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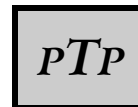
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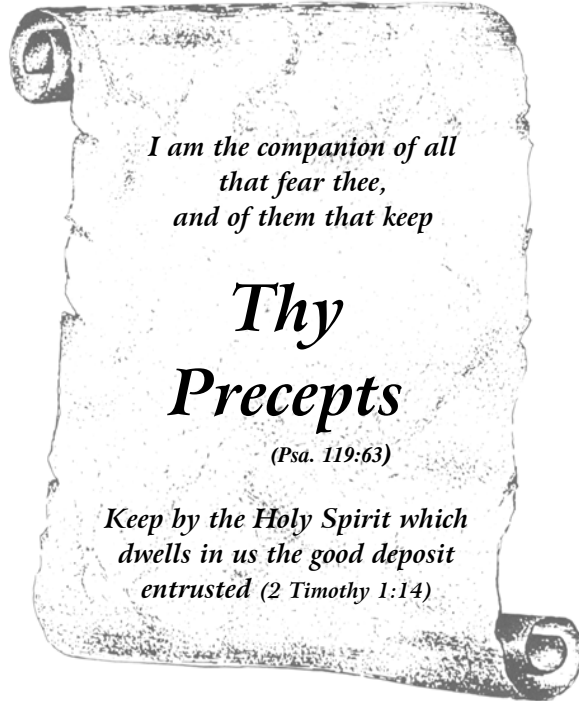
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*The Mystery of Christ and the Church  
and The Covenants*

## *Chapter 5.3*

### *Genesis 5:*

### *The Godly -- Maintaining Separation*

We have just considered how at the end of Gen. 4, Elohim acted sovereignly in appointing Seth for Abel, in the face of the world's development away from Himself. In Gen. 5 the line is traced from Adam to Noah and his three sons. From Adam to Noah there are 10 generations. Scripture calls particular attention to the seventh in this line: Enoch, concerning whom there is comparatively much to say, as with Noah when we consider the Noahic Covenant.

We have considered the case of Cain killing Abel as the first man killing the second man; and that the Jews, by Gentile hands, and as representative of the fallen, first man, killed the second man, the Lord out of heaven. Seth represents Christ in resurrection. To Christ belongs a godly line.<sup>1</sup> In Enoch we see reflected the rapture of the saints before the judgment of the flood. In Noah we see a preserved remnant through the coming judgments in the earth. For those who are instructed according to the Word of God in the NT concerning what lies before us, these shadows of what is coming can be seen. For a false system like

1. While saints who compose the assembly of God are part of a godly line, the assembly has its own distinctives. To make the whole of the godly line from Adam to the end to be the church is utterly wrong. All saints are "saints" and are "just" and are born of God, but such designations do not in themselves warrant saying they were part of the church. Commonalities do not erase distinctives.

Covenantism, all this will be rejected, if not mocked.

Following is a chart of pre-deluvian chronology. I do not accept the notion that Gen. 5 is a genealogy to the exclusion of its being a chronology. It is both.

### *Genesis 5:1-5*

**(1) This is the book of Adam's generations. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him. (2) Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. (3) And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot [a son] in his likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth. (4) And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begot sons and daughters. (5) And all the days of Adam that he lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.**

(From W. Kelly)

. . . Now suppose the different-document hypothesis<sup>2</sup> a fact, and this chapter had ever followed Gen. 1 - 2:3, as the immediate sequel, how insipid such a continuation as the opening of Gen. 5! We say nothing of omitting such all important particulars as are ignored between the two, as we have already noticed. If on the contrary we receive these scriptures as they are, the new departure on ground similar to the earliest section most suitably calls for a tracing down from Adam through Seth to diluvian times, just as we have it. The intervening history which brought out God not simply as such, but as Jehovah Elohim, and then in the usual style of Jehovah, where special relationship is treated with rebellion against it, made it all the more requisite to resume the genealogical line from its source till God judged creation.

Even here it is far from mere repetition, which it might seem to the careless reader. For Gen. 1:26 says that God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness, and reiterates not His "likeness" but "image" twice in v. 27. Here it is said that, in the day of His creating man, He made him in the likeness of God. Both were true, but they are not the same statement; and an imitator or later redactor being uninspired would rather have made them identical. He Who knew the whole truth could and did use each appropriately; as we may see for the form here employed, when v. 3 comes before us. But the shade of difference is undeniable, understand it or not as we may.

