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Self-occupation in Service for the Lord

Self-occupation is a hard taskmaster to serve. Self never has enough, ever wanting more. Recognition of oneself ever needs to be fed.

Self may easily be connected with serving the Lord. It becomes more important than separation from evil unto the Lord. One may indeed have a gift, and every Christian has one or more, for a line of service in which the Lord markedly blesses the service in a public way. There is danger in this if the soul is not in self-judgment before the Lord. If it is not, the soul gets occupied with accomplishments for God and starts thinking of self, thinking of one's "successes," of one's service, of one's name, rather than of Him without whom we can do nothing {John 15:5}. Why, one might even be formulating plans concerning a work that is to be left to others to continue, with one's name attached to the work as founder, endowing it with funds, if one has the means, to perpetuate one's name. Let us beware, for it was the Pharisees, who had the praise of men, that had their reward here in this life.

Who then is Apollos, and who Paul? Ministering servants, through whom ye have believed, and as the Lord has given to each. *I* have planted; Apollos has watered; but God has given the increase. So that neither the planter is anything, nor the waterer; but God the giver of the increase. But the planter and the waterer are one; but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor (1 Cor. 3:5-8).

Ed.

"Unspotted from the World"

What need there is in these last and perilous times, that we should find in a closer walk with Christ, the secret of "unspottedness" from the spirit of this age, in all its boasted progress. You will recall the parable of the house that was swept and garnished, in Luke 11. The conviction as to *the last state*, which this scripture fastened on my mind, led me to throw down my broom many years ago, and to refuse even a jot of garnishing {the world} up to this present day, for I do not like the *incoming tenant*! "And all the world wondered after the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast"! {Rev. 13}. The Lord give *us*, and thousands more, trueheartedness to Himself, that may keep us in the true confession of his rights and titles, and of His coming, to make them all good in sovereign power, against the prince of the power of the air, the spirit *that now worketh* in the children of disobedience" {Eph. 2}. If the person of Christ were a reality to us, if in fact He were the only living and abiding reality to our souls, how we should make Him the governing and guiding object and motive of our daily life, "for me to live is Christ." Our ruling passion would *then be* "that Christ may be magnified in me, whether by life or by death." May the Lord lead to this devotedness and devotement, by drawing us to His own bosom, that our hearts may beat in true loyalty and attachment to Himself. *The Bible Herald* 1878, p. 291.

"Blinded"

Worldliness and earthly-mindedness have blinded the minds and hardened the hearts of Christians, now-a-days, to an extent very few have any idea of. There are, I am persuaded, very few cases touching upon the safety, and well-being of the Church of God, which can be left to be judged by the mass of believers. On whom can one cast one's burden of responsibility as to the spirituality of the saint's walk and conduct? In cases innumerable which have occurred, I have found that the affections to the person of Christ have not been lively enough to make Christians indignant at open insults put upon Him -- and they have had neither the heart nor the mind to stand apart from that which was the expression of indifferentism to Him.

The Bible Herald, 1879, p. 140.

The Two Paths

A broad path means a bad conscience, not a broad heart.

We have a narrow path, but it is a known path, and a straight one.

J. N. Darby, *Notes and Jottings*, p. 290.

Quotations from A. C. Brown

Said to the editor many years ago, numbers of times:

Beware of sweet brethren.

Some brethren think to be more gracious than God Himself.

Perhaps he had in mind the text: "[Let] your word [be] always with grace, seasoned with salt, [so as] to know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). Don't we know that the amount of seasoning varies with cases, knowing how to answer each one? Some cases call for quite a goodly amount of this seasoning.

Moreover, salt is a preservative, and that is exactly what holiness is: separation from evil unto the Lord. Ed.

Quotation from The Bible Treasury, New Series 4:245

Flesh hates fidelity.

Exposition of Romans 9-11

Introductory Remarks to the Study of Romans 9-11

The Place of Romans 9-11 in the Book of Romans

Rom. 1-8 divides into two major divisions of the book. The dividing point occurs at Rom. 5:12. The first division (Rom. 1 - 5:11) deals with sins committed and related matters.¹ The next division, Rom. 5:12 - 8 deals with sin as indwelling, called “sin in the flesh” (what we call the old nature) in Rom. 8:3, and related matters, and shows the Christian as indwelt by the Spirit of Sonship (Rom. 8:15) to be in the good of the truth brought out in Rom. 8.

In the first division the truth of *no difference* is expounded. All are alike guilty before God. All must now submit to the righteousness of God. Jew and Gentile are alike lost and salvation is for Jew and Gentile alike. There is no distinctive place *now* for Israel. This raises the question concerning the promises to be made good to Israel that the OT had proclaimed. In view, then, of the *no difference* doctrine, does that mean that the church has replaced Israel? -- that the promises to Israel are to be transmuted by spiritual alchemy into spiritual blessings for the church, while the curses are left for Israel? -- that there remain no distinctive blessings for the nation of Israel as were promised and as the prophets of Israel extolled? -- no future reign of Messiah over the new Israel under the New Covenant? -- no center of worship at a restored Jerusalem (see Ezek. 40-48)?

Rom. 9-11, the third major division of the book of Romans, answers that Israel shall indeed be brought into the good of the promises when God’s present work among the nations is completed. Rom. 9-11 is an amazing unfolding of the governmental ways of God regarding the present setting aside of the nation of Israel and the future accomplishment of the OT promises for the nation of Israel. It is as if Rom. 9-11 is the divine anticipation of covenant theology, striking it down as the explanation of God’s word. Indeed, it is the purpose of God to

1. Concerning this division and its importance to understanding Rom. 1-8 see *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 17:384; 19:201; 21:193, 195; 23:220, 283, 301; 29:256, 304; 31:259, 265; 33:50.

glorify Himself in Christ, in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly, with the church having a special place in the heavenly sphere with Christ, and the nation of Israel having a special place in the earthly sphere with Christ.

The OT depicts the trial of the first, fallen man (there are only two men, 1 Cor. 15:45-49) to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. This trial ended at the cross, the result of rejecting the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:24). In resurrection, Christ entered His place as the last Adam. Israel has been set aside, the Mosaic Covenant terminated -- though the Mosaic age continues on -- and the Spirit is meanwhile gathering a heavenly people (1 Cor. 15:48). When that work is concluded, God will form an elect remnant of the Jews who will become the nation, the new Israel, under the New Covenant, all Israel being saved (Rom. 11:26). That is in the coming era of the millennial kingdom, which forms the earthly part of what is called in Eph. 1:10 the administration of the fulness of times, when Christ will head up all things, things in heaven and things on earth.

Rom. 9-11 shows conclusively that the ancient promises for the nation of Israel will be made good. *Of course* they must be made good, for God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Num. 23:19). No Jew who knew the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and who heard the prophets of Israel, who read those prophets, had any basis to understand these things according to how covenant theology spiritually alchemizes them, transmuting them into speaking about the church. With all due allowance for figures of speech and symbolic language, the Jew had no basis whatsoever to understand the prophets in any other way than what has been called ‘literal interpretation.’² And if the prophecies and promises are understood literally, then there is a future, earthly kingdom for the nation of Israel. Here is what the amillennialist O. T. Allis wrote in his polemic against dispensational truth about this point:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.³

What here concerns us is the phrase “thy people.” From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah’s [Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel . . .⁴

You see that the OT prophecies could, as a matter of fact, be “literally

2. It has been shown in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, that John the Baptist, the remnant in our Lord’s day, and the Lord Himself, held to the expectation of a kingdom on earth for the nation of Israel.

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

4. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

interpreted.” It is the New Testament, he claims, which allegedly gives a larger meaning and scope (untrue). OT prophecies might be regarded, he says, as referring exclusively to Israel. And how was the godly Jewish hearer, who heard the word of God, to know that it only *seems* to be special promises to Israel but that in reality there was going to be a New Testament church that would give a “larger meaning and scope” to what he was hearing? If the meaning and scope were enlarged in the NT, what was the meaning and scope in the OT before it was enlarged in the New Testament? For example, what was Daniel to understand by “thy people” (Dan. 9:24) before this term was allegedly enlarged? Accordingly, this raises the question -- was God deceiving Daniel and the Jews? So we see from the admission by O. T. Allis that, after all, God did tell the OT Jews that there would be a literal kingdom. They had no basis on which to understand the prophecies other than literally (with due allowance for figures and symbolic language). And the NT does not give “a larger meaning” (read, *different meaning*) “and scope,” as if the NT church was meant by the (literal) prophecies of the coming kingdom for Israel. This has been shown to be the case in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1. But Rom. 9-11 was not considered there, which passage also confirms the coming place for the nation of Israel, and shows that the NT confirms the promises to Israel (cp. Rom. 15:8).

The grace of God brought to Gentiles now is not in the least inconsistent with the ancient promises to Israel. It is God’s prerogative to act according to uncovenanted grace *now*, grace apart from covenants, in forming a heavenly company while the fulfilment of the ancient promises are held in suspension until the present work is concluded. It is the human will set upon ranging everything that God does under the false, disorganizing principle of covenant theology that prohibits souls from rightly seeing that God acts in blessing apart from covenants. Indeed, the highest blessings that we Christians have are outside of, and above, covenanted blessings.

The OT only foresees a place of blessing on earth for Gentiles with Israel in distinctive prominence. The NT places saved Jew and Gentile in one body united to Christ as head. Moreover, among the many blessings in the heavenlies, where we are seated in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), is our being taken into favor in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). Think of it; *Christ’s place before the Father is our place*. Christ Himself is the measure of our place before the Father. None of this has to do with the OT, or covenants, or OT prophecies. The prophesied blessing for Gentiles, given in the OT, are blessings here on earth when the new Israel is under the New Covenant in the millennium. The NT quotations from the OT concerning such blessing are not quoted as if the fulfilment of them now was being taught, but rather to bring out some principle bearing on what God is doing meanwhile. We will look at such quotations in Rom. 9-11. The

fulfilment of these quotations from the OT will take place in millennial times. There is a bearing or *application* meanwhile.

