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CONTENTS

The Christian's Heavenly Place and Calling Eviscerated by Messianic Judaism: A Heavenly Sanctuary (continued)	41
The Sovereignty of God: App. 1: Is There an Eternal Decree of Reprobation?	50
Extract	60
The Mystery of Christ and the Church and the Covenants, Chapter 2 continued	61
Two Letters on Worldliness	68
As Obedient Children, 1 Peter 4:14-16	75
G. J. Stewart Affirmed Divine-Human Personality in Christ	77
Explaining Away and/or Coverups	78
No	79

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

Chapter 7

A Heavenly Sanctuary

(Continued)

Part 5

Let Us Draw Near

(Heb. 10:22)

It is indeed very blessed to be enabled to tell a poor awakened sinner, that in Jesus all things are ready which he needs for remission of sins, righteousness, and life. And it is not less blessed to be enabled to tell those who have so come to Jesus, that all things are ready for their worship in the holiest of all. That everything is there ordered by the blessed Jesus Himself for their entrance therein, and that He himself has consecrated the way for their approach.

The time is coming when

many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to *the mountain* of the Lord, to *the house* of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3).

But now is the time for believers to encourage one another to enter into the holiest of all -- even into heaven itself, because Jesus is there. Come ye, say they, and let us draw near with a true heart.

Under the law, much of the priestly ministry was outside the tabernacle, and open to the view therefore of the worshiper. If he brought a burnt sacrifice, he was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he was to kill it, and then the priests sprinkled the blood in his sight upon the altar that was by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This part of the priest's work was visible to the outside worshipers. But he who could approach thus far was never satisfied as to his conscience. He came indeed to these sacrifices --

he saw them offered -- but they were utterly inefficacious as to the purging of the conscience.

For it is not possible that the blood of *bulls and of goats* should *take away* sin {Heb. 10:4}.

But now all on the outside has been once and for all accomplished; the priestly ministry is all within and invisible, and therefore only known to faith by the revelation of God.

Let us put ourselves in the place of a Hebrew worshiper, by God's grace taught to know Jesus as the one sacrifice for sin, and as the ever-abiding High Priest in the holiest of all. What a struggle must there often have been in his mind when approaching God, because he had no sacrifice to offer -- nothing visible on which to lean -- no victim to lay his hand upon. It must, indeed have required real true-heartedness to Jesus to enable him to draw near -- and to look at everything with which he had been formerly conversant as taken up in Jesus, so that all that he had seen before was now only to be discerned by faith as fulfilled in Christ. And are we not often false to Jesus in this matter? Do we not often harbor the thought that something yet remains to be done either by ourselves or by him -- in order to our drawing near? Do we not often thus become occupied with the circumstantial of worship rather than with Jesus -- the substance? Are we not often false to Him in questioning our title to draw near, because we find distance in our own hearts, as if it was the warmth of our affections, instead of the blood of Jesus, which brought near?

But oh, beloved, how false to Jesus has the Church been! The worshipers are often pressed down by a burdensome ritual, and allowed neither to know that they are once and for ever purged, nor that all is prepared for their entrance into the holiest. They are turned back again to that which is visible, and go through the daily routine of service, never getting farther than the door of the tabernacle! They are set in the place of distant Jews, instead of that of priests sanctified for heavenly ministrations and worship!

And how continually do we see souls led to put the act of worship in the place of Jesus. Surely this is not to draw near with a true heart. A doubt harbored as to the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice, or the perfect efficiency of His priesthood, or His tender sympathy and compassion, is not to draw near with a *true heart*. If we shrink back into a distant place after all He has done, are we true-hearted to Jesus? But what positive treachery to Jesus is it to set up an order of men as in greater nearness to God than others -- virtually putting them *within*, and virtually putting others *without*. To lean on priests, or ministers, in worship, as if they were needed to that end, is absolutely denying the virtue and the person and work of Christ. But such things are the necessary offspring of departure from the truth of a sinner's justification before God, by

the one sacrifice of Christ. Distant worship necessarily follows imperfect justification. And if a sinner's justification before God by the blood of Jesus be not seen, much less will entrance into the holiest of all by the same blood for worship be allowed as the common portion of the saints. But even where the truth as to justification has been recovered and is preached, we still see a form and a ritual of worship altogether subversive of the truth. The access proclaimed in the gospel preached is not permitted to those who have believed that preaching. Thus the saints are practically kept in a place of distance, and thus taught to be false-hearted to Jesus! Surely we might say, if every church and chapel in the kingdom were closed, and all the ministers of the gospel shut up in prison, that true-heartedness to Jesus would lead His saints to assemble themselves together to worship, by faith, in the holiest of all -- knowing that there the ministry of the Great High Priest can never for a moment be suspended. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.

As to this expression, "full assurance of faith," it by no means conveys the idea of a certain standard measure of faith as a matter of attainment. The reference is not to the measure of faith, but to its bearing on the right object. The faith may be the weakest possible, but let that, weak as it is, be in full bearing on its own proper object.

We have another form of the same word in the New Testament. It is said of Abraham,

he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God, and *being fully persuaded*, that what he had promised he was able also to perform {Rom. 4:20-21}.

So again -- "Let every man be *fully persuaded* in his own mind." The moment the soul has laid hold on Jesus it is delivered from itself, and ought to be fully persuaded that all it needs is presented to it in the object before it -- even Jesus.

It is this single eye to Jesus which we need in worship. The very things which man in his wisdom has thought to be helps to devotion are really its hindrances. Which of the senses do not men seek to gratify in the circumstantials of worship? Now the very object of the apostle here is to turn away the worshiper from the things of sight and sense, to which he had been accustomed, in order to concentrate his soul on one single object, in which he was to find everything that he needed.

We can never look at our title to worship God, but we see our salvation. How blessedly has God linked these things together, and how perversely does man rend them asunder, either by calling on all to worship, believers and unbelievers, or by binding believers to a form, which negatives the sense of complete justification. What we need in order to happier and holier worship is more simple faith in Jesus. Are we fully persuaded that Jesus has done all that

is needed to make an acceptable meeting-place between ourselves and God? -- then let us draw near.

And what holy freedom and liberty attends this "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." The leper to be cleansed, in order to restore him to the privilege of worship, needed to be sprinkled with blood (Lev. 14:7). The Israelite, who had touched anything which made him unclean, needed to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but it only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9:13). The priests at their consecration had the blood applied to them, that they might so draw near and minister before God. But what is all this compared with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus? It is no longer a purifying of the flesh, but a purifying of the heart by faith. The flesh purified for worship might co-exist with an evil conscience, but a sprinkled heart never could. How entirely is a good conscience alone maintained by that which is not of sight, even by the purging power of the blood of Jesus.

Before Aaron could put on the holy linen coat he must wash his flesh in water (Lev. 16:4); and so it is now -- "Our bodies washed with pure water." We cannot put on our white robe unless we know what communion with the death of Jesus really is. How needful for us in our approach to our place of worship, even the holiest of all, habitually to remember that we have died, and that we are alive in Jesus. We have to do with the living God -- and He too a consuming fire. All that is contrary to life has been set aside by the death of Jesus. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And it is as alive from the dead that we alone can approach him.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." It is literally "of our *hope*," not faith, and has reference to the sixth chapter --

that . . . we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the *hope* set before us, which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil {Heb. 6:18-19}.

Our hope is that we shall be there actually, the holiest of all being our own proper place as priests unto God: but by faith we now worship there in spirit.

But it is hard indeed to maintain a profession contradicted, so far as sight goes, by everything in us and around us. Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that he was a king, without any mark of royalty about him. His confession seemed contradicted by his appearance. Timothy had confessed a good confession before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12), and he needed to be reminded of it. And so do we. For how constantly do we forget that we are what we are in hope. We could not give satisfactory proof to another that we are what we confess to be. We can indeed give the soundest reason of the hope that is in us, because the forerunner is *for us* already entered within the

veil; but we cannot satisfy the restlessness of our minds, or the minds of others, by evidence. No; blessed be God, He has provided for our hope on surer ground than any evidences we could produce, even on the ground of His own immutability and faithfulness for He is faithful that hath promised.

The word is of great force, “*let us hold fast*,” -- let us tenaciously grasp. And why? Because our hope is that which Satan would try by all means to wrest from us. And has he not effectually done this in the Church at large by making that their hope, which is, in fact, the ground of their hope -- even their justification. Present righteousness is the ground of Christian hope. The holiest of all is alone open to those who have been once and for ever purged. If our hope springs not from that *within the veil*, where is our steadfastness? Everything short of that may be shaken -- and will be shaken. If therefore we know not accomplished righteousness, fitting us now for the holiest of all, the peace of our souls must be unsteady. An Israelite might approach the door of the tabernacle with a sacrifice to be offered, but that sacrifice *had yet* to be pronounced acceptable and to be accepted; but it was on the ground of an already offered and accepted sacrifice, that the holiest of all was entered by the high priest. Thus it is with our title to enter within the veil -- the one offering of Jesus has for ever given us liberty to enter there. How amazing is the craft of Satan in his devices against the truth! When he could no longer keep out of sight the doctrine of justification by faith, he has contrived to rob it of its real power, even where received, by having practically put it as the *object of hope* instead of the *present possession of all who have come to Jesus*. The peace of the gospel is thus practically unknown, although the gospel itself is truly stated. And this *hope of justification by faith* always opens the door for distant worship. In how many real believers is the peace of the gospel hindered by their very acts of worship.

Let us therefore, beloved brethren, grasp and maintain this confession as our best treasure -- *Having present righteousness by faith, our hope is nothing short of the holiest of all; and there we worship in Spirit now.*¹ Our hope is independent of ourselves -- it hangs on the immutable faithfulness of God -- it is secured by the blood of Jesus, and it is already made fast within the veil; for Jesus is there, and there for us. Beware of mock humility, which is only the cover of unbelief and self-dependence. Look at yourselves and you are hopeless; yea, nothing is before you but a fearful looking for of judgment. Look at Jesus and know your hope; for where is he? In the holiest of all as the *forerunner!* Let this check all wavering, and answer every doubt and every difficulty. In spite

1. {It is true that we worship in the power of the Spirit of God, but when we speak of *being in the sanctuary*, we are there in spirit (small s). Ed.}

of all appearances, hold fast the profession of the hope without wavering.

