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

Chapter 5.2 Continued

Genesis 4:8-16: Cursed, Yet Preserved

(8) And Cain spoke to Abel his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. (9) And Jehovah said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? (10) And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. (11) And now be thou cursed from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. (12) When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield thee its strength; a wanderer and fugitive shalt thou be on the earth. (13) And Cain said to Jehovah, My punishment is too great to be borne. (14) Behold, thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a wanderer and fugitive on the earth; and it will come to pass, [that] every one who finds me will slay me. (15) And Jehovah said to him, Therefore, whoever slayeth Cain, it shall be revenged sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should smite him. (16) And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod, toward the east of Eden.

Genesis 4:9:

Hatred for Disrespect to the Religion of Works

W. Kelly made the following observations:

Nothing rankles more in a natural man than disrespect to his religion; and it assumes the most deadly character where God's disapproval is even insinuated. Yet what can be plainer or more certain than that a sinful man cannot be accepted of God in himself or in virtue of anything he can do? Sin is not cancelled so, nor is God thus glorified. The believer judges self before God, not selfishness only but all that is in man as he is, of which nature is proud till God unveils all, too late for salvation; and this justly, for the evil of man, and the resource of divine grace, were before Cain no

less than Abel. But Abel laid it to heart believingly, Cain did not and paid the penalty of woe, as all must who proceed in his way (Jude 11): a danger specifically laid before men in the Christian profession. So speaks, expressly in view of "the last hour," the apostle John in the First Epistle, (ch. 3:12), where Cain appears as of the evil one and slaying his brother; and this, because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. If sin begins toward God, it goes on toward man, even if that man were a brother with the loving claims of a relationship so near. Thus the irritation from a worship rejected of God broke out in hatred of the accepted man, and murder was the result then as ever since (Matt. 23:35, Rev. 18:24). For scripture lifts the veil and proclaims the truth, whatever appearances or pretensions say; the Cain worshipers hate and, if they can, slay those like Abel because their own works are evil, those of the persecuted, righteous.¹

Genesis 4:9-12

(From W. Kelly)²

... Not that Jehovah was ignorant any more than heedless; but He would bring home secret sin, and to the guiltiest give space and ground for repentance. Yet in the case before us the conscience was hardened by religious pretension without reality, and exasperated by the acceptance of him who stood only in the faith of divine grace, though in fact Abel's works were righteous and Cain's evil. He that received the best good in hope did good in his measure; he that despised it envied and hated and slew his own brother, that looked up in dependence on the God of grace.

The questions of Jehovah were searching: not, as before to Adam, Where art thou? but Where is Abel thy brother? and What hast thou done? Adam went away from God, self-convicted, before God pronounced on his sin and made known the resource of His mercy in Christ. Cain to his sin against Jehovah added sin against man, not a neighbor only but his brother: type of the world's, especially the Jew's, sin in the cross of Christ, Who had deigned to come of that people according to flesh. But unbelief blinds the heart to the highest favor which godless will can torture into a wrong to justify its own murderous pride.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.
If I had not done among them the works which none other hath done, they

1. *The Bible Treasury* 19:289.

2. The following series of quotations from W. Kelly are taken from articles in *The Bible Treasury* 19, under the title "The Early Chapters of Genesis."

had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But [it is] that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause (John 15:22-25).

The Son of God come and rejected proved the state of the world and of Israel in particular.

But Cain was as impenitent as faithless, and had the effrontery to fall back at once on falsehood. He knew not! he knew not where his victim lay! Yea, to a lie he added the insolence of "Am, I my brother's keeper?" Had he laid to heart Jehovah's remonstrance in vv. 6, 7, he would have judged himself and brought a suitable offering, thankful that his brother had profited by taking the shame of sin and giving God glory for His grace. But as indifferent to God as to his sins, he was puffed up and fell into the devil's fault and snare, manifesting himself as a child of the evil one.

His second question Jehovah follows up with the direct and terrible fact.

And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now cursed be thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand (vv. 10, 11).

The ground had fallen under curse for Adam's sin; and Cain, utterly thoughtless of sin and of God's sentence had brought of the fruit of it under his tillage, itself a consequence of the fall, as an offering to Jehovah. This might have been, had man not sinned. To ignore sin is to show neither repentance nor faith, without which no sinner can find the way to God. No believer would have offered what lay under curse, what spoke of his own toil. Now the proof of the unbeliever's evil was flagrant: violence and falsehood and irreverence. For his brother's blood cried to Jehovah from the ground. He himself too most righteously was pronounced accursed, not the ground now but the man who tilled it, because of the wrath which burned to white heat, not at the instant but the more his haughty spirit brooded over his own worship disowned, his brother's accepted.

It is to be observed that nothing answering to civil government was instituted originally; nor was it invented by man during all the centuries which preceded the flood. God set it up for the first time after that great event which ushered in those dispensations of God which still run their course till the Lord come. Hence it is that Cain was not punished by man, as responsibility would have required after the sword was committed to Noah. Thenceforward did God solemnly require blood for blood:

whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made He man.

The sword of civil government was only borne by man as God's minister after the deluge.

Nor do we find explicitly the eternal judgment in Cain's case any more than in Adam's. No doubt words employed occasionally imply more to the ear of faith; but the open statement speaks of God's government of the earth, as was suitable in a revelation given to His people Israel. Therefore we hear not of heaven or of hell; but

when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield its strength to thee; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be on earth (v. 12).

Heavier than before was to be the lot of him who slew his righteous brother, cursed himself on the reluctant earth, whence with difficulty he should draw his food, and where he should be a constant prey to a bad conscience and anxious fears, shunned by all around him.

How blessed the contrast in the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel (Heb. 12)! This called for vengeance, as that will blessing on the earth when the day arrives for the liberty of the glory, as Rom. 8 speaks: how due to an infinitely better than Abel!

Genesis 4:13-15

(From W. Kelly)

The sin of Cain was not simply self-will in rebellion against God like Adam's, but despite of grace in the fallen state; which broke out in murderous violence against the accepted man, not a neighbor only but his brother. It was the type of the Jews' sin against Christ; and the sentence was not death but to be cursed from the earth, a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. This too we see strikingly verified in that people, who as yet show as little compunction as their prototype, tenacious of religious forms, but leaders of the world in rationalistic infidelity with a bad conscience.

And Cain said to Jehovah, My punishment (or iniquity) [is] greater than to be borne. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day on the face of the ground, and from thy face I shall be hid, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive in the earth; and it will come to pass [that] every one finding me shall slay me. And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, it shall be avenged sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should kill him (vv. 13-15).

Here we see the reaction, from unbelieving indifference and dislike of grace and hatred of its object as well as its source, to despair. How deep the lesson and solemn the warning! How hard the heart which so slightly regarded his own fratricidal guilt, to say nothing of such a brother as Abel; and which so ungratefully received the goodness of Jehovah in all His ways and words with himself, which left the door open for repentance and, it would seem, a sin

offering also! But his pride rankled with hatred because of his unbelieving and rejected oblation, even though his primogeniture was expressly declared to be intact.

How true is that which our Lord lays down! If, on the one hand, a man love Me, he will keep My word, as, on the other, He that loveth me not keepeth not My sayings. The holy pleading of Jehovah with His vain worshiper never entered that unhappy heart. In man fallen the beginning of moral goodness is in the confession of one's badness; and faith in the Deliverer coming, and yet more as come, produces this repentance, which bows to God and confides in His mercy. So it was with Abel; not so with Cain whose bitterness rose up everywhere rebelliously, the form only changing with the circumstances. Cursed from the earth though he was, he was to live a wanderer here below: Jehovah does not act on the precepts of earthly government He had not yet divulged.

What space for self-judgment, if the appeals of Jehovah had been laid to heart! Heedless of His words, thankless for His longsuffering, Cain sheds not a tear over his murdered and martyred brother; his whole feeling is for himself. It was not his iniquity that overwhelmed his conscience. Of his punishment he complained as too great to be borne. That this is the true meaning of his words the context shows.

Behold, Thou halt driven me out this day on the face of the ground, and from Thy face I shall be hid.

But what care for Jehovah's face had he, who, without a victim, without the confession of sin and death, still less of a Savior to come, dared to approach Jehovah with the fruit of the ground cursed for man's sin? His worship betokened his wickedness, his incredulity, his dark unexercised conscience; as Abel's told out his sense of ruin, but confidence in the One revealed of God to destroy the destroyer on man's behalf and to His own glory.

We shall see ere long how little Cain respected the divine sentence which he next repeats: "And I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive in the earth." It was really a most mild and merciful dealing with the wicked man whose hands were imbrued with his brother's blood, directly suited to furnish time for bitter reflection and self-loathing and anguish, had not sin hardened his heart into a millstone.

Bold as he was, his consciousness of guilt could not keep his fears hid:

And it will come to pass that everyone finding me shall slay me.

There however he was mistaken. Jehovah's long-suffering with His adversaries is amazing; as men now would feel and own, if they only let in light enough to see their own dark enmity to God.

And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, it shall be

avenged sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should kill him (v. 15).

Cain was preserved, notwithstanding that which deserved immediate and condign punishment; he was reserved for the special dealing of Jehovah at the end; for He had even a mark set on him (of what sort it is not said) that none should find and slay him. He had the wretched consolation that man's meddling with him to his hurt, certainly to seek his death, would be avenged to the fullest degree. How evident a type it is of God's dealings, and in the revealed character of Jehovah too, with the Jew because of His blood Who was raised up from among His brethren after the flesh to be the anointed king and prophet and priest on His throne, all this and more, being in His own right Son of the Highest and no less God than the Father, Who alone of men and as man had glorified Him in all respects to the uttermost! Yet was He, yea because He was and spoke the truth to the Jews and witnessed the good confession before the Gentiles, slain far more wantonly and ignominiously than Abel was of Cain. But God in that unspeakable wickedness and crime of man made Him sin for us, that we might become divine righteousness in Him: the deepest and most needed and withal most effectual proof of what the God of love is toward man in salvation of the lost at all cost to Himself and His Son. But the Jew, blinded by religious pride and hardened yet more than the Gentile in his guilty course of evil, remains preserved of God, and awaits the special dealings of Jehovah at the end of the age, in that unequaled tribulation which is his predicted portion, before the indignation shall cease and Jehovah's anger, in the destruction of the enemies of Israel.