2. {This refers to the higher critical hypothesis of various authors of the Pentateuch (J E P D) put together by a redactor.}

Further, here only are we told that God “called their name Adam (man) in the day they were created.” It was Adam before the fall who called the woman Ishah, because she was taken out of Ish. It was Adam, after the fall but also the revelation of the woman’s Seed, who called his wife’s name Eve (Chavvah), because she was the mother of all living. Unbelief might have naturally called her Death, as the mother of all dying. But Adam looked in faith for her Seed Who entitled him and them to better things than he and she had any right to. But here it is the racial name, common to both, which God called in the day of their creation. How wise is every change, every difference, embodied in God’s word! And how foolish the incredulity that can see nothing beyond the discrepancies of different hands, none of them inspired in any true sense! <sup>3</sup>

. . . When Elohim made man, Gen. 1:26, He proposed it to be in His image, after His likeness. So He created him in His image, as it is said twice (v. 27). And we have already seen, that, as likeness resembles, image represents: a distinction which it is of moment to seize, as it holds everywhere in scripture. The “likeness” consisted of qualities corresponding to God, as no other nature on earth had; the image was man’s place in presenting Him to others {i.e., representative}, as not even angels of heaven did or could. As man was made upright, so he was called to dominion over the lower creation. Angels fulfil His word and do His pleasure, yet they only minister, never rule. But now that the head of the race was fallen, he “begat in his likeness, after his image.” It was in his own likeness, not God’s; and it was not Cain but Seth that is said to be “after his image.” Adam was represented by Seth, though he could not be said to be begotten after Elohim’s likeness but Adam’s. Yet it still remains true that man, even though fallen, is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7). Hence the guilt of murder demanded death, for it was the extinction of what represented God on earth, even when man was no longer after His likeness (Gen. 9:6). The comparison of our v. 1 makes it all the plainer: “in the likeness of God made He him” (Adam). The “image” of God was the emphatic point in Gen. 1:27, and even in v. 26 takes precedence, however important the “likeness” which sin destroyed for Seth, whom Adam “begat in his likeness, after his image.” The race is fallen.

What progeny Adam had during this early time we are not told, but simply that his “days after he begat Seth were eight hundred; and he begat sons and daughters.” How little is said of the line of faith, especially if we compare the striking picture which the preceding chapter furnishes of the world’s rapid progress in all that life which nature deems worth living!

“And all the days which Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died” (v. 5). There is not the slightest sound reason to doubt the longevity here

3. *The Bible Treasury* 20:2, 3.

attributed to antediluvian man. Man was made to live, not to die; his death came in through sin, The truth of life will appear when the Second man takes the world-kingdom (Rev. 11). Those who live righteously when He reigns shall continue through the thousand years, none dying save under curse for rebellion; and the righteous, as scriptural principles imply, are at last changed, without passing through death, into everlasting incorruption; as Christians are entitled to expect who are alive and are left to the coming of the Lord, before His displayed kingdom begins (1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15). Lengthened as the span of years may seem, compared with the measure which the prayer of Moses (Psa. 110) lays down as the ordinary rule of human life, they were but “days” of Adam or any other here recorded. After Adam they were begotten, and they begot; they lived and they died. This sums up the history of most; but of this more when we review the account of others, as well as the exceptions. <sup>4</sup>

### *Genesis 5:6-20*

**(6) And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. (7) And Seth lived after he had begotten Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. (8) And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. (9) And Enosh lived ninety years, and begot Cainan. (10) And Enosh lived after he had begotten Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begot sons and daughters. (11) And all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died. (12) And Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalaleel. (13) And Cainan lived after he had begotten Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begot sons and daughters. (14) And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died. (15) And Mahalaleel lived sixty-five years, and begot Jared. (16) And Mahalaleel lived after he had begotten Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. (17) And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died. (18) And Jared lived a hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. (19) And Jared lived after he had begotten Enoch eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. (20) And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.**

(From W. Kelly)

Josephus and certain Arabian writers, quoted by Hottinger, allege details of the ancient worthies here enumerated; which are not worth repeating, because they are destitute of real authority. The inspired writer all the more impressively

4. *The Bible Treasury* 20:18.

gives the same simple outline of these lives so prolonged. Two exceptions occur of most notable character which claim appropriate heed in their places. The general line is all that now comes before us. Divine purpose is the key to both. It explains alike the mention which looks so meager, and the special record in the cases of Enoch and Noah. It accounts for the omission of all particulars in the general genealogy beyond the direct line of the chosen people, and so especially of the Messiah, God's salvation, light for revelation of Gentiles, and glory of his people Israel. The rest of their progeny, however numerous or distinguished in a human way, are merely merged in "sons and daughters" they begot . . .