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” Here we are reminded that we have also to perform our priestly work. The priest had to *consider*, in cases of leprosy, -- and so, as priests, we have to consider one another, not whether we are cleansed or not, for it has been authoritatively pronounced of us by the Great High Priest himself, “now ye are clean,” -- but we are to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. The expression is remarkable -- “consider *one another*.” There is but One, even the Lord himself, who stands in the authoritative place of the priest to the church, therefore we are to *consider one another*. How entirely is this exercise of our common priestly function nullified by again setting up an order of priesthood to prescribe to us. What is the Confessional? What the Absolution? -- but the priest again pronouncing the leper clean! And how effectually does such a thought hinder our considering one another. We can only do this as standing in grace ourselves and recognizing others as standing in the same grace and the same nearness to God. It is as together standing in the holiest of all that we are to consider one another. There we are thus to help each other to detect what is inconsistent with that our high and blessed standing. There is no room for rivalry now -- all are priests; but abundant room for love; and our love for each other is to be measured by the love that has brought us where we stand. And as to good works, they also are to be judged by the same standard. No lower standard than the sanctuary itself must now be taken to determine what are good works. What becomes the holiest itself alone becomes those sanctified to worship therein. It is not what men call good works, but what God estimates as such, to which we have to provoke one another. The costly ointment poured on the feet of Jesus, wasteful and extravagant in the eyes of an ancient or modern utilitarian, was a good work in the eyes of Jesus. The two mites of the widow more costly than the splendid offering of the rich. How little of what men think good is really so before God; and how entirely what God esteems as precious is despised among men. Hence Christ was despised and rejected of men; and hence really Christian works are now despised of them. How needful then is it for us to be in spirit in the holiest of all, to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

But not only is there to be this constant provocation to love and to good works, it is also added, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”

When Israel came into the land, they were not to offer their sacrifices, or to worship, at any place they might select, but at the place where the Lord should put his name only. Jerusalem was the place whither the tribes went up. Put yourself in the position of a believing Hebrew on a solemn feast day in

Jerusalem -- one of the three thousand converted by the first sermon of Peter. Multitudes from all quarters might be assembled around him -- Jerusalem filled with worshipers -- while he would be apart from all that which attracted them. But would not his soul have many a struggle in keeping away from the festive and religious throng? Would he not have almost appeared an enemy to his country and to the temple? But was it really so? Think farther of the contrast he must in his own soul have seen between the upper chamber, or any other unpretending locality, and the splendid temple. Must it not have needed much simple faith in Jesus, to meet together {rather, "are gathered together" by the Spirit; Matt. 18:20} to break bread and worship with a number as unaccredited as himself, without any visible priest to order their worship, any sacrifice, any incense, any altar, any laver? Would not the multitude keeping holy-day give as it were the lie to the worship he had been engaged in, as if it had been no worship at all? Surely there is great force in the words, "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.*"

Yes; some drew back from acknowledging that as worship, which was without the outward form -- some even who believed in Jesus. It cost too much to own Jesus as everything by disowning all the shadows. The assembling of themselves together thus was the great testimony against the religion of the world, and that Jesus was all. It was the profession that He was the substance of worship, and that worship must now be according to the place and power of His priesthood. The despised company in the upper chamber were feeding on the substance, while the religious world in their gorgeous temple were bowing before the shadows. That despised company had by faith access into the holiest of all; they knew that Jesus, as the forerunner, had entered there for them; and in this knowledge of Him, they could meet at any time and at any place, for the name of the Lord was recorded in the place of their meeting. They were worshipers in the sanctuary, let the scene of their gathering on earth be where it may.

Hence we find that

on the first day of the week the disciples *came together* to break bread (Acts 20:7).

They might or might not have some one to minister the word unto them -- that was accidental; their coming together was for a positive and specific object. Paul came in among them and preached, but that was by the way. They came together as disciples . . . There is need of our exhorting one another as to this, for the danger is imminent of turning back to the old order. And the Spirit of God clearly saw the tendency of things that way, and that this would increase. That as the day approached when the Lord Jesus would be revealed, worship would become more and more worldly -- more and more after the ancient

distant Jewish pattern. Hence the exhortation would in the progress of things be increasingly needed, to stand fast as disciples in the simplicity of grace. Nothing can be more gracious than the provision which the Lord has made against the increasing evil. Just in proportion as the thought in the minds of Christians has prevailed of a progression unto blessing in the world, has worship adapted itself to the world. But when it has pleased God to open the eyes of many of his saints to see the steady progress in evil, and the great assumptions of the flesh, He has thrown them back more on Christian simplicity. And our exhortation the one to the other, as we see the day approaching, is to test everything by the light of that day, and to see that nothing will then really stand which is not of Christ. Surely the Lord intends to make His saints sensible of all that they have lost; but in doing so to make them as sensible of the value of what remains. If He had to say to His people of old,

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

This was not said to enfeeble, but to strengthen them. All the outward glory was gone, but still the Lord was there. And therefore it is said,

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and work; for *I am with you*, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

God remained unchangeably the same, and His original power in deliverance was real strength in the midst of weakness; so that out of weakness they became strong. And this is God's provision for the comfort and strength of the saints, as they see the day approaching, and everything unprepared to meet it, to exhort one another to the use of what remains unto them; and whilst Jesus abideth in the holiest of all, and now appears in the presence of God for them, they can always draw near. Yes, it is our privilege to do so, now that the dispensation has well nigh run its course, equally as much as in the apostles' days. Men indeed have, by their perverseness, put many things between themselves and God, but that which giveth nearness still remaineth, even the blood of Jesus. Let us then draw near.

Beloved, how much is this exhortation needed at this day! Simple worship, although our high privilege, is despised! Believers need something more than the presence of the Lord to induce them to come together. Jesus is not really to them the great substantial ordinance of God. They are not glad when they *assemble themselves* together. Let us not forsake this, for if we do we are in danger of forgetting that we are once and for ever purged worshipers, and that our place of worship is the golden sanctuary itself, also once and for ever purged (Heb. 10:2, 14.) There we have such a High Priest, one who can bring us in at once to the throne of the majesty on high, to us a throne of grace,

although He who sits thereon is holy, holy, holy.

Beloved, it is your place of confession to contradict all assumptions of priesthood, all repetition of sacrifice, and all repeated absolutions, by drawing near. Your worship is to be characterized no less by confident nearness to God than by reverence to his name. The day is approaching. Its approach is marked by a return to ordinances. Hold fast your profession, and let it be Jesus against every pretension. For be assured that whatever is not of Him is nothing better than a carnal ordinance, to be utterly disowned by the Lord when He appears.

If we look forward as to worship, what do we see there? All the shadows passed away, and only the substance presented.

I saw no *temple* therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the *temple* of it {Rev. 21:22}.

So again --

the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him (worship Him) : and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there, shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever {Rev. 22:3b-5}.

They shall *serve* and they shall reign at the same time. They shall then be manifestly priests and kings. But now in the acknowledgment that grace has already made them so, it is their privilege to approach by faith that glorious place in which they will {in} due time actually stand. Our best instruction is in gathered {sic} by looking forward. It is the reality which is to be our pattern now. Not things on patterns of the heavenly, but the substance known by faith stamping its impress on that which is present. Let us draw near

unto him that loved us; and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever. Amen {Rev. 1:5b-6}.

From *Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith* 3:301-313.

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

Appendix 1:

Is There an

Eternal Decree of Reprobation?

John Calvin's Decree of Reprobation

DID GOD DECREE ETERNAL SALVATION FOR SOME, AND DECREE DEVOTION TO DESTRUCTION FOR OTHERS?

John Calvin thought Scripture required the doctrine of the decree of reprobation because the Scripture speaks of God hardening persons. Here is Calvin's erroneous conclusion:

. . . God by his immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment . . . But as the Lord seals his elect by calling and justification, so by excluding the reprobate either from the knowledge of his name or the sanctification of the Spirit, he by these marks in a manner discloses the judgment which awaits them.²

IS PREPARATION TO DESTRUCTION IN GOD'S HIDDEN COUNSEL?

Calvin would not have the truth that God before prepares the vessels of mercy but that the vessels of wrath were not fitted by God for destruction. If God had said the vessels of wrath were *before prepared* for destruction, Calvin's case would be proved. Since that is not stated, Calvin had to work around the

². *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2:210, 212 (book 3, ch. 21, par. 7; see also 3-21-5), 1975.

difference in language concerning the two cases:

They {objectors} add also, that it is not without cause the vessels of wrath are said to be fitted for destruction, and that God is said to have prepared the vessels of mercy, because in this way the praise of salvation is claimed for God, whereas the blame of perdition is thrown upon those who of their own accord bring it upon themselves. But were I to concede that by the different forms of expression Paul softens ³ the harshness of the former clause, it by no means follows, that he transfers the preparation for destruction to any other cause than the secret counsel of God. This, indeed, is asserted in the preceding context, where God is said to have raised up Pharaoh, and to harden whom he will. Hence it follows, that the hidden counsel of God is the cause. ⁴

“Hence it follows” is not the statement of Scripture but a notion founded on the idea that hardening indicates that there was a decree of reprobation that is the cause. Having made that assumption, he transfers it into the part about the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. The very blockage to such a view is in the text itself, in the very difference of language regarding the two cases, which of course he recognized but works around by claiming that Paul softens the harshness but does not transfer the cause of perdition to anything other than the hidden counsel of God. He should have learned from the differences in the two expressions and have seen that the hardening of Pharaoh is of a vessel fitted for destruction by Pharaoh’s own obduracy. He has interpreted the meaning of hardening as if the very words were: vessels of wrath *before prepared* for destruction. He assumes that about Pharaoh, acts as if his point is proven, and he assumes that about the vessels of wrath. It is a tissue of assumptions.

