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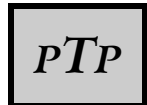
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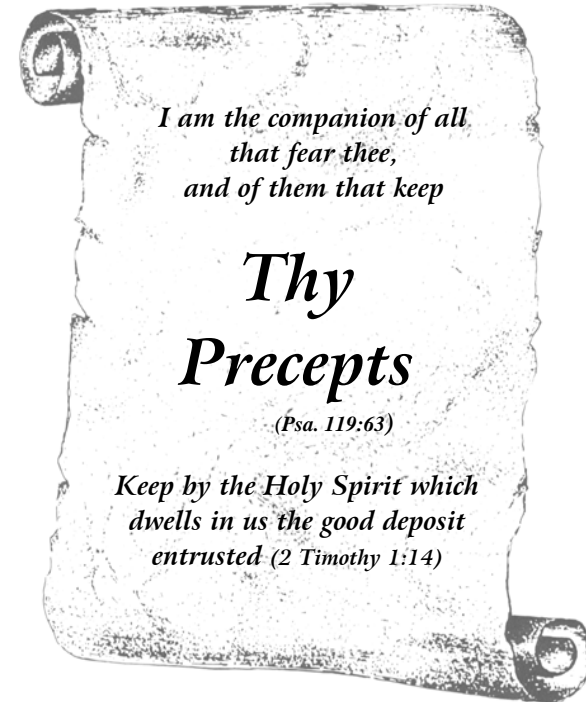
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*The Mystery of Christ and the Church
and the Covenants*

Chapter 4.1

Adam in Innocency

Genesis 2:15-17

(15) And Jehovah Elohim took Man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to till it and to guard it. (16) And Jehovah Elohim commanded Man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou shalt freely eat; (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die.

The Covenant With Adam

Man Appointed to Till the Garden and to Guard It

Man was placed in the garden to till it. The garden would thus be ordered according to the exercise of Adam's faculties which were, no doubt of a very high order. His naming of the animals indicated a high order of capability for zoological classification, as well as showing him there was not one like himself. No doubt he would excel in horticulture and botany also. He was created with full capacity of speech and no doubt his mind was richly furnished with an exceptionally high order of intelligence.

We see from this also that it was not God's intention that man be unoccupied. However, in the garden, without a curse on the ground, the work would not be as after the fall. The ground would yield abundantly. The tilling would not require sweating.

At first though it might seem strange that Adam was to "guard" the garden. But let us ask ourselves "how are we to 'guard' anything that God has committed to us?" Why, by obeying God's Word! Just as obedience is the saints' liberty, so is obedience the "guard" of what God commits to us. The guarding of the garden was bound up with obeying the one prohibition (Gen.

2:15-17): not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Guarding it should be viewed in connection with the inroad that the Enemy of God and man made (Gen. 3:1-7). Note, then, as soon as we see man put into the garden, the *command* of God comes before him.

In Innocency Adam Had A Law, not The Law

ADAM DID NOT HAVE THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

In his state of innocency there was *a* law given to Adam, not *the* law of Moses (John 1:17). It is important to dwell on this because it is part of Covenantism to state that Adam was under the law, thus placing all his progeny under the law. It is an effort to make the law the measure of everything moral, and even call the law a transcript of the mind of God, which it certainly is not. Hos. 6:7 is pressed into a false use to bolster this far-reaching error, as if it stated that Adam had the 10 commandments. It states no such thing, nor does that text imply it because that would contradict other texts. The notion that Adam had the 10 commandments clearly violates Scripture statements. Not only does this contradict John 1:17, it also contradicts Rom. 5:13-14. Here are helpful comments by W. Kelly about this:

The apostle meets a possible objection, and certainly proves that the existence of sin is independent of law.

For until [the] law sin was in [the] world; but sin is not put to account when there is no law.

Thus the Jew could not even make the miserable boast (for what will not man boast of?) that the law preceded sin. The very object of law is to prove the sin of men. Alas! it is not confined to Israel; it is universal. "Sin was in the world," where the law was not. When it was given by Moses, it put sin to account; but sin was already there, and far more widely than the sphere which law contemplated when it came. Law could work no remedy for sinners; it could only register -- not get rid of -- sin. Law gave sin the character of offence; sin, where law spoke, became the transgression of a positive and known commandment. "Where no law is, there is no transgression." It is a pernicious mistake to understand that the apostle denies sin to be where no law exists. Sin is not the transgression of the law, though transgression assuredly is sin. But sin is a wider and deeper thing. The Authorized Version {KJV} notwithstanding, 1 John 3:4 teaches really otherwise -- that sin is lawlessness, and not necessarily the violation of law. Thus both apostles are restored to harmony, instead of either clashing mischievously or tempting an expositor to a still more mischievous paring down of the truth to save appearances. Never is this needed with scripture. As being the word of God, we must eschew and resent all such manipulations of its language. It is only our ignorance

which finds difficulties; it is ill-will which sets one passage in antagonism to another. If John could have meant us to gather that sin and transgression of law are the same thing, nothing could save the statement from opposition to our text.

This is yet more apparent from the support the Apostle Paul adds in v. 14 to what was laid down in v. 13:

But death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those that sinned not in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was coming.

The two points are named when a positive commandment was imposed by God. Adam had *a* law; by Moses the law was made known. Between them there was no dealing with men by either the one or the other; yet men sinned as scripture abundantly shows. Hence death reigned, for it is the wages (not of transgression only but) of sin. It reigned in the case of Adam and Eve; it reigned from Moses' day; but not at either epoch only, but between them, when there was no law. Death reigned over all those that sinned; for sin they did, even though it was not in the likeness of our first parents' transgression. Their antediluvian posterity, as well as those who followed the flood down to the gift of law from Sinai, could not sin as their father in Eden or the children of Israel after they heard the ten words {i.e., the 10 commandments}. But they sinned, they did their own will, they were corrupt and violent, as they afterwards added idolatry to their evil ways. Accordingly death reigned even over them; for they were sinners, though not transgressors, like Adam at first and Israel afterwards.

It is interesting to note that the apostle refers here to Hos. 6:7:

But they, like men, transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

The margin gives the true sense, which is lost in the vagueness of "men" in the text. "They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." Israel had *the* law, as Adam *a* law; and both transgressed the bond by which they were held. But all between Adam and Moses were on a different footing. They were not a whit less truly sinners, but they had no law or laws proposed to them by God which they broke. So the nations in contrast with Israel are ever styled "sinners of the Gentiles." Having sinned without law, they perished without law {Rom. 2:12};¹ while the Jews who had the law sinned in the law and were thus transgressors, which the Gentiles who had not the law could not be. But the Jews were not sinners only but transgressors. Hence it is written,

1. {Observe that if Adam had the 10 commandments, and his posterity were all under the law, there would have been no persons sinning without law. The Covenantist notion that all are under the law contradicts this Scripture.}

Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

The law put sin to *their* account. Not so with the Gentiles: God winked at these times of ignorance.

Nothing, however, is said of Gentiles in our verses, for we are here led up to times before the Jews were called, or the Gentiles consequently could be left aside. We see the sons of Adam down to the promulgation of God's law at Sinai. If on the one hand there was no law to charge sin to the account of the guilty, there was on the other hand the reign of death, and this over sinners, if not transgressors, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Men at large were guilty and died accordingly. We are here then in presence, not of the law and its special aims and its peculiar sphere, but of sin flowing down from its first source, Adam, through all the streams which descended thence. If law was not there to set sin to account, as it does precisely and in detail, their death was the witness that they were all sinners, whose dread wages were duly paid. Thus Adam, as we shall see more fully soon, is a figure of the coming One, of Christ (i.e., of a federal head who was to follow the first).²

The law is the rule for man in a state of sin, with lust at work within; but Adam in innocency was not in a state of sin and was not given the law which, when given through Moses, addressed man in the state of sin. In notes regarding Patrick Fairbairn's, The Revelation of Law in Scripture, J. N. Darby wrote:

'The law of the Ten Commandments was written on Adam's heart on his creation,' etc. This is simple, but well known nonsense. How could "Thou shalt not steal" be a law to Adam? Or "kill," or "lust"? It all supposes sin and a fallen state, and in principle so does every prohibition of evil, and indeed a command to love God. 'Binding to obedience' is all very well -- that Adam's law did, but it did not suppose sin. The moment Scripture is owned, which expressly declares that man got the knowledge of good and evil by the Fall, and that this part, if they please to call it so, was acquired then, as Scripture expressly and in terms asserts, "The man is become as one of us," all this falls to the ground.³

Since this matter is so important and is fundamental to Covenantism, let us hear more from J. N. Darby:

2. W. Kelly, *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, in loco* on Rom. 5:13. See also J. N. Darby, *Notes and Comments* 5:8, 51; *Collected Writings* 7:290; 10:97; 21:197; 26:239; 33:334.

3. *Notes and Comments* 5:8.

Where is a trace of promise of life to Adam and his posterity if they exactly kept the law? It is a pure invention, falsifying Adam's real position and relationship with God in order to propitiate the law of the ten commandments. There is not a tittle of scripture for it. Adam, having life, was tested by a positive well-known commandment of not eating the forbidden fruit; and the perfectness of this consisted in the point that there was no intrinsic moral question in it {in the fruit}. It was a test of simple obedience to a sinless being with a threat of death (for life he had). A promise of life to Adam on keeping a moral law, which supposed the knowledge of good and evil, is a mischievous fable, and denies the whole position of Adam who was innocent. There would have been no harm in eating that fruit more than another, unless it had been forbidden. And, as I have said, this test of obedience was the only true one for an innocent being, not, as is alleged, a righteous and holy one (both which terms suppose the knowledge of good and evil, delighting in one and abhorring the other). Adam acquired the knowledge of good and evil by his disobedience: "The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." But this by the by. What I insist on is, there was no promise of life, which supposed he had it not; but a threat of death, which supposed him to be alive, but alive innocent with no knowledge of good and evil.