Rom. 9-11, then, shows God’s consistency and faithfulness, regarding Israel’s promised place, with what has been brought out in Rom. 1-8. Israel will definitely be sovereignly brought into the good of God’s promises, when His present work is completed. His governmental arrangements on earth are such that all blessing is seen to rest totally on sovereign grace and mercy.

We must note, yet, that Rom. 9-11 does not present us with the assembly, which is His body, as such. The olive tree of Rom. 11 is figurative of blessing in a line of privilege beginning with Abraham, the nation of Israel broken out, the Gentiles now brought in, yet eventually broken out, and finally the nation of Israel, as such, brought in again into their olive tree. The church does not definitively replace Israel.

Main Divisions of Romans 9-11

The three chapters give us Israel’s past, present, and future.

- Chapter 9: shows how **in the past** God has chosen Israel. *Election* is shown to be the basis for spiritual blessing.
- Chapter 10: tells us of Israel **in the present** under God’s governmental ways, His disciplinary dealings, in their *ejection* from the place of privilege, and the Gentiles brought into the place of privilege.
- Chapter 11: shows, (1) the ejection of the Gentile profession, as an entity, from this place of privilege will occur; and (2) **in the future** the “*reception*” (Rom. 11:15) of Israel by sovereign grace into the place of privilege again, sovereignly making good to Israel the promises to them.

A Survey of Romans 9-11

Divine Counsels and Ways

Read Rom. 9-11

(From *Things New and Old* 7:81-86)⁵

We listen either to doctrinal, moral, or dispensational teaching, as we read the Epistles. Doctrines instruct us; morals direct us; but dispensational teaching has this dignity with it, that it introduces us to the wisdom of God in the counsels which He has taken for the glory of His own great Name.

5. An excellent, short survey of Rom. 9-11 is given by W. Kelly in his *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, on Romans, *in loco*. The three volumes of *Lectures* covering the NT have been printed in one volume, with a Subject Index and a Scripture Index, available from Present Truth Publishers.

We have a wondrous piece of dispensational teaching in these chapters.

The Apostle stands in the sight of the present judged condition of Israel. But in occupying that position, we shall see him, not so much bringing out any new truths, but rather commenting on old truths, such as had already appeared and were to be found in the Jewish scriptures; putting them in their due relation to each other, and meditating upon them. This is characteristic of this fine scripture.

We find, therefore, a very large number of Old Testament truths considered, and Old Testament scriptures cited. We have, for instance, election, divine righteousness, faith and its consequences, human responsibility and its failure, and the like -- and then also, the remnant, the call of the Gentiles, Israel cast off for a season, and then restored, and the renovation of the world in the days of the kingdom. All these things are brought before us here and commented upon

...

The Apostle opens this great matter by uttering his heart over the present sorrows of Israel. He declares his devoted love to them, (like Moses in such a case, Ex. 32) and their former holy dignity passes before the vision of his heart to deepen his sympathy. But then he at once lets us know, that all this present loss and degradation of Israel had only verified the word of God; because all were not "Israel" that were "of Israel"; as Israel's scriptures had abundantly taught. The children of Abraham and the children of Isaac, in the book of Genesis, witnessed this. There were those who were "the seed," but not "the children," or the "called" seed. Election had, then, been announced and acted on at the very beginning. But having shown this from the old scriptures, the Apostle then comments upon it, telling us many weighty truths in connection with it. He tells us, for instance, that it involves no unrighteousness in God, but only reveals the sovereignty of His mercy, and that, but for that, but for election or the sovereignty of grace, not one would be saved, but the whole scene would be a Sodom and Gomorrah, a vast witness of judgment, from one end of it to the other. And, still further, he tells us, that acting thus on the principle of sovereignty or grace, God is free to take up Gentiles as well as Jews, as had already been told by Him through His servant Hosea.

So, as to "hardening," a fact or truth already shown us in Old Testament times and scriptures, the Apostle comments on that, as well as on election. He teaches us that "hardening" is judicial. Pharaoh was so dealt with, when he had fitted himself for destruction as a vessel of wrath, but not till then. The hardening had not corrupted him; it was judgment on him when he had

corrupted himself.⁶

These are Paul's inspired commentaries, in these chapters, on the Old Testament truths of election and hardening.

He speaks also of "righteousness." He shows us that Israel had not attained it, because they had sought it by the law, though their own scriptures had told them that it was to be had or attained by faith. So that they are guilty in not having attained it. Their failure was disobedience and pride. They had sought to acquire it, in the stead of submitting themselves to it; to work it out for themselves, and not accept it as the gift of grace from God, according to their own scriptures.

Thus it is, and thus the Apostle gives us fine moral commentaries on these profound truths which prophets have already announced. The sequel is well weighed. Election must be, or none would be saved, and yet man is guilty. And this is the end of the controversy that so hotly engages man in human religious wisdom and strife. Man is responsible, and is brought in guilty because of unbelief, which is disobedience; and yet salvation depends altogether on the exercise of divine good pleasure, or sovereign, electing mercy. God has followed man as to the very ends of the earth with the cry of invitation and the assurances of welcome, and pleaded with His own around Him and near Him all the day long -- but to no purpose. Man is guilty, but God must be sovereign. See Rom. 10:18-21.

What a light and consolation, when the blessed Spirit gives us a commentary as well as a text! When He thus delivers us from the reasonings of nature!

This puts us at the close of ch. 10. Then, in ch. 11, the Apostle takes up the subjects of the remnant, the present call of the Gentiles {this is not foreseen by the OT prophets}, together with the present rejection of Israel, and also the future restoration of Israel and of the whole world. These, in character, are a different order of truths from those just considered, but they are like those Old Testament subjects, and the Apostle, in treating of them, is in company with Old Testament scriptures, as he has already been.

A remnant is recognized, as of old, so now -- as in the day of Elijah, so now in the day of Paul. And the Apostle comments on such a fact. He tells us that a remnant is the fruit of grace or election, the fruit of God reserving to Himself a people. And he tells us that God will surely be true to such a people, while He is, for the present, blinding and casting off His nation, because of their unbelief, according to the voice of the Prophets.

6. See John 12:37-41, to the same effect.

He then discusses the subject of Israel as a nation, and not as a remnant merely. He teaches us, that the present casting off of Israel, as a nation, is not final; that though many are now cast off, because of unbelief, they shall be restored, or “grafted in again,” when brought to faith; and that that restoration shall be as new life, as resurrection-life to the world, as well as the accomplishment of covenant-mercies to themselves, and the setting of all, according to God’s purpose and glory, on the ground of grace. For all must stand there, if they stand with God for ever. There can be no other link with Him. And he also considers the question of the Gentile as well as that of Israel. He teaches us that the Gentile was now brought in, upon the present rejection of the Jew; but that he stood in faith; so that if he did not believe, if he did not continue in God’s goodness, he would be cut off, as the Jew now was. And he shows us that this very story, the present call of the Gentiles, was to be found in the Jewish Old Testament scriptures. “I will provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people,” was already written; and he hints, that being the Apostle of the Gentiles, he was the instrument by which God was fulfilling this word. Thus, he magnified his office; and, moreover, would, if he might, though the Apostle of the Gentiles, save some of his own nation. Yea, and though their Apostle, he would sound an alarm in the ears of the Gentiles, that they should beware of high-mindedness and conceits, because of their present standing in divine favor -- letting them know, that though God had a purpose in their present call and grafting in, yet that they might assure themselves He was not bound to them. He had not committed Himself to them, and would do nothing less than irrecoverably cast them off, if they were disobedient as Israel had been.

What a perfect piece of writing! Under the Holy Ghost the Apostle unfolds, thus completely, the wisdom of God, the counseled wisdom of God in His dispensational ordering of the story of this world! How grand the moral of the whole!

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as you, in times past, have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these now also not believed your mercy, that they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

And he closes, as well he may, this great exhibition of dispensational wisdom in which God is vindicated in the presence of evil, displayed in the exercise of goodness, and glorified in the counsels of His wisdom, by a note of admiration. It is not, however, ignorant, but intelligent admiration -- nor is it admiration of the mercy and salvation of God -- that we get at the close of ch. 8 -- but of His wisdom and knowledge; admiration drawn out by, rendered to, and spent upon the sweets of scripture. For all the incidents in this wondrous story

of God’s dealing with the earth, are found, as the Apostle shews us, in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, in the patriarchal, Mosaic, historic, and prophetic scriptures, as I have already noticed. He does but arrange them in their places severally, and in their relation to each other. But this is a blessed service under the Spirit. We get the divine commentary here, as we get the divine text before. What a Teacher was here! Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, to suit our infant, and yet enlarging understandings. O the insolence of that infidelity that insults the depository of such moral glories!

It is a great writing, indeed, on the counselled way and wisdom of God, and that, too, from the beginning to the end, from the call of Abraham to the glory of the kingdom. And mercy is maintained and dispensed throughout. As We sing, “Grace triumphant reigns.” The very first event in the story of this ruined, revolted world is reproduced, or made to reappear at the very end. Adam was saved through grace, sealed to him through the death and resurrection of the Woman’s Seed; and so “the all” at the end, shall, in like manner, be debtor to the same grace.

For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

The Apostle opens this great scripture, with breaking his loving heart over the present ruin of his loved brethren, “his kinsmen according to the flesh”; and he closes it by indulging his worshiping heart in admiration over the ways and words of God. How affecting, as well as great and beautiful!

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!” ❖

The OT Had Predicted a Period of Israel’s Unbelief Followed by Acceptance of King Messiah

Rom. 9-11 clearly shows that there is a period of Israel’s unbelief followed by Israel’s acceptance of Christ, by sovereign grace. The OT also shows this to be the case. The point made in the above heading was pressed home in *The Bible Treasury* 1:42, 43, from which the following is quoted.