Genesis 4:17-24:

Cain's World

(17) And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city; and he called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. (18) And to Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael; and Mehujael begot Methushael; and Methushael begot Lemech. (19) And Lemech took two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the second, Zillah. (20) And Adah bore Jubal: he was the father of those who dwell in tents, and [breed] cattle. (21) And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of those who handle the harp and pipe. (22) And Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, the forger of every kind of tool of brass and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah. (23) And Lemech said to his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice, Ye wives of Lemech, listen to my speech. For I have slain a man for my wound, and a youth for my bruise. 2(4)

If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold; Lamech seventy and seven fold.

Genesis 4:16, 17

(From W. Kelly)

The way of Cain thus demonstrates the worthlessness of natural religion to meet the need of fallen man, still more to suit Jehovah. It ignores both the ruin through sin and the nature of God. "Thou thoughtest," says the Psalmist, "that I was altogether such a one as thyself." Spiritual insensibility like this, when reproved of God as with Cain, becomes furious against such as by grace bow to the truth, even were they in the nearest ties of flesh and blood. Finding acceptance with God is intolerable in his eyes who was rejected of Him. There was no self-judgment, though Jehovah pointed out the way of mercy for the evil-doer, and maintained Cain's natural primacy intact. His religious observance covered a heart darkened and defiled by unbelief; the word of Jehovah slighted left him a prey to the evil one; and murder followed. For Satan is a murderer, as we saw him a liar in ch. 3. And Cain declares himself hid from Jehovah's face; as the man and his wife themselves from the presence of God when they heard His voice after their transgression.

But there is more for us to weigh in this instructive history. Despair not only closes the heart to the word of God, no matter what the grace He reveals, but it urges on the spirit to ever growing departure, and to fill up the void with present objects of sense. This is the fresh lesson taught here. The time was not yet arrived for the enemy to bring in idolatry, of which we never hear in scripture till after the deluge; and we are not entitled to affirm it without proof. In the antediluvian earth, bad as men were and ever sinking lower, they did not yet worship the powers of nature; still less did they change the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles {see Rom. 1}.

But Cain shows us the progress of an impenitent soul in a field for the energies of man without God. His worship is dropped; the world morally begins.

And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod [wandering] east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; ³ and she

3. {This question, sometimes asked triumphantly, as an objection to what is written in Gen. 5 is: "Where did Cain get his wife?"

And the days of Adam lived after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begot sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4).

(continued...)

conceived and bare Enoch. And he was building a city, and called the city's name, after the name of his son, Enoch (vv. 16, 17).

The language of inspiration is most significant. Jehovah did not leave Himself without witness, even to wicked Cain. He knew the end from the beginning, yet remonstrated with him when He could not accept his offering, urging righteousness, but disclosing the resource of grace when wrong was done. He laid the conviction of guilt on Cain after his secret murder of the suffering saint whose blood cried unto Him from the ground. What interest even in so wicked a man! What long-suffering with man as he is!

How can any believer venture to treat such early and gracious interventions of Jehovah as other than plain and sober, however solemn, facts! Undoubtedly they became rarer as the rule in man's history here below; and this in large part because they really were vouchsafed for his learning at the beginning. In no sense are they to be regarded as mythical, but as His actual dealings with man for his profit now and evermore, if he have ears to hear.

It was Cain then who "went out from the presence of Jehovah," and dwelt in that land which seems named from his exile; east of Eden. Jehovah was no longer before his mind. The world was his object. There were such as he feared already (v.14); and Jehovah had given or appointed for him a sign, lest any should find and kill him. Fear of Jehovah he had none. What actuated mankind later wrought in him henceforth.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil {Eccl. 8:11}.

The space which grace gives for repentance, ungodliness perverts to pursue its own will and indulge its lusts, in defiance of God and His word. His son is the "initiated," ⁴ whose name his father gives to the city he was building: a most striking fact for that day, and above all notable in him whom Jehovah had sentenced to be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth. ⁵

3. (...continued)

Was that so hard to see?

Some of the Ptolemies of Egypt, and some of the Inca rulers, had brother-sister marriages; but Cain marrying a sister? Such is the mind hostile to the Word of God.

4. It is all the more noteworthy, because in "the seventh from Adam" in the line of Seth we have another bearing the same name. His was another "initiation," his pre-eminently a heavenly calling. {Others give "dedicated" as the meaning of Enoch. Also, there was no heavenly calling until the church was formed. Enoch, the *seventh* from Adam, typifies the heavenly calling.}

5. {God's sentence he sought to evade. Such a course hardens one in departure from Him Who alone has the remedy for sin. Rather, Cain set up the city of the first man; and it was "dedicated" to the first man in his naming Enoch. The wrong use of the name Enoch occurs before the true Enoch

(continued...)

It is the rise of civilization without God; the effort of man to make a paradise for himself and forget that he is an outcast through sin. Cain shows us the first budding of what was to bear the bitterest fruit. Psa. 69 is a moralizing of the godly Jewish remnant, who in it see man, whatever his pretensions, no better toward God than the beasts that perish. With all their pride, then self-seeking meets its rebuke, for death shall be their shepherd, they being appointed as a flock for Sheol, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning. Their inward thought is, their houses are for ever, their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. This their way is their folly; yet after then men approve their sayings. Such is the world, till the Lord appears and executes judgment.

Genesis 4:18-22

(From W. Kelly)

We have seen under Cain the cradle of public civilized life, the first building of a city; his son named with an expression of initiation or culture, earthly as it was; and the city named in the pride of life after the name of his son: a little beginning of that vast system to rise up ere long in opposition to God, where the knowledge of the Father and of His love never penetrates, where Christ and they that are His cannot escape hatred. It was the resource of man under curse in the land of his exile, who went forth from His presence Who convicted him of sin against man, his brother, no less than against God. Faith alone purifies the heart; but faith was as far from him as love, the fruit of that divine love which unbelief never sees or feels. And as there was no dependence on God, so a bad conscience engendered dread of man: "whosoever findeth me shall slay me," his own words. Within that wretched breast grew up the notion of a city; as his son's name furnished the idea of perpetuating a family boast on earth. Jehovah's name was nothing to his soul, save one of horror, because of his own conscious guilt. He must die like his parents, but {his thought was that} his city, like his

5. (...continued)

came on the scene, the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth. Such is the way and portion of the seed of the serpent.

The city of the first man is brought before us before the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10), provided for by the second man, the great Seed of the woman, through His redeeming work on the cross. May I point out that the reference is not to a literal city? God's city speaks of permanence, and safety, and the divine presence, in contrast to our short stay here on earth.}

In naming things, the first man seeks to perpetuate the remembrance of the first man. Let us take heed and not imitate it.

family, shall continue for ever, his dwellings from generation to generation, and then at least the name should not die. Expulsion from paradise, going out from Jehovah's presence, only gave the occasion to prove how a brave and determined man can rise above the dreariest lot and turn a land of wandering into a settled habitation and secured from marauders and other foes.

And to Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael; and Mehujael begot Methushael; and Methushael begot Lemech. And Lemech took to him two wives; the name of the one [was] Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was father of such as dwell in tents and [have] cattle. And his brother's name [was] Jubal: he was father of all such as handle harp and pipe. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, forger of every tool of copper and iron; and Tubal-Cain's sister [was] Naamah (vv. 18-22).

In this first genealogical draft, what is said of Lemech arrests us. He is marked as violating first the divine order of marriage. It was "not good that the man should be alone." But His provision was not two or more, but one woman, "a helpmate," his counterpart. Self-will, ever growing, did not longer hesitate to traverse God's mind, evidenced sufficiently for those who fear God in His act: and "Lemech took to him two wives." From the beginning it was not so {Matt. 19}. Our Lord treats the account, not as poetic, or mythical, but as authentic and divinely authoritative fact. He also, we may notice, binds together chs. 1 and 2 as parts of one inspired narrative, whatever the difficulties or dreams of *soi-disant* higher criticism, not only erring but in its overweening vanity ignorant of the scriptures, and of the power of God, which faith alone in the nature of things can apprehend and enjoy. Polygamy is a direct transgression of that unity which is of its original institution according to God's will. The law no doubt permitted a measure of license in view of the hard-heartedness of Israel (i.e. of man in the flesh); but the law made nothing perfect: Christ vindicated, as He is, the truth.

The names of Lemech's wives are given, as of our first mother, and these only, with his daughter Naamah, of the antediluvian women. As Eve was named with express significance, it may well be that Lemech's choice denotes the gratification of taste in the growing world. For Adah means "beauty," Zillah "shadow," and Naamah "pleasant." God was not in the thought of their designations. They fell in with the advances of civilization, which disdains the pilgrim and stranger character, so dear to faith. Earth is its home, and every accession of present loveliness is welcomed. Why think of sin or righteousness, of death and judgment, of Christ and His coming? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. A "garden" of Epicurism soon opened when Paradise was closed; and votaries were not wanting long before Epicurus rose among the Greeks or Sadducees among the Jews.

Still clearer or more certain is the inference from the verses that follow.

And Adah bore Jabal: he was father of such as dwell in tents and [have] cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was father of all such as handle harp and pipe. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, forger of every tool of copper and iron; and Tubal-Cain's sister [was] Naamah.

Agriculture was the early occupation of Cain, as Abel had been a shepherd. "Building a city" followed guilt and dread of man without the fear of God acting on a mind stimulated by energy and fertile of resource, and a heart set on earthly hopes. Thenceforward the race progressed rapidly. Some, of whom Jabal is chief, pleased themselves in the rough and adventurous life of nomad herdmen; others struck out and pursued the inventive path of art and science. For Jubal, brother of Jabal, was father of all such as handle stringed and wind instruments: inventions cherished almost alike without a city as within, as experience shows. Nor this only: Tubal-Cain follows, forger (or furbisher) of every tool for cutting instruments of copper and iron. The road to eminence lay open for man alienated from God and indifferent to it, independent of God in will, if not really, and of course wrongly. He acts of and for himself to make the land of his wandering his paradise, of which he is the more proud because these useful or pleasant inventions he can boast of as his own. But he is God's creature, and responsible to obey, and must give account. By Adam's sin he lost his true place and relationship; and instead of seeking another and a better open to faith in the Second man, he prefers his own will, his fancied independence, which is no other than Satan's service, with Satan's doom at the end.