And when you come to details, just see, I must say, the nonsense of this system which Presbyterians accept by tradition. This law, we are told, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai "in ten commandments and written on two tables." Think of bidding Adam to honor his father and his mother, and that his days might be long in the land Jehovah his God gave him! Think of his being forbidden to steal -- nay, what is more material, not to lust or covet! Cannot these doctors see that the law supposes sin to be there in the prohibition of it, and that (unless in the case of honoring parents, which could not possibly apply to Adam) all the commandments without exception are prohibitions of sin, or refer, as the fourth, to the labor which came in as the present punishment of sin? All this is not a mere mistake of interpretation, or an imperfect way of putting things (of which I should have much to say on the {Westminster} Confession of Faith, and to which we are all liable); but it is grave and fundamental error on man's original relationship with God, and on the true state of our actual relationships too. The basis of the entire system of moral relationship with God in Presbyterianism is false; and it has tainted the whole Evangelical system everywhere. I believe it had its origin in the Reformation, or rather in reformed popery; but it has on this point been formalized in Presbyterianism as it has been nowhere else; and I defy anyone to give the smallest atom of scripture, or (if he knows what sin and innocence mean) of common sense either. It is a theological system without a scriptural basis, and absurd upon the face of it (assuming Adam's innocence; that is, believing the scriptural statement).

This is strong language to me as to the famous Confession of Faith; but the times are serious. We want the truth. We want the solid basis of scripture, of the word of God, for what we hold. Nothing else will stand in these days. Men may deny that word; but then we know what we have to do with. Men may set up conventional systems; but then popery is the strongest and will prevail, or infidel disgust throw up all, and (as I believe) devour at the end popery itself. But my business now is with the truth. Thank God, many Presbyterians love the Lord, and their traditional errors are partially dissolved in the power of grace, though, I believe, their system affects and injures their Christianity. Still every saint will cordially recognize every one in whom grace is. At any rate, that is what pleases God and is the true bond of comfort to the saint; but our question now is with a system of doctrine injurious to the saints we do love. In many parts I do not believe the Confession of Faith is really held by those who maintain it, as in the doctrine of absolute reprobation. Indeed it notoriously is not. They may talk about mysterious and deep truths when we bow. I have no objection to bowing to God on such points -- it becomes us; but they do not believe what is stated in the Confession of Faith -- I mean a vast number do not. And I affirm that what they do believe, the promise of life to Adam by keeping the ten commandments, is an absurd and unscriptural folly, and one which subverts his and our relations to God, fatally modifying the truth of the gospel when it is preached.⁴

CONFOUNDING TRANSGRESSION AND SIN

It is erroneous to confound transgression and sin. All transgression (breaking a given rule) is sin, but not all sin is transgression. Men sinned between Adam and Moses, but the law was introduced by Moses. **It is sinful for a man to have a will of his own;** and *that*, men indeed acted on consequent upon the fall, though they had not the 10 commandments to transgress. For example, no law was given concerning approach to God through substitutionary sacrifice, which Abel's sacrifice was, and Cain brought the work of his hands from the cursed ground. His works were wicked (1 John 3:12), without law. In view of this distinction, let us read Rom. 4:15:

For law works wrath; but where no law is, neither [is there] transgression.

The Gentiles never were under the law:

For when [those of the] nations, which have no law . . . (Rom. 2:14).

The law came in 430 years after the promise to Abraham:

. . . the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promises of no effect (Gal. 3:17);

⁴ *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 14: 346-348, article "Presbyterianism."

and, it came by Moses:

For the law was given by Moses (John 1:17).

These Scriptures are quite clear -- when not transmuted through spiritual alchemy that places everyone under law.⁵

SIN IS NOT THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW

W. Kelly noted that sin is lawlessness, not the transgression of the law, but we need to notice further.

Everyone that practices sin practices also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Lawlessness is acting without reference to the will of God. **It is sinful for a man to have a will of his own.** The KJV translation, “sin is the transgression of the law” hardly seems to be a blunder, but rather the consequence of the Covenantist idea that all are under the law, and sin is the transgression of the law. J. N. Darby had some pointed words to say on this very bad translation⁶ of 1 John 3:4

The other is, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This is really, I must say, a wicked subjection of the word to theology; The word (*anomia*) is never used for “transgression of the law” anywhere else in the English translation of the holy scriptures; another expression is, *parabasis nomou*. I call it “wicked,” because by it a human system denies what the word of God carefully insists on. Not only so, but it is the word rightly translated elsewhere “without law.” Sin is not transgression of the law; to say so, universal as it may be, is a wicked anti-scriptural perversion. Sin is the evil nature which produces lust, the enmity of the heart against God. It is written, “Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful,” which could not be if sin was not there before the commandment. Again, the contrary is expressly stated. “Until the law sin was in the world.” There is no transgression without sin. Further, it is said, “They that have sinned without law,” the same word as an adverb (*anomos*), in contrast to sinning under the law. That is, the word of God puts it in direct contradiction to what this false translation does.

5. Scripture, then, clearly shows, spite of theology to the contrary, that Gentiles never were under the law. ‘The *work of the law* written in the heart’ does not mean the same as ‘*the law* written in the heart.’ The law will be written in the heart of those under the new covenant (Heb. 8). The work of the law is to write the conviction of failure and judgment in the heart. The text just quoted shows that persons not under the law (and there are none such if the law was given to Adam and all his posterity) may have conviction of sin written in their heart. No amount of spiritual alchemy can get Gentiles actually under the law.

6. W. Kelly called it “the deplorable mis-rendering” (*The Bible Treasury* 19:66).

These gentlemen believe men are born in sin. I do not blame them for this, surely; but are men born in transgression of the law? It is false theological perversion, and nothing else; and it is time that false theology gave way to the word of God: for this affects the whole nature and character of Christianity. Patience has its just place; but, after all, souls are more precious than false theology.⁷

Sin is not defined in Scripture as a conscious transgression of a known law -- a notion at war with Rom. 5:13, etc. If sin was a conscious transgression of a known law, there would have been no sin in the world before the law was given. Certainly, transgression of a law under which one is placed by a moral governor is an act of sin, but there are acts of sin when not placed under law by a moral governor. Indeed, sinful acts reached such a height that the flood was brought upon the world filled with violence and corruption -- long before the law was given to Israel.

Confounding “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) with sins as acts committed is a basic error.

Self-will and selfishness act without reference to the will of God.⁸ This is what is intended in saying that sin is lawlessness, or lawlessness is sin.⁹ It is acting in self-will without reference to the will of God. **It is sinful for a man to have a will of his own.** Between the fall of Adam and the flood, man acted thus, having the knowledge of good and evil, and choosing the evil -- a self-willed choice.

THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW ARE NOT THE SAME THING

J. N. Darby wrote:

I deny the sense of responsibility and a law to be the same thing or either of them the knowledge of good and evil. A law may be the rule according to which we are responsible to One who has authority over us, but it is not the responsibility itself. Man was responsible before he had the knowledge of good and evil; and he had a law which implied no such knowledge. Responsibility is to a person: a law may be its measure. The knowledge of good and evil is a capacity of nature to discern right and wrong where there is no law. “So the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” A law may give me God’s measure of it as to me, and so the divine law did as to man. But obedience always and in everything is what we are responsible for if the One above us is supreme -- has such claims over us -- to keep the law, if He has given one, and every commandment He gives.

7. *Collected Writings* 23:307-308. The New International Version has this false translation.

8. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 23:134; 26:240.

9. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 3:60

But this is only what the responsibility is shown in. The knowledge of right and wrong is in itself a contrast with law, because it is in us, and there is no one to whom (*if that be all*) we are responsible. We may be also responsible to another; and he, if a moral governor -- not otherwise, holds us responsible according to that knowledge.¹⁰

The Rule of Life for Adam Innocent

Adam's rule of life was not the 10 commandments. Rather:

The rule of life for unfallen Adam was consistency with the innocent nature and place of blessing in which God has set him. He should have felt and walked in consistency with this.¹¹

The unbelief, which blinds sceptics where it is complete, darkens God-fearing men in the measure of their pursuit of human thoughts and theories. Thus soon after the apostolic age a patristic tradition grew up, from Rabbinism and philosophy, as if Adam {unfallen}, like Israel or fallen man generally, was under a moral government in respect of known good and evil in itself, or such a moral sense as man got by sin and a bad conscience. On the contrary he had only goodness to enjoy in thankfulness to the blessed Giver of all, abiding in that normal condition which was the peculiar position of primeval Man. A general state of government where he could judge intrinsically between good and evil was in no way his originally, though it became his when he transgressed and God drove him out from the garden, with that sad but useful monitor along his fallen pathway. Before he fell, it was his place to live in the constitutional enjoyment of divine goodness and its abundant gifts with a simple test of his obedience. His condition therefore stands in plain contrast with ours, who, being naturally sinful, by faith know Him that called us by glory and virtue, whereby He has granted to us His precious and exceeding great promises. But Man, when unfallen, had just to abide in, not quit his first estate, instead of being called out of a fallen one as believers are. No reward was proposed to him in obeying God's gracious call as to us now, nor was there the least room, as we need, to have senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil. Adam was simply warned against disobedience in one particular, which was evil because forbidden. Free to act in the sphere subjected to him, he was responsible to obey in refraining from the forbidden tree.

Nor can notion here be more evil and false than the thought of freedom to choose. Alas! this suits man's pride, but it is bad and senseless to boot. Free to obey or disobey God! Can these abstract reasoners mean what they

10. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:41.

11. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:177.

say? Unfallen or fallen, man is only and always bound to obey God. He was not a slave of sin then; he is now. This is the truth according to scripture. It was then a natural relationship to God where all was good, but with responsibility to obey, and loss of all -- death -- if he disobeyed. Sin put man out of that relationship to God; grace by faith alone gives a new and better and eternal one in Christ. Reinstatement there is none. The paradise of man is not regained, but the paradise of God opened by Christ to the believer, whom grace makes a child of God and teaches to walk in obedience, as Christ did perfectly and unto death -- death of the cross.¹²

The Two Trees in Eden

The word "tree" brings before the lovers of the Lord Jesus the tree upon which He was hung, where he Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). And,

Cursed [is] everyone hanged upon a tree (Gal. 3:13; cp. Gen. 40:19; Josh. 8:29; Esther 2:23; see also Acts 5:30 and 1 Pet. 2:24; contrast Gen. 18:1-4 and Ex. 15:23-25).

The One who has inspired the Scripture of truth has been pleased to call the cross a tree, thus connecting it with the two trees in the garden of Eden (Eden means "delight").

