly the mystery of His Person is in question; to the captious, the irreverent, the curious, a stone of stumbling in all ages, but to the humble and reverent soul a source of unflinching gladness and thanksgiving. Of course there is a sense in which we do know Christ -- most really know Him, albeit not the mystery of His Sonship. Our Lord gently reproveth Phillip for not knowing Him, for not discerning that all that infinitude of moral glory was the manifestation of the father. To know Him was to know the Father, so that this verse in John is in the fullest accord with the passage in Matthew {11:27}. But, as we know, it is the union of the divine and the human in His blessed Person that is unknowable. All manner of ingenious speculations have been exhausted in the attempt to analyze it. In vain! No such impregnable tower ever rose four-square to heaven. The would-be interpreters are ever baffled, and the burning of their own fingers is the least part of the damage. What of the wide-spread injury to the flock of Christ? Surely it had been better, instead of such unhallowed dissection, to have bowed before the "mystery of godliness," or even to have taken up, may be, the words of the ancient creed, for "God and Man are one Christ." Such is the incarnation.<sup>31</sup>

**Scrutinizing the Person of Christ.** Scrutinizing the Person of Christ refers to the attempt to explain the union of God and man in His Person:

We cannot fathom who He was. Our hearts should not go and **scrutinize** the Person of Christ, as though we could know it all. **No human being can understand the union of God and Man in His Person** -- "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." All that is revealed we may know; we may learn a great deal about Him. The Father we know: "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." We know Him to be holy; we know Him to be love, etc. But when I attempt to fathom **the union of God and man -- no man can**. We know Christ is God, and we know He is man-perfect man, apart from sin; and if He is not God, what is He to me? What difference between Him and another man? Christ came in flesh. Every feeling

30. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:181.

31. R. B. Jr., *The Bible Treasury* 18:218.

that I have (save sin) He had.<sup>32</sup>

Confessing that Christ has a human “I” (ego) and a human will is *confessing* the truth of Christ’s Person, *not scrutinizing* the union of the two natures so as to explain it, which explaining is precisely what Monothelism involves. As an example, consider again this stricture by JND:

And this last statement, that Christ had no human personality, no ego {means, no “I”}, which is really heresy . . . and the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the mystery of His Person . . .<sup>33</sup>

Such Monothelite rejection of a human “I” (ego) in Christ’s Person is the result of scrutinizing His Person.

**Looking Into the Ark.** The men of Bethshemesh looked into the ark of God and God smote 70 persons (1 Sam. 6:19). Confessing the truth of Christ’s humanity is not the sin of looking into the ark. What answers to looking into the ark of God is what the Monothelites did. They wanted to explain the union of the divine and human in the Person of Christ, reducing it to what their minds could understand. Of course, it is not unexpected that such a paper as this one which is in the reader’s hands will be, by some, likened to looking into the ark of God -- in an effort to put down the truth of Christ’s human “I” (ego) and human will. It follows from this reversal of the charge (a not uncommon way of dealing with matters) that JND, quoted above, and all the persons quoted in what follows, are all like the men of Bethshemesh. Those who make such a charge must be holding evil teaching on the union of the divine and human in Christ (Monothelism, if not Apollinarianism), else why would they do such a thing?

### *The Lord’s Human Will Expressed in Gethsemene*

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

Here in Gethsemene we see the perfect submission of the Lord’s human will to the will of the Father. His human 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

32. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 27:357. Boldfacing is added.

33. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:213.

was in accordance with His holiness to do so.<sup>34</sup> 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 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 human “I”), 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

34. 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*).

[wilt].”<sup>35</sup>

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.<sup>36</sup>

He also wrote:

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 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.<sup>37</sup>

Let us look at some remarks by J. N. Darby 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.<sup>38</sup> ♦

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:

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

36. *The Crowned Christ*, Kilmarnock: Ritchie, p. 54, 1945 reprint. Boldfaced emphasis is added.

37. *The Numerical Bible, The Gospels*, p. 251. Boldfaced emphasis is added.

38. *Collected Writings* 29:319.

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.<sup>39</sup> ♦

. . . said “Therefore,” **as a man**, “**not my will** but thine be done.”<sup>40</sup> ♦

This reflective self-consciousness is man’s distinctive prerogative, as having a spirit. “I” {which resides in the soul} 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 “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.<sup>41</sup>

Ed.

39. *Collected Writings* 16:175; repeated in 28:175. Boldfaced emphasis is added.

40. *Notes and Comments* 2:256. Boldfaced emphasis is added.

41. *Notes and Comments* 2:315, 316. Boldface emphasis added.

*The Christian's Heavenly Place and  
Calling Eviscerated by Messianic Judaism*

## Chapter 1

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### *Acts 20:7: Its Bearing; and the Distortion of It by Messianic Judaism*

Messianic Judaism is a general designation for numbers of congregations composed mainly of Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Their view of the New Testament (NT) is that it has been distorted by Gentile converts and they are correcting that distortion, showing how “Jewish” the NT really is. And so they find that the NT (viewed through the distorting lens of their Jewish presuppositions) actually supports their Judaism, including observation of Jewish feasts. They are Sabbath observers and hold their services on the seventh day. They meet in synagogues (Gentile believers are welcome). The NT is made to support these things. Thus “the Lord’s Supper” held by early Christians on the first day of the week, is turned into something observed on the seventh day of the week. While there are numbers of books supporting the Judaizing system, there are two that seem to be widely received, both by Dr. David Stern: *The Jewish New Testament*, his translation of the NT, as well as his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*.<sup>42</sup>

This series of articles will be confined to considering only some of the texts

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42. *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, p. 297 (1996). The information in the rear of this 934 page book says of this Ph.D in economics:

In 1972 he came to faith in Yeshua the Messiah, after which he received a Master of Divinity degree at Fuller Theological Seminary and did graduate work at the University of Judaism.

In 1979 he moved to Israel and is active in Israel’s Messianic Jewish community.

We will also quote from some other books by those who adhere to “Messianic Judaism.

that are distorted in his attempt to correct the alleged Gentile Christian bias in the NT. The fact is that *he* distorts texts to make them say what is not there. His translation is well named: it is a *Jewish NT*, a distorted NT in order for it to be what he wants it to be.

An objective in this series of articles is to present the reader with truth that meets these Judaizing distortions and sets out the difference between the earthly calling of Israel and the heavenly calling of Christians. Another objective is to contrast the place of Israel as God’s earthly people and Christians as a heavenly people. It is hoped that our souls will be edified by truth and our appreciation of the special blessedness that is ours as “in Christ.” We will begin with considering Acts 20:7, which refers to the great, central privilege that the Christian has of remembering the Lord Jesus in His death for us, on the first day of the week, the day on which He rose from among the dead:

And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread . . . (Acts 20:7),

using an article by W. J. Hocking that appeared in three installments in *The Bible Treasury*.