* * * * *

If we turn now to the early chapters of the Acts . . . we shall find that what they present is, this lingering of divine mercy over Israel, before the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. They had indeed committed an unparalleled crime in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, and in a certain sense filled up the measure of

their iniquity. But the vine-dresser had interceded for the barren fig tree (Luke 13:8); Jesus, on the cross, had cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do": this, their ignorance, thus pleaded by the Redeemer on the cross, is precisely what the Holy Ghost admits by Peter in Acts 3:17;

And now, brethren, I wot {know} that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

So far were they, in answer to the intercession of Jesus, conditionally forgiven, that instead of judgment being instantly executed, full, free, absolute forgiveness, was proclaimed to them, on condition of their repentance. Observe too, that it is national forgiveness of which the apostle treats, and the restoration of their forfeited national blessings, even including the return of Jesus himself.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that (see the Greek ⁷) the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Forgiveness of sins, and the times of refreshing, or restitution, of which all the prophets had witnessed, as well as the return of the Lord they had rejected, are here proposed to the Jews on condition of their repentance. This was the only condition on which Old Testament prophecy had suspended the arrival of these bright and happy days for Israel; and on this condition they are still held out by the apostle.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

He well knew that they who had rejected and crucified a humbled Messiah on earth, would still reject this Holy Ghost-testimony to an ascended and returning Christ; and everything which ensued was arranged of God accordingly. But if Jesus himself looking down upon Jerusalem, and weeping over it, could say,

If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!

we need not, in the unchangeableness of God's purposes, find any difficulty as to vast and wondrous results depending on Israel's repentance, as taught in Acts 3, even though it was surely foreknown of God that they would persist in their sin, and that wrath would come upon them to the uttermost. We may well understand, that what was long afterwards said by Paul to the Jews of a certain locality, was true of the whole nation:

7. The Greek word ὅπως occurs upwards of fifty times in the New Testament, and is never, save in this instance, rendered "when." Its ordinary rendering, and simple obvious import, are us given above.

It was necessary, that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

The martyrdom of Stephen terminated for the present all hopes of Jerusalem's repentance, or of Israel's reception of the Lord whom they had crucified; and seeing that every Old Testament prediction of the kingdom, or the millennium, treated of its establishment as dependent on Israel's conversion, that also was indefinitely postponed; and thus was the way prepared for the revelation of the mystery, till then necessarily concealed {Rom. 11:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:5, 9-11}, that the period of Christ's rejection by Israel and the earth, should be occupied in the calling and formation by the Holy Ghost of "the church" -- the elect body ⁸ or bride of Christ -- to be the vessel of His sympathies and sharer of His rejection while He sits on the Father's throne on high; and also to be the sharer of His glory when He shall "take to him his great power, and reign" upon the earth . . .

First, be it remembered, that the Old Testament itself predicts, in several passages, that for a long season Israel would remain in unbelief; while judicial blindness, rejection by Jehovah, scattering among the nations, and abject misery under the Gentile yoke, should be the result of their sins, and of their having rejected their Messiah. See, among other passages, Isa. 6:9-12; 50:1, 2; 53:1-3; 63:17; 64:7; Hos. 1:6-9; 3:4; 5:14, 15; Mic. 3:9-12; 5:1. But, secondly, all these prophecies, and numbers more, show decisively that Israel's rejection and unbelief are but for a time, however prolonged; and that this dreary period is to be succeeded by the days of promised blessedness and rest. Thirdly, our Lord and his apostles distinctly recognize both these truths. Without doubt they declare, and that most unequivocally, that the Israel of that day were sealing on themselves the calamities by which they had been already overtaken, and bringing upon themselves and their children still heavier judgments than any which had yet been inflicted. Nor do they fail to portray the blessings to the Gentiles which result from the way in which divine mercy has overruled the sin of the Jews and their consequent rejection for a time. But do they anywhere intimate that this rejection is final and irreversible? Do they anywhere teach that the present Gentile dispensation has permanently and unchangeably replaced God's natural relations with the earthly people of his choice? Far from it -- as far as possible. In Matt. 23 -- the sequel, in fact, to the series of parables which have been already considered, and in which our Lord had told the Jews that the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to others -- after pronouncing

8. {Actually, Israel is the only "elect body." The church, as a body, is not said to be elect; our election is of individuals, not corporate.}

upon them the dire and oft-repeated woes which their evil and hypocrisy drew forth from those blessed lips; after declaring that on them should come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, lamenting over them in such pathetic language,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together, and ye would not!

after declaring, as he crossed the temple's threshold,

Behold your house is left unto you desolate;

does he not add, as though he would not leave them utterly hopeless,

Ye shall not see me henceforth, TILL YE SHALL SAY, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?

Can we suppose the Savior to have used these as His parting words, if He knew that they would never nationally welcome him, and never see him again, till, as individuals, in common with the whole human race, they behold him on the great white throne? Could words more clearly intimate, that however they might be in the act of rejecting him, the days would come when they would welcome him with all their hearts? that however certain -- sadly, sorrowfully certain -- that *till then* they should not behold him, yet that *then*, made "willing in the day of his power" {Psa. 110} they should see him again, and see him to their joy?

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord

were words well known to Jewish ears. They form a part of that magnificent Psalm (118) which was well understood to be an inspired, prophetic utterance, prepared beforehand as Messiah's welcome to the throne. These very words had been but a short time before uttered by the disciples and the multitudes on the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Had they been sincerely used -- used, moreover, not only by those who did chant them forth, but by the heads of the nation, and by the nation itself as a whole -- then, what might not have occurred? In that case they would have known the day of their visitation, and everything must have been changed. Alas! they knew it not; the fervor of the multitudes was rebuked by the Pharisees; and on the part of the nation as a whole, the cry was ready to be uttered,

Away with him! Crucify him!

It *behoved* Christ to suffer, "and enter into his glory." "The stone" was to be first "rejected of the builders"; but where was the prediction of this fact recorded? In the very psalm quoted by our Lord when he said,

Ye shall not see me henceforth *till ye shall say*, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Thus does He at once interpret and endorse Old Testament prophecy: linking

together in His farewell words to Israel, their future national reception of Him as their Messiah; His return to them at that time from heaven, where, as the rejected Stone, He is at present exalted; and their own celebration, in that day, of *His* triumphs and *their* deliverance in language prepared for them by the sweet singer of Israel. Read Psa. 118 in the light thus shed upon it by our Lord's words; read it, as the joyful, adoring utterance of the penitent, pardoned, delivered Israel of the latter day, when they see their long-rejected, but now welcome Messiah, and say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; read it thus, we say, and every line, every word is pregnant with meaning, and redolent with joy. Set aside Israel's hopes, and the attestation of them by our Lord in the moment of Israel's deepest guilt and degradation, and how unmeaning the Psalm becomes!

If we turn, moreover, to the testimony of the apostles, we shall find it confirmatory, not condemnatory, of Israel's hopes. Take, for instance, Rom. 11. The chapter opens with the enquiry, "Hath God cast away his people?" to which the emphatic and almost indignant reply is at once subjoined, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" . . .

One remark we must by no means omit, -- that it was not by Israel alone that Christ was rejected when He came before. He was presented to the Gentiles, in the person of Pontius Pilate, the representative of Gentile power;⁹ and His rejection is treated by Himself and by the Holy Ghost, as His rejection *by the world*. It was, as we have seen, in Israel that the test was applied; but the question to be decided was, whether Christ would be received in His own world. It was decided in the negative. In John's gospel, where Christ is presented in the full divine glory of His person, as the Son of the Father, rather than in His dispensational characters and relations, as in the other gospels, this fact is largely and solemnly insisted on.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and *the world* knew him not (John 1:10).

This is the condemnation, that light is come into *the world*, and men (not Jews merely) loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil (John 3:19).

Now is the judgment of *this world* (John 12:31).

The Spirit of truth, whom *the world* cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him (John 14:17).

9. {This is very important. Gentile power of empire had been given to Nebuchadnezzar and that power continues until the smiting stone falls on the feet of the image depicted in Dan. 2. When our Lord was here, the Romans held that power and the representative of Rome, Pilate, had the Lord crucified. Jew and Gentile are guilty.}

Yet a little while, and *the world* seeth me no more: but ye see me (John 17:19).

If *the world* hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you (John 15:18).

And when he (the Holy Ghost) is come, he will reprove *the world* of sin . . . because they believe not on me (John 16:8, 9).

O righteous Father, *the world* hath not known thee (John 17:25).

Who can read these passages and entertain a doubt, that the Christ of the Acts and of the Epistles, is a world-rejected Christ? This is another great truth which our brethren who reject premillennialism overlook, or, at least, by their system, set aside. This really constitutes the most essential, fundamental difference between their theories and the Christianity of the New Testament, which consists in knowing, confessing, and serving Christ, and in waiting for Him, *as the rejected One of this world*.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, *disallowed indeed of men* (1 Pet. 2:4).

By and bye he will arise from off the Father's throne, and receive to Himself the co-heirs who are now being called; the power of the throne will then be exercised in vindication of his long-despised and rejected Name; and when all things are prepared for the solemn event, He and His saints will return, and this earth shall be subdued to His sway. Of these things the prophecies of the New Testament bear witness; the more they are studied, and the better they are understood, the more evident will it be, that no contrariety exists between the Old Testament and the New. The prophecies of the Old Testament leave room for the revelations and mysteries of the New; the latter fill up, but do not contradict, the former; they both exhibit the purposes and ways of God for the glorifying of himself in Christ, as one vast harmonious whole; and in their combined light, grace and righteousness, mercy and truth, Jew and Gentile, heaven and earth, are all seen to be to the praise of the glory of Him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things: to whom, indeed, be glory for ever. Amen. ❖

* * * * *

In addition to the above remarks concerning the world, let it be observed that the crowning act of the first, fallen man, was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son:

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

This ended the testing of the first man, as fallen, to show that He was not recoverable from the fall. Consequently, Satan was pronounced to be the god

of this age (2 Cor. 4:4) and we read in 1 John 5:19:

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked [one].

The Christian is not of the world (John 17:14). He is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48). Israel will be seated in the *earthlies*, so to speak, when Messiah reigns. But we are even now seated in the *heavenlies* in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), though we are here in testimony meanwhile, as pilgrims and strangers (1 Pet. 2:11). There will be a kingdom age for Israel, which has its place among the earthly ages, but there is no such thing as a church age. The church is not an age among the earthly ages, for it is not earthly in either constitution or position.¹⁰

(To be continued, if the lord will)

Ed.