CALVIN’S CAUSE OF THE ETERNAL DECREE OF REPROBATION IS THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF GOD, NOT FOREKNOWLEDGE

God’s foreknowledge of works is not the cause of the decree of reprobation.

Commenting on the cases of Jacob and Esau, Calvin said:

. . . the foundation of predestination is not in works. ⁵

3. {This is an assumption in order to reach the wanted conclusion. Paul did no such thing.}

4. *Institutes* 3-23-1.

5. *Institutes* 3-22-11 (p. 224). Fred. H. Klooster wrote:

Calvin affirmed that the will of God, His eternal decree, is the ultimate cause of reprobation as well as of election (*Calvin’s Doctrine of Election*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 71, sec. ed. 1977).

Of course, not all Calvinists will agree with Calvin. B. B. Warfield, quoted approvingly by L. Boettner, said:

. . . it is still the sinner’s sinfulness that constitutes the ground of his reprobation. Election and reprobation proceed on different grounds; one on the grace of God, the other the sin

(continued...)

5. (...continued)

of man (*The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, p. 114, 1963).

Let us hear one more dissent from Calvin’s grounding the decree of reprobation in the will of God and not in His foreknowledge, quoted approvingly by L. Boettner :

When the Arminian says that faith and works constitute the ground of election we dissent, says Clark. But if he says that foreseen unbelief and disobedience constitute the ground of reprobation we assent readily enough. . . . it is still the sinner’s sinfulness that constitutes the ground of his reprobation (*ibid.*, p. 114).

Of course, this contradicts Calvin. Moreover, notice the parallel reasoning regarding the decree of reprobation with Arminian reasoning on the decree of election. There is a desired symmetry in the double decree of predestination, but there is not a real symmetry in the minds of some Calvinists.

Regarding the quotation from L. Boettner just given, R. C. Sproul, commenting on the case of Jacob and Esau, disagrees that foreknowledge is the ground of reprobation:

If Paul meant that election is based on some foreknown human decision, why did he not say so? Instead he declares that the decree was made before the children were born and before they had done any good or evil. Now we grant that a foreknowledge view of predestination realizes that the divine decree was made prior to birth. But that view insists that God’s decision was based on his knowledge of future choices. Why doesn’t Paul make that point here? All he says is that the decree was made before birth and before Jacob and Esau had done any good or evil.

We grant that in this passage Paul does not come right out and say that God’s decision was not based on their future good or evil. But he did not need to say that. The implication is clear in light of what he does say. He places the accent where it belongs, on the purpose of God and not on the work of man. The burden here is on those who want to add the crucial qualifying notion of foreseen choices. The Bible doesn’t add it here or anywhere (*Chosen by God*, Wheaton: Tyndale House, p. 150, 1987).

What is the real meaning of that? Herman Hoeksema wrote:

Jacob He loved, and Esau He hated sovereignly, without regard to their works, in His eternal Counsel (*God’s Eternal Good Pleasure*, Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, p. 75, 1979).

In regard to Calvin’s grounding the double predestination in the sovereign will of God, and neither one of the decrees in foreknowledge, Fred. H. Klooster said this about “equal ultimacy”:

If election and reprobation are *equally* ultimate in the sense that the sovereign will of God is the ultimate cause of each, this does *not* mean that, for Calvin, election and reprobation are *in all aspects parallel* . . . When ultimacy and parallelism are not clearly defined and distinguished, a simple denial of equal ultimacy usually involves a distortion of Calvin’s insistence upon the sovereignty of the divine will in reprobation . . .

One of the most striking indications of the lack of parallelism is evident in Calvin’s insistence on distinguishing the ultimate and proximate causes of reprobation. Human sinful action is the proximate cause of the condemnation aspect of reprobation . . .

It would also be improper to say that the ground of reprobation is man’s sin and guilt (*Eternal Predestination*, pp. 120-21). Sin and guilt may be said to be the ground of only

(continued...)

The Claim that the Cause of the Decree of Reprobation is God's will. Calvin speaks of the complaint of some who object that:

. . . to devote to destruction whomsoever he pleases, more resembles the caprice of a tyrant than the legal sentence of a judge; and therefore there is reason to expostulate with God, if at his mere pleasure men are, without any desert of their own, predestinated to eternal death.⁶

Calvin's teaching is that God's foreknowledge is only because He decreed what comes to pass:

If God merely foresaw human events, and did not also arrange and dispose of them at his pleasure, there might be room for agitating the question, how far his foreknowledge amounts to necessity; but since he foresees the things which are to happen, simply because he has decreed that they are so to happen, it is vain to debate about prescience, while it is clear that all events take place by his sovereign appointment.⁷

It follows from this that God must have willed Adam's fall. Calvin's view is not that God merely *permitted* Adam to fall, but that God had *decreed* the fall, yet that God is not the author of sin, and man himself is responsible for his sin, not the decree of God. He spoke of the decree as dreadful -- *decretum horribile* -- the horrible decree. He wrote:

The decree, I admit, is dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before he made him, and foreknew, because he had so ordained by his decree. Should any one here inveigh against the prescience of God, he does it rashly and unadvisedly. For why, pray, should it be made a charge against the heavenly Judge, that he was not ignorant of what was to happen? Thus, if there is any just or plausible complaint, it must be directed against predestination. Nor ought it to seem absurd when I say, that God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and in him the ruin of his posterity; but also at his own pleasure arranged it. For as it belongs to his wisdom to foreknow all future events, so it belongs to his power to rule and govern them by his hand.⁸

Whatever exists must have been because of a decree, the decretive will of God,

5. (...continued)

one element of reprobation, namely, condemnation; sin is the proximate cause of reprobation only in this sense (op. cit., pp. 75-77).

R. C. Sproul defines "equal ultimacy" in the double predestination differently -- as meaning that God "intervenes in the lives of the reprobate to create or work unbelief in their hearts," a view he rejects (*Chosen by God*, Wheaton: Tyndale House, p. 142, 1987). And so it goes . . .

6. *Institutes* 3-23-2 (p. 227).

7. *Institutes* 3-23-6 (p. 231).

8. *Institutes* 3-21-7.

not the permissive will of God. Oh, except sin; God is not the author of it! -- but the fall? yes, God decreed it! Fred. H. Kooster remarked about this:

For example, Calvin suggested that if the view that God had decreed Adam's fall makes God the author of sin, then one is also forced to say that God is the author of that wicked act by which the Jews crucified Jesus Christ. The Jews did "that which Thy hand and Thy counsel beforehand determined to be done" . . .⁹

In effect, the argument here is that if God decreed that any one thing be done, then it follows that He must have decreed that everything be done. It should be evident that in Calvinism, as in Arminianism, numbers of conclusions are reached, not on the basis of Scripture stating so, but for the purpose of framing a system.

God is not the author of moral evil, certainly. Adam's fall from innocence is not to be equated with what men *already wicked* did as God used them to accomplish His purpose in the death of Christ. Adam was not wicked before He fell. He became wicked in the fall. God, says Calvin, decreed that Adam fall. That seems like decreeing wickedness.

* * * * *

Having read the body of this book, the reader should recognize that it is better to distinguish a *desire* on God's part as well as His *decretive will* regarding unconditional election, and His perfect moving of men and events for the accomplishment of His glory in Christ. We deny moral free will towards God in the sinner and affirm the sinner's responsibility, rejecting the complaints by Arminians, grounded in philosophically framing a system.

Heinrich Bullinger Rejected Double Predestination

BULLINGER DID NOT HOLD THE DECREE OF REPROBATION

The Second Helvetic Confession (written by Heinrich Bullinger) in chapter 10, "The Predestination of God and the Election of the Saints," does not mention a decree of reprobation at all, speaking only of God's free choice from eternity of the saints.

God has from eternity predestinated or freely chosen, of his mere grace, without any respect of men, the saints whom he will save in Christ (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10).

God elected us in Christ and for Christ's sake, so that those who are already implanted in Christ by faith are chosen, but those out of Christ are

9. *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

rejected (2 Cor. 13:5).¹⁰

Although God knows who are his, and a ‘small number of the elect’ is spoken of, yet we ought to hope well of all, and not rashly count any one among the reprobate (2 Tim. 2:19; Matt. 20:16; Phil. 1:3, sqq).¹¹

The notion of the decree of reprobation is not necessary for unconditional election to be true. That is taught in the Word but the decree of reprobation is not stated there. The notion of the decree of reprobation is the fruit of speculation in divine matters. The decree of reprobation is supposed to be shown to be true because of certain Scriptures, and especially those that speak of *hardening* by God.

HEINRICH BULLINGER ON HARDENING

The Second Helvetic Confession, in chapter 8, “Of Man’s Fall, Sin, and the Cause of Sin,” we read:

When God is said to blind or harden men, or to give them over to a reprobate mind (Ex. 7:13; John 12:40), it is to be understood as a righteous judgment. Moreover, God overrules the wickedness of men for good, as he did in the case of the brethren of Joseph.¹²

This is the correct view of the matter but is unsatisfactory to many Calvinists. They are not Heinrich ‘Bullingerists’; they are Calvinists. Richard A. Muller said that:

Bullinger demonstrates the least willingness to develop a speculative doctrine of the decrees, and he did object to the double predestination emphasis of Calvin’s doctrine and the inclusion of the fall in the counsel of God.¹³

Yes, “a speculative doctrine of decrees” is an excellent description of what has occurred under the name “Calvinism.”

