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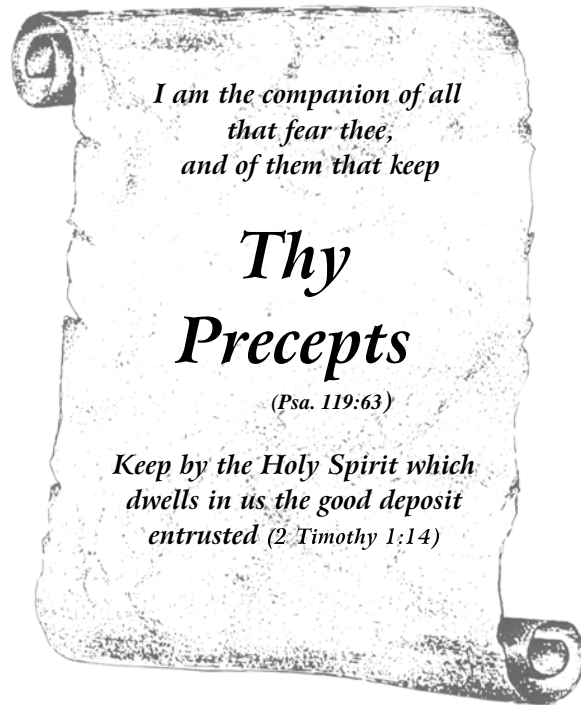
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*The Christian's Heavenly Place and
Calling Eviscerated by Messianic Judaism*

Chapter 5

A Heavenly Sanctuary Part 3

Following upon the last article, "The Priesthood and the Law Changed," we will now consider "A Minister of the Sanctuary," the new, heavenly sanctuary reprinted from *Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith*. There is no room for any official Christian in the heavenly sanctuary. To have an official is Judaistic. Let us bear in mind that the Apostle Paul wrote from prison and the time of patience with 'Messianic Judaism' had now come to an end, and the Jewish Christians were told to go outside the camp, i.e., Judaism (Heb. 13:14). Soon, the destruction of Jerusalem would take place, God thus governmentally removing the seat of Judaism. So, the Jewish saints had a short time to act in faith before that happened, obeying the Word of God in separating from Judaism. Of course, Gentile Christians have largely embraced Judaistic elements. From all this we must stand in separation, as going "forth unto Him, without the camp, bearing his reproach." Ed.

A Minister of the Sanctuary Heb. 8:1

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

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

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

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

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

The consequence must be that in the city of solemnities itself such an one finds himself in the wilderness. He can no longer have fellowship with the multitude who keep holy-day. His temple and his High Priest are now in heaven; and if he went up to the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer, he there has to testify that Israel are blindly groping amidst the shadows, and that all the promises of God are yea and amen in him whom they had slain, but whom God had exalted to his own right hand. But though thus full of heavenly communion and intelligence, such an one would appear to the eyes of those around him, as though he had been cut off from Israel; yea, he might actually have been put out of the synagogue (John 16:2). If he would speak of worshiping God, he would have it cast in his teeth, that he had neither sanctuary, nor altar, nor sacrifice, nor priest! Hard indeed must it have been to have maintained that he had all these, when apparently he could not point to one of them. Hard indeed to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end. But with a single eye to JESUS all this was possible. Yea: there ought to have been a confidence and rejoicing in the assertion of what he had found, as far superior to all that he had

left. All he had left was visible and present indeed -- things which were palpable to sense -- and all he had found was known only to faith; but still he could say what he *had*. He could testify that the only value of all that God once established amidst Israel, was found in its representing that which he now in substance knew in heaven. And he could therefore say, "Taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

But how strange and irregular must it have appeared to such to assemble for worship without any *single visible* essential of worship; no prescribed or consecrated place; no sacrifice; no ministering priest. But here came in the profession -- *that all these they had*. "*We have,*" says the apostle,

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

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

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

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

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

And, *we have* "a minister of the sanctuary."

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

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

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

But he was not called out from the multitude of believers, as the priest was from the multitude of Israel, to minister *for them* before the Lord (Heb. 5); though he surely was a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name to the Gentiles, and though he had a certain place of authority and eminence in the Church itself. But however distinct may have been his ministry -- or even ministries -- he was one of a *common priesthood*. He well knew that there were but two ranks in Christian priesthood; the Great High Priest and the priests. He was one of the priests; and therefore, though he could magnify his office as an apostle of the Gentiles, he could not magnify his priesthood. Hence he writes authoritatively as the apostle, while before the Great High Priest he is but a brother among brethren. The great subject of priesthood, which he so largely discusses in the Epistle to the Hebrews, demanded that the apostle should himself take the place of a worshiper; that thus his own peculiar office might sink into nothing before the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Thus does the apostle acknowledge and declare that Jesus, the Son of God, alone, is the representative priest on the earth. ¹ Would that in this Paul had had more successors.

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

The sanctuary in which Jesus ministers is not on earth, as that was in which

1. {This sentence is misleading. Christ never had, and now has no, priesthood on earth. Perhaps the writer meant to say, 'is the representative priest for those on earth.'}

Aaron ministered, but in heaven itself. Even there he is pre-eminent; “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;” but all the redeemed saints of God worship there, through him, as equal one with another. But it is nevertheless true that God has now a ministry on earth as well as a ministry in heaven. But these ministries differ most essentially. The ministry on earth goes forth from God to bring sinners to himself, upon the ground of his manifested love in the gift and sacrifice of his Son. The ministry of the sanctuary is a ministry on behalf of those already brought nigh unto God by the blood of Jesus. In the former there is nothing positively priestly. The minister of the Gospel does nothing *for the sinner* -- for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord -- but he proclaims *what the Son of God has done*; what *God* has wrought, and what *God* declares. On the other hand, the minister of the sanctuary is actually occupied with doing something *for the worshiper*; for those who have come to God through Jesus, and who have free access into the holiest of all. The minister of the Gospel has to tell sinners of the work of sacrifice; a work done on earth, a finished work, never to be repeated: but the work of the priest is continuous; it is a work on behalf of believers alone; a work for the true worshipers, and which they still need. To confound these ministries is sad confusion indeed. To make the ministry of the Gospel priestly in its character is to deceive sinners into the thought that they are worshipers; and it is at the same time entirely to obscure the blessed ministry of reconciliation. Nor is that error less dangerous which has confounded the ministry of the Spirit, by gift, in the Church, with the true service of the one minister of the sanctuary. It is an awful invasion of his office, to suppose that any in the Church are *peculiarly* priests.

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

1. “We have *such* an High Priest.” The person of our Great High Priest, ² and the connection between His person and His office, having been already rested on in a previous paper, I would now only say, that this language is in its character boasting. And it is rightly so; for we may glory in the Lord. It is right to challenge any comparison with Him; and to leave who will to draw the conclusion. But this is not all said of Him here: it is added, “who is set down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.” It has been noticed already, that the attitude of sitting down, contrasted with the standing of Aaron, shows that the

2. {The glory, value, and virtue of the Person of Christ fills that office with His glory, virtue, and values.}

one has completed the work of sacrifice, which the other never did. But there is this also be noticed -- the place in which he is seated, “on the *right hand* of the *throne of the majesty*, in the *heavens*.” How every expression of honour and dignity seems to be collected together here. What a seat is this! There is our High Priest seated! And is this other blessed truth; -- He has taken His seat there at the call of God.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool {Psa. 110:1}.

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

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

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

3. {There were no seats in the tabernacle because the work was not finished.}

in this assume the exclusive prerogative of the Son of God.

I believe that our souls are little aware of the deadening effect of looking to any set of men to perform public service for us to God. It must necessarily take away the soul from immediate dependence on the great public minister, and His divine service in heaven. It is not that every one is qualified to lead the public worship of the saints, any more than that every one is qualified to teach the saints or to preach the gospel; but there are none who stand in the same relation to the Church that Zacharias did to the Jews (Luke 1). None who are called to perform service for them, so that if such a person was wanting, the saints could not worship. Let the saints ever remember this, and guard against any intrusion on that office solely belonging to the Great High Priest. Divine service is now performed in heaven by the one Great High Priest, and He is jealous of the intrusion of any into this His office; as He was, when Korah and his company intruded into the office of those whom he once ordained to perform divine service on the earth.

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

Remember, it is no question between the comparative advantage of one ritual above another; or whether there may not be evangelical truth and spiritual breathing in a liturgy; it is a much more solemn question. It is a question concerning the assumption by men of an office belonging alone to the Son of God. Korah and his company might have intended to adhere ever so strictly to the directions for priestly service; but that was not the question; it was one of personal intrusion into an office unto which God had not called them. Indeed, they perished with censers and incense in their hands; the controversy of God was with *them*. And just so is it of all false assumption of office in the Church. It is not a question of what may or may not be done in the office; it is the intrusion into it which is so fearful a sin; for is not reproach cast upon the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven -- is he not trodden under foot, if the

thought is allowed of the necessity of any one person, or any order of persons, to perform divine service *for us* on earth? "WE HAVE" -- blessed be his name! -- "a minister of the sanctuary" always performing divine service for us above. Be it our souls' joy to know it more and more.