It is in vain for men to decry the longevity of the men before the deluge, and, though diminishing, after it. Oriental and other nations long retained the tradition, however disguised, pointing to the primitive facts. To argue that it is contrary to the known laws of physiology is only the resort of narrow-minded and ignorant unbelief. For God if He pleased could easily by change of conditions reduce man's life from 900 years to 90. It is a question of fact for which His word vouches. Nor is there any need to labor on behalf of the plain statements of scripture; for man unfallen never partook of the tree of life; and, when fallen, he was driven out lest he should. The gradual experience of men since the deluge is of no validity against the immensely greater age of mankind as scripture avers before that great event, whatever the physical or secondary causes may have been before or after, as they are presumptuous who deny it.

We are not in a position to ascertain where God has said so little; but there were reasons we can appreciate why in the early history of mankind their prolonged span of life was of incalculable moment. It was in their high interest that the origin of the race should be attested, as well as of the earth and heavens, and of all creatures in them; still higher was it to hear of the fall and its solemn results; highest of all, to know that He, alike the Creator and in moral relationship with man, had interposed in a way not more righteous than graciously revealing a suffering Deliverer, the woman's Seed, to destroy the enemy: the victory of good over evil for all who believe as well as creation. What can be conceived of such great weight for God and man as to convey aright this pregnant revelation of grace, and to those so immediately concerned as the fallen race, or at least such as had ears to hear? And how was a revelation as yet oral to reach the family of Adam effectually save by the longevity which characterized that early day? For Methuselah lived to tell Shem what Adam communicated from God Himself, and Shem lived to repeat all to Abraham and

Isaac: <sup>5</sup> facts and prospects briefly expressed, of plain meaning, and profoundly important.

Then again one can understand how favorable the lengthened span of life in those days was to carrying out God's word in blessing the first pair, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over fish of the sea, and over bird of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Thus not only is the fact unquestionable for all that respect revelation, but the wisdom, not to say necessity, of that exceptional condition, is pretty apparent.

The fact is, so far from the truth are those who judge solely from present experience, that man was naturally made at the outset to live. Death was sin's wages, not then a physiological necessity. God had provided the means for prolonging his life if obedient; but deprived him of that means peremptorily when fallen. For what greater misery, or moral anomaly, than an everlasting life of sin? Death therefore is in no way a debt of nature but of sin; and here we read its knell for each even of those who stood aloof from the evil way of Cain, the ancestors not of Israel only but in due time of the Messiah. Of Adam, so of Seth, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jared, it was alike said "he died." <sup>6</sup> Now that man is a sinner, it is the one event that happens to all in the seen world; in the unseen there will be another still more solemn. "For it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

How sad, were this all! Not so however; it is only the first man . . . <sup>7</sup>

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5. {Meanwhile idolatry had grown while Shem lived. The ungodly did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:21).}

6. {The eight-fold repetition of "and he died" surely denotes a character of walk proper to the godly line. It points to a recognition that the world is not our permanent home. A saint should realize this in a practical way in the soul, being exercised to have a walk that is for Christ's glory.

"Only one life, t'will soon be past;

Only what's done for Christ will last."

It is not merely being busy for Christ, but being here for Him, displaying the resurrection-life of Christ in us, for He is in us!}

7. *The Bible Treasury* 20:33, 34.

## Genesis 5:21-24

(21) And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methushelah.  
 (22) And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methushelah three hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.  
 (23) And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. (24) And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

### *Enoch: Type of Expecting the Blessed Hope*

Except for Adam, persons named in the godly line lived longer than Enoch; and Noah was born after Enoch was translated. No doubt there were many persons that knew Enoch and heard what he said regarding judgment on the wicked (Jude 14, 15).

We are told that Enoch walked with God for 300 years after he had begotten Methushelah (his firstborn) and begot sons and daughters (Gen. 5:22). There is much in this brief statement.

It has been noticed in *some* young Christians the sobering effect that the birth of a child has on them. A sense of Christian responsibility becomes deepened in them as a new life is entrusted into their care. Every child of God ought to have a deep sense of responsibility, at all times, yet this does occur and it gives joy to see it happen. Consequent on the birth of his firstborn, we read of Enoch walking with God for the 300 years until translated.

He was a family man for this 300 years and as a family man he walked with God. Nothing deterred him in that blessed course. It is something to ponder and take stock of ourselves.

He was a man *devoted* to Him with whom he walked. He was devoted in this way steadily -- for 300 years.

He was a *consistent* man, walking steadily, not in a crooked way, not in a self-serving way.

He was a *separated* man, separated from ungodliness, from the corruption and violence continually growing until the flood of judgment must come and sweep it away.