### *Breaking Bread at Troas*

It is of no inconsiderable importance to seek to arrive at a clear understanding, not only of the real intention of the saints at Troas, but of God's mind in the record of their assembling together on the occasion made memorable by the presence of the great apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 20:7). For the practice of the early saints recorded thus by inspiration affords a certain guide for the observance of the church from that time onward; because in as far as their example is approvingly cited by the Holy Ghost, so far may saints follow with boldness and confidence.

A great distinction however must be made between the inspired account of the founding and development of the assembly of God in apostolic times, and that which proceeded in later but early days when men wrote no longer by the unerring power of the Holy Spirit. The difference is not in degree but in kind. While the Scripture is the adamant rock, the productions of the so-called "Fathers of the church" are the treacherous quicksands: the one affords unyielding support, the others offer nothing but at best a dim uncertainty, coupled with the risk of following their departure from the truth.

The reason for this wide difference is not far to seek; though at the same time it is of such profound importance that no apology is offered for referring to it here. To some it may appear trivial and commonplace to insist upon the inspiration of Holy Writ and to contend that its inspired character elevates it

immeasurably above every other writing whether ancient or modern. But it is certain that none can in these days advance too far in reverence for the Scriptures, or hold too tenaciously that the voice of God is heard in every word from Genesis to Revelation.

The perfect and sufficient presentation of the mind and will of God, under the unerring operation of the Holy Ghost, is to be understood not in the statements of doctrine and in the revelations of the future only. The historical portions are no less divinely given and guarded. Even in recounting events that came under their direct cognizance, the writers were never suffered to pen just what their memories retained or their fancies dictated. The Spirit was there to secure the accomplishment of His own purpose in the Scripture as well as to preclude any human frailty or error.

Thus, in the instance before us, the writer, Luke the physician, was in no wise left to his own wisdom in the compilation of the history. While leaving the impress of his individuality upon his writings, and that so distinctly that they can never be confounded with those of Matthew, Mark, or John, the impress, nevertheless, was such as to include none of the prejudices, the distortions, the foibles, or the partialities that are common to every uninspired historian in a greater or less degree. For the "human element in inspiration," to use a familiar phrase, never supposes or admits any taint of the weakness and wilfulness, the blindness and bias, which are altogether inseparable from fallen human nature.

Indeed in this latter particular the written word of God may be said to resemble the Incarnate Word. In Him, blessed be His holy Name, we have One Who was both God and Man. Since He was the Son and eternal God, He could and did reveal God and the Father. Since in grace He became Man, He revealed the Father in such a sort that we might see and hear, believe and know. Yet though He descended so low in order to bring the fulness of grace and truth to poor ruined man, He remained in that state of immaculate purity which was true of none but of Himself. Unsoiled, unstained, though in the semblance of sinful flesh, perfect without and within, of the Savior alone is it written that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," that "He knew no sin."

In like manner are the Scriptures divine. In the one case God reveals Himself in our nature; in the other He reveals Himself in our speech; but in both cases is there the most rigid exclusion of sinful imperfection. And the reason is patent. For in the word, God reveals Himself and the triumph of His ways of grace over the sin of man. And this is communicated by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 2:13); for who indeed but He could write on such a theme? And since He graciously undertook to express the mind of God to man, how daring and impious to impute error in any way to the writings He has inspired for this

purpose!

Still the revelation while emanating from the Spirit of God took a human form. It was given to men and intended for men; hence human phraseology and modes of speech were employed. Nay, even the actual state of the language, Hebrew or Greek, when employed, is reproduced there. Nevertheless it is of amazing comfort to know that every expression, however human, is cleansed from the moral imperfection, from the mistakes and misrepresentations, which under all other circumstances are to be found in the writings of even the most accomplished and illustrious authors. So that it is one of the most blessed characteristics of Holy Writ that it forms an absolutely immovable foundation on which the soul may rest. Remembering this truth we desire to examine the passage before us.

And on the first [day] of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed to them, about to depart on the morrow, and prolonged the word till midnight <sup>43</sup> (Acts 20:7).

What is the teaching of this Scripture and its context as to the breaking of bread? Was it the general usage of the disciples to, assemble on every first day of the week to break bread? In other words, had the breaking of bread such a paramount claim upon the disciples that it was the specific object before them in gathering together? On the other hand, was the breaking of bread decried by them of such minor importance that the presence of Paul was a sufficient pretext for setting it in the background in favour of the apostle's ministry? The latter view is held by the apologists of ecclesiastical tradition, as well as by the upholders of all but universal modern practice; both of whom unite to rob the Scripture before us of its plain unequivocal meaning by using it to place the Lord's Supper in a subordinate position utterly unknown to either the Gospels or the Epistles. We do not now speak of those who pervert it into a sacrifice for the living and the dead, and the accompanying horrors of that unbelieving and superstitious system.

Let us consider the interesting and instructive circumstances of the breaking of bread at Truss, and notice the unobtrusive way in which they are woven into the texture of the narrative.

The voyage of the party from Philippi occupied five days (Acts 20:6). This was probably longer than it might have been calculated that the vessel would take. At any rate we know that, when they crossed into Europe on a former occasion, the journey between the same towns was accomplished in two days

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43. Mr. Kelly's translation, *Bible Treasury* 17:26, and in his Acts expounded, vol. 2, p.177 XXX).

only (Acts 17:11,12). The extension of the two days to five proves pretty conclusively, that in this instance the progress of the ship must have been considerably hindered by contrary winds or the like, to account for the wide difference.

It would appear that the party landed in Troas during the latter part of the first day of the week, or the early part of the second; for they abode in that place seven days (Acts 20:6), which brought them to the next first day of the week. The fact of this lengthened stay is highly significant.

For what reason did Paul protract his stay in Troas at a time when, as we know, he was hastening if possible to be at Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16)? He deliberately avoided Ephesus because he would not be delayed on his journey. Yet here at Troas he spends no less than seven days. And it was immediately after leaving Troas that he asked the Ephesian elders to meet him at Miletus, a distance of thirty miles, that no time might be lost. Are we not bound to gather from these facts, that some important consideration was of sufficient weight with the apostle to cause him to tarry so long in Troas?

But the narrative supplies another circumstance which sheds considerable light on the motives of Paul and his companions. When the first of the week did come and the disciples had broken bread together, the apostle was so unwilling to lose another moment that, though he spent the whole of the night in the company of the saints, he set off (we are told) at break of day on foot to Assos. It is clear therefore that Paul remained the seven days in order to be present at the meeting of the church in Troas.