These two trees signify two great lines of truth. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the principle of responsibility.¹³ We observe that a command of God, coupled with a penalty for disobedience, attached to the eating of this tree. The eating of it brought sin, the curse, and death into the world of man. The eating of the fruit was evil because God had forbidden them to eat it. All works-for-merit religion is nibbling at, and eating from, this tree. It even goes on under a cloak of 'Christianity.'

The tree of life points us to the sovereign grace of God, manifested in Christ, who bore our sins in His body on the tree. *He* is the tree of life.

J. N. Darby wrote:

And you get a striking thing here, one which has been a question even with heathens, and it is also a ground of discussion between Calvinists and Arminians: the tree of life, which is free gift; and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is responsibility. Man has been trying to unite these in himself, and never can. Man did take the responsibility-tree, and was lost.

12. *The Bible Treasury* 19:66.

13. The eating of the fruit was evil because God had forbidden them to do so.

Then the promise came to Abraham to shew that grace was really the thing after all -- the tree of life; and then came the law, the other tree. People have made the life dependent upon the responsibility-tree, which is utter folly.

But we find in Christ the two principles united; for He is the man who charges Himself with our responsibility, as He is Himself the life. If I have Christ for my life, with whom also I have died, I can bring the two together. But if taken out of Christ, it is impossible to unite the two things, any more than they were one in the garden.

If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, he would have been an immortal sinner. As he was, we have got the responsibility-man, not the man of God's counsels; but to faith the first or responsibility-man is set aside for Christ, the Second man. We have Christ as our life, and are bound to live in that life, and not in the old man. When it comes to a question of responsibility and judgment, I say I am not in the old man, but in Christ. And in my actual condition I say, Christ is in me, and I am to manifest Him as my life.¹⁴

We see the two principles that these two trees point to in the two great ways of God with man.

- (1) *Promises* were given to Abraham; i.e., blessing comes by sovereign **grace**.
- (2) The *law* was given to Israel. The law took up the fallen first man, in fallen Adamic standing, dealing with him on the basis of **responsibility in performance to obey**.

The law which came in 430 years after the promises (to Abraham) cannot annul the promises (Gal. 3:15-20). The trial of the fallen, first man, to show that he was not recoverable, ended in him crucifying the second Man. Yet through that most heinous deed, sovereign grace wrought for God's glory and our blessing on the principle of the tree of life.¹⁵ Grace triumphed through the promised Seed enduring the cross and glorifying God in His nature as light and love. This triumph of grace over evil reminds me of the line in a hymn by J. G. Deck:

The very spear that pierced Thy side,
Drew forth the blood to save.

Thus God overrules all for His own glory in Christ. The responsible man, the first man, is set aside and God has established the second Man in His place,

14. *Collected Writings* 19:62.

15. God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrains (Psa. 76:10).

in resurrection.¹⁶ The testing of man to show that he is not recoverable was completed with the crucifixion of Christ.

THE LAW IN THE TRIAL OF THE FIRST, FALLEN MAN

Before closing this section let us notice a further point regarding the law given to Israel under trial as representative of the fallen first man. The law is not of the character of the tree of life. A Scripture used as if it proves that man is capable of choosing salvation is Deut. 30:19, 20:

. . . life and death have I set before you, blessing and cursing: choose then life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed, in loving Jehovah thy God, in hearkening to his voice, and in cleaving to him -- for this is thy life and the length of thy days -- that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

The Arminian use made of v. 19 should be self-evidently ludicrous. The life is unending natural life (which is not what Scripture means by eternal life). It is natural life in Israel.

And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments, by which the man that doeth them shall live: I am Jehovah (Lev. 18:5).

None ever kept the law (but One); the proof being that they all died. Had Adam not sinned, he would not have died. *Endless being* is not what is meant by "eternal life" as found in Scripture. In eternal punishment the wicked will have *endless being* but that certainly is not the eternal life that a believer has. Even the resurrection asserts this distinction, for there is a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment (John 5:29). The *law* kills (the *letter*, 2 Cor. 3:6); it was a ministration of death (2 Cor. 3:6), a ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9). Adam *chose* death, and so do all his offspring.

RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH MAN'S WILL AND POWER

This subject has been discussed in *God's Sovereignty in the Salvation of Lost Men*.¹⁷ So, I merely direct attention to the fact that in the fall man acquired the knowledge of good and evil: he acquired a conscience -- a bad conscience -- and there arose in his soul what Rom. 8:3 calls "sin in the flesh": i.e., what we call the old nature. These are passed on to his descendants. The old nature, i.e., "sin in the flesh," controls the will of fallen man so that he pleases himself, not God. This control by sin in the flesh is such that we read:

16. The Lord Jesus was the second Man in His Person when He came here, while the trial of the first man was nearing its conclusion. In resurrection, Christ entered the *appointed place* of the second Man and last Adam. The first Adam is thus displaced and has no more standing before God. The first man's trial ended at the cross. There is no testing of man after the cross.

17. Available from Present Truth Publishers.

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be; and they that are in flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:7, 8).

The word “can” denotes ability to do something. “Cannot” denotes *inability*. Inability is man’s condition as fallen. Inability does not relieve from responsibility, though that is a common notion when it comes to this moral issue -- though persons who say that if man can not pay God then that would mean he is not responsible to pay. Persons do not apply that absurd notion to their own debtors. If one owed them one million dollars and he was penniless, they do not come to the debtor and say, “My principle of conduct is that if a debtor cannot pay me, then he is not responsible to pay.”

Adam had free will and lost it, never to be recovered. No man has moral free will. His will is bound by “sin in the flesh” and he is under the dominion of sin (Rom. 6). God has never rescinded man’s responsibility to obey. Even when Adam had free will, God had never given Adam a choice to obey or not obey. He was to obey on penalty of death.

The importance of this matter was concisely well stated by J. N. Darby:

. . . the doctrine of free will ministers to the pretension of the natural man not to be entirely lost, for that is just what it amounts to. All who have never been deeply convicted of sin, all those with whom this conviction is based on gross and outward sins, believe more or less in free-will. You know that it is the dogma of the Wesleyans, of all reasoners, of all philosophers; but it completely changes the whole idea of Christianity, and entirely perverts it.¹⁸

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

18. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:314; read the rest of this letter.

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

Chapter 8

Wilderness Types and Canaan Types

(Continued)

Circumcision on the Eighth Day

Abraham was told to circumcise on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). The number eight points to something new, a new beginning. The Lord Jesus lay in the grave on the seventh day,¹ and rose on the morrow after the Sabbath, as the wave-sheaf of the firstfruits (Lev. 23:10, 11). The resurrection of Christ took place on an eighth day, the first day of a new week, the Lord’s day. Circumcision points to the cutting off the first man, in his fallen, responsible, Adamic position from before God. Christ’s dying and then His rising on the eighth day introduced a great change. It closed the Mosaic order, and also closed the trial of the first man, and He rose as the first of the new creation, formed by His resurrection, and thus taking the *place* of the second man.² Those *in Christ* are viewed by God as being spiritually circumcised in Him. See on Col. 2:10-12 below.

The eighth recorded communication with Abraham is in Gen. 22, where Abraham receives Isaac from the dead, in a figure (Heb. 11:19). It points forward to something new. It affects two spheres, the heavenlies and the earthlies (so to speak), in both of which something new will be displayed.

1. There is no evidence of observing the Sabbath before the law. It was not part of the Abrahamic Covenant. Observance of it by “Messianic Jews” comes from the Mosaic Covenant.

2. He was the second man as born into the world, but took the *place*, in the ways of God, of the second man in resurrection, as having displaced the first man -- consequently no longer recognized as having a standing under trial to show that he was not recoverable.

We Christians are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, this circumcision meaning His death on the cross (Col. 2:11). This is true of all who are *in Christ* (see below). None are *in Christ* but saints between Pentecost and the rapture of the saints. If any man be in Christ, it is new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Israel will be blessed under the Priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13), the resurrected Christ, and this under the New Covenant, though it be the seventh covenant mentioned in Scripture. That epoch closes the covenants in the earth. But it is all administered under Him who rose on the eighth day, giving character to the new order of priesthood for Israel on earth, the Melchisedec order. The Aaronic order looked forward to, the Melchisedec order looks back on, the once-for-all finished work of Christ. (Regarding the present, heavenly work in connection with the Church of God, Christ is presently *exercising a heavenly priesthood* in, and suited to, the heavenly sanctuary. See Hebrews 8:1, 2.) In the millennium Christ will be King upon the throne of David (cp. Rom. 1:3, 4), for it is in the resurrected Son of David that the Davidic Covenant is made good. These two offices of Priest and King are symbolized in the vision in Zech. 4. The two sons of oil point to these two offices of Christ as fed by the power of the Spirit. Christ is this great millennial light, in the vision fed by 49 pipes (7 x 7) from the ever-full bowl of oil above the lampstand. (Christ received from the Father the Spirit without measure (John 3:34).) Such will be its display in the millennial earth. The final feast of tabernacles (booths), on the 1335th day (Dan. 12) brings millennial Israel to the longed-for blessing. It speaks of the joy of the kingdom. This feast has an eighth day, and that points to what lies beyond that future, mediatorial kingdom of Christ in this creation, pointing to the new heavens and the new earth.³

Israel will be in the good of the Abrahamic Covenant in the millennium and so will be circumcised bodily. They will all be as described in Rom. 2:28, 29 and 11:26 but that in itself is not the distinctive Christian position. Of course, it must be true for a Jew to be in the Christian position,⁴ and will necessarily be true of Israel under the New Covenant.

But there is something else of great importance connected with the eighth day of the feast of booths, as we see in John 7:37-39. Consequent upon the

3. These things are discussed in some detail in my, *The Seven Set Feasts of Jehovah*, available from the publisher.

4. All saints from Adam on were born of God, and will be in the future. The new birth does not place one in the church, though all in the church are, of course, born of God. The disciples waiting for the Spirit to come were born of God but had not yet received the indwelling of the Spirit, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit into one body. Things that differ must be differentiated!

resurrection of Christ and His taking His place in glory, the Spirit was sent down (in the special capacity for indwelling those who believed and for uniting them together in one body joined to the Head in heaven (Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13)). This, too, is connected with the number eight, something new, and in this case with resurrection. Indeed, we have the resurrection-life of Christ (John 12:24; 20:22) being grains on the risen stalk, forming one plant in Him.⁵ This is the heavenly side of the eighth day. Indeed, in Christ we are new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

The work of Christ and His resurrection have their bearing on both the heavenlies and the earthlies. What is for the heavenlies is greater, and the church will subsist in its distinction eternally (Eph. 3:21), while in the new earth (Rev. 21:1-5) we read of “men” and “the tabernacle of God” (i.e., the church) with men. The promises for Israel and the gracious covenants last as long as the present heavens and earth, i.e., as long as the moon and sun, but not in the new heavens and new earth.