He was a *God-pleaser*, not a man pleaser. Oh, how man-pleasing gets among God's people. The Lord Jesus never pleased Himself (Rom. 15:3). Of Enoch it was said:

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

He was a man *instructed* in the mind of God. In fact, this was manifested when he named his firstborn. The name Methushelah means "When he is dead it shall be sent." Shortly after he died, the flood came. It seems therefore that Enoch did not expect to be in the judgment he prophesied, nor did he expect this son to be in that judgment. He did not set a date for anything.

In Jude we are told that he was the seventh from Adam. Yes, that is not the Enoch in the line of Cain, Cain's son. 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? Of course it leaves no doubt, but 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., Lemech (Gen. 4:19-24), and contrast the two. In the previous chapter we saw how that in certain aspects the world came to matured expression in Cain's line. While three sons of Lemech are noted, and remarkably, a daughter is named, the purpose was not to continue the line of Cain.

So, some point is reached in the seventh from Adam in each line and in marked contrast. 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.<sup>8</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

(The following article is from *The Girdle of Truth* 3:105-114.)

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8. The following remark by J. G. Bellett concerning the NT reference to Noah and Enoch bears on this difference in types:

. . . but it does seem to me that the Lord, *speaking of the Jewish election*, takes Noah for His text or type (Matt. 24); while the apostle, addressing the Church, takes his language the rather from the translation of Enoch (1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Thess. 2:1). For the Jewish remnant, like Noah, will be carried through the judgment -- the saints now gathering will be in the sphere out of which the judgment is to be poured. For we are taught again and again, as I have noticed before, that exercise of power in that day, in company with the Lord, is part of the glory of the saints. See Col. 3:4; Rev. 2:26; 17:14; 19:14. (*The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, p. 44, note, n.d.)

### *Enoch*

Abel, the example of righteousness and of its fate in the world, we have seen cut off by the hand of violence, while Cain the murderer, “who was of that wicked one and slew his brother,” lived on and became the progenitor of a race distinguished by all the characteristics and aims of the men of this world. They were “the men of the world, who have their portion in this life”; the “men of progress” of their day. And accordingly they are celebrated for their energy in the building of cities, and the arts and embellishments of life have their birth-place amongst them. But faith looks to the future and unseen world, and expects the triumph of righteousness here only as the result of the judgment of the wicked who have corrupted the earth. Hence the posterity of Seth are marked only by the principle of their separation from the apostasy of Cain and his family. (“Then began men to call on the name of the Lord,” or to call themselves by the name of the Lord.) And besides this testimony, their history is only a record that they lived their days on earth, and died, leaving no monuments for their fame or traces of their greatness on the earth. Their “record was on high.”

Enoch, “the seventh from Adam,” was of this family, and is distinguished by his separation unto God, and by his testimony of the coming of the Lord to judge the wicked of the earth, and by the victory over death which closed his walk with God on earth and was the crowning triumph of his faith.

Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.

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

Adam, as the result of his sin, was driven out from the presence of the Lord; Cain in his worldly-mindedness voluntarily left that presence; but Enoch’s record is, that he walked with God -- not in a paradise as Adam, but in the midst of the increasing evil of the world and in the common every-day circumstances of ordinary life. He walked with God on earth, and God took him to dwell with himself in heaven. Blessed and triumphant issue of a life of faith and of a separated walk with God!

One effect of Enoch’s walk with God is seen in his being made the depository of His counsels, as Abraham also was in a later day.

The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?

But Lot, who was indeed delivered from the judgment of Sodom, which was revealed to Abraham and awakened in him the spirit of intercession, was not near enough to the Lord to receive his communications -- those blessed pledges of His confidence as well as tokens of His condescension and grace. Enoch

testified of the coming of the Lord, and of the judgment it would bring upon the wickedness by which he was surrounded, and from which, in spirit and conduct, he was separated by the power of faith that associated him in his walk with Him, concerning whose coming and judgment he witnessed. Though, doubtless, the flood was the immediate and proximate judgment on which his testimony bore, the Spirit of the Lord shows it reached beyond this to the Lord’s coming with His saints to judge that evil and apostasy at the close of the present dispensation,<sup>9</sup> of which the epistle of Jude so solemnly speaks. Unlike Noah, whose faith carried him through the judgment of the old world, Enoch’s faith rested in the hope of translation from the scene of evil on which the judgment was about to fall. He sees the judgment coming, and warns of its approach, saying,

Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment, &c.;

but the rest of his own heart is found in a daily walk with God, in moral separation from all that was bringing on the judgment, and in the certain hope of being with God when it was executed.