2. We must now glance at the place of his ministry; His

more excellent ministry.

A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

What a solemn lesson are we taught here concerning earthly and human things. Human instrumentality -- that which is "made with hands" -- "of this building" (creation) -- whether respect to place, persons, or things, ever fails, and is all disowned of God. Nothing will stand but that which is "made without hands," i.e., of God. Men may think they honour God by rearing magnificent buildings, and dignifying them with the name of temple, or house of God; but they cannot be *the true*, because man and not God has founded them. Their device and their order all show them to be of the earth. It is well indeed if the

very appearance of our worship here testifies that it is not of the worldly order and pattern. And this will be so, the more we realize that the place of worship is now changed from earth to heaven. There it is that the minister of the sanctuary exercises His most blessed office. The Lord Jesus Christ exercised no such ministry on earth;

for if he were on earth, he should not be a priest {Heb. 8:4};

and therefore our place of worship must be heaven, because there are no accredited priests of God on earth to offer gifts or to perform divine service (v. 4).

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

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

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

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

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

He ever liveth to make intercession for us {Heb. XXX}.

Hence he is able to save right through, from the beginning to the end. No plague of destructive judgment can come forth against the Church because of this. It is constantly upheld in perfectness by the power of the intercession of Jesus. It is this which ever keeps it in its right place before God, however infirm or erring here.

The blessedness of the ministry of him who ministers for us in the true tabernacle, is, that it is entirely independent of us. It is *by Him for us*. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-judgment, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God; whether our souls are realizing the value of what he is doing or not. Every saint is upheld by the intercession of Jesus even in his most thoughtless mood. Priesthood is part of the work of *grace* -- grace that provides for the putting away our every sin, and aiding our every infirmity, and bearing our every waywardness, in order that we may never be out of the presence of God. Hence, the moment the conscience of a careless saint is reawakened, he may find full and instant access to God, because, though he has failed, the minister of the sanctuary has not. ⁴ Long before he is alive to his failure, he is debtor to the ministry of Jesus for having been kept from falling. Little did Simon think of the sifting power of Satan, but the Lord, who had prayed that his faith might not fail, could point out to him his danger. And so with us oftentimes. We see our failures, or the might and craft of our enemies, and then how precious is the thought that the intercession of Jesus for us has been over all. We are led to value the intercession of Jesus *after* failure or danger is discovered -- as surely Peter was; but its real value is, that it is perpetually offered, and perpetually prevalent. However we may fail, therefore, the resources of faith can never fail; for faith reaches out to God, and God's provisions of grace in Jesus, over every failure. If there be one deeper anguish of soul than another, it surely must be for a saint to become conscious of sin, but to be without faith to look to God's gracious provision to meet it; but Jesus prays that our faith may not fail.

We are apt to regard the intercession of Christ only as occasionally exercised on our behalf, and exercised because we have applied to it; yea, we know that men have gone so far as to make it appear that the intercession of Jesus was only to be called out by a secondary intercession of others, such as the Virgin, or departed saints, or the Church. But how false is all this! No; His ministry is marked by the same grace now as when on earth. "*I have prayed for thee*" was his word to Simon Peter. And so when He saw the multitudes fainting, He well

4. {We should keep in mind that Christ's priesthood is to maintain us; His advocacy (1 John 2) has restoration in view}.

knew what He would do, and do without being asked. And so now, his intercession is of the same grace; it is according to his own divine and gracious estimate of our many needs. He knows how, in our practical danger, weakness, and foolishness, we look in the eye of God, and He ever makes intercession for us accordingly; maintaining us thus in His own fragrant perfectness. In the challenge of the apostle as to where a charge can be brought against God's elect, he winds up all with this, as though he could go no higher,

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

In another aspect the present ministry of Jesus is one of offering; as it is said,

wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer {Heb. 8:36}.

Or, as it is subsequently said,

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

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

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

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

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

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, that is,

the fruit of our lips, giving thanks (making confession) in his name {Heb. 13:15}.⁵

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

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

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

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

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

5. {In JND's translation this reads: {"[the] fruit of [the] lips confessing his name."}}

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

Chapter 7

God's Sovereignty in Peter: Election and Foreknowledge

(Continued)

Not Willing that Any Should Perish; and Reprobation

Before considering 2 Pet. 3:9, we shall first look at 1 Tim. 2:4 and some other Scriptures. Many Calvinists restrict “all” in such a texts, as they do in some other texts, to mean classes of men, not all individuals. What is at the bottom of this is the restriction of God’s love to only the elect, not seeing the general love of God and that this general love does not set aside unconditional election. So just following our examination of 1 Tim. 2:4 we will review some passages that speak of all men.

1 Tim. 2:4

. . . our Savior God, who desires ¹ that all men should be saved and come to [the] knowledge of the truth.

The right understanding of this text is that all men means every individual but the verse does not mean that God’s decretive will is that every individual be saved.

1. W. Kelly remarked:

. . . why should the Revisers {1881 Revised Version} give “desiring” (θέλω.) in 1:7, and “willeth” (θ.) here, but “desire” βούλομαι in 8? In 2 Pet. 3:9 they render β. “wishing.” Why this looseness and caprice? Buttmann’s distinction (Lexil. i. 26), that θ. [ἐθέλω] is not only the more general expression for willing, which is true, but that kind especially where a purpose is included, as compared with β., which implies a mere acquiescence in the will of others, seems to be quite untenable even in Homer. It is β. which is used especially to express mind or purpose if required. Mr. Green is also faulty in giving just the same force to the two different words in 1 Tim. 2:3 {sic., 4} and 2 Pet. 3:9; so indeed are the old well-known English versions (*The Bible Treasury* 14:30).

Coupled with this is v. 6 which also refers to all individuals but does not mean that Christ bore every person’s sins substitutionally. 1 Tim. 2:6 is explained in detail in *The Work of Christ on the Cross and Some of Its Results*, available from the publisher. The distinction between 1 Tim. 2:6 and Matt. 20:28 is shown in that book, as well as the fact that “ransom” and “redemption” are not identical. Moreover, the distinction between purchase (bought) and redemption is often not apprehended, as W. Kelly pointed out, and this has led to much mishandling of many texts.

This text in no way denies unconditional election. Calvinists who see the *will of decree* in this verse must necessarily have “all” mean, not every individual, but every kind of men, or *all classes* of men -- because, if it meant the will of decree *and* every person, then every person would ultimately be saved. Since not every person is saved, then either the verse expresses God’s *desire*, or else it refers to classes of people, not to every individual. Since many Calvinists insist that God’s will of decree is meant, they assert that “all men” means all classes of men. Their procedure is to direct attention to passages that they think clearly use the word “all” in this restricted sense and then view this passage in the same way. ² After having done this, W. Hendriksen wrote:

Even today, how often do we not use the expression “all men” or “everybody” without referring to every member of the human race? When we say, “If everybody is ready, the meeting can begin,” we do not refer to everybody on earth! {But we do refer to every individual in the room where the meeting is! The analogy is false.}

Thus also in the present passage (1 Tim. 2:1), it is *the context* that must decide. In this case the context is clear. Paul definitely mentions *groups* or *classes* of men: kings (verse 2), those in high position (verse 2), the Gentiles (verse 7). He is thinking of rulers and (by implication) subjects, of Gentiles and (again by implication) Jews, and he is urging Timothy to see to it that in public worship not a single group be omitted. In other words, the expression “all men” as here used means “all men without distinction of race, nationality, or social position,” not “all men individually, one by one.”

Besides, how would it even be possible, except in a very vague and global manner (the very opposite of *Paul’s* constant emphasis!), to remember in prayer *every person on earth*?

2. In explanation of the expression “in behalf of all men” the apostle continues: in behalf of kings and all who are in high position. ³

Let us begin with: “Paul definitely mentions *groups* or *classes* of men: kings (verse 2), those in high position (verse 2) . . .” 1 Tim. 2:2 states:

2. For example, George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 113ff, 1992.

3. *The Epistles to Timothy & Titus*, London: Banner of Truth Trust, p. 94, 1959.

for kings and all that are in dignity . . .

While I would not take this to mean that we are to pray for each king by name, and each person in the world who is in dignity by name, is our prayer for such to be inclusive of every individual king and every individual person in dignity? – or ought we to exclude some? That is, is our prayer for them to comprehend within the prayer every single one of them? --“that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life . . .” (v. 2). Notice that W. Hendriksen definitely excludes “everybody on earth” from “all men” although he includes all classes of men. Would it not follow from what he claims that the words “all that are in dignity” excludes the meaning ‘everybody in dignity’ but includes all classes of men that are in dignity? We are to pray for the class “kings,” and the class “rulers,” and the class “governors,” and the class “mayors,” and the class “magistrates,” and so on. So if I do not like some particular person in dignity, I do not have to pray for him in particular, because some individuals are excludable while I pray for all *classes* in a general way? This might remind us that Christ was sent to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24). Why limit this to classes of lost sheep of Israel, instead of to all the individual lost sheep?

There follows this direction concerning prayer, that has in view tranquility and godliness of His people, the statement that God desires that all men should be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). After that comes the statement:

For God is one, and [the] mediator of God and men one, [the] man Christ Jesus . . . (1 Tim. 2:5).