No Mixing a Grace-Covenant and a Works-Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional. It is one of four covenants of promise (see Eph. 2:11-12): to Abraham, to Phinehas, to David, and the New Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant is a conditional covenant to show that the first man cannot gain the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant by works. So Israel as a nation undertook a works-covenant but the Abrahamic Covenant is a grace-covenant. How could Israel as a nation be under both at the same time? Was Abraham under grace and works at the same time? Is the church under works and grace at the same time? Was Israel as a nation, under the Mosaic Covenant, under a grace-covenant and works-covenant at the same time?

The answer to all of these questions is surely, no, and shows that the Abrahamic Covenant is in suspension until made good in the millennium when all the covenants of promise will be made good. While the cross brought the Mosaic Covenant to an end, no Scripture indicates that the Abrahamic Covenant was re-instated at that time, by the cross. It remains in suspension until Christ comes in glory and makes good the four gracious covenants.

The Abrahamic Covenant was placed in suspension by the introduction of the Mosaic Covenant. Israel was placed under trial to show that the promises could not be gained by works. The promises, *as covenanted to be sovereignly*

5. See my *From New Birth to New Creation* for these matters.

administered in the Abrahamic Covenant, were suspended (not annulled) in order to have Israel in the position of attempting to gain the promises by a works-covenant. It is part of the trial of the first man to show that he is not recoverable. The promises made to the fathers were thus before Israel for gaining by human merit, i.e., “on the principle of law” (Gal. 3:18). But the introduction of the Mosaic Covenant did not annul the promises:

A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul, so as to make the promises of no effect (Gal. 3:17).

Thus, the promises were not annulled; they were put in suspension regarding obtaining them on the basis of sovereign grace -- until the millennium. Meanwhile, could the first man, under trial to show that he was not recoverable, obtain them by obedience to the law, under the Mosaic Covenant? No, but they shall be made good by the second man. So the promises were before Israel while under the Mosaic Covenant, but not as couched in the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. Regarding the promises, then, Israel could not be under a grace-covenant -- sovereignly giving the promises -- while under a works-covenant to merit the promises at the same time.

As part of the Abrahamic Covenant God gave to Abraham the covenant of circumcision:

And he gave to him [the] covenant of circumcision . . . (Acts 7:8).

Therefore, as God will make the promises to Abraham good, so will he make circumcision good. Thus, for Israel in the millennium, they shall all answer to the meaning of circumcision. However, just as the promises were taken up in the Mosaic Covenant to show that the first man could not merit them by works, just so was circumcision taken up in the Mosaic Covenant to show that the first man cannot make good the meaning of circumcision in himself, by works. The case with the promises and with circumcision is the same.

So, the Jews under the Mosaic Covenant were circumcised. This does not prove that the Abrahamic Covenant was therefore in force while Israel was under a works-covenant:

Concerning the promises, under a works-covenant the question was --

could Israel by a works-covenant obtain for themselves the promises?

Concerning circumcision, under a works-covenant the question was --

could Israel by a works-covenant obtain for themselves the meaning of circumcision?

Circumcision points to the cutting off of the flesh (cutting off man as in his lost estate). Israel did not answer to its meaning (cp. Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:14; 9:26). The first man does not answer to its meaning; indeed, cannot (Rom. 8:7). Under the New Covenant, the promises will be made good to Israel by sovereign grace; and just so will the meaning of circumcision be made good to Israel under the New Covenant. For the believer now, sovereign grace makes good the meaning of circumcision to us, but in a far higher way than in Israel (Col. 2:11), which we will consider in some detail below and in another chapter.

The Jews were the seed of Abraham, at least externally, though those Jews in whom God wrought the new birth were true seed of Abraham.⁶

Additionally, we should observe that Christ’s work on the cross ended the Mosaic Covenant but did not reinstate the Abrahamic covenant so that it is in force now. If it was reinstated, where does Scripture state that? The Mosaic age introduced by the Mosaic Covenant rolls on uninterrupted until the introduction of “the age to come” under Christ, when the New Covenant is put in force, and the gracious-covenants with Abraham, Phinehas, and David are in force as the New Covenant will be in force.

The Meaning of Circumcision

The following article, taken from *The Girdle of Truth* 7:193-211⁷ will serve as a general introduction to the place of circumcision *in Christ*. Some Scripture quotations have been changed to J. N. Darby’s translation.

Gilgal

(Josh. 5)

If we take the Book of Joshua to be typical of the position of the Church as presented in the Epistle to the Ephesians, “made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,” {Eph. 2:6} and consequently, in order to the practical enjoyment of the blessings of this position, brought into conflict “against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual [power] of wickedness in the heavenlies,” {Eph. 6:12} we shall see how important a place “Gilgal” holds in relation to this.

6. The *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:333-336 addresses the matter of Abraham, circumcision, the Christian, the Church, etc.

7. Nine volumes available from *Present Truth Publishers* in one 8 1/2" x 11" volume.

The children of Israel are not at this time in Egypt, the type of the world or a state of nature; nor in the wilderness, the fitting expression of the believer's life of trial in his passage through the world; nor are they yet quietly established in Canaan, the shadowing forth of heavenly rest. They are entering the land under the guidance of Joshua, not Moses, (for the law cannot give possession of the inheritance) and are about to commence those conflicts with out which the land of promise could not be theirs in possession and enjoyment. For in the Book of Joshua it is to be noted that it is not so much the rest of Canaan that is in prominence, as the conflicts of the people ("the wars of the Lord"), which were the necessary condition of their possession of the inheritance.

In sovereign mercy God had visited the people in Egypt, breaking the yoke of their bondage, and by the blood of the passover separating them for ever both from Egypt and from its judgment. In application this is redemption from a state of sin, and from God's judgment against sin, by faith in the blood-shedding of Christ: for it is said, "Christ our *passover* is sacrificed for us." So that at the outset of our pilgrimage; and before we have taken a single step in our heavenly journey, trust in the blood of Christ is our full and absolute security against the judgment of our sins -- a judgment which will come upon the world on account of sin. Next follows "the salvation of the Lord,"⁸ as it is expressed, in bringing the people through the Red Sea, with the utter destruction of their enemies in it, and so placing the sea as an impassable barrier between His people and Egypt. To us this is the passage, by faith, of our souls through death in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that His death and resurrection should be placed by God Himself between us and all the power of the enemy, in token of eternal deliverance from it, and giving also the character of that deliverance, as well as final separation from the world that lies in wickedness . . . Then comes the wilderness, characteristic of the journeyings of the people, and a figure of the trouble and temptation which the people of God find in the world while passing through it as strangers and pilgrims.

Under Joshua a new scene opens. It is the passage of the Jordan effected for Israel by the ark of the covenant going in the midst of the river when it overflowed all its banks, so that "all the Israelites passed over on *dry ground*." A wondrous and blessed picture of Christ in His death exhausting all the power of death, and thus making it the ally of his people, and the means of their entering, now by faith, and finally in person, into their heavenly inheritance.

8. {The passover gave them *safety* from the judgment; the passage across the Red Sea gave them "the *salvation* of the Lord" and deliverance from the taskmaster. See *From New Birth to New Creation*, obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.}

The Jordan must be crossed before Canaan can be possessed even by the people to whom by God's appointment it belongs. There must be in the Christian not only the faith which associates him with the power of the death of Christ as the ground of his justification before God, and the pledge and security to him of eternal redemption; but there must be an entrance by the power of the Spirit into that death and resurrection as the means of bringing him into his heavenly position, and as the power by which alone it can be realized. "If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ," says the apostle, "seek the things [which are] above, where the Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God. Have your mind on things [that are] above, not on things [that are] on the earth." This, be it remembered, is not simply laying hold of Christ's death as the power of redemption, and the ground of peace and security: it is an exhortation to the practical entrance of the soul into the death and resurrection of Christ, as participants in it, in order to the affections being placed on the proper objects of the heavenly life and heavenly position into which we have been brought by Christ.

But the Jordan thus passed, what is the first thing that meets us on the Canaan side of it? It is Gilgal: where by means of the circumcision of the people the Lord could say, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." At Gilgal they are delivered from every badge of Egypt and its bondage, to enter as the redeemed people of Jehovah on their inheritance. The obvious lesson to us is, whether we have learnt it or not, that every trace of worldliness is a reproach to those who are called to be a heavenly people. However, circumcision in its spiritual application is plain. The apostle says,

For *we* are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and *do not trust in flesh* {Phil. 3:3}.

But this is in connection with being dead and risen with Christ, as the following part of the chapter shows; where the apostle unfolds how far "trust in flesh" extends, and how much it includes; and then shows how all is displaced as "dung" and "loss" by the excellency of the knowledge of a dead and risen Christ. The flesh can have nothing to do with that heavenly life into which we are introduced by Christ. It is that which attaches itself to the things of this world, and cannot rise above it; hence there is nothing left for it but that mortification, of which circumcision is the typical expression.

During the whole of their wanderings in the wilderness, the people were not circumcised. And in truth, it is not in the sorrows and trials of a life of pilgrimage, nor in its mercies either, however it may be the result of redemption, that we get the power to put aside all that attaches us to the world. This life must be lived, it is true, and there must be faithfulness in it; but where this is the case, it leaves the traces of Egypt still upon us, and does not rise to

the sphere which is proper to the heavenly life, to which redemption brings us. It is in practically entering by God's Spirit into the truth that we are dead and risen with Christ, that we get this power. In Col. 3:1, we have the exhortation,

If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things {which are} above, &c.,

founded on the statement in the previous chapter in which the true force of *circumcision* is given.

ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and authority, in whom also ye have been *circumcised* with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ; buried with him in baptism, in which {or, in whom} *ye have also been raised with [him]* &c. (Col. 2:10-12).