The Apostasy

The open apostasy, then, has not yet come; but the giving up of the authority and efficacy of the word, and of faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost, the substituting the authority of the clergy for the immediate rights of the Lord over the conscience, the denial of justification by faith, and the putting the efficacy of the sacraments in the place of the work of the Holy Spirit -- in a word, the full development of "the mystery of iniquity" -- shows us an abandonment of the first condition of the church, and of the principles upon which it was founded, which is a moral apostasy. As John says, "You have heard that antichrist shall come: even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." Thus the apostasy, in the sense of a public giving up of Christianity, has not come; but the spirit of the apostasy manifests itself, not only in the development of the mystery of iniquity, but in the giving up of Christianity and of the authority of the word, and of Christ Himself, which characterizes half the population of Western Europe -- Rationalism, as it is called, and the spirit of rebellion which accompanies it. The thoughts of man have taken the place of the word of God; they will no longer have its authority: the will of man will no longer have the authority of Christ. If the antichrist is not there, antichrists have been there long since; if the apostasy is not there, the spirit of apostasy has long since taken hold upon the mind of men.

Letters of J. N. Darby 2:94.

10. Important to a right understanding of these things is that the cross and the termination of the Mosaic Covenant did not change the age. The Mosaic age continued on, and continues until it is ended at the introduction of "the age to come," i.e., the millennial age. This has been examined in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

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

Chapter 5.1

From the Fall Until the Flood

The following is from the same paper quoted when considering the seed of the woman and the introduction of God's working in mercy and grace.¹

* * * * *

Let us now look at Gen. 4 and 5. Short and concise history of man's conduct under the first display of grace! And here, as ever, man utterly fails. Yet, fail as he may, God changes not his counsel and plan about the mediatorial glory of redemption for his Son, and those that are his; for *He* had not failed; nor did the fresh proofs of the badness of that which the serpent had done induce the thought that, therefore, *he* should go unpunished. Surely, it was contrariwise; and, if man was allowed to develop and make manifest before all, in heaven and on earth, what the evil of the fall was, while God's patience was perfect, -- [because, his power being perfect (and perfect, not only over all around, but perfect in self-possession too), He could wait -- Wait, that man might hear of grace and live -- Wait, that the real imbecility against Himself of the adversary might become the more evident] -- *still the counsel remained unchanged.*

No sooner is Adam out of Eden, than we read of the birth of children. The first-born, Eve called Cain, saying, "I have gotten the man from the Lord." And did she really think that this was the Seed of the woman promised -- that he was Cain indeed (a possession)? Bitter delusion, if so she thought. Bitter counterpart, out of Eden, of the same haste she had made in Eden. Cain, the bandyer of words with God; -- Cain, the murderer; -- Cain, whose hand, hot with a brother's blood, should display the first sample of that death to which Eve had sold herself -- What a possession was Cain! Righteous and true is the Lord in all his dealings; and his moral government often brings home first to the very bosom which carried forth seed prohibited to be sown, the harvest of its own folly. She had brought in death.

The mother of death to her race, she should be the mother of the murderer, and should nourish and nurture in her own bosom the first murderer and the first victim of death! How must "*possession*" {= Cain} and "*a passing breath*," {= Abel} the names of her two sons, have, oft, in after-times, recurred to the mother's mind.

I do not say Satan is not to be traced in Gen. 4. Surely, to the eye of faith, he is seen there present, -- lurking beneath the surface; but his power is not the thing which is sought to be illustrated, or which stands out in prominency in this portion. Neither, again, is the question at all about man's circumstances; -- that is settled, -- he is *out* of Eden, and in the sweat of his brow has to eat bread. *The* point of instruction, of Gen. 4 as a whole, I conceive to be, *man*. How will man act, if left to himself, out of Eden? How will man there treat the long-suffering of God, who, waiting to be gracious, may still be manifesting his goodness? Alas! sad picture! we have that question answered here.

And, as in Eden, I see what the unfallen man is, as a *creature*, if left to himself; so here I see what the fallen creature's course will be, while on earth, and allowed to abide there.

1. We have to notice the simple guidance of faith, and its contrast, the error of nature. The firstlings of the flock bespoke faith, or the apprehension of that which was now in the Divine mind, the basis of every man's approach to him, -- new as it might be to man; and the fruits of the earth, bloodless offering, though more venerable, told of a mind unguided by God, and left in nature's darkness.
- 2.² It was the younger who was taken, the elder who was left, according to electing love.
3. And this appears -- "The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering." "He had respect," *that* was they point: but then it says, "To Abel and his offering"; not to the offering of Abel and to himself. The person is set before the way of approach, that grace might have its mark on the page.
4. See the effect of God's judgment upon the heart of unrenewed man. "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."
5. What gentle dealing on the Lord's part! what grace shown! if, haply, the wanderer might yet return; if, yet, the assurance that one way was open to him as to Abel, and to all, might win Cain into the path of blessing. But man, as man, has no heart for God, nor will to bow to Him, and own his absolute dependence for every thing. The question is not, Has he a free will? but will the {alleged} free-will of fallen man turn to God? That is the question.

2. The expression, v. 3, "in process of time," lit. "at the end of days," is remarkable. Verse 8, "Cain talked with," is rather, "Cain spoke it to."

1. "The Deluge. Reasons of It -- On Earth, In Heaven," *The Present Testimony*, vol. 2.

6. We find he goes out -- talks with Abel about it -- and then murders him. Lawless putting forth of power this! even if he meant not that which would follow; and sad reason that which the Word of God (in 1 John 3) assigns for the deed; viz. because his own works were evil, and his brother's good. Affecting truth! but truth it is: there is nothing which more provokes enmity in the mind of fallen man, than a savour of godliness in another man.

7. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?"

What gentleness on the Lord's part! what seeking after conscience! but conscience was seared; hard as the nether millstone. Alas! the folly of man's wisdom! With whom was this infuriate bandying words? Against whom was he restlessly throwing up the shoulder, as if He were unjustly assuming that he (Cain) had a duty to his brother? It was the Lord omniscient, almighty, who had made men to be helpers, the one to the other: who had, as yet, given the power of life and death over man to no one, and whose rights Cain had just infringed, assuming to himself the right to slay Abel, because his works pleased God, as his own did not.

8. The judgment was just; -- a curse, from the earth. But let it be observed, how this sentence upon Cain told of how precious, in God's sight, not only was the blood of the martyr Abel, but how precious was the earth still itself in his sight. For Adam's sin he had said (Gen. 3:17, 18)

Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.

But now he says (Gen. 4:11),

Thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

9. Cain fears for his own life, and turns to see what he can gain for himself. Fair subject he, in the school which Satan was conversant, and to which he alludes (Job 2:4),

And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Without deference to God; without one natural affection which will answer to that name *brother*; without a chord to respond and vibrate in unison with the heart of a father and mother, so bereaved and so afflicted, Cain has yet his fear for *himself*. And he turns, a suppliant, to the avenger of his brother's blood.

10. Touching occasion this for the Lord to show -- how open His ear, how ready His hand to give freely! Cain is heard, and the much loved life is protected by a mark and a proclamation of the Lord. He gives to the unthankful and to the evil;

causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust -- and is good to all His works.

But Cain was untouched by the goodness, and v. 16 we read,

11. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.

Yes! the presence of the Lord suits not man when he is bent upon wickedness and self-will. But as it was the younger son who, having asked "for the portion of goods which falleth to me," . . . "not many days after" . . . "gathered all together and took his journey into a far country" -- so likewise, here it is written. "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" -- the action was his own. He went out thither, where his own way, -- the way of Cain (Jude), ³ -- might be undisturbed.

Fallen human nature has a religiousness of its own as had Cain. Among the heathen, it is to be seen in full development. It will not bow to the living and true God, nor own His way of grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; it cannot bear his people; its pleasure leads it out from the divine presence, and there it gets a name on the earth.

12. Let us glance at the family of Cain.

His first-born he called *Enoch* [or dedicated]; built a city and named it after his son "Enoch." Was it like Absalom that he desired the name to be remembered? *Dedicated* to whom? for what? Whatever he thought, the city looks like an overt act of rebellion against the Lord, though a sorrowful confession of his own distaste to the fugitive wandering life to which he himself had been doomed.

If he thought that himself would become a settler, then he showed his insubjection to the sentence recorded against him. If he sought to make a name on the earth for his family, dwelling outside of the presence of the Lord (wanderer as himself might be), he was rearing a pillar out of God's presence, to make his family to be a testimony of his own discontentment in being a wanderer. But his family had a name on the earth; for the city was called by Enoch's name. How unlike the heavenly Enoch of the next chapter, who passed over the earth lightly, and left no record save a heavenly one behind him!

Next, we find in Cain's family, polygamy, "which was not so at the beginning" (Matt. 19:8); as said our Lord. But, here (v. 19) we read, "Lamech took unto him two wives."

The name Lamech is said to signify *strong*. That he was a remarkable man, one greatly characterized in his place, day, and family, for *energy* and *wisdom* of

3. {"The Way of Cain" in Jude 11 refers to the false approach to God -- the works-approach of his offering. Balaam represents a hired ministry, and Core (Korah) represents a false worship, seen in the strange fire presented before Jehovah.}

a certain kind, cannot be doubted.

In one branch of his family, leaving the city, there was a son, who was the first example of a Nomad cattle-holder; in another son was found the head of the science and art of music, -- “the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.” His other wife’s children, too, were not without name; and one of them (Tubal-cain) was “an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.”

Thus polygamy, character on the earth, and the arts and sciences, were found in Cain’s family . . .

Such was the family of Cain; a little WORLD (or *orderly system*) set up by man, in which to make himself happy without God, and out of God’s presence. Solemn thought! that reprieve of judgment should be frittered away in self-devised conceits and fading pleasures. Poor world! all its pleasures are but for a season; its day of reckoning is coming, and then where will be Cain’s family? Where will be those that have walked in *his way*?

If man is left to himself in the day of grace -- the world is what is produced. Thus far as to Gen. 4:1-24. A few words now on what follows.

As is the divine way, -- the insignificant thing is spoken of first, and afterwards that which is of importance. Cain’s family is chronicled, and then comes Seth’s family -- that is, the world first, and then the line of promise, blessing, and descent.