That the period of this stay should be just seven days and no more could hardly escape comment. And it is the more to be remarked upon, since we find the mention of the same period at a later stage of this very journey to Jerusalem, and in like manner immediately followed by the departure of the travelers. Luke records that at Tyre,

finding disciples, we tarried there seven days.

And when we had accomplished these days, we departed and went our way (Acts 21:4, 5).

Yet another instance occurs in this book. When describing the journey to Rome, Luke writes

we came the next day to Puteoli, where we found brethren; and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward home" (Acts 28:13, 14).

This then is the third recorded occasion in the Acts when Paul and his company after a sea voyage remain in the place of landing with the saints last seven days, and then at once recommence their journey.

The explanation that lies on the face of the narrative in Acts 20 supplies the

key to the other cases, since no other is given, and the ground or motive is constant. The travelers through unexpected delays on the voyage landed at Troas just too late to join the usual weekly assemblage of the disciples to break bread. In order therefore to partake with them of the customary eucharistic remembrance of Christ, it was necessary to stay a week for the next occurrence.

There would be no such necessity to tarry until the first of the week in order to discourse to them. Of this he could and doubtless did avail himself as far as it was practicable on other days: so we know he subsequently did with the Ephesian elders. But the object of gathering at Troas, &c., was certainly not to hear Paul, though this was of deep interest and a very sufficient reason at other times for such as could be gathered. Here the standing or habitual purpose is expressly declared to have been "to break bread."

At the same time it is noticeable that the purpose is stated without special emphasis or any word of enlargement. This indicates the all-importance, not the unimportance, of the motive of the disciples in so assembling. It attests not only the veracity of the historian but the divine design of the history to those that seek the truth. For there stands written the instructive fact that breaking of bread on the first day was the then established and regularly recognized institution of the Lord for the assembled saints in the apostolic age.

*The Bible Treasury* 20:231-233.

(To be continued if the Lord wills).

Ed.

## *God's Sovereignty and Glory in the Salvation of Lost Man*

### *Chapter 3*

## *The Sovereignty of God in John's Gospel*

(Continued)

### *4. The Father and Son (and the Spirit) Quicken*

#### THE WORD QUICKEN INDICATES MAKING ALIVE FROM DEATH

Quickening is applied to the body in John 5:21, Rom. 4:17 and 8:11. Quickening is, elsewhere in the NT, used of the new birth looked at in reference to being made alive from a state of spiritual death.<sup>44</sup> The Father, Son and Spirit quicken (John 5:21; 6:63). All quickened souls are children of God, and this is true in all ages, for such are children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7),<sup>45</sup> though OT saints did not know that truth, since it was not a revealed ground of relationship. Consult the word "Quicken" in *Morrish's Bible Dictionary* for the use of the word quicken in the OT.

#### DEAD AND QUICKEN ARE CORRELATIVE TERMS

We will return again to the point that man is dead towards God and in need of quickening when we come to Eph. 2:1-5. A half-dead person, or an unconscious person, or a person who appears to be about to drown, is not in need of quickening, i.e., making alive -- because they are not dead. The force of the words dead and death must not be mitigated so as to mean man is not really spiritual dead toward God.

44. "Quickening with Christ" (Eph. 2) brings in additional things beyond mere quickening, but discussion of this is reserved until later. Obviously there is a difference. OT saints were quickened, but could not have been *quickened together with Christ*, who had not yet come, died, and risen from the dead.

45. See *Notes and Jottings*, p. 41.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he that hears my word, and believes him that has sent me, has life eternal, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death (1 John 3:14).

For the love of Christ constrains us, having judged this: that one died for all, then were all dead (2 Cor. 5:14).

And *you* being dead in your offences and sins . . . has quickened us with the Christ (Eph. 2:1, 5).

Before having divine life, before being quickened, before being born again, the person is in a state of death; spiritual death; clearly, not physical death. This answers to the darkness of John 1:5. How, then, does the passage from death to life take place? Why, the very next verse after John 5:24 just quoted above explains how this happens:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that an hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that have heard shall live (John 5:25).

How do the spiritually dead hear? Is that a valid objection? How did dead Lazarus hear when the Son called, "Lazarus, come forth"? Hearing was implanted.<sup>46</sup> Hearing, faith, and life (new birth) are simultaneously divinely implanted.

#### PHYSICAL QUICKENING IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SPIRITUAL QUICKENING

In John 6:63 and 2 Cor. 3:6 we see that the Spirit quickens. In 1 Cor. 15:45, Christ as the last Adam is called a quickening spirit. It is divine Persons who quicken, i.e., make alive, the spiritually dead. The spiritually dead do not contribute to, or assist at, their own quickening. It is to cause to pass "out of death into life."

46. Not surprisingly, an objection is made to making a parallel between a physically dead man and a spiritually dead man. It is not surprising because the truth of the spiritually dead state of man towards God is not really believed by free willers, as we shall see more fully when considering Eph. 2:1-5, and observe how they try to circumvent such Scriptures. Dave Hunt wrote:

Vance points out the obvious error:

And finally, if you make an exact parallel between a physically dead man and a spiritually dead man . . . then you likewise have to say . . . [if] he can't accept Christ because he is dead then he can't reject Christ either. A [physically] dead man cannot believe on Jesus Christ, but a [spiritually] dead man can.

The answer is, as pointed out earlier, that in Romans man is presented as alive in the flesh (Rom. 8:7, 8), under the power of "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3; ch. 6). One in that condition rejects Christ. This does not set aside other Scriptures that present man as spiritually dead towards God, and who cannot accept Christ. In fact, these two presentations of the same person illustrate John 5:40 and John 6:44 respectively.