10. Richard A. Muller translates the last phrase as “those truly are reprobate who are outside of Christ.” No doubt reprobate means rejected. But be this as it may, the *decree* of reprobation does not appear in this confession as he notes:

. . . the identification of the reprobate as *extra Christum* avoids even the traditional infralapsarian distinction between a positive willing to elect and a negative passing over in reprobation. What Bullinger presses on us is the fact that election relates directly to Christ, whereas reprobation, whatever the causal explanation, is outside of Christ (*Christ and the Decree*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 45, 1986).

11. In Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Grand Rapids: Baker 1:400, reprint of sixth ed., 1931.

12. In Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Grand Rapids: Baker 1:400, reprint of sixth ed., 1931.

13. *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

Supposed Proofs for the Decree of Reprobation

I am not aware that there has been produced a Scripture statement of the doctrine of the decree of reprobation that parallels the Scripture statements regarding (unconditional) election. There is no statement about being reprobated before the foundation of the world (cp. Eph. 1:4). Another example we have previously seen is that there are “vessels of mercy, which God had *before prepared* for glory” (Rom. 9:23) but we do not read of vessels of wrath *before prepared* for destruction, etc. Should not such facts warn us? Lacking such parallel evidence with the teaching of election, other proof is sought.

The decree of reprobation is (erroneously) *inferred* from the truth of election and that is regarded as “proof.” It is thought that God’s passing some by is proof of an election of reprobation. And then it is said that there is independent Scripture proof, although, it is added, Scripture speaks more of what God does in producing faith and repentance.

Loraine Boettner has noted that Arminians want to discuss reprobation first, seeking to prejudice persons against the doctrine, alleging there is no such thing, and then argue that unconditional election of the saints is also false.¹⁴ Not being an Arminian, nor a semi-Arminian, I have presented unconditional election in this book, shown the fallacy of the idea of moral free will towards God, and have left the main discussion of the decree of reprobation to an Appendix. Concerning the approach of Arminians and Calvinists, Dr. Boettner wrote:

Let them turn rather to the positive side of the system; let them answer and dispose of the large amount of evidence which has been collected in favor of this system.

On the other hand Calvinists usually produce first the evidence in favor of the doctrine of Election and then, having established this, they show that what they hold concerning the doctrine of Reprobation naturally follows. They do not, indeed, regard the latter as wholly dependent on the former for its proof. They believe that it is sustained by independent Scripture proof; yet they do believe that if what they hold concerning the doctrine of Election is proven true, then what they hold concerning the doctrine of Reprobation will follow of logical necessity. Since the Scriptures give us much fuller information about what God does in producing faith and repentance in those who are saved than they give us in regard to His procedure with those who continue in impenitence and unbelief, reason demands that we shall first investigate the doctrine of Election, and then consider the doctrine of Reprobation. This last consideration shows the utter unfairness of Arminians in giving such prominence to the

14. *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, p. 123, 1963.

doctrine of Reprobation.¹⁵

Dr. Boettner claims that:

We shall find that some Scripture passages do teach the doctrine with unmistakable clearness. These should be sufficient for any one who accepts the Bible as the word of God.¹⁶

Ignoring the not-so-subtle hint in the last sentence, we note that he brings forward a considerable number of texts, which we will now look at.

PROV. 16:4

The first Scripture brought forward is Prov. 16:4, which he quotes as:

Jehovah hath made everything for its own end; Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

J. N. Darby's translation reads:

Jehovah hath wrought everything on his own account {Or, 'for his own purpose'}, yea even the wicked for the day of evil.

Does this "teach the doctrine {of the decree of reprobation} with unmistakable clearness"? Calvin said:

. . . the wicked were created for the day of evil simply because God willed to illustrate His own glory in them [Prov. 16:4]; just as elsewhere He declares that Pharaoh was raised up by Him that He might show forth His name among the Gentiles (Exod. 9:6).¹⁷

In an 1831 paper, intending to show what the doctrine of the Church of England was at the time of the Reformation, J. N. Darby quoted Martin Baucer (1491-1551) on Rom. 9:

Hence also is the predestination of the bad. For, as God also forms these out of nothing, so He forms them to some certain end: for He does all things wisely, without any exception, even to the predetermined and good use of the evil. Also the impious are organs and instruments of God, as below, ch. 9. God made all things for Himself, the wicked also for the day of evil. But this theologians do not bear to call predestination, but they call it reprobation: but God does everything well and wisely. Therefore also everything has a determined end (nihil non destinatum) . . .

But whereas God formed these and all other wicked men, who will deny, that He knew, before He formed them, to what He willed to use them; and that He

15. *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, pp. 123, 124, 1963.

16. *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, p. 108, 1963.

17. Quoted in *Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 80, sec. Ed., 1997.

then ordained and destined them to this? What therefore forbids us to say that there is a predestination of these also?¹⁸

The Arminian says that, God knowing beforehand that some men would of their own free will choose to believe, God then elected them.

Baucer said that God, knowing before he formed the wicked, to what He willed to use them, "then ordained and destined them to this," that is, a predestination of reprobation!

These seem to me to be fruits of a similar reasoning process. In both cases, God saw beforehand, or knew beforehand, and in one view then decreed Arminianistically, and in the other view then decreed Calvinistically.

Prov. 16:4 has nothing to do with a decree of reprobation. "Made everything" or "wrought everything" does *not* mean *creation* (or do you think that God created certain men to be wicked?). It has to do with the certain, unailing, moral government and superintending power of God sovereignly working everything for His glory. We see this in Psa. 76:10:

For the fury of man shall praise thee: the remainder of fury thou wilt gird on thyself {Or, 'restrain'}.

God controls in this way. "God hath wrought everything on his own account." What would not ultimately do that is restrained. Yes, "even the wicked for the day of evil" will redound to His glory. God made man upright in the garden, but man fell and became wicked in the garden, as man was wicked afterwards outside the garden. God uses all such things for His glory. Pharaoh, being what he was, God brought him to the place where His power might be shown and His name magnified before the heathen. So in Judas' case.

1 PET. 2:8; JUDE 4

These have been considered in Chapter 8.

2 Pet. 2:12, 13

But these, as natural animals without reason, made to be caught and destroyed, speaking injuriously in things they are ignorant of, shall also perish in their own corruption, receiving [the] reward of unrighteousness . . .

Dr. Boettner merely quotes the verse without comment. Is the Calvinist's point that the wicked were created by God for the purpose of God's catching them and destroying them?¹⁹ Simon Kistemaker wrote:

18. *Collected Writings* 3:8

19. Interestingly, the hyper-Calvinist, Gordon H. Clark, in his exposition, (*1 & 2 Peter*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., pp. 47, 48, 1980), says not a word about reprobation and

“[They are] born to be caught and destroyed.” Peter uses this illustration to imply that man was not born to be captured and killed, but rather to live in freedom and with spiritual knowledge, in full reliance on God. But these men who have deliberately departed from God are like beasts of the field. They live by instinct and because of their spiritual ignorance they will soon perish (Ps. 49:12).²⁰

The reference to Psa. 49:12 is quite apropos. It reads:

Nevertheless, man being in honor and abiding not; he is like the beasts that perish.

Man is composed of spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:12; see Heb. 4:12 -- contra the dichotomist view of man's constitution). Animals have souls, but not spirits, and operate instinctually. Man has fallen into such a condition that the spirit is not in control, but rather the soul, and he is led by the lower part of his immaterial being, the soul -- and is thus like the animal that has but a soul. Thus is he like the beasts that perish, which are made to be caught and destroyed. This is what man has made of himself in sin. There is nothing here about God having made, or created, man this way.

REV. 17:17

For God has given to their hearts to do his mind, and to act with one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

What is unmistakably clear here is that God sovereignly controls the affairs of this world. There is no doctrine of the decree of reprobation here. Rather, we have a terrible case of judicially given blindness upon these apostates of Christendom, for these are sent the “working of error” (2 Thess. 2:11). Why? because “they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved.” There is a helpful footnote in JND's translation to the word “sends” in 2 Thess. 2:11:

The present tense is used here as stating the moral fact; it is not present as to time. It refers to the time when the lawless one is revealed, and is in contrast to the present time, which is referred to in v. 7.

REV. 13:8

and all that dwell on the earth shall do it homage, [every one] whose name has not been written from [the] founding of the [the] world in the book of life of the slain Lamb.

First of all, once again, these are the apostates of Christendom. Those “that

19. (...continued)
these verses.

20. James, *Epistles of John, Peter and Jude*, Grand Rapids: Baker, pp. 298-300, on 2 Peter.

dwell on the earth” is really not a reference to every person on the globe. It is a moral expression for the apostates, they having the character noted in Phil. 3:18, 19, a character which comes to full expression at this epoch. They are under the judicial “working of error,” noted just above, and are given over to the worship of the beast. *Hardening is no proof of a decree of reprobation.* A decree of reprobation is an assumption. The absence of names from this book of life of the slain Lamb does not prove a decree of reprobation. Were their names written in ‘the book of death from the founding of the world’? Were their names written in the book of the decree of reprobation? Let us reprobate speculation and allow the text to state what it does, and pass on.

(Appendix 1 to be continued, if the Lord will.)

Ed.

Extract

Jesus only took up the promises when risen, in a life to make all sure on the other side of the grave: a mere man could not do this (2 Sam. 23:5; Isa. 55:3; Acts 13:34). Jesus must introduce the blessing of God among creation. It is not here the Father and the Son, but Jehovah and the Son of David; and there is a counsel of peace between them both, to the end that creation should be blessed (Zech. 6: 12, 13), Israel being restored to their own land.

We have been instruments of mischief to all creation, which now awaits for the manifestation of the children of God for its blessing and happiness too. We are gathered a kind of first-fruits of the new creation, while God hides His face from the house of Jacob. What gracious consideration in God towards us, for whom, having been in Adam the instruments of the ruin of creation, all creation waits, that we should be manifested with the second Man for the blessing! When Christ shall be Priest on His throne, the counsel of peace shall proceed for the blessing of the earth. As to us, identified now with His humiliation, we shall be identified with His glory; we alone shall see Him as He is in the intimacy of His love. The Jews will see Him as He shall be manifested in earthly glory. In the expression of faith, as in the Psalms, mercy is always before righteousness, because Israel had failed completely in righteousness, and there must be recourse to mercy and grace.