Are we to suppose “men” here means “all sorts, or all classes, of men”? The question is, is Christ the mediator of every individual and God or is He the mediator of classes of men and God? Is He the mediator of “kings and all that are in dignity,” and of Jews and Gentiles, but not of every individual? We have “men” on the one side, God on the other side, and the Mediator between; a man. There is God on one hand, a man the Mediator, and men on the other hand. ⁴ Let us return to 1 Tim. 2:4:

. . . our Savior God, who desires that all men be saved and come to [the] knowledge of [the] truth.

The verse shows that God hinders no one from being saved and coming to the knowledge of the truth. There is no decree of God preventing them, no decree of reprobation. It is man’s willful refusal to come to the great supper that is the reason they are not there. The will of man refuses, yet the gospel is for *all men*. However, those that do come to God’s great supper do so because they are

4. And then comes v. 6, which is discussed in the book, *The Work of Christ on the Cross and Some of Its Results*. It means exactly all men but does not mean that Christ is the substitute for all men as if He bore their sins in His body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). Were they really only all classes of men?

compelled to come in, meaning that God implants in them a new nature and faith.

R. K. McGregor Wright gives the following meaning for “all” in 1 Tim. 2:1-6:

“all men” v. 1	“all kinds of people”
“all men” v. 4	“‘all of God’s people’ or ‘all kinds of people’”
“men” v. 5	{no comment}
“all” v. 6	“‘all of God’s people’ or ‘all kinds of people’”

And why is this necessary? He is rebutting the idea of Christ dying *substitutionally* for everyone by doing this and then says, “The passage is now, as I have put it, removed from the Arminian arsenal.” ⁵ I must note one more point from him, namely an argument why “all existing human beings” is not meant by “all” -- instead of saying ‘all presently living human beings on earth.’ So, having set up a straw-man (i.e., cannot mean “all existing human beings”), he knocks him down by saying that the phrase would include those in hell and that could not be. So he concludes it means “all classes of people” -- as if there will not be “classes of people” in hell (“kings,” to take an example from our chapter). The Calvinistic reasoning that goes into numbers of texts is just as wearisome as Arminian reasoning that goes into numbers of texts. Arminians work around texts which stand in the way of moral free will towards God. Calvinists work around a number of the uses of “all” in Scripture when they think that the word “all” should be restricted to the elect only. The view presented in this article rejects both the Arminian and Calvinistic explanation.

However, the Calvinist, John Piper, in an article, “Are There Two Wills in God?”, rightly takes the position that “all men” in v. 4 means just that. And, the reason that not all are saved is, he says, because:

there is something that He wills more, which would be lost if He exerted his sovereign power to save all . . . The answer given by Calvinists is that the greater value is the manifestation of the full range of God’s glory in wrath and mercy (Rom. 9:22-23) and the humbling of man so that he enjoys giving all credit to God for His salvation (1 Cor. 1:29). ⁶

This is true. I would have given an answer in terms of the nature of God, in terms of what God is; namely, *God is light*, and *God is love*: that there shall be the

5. *No Place for Sovereignty, What’s Wrong with Freewill Theism*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, pp. 171, 172, 1996.

6. From, Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware, editors, *Still Sovereign*, Grand Rapids: Baker, pp. 123, 124, 2000.

eternal display of this in the eternal, conscious punishment of the wicked, and in the eternal, conscious blessedness of the saved. God permitted the entrance of evil that the glory of His nature as light might shine in the punishment of sin as an affront to that glory. In the case of the elect, God also uses sin in the display of His nature as love, for *He* provided His Son's sacrifice for sin on the cross, and by sovereign grace fits such for an eternity with Himself. He glorifies Himself in them as the trophies of His love. Thus, we have God glorified in all that He is: as light and as love. And we should keep in mind that God has dealt with our sins on the cross, according to what He is as light, and is thus just in justifying the believer. It gives us peace to know that God has righteously dealt with our sins (as well as what we are as characterized by the old nature). Those viewed by God as in Christ are the chargeless elect (Rom. 8:33; and see Eph. 1:4). No wonder that A. C. Brown so often said that "grace is God for us in all that He is, in spite of what we are in ourselves." God the omnipotent One has shown what evil is, an offense against His majesty, nature, and glory, and has undertaken to glorify Himself with respect to evil.

John Piper has also noted that such an explanation concerning God's "two wills" does justice to Ezek. 18:23, 32 and 33:11. None of this precludes God's will of unconditional election.

ALL MEN

Regarding the use of "all men" in 2 Tim. 2, George W. Knight III wrote:

What does "all people" (πάντες ἄνθρωποι), Acts 22:15; Rom. 5:12a, 18a, b; 12:17, 18; 1 Cor. 7:7; 15:19; 2 Cor. 3:2; Phil. 4:5; 1 Thes. 2:15; 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Tit. 2:11; 3:2) mean? The repetition of ὑπέρ and further specification, as a subgroup⁷ of civil rulers (v. 2) points in the direction of meaning all *kinds* of people.

Let us look at each of these texts alleged to mean all *kinds* of people, not all individuals.

Acts 22:15

. . . for thou shalt be a witness for him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

Since Paul did not personally witness to every individual on the globe, the solution sought is that this must mean all *kinds* of men. May we ask how many *kinds* of men are on the earth? Did Paul witness to each of these *kinds* of men? I am not aware of how Calvinists define, or limit, the *kinds* of men so as to fit the case. The better explanation is that a testimony was not personally rendered to all men, but that it had all men in view.

Rom. 5:12

For this [cause], even as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . .

How could anyone pretend to drag the notion of all *kinds* of men into this when it is so clear that every individual is meant?

Rom. 5:18

So then as [it was] by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life.

This is a statement of the bearing, or thrust, of the respective actions, not the actual effect. In the case of Adam's offence, we learn from Rom. 5:12 that the effect was that it did indeed result in death passing upon all men. However, we do not read in Scripture that the thrust of the one righteousness of Christ effected justification of life for all men. All men means every individual.

Rom. 12:17, 18

Recompensing to no one evil for evil: providing things honest before all men; if possible, as far as depends on you, living in peace with all men.

I suppose the notion is that since no one does this before every individual on the earth, therefore all *kinds* of men are meant. Does any Christian do this before all *kinds* of men? Is that supposed to be possible? Will someone provide us with an authoritative listing of all the *kinds* of men -- so that we Christians may be sure to obey and do it before all those *kinds* of men? Recompensing no one evil for evil has to do with any individual with whom we have to do. "All men" has all men in view, and wherever we find ourselves with them, we have directions here for our conduct.

1 Cor. 7:7

Now I wish all men to be even as myself; but every one has his own gift of God: one man thus, and another thus. But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows, It is good for them that they remain even as I (1 Cor. 7:7, 8).

"All men" here has in view Christians -- *all* Christians; but every one of the Christians has his own gift of God regarding marriage. However, regarding every one of the unmarried and every one of the widows, "it is good for them that they remain even as I," "to be even as myself."

1 Cor. 15:19

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are [the] most miserable of all men.

"We" refers to all Christians and "all men" refers to all Christians and non-Christians, i.e., all men.

7. *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 115, 1992.

2 Cor. 3:2

Ye are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men . . .

Were the Corinthians known and read of all *kinds* of men because every individual around the globe read them? Could there be some *kinds* of men that did not read them, located far from Corinth? I suggest that the appeal to the idea of all *kinds* of men is not actually helpful, though many Calvinists think it necessary in order to maintain unconditional election.

Phil. 4:5

Let your gentleness be known of all men.

The same objection regarding all *kinds* of men applies.

1 Tim. 2:4

We have discussed this, as well as some other uses of “all,” above.

1 Tim. 4:10

God, who is a preserver of all men, specially of those that believe.

Perhaps the notion is that since a group of persons, “those that believe,” is mentioned, that therefore God is the preserver of all *kinds* of men but not of every individual? God is the preserver of every individual, including every Christian, but especially so of Christians.

Titus 2:11

For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men, has appeared . . .

That is the character of the grace of God. Its actual application to individuals is in accordance with God’s unconditional election.

Titus 3:2

. . . to speak evil of no one . . .

Why see in this that we are speak evil of no *kind* of men and that it does not mean every individual? Is it forbidden to speak evil of classes of men, but not forbidden to speak evil of individuals? Take, for example, the class “murderers.”

Summary. The passages supposed to indicate *kinds* of men actually show that all individuals are in view. Just as Arminians read into many texts their idea about free moral will towards God, so do Calvinists restrict the meaning of “all men” to fit a notion about election. And this has its importance in some texts to which our attention was not yet drawn:

God . . . now enjoins men that they shall everywhere repent (Acts 17:30).

For the love of Christ constrains us, having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

There is nothing here about kinds, or classes, of men. In fallen Adam all have died. And there is an aspect to the *death* of Christ that has all men in view. In Scripture usage of words, the *blood* is only applied to believers. This has been reviewed and explained in *The Work of Christ on the Cross and Some of Its Results*. It is necessary to observe the Spirit’s use of such words.