The quickening from physical death (John 5:21) serves as a pattern of spiritual quickening. The one that “hears my word, and believes on him that has sent me” (v. 24) does so because the “voice of the Son of God” makes him hear and believe. The spiritually dead do not have the faculty for spiritual hearing, nor for seeing spiritually. Thus, quickening power must be applied. Having noticed that quickening has application both to physical and spiritual death, let us consider the case of dead Lazarus. In John 11:25 the Lord Jesus declared Himself to be the resurrection and the life. This has in view both the physically dead (the resurrection) and the spiritually dead (the life). While Lazarus was restored to natural life, his case illustrates the Lord’s power as the resurrection and the life:

Of course, the loudness of the Lord’s words was not to make Lazarus hear -- a foolish notion. The loudness was for the crowd. The voice of power and command spoke hearing ability, seeing ability, and life, into Lazarus (yes, and even transported Lazarus right into His presence where He was standing (cf. v. 45). And when the Lord calls forth the sinner from his state of spiritual death, He gives him hearing, seeing, and life. He is quickened by the Son’s power. The quickened one thus has a new nature and faith. All is from a divine source. And this answers to the word “compel” in the parable of the great supper.<sup>47</sup>

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47. N. Geisler wrote:

Moving the coercive {he should use the Scripture word: *compel*, or *compelling*} act of God to the point of regeneration {*quickening* is the word} does not make it less violent, for the totally dead person being regenerated {*quickened* is the word} is both unaware and unwilling of the operation of God upon him that is totally against his will and desires (*op. cit.*, p. 261, sec. ed., 2001)

Substitute the illustrative case of Lazarus into this. Was raising Lazarus from the dead a “coercive” act of the Son’s power, as He quickened Lazarus to life? An invitation to Lazarus to live would have fallen upon deaf ears (John 8:43; 5:24, 25; cp. 6:45) just as was the case morally concerning those who were invited to the great supper; not a one came. Those compelled came. It requires the quickening power of the voice of the Son of God, whether to quicken the sinner who is spiritually dead, or a dead body. These two cases (i.e., the physical and the spiritual) are brought together in John 5:21-29.

The fact is that free willers do not really believe that men are spiritually dead. They cannot so believe without giving up their notion of moral free will towards God. Such is the case with Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This?*, p. 363, who, quoting John 5:24, explains it away, as so many texts are explained away, by saying:

Again, hearing and believing precede receiving eternal life, which come through the new birth.

So then the spiritually dead person, the person without life or motion towards God, believes while he is in the spiritually dead state. Thus we see that he does not believe man is really dead towards God. Spiritual death means, to them, something else -- certainly not *inability*. And such a view really does not want Lazarus’ case brought into this, because their notions do not work in Lazarus’ case -- but the Lord brings the case of both the spiritually dead and the physically dead together in the same passage (John 5:21-29) in connection with His quickening power. The cases are, in fact, analogous, (continued...)

## MAN’S WILL IS EXCLUDED

There are Scriptures which *expressly* exclude man’s will, and assert that it is God’s will that causes quickening and the new birth.

A man **can receive nothing** unless it be given him out of heaven (John 3:27).

**No one can** come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him . . . (John 6:44).

Therefore said I unto you, that **no one can** come to me unless it be given to Him from the Father (John 6:65; see 17:2).

Why do ye not know my speech? Because **ye cannot** hear my word (John 8:43).  
. . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world **cannot** receive (John 14:17).

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

They that are in the flesh **cannot** please God (Rom. 8:8).

And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and **every imagination of the thought of his heart only evil continually** (Gen. 6:5; see 8:21; Eccl. 9:3).

The heart is deceitful above all things, and **incurable**; who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).

. . . for we being **still without strength**, in [the] due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).

And you, **being dead** in offenses and sins . . . (Eph. 2:1).

Read Rom. 3:10-20 and Psalm 14:2, 3.

And all began, **without exception**, to excuse themselves . . . Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring here . . . **COMPEL to come in**, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:18-23)

So then [it is] **not of him that wills**, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy (Rom. 9:16).

. . . who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh’s will, **nor of man’s will**, but of God (John 1:13).

According to **his own will** begat he us by the word of truth . . . (James 1:18).

For ye are saved by grace, through faith: **and this not of yourselves**; it is God’s gift; not on the principle of works, that no one might boast. For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has before prepared that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

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47. (...continued)

but that is unsuitable to the moral free will notion. Hearing and life are divinely implanted simultaneously, and for the spiritually dead, along with faith at the same instant. All is the work of God.

If the will of a man is set to have it be otherwise, he finds ways to satisfy himself that he has explained all this so as to still have the exercise of his alleged moral free will towards God exercise human faith. But more, he will complain that no one has brought forward passages that express man's *inability*.

Scripture denies that man has a morally free will towards God, and it shows that a man is born again by a sovereign act of God's will planting within him a new nature and faith, giving life where there had been death. Another wrote:

You may say, But is it not also true, that when a sinner is converted to God, he does will? Yes, he does then will and desire to be saved, and to serve God. If it is not his own free choice as a lost sinner, how is it? This is the scriptural answer: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). This, you notice, is the very explanation how those that are saved and sanctified in Christ are to work out their own salvation. It is God that works in them to will. He gives them a new will, and works in them by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Cp. Rom. 8:2 . . .

It may be asked, How then is this new will, or new nature, imparted? It is the direct operation of the Spirit of God. How? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" . . .

Now would it not be absurd to say that the new nature was begotten by the free will of our old evil nature? But what saith the scripture: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). Do you see the difference? Then again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (v. 23).<sup>48</sup>

Another summed up thus:

Will any still object and say they cannot reconcile the two things -- man's powerlessness and man's responsibility? Let them bear in mind that it is none of our business to reconcile them. God has done that for us by placing them side by side in His own eternal word. It is ours to submit and believe, not to reason. If we listen to the conclusions and deductions of our own minds, or the dogmas of the conflicting schools of divinity, we shall ever be in a muddle and a jumble, and perplexed and confused. But if we simply bow to Scripture, we shall know the truth. Men may reason and rebel but the question is whether man is to judge God or God to judge man. Is God sovereign or is He not? If man is to sit in judgment on God, then God is no longer God. "O man who art thou that repliest against God?" This is the great question. Can we answer it? The

48. "Freewill," *Things New and Old* 33:26, 29.

plain fact is that this question of power and responsibility is all a complete mistake, arising from ignorance of our own true condition and our want of absolute submission to God. Every soul in a right moral condition will freely own his responsibility, his guilt, his utter powerlessness, his exposure to the just judgment of God and that if it were not for the sovereign grace of God in Christ he should inevitably be damned. Anyone who does not own this, from the very depths of his soul, is ignorant of himself, and virtually sitting in judgment upon God.<sup>49</sup>

A. H. Rule wrote:

The life is communicated to us through the Word and by the Spirit, the Spirit being the divine agent by whom the Word is made effective in the soul (John 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 5:24-25). Man is in a state of death, and if he is to have life, God must act sovereignly. God begins. Man himself is as powerless as was dead Lazarus, until the life-giving word is spoken. The power of God acts upon the dead soul by the Word, and God gives the faith that receives it. It is all above and beyond human reason. None can understand or explain. Humanly speaking a dead man cannot hear or believe; nor could man or angel make him hear or believe. But God moves in the scene of death, and all is changed. He who created when only Himself existed, and at whose word worlds sprang into existence, can make His word heard in the soul of a dead sinner. Dead Lazarus heard the voice of the Son of God, and came forth from the dead; and dead souls now hear His voice and live. The Word accompanied by the power of God produces its own effect in the soul; and this is so right on to the end. God acts in us by His Word, whether as dead sinners needing life, or as saints needing instruction and warning. We are vessels of mercy. But if He has wrought in us by His Word, that word has been received in the soul. It has been believed. If God gives, we receive, believe, though even this be by grace from Him, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). But man cannot explain the how of these things, any more than he can explain the mystery of natural life (John 3:18; Eccl. 11:5).