“If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ,” it will be seen, is in immediate sequence with this. Moreover the following exhortation, “Put to death therefore your members which [are] upon the earth,” {Col. 3:5} &c., is founded on the statement, “Ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God” {Col. 3:3}. This, then, is our “Gilgal.” All enjoyment of our special portion in Christ, all spiritual power to overcome our enemies, hangs on this.

But this is not all that Gilgal presented. It was there that they kept the passover, as it is said, “in the plains of Jericho.” The passover, as observed in Egypt, was the symbol of deliverance from surrounding judgment, while the people eat it in haste with girded loins, ready to depart on the morrow from the land of their bondage, to which they were never again to return. Before Jericho, it was God's table prepared for His people in the presence of their enemies. It was at the same moment the commemoration of their redemption from Egypt, and of all the mercy that had resulted from it in the displays of divine power and goodness at the Red Sea, and in the forty years of the wilderness, and which had now planted them in Canaan. Redemption from Egypt and the rest of Canaan are brought together by it. For us, it is the heart turning back again to the cross to see the linking together by it of redemption and heavenly glory; to learn how that wondrous death of Christ which at first met us as deliverance from wrath and condemnation, is the groundwork of all those after displays of divine mercy, which are involved in being

has quickened us with the Christ, (ye are saved by grace,) and has raised [us] up together, and has made [us] sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:5, 6}.

But conjoined with the passover, they “eat of the old corn of the land,” and the manna, the bread of the wilderness ceases. Before a single city is taken, and the enemy apparently remaining in unbroken strength, the people are quietly enjoying the fruit of the land of Canaan. Thus Christ, when the soul is in the

power of its heavenly place and portion, is fed upon in another character than that in which He was presented in His path with us here on earth. As incarnate, “the bread which came down from heaven,” the soul finds the preciousness of seeing Him, whom it is called to follow in his course of subjection and divine perfectness, as a man on earth. It is its stay and strength, amidst the trials and difficulties of the way, to see how Christ, as a man, was found in every sorrow and circumstance into which the believer can be brought in his path, in the world, of faithfulness to the Lord. But as “raised with the Christ,” a risen Christ in heaven becomes the necessity of the position in which we are set. He must now be fed upon in His proper character of a heavenly Christ, and in heaven; and as having brought us there too.

If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things {which are} above, where the Christ is sitting [at] the right hand of God {Col.3:1}.

In Egypt the view of Israel was bounded by the deliverance of the passover. At the Red Sea their horizon was enlarged; and a song of triumph was raised when from its shores they saw the salvation of the Lord. In the wilderness they saw still further, and proved the exhaustless resources and the patient goodness of their God. But at Gilgal, when the Jordan was passed and their feet pressed the promised land, all was brought together in one grand panorama, as they “kept the passover” and “did eat of the old corn of the land.” And surely it is not to dismiss the cross from our sight, or to lightly esteem the bread which came down from heaven, when we speak of being in heavenly places and feeding upon a heavenly Christ. No. It is from this point, and from this point alone, that what Christ has done for us, and the way in which he has been presented to us, can be seen in their proper elevation and their due significance.

But there is still something further which characterizes “Gilgal.” The twelve stones which were taken up out of the midst of Jordan, where the priest's feet stood with the ark, were pitched in Gilgal. For the people were brought into the land and the memorial of their passage through the Jordan was set up before their circumcision. But if their title to the land was thus made good by divine power, their enjoyment of it was inseparable from their passing through the land in self-appropriation and the ejection of their enemies by the victorious power of God. So every believer, as a divine truth, is dead and risen with Christ, through faith in Him “who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” But this is a very different thing from its practical realization through the power of the Holy Ghost. The entrance of the heart in joy into the place to which the wondrous death of Christ gives us a title is inseparable from the use of that death, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the mortification of the flesh and of all that is contrary to a heavenly life. And this again cannot be dissociated from those conflicts with spiritual enemies, of which the wars of Joshua are but a type. Gilgal must be our camp, as it was

Israel's, where we must "put on the whole armour of God." God was there in all His strength against the enemies of the people. And so the apostle urges, in connection with putting on the armour, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." And he closes the exhortation by the words, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Because prayer is the acknowledgment of dependence and weakness; but it is the direct means of bringing in the strength of God.

But that which gives Gilgal its special practical character is the circumcision of the people, by which the reproach of Egypt was rolled away.

The Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day {Josh. 5:9}.

Circumcision took away from the people the last trace of the bondage from which they had been redeemed. They are now manifestly no longer the slaves of Egypt, but the citizens of Canaan, bearing in their own persons the mark and seal of separation to the Lord. In like manner, that which corresponds to a heavenly position is that we put aside all that marks our character as belonging to this world. This does not consist in throwing off all natural affections, or in the negligent discharge of natural obligations, under the pretense of the heart's occupation with higher things. It is not asceticism; though it is the putting aside of the habits and tastes which connect us *morally* with the world, in order to be under the power of those objects which address themselves to the heavenly life, as risen with Christ into another sphere, where He Himself is.

Gilgal is the place of the enjoyment of accomplished redemption; of feeding upon a heavenly Christ; of the witness of the power of His death and resurrection, as bringing us into heavenly places; as well as the place of strength for spiritual conflicts. The camp of Israel was at Gilgal, to which Joshua and all the people returned after their conquests in Canaan. So, whatever spiritual victories we may gain they will soon cease, or be exchanged for discomfiture and dismay, if there be not the constant, habitual mortification of the flesh {Col. 3:5-11}.

The consequence of Israel's leaving Gilgal is seen ultimately in the condition of the people in the Book of Judges, where it is said (Judg. 2:1), "The angel of the Lord came from Gilgal to Bochim" -- the place of weeping. And how surely has the humbling parallel been brought out in the history of the Church! The enjoyment of Canaan exchanged for bondage to the Canaanites! The place of victory and joy surrendered for the place of vanquishment and tears! It was not said in the history that the Lord and His strength were linked with Gilgal; but it came out too clearly when, through departure from it and unfaithfulness, His

presence and sustainment were lost. And if, in application to a narrower circle, it be asked, How is it that heavenly truths have so little power, in those by whom they are professed, to produce a heavenly life, and are so little accompanied by spiritual power and separation from the World? the reply must be, Because there is so great an estrangement from Gilgal. It is impossible to live a heavenly life, or to enjoy the heavenly portion in which grace has set us, if we neglect to

put to death therefore your members which [are] upon the earth {Col. 3:5}.

The Lord Jesus Christ has converted death into an instrument and means by which we may disengage ourselves from the claims of the flesh and all that is a hindrance to our heavenly life. As it is said,

Reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus {Rom. 6:11}.

It is thus practically that the claims of the flesh are to be met and set aside. If I am dead to sin, I shall not be living any longer in it. If I am dead to the world, the world will become dead to me. All that makes its appeal, and makes it successfully, too, to one who is "living in the world," becomes powerless in regard to one who is using the death of Christ so as to reckon himself to be dead. But this is common-place, every-day work. It makes no show, and brings no credit. The mortification of the flesh is not outward activity. Neither is it the *display* of spiritual energy. But it lies at the basis of all true spiritual strength, and is a *sine qua non* to all real service for Christ, and all possible enjoyment of our place as risen with Him.

There are two lives, if I may so speak, that the Christian is called to live by virtue of his association with Christ. There is the life of faithfulness here amidst the trying scenes and circumstances of this world, in which he is to walk as Christ also walked. In this he may be doing the same things as other men, but doing them from an entirely different motive and with an entirely different end. No doubt it is by the heavenly life that the true character is impressed upon our life of faithfulness here in the world. For the Lord Jesus was always a heavenly man in circumstances which marked His sojourn here on earth. Still this life, of which we speak, has a necessary connection with the world, and its energies are called into action by the circumstances that characterize the world. But there is another life that is specifically and essentially heavenly. This life owes nothing to this world. Its source and origin is heavenly. Its springs of enjoyment, its resources and objects, its sphere and final end are all heavenly. There is nothing of this world that enters into this life.

For ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God {Col. 3:3}.

Now there are a thousand things that the heart may get entangled with, which are not exactly the evil lusts of the flesh, which, if they do not outwardly mar the faithfulness of our walk in the world, do entirely prevent the realization of that heavenly life to which we are raised, and in the sphere of which we are set by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If then we have so by the power of the Spirit passed through death as to have our life in heaven, with the Jordan as our frontier and Canaan as our home, let us not forget that our conflicts must be there too. Gilgal was Israel's camp; but while circumcision stamped its name upon it, and gave it significance, there were grouped around it the stones of memorial out of the midst of Jordan; the keeping of the passover in the plains of Jericho; the eating of the old corn of the land; and the wondrous presence of "the captain of the host of the Lord."

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

The Ministry of the Apostles John and Paul: What is the Difference?

That each servant of the Lord has his appointed sphere of service by gift or apostleship is clear from Scripture such as 1 Cor. 12:7-11, plus Eph. 4:7, 11-13, 15b, 16; 3:1-3; Gal 2:7, 8 (read carefully). So both gift and appointment to service come from God directly and not by the agency of man (Gal 1:1 -- neither of man as source nor by man as appointment officially).

So likewise in the divine communication in the Word of God, each inspired writer was guided in his writing and subject. Thus in the four gospels we have a fourfold record of the Christ of God complete in its purpose, not a mere chronological history of the Man Jesus Christ, but a documentation of His essential claims as the God-Man. He is King of Israel and nations (Matt. 1:15 and 2:2 with 25:31-34; 28:18-20; Rev. 15:3, margin). He is Servant of God His Father (Mark's account, Isa. 42:1). He is Man, the Son of man, the second Man, the Lord out of heaven in origin, born man of the virgin woman (Luke 19:10, 1 Cor. 15:47¹). He is God manifest in flesh (John 1:18 and 1 Tim. 3:16). Thus there is a fourfold view complete concerning the subject of the Gospel story -- Christ Himself. As

1. Sometimes called "the heavenly Man" based on misreading the text which reads, "The LORD from heaven," not the Man from heaven. His manhood came in time through the virgin, as conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit on earth in the fullness of the appointed time (Gal. 4:4).

their ministries are not the direct subject of this paper I proceed directly to John's account.