We find in prophecy great principles of truth which can guide us, Christians, but also circumstances which do not concern us. Spiritual intelligence seizes the place of the church and the exaltation that God reserves for His Son Jesus, that all glory may center in Him. The Christian's heart is happy in seeing Jesus exalted everywhere and with all glory. The scriptures bear testimony to Him, and, in proportion as we apprehend better the glory of Jesus, the scriptures become more easy for us to understand.

Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 30:193, 194 (on Isaiah)

*The Mystery of Christ and the Church
and The Covenants*

Chapter 2

Objections Regarding The Hiddenness of This Mystery

(Chapter 2 continued)

Ephesians 3:5, 9

Some opposers will point to Eph. 3:5:

. . . 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 . . .

It was “not made known to the sons of men” -- no, not even to Abraham. The mystery was revealed to “his holy apostles and prophets,” meaning, of course, persons of the church; which adds weight to the rendering, “and by prophetic writings” (Rom. 16:26). However, it was Paul who wrote about the mystery.

Note the comma separating the words “men” and “as.” W. Kelly translated likewise and with the same comma there. It shows that these Greek scholars understood the word “as” to denote a complete contrast: it was not heretofore made known -- as now is the time when it is made known. It is not a matter of degree but of absolute contrast.

W. Kelly translated Eph. 3:9 thus:

and to enlighten all as to what [is] the administration of the mystery which hath been hidden from the ages in God that created all things.

Concerning the word translated “hidden” in Eph. 3:9, it is the same word in Col. 1:26, regarding which we saw that the Lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich says:

hidden, kept secret . . . Col. 1:26. ²¹

Paul said of it, “which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men” (Eph. 3:5). Of course, it was not made known before the world began (it is absurd to speak of such a thing), but that is not the point. It is the period that has elapsed until revealed after Christ was in glory to be the Head of a body.

Now, the once professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, OT Allis, whose well-known anti-dispensational polemic, *Prophecy and the Church*, which does not even list Eph. 3:9 in the Scripture index, takes the word “as” in Eph. 3:5 to be merely a comparison between the way the mystery was spoken of in the OT and the way Paul spoke of it. Stunningly misusing the thrust of Acts 26:22, and referring to it in a way which labels others “lame and arbitrary” for not seeing it his way, only serves as a splendid example of how anti-dispensationalists find references to the mystery in the OT, in spite of Scripture assuring us that it is not there:

Paul . . . declares emphatically that he has been preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not foretold. What clearer illustration could be found of the need of giving heed to Paul’s words, “as it has now been revealed” (Eph. 3:5), when he speaks of the mystery? In commenting on this passage in Acts, all Darby has to say is this: “He speaks not of the assembly [the church] -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history” {see *Synopsis, in loco*}. That a man of Darby’s mentality should have offered so lame and arbitrary an explanation is convincing proof that Paul’s words on this memorable occasion cannot be made to square with the doctrine of the Pauline mystery Church as it is held by dispensationalists. ²²

We must conclude that his view of the matter is that the mystery is found all over the OT (Moses and the prophets, he believes). Thus he empties the Scriptures we are examining of any real meaning. They may as well not have been in Scripture at all. This springs from the want of “*the obedience of faith*” regarding what God has said in the three (or more) Scriptures that we are considering. Now note that Acts 26:23 explains what Paul meant in v. 22:

[namely,] whether Christ should suffer; whether he first, through resurrection of [the] dead, should announce light both to the people and to the nations (Acts 26:23).

That, of course, is not the mystery; but OT Allis thinks it is. Once again we see the erroneous equating of salvation with the mystery; and then, lo, there it is in the OT – and in spite of J. N. Darby’s extraordinary mentality, the poor man

²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

²² OT Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 151, 1945.

did not see what to OT Allis is so plain in Acts 26:22, 23! At any rate, J. N. Darby was altogether correct in the above statement. Acts 26:22, 23 does not speak of the church, which is Christ's body.

As an example of where this false view of making the mystery to be the gospel leads, and how far astray the anti-dispensationalists are, consider the words of V. Poythress, who teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary:

No dispensationalist has shown a way to maneuver around the fundamental dilemma: the one way of salvation is through union with Christ.

He is imagining a necessity to maneuver because of his own false view about *union* with Christ. First of all, we confine the words "union with Christ" to the union of the members of the body to the Head in heaven. The fact is there never was union with Christ as members of His body until He took manhood into glory. We are united to Him in connection with His risen and glorified humanity, a thing impossible until He had died, risen and been glorified above. Secondly, John, who speaks of oneness of life in the Son, directly contradicts the allegation because the Lord abode alone before He died on the cross.

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

Thus, before His resurrection He abode alone; no one was in oneness, or in unity, with Him. He Himself taught this fact. Correctly speaking, we would do well to use the word "oneness" regarding what John teaches, and keep the word "union" for what Paul teaches, in order to describe the differences in what they teach, though the truths are, of course, complementary. It was, then, consequent upon Christ's resurrection that we form, as it were, grains upon the risen stalk, His resurrection-life being our life, we forming one plant with Him. Before His death, the saints had divine life, but not in the character of forming one plant with the risen stalk of wheat, as *oneness in life in Him* is presented in John. It is "life in abundance" (John 10:10). In resurrection, taking the place of the Last Adam, the risen One breathed on them (John 20:22), bringing them into this new connection with Him, communicating the Spirit, not as the Pentecostal gift for union with Him in heaven as Head of the body, but as the power of *life in the Son*, as it is presented in John. The OT saints had life, but neither *oneness of life in Him* (John), nor **union with the Head in Heaven as members of one body** (Paul).²³ Subsequently, as a consequence of His being there in heavenly

23. Even when John is speaking of profession, he uses a plant to represent the point (John 15), not the figure of the body and the Head. C.C. Ryrie's reference to John 10:16 and John 14:20, while rightly refuting ultradispensationalism, in order to show that the Lord spoke of the mystery and say (continued...)

glory, the Spirit was sent (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33) that those who were waiting might be baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), uniting them as members to the Head. The two things were separated in time, God graciously helping us thus to discern differences and to understand and appreciate, in our feeble measure, the immense range of blessings that we have.

Moreover, V. Poythress' notion that OT saints had salvation through union with Christ²⁴ is vitiated on another basis. Christ is the eternal Son united to holy manhood. Thus, while the eternal Son always was such in the Godhead, *the Christ* did not exist in OT times, for the incarnation had not taken place. The talk about "maneuvering" is altogether inappropriate, to say the least. The "maneuvering" is seen to be entirely on his part; "maneuvering" around the great and distinctive facts of Christianity. Such charge "dispensationalists" with Judaizing but the truth is that it such as themselves who are Judaistic, as is patently inherent in his very complaint.

All saints in all ages are saved by the grace of God, which does not mean, or imply, union with Christ for all. OT saints believed the testimony of God given to them. They were saved in virtue of the blood of Christ to be shed, which God had before Himself, such that He was righteous in "respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). All saints that ever lived, or will live, are saved through the blood of Christ. Union with Christ is another matter.

The fact is that the anti-dispensationalists, now being assisted by those pretending to be "progressive dispensationalists," lower the Christian position to that of a **millennial saint** at best; and though that is higher than the position of an OT saint, it is not proper Christian position presented in Scripture. But we do not enlarge on this here.

Above, we noted that O. T. Allis can find the secret mystery, which was hidden from ages and generations, and hidden in God, in Moses and the prophets. The amillennialist commentator, W. Hendrickson, illustrates the idea that the mystery can be found wide-spread in the OT. Of course, what he does is equate the mystery with OT predictions of the future blessing in which

23. (...continued)

that "The Body Church relationship was thus revealed by the Lord before His death," is incorrect; *Dispensationalism Today*, p. 203. Paul alone speaks of it.

24. We have the blessings we are speaking of (not the new birth) in connection with Christ's risen manhood. The idea of OT saints having union with Christ results, unwittingly, perhaps, in union with deity, since the Son was not incarnate then. So it follows that the union was with the non-incarnate Son, i.e., with deity. This is the real meaning of V. Poythress' criticism.

Gentiles would share; and then, of course, finds this everywhere in the OT . Commenting on Eph. 3:5, he wrote:

The Old Testament writers, in fact, did know about it and referred to it again and again (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps. 72; 87; Isa. 11:10; 49:6; 54:1-3; 60:1-3; Hos. 1:10; Amos 9:11ff; Mal. 1:11, to mention only a few references).²⁵

“To mention only a few references”! Look how easy it is to find what Scripture says was hidden from ages and generations! This is a mystery as to which silence was kept? or, as the Lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich said: “a secret that was concealed for long ages”? Is this not, in reality, a mockery of God’s Word, whether intended or not? -- and I doubt not that no disrespect for God’s Word was willfully intended -- rather, it is the exigency of a false theological system clouding the mind.

The fact is that OT prophecies of Gentile salvation will be fulfilled in the millennium, the coming kingdom which so many deny will come to pass; meanwhile there is an *application* of some of those prophecies at the present time. The prophecies concerning Christ’s death, resurrection and exaltation to Jehovah’s right hand have been fulfilled. The consequences of these things as they affect Christ and His body were not prophesied. The other prophecies will yet be fulfilled when God’s present work regarding the church is completed. The other quotations from the OT in the NT are for the use of a principle contained in them, or to illustrate a point, or to show that Gentiles being saved now is not inconsistent with the OT. Moreover, the fact that the OT prophets spoke of Gentile blessing of salvation in the coming (millennial) kingdom helps us understand such a passage as, for example, Eph. 1:12:

that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ.