Notice, too, when the Lord is speaking of life, He says: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" . . .<sup>50</sup>

While quickening indicates making one alive, new birth speaks of the fact that a new nature is communicated.

## CONVERSION

*Conversion* means that one is turned about towards God. All persons born anew are both quickened and converted. All quickened souls are both born anew and

49. "Responsibility and Power," *Things New and Old* 17:61,62.

50. *Selected Ministry of a. H. Rule* 2:210.

converted. One who is a child of God as Peter, having failed as he did, may upon repentance of that sin be, not born anew a second or third, etc., time but, converted (Luke 22:32). In such a case it means freshly turned about to God, from the sin; but there is no such thing as another new birth. Peter remained a child of God all through the sifting.

### THE FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT SEEN QUICKENING

In John 5 we see that wonderful unity of action of the Father and the Son:

(17) But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto and I work. (18) For this therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only violated the sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God. (19) Jesus therefore answered and said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of himself save whatever he sees the Father doing: for whatever things *he* does, these things also the Son does in like manner. (20) For the Father loves the Son and shows him all things which he himself does; and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may wonder. (21) For even as the Father raises the dead and quickens [them], thus the Son also quickens whom he will (John 5:17-21).

The works of the Son were the works of the Father (John 5:20; 10:25, 37; 14:10). They act according to the distinction of Person but are one in will and purpose. The Son can do nothing from Himself independently, but does those things that He sees the Father do. Moreover, the Father shows the Son all things that He Himself does, and whatever He sees the Father do, the Son does. This is infinite unity of action and power. The Son and the Father are equally God. And so, as the Father raises the dead and quickens them, the Son also quickens whom He will. All is done in unity. The raising of the dead and the quickening here speak of the physically dead, as we noted above.

Each and every action of the Son exhibits what He sees the Father do. There is the perfect revelation of the Father in the Son:

the Father who abides in me, he does the works (John 14:10).

He that has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9).

And, if the Son quickens, the Father in Him does the work. And what of the Spirit of God?

It is the Spirit which quickens, the flesh profits nothing: the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life (John 6:63).

For the letter {i.e., the law} kills, but the Spirit quickens (2 Cor. 3:6).

The Son spoke the Father's words. The truth is that the three Persons act in unity in all things. The instrumentality of quickening is the Word of God. The flesh profits nothing. It is vain to pretend that the will is not controlled by the flesh and that it acts of itself freely towards God to believe.

The Lord spoke of a coming hour. It is the present time. When He rose from

the dead He took the *place* of the last Adam (*last* -- there will not be another such head after Him) and as such he is called "the last Adam, a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:46). He quickens, the Father quickens, and the Spirit quickens. The Word is the instrumentality used.

### DOING THE WORK OF GOD

Those who believe in man's free will morally towards God say that the faith in Eph. 2:8 is human faith; i.e., it is not the gift of God. (We shall look at that more fully in another chapter.) But if that is the case, then faith is a *work* and Scripture says "not of works." So, of course, effort is made to explain how the exercise of mere human faith in obedience to God is not a work. Now, faith involves believing on Christ. We read in John 6:29:

Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom *he* has sent.

So belief on Christ is indeed a work; it is the work of God. To attribute faith to the human will as its source would make it a work of the flesh.

### THE SON MAKES US FREE

Men are in bondage to sin; i.e., they are slaves to sin and are not free. If men had moral free will towards God, they would not really be slaves as Scripture says that they are. Moreover, there is a belief on Christ which is not really the work of God. It is a belief that is merely mental assent. Faith is tested, and so is mental assent. We read of persons having mental assent, and the Lord's not trusting Himself to them, in John 2:23-25:

(23) And when he was in Jerusalem, at the passover, at the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he wrought. (24) But Jesus himself did not trust himself to them, because he knew all [men], (25) and that he had not need that any should testify of man, for himself knew what was in man.

This is evidence of His omniscience. Their belief was founded on the wrong thing. In John 8:30-36 we see this happening again and in this case it becomes clear that those guilty of this did not acknowledge that they were slaves of sin.

(30) As he spoke these things many believed on him. (31) Jesus therefore said to the Jews who believed him, If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples; (32) and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. (33) They answered him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never been under bondage to any one; how sayest thou, Ye shall become free? (34) Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Every one that practises sin is the bondman of sin. (35) Now the bondman abides not in the house for ever: the son abides for ever. (36) If therefore the Son shall set you free, ye shall be really free.

Man's will is in bondage to "sin in the flesh." He sets us free from the bondage of the will to the evil nature that we have. He does not look down the avenue of

time and say, there is a sinner who has morally free will towards God and who is going to exercise human faith to believe, so I will set him free. If he had moral free will toward God he was already free and did not need for the Son to set him free from the bondage to “sin in the flesh.”

The doctrine of moral free will towards God is a doctrine of theft. It steals from God what is His, and His alone.

### *5. The Father Draws and Speaks to Sinners, Gives Them to the Son, and the Son Gives Them Eternal Life*

#### YE WILL NOT COME TO ME

. . . ye will not come to me that ye might have life (John 5:40).

Such is the state of man’s will. It is not morally free towards God but rather **man’s will is bound by his fallen nature. It is free to act within the bounds of the fallen nature which controls the will**, the nature acquired when man fell. The fallen nature, controlling the will, does not want the Son. If having life means coming to the Son, man will not have it so. So powerful is the control of the old nature on the will, that man rejects the Son, and he cannot come to Christ, and therefore *the Father’s drawing is needed* in order for a person to come to the Son. God must implant a new nature that affects the will.

We saw this self-will in the parable of the great supper, where all invited refused to come -- without exception. This unwillingness to come the Lord pointed out in John 5 before He brought out what we have in John 6, namely, that none *can* come except the Father draw Him. Such is the fearful state of man’s will, a will which dares to say that it is free and can choose Christ by an act of the human will <sup>51</sup> and that God cannot violate that freedom! Why, that makes a contingent God. Well did JND say ironically:

. . . God . . . cannot act freely in respect of my freedom! I am free, and He is

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51. Even John 5:40 has been pressed into supporting free will. An example, *Uplook*, Oct. 2001, p. 27 says:

Scripture emphasizes that God has sovereignly granted man the ability to make free choices . . . This principle is stated by our Lord Himself in His interview with Pilate . . . (John. 19:10-11) . . . (Prov. 1:29-30) . . . (John 5:40 . . . (Matt. 23:37).