John's writings are directed to the unfolding of "that Eternal Life that was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (John 1:2 and John 1:4), and communicated to us who believe the testimony of Scripture; i.e., the Father's, John the baptizer, and the Word itself, plus His works (John 1:8; 5:24, 33, 36, 37, 39; and 20:30,31). So that those sons of men who receive Him by testimony are *alone* called "children of God," (John 1:12, 13, JND trans.; Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:12, 13). These alone constitute His holy Family through new birth of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6; 6:63). But John states in 20:30, 31 that he is writing his record to the end, "that ye might believe and that believing ye might have Life through His Name." It is a gospel message to the world to enter into that which is really life.

I. When we come to John's three letters, one is general and two are to individual believers who are of the household of Faith; a woman, and Gaius a brother. They have already believed so that "these things have I written to you that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13, JND trans.). So John's writings are a gospel account of Him Who is Life to all that trust Him and assurance to those believing as to their sure possession of Life, by knowing. They walk IN the light and will walk ACCORDING TO that light (1 John 1:7 and 2:6) with provision for failure to do so (1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2). The child of God has been cleansed from "a conscience of sin" by His blood (Heb. 9:14). The two short letters to individuals are further instruction to those possessing Life to beware of false teachers, "angel of light," "ministers of righteousness," come to deceive and deny the true Christ (2 John 7-11; 2 Cor. 11:13-15). "Receive him *not* into your house . . ."

The third letter to Gaius is an exhortation to "receive such" who are true servant-brethren who "have gone forth" in the Master's service. He enjoins true brotherly love that repels controlling overlords (Diotrephes) but welcomes those of good example (Demetrius) (3 John 9-12). Therefore the *life* fellowship of believers in the family of God is John's theme. We might characterize it a communion of the Family at the table within the House of God; i.e., fellowship of life that embraces *all* His blood-bought and only restricted by unholy conditions whether moral or doctrinal (1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 John 10, 11; 1 Tim. 5:22; Eph. 5:11; 1 Cor. 15:33, etc.). So even among true believers, children of God, it is not a careless, unguarded communion of a "laissez-faire" live and let live type, but a "holy" communion. Our God is called "holy Father" in our Lord's prayer (John 17:11), and in 1 Pet. 1:14-17 we too are enjoined to be holy (v. 16) because He, the Father, is holy and who will judge without respect to persons, wrong doers. Of course He deals with us as sons, not as sinners, and chastens every son He receives therefore (Heb. 12:5-10), that we might be partakers of His holiness in a practical way in living (the word *holy* does not mean sinless but separated from what defiles the soul or separated unto Him or for His use (2 Tim. 2:21)).

Sanctified is another word for holy, meaning the same thing, i. e., “separated.” It is a serious relationship we’ve been brought into by the Holy Spirit and our bodies are called “the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20), even as the Church collectively is called the temple of God and to be holy in communion, or He deals with it (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). We must never forget it is the HOLY SPIRIT that dwells within us and He is not to be grieved nor quenched; i.e., grieved as doing what we shouldn’t and quenched as not doing what the Spirit enjoins through prophesy (Eph. 4:30 and 1 Thess. 5:19, 20).

We can see by all this thread of thought that John and Paul’s ministries blend though having distinct lines of subjects.

II. Turning now to Paul’s ministry, we first of all must recognize he was a special chosen vessel to bring forth the hidden mystery concerning the Assembly of the living God as the Body of Christ particularly (Acts 9:15, 16; Eph. 3:1-9; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:24-26; 1 Tim. 3:14, 15). Along with this special mystery is linked a second subject called by Paul “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), which is also called “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 19:24b). We should also tie this in with his expression in Eph. 3:2, “the administration of the grace of God which has been given to me, towards you.” In Gal. 1:11, 12 and 2:2, this gospel is presented as something for this present time, i.e., AD 35 to the Rapture following which the “gospel of the Kingdom” will be resumed as the preaching of the Jewish remnant to the nations of the world for a testimony of the coming King while judgment falls in the last seven year tribulation period before the millennial Kingdom of our Lord (Matt. 24:14; 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 15:24-28, etc., with Rev. 20:6, 11-15), the millennial kingdom being the final administration before the eternal state when all is made “new” (Rev. 21:1, 5) The eternal state is called “the day of God” in 2 Pet. 3:12, 13, wherein “righteousness *dwells*.” All enemies will have been removed for ever and ever. In the millennium, righteousness still must reign for there is still secret resistance to be judged on manifestation (see Zech. 14:9-19; Isa. 32:1).

Now coming back to the particular subject we are considering, i.e., Paul’s ministry, Paul speaks of the house of God (collective), fellowship called “the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9 with v. 2). This epistle, with the second, deals with the House fellowship in its responsibility to maintain order and holy communion under the sovereignty of the Lord and His Vicar the Holy Spirit. How contrary to what we read in these two letters, together with 1 Timothy and Titus, do we see in the present setup in Christendom -- from Rome, with all its trappings of Pope, Cardinal, Archbishops, priests, pagentry, etc., to the simplest dissenting congregation with their unscriptural disorder with the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit all but set aside for a human-dependent arrangement of “the pastor and congregation.” The Lord alone is the Head, and the Holy Spirit alone the One in charge giving and distributing the gifts as well as employing them whenever and wheresoever He pleases (1 Cor. 12:23-35; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 4:7-16;

Heb. 2:4, etc.). Is God not in controversy with all this human setting aside of His revealed order in Scripture? (Rev. 2:7, 11; 3:19 particularly the “Nicolaitanes”² in deeds and doctrine (Rev. 2:6, 15, 16).

Now let us consider Paul’s reference to the Assembly as “The House of God” in 1 Tim. 3:14, 15, where he says to young Timothy,

in order that thou mayest know how one ought to conduct oneself in the house of God (JND trans.).

This speaks of responsibility to carry out the instruction given by an inspired apostle to the assemblies for order to be maintained in government, or ministry, or worship as the case might be. Because of failure in these things, as always, with what’s committed to man’s responsibility, Peter has to speak of

judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17);

and the Lord as the all-discerning Priest-Judge of Rev. 1 discerns failure and calls for repentance, else removal of the candlestick of testimony (Rev. 2:5; 3:16).

Let him who hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the assemblies (Rev. 1:9, 10, etc.).

As members of the Body of Christ we function individually under the Spirit’s sovereignty and power for the good of the whole

until we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:12, 13, 16, etc.).

This is God working out to full maturity at the Rapture when the Spirit’s work is done forming the Assembly. There is never a thought of a rent in the Body as sometimes is said. God’s work is perfect and He alone is responsible for its unity. We are exhorted in Eph. 4:1-5 to use diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. This is our part and where failure has come in, “while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat” (Matt. 13). It is in the house-order that our responsibility finds fulfilment and Paul’s doctrine is linked with this as his instructions to Timothy and Titus indicate. Accordingly, 1 Cor. 1-11 gives this responsible charge locally to the Assembly of God and all everywhere that call upon the name of the Lord (1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 16:1, etc.). So discipline is ordered on the immoral called “brother,” and party-formers, false teachers (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-4; 5:1-13; 10:21; 11:17-19; 15:33, 34). The danger of leavening by association with known and allowed evil is the reason a holy fellowship requires carefulness (1 Cor. 5:17 -- moral leaven; Gal. 5:7-9 -- doctrinal leaven. See the warnings in 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 11:3 and 2 John 10, 11). Timothy was called to

2. See *The Scofield Reference Bible* (old edition) note #1 p. 1332 on the meaning of this word from the Greek. This note was eliminated from the Revised edition, and no doubt as too pointed to the Clergy-Pastor unscriptural position.

be very cautious concerning laying hands suddenly on someone lest he be partaker of other men's sins (1 Tim. 5:22).

Summing up our consideration of the two ministries of Life-fellowship and House-fellowship, we may observe that the fellowship of the holy Family is all-inclusive except from those walking in sinful ways or holding false doctrine. Paul's doctrine embraces a narrower line of communion, limited to those seeking to practice New Testament order given by Paul as outlined in the two Corinthian epistles, the two letters to Timothy, and the letter to Titus. If anyone contests these directions as outmoded or unimportant Paul writes,

If any one is spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write are the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37).

The Lord help us to walk humbly and be obedient, which is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22).

T. J. Knapp

2 Corinthians 12:14

I do not, however, forget a passage which has often been used, or rather abused, to defend the worldly, unbelieving practice of hoarding up. I allude to 2 Cor. 12:14.

Behold the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

How glad people are when they get a semblance of scripture authority for their worldliness! In this passage it is but a semblance of authority; for the apostle is certainly not teaching Christians to hoard up -- he is not teaching heavenly men to lay up treasure upon the earth, for any object. He simply refers to a common practice in the world and to a common feeling in nature, in order to illustrate his own mode of dealing with the Corinthians, who were his children in the faith. He had not burdened them, and he would not burden them, for he was the parent. Now, if the saints of God are satisfied to go back to the world and its maxims, to nature and its ways, then let them hoard up with all diligence -- let them "heap treasure together for the last days"; but let them remember that the moth, the canker-worm, and the rust, will be the end of it all. Oh! for a heart to value those immortal "bags" in which faith lays up its "unfading treasure," those heavenly storehouses where faith "bestows all its fruits and its goods." Then shall we pursue a holy and an elevated path through this present evil world -- then, too, shall we be lifted upon faith's vigorous pinion above the dark atmosphere which enwraps this Christ-rejecting, God-hating world, and which is impregnated and polluted by those two elements, namely, hatred of God, and love of gold.

From CHM, *Now and Then; or, Time and Eternity*.

The Old Prophet of Bethel

1 Kings 13:1-32

by L.

The effect of sin was to separate the heart from God; so the conduct of sinners (Rom. 3:18); "There is none that seeketh after God." The natural heart is opposed to God; and the enmity already there, is increased by the subtlety of Satan, in order that he may keep it from Him, whom to know is life and peace. When, in His grace, the soul is quickened and brought nigh by the blood of Christ, the hostility of Satan ceases not. A present God, is present power. *The enemy of souls seeks to undermine our dependence upon God, and thus separate us from Him.* In the former case, security is pledged; in the latter, endangered. And if life ("because he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself") is certain, yet fruit-bearing ceases, and the Lord is not honored. Whilst rejoicing in the salvation provided for us in the gospel, we must remember the object of it, in that God may be glorified in us. And to this object Satan is opposed. Many are the ways by which he succeeds. Oftentimes by exciting to evil, for the chaff is still in us, and needs but the fuel to ignite. But the believer escapes to his hiding-place (Psa. 32:7). He knows the enemy in this form and avoids him. Or if taken unawares, yet the source of the evil is detected, confessed and forgiven (1 John 1:9). But the enemy is not put down or turned from his purpose; if he cannot work to our injury by things which are evil, he will strive to do it by that which is good. The good which flows from God shall be presented as food for the soul, instead of the God who supplied it. The fruits of faith in God, instead of the God of the fruits. And it is just here where his success has been most eminent. If the bait, in the form of gross evil, is not taken, and his presence detected, yet, transformed into an angel of light, he succeeds. The world and its allurements may be overcome; but that which is good being perverted to raise a reputation for ourselves, instead of bringing glory to God; by that we fall. The precept being regarded -- "When ye have done all, say ye are unprofitable servants" -- is the state of heart which preserves. But, alas! who is sufficient for these things!