We have “pre-trusted”; i.e., we have trusted in Christ before the predicted (millennial) time of Gentile salvation. Christ has died and been raised from among the dead. The work on which the prophesied millennial salvation for Gentiles is based is already accomplished and the fulfillment of the OT predicted salvation for the Gentiles awaits that day. Meanwhile, the work being done, God has saved some Gentiles now (“pre-trusted” before the millennium) **and, additionally**, has brought them into the blessed place occupied by those who are

25. *New Testament Commentary: Galatians and Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 154, 1990. He remarked that there was something not made clear in the OT: “. . . the old theocracy would be completely abolished and in its place would arise a new organism in which the Gentiles and the Jews would be placed on a footing of perfect equality,” *ibid.* “Not made clear”? There is not the slightest hint about it. At any rate, what he asserts is that some of the mystery is found all over the OT and some was not made clear.

seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), giving them Christ’s place before the Father as their place (Eph. 1:6), by virtue of their union with Him. All of this escapes the anti-dispensationalists.

As another example, let us hear Vern S. Poythress explain it away:

This passage says that the way in which Gentiles were to receive blessing, namely by being incorporated into Christ on an equal basis with Jews (v. 6), was never made clear in the Old Testament. The claim that the mystery in Ephesians 3:3-5 was not previously revealed need mean no more than that.²⁶

His notion is that *the way* to accomplish it was (not unknown, but) not made clear. He does not mean *the fact* was not known. And then *The Geneva Study Bible, Bringing the Light of the Reformation to Scripture*, omitting comment on Eph. 3:9, says, concerning v. 5:

3.5 as it has now been revealed The Old Testament’s silence about Paul’s mystery -- the union of Jews and Gentiles in the church (v. 6) -- was relative, not absolute. It was anticipated by the prophets. (Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance,” Is. 19:25). If the idea had been altogether absent from the Old Testament, Paul could not have said, as he did in Rom. 4, that the Abrahamic covenant included all who were of like faith with Abraham, including Gentiles. Paul told Agrippa that his proclamation of light to both Jews and Gentiles did not go beyond what had been promised by Moses and the prophets (Acts 26:22, 23).²⁷

We will consider this misuse of Acts 26:22, 23 in Part 4. It is very instructive that the best that is offered is Isa. 25, which they think is a statement that Jews and Gentiles would be united in the church! It is good to have these ‘proofs’ of covenant theology before us so that its true poverty can be seen. Does it not tell us what the character of the concept concerning union must be? There is no sense of the heavenly character of the church. The church is nothing but a better Israel in this scheme.

Contradicting the Scriptures, a leader of the retrograde dispensationalists, R. L. Saucy, aligns himself with the anti-dispensationalists in their treatment of the texts we are considering, saying:

Thus we agree with the non-dispensationalists that Paul’s teaching concerning the mystery of the church in the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ is a fulfilment of Old Testament predictions.²⁸

In still maintaining a few things that distinguish themselves from “non-

26. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 26, sec. ed.

27. Nelson: Nashville, p. 1887 (1995).

28. *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 163, 1993.

dispensationalists,” the position of the retrograde dispensationalists (who do not deserve the word dispensational) is, indeed, as V. Poythress said, “inherently unstable.” I do not think that they will find it possible in the long run to create a safe haven, theologically, between “classic dispensationalism” and covenantal Premillennialism.”²⁹ This remark assumes that they would hold on to the idea of a millennial kingdom, while embracing a covenant position.

We have had before us this:

- as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages (Rom. 16:26).
- which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations (Col. 1:26).
- which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed (Eph. 3:5).
- hidden throughout the ages in God (Eph. 3:9).

It is the blessed path for the Christian to exercise the **obedience of faith**, first with respect to the gospel (Rom. 1:1-5), upon which salvation occurs; and also for the **obedience of faith** regarding the mystery (Rom 16:25, 26), which leads to understanding, according to our respective measures, of God’s glory in Christ, in the heavenly sphere, where the Christian is (positionally) seated in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6) and is in Christ’s place before the Father (Eph. 1:6). He will be eternally seated there as he is now, but soon he will be there bodily also. His position as seated in the heavenlies, and as having Christ’s place before the Father, will never change:

But to him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think, according to the power which works in us, to him be the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages. Amen (Eph. 3:20, 21).

If the above cited Scriptures make it clear to you that the prophets did not speak of the Church; if you see that the mystery was “hid in God” and not ‘hid’ under terms like Judah, Israel and Jerusalem;³⁰ then you will also easily see what the

29. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 137, sec. ed.

30. . How would the Jews know it was hid under such terms, if indeed it was? V. S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, has a chapter, “Interpretive Viewpoint in Old Testament Israel”, wherein he seeks to address this matter. One tack he took is to cite passages of figurative language and state that the readers “would not know exactly to what extent a metaphorical expression of truth was at work” (p. 99). If such a tack is used, then it seems to follow that the O.T. readers would not know whether or not to spiritualize the prophecies; and thus this reasoning would leave them in a quandary. The Psalms are full of figures. Did that leave the O.T. reader in a quandary? At any rate, we shall see that our Lord and the remnant in His time here understood the prophets literally.

(continued...)

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nature of the kingdom is that was announced by John the Baptist and our Lord. It is that literal kingdom over which Messiah would reign, about which the prophets did indeed prophesy. You should also see that the way of interpreting the prophets has also been essentially settled.

Since the church is part of the mystery concerning which silence was kept in the OT, the prophecies of the coming kingdom are not about the church, and these prophecies are left to Israel’s future. The church, then, is distinct from Israel. As distinct from Israel, is the church another earthly people -- resulting in two earthly peoples? Not so. The church is a heavenly people, as is obvious particularly from Ephesians -- obvious, I say, unless you have a theological system that clouds the truth about it. So, while there are anti-dispensationalists that charge that dispensationalism Judaizes, the truth is that those who make the charge are the ones who Judaize -- by bringing the church down to being an earthly people.

Ed.

Two Letters on Worldliness

(From the Italian.)

No. 1

Dear Brother, -- I should like to say a few words on the tendency which there is in these days to worldliness, and more especially on the means employed by the enemy to divert Christians from the path which leads to the glory (Phil. 3).

The subject is of so much importance that many will immediately say: “While we are down here we have occupations which bring us into direct contact with the world, either in our daily avocations, or in our individual relationships, and consequently it is impossible to fulfil our duties without more or less participating in the principles which govern it.” This I totally deny, and

30. (...continued)

We cannot review V. Poythress’ chapter here but just call attention to his remarks on Ezek. 44-46. He wrote, “Was the Old Testament hearer obliged to say that the passage must be interpreted in the most obvious way?” (p. 105). Note well that this **admits** that *the most obvious way* to understand Ezek. 44-46 is literally. Of course, and there was no basis for an Israelite to understand it otherwise. Subsequently we shall see that the well known amillennialist, OT Allis, stated that if the prophets are understood literally, then those prophecies cannot be fulfilled now. This **admits** that the prophets can be understood literally. In spite of the efforts that have been made to explain why an OT Jew should not have expected a literal kingdom, the question at the beginning of this note has not really been answered.

I think the Word shows us clearly that there is in us a power great enough to keep us unspotted from the world, and capable of resisting it unto the end. The Word does not admit the possibility of our living out of the world; on the contrary, it teaches us that we are left in it, but that we are kept from the evil (John 17:15; 1 Cor. 5:10), and in order to encourage us in our warfare with the prince of this world, it tells us that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). What then is lacking? God has put at our disposal all the weapons necessary to meet the assaults of the enemy, and if, instead of defending, we allow ourselves to be beaten, it is either that we fail to employ the weapons with which God has furnished us, or that we misuse them. A true Christian pursues his trade honestly to gain his bread, but his real aim is to obtain everlasting glory with Christ; and this is a normal Christian according to the Word.

I come now to the means employed by Satan for turning us aside, if the heart be not truly attached to the person of Christ. It is astonishing how many Christians, while avoiding serious falls and flagrant sins, allow themselves to be overcome, little by little, by worldly ways, by the claims of society, by old friends; while they fail to see that the divine life in them loses its energy, that it is choked and enfeebled, and that gradually "old things" take possession of their hearts. At first they suffer, and make almost a sacrifice to please the world in things that are not evil in themselves; but they end by having a taste for the "old wine" (Luke 5:39), and forget that the new is much better.

We have a picture of these Christians in the history of Solomon. He never had such a serious fall as David, he never committed so great a sin as his father; but an attentive examination of the conduct of this illustrious man will reveal to us a *gradual return* to the world. His reign opened amidst the glory of a little millennium, his golden scepter was resplendent at the dedication of the temple, around him all was joy and peace; but unhappily it was of short duration. As we advance in the examination of his conduct, it is easy to see that his pristine glory fades, the monarch's heart turns to the world, the world becomes his master; and the reign which had been inaugurated by peace and glory, and the knowledge of God, is terminated amidst idols and strange women. What a difference between the beginning and the end! And how had this decadence begun? Note, dear brother, it did not happen all at once, but gradually; insensibly the things of the world gained access to his heart, and he went from bad to worse till he became an idolater.

This may be a wholesome warning to us, dear brother, and certainly shows us with what reason John said to the young men who were already strong in Christian life,

Love not the world, nor *the things that are in the world* (1 John 2:15).

We are in the truth, but we are not out of danger, and the Lord alone can keep us faithful.