So conversant are we with corruption and decay, and all the consequences of sin, that there is something wonderful in the thought of being taken, without the intervention of death, in our own persons, and living, from the scenes of this world, into the presence of God in that world where He manifests Himself apart from all evil in the goodness of His own eternal nature. But this is the very hope -- and form of its accomplishment -- which is set before us in the reception of the gospel. We are converted to wait for God’s Son from heaven.

We shall not all sleep.

We which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Perfect is that victory which Christ the Lord of life has gained over death, so that He can say,

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.

Still, to be effective in the soul, Enoch’s hope must be coupled with Enoch’s walk. Who can question that the practical effect of those words, “so shall we ever be with the Lord,” is neutralized too often in the heart, by the lack of those affections toward the Lord, and of that confidence in Him which are alone awakened by an habitual walk with Him? How can the heart long for the presence of God in heaven that is not at home in His presence habitually through

<sup>9</sup>. {The phrase “at the end of the present dispensation” is not quite accurate.}

grace on earth?

But there are two things which are essential to a walk with God (for I am supposing that the heart is established with grace): a knowledge of His character and will as revealed to faith, and an apprehension according to the judgment of God of the moral character of the scene around. If I am to “walk with God,” I must have a heart at rest in His presence through grace, and also affections and desires which can find their satisfaction in the known and apprehended character of God -- a heart that can delight in the contemplation of His goodness, and that can take pleasure in intercourse with Him as the eternal portion of the soul. Then also there is the reflective influence of this walk with God in the soul’s moral judgment of things.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Consequently a walk with God necessitates a separation in heart and spirit from the course of this world. The action of divine grace which puts the soul in relationship with God at first, is characterized as a deliverance from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal. 1:4); or, in the words of Christ, “I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:19), and never can the subsequent walk with God, in the scene from which grace has delivered us, be in contradiction to this fundamental principle. And surely nothing can be more interesting than to see a man surrounded by evil and corruption, and in the midst of the trials and difficulties of common every-day life, with his heart so raised above everything around him, as to show that his resources are in God Himself, and his whole spirit, and conduct, and ways, molded and regulated by his walk with God, and by a reference to His will. For we must remember that in this testimony concerning Enoch and his faith, it was not that his person and worship were accepted, as in the case of Abel, but that his walk was sanctified and molded according to the perfect will of God.

For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.

His faith was not exercised merely with regard to the exigencies and circumstances of this life -- in which lower walk of faith, alas! so many fail -- but in raising his soul above these circumstances so as to be able to walk in harmony of spirit with God. And yet, on the other hand, there is the simple record of his earthly associations, in his having had sons and daughters, that we might not fail to see the one side and the other of our walk in this world with God. And it is observable that the declaration in Heb. 11:5, that Enoch, “before his translation, had this testimony that he pleased God,” gives occasion to the statement,

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Or, in other words, the faith which leads to a walk with God is not conversant with abstract truths, but with God Himself; and it leaves not the soul at a distance from God, but brings into living, habitual contact with His infinite goodness, so that His being, and character, and moral dealings, are living and eternal realities. ❖

### ***Enoch Translated Before the Judgment on the Earth***

(From *The Girdle of Truth* 9:91-94.)

. . . Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is born, and he occupies the place of God’s witness for 300 years. He “walked with God” for 300 years, “and he was not, for God took him.” He was known as a prophet, warning of coming judgments, and in the spirit of John in the Apocalypse, testified of the judgments coming on men, because of their growing ungodliness. From God’s side he viewed the state of things on earth, and as Abel had testified how approach to God was to be obtained and acceptance known, so Enoch IN acceptance (the word “walked” is synonymous with “well-pleasing” -- see Heb. 11) with God looks on the earth, and proclaims through His Spirit, in which he is himself in fellowship, what must befall man on earth, because of his departure from God. Looking from God’s side and knowing in himself what was compatible with God in His holiness and truth, he saw clearly that nothing less than terrible judgment could vindicate it, even what is fully depicted in Rev. 19. His was a glorious testimony. He walked with God for 300 years and proclaimed to men the judgment which, as worthy of God, should await them. *With* God and *for* God on the earth, he passes away from it as one beyond the power of death. His testimony is sealed by the announcement, now through his translation made for the first time, even that the heavens are opened to man, that he is to have a place, an inheritance *there*, even as Adam in his first estate had on the earth. The seventh generation from Adam is chosen to announce the glad tidings that God will deliver from death; yea that light and incorruptibility have come even now. The supremacy of grace over the penalty of man is declared. If Abel had died at the hands of his brother because he was accepted of God, Enoch is enabled through the same grace to show himself victorious over death, as Stephen did in principle, and he “is not, for God took him.” What instruction and interest does his testimony in every way convey to us!