It may not be amiss to notice how the word of God overthrows the modern speculator who assumes the three ages of stone, bronze, and iron, through which they will have early mankind to have passed in pre-historic times. Even had we no inspired record, enough has been gathered from facts of the past to dispel the illusion. Epochs in chronology they are not in any sense. There are regions even now, and not all confined to Australia, whose use of rough stone implements would thus fix them in the palaeolithic age. A similar condition was attested a century ago of races in the northern and eastern districts of the Russian empire, European and Asiatic. And we have good authority (Prof. Rygh, of Christiania, before the Stockholm meeting of the International Congress of Pre-historic Archeology) that, north of Nordland in Norway, the inhabitants remained in the practice of the so-called stone age till the beginning of last century, though for hundreds of years in communication with people who used iron. See *Academy*, August 29, 1874. Again, the races of Mexico, Central America, and Peru, employed weapons of obsidian and implements of bronze, when the Spaniards overran and conquered them. So it was in the early age of Greece, which used stone and bronze together, but not iron any more than did S. America. And what evidence is there of a stone *age* in Egypt, however early we trace the facts?

No one doubts that a few traces of stone appear, and even bronze only prevailed a short while. In Babylonia both flint and bronze were used for war and peace; as were leaden pipes and jars, along with iron; as, much later, stone implements continued to be used, when ancient civilization had reached its zenith with cutting instruments of metal in familiar use (Smith's *Anc. Hist.* 375).

To this day the people in Northern Abyssinia use stone hatchets and flint knives, along with iron poignards. And as to cave dwellers, they are still found, not only in distant lands, but even in a land so near as Spain, where many perished quite recently through sudden floods which surprised whole families. It is a question, not of antiquity, still less of definite ages in that imagined succession, but of civilization; and scripture is express that the settled, ordered, and combined life of a city, as well as the working of metals, and the invention of musical instruments within two main divisions, began early in the life of Adam. The mythical treatment of the question is entirely due to skeptical men of science who prefer hypothesis to well ascertained fact, and seem pleased in opposing revelation.

Genesis 4:23-24

(From W. Kelly)

We have had in Cain the moral history of man outside Paradise, sin fully developed, not against Jehovah only, but, because his own works were evil and his religious service an offering of impenitent folly and rejected, against his believing and righteous brother Abel. Along side of it the long-suffering yet righteous dealings of Jehovah are of the highest interest and instruction, the manifest foreshadowing of His ways in due time with His people Israel, who would abandon promise by God's grace in Christ for conditions of law which flesh presumes to fulfil to its own ruin. Like Cain too, the Jews slew in result Jesus Christ the Righteous, though He came of them according to flesh, their own Messiah, Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Hence they also are gone out from the presence of Jehovah, cursed from the earth for blood-guiltiness, dwell in a land of wandering exile, and, in the evident loss for the present of their divine mission of blessing to all families of the earth, betake themselves to city life, to bold adventure, to the inventions of art and science, and to the amenities of the civilized world. Man's will governs and pursues its onward way, totally indifferent to God's will and glory.

It is therefore not man only, but the firstborn in sin, answering to God's favored people, men religious after the flesh, but in fact unjust and rebellious even to the death of the Righteous One, Whom by the hand of lawless men they did crucify and slay. By fierce imprecation of all the people, His blood is on

them and on their children, and their land as yet like the potter's field to bury strangers in, justly called Akeldama, Blood-Field.

This is followed up in the account of Lemech's words to his wives, on which tradition has hung its myths, and theologians have speculated through not seeing the divine mind and purpose to be gathered from the scripture. Either way God's word is not honored by faith; and who can wonder that edification fails?

And Lemech said unto his wives,
 Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
 Ye wives of Lemech, hearken to my speech:
 For a man I have slain for wounding me,
 And a youth for hurting me;
 If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold,
 Then Lemech too seventy and seven[fold] (vv. 23, 24).

It is the first recorded poetry in the Bible; and God is in no way the object, but self for this life: another and weighty addition to the picture of the world. Whatever the historical circumstances, the aim was to reassure his wives who dreaded the consequences of his violent deeds. Lemech appears to plead that the blood he had shed was shed in self-defence, not murderously like Cain; and therefore he avails himself of the divine shelter of his own forefather as the surest pledge of intervention on his own behalf.

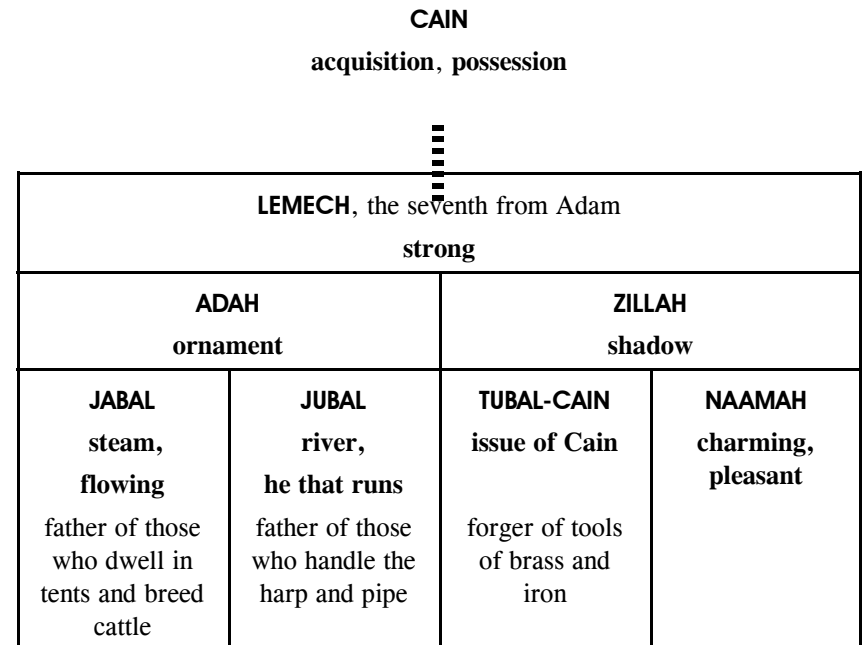
The fact is certain that God watches over His ancient people, guiltier far than Cain, but of blood that speaks better than that of Abel. For if the Jew has been kept, in the face of man ever hostile and ready to slay, in the face of more spiteful Christendom, Greek or Latin, utterly ignorant of God's secret purpose to pardon and bless in the end, neither bloody crusades of old nor cruel ukases now, will succeed to exterminate Israel, but only to bring punishment another day on their adversaries. There they are, wanderers but preserved, as no people ever was, for everlasting mercy when their heart turns to God and Him Whom they cast out. And here in Lemech's words, though he may have meant nothing higher than the sad facts of Cain's deed or his own, can we not hear the inspired image of the Jew's confession in the latter day? Assuredly we know on authority which cannot be broken, that the repentant Jew will yet own, like their forefathers in the analogous case of Joseph, but about One greater and better than Joseph, We were very guilty concerning our brother. For the prophet declares what divine goodness and truth will yet fulfil: --

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourned' for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn (Zech. 12:10).

Lemech's saying, therefore, is an unconscious prophecy like that of Caiaphas, but of the Jews acknowledging, not hiding, blood-guiltiness (Psa. 50), the blood of their own King: and of what a King! Himself, the sacrifice for the sin which slew Him; and those who in their blind unbelief were thus guilty brought to true faith and real repentance, thenceforward to have God blessing them, causing His face to shine upon (with) them that His way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations . . .

Lemech, the Seventh from Adam

HIS FAMILY A PICTURE OF THE WORLD AWAY FROM GOD



In Jude 11 our attention is directed to Enoch, the seventh from Adam. While it is true that this gives certainty that the Enoch in the line of Cain is not meant, suppose Jude had not said the seventh from Adam, would you have supposed that reading Gen. 4, 5 you would come to the conclusion that Cain's son was prophesying such coming judgment? I suggest that the *seventh* directs our thoughts to two matters:

- (1) that as the number seven in Scripture is used to show the completeness of something, so Enoch points typically to some work that God would

complete; and

(2) it invites us to also examine the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, i.e., Lamech (Gen. 4:19-24), and contrast the two. In Lamech's family we see how that in certain aspects the world came to matured expression in Cain's line. Previously, no woman's name had been given since Eve, and no daughter's name had been given until now. But, while three sons of Lamech are noted, and remarkably, a daughter is named, the purpose is not to continue the line of Cain.

So, some point is reached in the seventh from Adam in each line and in marked contrast when we consider this Enoch and this Lamech. We Christians need to remember and practice what our Lord said in prayer to His Father:

I have given them thy word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world (John 17:14).

Enoch is a type of those who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18) before the Lord comes in glory to execute judgments in the earth. Noah points to those who shall be preserved for the millennial earth. This Lamech gives us the world away from God, which, as it was swept away in judgment in Noah's day, shall be judged in its present state when Christ comes in glory to set up the kingdom reign of 1000 years.

The meaning of the names in Lamech's family shows a satisfaction and complacency of being away from God. The sons of Lamech, the self-sufficient strong one, by Adah, are an ornament to him. Jabal and Jubal indicate progress is being made. There is another side, another aspect to these things, brought before us by Zillah. Though there is a *shadow* (Zillah) over all (for death is not eliminated), and Tubal-Cain reminds us that all is, really, the issue of Cain who willfully went out of the presence of Jehovah, it is *pleasant* (Naamah) not to have to do with God -- however fatal.

The world is fully expressed in Lamech, his wives, and his off-spring. This is fully expressed in *the seventh* from Adam in the line of the seed of the serpent -- thus the line is not followed further as in Enoch's case.