And Adam. knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

Cain was under sentence; and of his own accord he had “gone out from the presence of the Lord”: a new line is *placed* or *set* (Seth) in the place of Abel, who had been the representative of the household of faith. To Seth a son is born, and “then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord” -- so I read it: that is, as Cain was recorded as remarkable for cities, arts, sciences, character, etc. etc., out of God’s presence; so the family of Seth took up *this* as their distinctive mark, “*We are the Lord’s.*” Sweet privilege for the meek and lowly this! But if it were done in pride of heart, it would be the harbinger of judgment. The Lord takes care to put in juxta-position with this,

And Adam begat a son in *his own likeness, after his image,* and he called his name Seth.

The *likeness and image* of fallen Adam clave, still, to those who on earth were the Lord’s, -- and were *His* line for blessing and for testimony. First, observe how far from brilliant, either as to the things of God, or the things of earth this line of Seth was. As to the earth, nothing glorious is recorded: no city was built and named; there was no bettering of the human race, by discoveries,

inventions or the effort to strike out some new path or to bring in some new convenience or pleasure into the family. And this was no bad token for it either. For, *What is the power by which all these things are cultivated?* It is the knowledge of good and evil, which came with the fall, -- and nothing else. Yes; men may hide their own shame, if they will; or, they may foam out their own shame, in witty inventions; but after all, where got they this power, and, what in their present condition, does it speak? It was *stolen*, stolen under the suggestion of Satan, sacrilegiously stolen from God, against His orders. That God may have used witty inventions, as printing for the Bible, and ships, and railroads, etc., for the passage of his servants, is quite true; but they owe not their existence directly to Him; and, if flowing out of the knowledge of good and evil which marks Him, as He said, “they are become as one of us knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3), they have flowed out, through that power, fraudulently and sacrilegiously stolen by man under Satan’s guidance, from God. And what do they, in our present condition, be-speak? Of nothing but expediency to meet felt and confessed necessity. In Eden there was no necessity, and until the fall no expedient. The first thought of blending circumstances together so as to meet need which we read of, is in Gen. 3 --

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And the second is like unto it, Gen. 3:8.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

A cover from their own eyes and a covert from the presence of the Lord, was what in these two *expedients*, these two wise blendings of circumstances, they sought; and is not *a cover from our own eyes* and *a covert from the presence of the Lord* (something which, by darkening our minds, may make the sense of His presence less painful) to be seen, by faith, on all that man thus glories in -- arts, sciences, etc. He seeks them *for himself*, he being in ruin, and without the manifested presence of God with him, as it was with Israel when it went up out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, tarried forty years in the wilderness, and then entered the land in triumph. In the new heavens, on the new earth, what will be the place such things will have? One need not ask -- where God shall be all in all -- they could not live. ⁴

Down to v.18, the birth, the living till marriage, the becoming parents, the living after that, the number of children and the deaths, is pretty much all that we

4. To use such things *as are*, is our privilege, and that, without a question; for the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof: to glory or take delight would be incompatible with *seeking, minding*, things above.

read of.

The continuity of the line of blessing which would be found *in the Seed to come*; that was *the* great thing for man; though, to grace divine, every little circumstance of the people of His choice is dear; every hair numbered; every circumstance cared for; and precious in His sight the death of his saints. Still, though the Lord's people are not to be great in the earth in its things, it is, and ought to be, a most humbling thing to see how few of them attain to any place of distinction in Him or in His things. Six links in the pedigree and no Enoch yet: none, as yet, of whom the Lord could speak as that they had found grace publicly to identify themselves with Him. I speak not now as to the question of standing in the line of testimony, or as to that of being individually blessed; but of this -- why so many of those who are in the line of testimony, who are individually blessed, keep not practically their position of testimony, and the power of their blessing, so as to make it manifest to all? Why, alas, do so very few keep it at all, so as to be manifested to others, and to have their good works go before them? God is not unmindful of any work and labor of love for His name's sake; and that He loves to say the most He can for His servants, who can doubt? He made good the standing of Job before his friends, better than Job could; and how graciously, withal, does He make them taste the pre-eminency -- they must be blessed through Job. He gives Job, too, a better character than he could give himself (see James 5:11). And who can read the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel and not be astonished at the thoughts which the blessed Lord expressed to His Father about His poor feeble disciples. It is the mother's eye which makes the first-born babe so *peculiar* to her sight; it was faith-estimate of the people which made Balaam say such things about Israel (Num. 24:1-9); and it is the Lord's own heart makes him speak so of his disciples. There is no unwillingness in God to praise us -- quite the contrary; but, as for us, there are fifty Lots for every one Abram. And who of us, judging the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, are walking in heavenly spiritual Nazariteship, as we should?

2ndly. -- As to Enoch. His name signifies *dedicated*. If he was dedicated to the Lord of heaven, and for a testimony upon earth for Him, then his name was as well chosen as was that of the other Enoch in Cain's family, if *dedication* to human interests on the earth was that which he was meant for.

We may notice, as to this Enoch, the name of his son. Methuselah -- "*(At) his death (he) sends*": as if some great event were before his mind. And, as has been observed, the death of Methuselah just preceded the deluge. Then observe the testimonial for Enoch. His excellency consisted not in deeds wrought or service (as man counts service) done; but he had chosen the better part -- God was in all his thoughts, and his life told it --

He walked with God.

He walked with God! blessed privilege *open* to every member of the family, in

the household of Faith, in every age -- *enjoyed*, however, by but few.

He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him;

and,

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God (Heb. 11:5);

and the testimony in Jude closes his history --

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (vv. 14, 15).

Brilliant exception to the rest of those whose honored place was in the line of testimony and of blessing before the deluge. How soon after Philadelphian praise and beauty does Laodicean failure and pride appear upon the stage; and how soon after Enoch does the night close in upon the antediluvian world. Indeed, it may be, that, like the testimony of Peter and John in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, Enoch was the token that evil had risen to its measured limit, and that judgment was at the very door: for oft, as has been remarked by others, a display of light and power are not the harbinger of blessing to that, before which they are set, but of judgment on it and of salvation to others.

Lamech, who -- self-deceived and deceiving -- prophesied smooth and soft things (as has elsewhere been noted), was one sign of those last days. And who can read of his conduct in this respect, and think of the way in which, in our own day, the professing church is using prophetic Scriptures, and not tremble? If men will have "a rest" on this earth, -- if they think to have glory, under the present heavens, -- and the exaltation of man, as he now is, -- they will find it in Babylon -- the harlot and city; but all there is Godless, Christless, and without the Spirit; earthly, sensual and devilish.

This is not our rest; it is polluted. Noah's inheritance and prospects lay under another canopy, in another sphere altogether, to that which Lamech supposed: but Lamech's tone of speech and thought, though different from the overt wickedness, which is afterwards spoken of, chimed in with it; and tended to blunt the edge of the prophetic word of judgment coming. As one might have answered Noah, when he was a preacher of righteousness and busy preparing for judgment, "Nay, your own father and family correct your folly -- hear what he said and how piously he spoke." Infidelity does not always scoff openly. The *second* mark of the last days is recorded, Gen. 6:1, 2,

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth,

and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all they chose.

The sons of God, were, I presume, those who called themselves by the name of the Lord, ⁵ and the daughters of men were in Cain's family. And observe the corruption was *from within* the separated body. It is not said, "The sons of men took of the daughters of God" -- but the reverse. It was God's witness which was betraying *itself*, was mixing the lines which God had separated. And what wonder, when a Lamech was the preacher? Earnestly did Paul warn upon this same subject (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Alas! if I spake here my thought as to ourselves, it is this: -- The world has too much hold over *us*, for us to see how much association with it we have. I

5. {Allow me to say that "the sons of God" here mean such as are spoken of in Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7. Both the OT and the NT point to this meaning. There is no reason for the unions to produce "giants" (Gen. 6:4) if only humans were involved, and this both before the flood "**and also afterwards**." Objections such as mistaking Matt. 22:30, that in the resurrection there is no marriage but the state is as the angels, proves nothing against this; for that Scripture, fully quoted, speaks of "the angels of God *in heaven*." These in Gen. 6 are not the angels of God *in heaven*. Note carefully that the angels who kept not their own original state, but had abandoned their own dwelling, are kept in eternal chains (Jude 6). If you apply "not kept their original state" to the fall of the angels with Satan, then why are Satan and demons loose now? The not keeping their original state means those particular "sons of God" noted in Gen. 6. Note also the word "As" which begins Jude 7, and allow the context to help understanding. 2 Pet. 2:4, 5 also is a context that includes these particular "angels who had sinned," with the destruction by the flood, and then Sodom and Gomorrah. Of these angels we read that God has "cast them down to the deepest pit of gloom {down to tartarus} has delivered them to chains of darkness [to be] kept for judgment." The phrase "angels that had sinned" cannot refer to the original fall of the angels because then no fallen angels would be loose in the world.

But we cannot enlarge upon this unhappy subject here. The sin was worse than the godly mixing with the ungodly, sinful as that is. And we see the machinations of the Enemy in this unspeakable *corruption*, as well as the violence that *filled* the earth.

Concerning "**and also afterward**" (Gen. 6:4), the sons of Anak appear to have had this origin. Israel was used to exterminate them. See *The Bible Treasury* 20:288; *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:72.}

condemn no one; I speak for myself and the church of God -- the saints are not heavenly and divine in character as their Head would have them, -- they are not, here below, like the widow that is desolate and trusts in God.

Thirdly, man had tampered with God's word; had trampled down, for the sake of indulging the lust of the eye and the flesh, the barriers which God had raised for His testimony upon earth. The next thing (and what wonder?) there is violence against his fellows: "the earth was *filled* with violence." When the people who are separated unto the Lord outwardly and in profession, become known on earth for their giants, -- their mighty men, their men of renown, -- it needs no great acquaintance with the human race, or with the Divine government, to be able to say that violence among men will soon plentifully show itself; and, then, judgment from the Lord will quickly follow. The boast of our day is not in height of stature or width of shoulder, but its boast and glorying is not in the Lord alone; -- intellect is man's pride now. How perfect is the word of our God in warning as in guidance, and it has said,

Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited (Jer. 17:5, 6).