We have, in the subject before us, an instructive lesson. Judgment pronounced upon evil by the prophet of the Lord, and the reception he met with. The opposition of the king, and the power of God supporting his servant. The servant's faithfulness in obeying the commandment and in refusing a reward; closing with his fall and the occasion of it. He is proof against temptation when presented in the form of evil, and he falls when tempted by apparent good. The voice of a brother, his standing and reputation, are honored above the word of God. He disobeys the

former and accredits a lie in the latter.

The Holy Ghost is silent as to the sin of the old prophet of Bethel. The sin of the one against his neighbor is clear; but the sin against God in the other's disobedience is clearer. We are often taken up with that which is an injury to many, regardless of that which is done against God. Many can contend earnestly for love to the brethren, and warmly resent failure in this respect, yet remain unmoved when the truth of God, on which it is based, is sought to be undermined. We cannot hold the truth, without love to the brethren being a consequence. The fruit-bearing which flows from communion with God is the evidence of it. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all things else shall be added unto you.

The communion of saints did not spring from their agreement with one another, but their union of heart about God. Taught by His Spirit the virtue and value of the Lord Jesus for them, they rolled themselves in the confidence of love upon His care. That they enjoyed His presence was manifest, in that "great grace was upon them all" {Acts 4:33}. In beholding the love of God, they became vessels for transmitting it.

Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord they were changed!

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

He bestows His gifts on those who love Himself. There is positive declension in the soul, when the gifts are spoken more about than the Giver -- when saints can be grieved for the lack of right deportment to themselves from their brethren, yet indifferent as to right thoughts about God in Christ. Dishonor to the Lord is less thought about than disrespect to one another. But so it is under every trial: man has proved himself untrue to God; God, in His covenant with Christ, true to man. "He abideth faithful." Blessed that it is so! Most blessed! because He changes not, we have confidence and hope. We must cease from man {Isa. 2:22}. We must trust in God.

The subject before us so graphically portrayed, is not novel in its occurrence. A saint today and a prophet then, have features in common. Seeing the one, you recognize the other. The servant of God subduing every outward opposition, and himself subdued by that which was within.

Very weak ones have got the victory over the world outside the church, have overcome its threats, and despised its rewards. Very strong ones have fallen from troubles within. Ostensible evil is easily resisted; when, disguised as good, it subdues. Hence the need of constant dependence upon God, and right thoughts about Him, that He may give us the spirit of dependance upon Him. There was a bond between Job and God, as related in Job 42:8:

Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

Job had his failings and many of them. But Job had right thoughts of God. We have our failings and many of them, so that no less a Christ than the Christ of God

can meet our need. Let us beware of dishonoring Him, and of that which is as bad, if not worse, assuming a neutral attitude. Judging the wrong ways of many who are contending for the right, instead of identifying ourselves with those on the Lord's side.

The sin of Jeroboam provoked the judgment of God, and in the chapter before us is given the prophet's denunciation against the altar. The course of the prophet to the close of the tenth verse, is marked by steadfastness in the service of his master. He set out on his errand by the word of the Lord. He delivers his message. The king is provoked to wrath, and commands the prophet to be seized.

He put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold of him, and his hand which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

The word of the Lord is adhered to, and His strength goes along with it. He identifies Himself with His testimony. The king, smitten, becomes a suppliant. He who stretched out his hand against God cannot draw it back again. And he entreats of the prophet to pray for him. What instruction is here!

The servant, whilst witnessing for God, is supported by Him; and the power of the world is humbled at his feet. And so it should be with the church. Not because she is the called of God, but for His sake who called her. Alas, she has used the grace God has bestowed, for her own exaltation, forgetful of His glory.

And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him again, and became as it was before.

And the king said unto the man of God,

Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

And the man of God said unto the king,

If thou wilt give me half thine house I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was charged me, by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

Thus far the word of the Lord is obeyed -- the testimony against the altar delivered. Outward opposition was overcome, and the gifts of the ungodly king rejected. The prophet was not afraid of his threats, and was proof against his rewards. His separateness as God's witness against ungodliness was maintained. Yet,

let not him that putteth on his armor boast as he that taketh it off.

Many trials await us in the wilderness. We cannot raise so much as our helmet (Eph. 6:17), but we are open to the darts of the foe. The sense of danger should keep us on the alert. It was "whilst men slept that the enemy sowed tares." That which is most apparent, is the least dangerous. The history of the Church elucidates this. Open opposition to God's people drove them to Him for protection.

When Peter saw the wind was boisterous, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!

The greatest danger to the Lord's people is from one another. Paul, speaking to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, warns them that grievous wolves should enter in among them—"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." "Looking diligently, lest any man fall from the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Such portions of the Word healthily digested in the soul, would work wonders in the way of keeping down self-sufficiency amongst saints. None ever wandered so far from the truth, but any of us may go further; none ever dishonored God by sin, however hateful, but we may do worse. We cannot depend upon one another. We cannot confide in one another; and the communion of saints did not consist in leaning upon one another; but each individual trusted in God, and, according to His faith, was in a position to assist his neighbor. If brotherly love could be sustained apart from God, then in just such proportion could we do without God. But "of Him, and to Him, and through Him, are all things." He gives the blessing, and His is the power to sustain it. In honoring Him, we are taught to honor one another. When His glory is our aim, our happiness is His. Exalted conception of the majesty and dignity of the Lord Jesus . . . and God the father delights to shower down blessing on His people. *His* happiness is in them, and they find their happiness in Him. Let us beware of unhallowed thoughts of the Son of God. Let us eschew curious disquisition about His person. His name is Wonderful; no man can unravel the mystery. He is presented to us as the object of adoration, not as a subject for inspection.

He smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord.

But again to our narrative. We read in vv. 11 to 19,

Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? for his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? and he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him,

and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

Paul, writing to the Galatians in ch. 1:8, says,

Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

The prophet of Judah had delivered his testimony upon the express revelation of God to himself, and it was not said to him "Go to such a person, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." We have a standard in the written Word, and the Spirit of God also to enable us to apprehend it. A revelation discordant with it could not be accredited. The New Testament unfolding the purpose of grace in the Gospel, was but the fulfilment of the promises recorded in the Old.

The prophet of Bethel might have much to recommend him to notice. His years would add weight to his words. He came as a brother, and put in his claim to be so regarded because of his brotherhood. The temptation was strong, and succeeds. We shall do well to take heed in our days. A man, in the grace of God, may understand and clearly put forth the grace of the Gospel. A man, in the strength of the Lord, may manifest much of the savor of Christ in his life. God may put honor upon him, and he may deserve to be honored; but God allows no man to usurp His place.

Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, "and the man in labor more abundant," are alike debtors to grace. What have you, that you did not receive? Who makes you to differ from another? Eminent gifts for the edification of the body, or shining faith for the example of the body, give no pre-eminence over it. God gave them for the service of the Church, and their service is real only as it leads the soul to rely on God. The servant should serve for the Lord's sake, and the body be grateful for the Lord's sake. The servant should wait on the body, because it is the Lord's; and the body should cherish the servant, for the Master's sake. And when this is the principle of service, it carries over every difficulty, even as with Paul, "The less he was loved the more he loved." They were dear to the Lord, though unfaithful to him; and the single eye as to whose they were, strengthened his purpose in ministry. How full of instruction is the life and career of Paul! How true to his Master; and, *therefore*, how true to His members! How dear to him the honor of Jesus; and, *therefore*, the welfare of His Church! He would not have them regard him, but Christ in him, and follow him only as he followed Christ. How this shines forth in his parting scene with the elders at Ephesus! He "commends them to God, and the word of His grace."

Fatal delusion, if the servant of Christ allows the maintenance of his own credit and character to occupy the place of the Lord's glory and honor! Sad folly, if his own wounded feelings distress him more than the Lord being wounded afresh in the house of his friends! Our own happiness is secured just so far as the Lord's glory is our aim. Faithfulness to Him secures devoted love to His people. God in Christ must be the spring of every right action for Him. Diversity of judgment in

minor matters will not disturb the peace of a community, where conscience towards God is respected. Whilst praying that we may see eye to eye, we can give God thanks that the eye is directed to Him. The commandment, "This is my beloved Son, hear him!" effectually closes the door to any one less than Him. True teaching sets Christ before the taught. The subject matter conveyed will occupy the heart more than the person who imparts instruction. The object is to bring the soul into obedience to God. The instrument can never take His place, so John in his Epistle writes,

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.

The prophet of Judah failed in this. "I am a prophet as well as thou art," said the old Prophet of Bethel. God, who gave the calling to both, is displaced. Their character and standing is before them, responsibility to God forgotten. No uncommon occurrence in another light in our day. Brethren in Christ may dispute about their relative qualifications, whilst God, the Giver of them, is little thought of. And this is Satan's object. We can be jealous for fruits, and not care about the tree, until the blossom is nipped and blighting winter comes over the soul. Added to this, disobedience to God brings down His judgments. And these things are written for our admonition. The manner of the punishment, also, is characteristic of the offence. If man's word is regarded before God, then by man shall the sentence of condemnation be inflicted. If saints care more for their own credit with brethren, than obedience to God in His word, and prefer quiet at the sacrifice of a good conscience, they may yet learn, as did the Prophet of Judah, that the very parties for whom they have made shipwreck of faith, will be instruments in God's hands for their chastisement.

And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the Prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come into the sepulchre of thy fathers.

And so it fell out unto him. And in vv. 23, 24, 25, we have the judgment recorded.