Enoch's son, whom he named Methusalah,<sup>10</sup> lived to the very year of the flood. Methusalah's son Lamech lived to within five years of it. None from Seth down died before the translation of Enoch. We may conceive the effect that this increased light must have had on this living chain. The story of Abel was part of the history of each on earth, but the translation of Enoch presented a new and wondrous consummation to all their hopes and desires. What a revelation it must have been to those who must have felt the judgment on man, now the more aggravated since the unnatural death of Abel. Adam is now dead, but all his posterity in God's line do not pass away until after the translation. Even Adam lived to within fifty-seven years of it. What a day it was! And what strange joy it must have diffused among the godly, and what full and gracious unfoldings of His mercy for God to vouchsafe at that early day!

\* \* \* \* \*

Noah, a type of the future godly Jewish remnant, will be considered in chapter later.

Ed.

### *Errata*

A reader informed the editor that the article *The Perfect Workman . . .*, appearing in the Nov/Dec. 2006 *Thy Precepts*, was most likely written by C. H. Mackintosh, not J. N. Darby as stated. Using the Mackintosh CD (see add for it on inside front cover), I found CHM made a reference to it. However, that paper is not on the CD.

Ed.

### *Quote*

"Satan tempts the saint to seek to be like Lot, when they ought to be like Abraham; to seek to be earthly-minded instead of heavenly-minded.

A man says what is the harm of the well-watered plains of Jordan? Are they not the gift of providence? I answer, "The Devil has planted Sodom in the midst of them."

10. The word Methusalah signifies, "he dies and it is sent," or "at his death he sends it," thus giving moral confirmation of the chronological fact that his life, which was 969 years, reached to the very verge of the judgment, which Enoch his father doubtless, foresaw, when he thus named him at his birth, the very year he began to "walk with God" (see Gen. 5:21, 22).

## *Exposition of Romans 9-11*

### *Romans 9:14-18*

**(14) What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? Far be the thought. (15) For he says to Moses, I will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy, and I will feel compassion for whom I will feel compassion. (16) So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shews mercy. (17) For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very thing I have raised thee up from amongst [men], that I might thus shew in thee my power, and so that my name should be declared in all the earth. (18) So then, to whom he will he shews mercy, and whom he will he hardens.**

The Apostle, having demonstrated that the promises are not obtained on the mere ground of physical descent, but rather only by sovereign grace, by election, now demonstrates that the blessing cannot be obtained on the ground of obedience -- that being shown by Israel's failure. The blessing is not of him that wills, nor runs, but of God who shows mercy. Without this, where would Israel have been after the matter of the golden calf? Jehovah turned the evil they did into an occasion of magnifying His mercy. On the other hand, Pharaoh serves as an occasion of God hardening whom He will. He is sovereign. On this basis, then, we shall see that He can bless Gentiles *now* as it pleases Him.

Since the word mercy is much used in Rom. 9:11, the following words from J. N. Darby regarding grace and mercy might be helpful:

Grace refers more to the source and character of the sentiment; mercy to the state of the person who is its object. Grace may give me glory; mercy contemplates some need in me. Mercy is great in the greatness of the need; grace is the thought of the person exercising it.<sup>1</sup>

A. C. Brown said to me: "Grace is God for us in all that He is in spite of what we are in ourselves." Truly.

### *Is God Unrighteous?*

In view of what the apostle stated about His election, there arises opposition to

1. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:216.

this truth in the human heart. He thinks that God is unrighteous (Rom. 9:14).<sup>2</sup> Really, it is man who is unrighteous and he unrighteously thinks to sit in judgment on God. Fallen man does not penetrate to the depth of his own lost condition:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable; who can know it? I Jehovah search the heart, I try the reins . . . (Jer. 17:9, 10).

That self-deceit remains in the Christian and he needs to bow to the light of God's Word about the depth of the evil.

In Rom. 9:14, anticipating an objection, we read:

[Is there] unrighteousness with God?

Is God unrighteous because He chose Isaac and Jacob, not Ishmael and/or Esau? And what about setting Israel aside? Was that unrighteous? What audacity it would be for a Jew to charge God with being unrighteous in setting Israel aside. The Spirit of God brings forward two cases which may be considered in connection with the question of whether there is unrighteousness with God: the failure of Israel and the opposition of Pharaoh.

First we have Israel's sin. Read Ex. 32 for the audacious behavior and idolatry of Israel while Moses was on the mountain receiving the law. Do you demand to have justice (according to your human imagination about it)? Then Israel, should have been destroyed.