It has been remarked that gold and silver is not mentioned. Perhaps Tubal-Cain did work with those metals. The point is that they are not mentioned, as in keeping with what is meant to be suggested to our spiritual exercise regarding this family of the seventh from Adam in Cain's line. In the types, gold speaks of divine righteousness and silver speaks of redemption.⁶

ANOTHER PICTURE BASED ON WHAT LAMECH SAID TO HIS WIVES

And Lamech said to his wives:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,

Ye wives of Lamech, listen to my speech.

For I have slain a man for my wound, and a youth for my bruise.

If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold:

Lamech seventy and seven fold (Gen. 4:23, 24).

Previously, comment was made about Cain being a picture of the Jews slaying Christ. Cain slaying Abel is a picture of the fallen first man slaying the second man. In the trial of the fallen first man to show that he was not recoverable, the trial took a certain form in the persons of the Jews. Finally, they, using the Gentiles, slew Christ, as Peter charged (Acts 2:23). Meanwhile, they, like Cain's line, are preserved from extinction. Concerning what Lamech said, E. Dennett wrote:

In the history of Lamech we have on man's part self-will in lust. He had two wives, and vengeance in self-defense; but, I apprehend, an intimation in God's judgment, that as Cain was the preserved though punished Jew, his posterity at the end, before the heir was raised up and men called on Jehovah in the earth, would be sevenfold watched over of God. Lamech acknowledges he had slain to his hurt, but shall be avenged.

Thus far is a citation from the well-known *Synopsis*. A few words may be added in further explanation. The "self-will in lust" of Lamech is seen in his wilful departure from the institution of marriage in Paradise (Gen. 2:24). He acted in self-gratification in having two wives. He also, as pointed out, avenged himself, and that at the cost of the life of his enemy. The two forms of evil, on account of which God afterwards sent the flood, viz., corruption and violence (see Gen. 6:12, 13), are both combined in Lamech. Hence he acknowledges that he had slain a man to his wounding and hurt; for these things must bring down the judgment of God. But Lamech also, as descended from Cain, is a type of the Jew of a later day; and, inasmuch as he is introduced before the "heir is raised up" -- that is Seth, who becomes a figure of Christ (for it is in His days, in the kingdom, that men will call upon the name of Jehovah) -- there can be but little doubt that the sin of Lamech is a foreshadowing (as also the sin of Cain) of the wickedness of the Jews in rejecting and crucifying Christ. In this light all is plain. The sin was great when the Jewish nation by wicked hands crucified and slew their Messiah; and it was most surely to their "wounding," and to their "hurt"; for to this day they abide under the judgment of God on account of His blood. (See Matt. 27:25.) Notwithstanding, great as has been their iniquity, God preserves them, and avenges, and will avenge them "seventy-and-sevenfold" on any

6. See *Types and Symbols of Scripture*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

nation that may seek to destroy them from off the face of the earth.⁷

Some General Remarks on Cain's World

(From J. N. Darby.)

❖ We may try to make the best of the world; but we must all feel that something has come in, something that has brought in death and judgment. Happiness cannot be associated with sin, any more than sin can be associated with God. As for man, though he seeks to buoy himself up with his sins, and to delude himself with the lie of Satan, sink he must, sooner or later, under the power of the sin and death that has come in. He is just spending his energies to make the world pleasant without God, and himself comfortable and rich in it, to die out of it.

The world he cannot keep. He may build a city for himself, as Cain did (Gen. 4:17), and call it after his own name (Cain called his city after the name of his son); but it will be with him as David speaks,

Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their saying. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them (Psa. 49).

Cain did not like the sense of the wrath of God lying upon him. Gone out from the presence of Jehovah (Gen. 4:16), he had become so great in the earth that he could build a city. Man never likes to be in the truth of his condition. Cain likes not to be “a fugitive and a vagabond,” and he tries to build a city, and he does build a city, in the endeavor to make the world as pleasant as he can without God. It might be said, What harm was there in building a city? In the first place there would never have been the necessity for this in paradise. Moreover it was a proof of insensibility as to this sin against God; it showed quiet contentment under the effect of that punishment which at first he had felt was greater than he could bear; it was the last expression of total alienation of heart and affection from God. Driven out from the presence of God, he sets about to establish himself. He seeks for himself a home, not with God in heaven, but on the earth, from which God had pronounced him “cursed.” He makes himself master of a city, where God had made him “a vagabond.”

And mark further the faculty man has of making himself happy in his estrangement from God. We find amongst the family of Cain not only “the

7. *The Christian Friend* 1888, pp. 163, 164.

father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle” (Gen. 4:20), but “the father of such as handle the harp and the organ” (Gen. 4:21), and “the instructor of ever artificer in brass and iron” (Gen. 4:22). Now there is nothing wrong in working brass and iron; neither is there any harm in sweet sounds (we read in the book of Revelation of harpers in heaven); but what Cain was doing was this -- he was making the world pleasant without God.

These are the efforts of man, who has settled himself down in a world where judgment has placed him, and who is trying to make himself as happy and the world as pleasant as he can without God, till death and judgment overtake him. If I saw a man who had committed some wicked crime against his father, the next day playing on musical instruments, should I say there was no harm in that? Such was Cain's world. And is it not like your⁸ world? Is there any difference between your soul and Cain's world? Is it a better world because God's Son has been crucified in it? Has that act on the part of man made it more acceptable to God? (because that has happened since the days of Cain). Where is the difference? They had their “harps and organs”; and so have you. They had their “artificers in brass and iron”; and so have you. It was Cain's world then away from God, and it is Cain's world still. The like tree produces like fruit. Man is carrying on the world by himself, and for himself, endeavoring to keep God out of sight, as much as possible to do without Him, lest He should get at his conscience and make him miserable.

Can you find any difference between Cain's world without God and your world without God? You may object that you are not without God, that you are called by the name of Christ -- are Christians, and have a religion also. Cain had a religion. He was a religious man, as religious as Abel. But he had no love to God; he had no faith. He was a religious man, but not a godly man.

It is a strange introduction to this picture, the setting forth of Cain as a worshiper, and a worshiper moreover of the true God. We read,

And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah (Gen. 4:2, 3).

There is no mention made of false gods before the flood. Cain was a worshiper of the one living and true God. Soon after the flood there were idolaters; and then God called out a separate people as witnesses of His character to make good His name and grace. But there is not any mention made of false gods

8. The believer is “not of the world”; his home and citizenship are in heaven, and his walk down here on the earth should be in the distinct consciousness, and in the distinct confession, that he “seeks a country” (Heb. 11:14). This is of the last importance: anything of the earth is of that which rejected Christ.

before Josh. 24:6-8, “Your fathers worshiped other gods”: a fresh crime, a fresh snare of the enemy, which called for new measures on the part of God. Satan had come and slipped himself in between man and God, and was the one that was really worshiped, though under the name of gods; and the call of Abram was the call and witness of “the most high God.”

Your “artificers in brass and iron” are worshipers of the true God. So was Cain. And he took some pains too. He offered that which he had been toiling for in “the sweat of his brow.” He was a “tiller of the ground,” and he “brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah.” He did not bring that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24); nay, his worship cost more of toil than that of Abel. He came in the way of nature, offering the fruit of his toil and labor; and you have done the same. This is ever the character of false worship. Religiousness does not take a man out of the character of Cain; it the rather brings him into it. So that you have not got one step in that way out of the character God has marked as that of Cain. ❖⁹

Cain, Sin, and Crime

Concerning Cain’s crime and punishment, the following from J. G. Bellett is helpful:

There is the light of righteousness or holiness. But the refusal of it is not without remedy. In that light the Lord God had come into the garden and called, “Adam, where art thou?” Adam could not stand it; for he had sinned. It was intolerable to him. He had come short of that glory. He retreats from it. And then the Lord God shines in another light. The promise is made. The character of the glory is changed. God seats Himself in a light which the sinner can approach, and, believing, Adam comes forth.

This was the light which Cain despised, the light of salvation, the light of the promise, the light in which God shines before men outside the garden. And Cain is therefore cursed as Adam had not been. As it is said of another generation, “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.”

All this is the solemn history of the first unbeliever. But the treasury of corrupt nature that was in him spends itself in further ways of wickedness. In him was rising that spring which was to give out “its superfluity of naughtiness.” He lies after all this, and justifies himself. “I know not,” says he; “am I my brother’s keeper?” For “the lusts of his father he would do”; and when the devil “speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

9. “Cain, His World, and His Worship, *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 12:317-320.

All this, however, and even more than this, was man, and not Cain merely. It was the ruined heart of man exposing itself. And because it was this, because it was the common nature that was thus disclosing itself, the Lord takes the judgment of it away from man. “Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold”; for none are without sin.

Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.

All are in the like condemnation. No one can take up the stone and cast it at another. And in order to express this great principle of truth, and that God alone has either title or competency to deal with sin, the Lord will not allow any man to touch the fratricide. By this divine writing on the case, all are to go out convicted, one by one, and leave the sinner with God (John 8).

For the ends of government, when government in the earth becomes the divine purpose, said, Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed (Gen. 9:6). But this is not so as yet. And for the teaching of the common pravity, that all of us may be humbled by the common conviction, that “we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” not one of the whole human family is allowed to touch this wicked Cain. And so to this day, when government has been divinely set up, it is not sin that it deals with. *Crimes*, or offences against public order, and *wrongs* done to individuals, may be judged by man; but to take vengeance on *sin* would be the assuming of personal guiltlessness. “He that is *without sin* among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” God has to deal with *sin alone*.¹⁰

Genesis 4:25-26: A New Line Appointed

(25) And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and called his name Seth: . . . for God has appointed me another seed instead of Abel, because Cain slew [him]. (26) And to Seth, to him also was born a son, and he called his name Enosh. Then people began to call on the name of Jehovah (Gen. 4:25, 26).

Gen. 4 gives us the origin and history of Cain’s line, but before we come to the next section (Gen. 5), The Word of God tells us of God’s acting in sovereign grace in view of this development of the world in self-willed departure from

10. *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 23-25, n.d.