Since “Scripture emphasizes” free choices, this must be the cream of the proof. What has been presented is really evidence of refusal of Christ and the act of a wicked governor. God does indeed allow man to go on in evil and refuse Christ. Of course, how these Scriptures demonstrate that man by his alleged moral free will toward God actually chooses Christ by the exercise of human faith is hidden from many of us.

not. Then certainly I am God, not He. <sup>52</sup>

Elsewhere he wrote:

In the Gospel of John He {Christ} is presented at the outset as God Himself {John 1:1}, and consequently as already rejected, as He is seen in John 1:10, 11. The Jews from the beginning, and throughout the whole of this Gospel, are treated as reprobates. The necessity of the divine work in its two parts, the new birth and the cross, is asserted. Election and the sovereign action of grace, and its absolute necessity for salvation, are brought out everywhere. No one can come to Jesus, unless the Father, who hath sent Him, draw him. His sheep receive eternal life and shall never perish. <sup>53</sup>

One more matter should be noted here. While the Gospel of John brings before us so often, and clearly, the divine, sovereign operations of God in the sinner’s salvation, the condition of man’s will and man’s responsibility to believe is also brought out as here in John 5:40, for example. That sovereign operations are required for man’s salvation does not remove man’s responsibility.

#### NO ONE CAN COME TO THE SON IF THE FATHER HAS NOT DRAWN HIM

No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day (John 6:44).

“No one can” *does* means *inability* to do so.<sup>54</sup> No one can come to Christ by his

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52. *Collected Writings* 9:163.

53. *Collected Writings* 30:272.

54. J. N. Darby has given an excellent survey of the issue involved and comments on the force of “can”:

Usually when we speak of *free* and *can* . . . the absence of compulsion, and the presence of power are confounded. I say ‘every one can come to the meeting,’ meaning it is open to every one. I am told it is not true, for such an one has broken his leg and cannot. I take a plain case, to show what I mean. Thus where the Lord says, “No one can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him” {John 6:44}; it is not that God prohibits or hinders, but that man is so wicked in will and corrupt, that unless a power outside himself act on him he cannot come -- he is never morally so disposed. Man is perfectly free to come now as far as God is concerned, and invited to come, yea, besought; and the precious blood of Christ {is} there on the mercy-seat, so that moral difficulty is removed by God’s own grace as regards the holy One receiving a sinner. In this sense he is perfectly free to come. But then there is the other side, man’s, own will and state. There is no will to come, but the opposite. Life was there in Christ. “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” . . . “It is simple nonsense to talk of freedom when applied to man’s actual condition, if he is already inclined to evil; admitting him more than free to come, invited and besought by every motive, all made ready -- but which proves that he *will* not, and that no motive induces him. I have yet *one son*, says God, but that is over. To say he is not inclined to evil, is to deny all scripture and all fact; to make him free to choose he must be as yet indifferent, indifferent to -- having no preference for -- good and evil, which is not true, for evil lusts and self-will are there,

(continued...)

supposed moral free will towards God. It requires the Father's drawing him. Free-will advocates respond by claiming that the Father draws everyone, or Christ draws everyone and that *draw* is used in the sense of persuading. But, clearly, that is not so. Concerning those whom the Father draws, Christ said:

I will raise him up in the last day.

It is exactly, and only, the drawn ones that will be raised up. Those raised up in the last day are the drawn ones. But not all men will be raised up in the last day for blessing; thus, since all drawn by the Father are raised up in the last day, it is clear that not all are drawn by the Father.

Being drawn by the Father means that it is *given* to the drawn ones to come to Christ:

Therefore said I unto you, that no one can come to me unless it be given to him from the Father (John 6:65).

Moreover, *hearing* from the Father, and *learning* from Him are included:

Every one that has heard from the Father [himself], and has learned [of him], comes to me (John 6:45).

The order is clear. The sinner does not come to Christ and then hears and learns from the Father. The hearing and learning from the Father and the coming to Christ are linked together; really, this is simultaneous. The giving of the sinner by Father to the Son is first, *then* the Father gives to the sinner the faith to believe, those so given to the Son are hearing and learning from the Father, thus coming to Christ. The Scripture teaching is that everyone *given* by the Father to the Son do come to Christ:

All that the Father gives me shall come to me . . . (John 6:37).

The result of the Father's giving to the Son is that all those given to the Son, the Son gives them eternal life:

. . . as thou hast given him authority over all flesh, that [as to] all that thou hast

54. (...continued)

the two great elements of sin, and if it were true would be perfectly horrible . . .

Freedom is the fruit of deliverance by Christ. First, in His death the old man, sin in the flesh, is dead for faith; we are crucified with Him, and I have life in the power of the Spirit in Christ, and then I am free (*Letters* 2:164, 165).

How helpful those remarks are in contrast to Dave Hunt's using John 5:40 against this:

Men fail to come to Christ not because they *cannot*, but because they will not . . . John 5:40 (*What Love is This?*, p. 98).

Then faced with the *cannot* Scriptures, such say that all are drawn. The truth is that man both *will* not and *cannot*.

given to him, he should give them eternal life (John 17:2).

How good, and God-honoring, it is to acknowledge that:

A man can receive nothing unless it be given him out of heaven (John 3:27).

It is a sorry spectacle to see Christians strenuously fighting against these wonderful truths.<sup>55</sup> It is the exaltation of the will of man (bound by "sin in the flesh") over the sovereignty and glory of God in the salvation of lost men.

The Father's drawing is not a plea, not an influence, not persuasion. It is an *effectual* action such as we read of in the parable of the great supper where

55. Thus, for example, Dave Hunt says:

Christ says it is those who actually come to Him that he will raise up at the last day (*What Love Is This?*, p. 234).

But that does not really address the issue. The issue is: why do they come? The answer is:

No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day (John 5:44).

In voiding the force of John 5:65, he offers this:

Surely it is justifiable to take what He says in verse 65 as at least a *possible* indication of what Christ meant by the Father drawing: i.e., that the Father *gives* the opportunity to come . . . (*ibid.*, p. 344).

Then he attempted to turn the "possibility" into the fact of the case. Any person who hears the gospel is not prohibited by God from responding. But that is not what John 6 is about. The idea of moral free will towards God demands the explaining of these things in line with an *opportunity*-to-believe notion, thus deliberately removing the sovereign actions of the Father and the Son regarding the divine implantation of faith and life.