The mediatorship of Moses intercedes and God did not act in summary judgment on them as He had proposed doing. Were it not for His mercy where would Israel have been? Give up God's sovereign action in mercy and Israel would never have a place. But when God gave the promises He knew the basis for blessing was in Himself -- in sovereign mercy and grace to make good those promises after demonstrating that Israel was unable to secure them by human merit. And, on the same basis on which He showed mercy to Israel, God can show mercy to Gentiles now. This basis is brought out in Ex. 32, as Paul says:

For he says to Moses, I will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy, and I will feel compassion for whom I will feel compassion. So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shews mercy (Rom. 9:15, 16).

Willing it, or effort (running), is utterly useless. No alleged free moral will

2. The view that some have, that God is the author of sin, makes God unrighteous. God did not originate sin. The Scripture declares that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Isa. 45:7, God creating evil, refers *not to moral evil*, but to what people call natural disasters. God raising up Pharaoh means that God brought him to the position of power, not that God made him evil.

towards God pretended by man, and no works of religiousness to obtain merit with God, obtains the blessing. That man *should will* is true; but he is bound down by "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:2) which we call the old nature, acquired in the fall. Adam alone had moral free will and fell under the power of "sin in the flesh" under which his posterity are held. And concerning man's *running, the law was given to show that man could not keep it*. Do you not admit that if God gave the law to Israel, Israel should have kept it? Were they not *responsible* to keep it? Well, that is *responsibility*, is it not?

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God: for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).<sup>3</sup>

As Israel demonstrated, man is bankrupt and cannot pay. Does that mean he is therefore has no debt or is not responsible to pay? So, if someone owed you \$10 million dollars and was penniless, you will tell him that your principle is that if one cannot pay he has no responsibility to pay you? Is that how you reason about what is owing God? Thank God, that bankrupt sinners are shown mercy sovereignly, though having no merit in themselves, or none would be blessed.

Perhaps the reader will see that the false idea that God created moral evil, or the false notion that He 'before prepared' a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction, is excluded by the truth: "Is there unrighteousness with God?" It excludes the notion that God created Pharaoh's stubbornness.

If it were true, as Calvin says, that those who perish were destined to destruction by the will of God, the case were hard indeed. But scripture never really speaks thus, and the language of the texts usually cited in support of such a decree, when closely as well as fairly examined, invariably avoids such a thought, however near it may seem to approximate.

In truth it is but the expression of the heart anxious to gather an excuse for its own wilful evil and a plea against judgment from the irresistible will of God. Yet better is known in the heart of hearts all the while. It is never said in scripture that sin was God's purpose; but man fallen under sin is the platform where He does display His ways, counsels, and even Himself. God did not make any man to be evil; but from all (being evil already) He does choose according to His sovereign will and show mercy to some, not all, though all be no more guilty than the some may have been. It would be perfectly just to destroy all. But if pleased to spare whom he will, who shall say to Him, nay? It would be to set up a claim of superiority over

3. It is an outrage against the truth to say in the teeth of Scripture to the contrary, that "God's commands are man's enablings." That is the pretension of the first man not to be really lost. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. There is none that seeks after God (Rom. 3:11).

God, and is really an attempt to judge Him. Now whenever a sinner is converted, he feels and owns the just judgment of God, even though such a recognition sanctions the execution of the divine sentence against one's self, yet withal never quits in despair, but looks and cries, feebly at first perhaps but with increasing earnestness, for mercy. <sup>4</sup> ❖

Of course the last received their wages thankfully {Matt. 20:1-16}. But when the first heard about it, they began to think themselves entitled to more -- they who had borne the burden and heat of the day. But the master reminds them that all was a settled thing before they entered on their work. In their selfishness, they forgot both the terms and the righteousness of him with whom they had to deal. If, out of the liberality of his heart, the householder was pleased to give others, who had worked the twelfth part of what they had done, as much as he gave themselves, what was that to them? God maintains His own rights.

It is of greatest importance for our souls that we hold to the rights of God in everything. Persons will argue as to whether it is righteous for God to elect this person or that. But on the ground of righteousness all are lost, and for ever. Now, if God is pleased to use His mercy according to His wisdom, and for His glory, toward these poor lost ones, who is to dispute with Him? "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" God is entitled to act according to what is in His heart: and "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Is He entitled to act from Himself? He cannot act from man on the grounds of righteousness. There is no foundation on which he can thus deal; it is entirely a question of His own good pleasure. And we must remember that there is not a man that is lost but rejects the mercy of God -- despises it, or uses it for his own selfish purposes in this world. The man that is saved is the only one that has a true sense of sin, that gives himself up as lost; but then he falls back upon His infinite mercy in Christ to save a lost sinner. <sup>5</sup>

Do *you* accept it that God has the right to have mercy on whom He will choose to have mercy? and to have compassion on whom He chooses to have compassion? This is a test for one's state of soul.