2 PETER 3:9

. . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

F. G. Patterson remarked:

He has not counseled (μη βουλόμενος) that any should perish . . .⁸

Another observed that:

These words entirely set aside the horrid idea (technically called reprobation) that any man was made for the purpose of being cast into hell. God, on the contrary, desires to save. His heart yearns over men. He waits on them, entreats them, sends the Gospel to them that they may receive it. No doubt it is pure grace and only grace that awakens one soul to love God. But it is the sin, the unbelief of man (whatever be the judicial hardening in certain cases) that shuts them up in the rejection of His mercy.⁹

It is clear that God is not *purposing* anyone to perish. It is also clear that He is not *purposing* all to be saved, else all would be saved. Regarding election and reprobation, W. Kelly wrote:

Election is necessarily from God entirely apart from those that are the objects of it, as it means the exercise of His sovereign choice. If there is the smallest ground in the party chosen because of which God chooses, it is not His choice, but rather a moral discernment, which, far from being sovereign, is only an appraisal whether the person deserves or not. One may hold then as strongly as the stoutest Calvinist the free sovereign choice of God, but the reprobation of the wicked which the Calvinist draws from it, as an equally sovereign decree, is in my judgment a grave error. I do not therefore scruple to say a word upon it now, inasmuch as it is an important thing in both doctrine and practice. The idea that, if God chooses one, He must reprobate another whom He does not choose, is a fallacy and without, yea against, scripture. This is exactly where human influence comes in; that is, the petty self-confidence of man’s mind. Now I do not see why we as believers should be petty; there is every reason why we should gather what is great for God. To be simple is all well; but this too is a very different thing from being petty, and no reason why we should limit ourselves to ourselves; for what does God reveal His mind for? Surely that we should know Him, and be

8. *Collected Writings of F. G. Patterson*, p. 220, available from the publisher.

9. *The Bible Treasury* 3:59.

imitators of Him.¹⁰

For more on the Calvinist doctrine of reprobation, see Appendix 1.

Not surprisingly, there are Calvinists who want to restrict the meaning of this text (2 Pet. 3:9), just as in the case of 1 Tim. 2:4. As an example, R. K. McGregor Wright does so by presenting three arguments. While we may sympathize with his desire to show that these texts are not “‘obviously Arminian’ verses,” we do not agree with his Calvinistic view of them either. His first point is:

The simplest response to this curious notion is that if God did not want anyone to perish, he should not have created us with a free will in the first place, because this made the Fall inevitable sooner or later. More to the point, however, we might suggest that God should have done what would be necessary to save everyone, thus ensuring that everyone would not perish.¹¹

John Piper’s comments re 1 Tim. 2:4, given above, apply here also. Dr. Wright simply will not have it that God has a desire that all men should be saved, and that none should perish, but that His desire does not set aside unconditional election. His first point, then, is that such a thing cannot be.

The second point is to make the text refer to the elect only. Thus, he notes that 1 Pet. 1:1, 3, 5 show that Peter is addressing the elect, as he also does in 2 Pet. 3:1. Then, in v. 9 we are told that our measure of “slowness” is not the standard for what God does:

In fact, his love for the elect is shown by the fact that he waited until 1953 to save me . . . God is not willing that *any of us*, the beloved elect, should perish, but proposes that all of the elect from all times should come to repentance.¹²

This is mere assumption that that the word “any” is restricted to the elect. That Peter wrote to the elect does not prove this. The third point is an appeal to Greek:

Furthermore, in a Greek sentence such as this, an indefinite pronoun such as *any (tinias)* normally refers to the most immediate antecedent in the sentence. Thus *any* must mean “any of us” (the elect and beloved to whom the letter is addressed).¹³

Such able Greek scholars as J. N. Darby and W. Kelly do not agree with him, and, moreover, there are Calvinists that also do not agree with him. His three points have not shown anything but unwillingness to accept what the text says because to do so would interfere with some Calvinistic notions he has that restrict God’s love. He thinks this text is incompatible with unconditional election but of

10. W. Kelly, *Introductory Lectures . . . on the Minor Prophets*, pp. 508, 509.

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

13. *Ibid.*

course it is not. And the Arminian who somehow is able to find moral free will towards God in this text is also quite astray.¹⁴ Returning now to Calvinists who see only the elect in this text,¹⁵ apparently they are more Calvinistic than Calvin himself (a phenomenon which occurs concerning some other texts also). Here are some remarks of Simon J. Kistemaker in which he first quotes John Calvin, both of them contradicting the above quoted Calvinist:

“So wonderful is [God’s] love towards mankind, that he would have them all to be saved, and is of his own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost” (Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Peter*, p. 491) . . .

When Paul writes that God “wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4; also see Ezek. 18:23, 32), he does not mean that all men are indeed saved. Although God desires the redemption of the entire race, he does not decree universal salvation. Therefore, in respect to the verb *want* or *wish* theologians distinguish between God’s desire and God’s decree.¹⁶

God’s long-suffering was displayed previously during Noah’s day (1 Pet. 3:20). Longsuffering is being shown again before the day of the Lord begins. Note the words “longsuffering towards you.” Those to whom Peter wrote were themselves the beneficiaries of God’s longsuffering, for they had been gathered in during that longsuffering. And any added to the number of the saved may appropriate those words to themselves during the present time while God is forming a heavenly people.

1 PETER 2:8

. . . [who] stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which they have also been appointed (1 Pet. 2:8).

I have added the comma after disobedient, which is missing in the Stow Hill ed.(1966) of JND’s translation, but is found in the printing of the third ed., revised, 1884, of JND’s New Testament translation. It is important to apprehend that the appointment of these persons was not an appointment to be disobedient. They were, being disobedient, appointed to stumble.

The present state of the Jews exactly answers to the dark background of the picture. And the words which follow are as solemn morally as they are sure in

14. The Mennonite, D. Edmond Heibert merely says, “It leaves open the possibility of human freedom of choice” (*Second Peter and Jude*, Greenville: Unusual Publications, p. 156, 1989).

15. The Calvinist, Gordon H. Clark, wrote:

Peter therefore is simply saying that Christ will not return until every one of the elect has come to repentance (*1 & 2 Peter*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 71, 1980).

Christ’s coming is pre-millennial, and persons will be saved during the millennium, though not members of one body. He is mistaken about what “Peter therefore is simply saying . . .”

16. James, *Epistles of John, Peter and Jude*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 335 on 2 Peter, 1996 [1987].

fact: “stumbling as they do at the word, being disobedient, unto which also they were appointed.” There is neither here nor anywhere else the dogmatic reprobation of the Calvinistic school; which has no more to justify it from scripture than the opposite error of the power for good of the Pelagians. All the evil is man’s; as the good is exclusively of God’s grace. He never made man to be a sinner, nor does He take pleasure in a sinner’s death, still less in his everlasting destruction. But He is supreme; and, bold as man may be in wilful disobedience, God’s will stands. He presents His grace and truth in Christ; and men stumble at the word which reveals Him. To this they were appointed, not to be disobedient, but, being so, to stumble in this way, which God had in His wisdom appointed as their trial. They refuse and condemn the word; which others, by grace self-judging and believing Him, receive to their salvation, peace, and joy. Compare Jude 4.¹⁷

JUDE 4

For certain men have got in unnoticed, they who of old were marked out beforehand to this sentence, ungodly [persons], turning the grace of our God into dissoluteness, and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

“Marked out beforehand” does not refer to a decree of reprobation. These false professors of Christianity, like everyone else in the earth, have been bought, or *purchased*, by the death of Christ. Additionally for the believer, he is *redeemed* by the precious blood. Corrupting grace by using it as a cover for dissoluteness, these ungodly persons are subject to a sentence, or judgment. The sentence is not stated in v. 4. It is given in Jude 14, 15. They were marked out of old by Enoch, the “seventh from Adam,” note; not the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch. The believer knows what Enoch that was who was the seventh from Adam, namely, the one that was taken up before the flood of judgment broke on the world that then was. The sentence pronounced by such a one before the judgment of the flood fell is morally fitting for these corrupters of Christianity, upon whom, in due season after we are caught up, the judgment pronounced by Enoch will take place.

The word for “sentence” is κρίμα,¹⁸ found also 1 Cor. 11:29 -- “judgment.” See JND’s footnote to that word, as well as the footnote to “fault” in 1 Tim. 3:6.

Perhaps of greater bearing on our general subject is “marked out beforehand” -- προγεγραμμένοι.¹⁹ They were “marked out beforehand” in Enoch’s

17. W. Kelly, *Exposition of 1 Peter, in loco*.

18. See also *The Bible Treasury* 14:127 and 15:144.

19. W. Kelly remarked on the words “were of old ordained”:

. . . the Americans {correctors of the Revised Version of 1881} would have “written beforehand,” and put “set forth” into the margin: a doubtful interpretation, as it assigns but a secondary place to the well-known technical force of προγ. (*The Bible Treasury* 15:127).

(continued...)

prophecy. This has nothing to do with any alleged decree of reprobation, nor does 1 Pet. 2:8.

Ed.

“That They All May be One”

by A. J.