God (Rom. 1:20, 21).¹¹ Thus, after looking at the history of Cain's line, what is for Jehovah? The Eve's expectation according to nature produced Cain -- only evil. We now have the appointed man, Seth, brought before us. Instead of Eve's "I have acquired a man with Jehovah" (Gen. 4:2), we have here, I suggest, Adam naming the child, and the recognition that the sovereign *Elohim* had stepped in in grace, having appointed one in the place of Abel. Abel speaks of the first man killing the second man, and in the ways of God Christ was slain by the Jews -- using wicked hands of the Gentiles (Acts 2:23) (and Pilate's washing his hands did not relieve him of guilt). Thus, the world is guilty of the crime. Seth points to Christ in resurrection.

The seed of the serpent (Cain) thought to have gotten rid of the hated seed of the woman (Abel). But God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, in the heavenly and earthly spheres, will not be thwarted. His appointments ensure this. Thus Seth (meaning appointed), continues the line. This appointment is like Christ in resurrection. And from Seth flows a godly line.

Moreover, Seth named his son Enosh, meaning mortal man, or fallen man. The correct recognition of the true case of man's state before God is most important. "Then people began to call on the name of *Jehovah*." Thus is dependency expressed by the godly while the line of Cain walks in independence of God.

Those of Seth's line do not form a called-out people, of course; *calling* began with Abraham. However, Seth's line is distinctly marked and were for the pleasure of Jehovah. What is for the pleasure of Jehovah has its source in Himself, as does all that is suitable to Him.

So we see the parents of Seth acknowledging dependence in the place where sin had brought them. They understood that God acts sovereignly. Therefore they rightly named Seth, and Seth in *his* family acknowledged the true state of fallen man by naming his son Enosh. This is the way of blessing for all saints whatever position they may occupy in the unfolding of God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

11. Perhaps it is well to say that though Rom. 1 is specifically about the post-flood world, we have the principles of the world traced in Gen. 4.

Christ is the Measure

Christ judged on the cross is the measure of God's hatred and judgment of sin.

Christ judged on the cross is the measure of what God is as light.

Christ is the measure of our completeness before God. In Him dwells all the fulness, or completeness, and we are complete in Him (Col. 2:9, 10).

Christ is the measure of our place before the Father. Our place is the Beloved's place (Eph. 1:6).

Christ is the measure of the love wherewith we are loved (John 15:9).

Ed.

Christ Had Two Wills

Christ is fully God and He is fully man. Godhead and manhood are united in Him in a way incomprehensible to the finite mind. He took manhood into His person and remained one person -- the God-man. He had a human will and a divine will. Scripture presents Him that way. As we speak of the humanity united to the deity, we speak of Him as the divine-human One. His humanity is not independent of the deity. How can this be? "[The] Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of [the] Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Son of God in eternity, He is Son of God in time, as man.

In Christ's person there are two wills, human and divine. The human will is not independent of the divine will. In Christ there is the divine-human will.

In Christ's person there is human "I" and divine "I". The human "I" is not independent of the divine "I". In Christ there is the divine-human I.

In Christ's person there are two personalities, human and divine. The human personality is not independent of the divine personality. In Christ there is divine-human personality.

This is the confession that He is the man, Christ Jesus. Without human "I" He would not be man. Without human personality, He would not be man.

To deny human personality in Christ's person is fundamental evil, i.e., leaven. Without that He is not true man. This is the denial of the truth of His Person as God and man, the God-man. That is evil in itself, and the denial also undermines the atonement, for without human personality a true man did not die for us.

This denial of human "I", human personality, in Christ is as evil as the denial of the eternal Sonship of the Son of God. One attacks His complete Godhood and the other attacks His complete manhood. In either case, it is a false Christ, leavenous teaching. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

Roy A. Huebner -- Ed.

Exposition of Romans 9-11

Part 1, Romans 9

(Continued)

Romans 9:6-13

(6) Not however as though the word of God had failed; for not all [are] Israel which [are] of Israel; (7) nor because they are seed of Abraham [are] all children: but, In Isaac shall a seed be called to thee. (8) That is, [they that are] the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed. (9) For this word [is] of promise, According to this time I will come, and there shall be a son to Sarah. (10) And not only [that], but Rebecca having conceived by one, Isaac our father, (11) [the children] indeed being not yet born, or having done anything good or worthless (that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls), (12) it was said to her, The greater shall serve the less: (13) according as it is written, I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau.

The blessing will be in conformity with the purpose of God according to the election of grace. It was displayed in the past by His rejecting the children of the flesh, and sovereignly choosing the children of the promise. If blessing is obtained by mere descent, Ishmael (Arabs) and Esau (Edomites) must be included. The Jews, claiming descent (“We are Abraham’s children” (John 8:39)) was, in effect, the denial of blessing by sovereign grace alone. Sovereign grace, as we shall see, can bless Gentiles also, *now*, apart from covenants and/or promises.

Romans 9:6-9: The Children of the Promise Are Reckoned as Seed, as Isaac

The word of God has not failed regarding the promises to Israel. They will be made good when the present work of God is completed. It is instructive for us to know the following principle in the ways of God:

The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural,

then that which is spiritual (1 Cor. 15:45, 46).

This is a principle in God’s ways with man. As applied to Israel, observe that He gave the promises unconditionally. Then Israel undertook to gain the promises by works of law. They ended in crucifying their Messiah and have been set aside for a period. Let us call them the old Israel under the old, Mosaic Covenant. First was the natural Israel. Meanwhile God is doing another work, and when it is completed He will take up with Israel again and sovereignly make of them the new Israel under the New Covenant. That will be the spiritual Israel, they all being saved (Rom. 11:26). The old Israel was part of the trial of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable from the fall. The new Israel, the spiritual Israel, will be the fruit of sovereign grace. This follows the principle that first is the natural and afterwards is the spiritual. This is God’s way of doing things. Our place is to learn from it. This will help us to see why it is in the book of Genesis, that wherever it can be determined who the firstborn was, the line of blessing was not through him. The firstborn was always set aside from the firstborn’s place. God’s way is: first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual. This pointed to the first man and the second man (1 Cor. 15:45-47), the first being set aside.

The word of God has not failed, for not all that have sprung from Israel are of the Israel to be blessed (cp. Rom. 2:29).

If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham . . .
Ye are of the devil, as [your] father, and ye desire to do the lusts of your father (John 8:39, 44).

The failure was, therefore, in Israel.

The Apostle had stated that the Fathers belong to Paul’s kinsmen according to flesh. That is, of course, true, because he said so. But that ethnicity, though necessary, is not of itself sufficient to obtain the blessing. The Apostle will now show from the fathers that natural descent is no guarantee of the blessing being obtained, and that *the divine purpose of God according to election secures the blessing*. That being the case, He can also act sovereignly as He does now in calling Jew and Gentile.

In v. 7 “seed of Abraham” here means those descended naturally from Abraham (cp. John 8:37, 39). Hagar’s son Ishmael as well as the children of Keturah were each of them “seed of Abraham” in the sense of natural descendants. But these were not children of God according to promise. So, then, it is Isaac who was the child of promise and is reckoned the seed in the spiritual sense (v. 7).

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall indeed bear thee a son: and thou shalt call his name Isaac {laughter}; and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. And as for Ishmael . . .

But my covenant will I establish with Isaac (Gen. 17:19-21).

It was made clear to Abraham that Sarah would have a son by promise of Jehovah, though we know Sarah was past the natural age to have children. The point is that Isaac's conception was from above nature, even the special act of Jehovah. The child of promise is elect. God's election is uncontingent and determinative.

Ishmael was one of "the children of the flesh" of v. 8. The distinction between Isaac and Ishmael is sharply drawn in Gal. 4:28, 29:

But ye, brethren, after the pattern of Isaac, are children of promise. But as then he that was born according to flesh persecuted him [that was born] according to Spirit, so also is it now.

The thing mentioned in the OT that Ishmael did to Isaac was that he mocked when Isaac was weaned.¹

Accordingly, by sovereign action the child of the promise would be born (v. 9):

Is [any] matter too wonderful for Jehovah? At the time appointed I will return to thee, at [this] time of the year, and Sarah shall have a son (Gen. 18:10).

So Isaac was in the line of promise and Ishmael was excluded. Natural descent is not the sole basis for obtaining the blessing, else Ishmael would have been in the line of blessing.

Note that OT saints are called saints and elect in the OT. They were quickened, i.e., born of God, having had communicated to them spiritual life from God. In Rom. 9:8 we learn that they were children of God (as is seen also in John 11:52), but that fact was not a *revealed* ground of relationship with God in the OT. They were not, of course, sealed with the Spirit of sonship, which is true only of believers in Christ.

Before continuing, let us pause to note that the Apostle does not say that the word of God has not failed because the privileges of Israel are inherited by, and fulfilled, in the church; and/or that Israel has no future as a nation under Messiah's sway.

Romans 9:10-13: Sovereign Choice of Jacob

"And not only that" (v. 10), that case of Isaac, but there is the instructive case

1. I am aware that there are writers on Scripture that are not able to find out how Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Apparently they do not think mocking is a form of persecution. Thus they are driven to ridiculous suppositions explaining Gal. 4:29, a sign of an agenda.

of Jacob and Esau who had the same father and mother, which Ishmael did not. Let us bring into this the notion of God 'looking down the avenue of time' and seeing what would happen, then electing Jacob. Can you not see how such a notion evacuates the text of meaning? That is just an attempt to get rid of the truth of election; namely, that God can, and does, chose of His own will who will be saved. What is the point to referring to them "being not yet born, or having done anything good or worthless"? Also, they were twins. The point is that the issue does not hinge in any way on *time* -- "being not yet born" -- nor on their *conduct* -- "or having done anything good or worthless." The issue, then, is *God's election, God's sovereign choice*:

that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls.

The fact that Gen. 25:23 says that two nations were in Rebecca's womb is beside the point made by the Apostle. It is the birth precedence that is the point here. The "*purpose of God*" is the explanation for what He does. It is not the purpose of God to act contingently, to determine what He does by what man does. That is what the notion of moral free will towards God really means. The notion of moral free will towards God makes God's actions in purpose and in salvation contingent on what man does. But this text is very clearly against the notion.