It is impossible to trust to man and the Lord.

No man *can* serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).

And again,

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord (Jer. 9:23, 24).

See also the character of the king in Dan. 11.

The pride of man has *already* lifted him above family, title, and wealth, in this land and, in Europe, at least; but not above *intellect*. And when that comes to be honored, as it will be ere long, with full homage, then will men's hearts be blinded *thoroughly* to every folly. Let the French revolution be heard, if men will not hear Scripture, and let the stupid follies of the age of *reason*, and its immediate connection with the reign of *terror* be thought of. No considerate mind can doubt that we are on the eve of most eventful times in the history of both Christendom and the world. The entire revolution of everything throughout Europe, which the last twenty-five years have brought, cannot be hid. What, then, are the saints of God about, and where are they? There is but one Power which

can keep them free from other influence, and that is the Holy Ghost. Are they led by Him, -- are they walking in Him, -- or are they loose and lax in their walk, yielding now to one influence, and now to another, as it may chance to suit their convenience? Never, perhaps, was there a time when the value of a sure guide, a faithful *Eliezer* [*my God the helper*, which is not far from the idea which John 14 and 16 give us of the Spirit's gracious services] was needed. In our scenes at home, we have seen and been made to feel the value of One who can detect "angels of light" (falsely so called), and can unravel the mass of truth tangled with error. The Spirit of God knows all the land-marks of truth; can detect every shoal and sand-bank of error. What a blessed thing to have such a One for Guide in such a day as this!

May the saints of God humble themselves under Him, and He will enable them to see and understand far more of the written word than they now do, and give them more power, too, to use what they have. But let them get and keep themselves entirely separate from evil. Let "cease to do evil, learn to do good," be the guide of their lives.

One word more. Not only is God's pleasant purpose about making the heavens and the earth to become scenes for the display of the glory of Christ, the ground (which never can be shaken) of all his dealings with the earth; but, it is just because that never can be given up, that there have been, from time to time, acts of judgment upon various generations of men. The accomplishment of that purpose, and the development of that plan of redemption-glory, supposed God to be present, dealing (more or less directly) with man, in testimony, until the time came which was fixed for the display of the glory. To give up the testimony would have been to have shut out man from the glory. But man is so base, that without a check the world would have destroyed itself and its inhabitants, and, so far as it could, it would have driven God from it. Upon this ground, the Divine government has from time to time interfered to keep evil in check, and make it possible for God to continue dealing in grace, and for man to continue where the long-suffering of God is salvation.

And thus, these solemn judgments, before which the heart quails, overwhelming as they are to a whole generation, speak in the language of heaven, not only judgment, but the fixity of the Divine purpose to bless, under Christ, the human race, both in heaven and on earth.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

Is the Honor and Power of This World

Any Part of the Endowment of the Saints, According to the Word?

I feel this question to be one of immense practical importance. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, the Jews -- as they had done before, when they said to God, "All that thou hast said unto us we will do" -- asked Jesus, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? {John 6:28}. Man flatters himself, that all that is necessary for him to know is, what he ought to do, and he will do it. Jesus did not flatter them, but said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" {John 6:29}. There are a very large number of believers in the world, who do not at all recognize their position before God. There are very many of whom it may be said that they are not unbelievers, and yet by their position in the world cannot be addressed as Christians. The Word of God does not recognize them as in a Christian position. This should show us the importance of not being in a position to intercept the Word when it speaks, but to be able to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"; and of so walking, as to be discerned by the world as those who are not of the world.

There are some also who think that because they are Christians there can be nothing unchristian in their position. While nothing can alter a believer's relation to God, there may be many things in his positions which the Scriptures cannot recognize {as of God}. I confess I can think of no other relations scarcely, in which the Word of God recognizes the Christian, than the natural ones, -- as husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant. It is possible that we may be in a position of hostility, like our Lord, "When I am for peace, they are for war." I might suppose that the relation of subject and prince being recognized in the Scriptures, we ought to take part in the power of the world; while others may go to the other extreme and fall into a fearful mistake, that if it were wrong for a Christian to act as a sovereign, it must be wrong for him to act as a subject. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:1, 2), exhorts them to make

supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority.

While we are in this world, we are commanded to submit to the powers that be {Rom. 13}. But as to the saints themselves being those powers, is another thing. Surely none would say they wished to abide where God's glory must depart; and God does not abide in the high, easy, comfortable places of this world. All that is in the world a Christian is called to give up. Is the honor and power of the world any part of the endowment of the saint according to the Word? I must broadly answer, No. The answer to this last question would be brought into a very narrow compass when we read those words,

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world {John 17:14}.

We find the Jews wanted to make Him a king, but He pointedly rejected it; and I cannot see any opening or authority in Scripture for a Christian to say, Our Lord had nothing to do with the honor or power of the world, yet I may. Again, when one came and acknowledged Him as Master and Lord, and said,

Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me {Luke 12:13},

Jesus answered him,

Who made me a judge or a divider over you? {Luke 12:14}.

I believe it to be essentially wrong to touch anything of the mechanism of this world. I do not want to go into all the depths of the question, but all I have to do is just to ask, What did Jesus do? and upon that ground I safely take my stand. Who is the highest person in the rank of this world? The Scriptures tell us Satan is {2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:3}; and therefore the higher I get in the world, the nearer I get to Satan. Jesus is at the bottom of the ladder, Satan at the top; and I would ask those who desire the high places in the world, "Is it best to sit nearest Jesus or Satan?" I have never seen any good from a saint's association with the world's glory. Our work is in the Church, yet while we cherish the Church of Cod, we should remember to pray for those who are in the world, who are not yet manifested. It is a most wicked thing for the child of God, who knows he is in a wrong place, to ask, How shall I do God's will in my own way? The language of our hearts should be this, that He would cast down imaginations, and every thing (high) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ {2 Cor. 10:5}. It is not for a believer to choose his own place, and then ask God to show him what to do in that place. Again, there is often a fear of bringing the light of truth really to bear upon our position. One great practical difficulty, so to speak, is, having dug at the foundation, to go no deeper. God would say, Go very deep; but we say, We have not man's leave to go deeper. The question with us should not be, Where will these principles lead us? but if they are of God, let them lead to the Antipodes, let them take us out of the world, what matters that? Dear friends, what the most ignorant wants, is honesty; it is a single eye {Matt. 6:22} that we so much need, if we shrink, as I believe many do, from an increase of light. Oh, dear friends, let me warn you that that is a fearful darkness which is brought on by a man's own disobedience and rejection of the light. There are two things I desire for the saints -- that we may be guarded from the knowledge that puffeth up; and if we do get more perfect knowledge, that we may with the knowledge get more honesty.

GVW, in *Collectania*, pp. 83-86.

*The Perfect Workman: His Rebuffs, His Resources, His Returns*¹

Notes of a Lecture, Matthew 11.

J. N. Darby

This chapter you will find most simple. It is divided into three distinct subjects or sections; the first extends to the end of v. 24; the second from vv. 24 to 27; the third from v. 28 to the end. I just remark that we are going to speak together freely and simply on this chapter; it will be more a kind of meditation than anything else. I increasingly look on meetings like this in the simplest possible way. We are like sheep and lambs of a flock, gathered round the fountain, that the Lord, by whom He will, may roll away the stone that we may drink. The more this thought prevails, the more profit we shall reap. There is a constant tendency in us to drop into a kind of religious machinery. Of all things I have the greatest horror of religious machinery -- people going through meetings as a routine; and we Brethren (so called) are in as imminent danger as anyone. Beware of it, of dropping into Chistendom, or religious machinery; it is like a horse in a mill, going round and round, day after day. How are you to escape the snare? By, individually, living in the presence of God, and, when you come together, come with exercised hearts. On this account a meeting depends more, if possible, on the hearers than the speaker. I am conscious of the atmosphere of a meeting when I come into it, as I am of the atmosphere of a close room. If I come into a close room, my lungs feel it: and, if I enter a dead meeting, how the spiritual lungs feel it. And what do you find? men trying to get up the steam. Get down on your face before God. It is no use to keep up lifeless machinery. Get power into your souls, and there will be power in the meeting. There is the well, the full well; but how often we gather together, the well is there the same as ever, but the flock is not watered; there is no one to roll away the stone, because we are not living in the presence of God about these things. You are complaining of a want of Teachers, a want of Pastors, a want of Evangelists. All is in *Him*, draw from Him.

Now I lay before you these three distinct sections: In the first section you find the *rebuffs* that the Lord Jesus met with in His ministry. In the second, the *resources* He found in the living God. In the third, the *returns*, &c., made to us. A person may say, I don't understand what you mean by the Lord Jesus Christ meeting with rebuffs. Did you never read those words in Isa. 49,

I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain?

These words applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only perfect servant,

1. {This article to appear in *Additional Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 3, if the Lord will.}

the only perfect workman, the only perfect minister. He was a marvelous teacher and minister; but He met with rebuffs and disappointments. Did you never read those words in Psa. 69,

I looked for some to take pity but there was none, and for comforters but I found none?

He passed through every sorrow and pain possible for any perfect human heart to feel. Don't suppose that, because the Lord Jesus Christ was "over all, God blessed for ever" {Rom. 9:5}, He did not feel all these things as a perfect human heart would. We are apt sometimes to say, He was God, He did not feel things as I feel them. There is the mistake; He felt every single thing, not a single slight put on Him that He did not feel. What did He say to Simon the Pharisee?

Thou gavest me no water for my feet; thou gavest me no kiss; my head with oil thou didst not anoint {Luke 7:44-46}.

He felt every slight, and let me add, *He feels it still*: not only as to His person, but every slight we put on Him by indifference and coldness. His heart is jealous over our hearts; He wants our affections. He feels *everything*. He felt all the rebuffs; and what will you say when I tell you that the very first was administered to Him by no less a one than John the Baptist -- think of John the Baptist administering the first rebuff to the heart of Christ. Look particularly at this question which John sends. I want you to lay hold of it; I say so because many say he sent the question for the sake of his disciples. No such thing: he sent the question because his own faith was wavering for a moment. That man that gave that brilliant, that magnificent, testimony to Christ, look at him! Now, in the darkness of Herod's prison realizing death, he sends this message to the Lord,

Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? {Matt. 11:3}.