The Good Shepherd -- He who gave His life for the sheep -- foretold that there should be one flock, and one Shepherd {John 10:16}. He died, not for Israel only, but that also He should gather together in one, the children of God scattered abroad {John 11:52}.

Before His death -- even upon the self-same night in which He was betrayed -- Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and prayed, not only for those whom the Father had already given Him (John 17:9,10), but also for *all* who should believe on Him through their word (vv. 20, 23) --

that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.

At the moment when He thus pleaded with His Father, concerning us who believe, He knew perfectly well that, after He had died for our sins, had risen again for our justification, and had ascended to the right hand of God, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, would come. He had so taught His sorrowing disciples (John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7). He also knew (although he had not revealed this result as yet), that at the coming of the Holy Spirit, all that believe would be baptized into one body, and be thus brought into special relationship with Himself, as also with one another; every one members of that one body, He Himself the glorified Head, and they, in Him, members one of another (Rom. 12:5). To this unity {union}, so wholly of God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, for the glory of the risen and ascended Christ, *man’s* will or power can have nothing to say, any more than he can have to say to his own salvation.

Did any earthly parent ever express a wish that his sons and daughters might become members of one family, and be brought into relationship one with another? They are this already by birth. What a parent desires is, that his family may be manifestly one in everything answering to, and corresponding with, their relationship to himself, and with one another. And it rejoices his heart if he finds, in the course and actions of every member of his household, the practical fulfilment of so cherished a desire.

19. (...continued)

He did not discuss this any further.

Before, then, the full result of the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth was made known, our Lord Jesus, in infinite wisdom and infinite love, prayed the Father that *all believers might be one*. Not simply that they might be *one* in purpose, *one* in desire, *one* in action, of *one* accord, of *one* mind, of *one* heart and of *one* soul, but above and beyond all these, that

they might be ONE, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee,

-- and this on earth, that the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus. ONE not so much for their peace and blessing, as for His glory. So blessedly and practically ONE that their every thought, word and deed might not only beautifully answer to the exalted relationship into which they should be brought, but be a standing witness to His praise in a world that crucified Him.

Although the *family unity* {oneness} (i.e., the unity {oneness} of the household of God), is not to be confounded with the “unity of the Spirit,” or the truth of “the one body,” the former must never be lost sight of in zeal for the latter. We are as children of God, responsible to promote family unity, for if discord and strife divide the children of one family, it is in vain to hope that that family can be recognized as *one* in any other relationship.

Our Lord has commanded us to love one another, as He loved us. If we keep His commandments, we shall abide in His love, and our ways, words and actions will testify to our unfeigned desire to promote the family unity {oneness}, as an essential element in the endeavors to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” {Eph. 4:3}. Let us never forget we are children of *God*, as well as members of the body of *Christ*.

Historically, we know that the church was no sooner formed, than the adversary commenced to attack it. Despite all his efforts, as detailed in Acts 4,

the multitude of them that believed were of *one* heart and of *one* soul . . . and great grace was upon them all.

Foiled, yet determined if possible to thwart the purposes of God, he attacked it with deeper subtlety from within (Acts 5 and 6). After this Stephen was martyred, and those that believed were scattered abroad by persecution, but Saul’s conversion showed that the Lord was working with them, and we read,

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Thus far, all who believed were *one*, not intrinsically only, but practically.

It was after God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles that the enemy imagined a mischievous device. He would raise a question, by pressing which, he hoped to break up the family unity, and to sow discord among brethren.

It was by *the enemy* (Gal. 2:4), and not by *the Spirit of God* that the question of circumcision was raised. Though division appeared imminent, the Lord Himself

directed the way for its settlement (Gal. 3:1, 2 ; Acts 15: 2), and the Spirit of God so guided and controlled “the Apostles and elders, *with the whole assembly*,” that the question was divinely settled to the great comfort and joy of all (vv. 22-31). The church then knew her responsibility to act as “the *whole church*” in the locality in which God had gathered it; and, despite the enemy’s malice, if the church had never left her “first love,” never abandoned her first principles, she would have continued as “the whole church {practically},” even though, as in Jerusalem, there were many thousand believers meeting in private houses or in upper rooms. Only unbelief can say, How could it possibly be? Is God the Holy Ghost unequal to maintain the integrity of that for which Christ died? for He died, not only to save, but to *gather into one* those whom He saved. Has the Head ceased to care for His body? Has the Father provided ought for one member of the household of God, which he has not provided for all its members? “Drink ye ALL of it,” said the Lord Jesus Christ, as He gave the cup to those beloved ones who were gathered round Him, when He instituted the feast of remembrance (Matt. 26:28). “And they ALL drank of it” (Mark 14: 23). So the Apostle --

For we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are ALL partakers of that one bread {1 Cor. 10:17}.

Is it asked who now are the “all”? None less, and none more, than those who by one Spirit are ALL baptized into one body, and have been ALL made to drink into (or of) one Spirit {1 Cor. 12:13}.

The Word of God alone gives the charter of privileges to the saint of God, and *can alone rescind any of them*. Disobedience to the Word of God, persisted in, calls for separation.

I have given them Thy Word, . . . they have kept Thy Word,

the Lord could say of His own in John 17. No less is worthy of Him now, and no less will satisfy His heart now (Rev. 3:8).

Men press for a slight departure from the Word, but the point once conceded, the path is downward. It was the devil who first raised the question, “Hath God said ?” We are not ignorant of the enemy’s devices. If he can foster a sectarian spirit, and tempt saints to act .as if the narrow path is narrower than it really is, or if he can lead them to count the narrow path wider than the Word of God declares it to be, is it not that souls may be entangled in a yoke of bondage, or seduced into walking disorderly, contrary to the written Word? Or further, if he can beguile souls into unduly exalting some favorite doctrine as a rallying point instead of CHRIST, and shutting out or shutting in all outside or within the rays of that particular doctrine, does he care what that doctrine may be? Nay, the higher the truth the better suited for his purpose; for the body gathered round it must be less than the “one body,” and that is division, not unity.

There were at least four parties at Corinth, but Paul made no attempt to decide between them. He sharply rebuked them all by the Holy Ghost, and met the whole

question by asking, “Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor. 1:13 ; 12:12). To this church, in which “heresies” were imminent, for schisms were rampant {1 Cor 11:18. 19}, the apostle wrote:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread {1 Cor. 10:16, 17}.

Alas! is not this Word and will of the Lord everywhere set aside most grievously? Not only in large towns, but even in small villages, believers, all “members of that one body,” are content to meet in separate communities, as if these had *a* cup of blessing, and those *a* cup of blessing. Beloved brethren, there is simply “*that one bread*,” and “*the* cup of blessing,” provided for all the members of the body of Christ Where is the authority for diverse loaves and diverse cups? ¹

And, as there is simply “*that one bread*,” and “*the* cup of blessing” for all saints, so they have but one Head. The external sign is valueless without the vital reality. While the Corinthians were saying, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos,” &c., they were drawing their own circles round their own centers, and separating themselves not only from other Christians, but, what was far more Christ-dishonoring, --

not holding the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands: having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God {Col. 2:19}.

How solemn was the fruit of such ways the 11th chapter {of 1 Cor.} vividly portrays. How much was there at Corinth which the Spirit could not sanction, and which the Corinthians were to put themselves to the test as to any complicity with. But, blessed be God, it was the Word of God then, as it is the same Word now, that settles all questions. It is our only safeguard, as the Spirit is our almighty power. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, would not yield an iota of the one, or limit the power of the other (ch. 2). He withstood Peter to the face when the truth of the Gospel was imperilled by him (v. 14), but he gladly acknowledged how the Spirit had wrought by him unto the apostleship of the circumcision (v. 8). This was grace and truth, and this only comes, and can come, from Jesus Christ. Grace might have tried to spare Peter the public rebuke, but truth with grace met all; and Peter retained his honored place among the saints, and, in the fulness of a restored heart, could only write of Paul as “our beloved brother Paul” {2 Pet. 3:15}.

A. J., *The Bible Herald*, New Series 2:95-100.

1. {The reader is mistaken if he thinks the writer refers to a “communion service” where individual wafers and cups are used, though he would not approve of that either. The thrust of what he writes is that loaves broken in separation do not testify that we are one loaf.}

The Mystery of Christ and the Church and The Covenants

Chapter 2

Objections Regarding The Hiddenness of This Mystery

Introduction

The OT Prophets Can be Understood Literally

In 1856 Charles Hodge wrote:

It seems never to have entered into any human mind until the day of Pentecost, that the theocracy itself was to be abolished, and a new form of religion was to be introduced, designed and adapted for all mankind, under which the distinction of Jew and Gentile was to be done away. ¹

In *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, it is shown that the expectation of the remnant in our Lord’s day, and of the Lord Himself, was of a future, literal kingdom for Israel; and, that in Acts 1 the Lord indicated to the disciples that the time for the kingdom was not yet.

Moreover, there was no reason for the Jews generally, as well as the remnant in our Lord’s time here on earth, to expect anything other than a kingdom under Messiah, with Israel as the head of the nations. That the OT prophecies concerned the church is a figment imposed upon Scripture by covenantism. If it is true that God couched OT prophecies under the terms of a literal kingdom, what grounds did any Jew have for regarding the prophecies in any other way than speaking of a literal kingdom? And that is just what John the Baptist preached, and the Jews and the remnant believed (as did our Lord Himself, of course). All this has been detailed in the book named above. It needs to be said that it follows from covenant theology that Jehovah deceived His people into a false expectation by couching what points to the church in words that speak of a literal kingdom.

1. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 165, 1980 [1856].

The fact is that the kingdom was offered to the nation in the person of the King. He, the second man (1 Cor. 15:46, 47), was unacceptable to the first man, whose testing to see if he was recoverable had not yet been completed. The first man was being tested through the instrumentality of the persons of those composing Israel, and the conclusion of this last test was:

. . . they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

So He was put to the cross, rejected, and meanwhile before the kingdom is brought in by sovereign power and judgments, the great mystery of Christ and the church has been manifested. There was a great void in revealed truth and it was given to the apostle Paul to make known truth spoken of in Col. 1:26 as completing, or filling full, the Word of God. The great secret as to which silence had been kept is now made known.

It is admitted by opponents of a future kingdom for Israel that if the OT prophets are to be understood literally, they do indeed prophesy a kingdom for Israel. O. T. Allis wrote:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age. ²

What here concerns us is the phrase “thy people.” From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah’s [Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel . . . ³

If so, we would rightly conclude that Jehovah deceived the Jews to whom the prophecies were given. We reject what leads to this conclusion. Not only can the OT prophets be understood literally, it is recognized that their prophecies are couched in terms of a literal kingdom. The Jews could not understand them otherwise, and Jehovah did *not* deceive them. The time for the fulfillment of those prophecies has not yet arrived, and meanwhile God is forming a distinct heavenly people. Therefore, we change the words “*can* be understood literally” to *must* be understood literally -- allowing of course for figures of speech and symbolic language. ⁴

***Part of the Objection Is Error Concerning
Both the Meaning of “Silence” and “Hidden”
and the Content of the Mystery***

ERROR CONCERNING THE MEANING OF SILENCE AND HIDDEN

2. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

4. This language is considered in my *Daniel’s 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*.

As an example of is the general approach of “Reformed interpreters,” note that Robert L. Reymond claims that:

The meaning of the word {secret} is not in dispute between dispensational and Reformed interpreters; it is the content of the “‘mysteries’ that is the matter of dispute. ⁵

Is that assertion to be believed for even one moment -- that the meaning is not in dispute? True, the content *is* in dispute; but so are the words “silence” and “hidden.” To the covenantists, “silence” means *partial* silence, and “hidden” means *partially* hidden. On p. 540 he tells us that Paul did not say in Ephesians “that the mystery had been hidden to previous generations in an absolute sense.” Since he refers to “dispensationalists” as claiming that nothing of the mystery was known in OT times, how is it that he says that the meaning of “secret” is not in dispute? He refers to some fifteen OT texts concerning future blessings that Gentiles would share with the Jews to show that something of the mystery was known in OT times. However, those texts point to Gentile blessing; but the blessing pointed to is millennial.

ERROR CONCERNING THE CONTENT OF THE MYSTERY

Let us consider the content of the mystery. On page 541, he has quoted from Charles Hodge:

That the Gentiles were to partake of the blessings of the Messiah’s reign, and to be united as one body with the Jews in his kingdom, is not only frequently predicted by the ancient prophets . . .

There are covenantists who say that the prophecies are couched in terms of a literal kingdom. Now, covenantists cannot have the matter both ways. If couched in terms of a literal kingdom, there are no OT prophecies of Jew and Gentile united in one body. Charles Hodge has read into the prophecies what is not there. But having done so, having found the one body predicted in the prophecies, what did he say concerning the mystery, or secret?

The mystery or secret, is not the simple purpose to call the Gentiles into the church, but the mystery of redemption . . . In all these places the mystery spoken of is God’s purpose of redemption, formed in the counsels of eternity, impenetrably hidden from the view of men until revealed in his own time. It was this plan of redemption thus formed, thus long concealed, but now made known through the Gospel, that Paul was sent to bear as a guiding and saving light to all men ⁶

I suppose that by the mystery of redemption C. Hodge means the manner by which God would accomplish what He has done regarding forming the one body by

5. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Nelson, p. 536, sec. ed., 1998.

6. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 170, 1856, 1980 reprint.

uniting Gentile and Jew. In other words, the mystery of Christ and the church is defined by him to be “the mystery of redemption,” not the Gentiles being united as one body with the Jews. And this he says in the face of:

. . . by revelation the mystery has been made known to me . . . which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in [the power of the] Spirit, that [they who are of] the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body . . . (Eph. 3:3-6).

The Scripture expressly states that the mystery includes the joint-body, but Dr. Hodge says, in effect, no -- that was predicted by the prophets, and the mystery is “the mystery of redemption.” Because he was faithful to the secrecy and hiddenness of the mystery, but being a covenantist, he was forced to find the joint-body in the OT prophecies. Without the joint-body being prophesied, he would have been forced by his covenantism to be unfaithful to the secrecy and hiddenness of the mystery. This well illustrates the dilemma of covenantism, as well as the issue of God couching the OT prophecies in terms of a literal kingdom, thus making of Jehovah a deceiver of His people.

The Understanding of the OT Saints

The understanding of the OT saints is a separate matter from what we have just considered. Nonetheless, since Christians put themselves into the OT, their understanding is hindered. Reading back into the OT the light we have since the finished work of Christ and the coming of the Spirit to form the church results in attributing too much to them and actually obscuring the light that the NT brings. This is implicit when Christianity is regarded as the accomplishment of OT promises. That, of course, violates the secrecy of the mystery. Let us consider, a little, the understanding of the OT saints.

Referring to Col. 1:27, Dr. Reymond wrote:

. . . Paul’s statements do not teach the radical conclusion which dispensationalists wish to draw from them, namely, that the Old Testament saints did not know that Messiah would be rejected and suffer . . . ⁷

He also said:

They {i.e., dispensationalists} maintain that the rejection of the King and his sufferings and death were biblical “mysteries,” that is, facts the knowledge of which God had kept “locked up in the secret councils {sic} of God” until he

7. *Ibid.*, p. 541. He adds to this objection also “that a distinction must be drawn between Old Testament Israel ‘under law’ and the New Testament church ‘under grace’ . . .” (p. 541). There is a sharp distinction, for Israel was not of the church which is His body, spite of covenantism.

revealed them to men through Jesus and his holy apostles and prophets. ⁸

Possibly some “dispensationalists” have said such nonsense. At any rate, J. N. Darby wrote:

As regards the estimate which the Old Testament saints formed of the sacrifices and types of the Old Testament, no one can speak definitely. That estimate was as various as we now see the estimate of renewed souls as to the value of Christ’s work is, if by value is meant the intelligent estimate of it. All that any one could speak of now is what the Old Testament afforded them, so that the Holy Ghost could act by the word upon those who had spiritual intelligence according to the measure of that day. Now I know of no fact in Christ’s history which is not testified of in the prophets -- His birth, His sufferings (even the details), His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of God, His coming again, and all the glories {except those in connection with the mystery} that should follow His sufferings. The only truths, that I am aware of, which were not revealed were the church, and His present intercession at the right hand of God -- truths, it is remarkable, equally omitted in John 1, in the catalogue of the glories of Christ there given, as well as (but for another reason) the fact that He was the Christ. Hence, the only question is, when they had the prophets, how far they were spiritual enough to connect these revelations with the types in order to understand them?

This depended on individual spirituality and divine teaching; only we must remember it could not be said, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things.” They had not the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to guide into all truth. This makes all the difference as to intelligence. Further, it was not the intention of God, while the veil was unrent, to put the consciences of saints in the position in which the rending of it was to set them so that “the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins.” Alas! many Christians are in a Jewish state in this respect. Had this been the case, the free admission of the Gentiles by faith on the same footing would have been the consequence, as this was not intended. On the other hand, there was the thought, that the time was coming when the nation’s sins and iniquities would be remembered no more, and this faith could look forward to, as to the then rejoicing of the Gentiles with His people, and a heavenly portion for the departed saints. This leads back to the original promise of the seed of the woman bruising the serpent’s head; and it, again, held out to faith a full restoration of man from the ruin, which though vague might have been complete in expectation. The clothing with skins, and Abel’s sacrifice, and Noah’s, point to covering and acceptance through a sacrifice; Isaac’s, to the faith of resurrection. But when sacrifices were legally instituted and the law given, hopes of forgiveness and restoration in peace in a coming age, but no purged conscience, save occasional at the present time, marked the condition of the worshiper. Before that time it was a larger expectation of restoration and goodness, and founded on sacrifices and covering iniquity and nakedness before

8. *Op. cit.*, p. 537.

God; but, though larger and more complete, more vague, of course, by the seed of the woman, resurrection and heavenly things coming in. For this both Enoch and Abraham, and even Job, furnished evidence. Under the prescription of the law the conscience was more brought under the yoke, present occasional forgiveness by a sin-offering more definite, but it was narrowed into present occasional clearing, and the hope of deliverance put into the age to come and connected with Messiah, as we know also it will be.