Moreover, he repeats that absurd notion that:

One cannot be held responsible for what one cannot do . . . (*ibid.*, p. 345).

No one could keep the law but that did not hinder God from giving it and demanding obedience. But, the notion quoted is *implicit* in the moral-free-will-notion, and it is contrary to Scripture. I am not aware that the above writer has dealt with Rom. 8:7 in his book. This Scripture expressly declares the *inability* of the mind of the flesh to be subject to the law of God. There is the direct statement of Scripture that the sinner cannot obey the law -- yet God gave it. Why?

Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God. Wherefore by works of law no flesh shall be justified before him; for by law is knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:19, 20).

"Be under judgment to God" means the world is in that state before God. It is the lesson of the trial of the first man in the persons of the Jews under the law. They were a sample of the first man, and the consequence of the trial brought the whole world under the sentence of judgment to God. How dare any professed Christian say, "One cannot be held responsible for what one cannot do"? Where is the Scripture statement that "One cannot be held responsible for what one cannot do"? The notion flies in the face of Scripture every time it is uttered by five-point, or four-point, or three-point Arminians. Moreover, I doubt they would say to someone that owes them a million dollars, but who is bankrupt and cannot pay: "One cannot be held responsible for what one cannot do."

sinner were brought and compelled to come in. We see that the drawing results in being raised up in the last day for blessing, showing that the drawing is selective, not universal. It is the elect individuals (not a corporate election) that are drawn by the Father and are given by the Father to the Son. This is the “compel them” in the parable of the great supper. God implants a new nature, having His moral qualities, and this nature can act upon the will so as to please Him.

We learn the same fact of *inability* in connection with the Spirit of God:

. . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him nor know him . . . (John 14:17).

John views the sinner as blind (here; John 3:3, 36; 9:39; 12:40; cp. 9:25), deaf (John 5:25, 37, cp. 45, 60; 8:43, 47; 18:37), and dead (John 5:25). The disciples were able to see (spiritually) the Son and the Father (John 14:7, 9). In John 15:24 we have a *seeing by the evil eye* of fallen man; and it is a responsible seeing that *is not the true seeing* when the Son opens the eyes to see, as He did with the man born blind in John 19. It is horrible to think that those in spiritual darkness saw things with *their father* while in contrast the Son saw with *His Father* (John 8:38).

We have considered a number of texts together in the above section in order to see their connection. Next, we will look at some of this again under distinct headings.

#### HEARING, AND LEARNING, FROM THE FATHER

It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that has heard from the Father [himself], and has learned [of him], comes to me (John 6:45).

It is not surprising that the Lord’s reference to Isa. 54:13 has been pressed into the service of making the Father’s drawing mean that the Father draws all -- because the prophet said that all shall be taught of God. Though that is not a surprising use, it nonetheless is quite an ignorant use. Clearly, Isa. 54:13 refers to Israel in the coming day when all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26), when they shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). And the reason for it is that they shall all have been taught of God. Thus, everyone taught of God in Israel is saved, and only such will be saved. If the Father now draws everyone, and obviously everyone is not saved, then Isa. 54:13 is misused to make it mean essentially the same thing as the Father’s drawing. It is merely a desperate misuse of Isa. 54:13. The Lord quoted it for the principle in it; namely, that those actually blessed are taught of God, and those taught of God are in fact blessed. So, the Christian believer has heard from the Father and has learned of Him, and therefore came to Christ. The fact is that those drawn by the Father have been taught of God. They have heard from the Father and have learned from Him.

It is such a sweet thing to our souls and fills us with joy to know such things. Before turning to the next point, a footnote to J. N. Darby’s translation of John 6:45, regarding the word “from,” should be noted:

*Para* with a genitive (as ‘of’ God, v. 46). It is what is received directly from the Father. I add ‘himself’ that its immediateness may be felt, which is the point of the sentence.

#### ALL GIVEN BY THE FATHER TO CHRIST WILL BE RAISED IN THE LAST DAY

All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will not at all cast out (John 6:37).

And this is the will of him that has sent me, that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up in the last day (John 6:39).

Note that this is interlocked with what we have just seen. Those drawn by the Father will be raised by Christ in the last day for blessing. Not all persons will be so raised; thus, not all are drawn by the Father. The Father’s **drawing** and the Father’s **giving** to the Son are interlocked. It is those *drawn* by the Father who are *given* by the Father to the Son, and all such the Son will raise up in the last day, and such have eternal life. The Father neither draws everyone nor gives everyone to the Son.

#### NONE CAN COME TO CHRIST UNLESS IT IS GIVEN TO HIM TO COME

Therefore said I unto you, that no one can come to me unless it be given to him from the Father (John 6:65).

We may notice the use of the word “can” in John 6:44 and 65. “No one can.” That expresses *inability*. The will of man is morally bound against God by sin in the flesh; he is totally lost, totally ruined morally towards God, and except the Father draw him, and gives him to Christ, he stays in that awful condition. It is the given ones that come; clearly, those who do not come were not given by the Father. Clearly, the Father does not give all. And the coming to Christ is itself a gift given by the Father to the one who comes to the Son.

#### ALL GIVEN BY THE FATHER TO CHRIST DO, IN FACT, COME TO CHRIST

All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will not at all cast out (John 6:37).

And this is the will of him that has sent me, that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up in the last day (John 6:39).

My Father who has given [them] to me . . . (John 10:29).

. . . that [as to] all thou hast given to him, he should give them eternal life (John 17:2)

I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. They were thine, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word (John 17:6).

I do not demand concerning the world, but those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine, (and all that is mine is thine, and [all] that is thine mine,) and I am glorified in them (John 17:9).

Father, [as to] those thou hast given me (John 17:24).

[As to] those thou hast given me, I have lost not one of them (John 18:9).

We ought to see that the Father does not give all to Christ because if the Father did that, then all would come to Christ. The same thing is true in connection with the Father's drawing. It is certain that the Father has given the believer to the Son and that all are not given by the Father: hence, not all have eternal life.

The complex action is that they are drawn by the Father, are given by the Father to the Son, and the Son gives them, every one of them that the Father gives to Him, eternal life. Moreover, concerning those given by the Father to the Son, it is the will of the Father that none such should be lost. This is what we mean by "eternal security." Notice that this is bound up together with the fact that it is the Father that gives them to the Son. Note well that "eternal security" and the Father's drawing and giving the believer to the Son, are bound up together and with "eternal security." To believe both in eternal security" as well as moral free will towards God is contrary to Scripture. Observe the connection with John 10:28, 29:

(28) . . . and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall seize them out of my hand. (29) My Father who has given [them] to me is greater than all, and no one can seize them out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one.