The case differs somewhat from the case of Ishmael and Isaac. It might be said (1) that the rejection of Ishmael was because he was not born of Sarah. He was born of a bondwoman; and (2) that Isaac was selected after Ishmael was alive for a while. Any caviling because of such things is cut off by the case of Esau and Jacob who had the *same* father and mother, and besides were twins. Parentage and birth order do not nullify election according to purpose.

Esau was born first. In our text, as the firstborn he is called the greater. In the book of Genesis wherever we can find out who the firstborn was, we see that he is set aside. This is warp and woof of the book of Genesis. It is in keeping with the fact that the first man was to be set aside and displaced by another (cf. 1 Cor. 15:45-47). This is in the purpose of God -- and His election encompasses the display of this truth. It is important for the soul to apprehend this truth: the first man is set aside. The first man is *the man of responsibility* and the second man is *the man of God's purpose*. Esau and Jacob illustrate God's purpose to displace the first man, Adam, and establish the second man, our Lord Jesus Christ. This divine purpose regarding Christ is why God set aside the cultural practice and reversed the order: the elder shall serve the younger.

We might pause to notice that there are those who say election is only corporate,² thus getting rid of God's sovereign election of individuals. Isaac and Jacob are examples of individual, sovereign choice, there being no corporate nation of Israel at that time.

What a sorry spectacle Isaac is in Gen. 27, being belly-minded! The six-fold mention of the *savory dish*, such as he loved, is most ominous. In his occupation with his stomach, he failed to heed the word of Jehovah in Gen. 25:23. His son took a much further step in belly-mindedness and sold the birthright for a mess of pottage, despising the birthright (Heb. 12:16, 17). Is there a lesson in these things? Isaac's wife, and son, Jacob, conspired to deceive him so that the principal blessing would fall upon Jacob. Now, we might rightly perceive that Jacob wanted to be in the line of blessing and that was well, but the deception was not in keeping with the faith he had. He never saw his mother again. She died before he returned home some 20 years later. These are matters of God's governmental/disciplinary ways with His own, as was all that Jacob passed through under Laban. None of this, however, caused God's purpose to be what it was. *He* has a purpose according to election: **“that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls.”**

Regarding the statement, “I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau,” in Malachi's day there was a moral basis in evidence for God's hating Esau, but there was never a moral basis in evidence for God loving *you*, reader, to save you.

Let us hear from W. Kelly on this, commenting on Mal. 1:

In this case how unbecoming the language of Israel: “Wherein hast thou loved us?” What was it for Israel to ask such a question of Jehovah? Yet He deigns to answer in grace:

I have loved you, saith Jehovah; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?

Jehovah, as usual, rises up to the source of things. “Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob.” Then He adds, “and I hated Esau.” I do not think it would be true to draw this inference at the beginning of their history. But it is just an instance of what the best of men do in their haste. God withholds the sentence of hatred till it is evidently justified by the conduct and ways of Esau, more particularly towards Jacob, but indeed towards Himself. In short, it would be quite true to say that God loved Jacob from the first, but that He never

2. The erroneous notion of “corporate election” of the church is a device to get rid of individual election, the total lostness of man, and to maintain the idea of moral free will towards God. This notion is considered in Appendix 7 of *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men* (available from Present Truth Publishers). To use the words “corporate election” both of Israel and the church is preposterous. The nation of Israel has a national election to supremacy under Messiah's reign, and is an earthly matter. There is no analogy with the church.

pronounces hatred until that be manifest which utterly repels and rejects Himself with contempt, deliberately going on in pursuit of its own way and will in despal of God. Then only does He say, “I hated Esau.” Along with this He draws attention to the fact that He “laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.” Thus, apart from such profanity, if God “despise not any,” we may be perfectly sure He hates not any. Such an idea could not enter a mind which was nurtured in the word of God, apart from the reasonings of men. I say not this because of the smallest affinity with what is commonly called Arminianism; for I have just as little affinity with Calvinism. I believe the one to be as derogatory to God's glory as the other, though in very different ways -- the one by exalting man most unduly, and the other by prescribing for God, and consequently not saying the thing that is right of Him.

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

To my own mind then it is full of the deepest interest, that while God chose before the children were born, and decided what was to be the lot of the one relatively to the other, He never made any man to be a sinner. No doubt the children of Adam are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity; mankind are born in that condition. Their whole being is lost in it. It is no question therefore of making man a sinner, because since the fall he departed from God and the race is evil without exception. Man belongs to a stock now wholly depraved -- evil the sad and universal heirloom. God's election is entirely independent of what He finds, and

spite of all evil. He elects angels no doubt that never fell: even so they had nothing to do with determining the rest who were not so kept. In every case it is simply a question of God's choice. But the fallen condition of man gives to God's election, where sinners are the only possible objects, an exceeding beauty and very deep moment. He chooses entirely apart from anything that deserves it, in the face of all that is out of harmony with Himself. It is not so where He judges and rejects.

When He says "Esau have I hated," He waits to the last moment, till Esau has shown what he is. The first book of the Bible lets us see His choice of Jacob. Only the last book tells us of His hatred of Esau. I do not say that we do not find His moral condemnation of Esau's spirit long before this, but He is patient in the execution of judgment. Long-suffering belongs to God, and is inseparable from His moral nature, while He delays to execute judgment on evil. All-powerful and good, He is nevertheless for that very reason perfect in patience. Now the sentence comes forth from His lips, and may well be felt to be a serious matter.

Yet Esau's ill-conduct to Jacob was not the only or the worst element of evil which comes into judgment. He was profane Godward, despising everything done on God's part, save that which brought sensibly before him the greater dignity to which his brother was promoted. Then he who sold it for a morsel of meat in the hour of want feels and resents keenly his loss of place and honor, even though he seemed one of those characters devoted only to that which man can do in this present life. He had no confidence in God: beyond this life no thought, no desire. If he could live in ease and honor, not without energy and action, that was enough for Esau. Why should he seek more than to enjoy present life, or, if needful, carry his point by main force? But that is practically a denial of God, particularly of His goodness and His sovereign choice. It is also a denial of one's own sin, of the real import of death, of resurrection, and of glory. There was undoubtedly a great deal unsatisfactory enough in Jacob, just as there is alas! in most of us. There is a great deal beyond question which proves how brittle and broken we are as men. Jacob shows us the difference by comparison with one who walked with God, and hence styled with singular beauty the friend of God. Jacob stands in painful contrast with Abraham in many respects. Though Abraham, we know, failed gravely now and then, still failure was not what characterized him in the same way as it checkered (we will not say characterized) Jacob. Intercourse with God stamped its attractive, softening, ennobling influence with a wonderful disinterestedness on Abraham's life and ways; whereas Jacob has the feebleness that belongs to one who knew not so to walk with God by faith. Craft, or a mind ever seeking to manage and so accomplish his ends, belongs to such as he. Self tarnished, but did not shut out God, with nothing but will to govern: this {the shutting out of God} is rather what we see in Esau. Jacob was really a different man. Even when going on with his devices to benefit himself,

he looked to God for a blessing of which he realized the need. Thus it was certainly by no means the happiest form of the life of faith -- far from it; hence a great deal takes the shape of warning to us in Jacob as in most, but genuine faith was there spite of all. Thus, not having a good conscience, he fell into a sort of fraud on his brother Esau in the first instance, and not much better when we last hear of the brothers meeting each other. We must remember he was a man naturally timid: only dependence on God does not find but make us what we should be.

And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

God was against him.

Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places.

Thus we see the strength of will to the last: he would fight it out even with God.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, Jehovah will be magnified from the border of Israel.³

On the other hand, there is no ground favorable to that absolute reprobation which Calvin deduces from this place . . . Man hastily infers reprobation of the one from the choice of the other. This is unfounded.⁴

3. *Introductory Lectures to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, Malachi, pp. 505-512.

4. *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, London: Morrish, p. 174, n.d. See the passage.

Regarding W. Kelly's remark that "there is no ground favorable to that absolute reprobation that Calvin deduces from this place," observe how John Murray deduces absolute reprobation:

This quotation by Paul from Malachi 1:2, 3 is for the purpose of elucidating or confirming what had just been quoted from Genesis 25:23. It must, therefore, be construed as having relevance to the same situation as that to which the oracle to Rebecca applies. Since the oracle points to a discrimination that existed before the children were born or had done good or evil (vs. 11), so must the differentiation in the present instance . . . it must be interpreted as hate with the positive character which usage indicates, a hate determinative as the unfulfilling purpose in terms of which the discrimination between Jacob and Esau took place. In view of what Paul teaches elsewhere respecting the ultimacy of the counsel of God's will, it would not be proper to say that the ultimate destinies of Jacob and Esau were outside his purview (*The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2:23, 1965).

For the Calvinist it must "be construed" as meaning what it *would* have meant if God had said it before they were born, though God did not state it before they were born. His stating it long after

(continued...)

4. (...continued)

cannot have another significance. The love and the hatred, they say, were before and therefore they are *co-ordinate*, though some Calvinists hedge about this. That is, election of the believer and reprobation of the unbeliever are co-ordinate, eternal decrees of God. That is, election of the believer and reprobation of the unbeliever are of equal ultimacy. That is, the human logic that arrives at a decree of reprobation will also arrive at co-ordinate decrees of equal ultimacy. Better than trying to hedge about “co-ordinate” and “ultimate” it would be well to reject the notion of a decree of reprobation.

The choice of Jacob was not contingent on foreseen character of either Jacob or Esau. That choice was stated before the twins were born. God’s hatred of Esau was expressed long, long after Esau had manifested his character. It is well to learn from this and let it have its force with us. Such presentations of truth are a test regarding our bowing to how God presents His truth, rather than framing a system of theology.

There are advocates of an eternal decree of reprobation who, rightly believing that God’s eternal purpose of the election of the believer is the ultimate cause of his salvation, say, for example, that:

Reprobation is God’s eternal purpose to pass by certain individuals in the bestowment of special grace, ordaining them to everlasting punishment for their sins . . .
(W. Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary, *Romans*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p 320, 1981).