With all this was connected a feebler estimate of sin and of the need consequently of divine righteousness, though this was prophetically intimated, but also in the age to come. There was sense of sin, of being shapen in iniquity (but no intelligence of a conflict between flesh and Spirit) and thus as a present thing righteousness looked for in the Lord; but, before the law, divine favor and the averting a curse by sacrifice; under the law, a definite sin-offering meeting the actual sins of the individual or of all, and a general sense of maintenance of heart in divine favor by the day of atonement -- the state as I have said in which most Christians are.⁹ ❖

As to the Old Testament saints, eternal life formed no part of the Old Testament revelation, even supposing that the Old Testament saints had it. Light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel. Not that they have been brought to existence, but they have been "brought to light." And when He in whom life is, came down and died and rose again, then a totally new thing was brought out. Eternal life is twice found in the Old Testament, but in both the passages it is prophetic of the millennium. And therefore, in the Old Testament, we never get conflict between flesh and Spirit. We find, 'conceived in sin,' in Psa. 51, but there is no thought of flesh lusting against the Spirit. "I am crucified with Christ:" says the apostle, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and there we find a contradiction twice over, and somebody else put in instead of "I." So again in Rom. 7, "What I hate, that do I," and, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," though in the previous verse he had just said that he did do it! All that the Psalmist can say is, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He takes the ground that if God wash him, he will be whiter than snow. In that passage, it is not a question of washing with the blood of Christ, and what I insist upon is, do not put into a passage what you cannot get out of it. The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, i.e., those who are dead in sins are quickened, it is not the simple fact of receiving a new life; it is not the way Scripture speaks, to say, 'here is a living man, and I quicken him.'¹⁰ ❖

There cannot for a moment be a doubt that the Spirit wrought in the Old Testament saints. The question is, whether He was present in the same manner, and dwelling in them, in virtue of Christ's work and glory, uniting them to a risen Head in heaven. This, of course, could not be. The work was not yet wrought, the glory not yet entered into by the man Jesus. The New Testament is clear on this

9. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:347, 348.

10. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 351.

point. He was not; but He *must* have wrought in and with the saints. He acts in everything good; the agent in all divine action in the creature, as in the creation He moved on the face of the waters, but specially in the hearts of men for any good that is there, and to be the source of joy and strength to the saints. So in the prophets and others.¹¹ ❖

I do not doubt that, according to the measure of their faith, though they did look for the exercise of God's government for deliverance here, yet in the delay of this they looked out of it all to a better place, though obscurely enough. But this changes nothing. They looked to it as a resource out of a scene they belonged to. The Christian dwells in it if in his right place, and has to cultivate the affections which belong to his Father's house as his own home. You will remark that I do not merely mean that in result Old Testament feelings are imperfect, for that may well be said of ours; but that the basis of them, the moral sphere in which they moved, necessarily made them imperfect; they were not in place, if they were not. God might inspire feelings right for those without hope, desire, confidence; but He could not truly inspire to those without the feelings which expressed being within, for those feelings would not have been true. My feelings, if right, are the feelings of one within in my Father's house as a known home, reconciled to God. Theirs, if right, were those of persons without, looking for the present government of this world, and confiding in God in spite of subsisting evil in a world to which they belonged. He that is of the earth is earthy, says the greatest born of woman, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard that He testified.¹² ❖

NO ONE BODY, AND NO UNION WITH CHRIST IN THE OT

If I may pick among J. N. Darby's writings rejecting the notion that OT saints were part of the church and suggest only one paper to you to read concerning this matter, I suggest, "Is the Comforter Come? And Is He Gone?"¹³ The immense difference between the position of a Christian and an OT saint must be emphasized. Here is a brief extract from J. N. Darby:

Another and lower ground of reasoning, though perhaps more palpable to some, alike shows the impossibility of the church's existing before the cross. Jew and Gentile could not be united in one. The Jew was bound strictly to keep up the middle wall of partition. The church is formed by its being thrown down, Christ thereupon forming in Himself one new man (Eph. 2:14-16). The church was formed through the throwing down of that which Judaism was bound to keep up. It could not exist until Judaism was ended. Hence, too, in Heb. 12 we have "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven," and "the spirits of just men made perfect," {these are OT saints} as a distinct class (v. 23). The truth is that the bringing in the Old Testament saints into the church is only dropping the

11. *Synopsis* 2:117, 118.

12. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 9:11.

13. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:232-256.

whole proper blessing of the church itself. The teaching of Scripture as to it is wholly lost. ¹⁴ ❖

Here are a few extracts from W. Kelly's writings:

. . . Old Testament saints could not be described as not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The Spirit is the seal of our new position in Christ, promised in the prophets and by the Lord, and received by Him for us after His ascension (Acts 2:33), and given as the Spirit of adoption, and uniting us to Him ascended. The distinction of flesh and Spirit is founded on the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the possession of the Spirit promised by Christ, and the present fruit of His redemption work. In His time on earth, John could say, The Holy Ghost was not yet {given} because Jesus was not yet glorified. And lust was working in the Old Testament saints, but now the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and freedom by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death is known only to those who have the Spirit given consequent on an accomplished redemption. It is clear they could not be in the Spirit if the Spirit was not given, and scripture is as clear on this as words can make it. The gift of the Spirit was such and so dependent on Christ's going away, that it was expedient for them He should do so. I have said above "if apprehended," because it cannot be but by experience. Forgiveness I can understand in a certain way, if I have it not, for men are forgiven their faults by parents, etc., and the burden of debt being removed is also intelligible. But being dead and reckoning myself dead when I feel myself alive is not so easy even to understand, till divine grace, teaching me to submit to God's righteousness, has set me free in the consciousness of a new position in which alive in Christ I treat the flesh as dead. It is called "the Spirit of Christ," because it is that which forms us in living likeness to Him. It is Christ in us in the power of life. This was perfectly displayed in His life in itself. In us it is realized in the measure in which we walk in the Spirit as we live in the Spirit.

Some further remarks will clear this point. The enquirer may remark that it is called "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," and "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus." I need not say that it is the same Spirit. But in the first, it is in contrast with the flesh (see Gal. 5:17). In the second it is that form of life in which its own qualities are displayed as in Christ Himself. In the third, it is the pledge of final deliverance and glorifying of the body itself into the likeness of Christ glorified, here spoken of however not farther than the quickening of the body by reason of it; but it goes on to the quickening of the mortal body itself. ¹⁵

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The Holy Ghost, in the Old Testament, brings before us either individual saints or a nation as the objects of God's favor and counsels. It is of that nation (Israel) that the Spirit uses the term "congregation" in the Old Testament, which our translators have given as the "church in the wilderness," in Acts 7:38 . . . this is a quite distinct thing from what is called "the Church of God," etc. in the New

14. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 31:350.

15. *The Bible Treasury* 6:367, 368.

Testament. For the Epistle to the Ephesians, with great fulness, shows that the body of Christ, God's Church, is founded on the abolition of the distinction between Jew and Gentile, and therefore could not be till the cross broke down the middle wall of partition. Nor could believing Jew and Gentile be builded together for an habitation of God, till the Spirit came down in a fuller way than before, as the fruit of Christ's victory and ascension on high, where He took the new place of Head of the Church (not merely of King in Zion). Does not F. L. W. understand that this was an entirely novel work of God, and that Scripture gives to this new assembly of believing Jews and Gentiles (bonded together by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven in the name of Jesus) the name of "the Church of God?" It is not merely that the term "Church of God" is never, in the sense now spoken of, applied to the Old Testament saints; but the state of things could not be before Christ's death and resurrection as the basis, and the Holy Spirit's personal presence (not influence, gifts, etc. merely) as the power of this unity. It is founded on Christ exalted in heaven, after having accomplished redemption; and it is formed by that operation of the Spirit which not only quickens but unites Jewish and Gentile saints now to Christ in heaven and to each other on earth as one body.

Now, indubitably such was not the case in the wilderness, nor in the promised land: Jew and Gentile, whether believing or not, were rigorously severed by Divine command, and the saints were sustained by a promised Messiah, instead of resting on the accomplished work of the Savior. Life of course, Divine life, they had through faith, else they would not have been saints. But there was no such thing as union with a glorified head in heaven. Nay, it did not exist even when our Lord was upon earth. The disciples had faith and life, but they were forbidden to go to the Gentiles, instead of being united to them, till Christ rose from the dead. But the moment the Spirit came down, consequent on Christ's exaltation above, the various tongues proclaimed God's grace to the Gentiles as well as Jews; and for the first time we read of "the Church," in the full and proper sense, as now subsisting on earth. (See Acts 2) Christ had now begun to fulfil His promise, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." How could this mean the old assembly which fell in the wilderness? It was a new and future building, as I hope F. L. W. will feel . . . the truth on this subject is to me clear and certain, though I do not expect to convince every one . . . Acts 7:38, which has been fully explained (1 Cor. 10), and proves that Israel was typical of us. How does that show that they and we form "one body?" ¹⁶ ❖

It is of no small moment to bear in mind that, while the "heavenly calling," as a developed system, depends on the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, the faith of Old Testament believers was far in advance of their calling and circumstances. Thus, the Lord called Abram from his country and kindred and father's house to a land that He would show him; and it was certainly by faith that he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went. But Heb. 11:9 shows us the further action of faith; for when he got to the land he sojourned in it as in a

16. *Christian Annotator* 4:15.

strange country, because a ray of the distant heavenly glory had dawned on his soul. “He looked for a city which hath foundations,” etc. Thus he and the other patriarchs died, as they lived, in faith, not in actual possession. Nevertheless, such strangership as this neither amounts to nor implies the “heavenly calling.” Doubtless, the “heavenly calling” now produces and enjoins strangership also; but this in no way proves that itself was published and enjoyed of old.