You may feel a difficulty in believing that John could waver like that; if you do, it is because you don't know enough of that heart that beats in your bosoms. You say, how could John the Baptist waver -- that giant-like man who bore such a testimony to Christ, who talked to the Pharisees as he did, said he was only "a voice" -- not worthy to unloose His shoes; and again,

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world {John 1:29};

and again,

Behold the Lamb of God {John 1:36};

and again,

Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ {John 3:28}.

But here he is in the darkness of Herod's prison, and his faith wavers. It is one thing to start in the fervency and power of new life, but quite another, when we

meet with rebuffs to hold fast. Let me tell you that there is not a single one who has started in the path whose faith will not be tested -- God loves us too well to leave us without trial. If you and I are going to follow Christ in the path of service, we must be prepared to go to the wall, to be put down in the gutter. Do you suppose I want to frighten you? God forbid. I want you to feel the foundation under your feet; I want you to have such a sense of the heart of Christ that you may stand firm, come what may, for we are not going to have a smooth path. What then does John's message remind you of? It reminds me of Elijah under the juniper tree. The man who had stood for God before all the prophets of Baal, the next moment under the juniper tree, fleeing from a woman. The most gigantic minister, the best servant, is like a falling leaf before the wind. What was the end of it? Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. He says, I am no better than other men; it is better to die than to live. What does the Lord say? I'll take you to heaven in a chariot of fire. So here the Lord Jesus Christ sent back this message to John,

Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, &c., &c. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me {Matt. 11:4-6}.

Do mark this most exquisite touch; I speak to those who can appreciate it. Here is the most exquisite touch to be found in Scripture.

You find this is a general principle in Scripture -- the Lord never exposes us to others. He will expose us to ourselves, never to others. He'll never expose us to a stranger. I want to dwell on this, it is a great practical truth; you see it all through Scripture. These disciples are going back; do you suppose the Lord Jesus Christ is going to expose their master to them? Not at all, that's not His heart at all. He wants to speak to John's conscience. How was it to be done? He wants to send an arrow that will reach John's heart, but He will enclose it in a case so delicate, that the disciples don't know what they are carrying: it illustrates the wonderful grace of the heart of the Lord. Whatever may be your infirmity He'll never expose you to another, and He won't allow another to deal with you; He'll deal with you Himself. He sends back this message to John, "Go, show John," &c. These signs ought to have been far more powerful than if He had put forth His power to deliver him. There is such a thing as *power* and *sympathy*. I suppose there is not one of us who has not some crook in his lot; it is a necessary ballast, we could not do without it. Perhaps you don't know where your breakfast is to come from tomorrow morning. You know the Lord could find you in all you want. Why does he not do it? I ask you a question, Which would you rather have, the power of His hand, or the sympathy of His heart? You say, The sympathy of His heart. Well, you would not have that if you had the power of His hand. Like Paul, the Lord says, I can't take away the thorn, I'll do something better,

My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in

weakness {2 Cor. 12:9}.

If I take away the thorn you will get something worse. Perhaps you are looking at the weak constitution of your family circle, or something in your business, some person you have to do with that is a constant grating, going on day after day. Perhaps you are disposed to think there could not be a more trying temper, that you could get on with anyone better than just that person, his or her temper is so dreadful. You would like to have a change. If you get from under that, you'll get something worse. Victory over yourself is what you want; a change won't do. The reason why you find that disposition so trying to you is because your own will has not been subdued. One once said, saints in domestic life were like bottles in a basket: if they had not plenty of hay round them they were always jarring together. They get on very well in meeting-rooms, and seem all that's nice there, but put them together in domestic life, and you find out what they are. They are like the cogs of a machine, grating together, they want a little more *oil*. I see it constantly in visiting, for people are ever ready to pour out their sad tales into your ear. I see constantly that saints, when they come together in domestic life, cannot get on at all, because there is not *self-subjugation*, *self-judgment*. People say charity must begin at home. I say, *self-judgment* must begin at home, too.

Mark this, the Lord Jesus Christ never exposes you to another, so he sends back this message to John. Don't you see that everything is being done, this work and that work, and "*blessed is he* whosoever shall not be *offended in me*." That is the very point of the arrow -- that was for John's own heart. Don't you see he would not let anyone else do the work? Take another case -- Don't you remember the case of Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 20)? Abraham was quite wrong, but will God allow Abimelech to tell him? No, on the contrary, He says, take care what you do with that man, he is a servant of mine; I won't let you touch him. God throws a mantle over him. If he were to fail ten thousand times over, He says, I would not let you touch him, but you must be a debtor to his prayers, for the restoration of your household. Take the case of Israel, when Balaam was hired to curse them. This was at the close of their wilderness course, after all their murmurings and short comings; out comes Balak to hire Balaam to curse them. They were not now in the freshness of their early days, when they came victoriously out of Egypt, but at the close of their wilderness history. Out came Balaam -- God says, I won't allow you to curse them,

I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel {Num. 23:21}.

Was it not there? "I have not *beheld it*." How was it? You know the ground of all this, that every single thing was charged on that blessed One, who hung on Calvary's tree.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree {1 Pet. 2:24};

who bore the wrath on your behalf, and brought you into a place where God does not see a spot on you, because Jesus has borne all that was against you. A person may say, does it not matter how we live, then, if it be so? What do we find in the javelin of Phineas? The judgment of their state. In God's words to Balaam you find the judgment of their *standing*; in the javelin of Phineas you see the judgment of their *state*. You get the grace of God, viewing them from the top of the rocks. "From the hills I behold him." That's the way to look at saints -- that's God's vision of them, and He says, not a spot. Looked at from your point of view, you see this crookedness and that disagreeable disposition, &c. You say, there's a crooked, sour, temper: *can that be a saint of God*, with all that crookedness? Yes. I am not defending crooked tempers, for I don't know anything that brings such trouble as crooked tempers, or is such a stumbling-block. People say, *there are your saints!* God forbid that what I say should hinder self-judgment. I make no *excuse* for myself, I make every excuse for you. Look at that poor crooked cross-tempered person from the top of the rocks, she is as beautiful as possible. Look for Christ in people, not at their blots. Let us never be found opening our lips to speak against a saint of God. There are two classes of "biters" -- *backbiters*, and *face-biters* -- those who go behind your back and speak evil of you, or those that flatter you before your face. I say unhesitatingly both are of the devil. Don't be found doing the devil's work -- he is the prince of backbiters. Never utter a word of evil about others behind their backs, if you know anything against them, let the man or woman be the first and *only* one to hear it. I'll tell you what I find a capital plan, a sure cure for backbiters, and I have used it several times lately with great success; when people come to me to talk about others, I say, now I shall go at once to the person you speak of, and tell them all you have said, and give you as my authority, then, if you can't prove it, you must eat your own words. If you do this you will not be troubled with backbiters. Is it that I am not to be faithful to others? No, I go to them and say, I see this or that thing about you, you must get rid of it. Take the basin and the towel and wash their feet. Some dear saint once said, "I am determined never to speak of a saint's faults behind his back and never to speak of his virtues before his face." I find this to perfection in the Lord. He could not say too much about John, when He had sent this message to him. That man who said he was only a voice -- the Lord says, he is more than a prophet; and he who said he was not worthy to unloose His shoes, the Lord says, there is not a greater born of women. I am persuaded that the heart of the Lord was wounded by that question, but there is not a single word about that behind his back; He sets him forth -- garnishes him; that's just the way He deals with us. Lest some should raise the question, I don't understand how he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist. I say, that refers to John's dispensational position. He further says,

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force {Matt. 11:12}.

The kingdom was put off for a time, and everyone who took the kingdom had to do violence to all his hopes as a Jew. He says the kingdom is not going to be set up in power now but in mystery, you must be willing to go down into the gutter with me.

I only say as to these cities, He has to say “*Woe unto thee.*” Think of that voice of thunder, because they had not received His words.

Mark this 25th verse, He retires into His resources in the Father. “*At that time,*” when all seemed to be against Him, He says, “I, thank thee, O Father.” Thank God for all these rebuffs? Can you thank God when things go against you? “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c., for so it seemed good in thy sight.” He takes refuge in the counsels of God. Though in that chapter in Isaiah, He could say, “I have labored in vain,” &c., what a response He gets from God,

Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord . . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth {Isa. 49:5, 6}.

Magnificent result! Though all may seem to fail, I’ll give you to be my salvation to the end of the earth, wave after wave of blessing. So I say to every servant of Christ here; perhaps you are a Sunday school teacher, are you cast down about your work? You say, I don’t see any results. It’s very blessed to see results; but be sure you are in your right place, and then go right on; don’t judge by results, the harvest time will come, the reaping time will come.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him {Psa. 126:6}.

How beautiful: go, work on, this is the sowing time, the reaping time will come. “What are you to do now?” Go back into your resources in God: if not, what then? I can tell you that I have during the last thirty-two years come in contact with many who once stood on the platform with us, but they have gone off. I have known those who wielded their pen in the propagation of these truths. I have seen them with the same pen contradict what they once held. Has Christ failed? Has God failed? Has the ground moved? No; there is the ground in all its stability, God is the same, and Christ is the same. What is the secret of it all? They have not found what they expected, and they have gone off with chagrin and disappointment. What did you look for when you came amongst them? You say, they were not what I expected; I came looking for love and I was disappointed. *Serve you right.* If you had come to *show* love you would have had a different story to tell. They have retired -- Where? into God? No; into themselves, and they have become like icicles hanging from the roof of a house. You never made a greater mistake than to come looking for love. I have been thirty-two years on the

ground,¹ and I have experienced a thousand times more love than I ever expected, and ten thousand times more than I ever deserved. When people talk of want of love, the fault is generally in their own hearts. Do you talk of deserving nothing but hell fire? Then what business have you looking for love? I have business to show love. There’s not a single line from beginning to end of this Book to teach me to expect love, but plenty to teach me to show love. You are never taught to expect anything from man. They came expecting love and were disappointed. If you come expecting love, you will get disappointed, and go out abusing those you leave. Have you never heard the story of the dry pump? What’s the use to pump away at a dry pump? Throw a little water in and you will soon get some out. You come to saints and you find them dead, and dark, and cold; throw a little water in, and you will soon get a gushing stream.