Though he added regarding reprobation and election that “it would be wrong to say that they are co-ordinate in every respect,” he called reprobation “an eternal decree.” God’s word speaks of blessings purposed for the believer from before the foundation of the world, but never speaks of reprobating (or hardening, either) from before the foundation of the world. The Calvinistic logic rushes in to speak of what God has not stated: since there is a divine decree of election of the believer, there must be a parallel (but not “co-ordinate in every respect”) divine decree of reprobation. But, as Lorraine Boettner said:

To affirm the former (*election*) while denying the latter (*reprobation*) makes the decree of punishment logical and possible. The one which states the former and denies the latter will resemble a wounded eagle attempting to fly with but one wing (quoted in my *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*, p. 252).

I suppose that eagles generally have two wings that are co-ordinate. Since *election* of the believer is the efficient cause of his salvation, *reprobation* of the unbeliever, if believed, ought, co-ordinately, to be the efficient cause of his everlasting punishment. Such a bird would have co-ordinate wings. But the truth is that Scripture speaks of no such doctrine of reprobation, co-ordinate, or un-co-ordinate, or partially co-ordinate. Scripture speaks of a book of life, but not of a book of reprobation. Does that sound like an eagle with only one wing, if Dr. Boettner’s analogy has any weight? The truth as presented in Scripture is that because of self-will, Adam fell, and all men are lost. God eternally purposed to save some -- the rest are left to the results of the fall. Reprobation and hardening in Scripture follow man’s manifested behavior, not preceding it as a cause of the behavior.

The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men (Present Truth Publishers) deals with these things and the texts alleged to prove reprobation just as Rom. 9:13 is supposed to be a proof-text for an eternal decree of reprobation. This logic is as faulty on the Calvinistic side as when an Arminian, on the other side, says that if man is responsible, he has the ability to pay. He defiantly says this in the face of the fact that man does not keep the law, and most likely will not tell the bankrupt man that owes him ten million dollars that since you cannot pay, why, you have no
(continued...)

Query

Regarding the Hymn,

Thy Father in His gracious love,
Did spare thee from His side . . .

and the objection that this conflicts with the Son’s ever dwelling in the Father’s bosom {John 1:18} – such matters are ever increasingly precious to my soul. The Father help all His children in holy reverence!

I do not know what the hymn-writer had in mind, but concerning the words, I see truth in them, as well as the truth that the Son ever dwells in the bosom of the Father. It seems to me that Scripture teaches both these things.

That the Son is eternally in the Father’s bosom is true; of course, even while on the cross during the three hours of darkness. The cross could not alter eternal relationships in the Godhead.

Concerning sending the Son, see the footnote in JND’s translation to John 1:14 regarding the word “with.” Also in John 16:18. Then, what about John 15:26, where the same is used of the Holy Spirit? He, too was sent, “who goes forth from with the Father.” The Spirit, who is omnipresent, nonetheless is also sent. So, it means He has come in a special sense, for a special function -- in connection with believers presently, and regarding the church -- and in this sense will be removed at the rapture (i.e., He is the restrainer of 2 Thess. 2), yet continues unchangeably omnipresent. That is never altered or untrue at any time.

The Son is ever, uninterruptedly, in the bosom of the Father, yet in John 16:28 He comes out from with God, and adds, “I came out from with the Father and am come into the world.” It appears to me that here the coming out from with the Father is noted as preceding His coming into the world. For myself, I understand this as, *so to speak*, motion in the Godhead preceding His coming into the world in holy manhood. It shows the sending from the Father occurring before the incarnation, and thus addresses the matter of the eternal Sonship which men attack. But we are considering what is really not comprehensible to the human mind, though we apprehend something of it.

4. (...continued)

responsibility. To each of these sides, their respective false affirmations seem eminently logical -- but they are not according to what God has stated.

As with *hardening*, so is the case with *reprobation*: these are spoken of in scripture as a judgment upon sinners after the manifestation of a course of sin, as with Pharaoh, as with the Gentiles (Rom. 1), as with the blindness of Israel (Rom. 11), and as with the present Gentile profession of Christianity (Rom. 11:21; see also 2 Thess. 2:11, 12).

Concerning the Son, His actual entrance into the world was in manhood. When He said, “again, I leave the world and go to the Father,” He was speaking of His bodily ascension in Acts 1.

For myself, I see, then, that the character of the Father sending the Son to be the Savior was sending from with the Father, which was before the incarnation, but the Son’s entrance into the world was by incarnation. This does not touch the meaning of John 1:18; He ever dwells in the bosom of the Father.

But there is even more than His ascension into heaven, amazing as that is. John 17:5 means His taking manhood into the glory He had with the Father *before this world ever existed*. He has taken that manhood into very Godhead glory! It staggers the mind!

Ed.

Dr. Arnold Fructenbaum’s Comment on Gentile Christians’ Observance of Christmas and Easter

In what appears to be an attempt to counter criticism of ‘dispensational’ Messianic Jews observing traditional Jewish days, while critiquing William Varner, Dr. Fructenbaum, a Jewish Christian, wrote:

I would love to see him write an article that discusses the church’s traditions around Christmas and Easter. Would he defend some of these practices or not? If he would, what would be the basis for doing so? If he would negate them, would he call for removal of these practices from the church? ¹

Nothing seems quite so good as to implicate a critic in hypocrisy, does it? Is that the way a Christian arrives at the truth of God -- i.e., show the objector in inconsistency, so as to justify one’s own error?

Hear the Word of God!

Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14).

Had those in the Christian profession obeyed that concerning the evil, heathen celebrations that took place around the 25th of December, do you honestly think the ‘sanctification’ of that date would have taken place by making a Christian holiday out of it? So entrenched has this idolatry become that those that stand apart from it are considered weird and even unfaithful. Thus is untruth put for truth, darkness for light, and unholiness for holiness. Had the one and only day of observance for the Christian, i.e., the Lord’s day, been carefully adhered to,

1. *How Jewish Is Christianity?* op. cit., p. 69.

along with fleeing from all idolatry, the ‘Christianized’ heathen holidays would not have taken over the profession of Christianity. These so-called Christian holidays are a standing witness to unfaithful Christian profession.

In connection with the truth recovered in the early 1800’s with the correct understanding of dispensational truth (which I mention because Dr. Fructenbaum considers himself to be a dispensationalist), those who identified themselves with that truth stood apart from these heathen ‘holidays’ rooted in paganism. Listen :

When in 1877 I first came into fellowship with those called Brethren, they were practically a unit in abstaining from all complicity with the observance of Christmas and similar abominations . . . tracts were written against it . . . But now with all those witnesses to divine truth gone, other generations have come upon the scene, and there are now few who regard with the same abhorrence these heathen, aye Satanic, for who but Satan, the one great foe of our Lord, would dare to commit this climax of heinous wickedness of attaching His Name to a lie? But beloved brethren, have you not been “keeping Christmas”? Have you been wishing each other to be “merry”, even whilst thus bringing Christ into full accord with Belial? That seems to me unspeakably terrible, am I wrong my brethren?

F.C.J., “An Open Letter.”

Why did he refer to Christmas in such terms? J.N. Darby wrote:

Christians, so-called, would have festivals {they were Judaizing and paganizing}, and they tacked on Christian names to heathen ones. The great Augustine informs us that “the church” did it, that if they would get drunk (which they did even in the churches), they should do so in honor of saints, not of demons. One of the Gregorys was famous for this, and left only seventeen heathen in his diocese by means of it. And another Gregory, sending another Augustine to England, directed him not to destroy the idol temples, but to turn them into churches; and as the heathens were accustomed to have an anniversary festival to their god, to replace it by one to a saint. It was thus Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor at least were Christianized. Sicily, which in spite of all efforts had remained heathen, as soon as it was decided that Mary was the mother of God at what I must call the disgraceful and infamous general council of Ephesus, gave up all her temples to be churches.

It was as easy to worship the mother of God as the mother of the gods. But everywhere drunkenness in honor of the saints, and even in the churches, took the place of drunkenness in honor of demigods, the great Augustine and other fathers being witnesses. Such were festal anniversaries, Christmas having been (and it is still celebrated in heathen

countries) the worst of heathen festivals, to celebrate the return of the sun from the winter solstice, without a pretense that Christ was born that day, but as they could not stop the revelry, they put Christ's birth there. Such, in real fact, is the church's celebration of anniversaries and saints' days. This is certain, that the apostle declares that it was a return to heathenism, so that he was afraid his labor was *in vain* -- avowedly turning the great and mighty parts of Christianity, by which God acted on souls, to bring them into blessed and divinely-wrought relationship with Himself, individually and collectively, into certain outward events, or outward facts, and exclusively to their announcement as occurring at particular times. "I am afraid of you." ²

Yet these poor Christians now desired to return to the weak and beggarly elements from which, when heathens, they had been delivered, through the knowledge of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! Mark well that all their ceremonies are but the same thing as paganism, the elements of the world. Even if those who subject themselves to them be Christians, yet the principles according to which they walk are the elements of the world, and their practices are heathen practices. We learn this here as doctrine, but the history of the church shows it to us as a fact. Holy days and holy places were taken from the heathen, who had holy places and days on which they held festivals in honor of deified men, such as Theseus, Hercules, and others. The names of saints were afterwards attached to these places and days, and the saints celebrated instead of the demi-gods.