For the “heavenly calling,” brought before us in Hebrews, grew out of the position of the Lord as having appeared, and when He had by himself purged our sins, as having sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. Hence the earthly tabernacle and the rest in the land, and the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices entirely disappear, for the partakers of the heavenly calling who are addressed in the epistle. This state of things was not true either of the fathers or the children of Israel. Their hope was intimately bound up with the land (no doubt, under the Messiah and a glorified condition, but still their land and people as the medium of blessing for all others); but the “heavenly calling” was not revealed, nor could be till He came whose rejection led to it and whose redemption and consequent glorification in heaven became its basis. Hence Abram had his earthly altar. Hence he sacrificed, as did his descendants, in due season, of the flock, or the herd, or the appointed clean birds. Then comes the worldly sanctuary and its most instructive furniture and rites, that spoke of better things looming in the future. Nobody that I know disputes that individual saints saw beyond these shadows, dimly perhaps but really, to a coming Savior and a heavenly country. Still the land to which the patriarchs were called was an earthly land, and the entire polity of Israel was that of a nation governed under the eye of a God who displayed himself on earth in their midst—in contrast with “the heavenly calling,” of which not the less it furnished striking types, *mutatis mutandis*. Accordingly, in Heb. 11, after having traced the precious individual traits of the Spirit in the Old Testament saints, not only from Abraham but from Abel downwards, we are guarded against the error that would merge all in one lump, by the incidental statement of the last verse (See also Heb. 12:23). The elders have not received the promise; they are waiting till the resurrection for that. Meanwhile God has provided unforeseen some better thing for us. He has given us not promise only but accomplishment in Christ. He has made us worshipers once purged, having no more conscience of sins. He calls us boldly to enter into the holiest by a new and living way consecrated for us. None of these things could be so predicated of them, and yet these things are but a part of the heavenly calling. Truly, then, has God provided some better thing, for us, even if we only look at what is now made known through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is also true that they without us shall not be made perfect. They and we shall enter on our respective portion in resurrection glory at the coming of Christ. Meanwhile we have no earthly calling, nothing but an heavenly one.

So far is it from being true that the early ecclesiastical writers erred by distinguishing too sharply between the dispensations, that their main characteristic is Judaizing the Church by denying the real differences. Jerome did this no less than others, even to the confounding of Christ’s ministry with Jewish

priesthood.¹⁷ ❖

HOW DOES THE CASE OF THE DISCIPLES BEAR ON THIS MATTER?

The OT Scriptures have many prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming and its result in His death and resurrection. We all know that. What dispensationalists said that “his sufferings and death were biblical ‘mysteries’”? The charge sounds concocted. At any rate, if it was said, it is ludicrous. But what is this charge about? I suggest that what fathered this (undocumented) charge is, is that Dr. Reymond believes that Christ’s sufferings and death are part of the mystery (which they are not), and thus the OT was not really silent concerning the mystery. Including such prophecies in the mystery helps in defining “silence” as partial silence.

I do not know which “dispensationalists” Dr. Reymond means, but be that as it may, he has not enlightened us from statements in the OT what OT saints actually understood. Quoting the prophecies hardly evidences what the Jews understood; quoting the prophecies merely would show what the prophets said. We know what they said. That is not the real issue. 1 Pet. 1:10-12 speaks of the prophets testifying thus:

. . . searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which [was] in them pointed out, testifying before of the sufferings which [belonged] to Christ, and the glories after these.

It is unquestionable that the prophets prophesied Messiah’s rejection and sufferings. But in the light of what our Lord said to the two on the way to Emmaus, it would be well to proceed with caution:

And *he* said to them, O senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).

They understood the prophets to speak of the coming kingdom for Israel but had not laid hold of the other matter about the Messiah. Their case is clear, but we cannot say that this is true of all OT saints. But the OT saints looked for a coming deliverer and the Lord’s disciples did also. The Lord admonished them that they should have believed in *all* that the prophets have spoken. For some reason, the rejection, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah had not been laid hold of by them. Is it not a fact that in the gospels His disciples are repeatedly seen as expecting the kingdom and yet not understanding what He was saying when He spoke of Himself as suffering, dying, and rising? The two disciples going to Emmaus were not part of the church, but Dr. Reymond’s covenantism requires

17. *Christian Annotator* 4:87.

him to believe that the church is composed of the aggregate of all saints. However, he might claim that these two were not saints. But that would leave him with the problem of all the disciples, who had the same view as the two going to Emmaus. Were the Lord's disciples not saints? Or, would it be troublesome for the covenantist church-notion to find such persons are part of the church they envision? The church began at Pentecost. The disciples were saints, and the two going to Emmaus show us their lack of apprehension of things that the prophets of Israel had testified concerning how the Messiah must be rejected, suffer, die, and rise again. That is quite evident, though it may be troublesome for the covenantist church-notion.

So, this shows that though the OT spoke of Messiah's suffering, dying, and rising again, the disciples had not apprehended it, even when, before the cross, *the Lord himself spoke of it*. They were on OT ground, but they had had teaching from Him in advance of what most in the OT had heard. Yet, though with all that lack of understanding, they were born of God and numbered among the just. They were saints. Now, how does this look in view of Dr. Reymond's over-reaching complaint?

Perhaps those who believe that all saints in all ages are part of the church have difficulty in believing that any OT saint could be part of the church and not having grasped the truth of a suffering, dying, rising again Messiah. Well, they would have to include the disciples just referred to. But the fact is, we do not know the understanding that all OT saints had. Moreover, we have no idea concerning the church that would deny that the two on the way to Emmaus, and the other disciples, were saints.

The church never began until Christ was in glory as man, and sent the Spirit down (Acts 2:32, 33) to baptize into one body (1 Cor. 12:13) those who already believed on Him. There never was a head-less "one body" in the OT. Before the cross there never was union with Christ, for Christ is God and man in one Person -- and there could be no union with Him before He took manhood into His Person. But even more than incarnation was needed, though essential in itself, because there is no such thing as union in incarnation; He must die accomplishing atonement, rise, and be glorified as man to become head of the body consequently formed by the coming of the Spirit, sent from Himself on high, in the special capacity to unite the believers together and to the head above in one body, thus forming a heavenly company. No one could be seated in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies until He Himself, as man, was seated there. We are in Him there, and He is in us here. Of no OT saint could it be said, "Christ in you the hope of glory," etc., etc.

John 12:24 is quite clear that Christ abode alone until risen from among the dead.

The notion that all saints in all ages form part of the church results in, among

other harmful things, two spiritually-harmful things we call attention to here: too much is read into the position and understanding of the OT saints; and, too little, much, much too little, is understood of the true, heavenly position and privileges of the Christian. These two go together. So, we use the same words of Scripture but understand them differently.

Ed.

(To be continued if the Lord will)

P. A. Humphreys Affirms Christ's Human Personality

Quoting from the Ravenite *Notes of Addresses and Readings at Quemerford*, May, 1895, P. A. Humphreys wrote:

Some one remarked "Mr. Darby says in the *Synopsis* on Colossians 1, Christ is God and Christ is man; one Christ. Mr. Raven's reply was: "Yes; but you must be careful how you take up an expression like that. In Person He is God; in condition He is man."

(Reference to the *Synopsis* shows that what Mr. Darby does say is: "Christ is God, Christ is man; but it is Christ who is the two." A flat denial of Mr. Raven's theory.)

However, a questioner asked: "Why is He not *personally* man?" The sophistical nature of Mr. Raven's reply needs little comment to any simple-hearted believer. It was: "He is personally the Son. You cannot have two personalities in one . . ."

The pretense that the truth leads to the doctrine of a dual personality ("two personalities") {i.e., two separate personalities} is mere dust for the eyes; every believer can see the truth of the unity of our Lord's adorable Person, God and Man, but one Christ who is both, can involve no such absurdity. ^{18 19}

F. E. Raven denied human personality in Christ. His form of denial was an Apollinarianism, i.e., he denied that Christ had a human soul and spirit. His dictum, "You cannot have two personalities in one" was propagated by T. H. Reynolds and others. It is possible to go so far as to affirm that Christ had a human soul and spirit, and a human will, and deny that there was personality in Christ -- i.e., deny that He spoke with a human I. Without it, there is no real manhood. Ed.

18. *Remarks on a Paper Entitled "The Person of the Christ,"* by F.E.R. , Sept. 1895.

19. Extracted from my, *An Affirmation of: The Divine-Human Personality of the Person of Christ, His Human "I" and Human Will, With a Note on His Impeccability* .