Yes, "eternal security" excludes the supposed moral free will of man towards God as exercised in appropriating salvation.

#### RECEIVE AND GIVE

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing unless it be given him out of heaven (John 3:27).

One does not obtain eternal life by receiving it because of an act of his own will. The *receiving* is given to him out of heaven. *All is of God*. The fleshly minded Corinthians needed to be reminded of that great fact:

For who makes thee to differ? And what hast thou which thou hast not received? (1 Cor. 4:7).

"Oh," says someone, "I have not received faith from God. That came from my own will!"

But [the] natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him; and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned

(1 Cor. 2:14).<sup>56</sup>

That is a statement concerning the state of lost man. Have you confessed before the Father that that is what you are by nature? Salvation is one of the things of the Spirit of God. Thank God, He brings and compels sinners to come to the great supper.

Clearly, all drawn by the Father are given to the Son and the Son gives them eternal life. Whoever believes has life. The person believes because he has been drawn by the Father and given to the Son. It is not a human choice by moral free will towards God. There is no such thing.

#### JOHN 12:32 CANNOT CONTRADICT WHAT WE HAVE JUST SEEN

The advocates of moral free will towards God hold that the Father draws everyone, and they bring in John 12:32 to show this. But we have just seen, above, that the Father neither draws, nor gives, all men to the Son. Thus, to bring in John 12:32 into the matter of the *Father's* drawing, is manufacturing a contradiction in Scripture. In John 12:32 the Lord Jesus said that if He was lifted up He would *Himself* (not the Father) draw all men unto Himself. This is not the same subject as the Father's drawing. It is Christ as *lifted up* on the cross (v. 33) drawing all men. The Jews were not expecting the Messiah to be crucified. His listeners objected, saying they heard out of the law that Christ abides forever (v. 34).<sup>57</sup> What, then, is this about the Son of Man being lifted

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56. In seeking to overcome the force of the Scriptures which describe man as spiritually dead, Dave Hunt wrote:

Where does the Bible make this distinction that the spiritually dead can "believe all sorts of things" but not "those things that are pleasing to God"? ( *What Love Is This?*, p. 317).

That is not an inquiry. It is a rhetorical question meaning there is none. Thus, if a text is brought forward that answers the question free-willers simply declare a restriction on such texts. In this case, referring to 1 Cor. 2:14, Dave Hunt says:

Yes . . . However, this cannot be speaking of the gospel.

"Yes" the natural man cannot receive the things Paul spoke of, but the natural man can receive the gospel, he says. And what proof are we offered that the natural man has the ability to receive the gospel? Are we offered an express statement of Scripture that men are able to do so? -- No; instead, we are told that the proof is that "the gospel is plainly offered to the whole world" ( *What Love Is This?*, p. 97). This is a typical example of how the statements of Scripture are circumvented. So, no amount of proof from Scripture will be enough before such methods of circumventing its force.

The truth is that the gospel goes out freely and the elect believe it through the sovereign implantation of faith and life.

57. They might appeal to such Scriptures as 1 Chron. 17:12; Psa. 89:24, 29; Psa. 110:4; Isa. 9:7; 53:8; Ezek. 37:25; Dan. 7:14; Micah 4:7 -- while ignoring the predictions of His death and

(continued...)

up? It did not fit their scheme of how matters should be. When Christ was living, the middle wall of partition (Eph. 2:14 ) remained between Jew and Gentile. To be the attractive One for all men, Jew and Gentile, He must be lifted up. The cross ended the fact that He was the Christ only for the Jews. J. N. Darby remarked:

He is “lifted up” in John 3, in connection with dying men, like the brazen serpent, and as introducing to heavenly things; He is “lifted up” in John 8 in connection with the utter rejection of the Jews; He is “lifted up” in John 12, drawing all men unto Him -- the wide sphere of application here below -- all this by His death. These are the only cases of the use of the word regarding Christ.<sup>58</sup>

And it is on the rejection of the Jews, as such, for rejecting His word, that He says “when lifted up” they would “know it was he.” When too late they would know whom they had rejected. So it was with the altar -- it was not in the camp but in the court of the tabernacle, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (of meeting). Only in ch. 8, He is the Word, I Am, whom they have rejected. It was one coming from the camp towards the Tabernacle (Heaven) who found the altar the first thing heavenward -- so Christ on the Cross, lifted up, the Witness, dying, that we were dead in sin, but find it in grace in a sacrifice for sin. We go further -- we enter into the holiest through the rent veil, but here was the meeting place, but it {is} as having done consequently with the world (the first Adam) as Christ had there done with it -- He was lifted up from the earth and all became heavenly but judgment, and that is so to us.<sup>59</sup>

Finding “draw” in both texts does not mean the reference is to the same drawing, any more than because Noah was in an ark and Moses was in an ark, that the two arks are the same thing. Care must be exercised not to force a false notion on the text so as to support the idea of moral free will towards God, thus leading not only to contradiction of passages but to absurdity.

Because the Father has drawn us and given us to the Son, we are in the good of redemption and that we are reconciled to God. He has caused us to hear spiritually, and implanted in us a new nature, along with faith, all at the same time, which leads on to repentance, etc.<sup>60</sup> Our hearts rise up in worship to the Father Who has given us as a love-gift to His beloved Son.

(To be continued if the Lord will)

Ed.

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57. (...continued)  
resurrection.

58. *Notes and Comments* 2:299; see also *Collected Writings* 26:356.

59. *Notes and Comments* 2:288.

60. See *From New Birth to New Creation*, available from the publisher.

## *Does a Broad Path Indicate Broad-heartedness?*

J. N. Darby remarked:

A broad path means a broad conscience, not a broad heart. We have a narrow path, but it is a known path, and a straight one.<sup>61</sup>

The flesh pretends that the broad path it walks in is really displaying broad-heartedness. It is a spiritual fraud cloaking itself in pretended piety, often coupled with denouncing those who walk in separation from evil unto the Lord. It involves the “liberalism” that says, ‘I will not judge you, and do not you judge me.’

We are not to judge motives, but we are to judge acts. The One who said “judge not that ye be not judged,” also said “judge righteous judgment.” The broad-conscience Christian seizes on one statement to contradict the other statement made by Him who never contradicted Himself. So, instead of apprehending that “judge not that ye be not judged” concerns motives, it is used by the fleshly Christian to hinder the righteous judgment of acts. What it is about is the pretension to be broad-hearted; pretentious self pretending to what is really a false love and false kindness, wanting a broader and easier path of Christian association, or with the world, and to be thought of as a “nice” person. Thus it is a crooked, hypocritical path. It is not the display of the life of Christ in us.

Ed.

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61. *Notes and Comments*, p. 290.