The Prophet was sent to Jeroboam because the latter had disobeyed the Lord and departed from Him. Now the servant falls himself into the sin of hearkening to man and neglecting God. As was before remarked, he triumphed over the opposition of the world without, and is seduced into unfaithfulness by a brother within. Communion with God is the basis of fellowship with one another. Love to God, from the knowledge of His love to us, produces love to one another. The thoughts of God concerning His people, communicated by His Spirit, form

affection towards them. But He is the source of it (Psa. 87:7): "All my springs are in Thee."

Thus John, writing to Gaius, addresses him "whom I love in the truth." Harmony and peace flow from Him. They have no existence apart from Him. Hence, statements of truth propounded for our reception, must be weighed in the sanctuary before Him. No instrumentality, however eminent, releases the saint from responsibility to God. If God, by His Spirit through the Word, sets seal to the communication that it is true, we honor the instrument because God has so used him.

To accredit the vessel for transmitting the truth, without inquiring of God as to its being truth, is to honor the creature in the place of the Creator, and set man in the place of God. Thus the Prophet of Judah falls a victim to his folly. It may be he was weary with his work, for he was "found sitting under an oak." It may be the weakness of his flesh sorely tried him. The Apostle warns against such a condition in Heb. 12:2, when exhorting believers to consider Jesus, "Lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." Again, "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

It is manifestly possible for such lassitude, from continued trial, to overpower the believer, so that he becomes an easy prey to the devices of the enemy; forgetting that "God giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isa. 40:29).

Rest was presented to the eye of the Prophet, and his heart already longed for it. The bait is gilded over by a brother's reputation; he takes it, and falls. Sad consequences for him, yet full of instruction to us.

It surely was a time of general apostasy and grievous departure from God, when the circumstances detailed in our narrative occurred. Yet, so much the more culpable was the disobedience of the Prophet of Judah. Just as in our day to acknowledge the ruined condition of the Church, involves responsibility to God, not incurred by those who do not recognize it. In the days of the Prophet Micah, how lamentable the evil by which he was surrounded, how dark the picture: yet how blessed the conclusion to which he was brought! "He could not trust in a friend, or put confidence in a guide." "Therefore (he says) I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." And so in Mal. 3:16: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it."

The Prophet of Bethel, who thus led his brother astray, he too has his hour of sorrow. Perhaps he was jealous of the testimony God had confided to the Prophet of Judah, as also of the honor put upon him in the work the Lord had done by him that day in Bethel. Be this as it might, there was a spark in his heart, which needed but the enemy to fan into a flame, and he became a fit instrument for his brother's destruction. Not that he foresaw the consequences, though he was the tool to bring

them about. Nor did his sin in tempting, excuse the other in yielding to the temptation. His soul, out of communion with God, devised a lie to deceive, and the soul of the other, out of communion, was easily betrayed. Sad was the fate of the victim, and sorrowful the lamentation of the old Prophet of Bethel (vv. 26-29).

And the old Prophet came to the city to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: for the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

Sorrowful picture of human frailty and its consequences. He mourns the dead he betrayed when living, and accredits the testimony borne by his brother as according to God: seeking consolation for his grief, saying, “When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones.”

The Lord give us understanding in all things (2 Tim. 2:7).

From *The Present Testimony*.

Stewardship

“Will a Man Rob God?”

The subject of stewardship has been much neglected because it rebukes our selfishness.

What is a steward? A steward is one entrusted with “That which is another’s” (Luke 16:12). We are so apt to regard our possessions as the world does and forget that even “Ye are not your own” (1 Cor. 6:19) but “His own” (John 13:1). Then as to everything we possess we should make good use of it as being “all Thine own” (1 Chron. 29:14, 16).

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). Be faithful to the True owner as He said “Trade while I am coming” (Luke 19:13, J.N.D. trans.). Instead of making good use of the Lord’s goods some lay “up in a napkin” (verse 20), or hide it “in the earth” (Matt. 25:25).

Our blessed Lord who has so abounded in His grace to us, now entrusts us to use all we possess for His glory and for blessing to others. “Distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim. 6:18; Heb. 13:16). “Liberal distribution” (2 Cor. 9:13). “Not grudgingly . . . for God loves a cheerful giver” (verse 7). “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth . . . the liberal soul shall be made fat . . . he that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse” (Prov. 11:24-26).

“Working with his hands . . . that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). “So laboring ye ought to support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). We will be richly blessed if our object is to give and not to get. A fish-trap gets; a fish-hatchery distributes. “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8).

“Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother . . . Beware that . . . thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought . . . Thou shalt surely (lit. bountifully) give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him” (Deut. 15:7, 9, 10). How well the Lord knows the heart of His fallen creatures.

It is in connection with stewardship in Luke 16 that the Lord speaks to the covetous and selfish rich that are indifferent to the poor at their door. Oh, the opportunities at our doors that we ignore! We close our eyes to them and then pray for those to whom we contribute nothing! What inconsistency! In chapter 12 the Lord says “Beware of covetousness” (verse 15). “Covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5 and Eph. 5:5). “The love of money is a root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10, J.N.D. trans.). “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare” (verse 9). “The deceitfulness of riches” (Mark 4:19). “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth” (Matt. 6:19). “Men of the world have their portion in this life, and . . . leave the rest of their substance to their children” (Psa. 17:14). In that way the world lays up for their children, but the apostle Paul left a more enduring heritage for his children (2 Cor. 12:14; Prov. 13:22; 1 Tim. 6:19).

Matthew Henry well said “There is a burden of care in getting riches, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account at last to be given concerning them.”

Earthly possessions are not our own nor intended to be piled up. “Woe unto them that join house to house” (Isa. 5:8); “build greater barns” (Luke 12:18); “heaped up treasures in the last days” (James 5:3).

Wealth is surplus, generally increasing, robbing God, oblivious of the needy, and the Lord’s work of evangelizing, printing, distributing, etc.

According to Webster a miser is “one who lives miserably to increase his hoard.” To be niggardly is one “who gives the smallest possible.” To be stingy is to be tight and lacking in large hearted liberality. See 2 Cor. 8:2, J.N.D. trans.

J. G. Bellet’s daughter writes of him “I think he had a dread of wealth. To hear of anyone dying ‘worth so much’ (as the expression is), especially if he were known as one who made a profession of religion, pained him very much. But the luxury of giving away largely, he fully understood.”

Very soon we shall have to leave behind all that is of earth and all that we have failed to use for our blessed Lord.

A. C. Brown

The Gender Argument Regarding Eph. 2:8

Regarding the grammar of Eph. 2:8, here is what J. N. Darby had to say about that:

It is by grace we are saved. Now we are not yet in the glory: it is by faith. Would any one say that at least the faith is of man? No*** it is not of ourselves in this respect either; all is the gift of God; not of works, in order that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship.

***I am quite aware of what critics have to say here as to gender; but it is equally true as to grace, and to say, "by grace . . . and that not of yourselves," is simply nonsense; but by faith might be supposed to be of ourselves, though grace cannot. Therefore the Spirit of God adds, "and that [not it] not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." That is, the believing is God's gift, not of ourselves. And this is confirmed by what follows, "not of works." But the object of the apostle is to show that the whole thing was of grace and of God -- God's workmanship -- a new creation. So far, grace and faith and all go together. ¹ ❖

Q. Does "that not of yourselves" apply to the whole thing?

A. No; I believe it applies to the faith -- faith is just simply the word of God applied to man's soul by the Spirit of God. When the conscience is awakened, it puts God in His place, and man in his. ² ❖

Now as to the passage in Eph. 2, it is very simple. What is said of the neuter is this: the adversaries of this truth say that τούτο ("that") cannot agree with "faith," because the latter is feminine; but in the same way it cannot agree with "grace" (χάρις) because it is feminine. Then they say, It is true, but it agrees with the whole thing, salvation; but this has no sense. "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that (this salvation) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Certainly salvation by grace is not of ourselves, otherwise it would not be grace -- impossible to suppose that grace is of myself, so that in this case "and that" has no meaning. But it may well be supposed that faith is of ourselves, as you say; therefore when he has said that it is by faith he adds, "and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." In short, by true faith we have life; we are children of God; but this is so because we are born of the Spirit, who works in us, and produces faith when we are begotten of God by His own will. To be begotten of God is by His operation, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; but seeing that it is by the word, and by means of faith (the Spirit gives to the word the divine power which produces life, as the incorruptible seed of the living God enduring for ever), the word of God becomes the revelation of

1. *Synopsis* 5:301.

2. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 35:140.

His Son in us, and Christ thus received is our life. ³ ❖

Note that being begotten of God by His own will (i.e., quickening) and the implantation of faith in the soul are simultaneous. God quickens sinners, putting spiritual life and faith in their soul simultaneously. *Then* the person can repent. Note how Eph. 2 begins with proclaiming man, not diseased merely, in need of some aid merely, but *dead* in offences and sins. As dead, there is no, and can be no, motion toward God. This excludes man's alleged moral free will towards God. All spiritual actions in Eph. 2:1-10 are wrought by God. Faith is not from the human will, nor is it something wrought by man co-operating with God. Implantation of a new nature accompanied by faith excludes man's alleged moral free will towards God. Oh yes, in Romans man is seen as alive in sins, but running from God as fast as he can. Therefore in Romans the remedy is death for man as "in the flesh." In Eph. 2, life from God, in quickening power is put forth, leading to new creation in Christ (Eph. 2:10). "For we are his workmanship," except, of course, for the action of the moral free will of man towards God, exercising humanly derived faith in v. 8??? You cannot see the spoilation of the passage, the setting aside the sovereign action of God in such a notion? God has given that faith which is one of the "things which relate to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). In Eph. 2:1-10 *all is the action of sovereign grace*. And this is the reason justification is not found in Ephesians, i.e., because one is taken from spiritual death right to new creation. Justification comes in the aspect of God's dealings with sinners in Romans, where the sinner is looked at as alive in sins.

Grace is outside ourselves. We do not need to be told it is from God. That is implicit in the word grace. Salvation is outside ourselves. We do not need to be told it is from God. That is implicit in the word salvation. But faith is the great question. Where does it come from? Eph. 2:8 tells us. And faith is included in the statement in Eph. 1:10 that "we are his workmanship."

As JND wrote in a letter, free-will is the pretension of the first man not to be entirely lost.

See *The Sovereignty of God in the Election and Salvation of Lost Men*, available from Present Truth Publishers. Ed.

3. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:480.