Amongst Satan's many fruitful devices for lowering the saints is that of subtly introducing the world without their being aware of it; on this account it is well not to be ignorant of his weapons, so as to be able to turn them aside. I will try and indicate some of them, with the hope that we may profit by the experience of other Christians who have preceded us on this difficult road. In the foremost rank may be placed *old acquaintances*, just because we have been on intimate terms with them, and to them our weaknesses are known. There are but two ways of avoiding this danger -- either to break off all connection with them, or to proclaim the truth to them, by showing them that we have found an object worthy of our affections -- an object which has taken possession of our heart, which has given a new direction to our life, and which is jealous of any friendship which is not based on the work of redemption. I admit *a priori* the difficulty of turning our back on an old friend, who has perhaps been of service to us, and the enemy takes occasion by all this to keep us in slavery, and to allure us into an atmosphere very unhealthy for those whose senses are fitted for a heavenly one. It may happen, for instance, that a worldly acquaintance of former days comes in and expresses a wish to pass an evening with us. What should be done under such circumstances? If we are not careful, it may become the means of making us miss a meeting, or a projected study of the Word with others; so what is the right path? I think the best service we can render to a worldly friend, who persists in seeking our friendship, is to speak to him faithfully of the Savior's work, and the result will be generally one of two -- if he listen, so much the better, the Lord can work and help us to win a soul; if he do not listen, he will probably complain that we are changed, have new ideas, and are less amiable than formerly, but meanwhile we shall be left free to follow the Lord. This may appear a hard thing, as truly it is to the flesh, and it would be an ignoble action if the motive were not the Lord's; but we ought not to forget what Peter said to his contemporaries --

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin (1 Pet. 4:1).

And then there is the exhortation which Paul addressed to the Corinthians --

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:17, 18).

Next to former friends, our greatest danger lies in *old habits, tastes of the first Adam*, which are so easily re-awakened in us. What a sad thing to be a Christian, and yet to go on with the ways that we allowed before knowing the Lord! The Cretians by nature were liars, and they remained so although converted (Titus 1:12,13); but they were to be rebuked sharply, because they were not walking according to the new man, or in dependence on the Spirit of God.

There are many of our brethren who, without falling into open sin, allow old things, already judged as hurtful, to take possession of the heart, and here is a principal cause of the weakness they often lament. I admit that our characters are different, and that tastes differ according to temperaments; but these are the things inherent in the first man, and if we follow our individual tastes, we shall get out of the sphere of Christian communion, where a taste for the Lord Jesus is the only thing. If, for instance, an amateur of music take up his old flute or violin to please the flesh for a few hours, if the reader of novels hunt up some old story to pass the time, and thus if each of us turn back to some occupation which we loved in days before the light reached us, who will be occupied with Jesus of Nazareth? who will proclaim His virtues? who will exalt Him in a song of praise? Remember Elisha, who, before putting on Elijah's mantle, rent his own garments.

I must not omit to mention another weapon which Satan uses successfully in his ceaseless work of drawing back into the world those whom God has set apart for Himself; it is, *present things* -- the very air which surrounds us. It is quite true that the majority of Christians do not care for the world in its most ostensible forms; they do not go to balls, do not play cards, &c., but is that enough? The Word says to us,

Love not the world, *neither the things that are in the world;*

and it is patent that many, without loving the world in its most popular garb, love *certain things which are in the world*. It is very easy to be led away by an object which in itself is not evil; but if our hearts be ensnared by things which are seen, we lose the taste for things which are not seen, and thus unwittingly we find ourselves in a worldly atmosphere.

The other day I received a letter from a brother, which I hoped might contain some word of edification; on the contrary, I found it full of a great industrial and artistic exhibition which was on hand in a European city. You can conceive, dear brother, my astonishment. But that is what we have come to. In the meetings we say we are heavenly, we read and print good books, we publish excellent periodicals, and then, from the practices of many amongst us, we see that hearts are full of worldly things, and insensible to the glory of Jesus, which

we shall so soon inherit. I do not say that art and science are bad things, but I would remind you, nevertheless, that Adam made a very wrong use of the trees in the garden of Eden, which in themselves were not bad things, when he used them to hide from God.

Farewell, dear brother, I have perhaps written sufficiently; but if the Lord permit, I will on a future occasion add a few more thoughts to my letter.

Your affectionate fellow-laborer, E. L. B.

No. 2

Dear Brother in the Lord, -- It has been on my heart for some time to add to my first letter on worldliness, and more especially because several brethren have communicated with me on the subject.

To some of these I appear hard and narrow-minded. Others, on the contrary, believe that such exhortations in these days are both useful and necessary, and have pointed out certain things which, with the Lord's help, I hope to notice. With the first class I have little to do, for if my first letter was stigmatized by them as severe and narrow, they will have occasion to do so still more with the second, since the greater our knowledge of the world, the less possible shall we find it to make a truce with it.

Two points in particular have been put before me -- the politics of this world, and the way in which the families of believers are so often a means of opening the door to the world.

On the first subject -- i.e., the world's politics -- I think two observations will not be out of place. Many Christians, whose conversion no one doubts, have hitherto failed to comprehend that the calling of the church is purely *heavenly*; that is to say, they have not grasped this sufficiently clearly to deliver them from an interest in politics. It is not theory that is lacking. What we want is to put in practice the marvelous truth that we are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are consequently entirely strangers to the ways of the inhabitants of the earth.

But some will object: "Ought we then to take no interest in events which warn us that the end of all things is at hand? We admit that the world is to be judged, and we approve in no wise its principles; but we have always felt free to follow the course of politics in order to see what things have come to." To such I would say, "If you must study politics, study Daniel and Revelation for a few days, and you will learn God's thoughts thereon." I think this is the only

satisfactory way of quenching the thirst for tracing the progress of events; and I have often said that the most simple Christian is better acquainted with this world's fate -- with the Eastern question, and with the last phase which the European Powers will assume -- than the cleverest politician of this world. "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book," says the Revelation (22:10). That is to say, that the Church can always know the thoughts of God on such questions, without the need of consulting newspapers to see if God has told us the truth. After all, this shows a want of faith in the Creator of all things, and a lack of reverence for the authority of His eternal Word. Newspapers only confuse the mind of the reader, because they alter their standpoint with every new aspect of the political world, and know no other basis than the vacillating ideas of men. It has been rightly said, that from a mountain-top the course of a river is better seen than in the plain, where the river-fogs impede the view. In like manner we Christians, who by grace occupy a higher place than the world, can peacefully speak with God, as did Abraham on the mountain-top, and study His thoughts on prophecy without consulting the mists of the valley. Had there been newspapers in Abraham's time, I do not think he would have read them. Lot perhaps might have been betrayed into so doing, because he had accustomed himself to living in the atmosphere of Sodom. But it is evident that he had not a very clear insight into true politics, or he would not have lost all his goods by staying in a town about to be destroyed. How indeed could he see clearly in Sodom?

Here then is my answer to those who under pretext of seeing how far things have gone, interest themselves in the world. Although prophecy ought not to be our chief study, it would nevertheless be well that all the saints should understand the books of Daniel and Revelation, wherein is presented the judgment of all human power; and Christ, in His great majesty, is seen taking possession of the whole world, to the praise and glory of God. This would, it seems to me, be the best preservative against the tendency which there is amongst Christians to the study of this world's politics.

And now, dear brother, I want to touch on the second subject which I mentioned at the beginning of my letter; viz., worldliness in the children of believers. And I hope, at the same time, you will understand that I do not allude exclusively to "they of Italy," but also to those who live where Christianity is supposed to be carried out better.

Alas ! how many sincere Christians allow in their children that which they themselves have given up for ever! I do not say this in a critical spirit, but simply by way of drawing attention to several called-for remarks which have been made to me of late. The subject is a delicate one, because we know what

difficulties there are in bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but we ought to be acquainted with the means which Satan has at his disposal for alluring the saints of God into the world. Godly fathers of families are to be found, who are weak enough to permit their children to be dressed in a manner not in keeping with their godliness. It may seem a very small thing, that the children of Christians should be dressed like those of the world; but the fact is forgotten perhaps, that as they grow older something more must be allowed, and something more again -- things, it may be, innocent in themselves, but which insensibly bring the world into the house; and once within, it is not easy to turn it out. I would not have it thought that I mean in anywise to make hard-and-fast rules for Christian fathers; but I desire to press the fact, that the houses of such ought to be wholly for the Lord, and that if they have His glory at heart, they must not allow for their children what they do not allow for themselves.

The history of the sons of Eli ought to be a salutary warning to every Christian father (1 Sam. 2). I do not think that they became so wicked all at once -- probably the starting-point was the over-indulgent heart of their father; then they went further and further into the world, until the whole house was swamped by it. How much grief would have been spared to poor Eli, had he known how to bring up his children in the fear of the Lord! And are not Elis to be found in our day? May God grant grace to His saints, to keep their families set apart for Him, and free from the spirit of this world. The days are evil; false principles easily take possession of youthful minds, and if fathers are not watchful, they will have, later on, to mourn over the infidelity of their children.

Before closing my letter, I must reply to one more observation which has been made to me. It is said that circumstances vary with different countries, and that in my first letter I referred only to music, novels, &c., while I ought also to have specified the worldly attractions peculiar to countries differently placed. I am sure it is useless to do so, because one would never have done signaling the examples and the dangers. Every true Christian will easily discern the spirit at work in the world, and will avoid whatever seeks to come between him and the Father.

An old servant of the Lord being asked one day by a banker's clerk if shoveling gold all day was likely to make him worldly, replied, "I don't see any more harm in a shovelful of sovereigns than in one full of sand, provided my heart be not in it." This example might serve, I think, for all the circumstances in which the saints of God may find themselves. So long as our hearts are not engrossed with our employments, our workshops, our fields, or

any other means of subsistence, each one of us may use what God has put before him, and administer it with the knowledge that all belongs to our God and Father.

My desire is, that each may search his own heart, to find out the worldly element which has a hiding-place there, and, when discovered, that he may judge it, and dethrone the idol that contaminates him.

Your affectionate companion in service, E. L. B.

From *The Christian Friend*, 1886, pp. 206-211.

{As Obedient Children}

1 Peter 4:14-16

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

But for simple faith in God and the consciousness that the Spirit of God is still guardian in the church, one would not know how or what to speak in these days. If you speak of grace, and dwell upon the fulness and freeness of it, there are so many hearts that will delight in it after a carnal manner, and use it as a cloak for evil; not merely those who do, as Jude says, “turn the grace of our God into *lasciviousness*,” but who will cover over a deep spirit of worldliness, excuse themselves much obedience on the ground of grace. Indeed, this is the prevailing leaven of these days. It is the root of that latitudinarian spirit which is tolerant of many evils and much disobedience. On the other hand, if you speak of holiness of walk, many souls put themselves under legal bondage, which robs them of their joy and peace, or at the best makes them the slaves of their own frames and feelings, or promotes that self-righteous spirit which fills the heart with intolerant pride.