Christ retires into his resources in the Father, and all is right. He comes out and what does He say, “Come unto me”; how beautiful, the more beautiful because it is so near “Woe unto thee.” Though they have disappointed me, I will not disappoint you. What does he say? “I will give you rest.” Is there a conscience here that has not got peace, not got rest? I don’t say a heart, for I believe this first rest is rest of conscience. What is the meaning of that? If you have not got rest of conscience, it is because you have not come to Jesus. Thousands of people are converted who have not got rest, because they have not come to Christ. They are occupied with their own frames and feelings, trying to get peace. Trying to get peace, you will never succeed. How are you to get peace? Simply by being satisfied with Jesus. God is satisfied with the work of Jesus; are you? He says, “Come unto me and I will give you rest;” you can’t have come to Him if you have not got this rest. Believe what He says, He desires to fill your own soul. There is no class of people I come in contact with, in whom I am so deeply interested as anxious souls. Come to Jesus now: look off from self altogether -- good self and bad self, and find in Jesus all you want. God finds in Him all He wants. You find in Him all you want. Then, there’s another thing, you find sinners exhorted to take the yoke of Christ -- a great mistake: to sinners He says, “Come unto me,” that’s not saying come to a yoke. When I have come to Him and got this rest, He says, Now stoop down and bow your neck and put it under the yoke along with me: Mark the beauty of that -- think of the privilege of taking the yoke with Christ. A broken will -- that’s the secret of finding rest. Are you *restless*? Do you want a *change* to improve your circumstances? More wages? Then you have not found rest. A man who has found rest says, “I would not move a finger to alter a single thing in my cup, because God has arranged it all.” You get something like it in John 14:27. The peace He leaves with them is

1. {I suppose by this he means the ground of being gathered together to Christ’s name (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 5:4). This remark places the address about 1859.}

peace of conscience; “My peace I give unto you” is peace of heart. Many are troubled about circumstances, &c., then I say, you have not found rest. “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me” is for us. Let me further add, if you and I retire from rebuffs into our resources in God, we shall be coming out to make our returns. In place of being icicles, we shall be streams of blessing. The people around you will see Christ instead of that odious self. In the midst of your families, in your business, or in your workshops, you are called upon to be a living expression of Christ.

You will find it the best remedy if you are bowed down in your spirit; or, when you get up in the morning full of aches and pains, to go to the bedside of some poor bedridden saint, and try to pour a stream of blessing into his soul, you will then find what relief you get in your own heart. Why? Because you have got rid of *yourself*.

There are three sources of evil: -- a legal mind, a morbid conscience, and a self-occupied heart. The cure for a legal mind is grace; the cure for a morbid conscience is truth; the cure for a self-occupied heart is Christ. When I find a heart occupied with self, I say you want a new center -- Christ. Revolve around that new center, and you'll get its beams. When Christians move round that center they are catching its beams, and throwing them back. Let us be working people, not talking people; but *living, moving, breathing* people. The Lord grant it may be so more and more.

“O patient spotless One,
our hearts in meekness train.”

Do you sing that? then don't be setting up your backs at the least thing that goes wrong. We *sing*, “Our hearts in *meekness* train,” and perhaps, directly we get trodden on, we set up our backs like the quills of a porcupine. Don't be bringing your whims, and fancies, and crotchets into a meeting, and throwing them like a wet blanket over God's work as a damper. Oh! to be broken material. Give me broken material -- if a potter is going to make a vessel, you must give him some clay, something malleable to do it with. You can never make anything of unbroken men! They are all points, and angles and crotchets. Oh for large hearts -- ready to every good work. “Jesus, thou art enough.” Is He enough? Then I shall not want light literature, I shall not want the newspaper; I shall not want the pipe or the snuff-box. If you do any of these things, Jesus is not enough. The Lord help us to sing truthfully. ²

2. Manchester: W. B. Horner.

Abunda-What?

Recently, I was speaking with a woman by telephone and she was to mail something to Present Truth Publishers. She asked what was published and I said Christian literature. She said she was a Christian and wanted to know what denomination I was identified with . . . She said she goes to an Abunda-Life place. I asked, what is abundant life? She fell silent and I quoted John 10:10:

I am come that they might have life, and might have [it] abundantly.

I said, think of reading that as if it said ‘I am come that they might have a peppy life, and have pep (energy) abundantly,’ or, ‘I am come that they might have health and have health abundantly.’ ¹ She remained silent, so I continued, A Christian might be lying in bed with crippling arthritis, but has abundant life. Abundant life is seen in John 12:24:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except the corn of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit.

True believers are looked at here as forming one plant with the risen stalk, i.e., Christ as risen from among the dead, we being grains in that plant, with the life of the stalk flowing in the grains. I do not know that she understood, for Abunda-What? interferes with apprehending truth.

Yes, the resurrection-life of Christ flows in the grains forming one plant in Him. We have eternal life in the Son (1 John 5:11). John speaks of the character and nature of the life we have; Paul speaks of the place, or position, in which we have it: namely, life in Christ. You and I have the resurrection-life of Christ; and the position in which we have it is “in Christ.”

Historically, the disciples were endowed with the resurrection-life of Christ before Pentecost. Since Pentecost, we are endowed with this character of life consequent on sealing with the Spirit. That this occurred with the disciples before Pentecost is a mercy for us, since it helps us to see its distinctiveness. It occurred in John 20:22, when the risen stalk, so to speak,

. . . he breathed into [them], and says to them, Receive [the] Holy Spirit.

As God had breathed into Adam the breath of life, that gave him life for this creation, so here, the Second Man, now entered into the Second Man's *place* in resurrection, breathed *into* them the breath of new creation life, so to speak.

The disciples were already quickened, that is, born again, but now there

1. A nation-wide group of FM stations features a “Medical Moment” and the Doctor gives some brief health advice, often starting by quoting John 10:10, which has nothing to do with medical advice.

was something more: the reception of the Spirit as the power of resurrection-life. This was not some symbolic act, pointing to the Spirit's coming at Pentecost to form the church. No, it was the bringing the disciples, by the Spirit's power, into connection with Himself as He had illustrated in John 12:24. They were by this act one in resurrection life, in oneness of life, with Him. Before this, He abode alone (John 12:24). OT saints, and the disciples, though born again, were not in oneness of life with Him, for it could not be until the corn of wheat fell into the ground, died, and came forth as the risen stalk. As a consequence of breathing into them and they receiving the Spirit as the power of resurrection life, they answered to the grains on the risen stalk, with the risen life of the stalk flowing in the grains. Now the disciples formed one plant in Him, such was this mighty operation of the Spirit imparted to them as the power of this life in them. As Christ, by virtue of His resurrection became head of a new creation, thus by breathing into them the Spirit as power of life, He brought the disciples into new creation by endowing them with resurrection-life,² His own life in resurrection.

We, many years later, are endowed with this character of life in us when we are sealed with the Spirit. The seal of the Spirit not only unites us to Christ as head of one body; there is also the matter of the character of life, and the Spirit is the power of that also. When we are sealed with the Spirit, we are brought into the good of what happened at Pentecost, but we are also brought into the good of what happened in John 20:22.

Connected with what our Lord did in John 20:22 was the absence of Thomas. He is a picture of the godly Jewish remnant being eventually brought into blessing, but not this blessing of life in the Son. Of course, he subsequently was incorporated into the church and blessed that way, but we are speaking of what took place in John 20 and the teaching meant to be conveyed there. Even under the New Covenant the sons of Israel (all righteous, Isa. 60:21) will not have the character of life that we have, nor will they participate in what happened at Pentecost; i.e., they will not be part of the body of Christ or of the new creation in Him.

Rev. 3:17 is not a claim to financial riches, but to spiritual riches. Laodicea has much Abunda-What?. Yes, there are some of the Lord's people in Laodicea, and He would sup with such, but Laodicea, as such, is characterized by spiritual

2. ___ forgets that 'resurrection-life' is a term (as a short statement suitable enough) invented by Christians to express the state in which we are, not a scriptural one. In essence divine life is always the same: only that now Christ, who becomes our life, being not only a quickening Spirit, but also Himself raised from the dead, we have this life as ours according to the condition into which He is entered as man (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:405 406). Did *he* invent the expression?

shame. And see how the Lord presents Himself as "the faithful and true witness." He presents Himself to the various assemblies according to their state, in Laodicea's case as not answering to what He is in the way He presented Himself. Laodicea is an unfaithful and false witness. The fact that some of the Lord's people are there does not change that. Moreover, Christ presents Himself as "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). Of course, that means *the new creation* which we have been considering, above. He, in resurrection was the beginning of it. Abundant life is the life of the new creation of God, given by Christ in resurrection to the disciples. Laodicea is characterized by abundant Abunda-What?, not life in abundance. "I am about to spue thee out of my mouth" says Christ, the Judge among the candlesticks. If a Laodicean who is really Christ's would read, and act on, 2 Tim. 2:19-23, he would be blessed. Fellowship with Christ outside Laodicea is better than supping with Him while maintaining that unholy connection.

But what Christian is exempted from acting on 2 Tim. 2:19-23?

Ed.

Christian Zionism

How absurd to trace "Christian Zionism" to J. N. Darby, when it is those who have fragmented, and refused parts of, his dispensational teaching that engage in Christian Zionism. J. N. Darby did not even vote!

He knew that numbers of Israel would be back in the land by man's efforts, eventually rebuild the temple, receive the Antichrist, and be over-run by the final Assyrian of prophecy, experiencing the very worst of all calamities they ever have experienced. It will be an epoch such as the world has never experienced before (Matt. 24:21). An article on these matters will appear in the next issue if the Lord will.

The reason behind the attempt of some to date the writing of the Revelation before the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) is so that this calamity can be placed in the AD 70 period, not in the future; for Rev. 7:14 shows a crowd coming out of the great tribulation. If that is after AD 70, then when?

Ed.

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