St. Augustine has told us what was done, and how it began. He sought to put an end to these evil habits, not to the days, but to what was practiced upon them, for they got drunk in the churches. This occurred in Africa, and the same thing was done elsewhere. The feast of the Nativity was the worst of all the pagan festivals, and it is still celebrated among the heathen in the East. Not being able to prevent those who, emerging from paganism, called themselves Christians, from continuing the disorders practiced at this festival, the leaders of the church decided to put in its place the Nativity of Christ. Augustine also says, respecting the memory of the saints who took the place of Theseus, etc., that the church thought it better for people to get drunk in honor of a saint, than in honor of a demon. It is certain that Christ was not born in December. The time at which Mary went to visit Elizabeth proves this, if compared with the order of the twenty-four courses of the priests. Zacharias was the eighth course. In taking up again from the Jews these elements of the world, the Galatians were returning to their former heathen practices. Until the coming of Christ these things had an important meaning; they were figures of that of which Christ has been, or is now, the reality:

2. *Collected Writings* 29, 331, 332.

moreover they tested man, and showed that he cannot walk with God as man in the flesh. But when once Christ was come, the substance was there, and the figures had no more ground of existence, the test had been already applied. What is done in fulfilment of the law is but the denial of the fulfilment of all in Christ -- heathen elements of the world, in which the Galatians walked when they lived as heathen in the world. ³

A moral stream does not rise above its source.

The passage of time does not change the character of a moral action.

The point of departure is the point of recovery.

Rom. 14 is written as supposing every conscience is in exercise. The weak brother in Rom. 14 is one who has scruples about certain Jewish things that were part of a system once owned of God, which paganism never was. To use Rom. 14:5 to sanction a supposed liberty to observe 'Christianized' pagan holidays is reprehensible. Do *you* think that the saints that F. C. J., above, refers to were too stupid to recognize that Scripture gives *you* 'liberty' to observe 'Christianized' pagan holidays -- i.e., C. H. Mackintosh, William Kelly, J. N. Darby, etc., etc.? Self-indulgent indifferentism and arrogance seem to know no bounds. Let us call things by what they really are.

Hear the Word of God!

Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14).

Ed.

“Three Things I Find in the Toilsome Life of Faith”

There are three things I find in the often trying and toilsome life of faith: first, trusting God that nothing can hinder His accomplishing His purpose. All that his brethren did to frustrate the accomplishment of Joseph's dreams, just led to that accomplishment. They sent him to Egypt. The hard and wicked accusation against him in Potiphar's house put him in prison, where he met the butler and baker who brought him where the dream was fulfilled. Next, for us, simple obedience, taking God's mind for wisdom, and doing His will. He has a path for His saints in this world; in it they find Him and His strength, though perhaps the life of faith be dark: then, if we know the purpose of God, light is in the soul. But the path He will guide us in. It may seem dark, but, if His, it is the way of arriving at His rest. But a single eye seeking nothing but Christ is the secret of certainty of walk, and firmness as having the secret of the Lord with

3. *Collected Writings* 34:84, 85.

you. But what a calling! we have to walk worthy of God who has called us to His own kingdom, and yet what a joy to be thus associated with Himself! And we know His purpose is to glorify Christ, and so we seek that, in walking worthy of Him and serving Him in love.

Did you ever notice Luke 12, the two things looked for in us? First, watching; its reward, making us sit down to table in heaven, and ministering the blessing to us; and then serving in what He sets us to do, and the reward of that, ruling. But the first is wonderful, that He remains for ever our servant in love. How blessed to have Him, and be His! There is progress in the Song of Songs. First, He is ours; next, we are His; and then I am my Beloved's, and His desire is towards me. That is wonderful to say! The riches of scripture, both for knowledge and for affections, is beyond our thoughts -- no wonder, as it comes from God; but it is all ours. But the perfectness of our place is wonderful; and I do not mean now as to glory, true as that is, but morally. He is given to be the Object of our affections who is sufficient for the Father's; and to have Him in His path down here even is the food of the soul. Energy comes from seeing Him up there (Phil. 3), likeness to Him from feeding on Him down here (Phil. 2).

Letters of J. N. Darby 3:93, 94.

Alliance With the Unfaithful

But Ahab's mind was made up; and the king of Judah was bound by his engagement. It was no longer time to consult Jehovah: to inquire after the truth, in such a position as this, was but to learn a judgment which they had resolved to contemn. Ahab was more consistent than Jehoshaphat. The conscience of the latter only made every one uncomfortable, and proved his own folly. To please Jehoshaphat by speaking to him of Jehovah was no more than decency required; but it was all that Ahab did for Jehoshaphat, except that he unwillingly sent for Micaiah. Jehoshaphat helped Ahab against Syria; he helped Jehoram against Moab; but neither Ahab nor his son helped Jehoshaphat in any one thing, except to be unfaithful to Jehovah. Ahaziah was willing indeed to go with him, but it was in order to obtain gold from Ophir. It would rather appear that this alliance was the cause of that between Moab, Ammon, and Seir against Jehoshaphat. Happily it was no question then of succoring Israel.

Such is the history of the alliances of believers, not only with unbelievers, but with the unfaithful. The latter are very willing that we should go with them; but to walk in the ways of truth is another thing. This is not the question with them; if they so walked, they would cease to be unfaithful. A true union would necessarily have made Jerusalem the center and capital of the land: for Jehovah and His temple were there. The alliance took it for granted that Jehoshaphat had

given up all such idea, since it showed that he recognized Ahab in his position. There is no equality in an alliance between truth and error; since, by this very alliance, truth ceases to be truth, and error does not thereby become truth. The only thing lost is the authority and obligation of the truth.

Synopsis 1:396.

Witting Association With Evil

But in these days the unity of the body, and separation from evil, are vital points of testimony for Christians. One is the original and abiding principle of the Church's existence; the other, faithfulness to its nature, and characterizing that faithfulness in a special manner in the last days. To me it is that (both) or nothing. One is the special purpose of God as to us connected with Christ, the other His nature. The notion that one can be wittingly associated with evil, and be undefiled, is an unholy notion -- a denial of the nature of holiness. And in the world the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The character of Christ with Philadelphia is, He that is holy, He that is true; the keeping His word and the word of His patience, what is commended in the saints; an open door and only a little strength, but special association with Christ the holy One, and the truth in the midst of a degenerate people. And things are going on so rapidly in these last days that Christians will be cast on their own ground, and we shall need the word to be our authority, and it is a divine one.

Letters of J. N. Darby 1:509.

Confidence in Self -- and Restoration

I do not believe that restoration means the recovery of peace, unless it be peace in the consciousness of the favor of God, which is enjoyed anew in the soul -- the re-establishment of liberty of heart with God. One meets with cases where a Christian has fallen, yet in nowise doubts his salvation, or the efficacy of the blood of Christ; but the heart has got to a distance from God, has not the sense of what sin is, such as the presence of God always gives.

Now to be truly restored, the Christian must recognize the point of departure where his soul gave up communion with God, and sought its own will. It was thus with Peter. The Lord does not reproach him with his fault, but says to him, "Lowest thou me more than these?" That was the point where his soul had turned aside from the right way, where self had shown itself, confidence in himself. The Lord probes Peter's heart, and makes known to him the undercurrent of pride and false confidence which was found there. Until that

moment Peter was not restored, although on the way to be so. When a brother in fellowship has fallen, and has sincerely acknowledged his fault as an evil, even when he may have been reinstated, he is always in danger of falling again if he has not judged the root of it. It is there that he got to a distance from God. Communion with God is not thoroughly re-established, self and its will are not thoroughly broken, as long as the Christian has not found the point where his heart began to lose its spiritual sensibility; for the presence of God makes us feel that. I am not speaking of a matter of memory, but of the state of the soul.

One meets with cases (where probably true deliverance had never been realized), like that of dear _____ where despair takes possession of one in failure. Then it is a question of finding peace through the blood of Jesus, or at least of power to raise the shield of faith, of confidence in God.

A soul is restored when it enjoys the favor of God, not simply as certainty of salvation, but when the Spirit, instead of accusing, causes it to rejoice in the goodness of God. Restoration is not complete until there is enjoyment of communion with our brethren. I remember having seen horror at having sinned against grace, and at the dishonor done to the name of Christ, as the first effect of the renewed power of the word in the heart: then came the sense that grace has triumphed over all -- blessed be God!

Letters of J. N. Darby 2:111-112.

In the World but Not of It

The ordinary rule of scripture is in the calling wherein a man is called he should therein abide with God. The blessed Lord was a carpenter till called to His own fuller service, and Paul was a tent-maker, and at times supplied his own wants. In a certain sense all things are lawful for me. There are many where the motive is everything. Christianity does not change the order of the world, even where sin has given rise to it. I could not systematically sell gin. If gin was of use I could give it to the sick, unless it were a stumbling-block to others. The disciples were taken out of the world to represent God in it, walking in His ways, not its ways, deriving their life and all their ways from Him, to live as Christ did. The world is an immense system built up by Satan around fallen man to keep man insensible to his ruin (Gen. 4:20-22). The Lord does not pray we should be taken out of it, but kept from the evil {John 17}.

Your friend is solemnized by the voluntary! Is he content to be unfit for worship till he hears the organ? This is a poor plea and putting nature instead of grace, which has even boldness to enter into the holiest. This lowers and falsifies the whole nature of our relationship with God and Judaizes it. As to conversion, wherever Christ is presented souls can be converted, but this is not

worship but preaching. Christians becoming more and more worldly is no reason for our going with it, but the contrary. No doubt people may be attracted, but so they are to gin palaces. The Puseyites recommend it in church on that ground, so they are largely as popery. God may rise above all mistakes in grace, but it is one of the strongest marks that worldly attraction has taken the place of grace and Christ. Did you ever find Christ or Paul have music or a band to draw people? It covers the whole character of Christianity. The earthly promises to the Jews do not directly apply to us, but in general God's faithfulness and loving care is, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," is used in the New Testament as well as in the Old. Read the latter as written for us for our instruction on whom the ends of the world are come, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 1 Peter is, after redemption stated, a treatise on the ways of God, now using the Old Testament for it. The Old Testament scriptures cannot give us an accomplished redemption nor glory into which Christ was not yet entered, but they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. You have to discern what is earthly Jewish promises. It is important to do so; but what is in God, faithfulness, grace, love, condescending care of us is always true. We get it perhaps more clearly applied in the New Testament. Thus, "seek ye first . . . and all these things shall be added unto you." I should be sorry to reduce Christianity to mere Jewish promises, but what is in God is always true. 2 Thess. 2 shows that where people would not receive the love of the truth that they may be saved, they are, when Christ rises up, given to darkness.

Letters of J. N. Darby 3:480-481.

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