Still the truth must be told; and it will have its fruit in some hearts. In the passage above we see the most touching appeal to the heart of a saint; and these two principles, grace and holiness, exactly in unison. The appeal is not to bondmen or servants, but to children. “As obedient *children*”; and it is from “Him which hath called you.” Grace has brightly shone in these two facts, “He *hath* called us,” and

whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many *brethren* (Rom. 8:29).

That is, He hath called us, and has made us *His children*. The appeal is this, seeing He who has thus acted in such grace, and brought us into such relationship, is Himself holy, so should we be holy. And there is grace in this appeal, for He desires that we should be before Him in joy and love; which could not be without holiness. This our God has secured to us in Jesus,

having chosen us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy and without blame* before Him in love (Eph. 1:4).

But God has now separated us unto Himself from an evil world, and from our own evil too, hence the present appeal to be “as *obedient children*.” The principle is this, the children should be as the Parent. God is holy; hence His children are to be holy. As holiness is a characteristic of the Father, it should also be a characteristic of the children.

Now, if this principle had more weight in our minds, our chastenings would be found much more fruitful; for surely that soul that longs after holiness will profit more than the careless soul, by the varied chastenings of the Father's hand.

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10).

Many are apt to contrast grace and holiness, but there can be no *contrast* between any of the attributes of God. All His attributes express Himself, and He is One. Grace, indeed, shines most in this, that we *sinners of the Gentiles* should be *reconciled* unto God, and built up with the Jews a holy temple in the Lord, etc. (see Eph. 2:11-22; see also same chapter all through, especially vv. 4, 7, 10). “Grace reigns through righteousness” (Rom. 5:21).

I am sure of this, if we would serve the Lord, we must be holy. Not in self-righteousness, but “as obedient *children*.” As those that wish to be as He is. Every exhortation to His children, and every recognition of them is full of this principle -- holiness. As, “To the saints,” “holy brethren,” “redeemed from all iniquity, to be a peculiar people,” etc.

One could dwell very much upon this important subject; and I trust the Lord may lead our souls more into it. For it is evident, from the Word, and from past experience, that God's work is accomplished by means of holy and godly people. A true position and clear knowledge of truth will not suffice; holiness is what God looks for. The reason is evident, since to do God's work he must have the soul walking with himself; in communion with his mind. Witness the contrast between Abraham and Lot.

Let brethren in Christ everywhere look well to this, for there is lack of power: much truth abroad; but it seems to have little power in separating souls

from evil. For when we see light spreading, if that “light in them be darkness, how great is that darkness.” There seems to be lack of power for *obedience* to the truth when it is seen. Why is this? 2 Tim. 2:21 implies there is such a thing as *meetness* for the master’s use. And this is the meetness “being purged from these” (vessels of dishonor) *not* having knowledge.

Let us remember this,

the Lord knoweth them that are His; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity {2 Tim. 2:19} .

I doubt not the Lord is doing a work among souls; and if we would share the rewards of such a work, we must see to it that we are found “in all things *approving* ourselves as the ministers of God.” “As workers together with Him, giving no offence in anything” (see 2 Cor. 6).

The Present testimony 6:304-306.

G. J. Stewart Affirmed

The Human Personality of Christ

Since the Lord had a human soul, He had a human “I.” The “I” is in the soul. Responding to Ravenism in *The Man Christ Jesus*, G. J. Stewart wrote:

If the Lord were not personally Man He could not die for men. If HE had no human soul, no human personality, His blood could not make atonement for the “soul,” in which lies the “I” of individuality and responsibility . . . (p. 4).

Yes, the will and the “I” of manhood is in the soul, and Christ had a human soul. A soul without that would be an impersonal soul, not a human soul. ³¹

31. 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* .

Explaining Away and/or Coverups

The SIS periodical, *Chronology & Catastrophism Review*, May 2004 issue, reported the following in the Monitor section (p. 34):

Suppressed Evidence (*Science Frontiers*, no. 144, Sept-Oct. 2003, p.1) ³²

Halton Arp ran afoul of the establishment when he questioned the orthodox interpretation of redshift in astronomy. In 1971 NASA produced a photograph of a luminous bridge which connected a galaxy with a quasar with a different redshift, which orthodoxy says means they are separated by a vast distance. In Oct 2000 the Space Science Telescope Institute issued a photograph which no longer showed the bridge.

The astronomer Halton Arp was installed as astronomer at the Max Planck Institute, having moved from the USA consequent upon being given less and less time on the telescopes here. He has, for many years, been publishing anomalies in the red-shift notion of measuring the distance to stars. These anomalies bring into question the “big-bang” theory of the origin of the universe and this is not acceptable to those scientists who hold this notion of the origin.

The interested reader will find information on the haltonarp.com website. Regarding this particular anomaly, big-bangers have alleged that it only appeared that there was a bridge, the alignment only being apparent, and that one was farther distant from the earth than the other. It is obvious why this is claimed. The claim accords with the standard notion concerning the validity of the red-shift being an indicator (a doppler measurement) of distance from earth. Having two such differing red-shifts, why, they *must* not be at the same distance from the earth, with a luminous bridge between them. If there is a valid, different explanation for red-shift, then clearly the objection is circular reasoning. But the “big-bang” notion must be maintained, for that is the reigning, unbelieving, explanation for the origin of the universe as we presently see it.

Suppression of evidence is quite different from explaining evidence away. It does appear that in this case both have been done.

It is true that there are some persons working on notions of an electric, or a plasma, universe, but the “big-bang” reigns right now. And what existed before the “big-bang” does not seem to be addressed. A universe that is eternal and goes through cycles might be proposed. The universe either always was, or it came from nothing. *Is that a clever explanation?* What about the unbelieving

32. *Science Frontiers* is published by William Corliss who has published books full of anomalies in the various sciences.

and hostile question, “where did God come from?” *Is that a clever question?*

Think about it according to the “big-bang”: here we are, the product of a tremendous explosion (+ time) thinking about where we came from. A mindless explosion has produced minds thinking about the mindless explosion (+ time) that is the creator! This is the present pinnacle of ‘learning’ concerning origins; and with that, it is also the expression of the unmitigated effrontery of the creature. Ed.

No

A Christian man comes under exercise before God concerning some matter regarding his pathway. In his conscience he knows that he must separate from this thing as not having God’s approval. It might be something that involves him individually, or also his wife and children, or ecclesiastically. He says to his wife, “this calls for separation, unto the Lord.” His wife says: NO! She *feels* differently about it. That is a NO of self-will, of impiety, and worldly lust.

This situation has been increasing over the years. *Feelings* set aside conviction based on God’s Word. The woman is exercising headship.

Self-pleasing, not what is due Christ, who pleased not Himself (Rom. 15:3), is increasingly the order of the day. Self-will, not God’s will (see Rev. 4:11) expressed in His Word, is preferred, as the time of the Wilful King (Dan. 11:36) gets closer. Self-indulgence (James 4:3) is the order of the day -- self, self -- me, myself, and I.

Gilgal speaks of the rolling away the reproach of Egypt (Josh. 5:9). Gilgal represents judgment on the flesh. It was the entry point for the Israelites into the land of promise. It is the great NO upon the flesh. The pretender, Saul, went down to Gilgal after he was told to destroy Amalek, Amalek pointing to the power of the Enemy acting on the flesh.

And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said to him, Blessed art thou of Jehovah: I have fulfilled the word of Jehovah (1 Sam. 15:14).

There we have it -- a reflection of what is in our hearts; and, alas, in our conduct. The name of Jehovah is used to cover up self-will and disobedience.

Was Saul deaf? Not physically, but the ear of hearing the will of Jehovah in his conscience was corrupted. He made some effort, doing a partial work. But a partial work is not acceptable to God. Do we really believe that we can obey the Lord only as far as we wish and He is bound to accept that and recognize what we have done? Well, God has a NO also.

So, Saul reasoned on the matter with Samuel (1 Sam. 15:17:21). Regarding

the things that were to be devoted to destruction, Saul indulged in the blame-game, blaming it on the people, over whom he was king (1 Sam. 15:21). And then he told Samuel that the people saved those things to sacrifice at *Gilgal!* The effrontery of all this, the hypocrisy, blaming someone else, and whatever self-deception was involved, was swept away:

And Samuel said,
Has Jehovah delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices,
As in hearkening to the voice of Jehovah?
Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice,
Attention than the fat of rams.
For rebellion is [as] the sin of divination,
And self-will is [as] iniquity and idolatry,
Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah,
He hath also rejected thee from being king.

How pathetic it is that we delude ourselves into thinking we can deceive Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Yes, it *is* as idolatry. “Self-will is [as] iniquity and idolatry.” We make God according to our self-will. That is an idol. “Rebellion is [as] the sin of divination.” We consult, as it were, with a spirit – even if it is our own, displacing God. This is horrible! Do we have a sense of it in our souls?

But there is a place for a *godly NO*:

For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, *having denied impiety and worldly lusts*, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise thee (Titus 2:11-15).

You ask, where is **YES**? It comes *after* the **NO**. Grace teaches us to say *no* to impiety and worldly lusts, and then *yes* to living soberly, justly and piously. Note the order. Are you wiser than God concerning the order? Do you have a notion of first presenting the positive and *then* the negative? That is a fleshly self-deception. What that is really about is to present the positive so as not to have to deal with the negative -- and in avoiding the negative, the result is that the positive does not receive its full place. Such handling of God’s Word is, at bottom, a Saul-like subterfuge. It is disobedience to God’s Word. It is, in reality, sparing self and making God’s Word sanction it. Ed.

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