So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy (Rom. 9:16). <sup>6</sup>

We cannot obtain the blessing by *willing* to have it or by any *running* (activity, actions) in order to obtain it. It is sovereignly given.

Arthur Pridham observed:

The suggestion, therefore, as to the possibility of there being

4. W. Kelly, *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, London: Morrish, p. 182, n.d.

5. W. Kelly, *Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew*, London: Rouse, 1896, p. 105.

6. See *Collected Writings* 26:179.

unrighteousness with God, after calling forth from the apostle his usual exclamation of indignant repudiation, becomes an occasion for the more distinct and emphatic enunciation of the doctrine of mercy as a particular aspect of the electing will of God:

"For he saith unto *Moses*, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c. (v. 15).

It was to the lawgiver of Israel that Jehovah revealed the secret of His way, in sovereign elective grace, after the nation had for ever forfeited all claim of *legal* blessing by their breach of the covenant of works. <sup>7</sup> After having been for a moment admitted to a higher moral elevation than other men, by virtue of their promised obedience to the Law, they are precipitated by their sin to the ordinary level of an ungodly world (Amos 9:7, 8). But the common guilt and consequent ruin of the creature having been once proved, the question of *justice* is necessarily excluded from any display of Divine favor towards such. That is, considered in themselves and with reference to their own works, the entrance of God into judgment with men must destroy all hope. For vengeance against sin is the natural march of Divine justice. But this would involve the destruction of all, for all have sinned. Power belongs to God, and the natural condition of man as a sinner provokes the exercise of that power in wrathful indignation. But mercy also belongs unto Him. Now this must in its nature of necessity be controlled and directed by the will of Him who shows mercy. It is drawn by no attraction of desert. Moreover, human wretchedness, being in itself the natural effect of Divine judgment against sin, is no compelling cause of mercy. Its deep and blessed spring is to be sought for and found (if indeed that depth be searchable) in the mystery of the love of God -- in God Himself, whose name is Love.

Nor is this all. The objective display of mercy, when revealed in its full brightness in the person of Jesus, is not enough to secure the blessing of the chosen vessels of God's grace. Nature can never believe the truth of God, whether for good or for evil. "*Because* I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:45), is the expostulation of Truth itself, when dishonored and withstood by those who, as touching the flesh, nevertheless stood near to God {i.e., the Jews}. The vessels, therefore, of Divine mercy must be fitted to receive mercy. Truth must act subjectively on the heart and conscience by the power of the Holy Ghost, or all promise and

7. Ex. 22, 23, *passim*, and Acts 7:42. The force of this allusion to so important a crisis in the national history is obvious. The Jewish mind, in order to be delivered from the inveterate notion of self-righteousness, needed to be taught or reminded, by such references, that the principle to which it clung with such infatuate tenacity had been disallowed from the very first. Long-suffering, mercy, and faithfulness had been the security of a stiff-necked people, whom righteous judgment, untempered by mercy, must have blotted from the earth.

testimony alike will fail of their effect. And so, he adds, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

Now it was to Moses the man of God that the secret of electing mercy was declared. Its grand exemplification to Israel will be in the day when, having wearied itself in the greatness of its way (Isa. 57:10), the scattered and dispersed nation shall again be brought into its own land. For the mercy which their sin under the old covenant had caused to depart, will yet again revive when the time of promise shall have come. “I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy” (Hos. 2:23), is the word spoken concerning her who had first been put away for her sins. Moreover, the Lord will yet return with mercies to *Jerusalem*. His house shall be built in it, and a line stretched forth upon Jerusalem (Zech. 1:16). For a small moment He has forsaken Zion, but with great mercies He will gather her (Isa. 54 *passim*). Thus we find, first, the solemn assertion of the sovereign will of Divine mercy as the alone condition of blessing; and secondly, the distinct assurance that the good pleasure of that will is to show mercy unto Israel in the latter day

Verses 17, 18. It is in close connection with what goes immediately before, and in further illustration of the doctrine of Divine *mercy*,<sup>8</sup> that the manifestation of righteous power in the way of judgment is next exemplified: -- “For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,” &c., &c. The same Holy One, who reserves to Himself the sovereign prerogative of mercy, is equally God in the just infliction of His vengeance upon rebellious sinners. The question, “who is the Lord,” which was asked by Pharaoh in his pride of heart, -- a question which, whether audibly expressed or not, lurks always in the depths of unregenerate nature, -- must one day receive its decisive answer. As it has happened to Pharaoh and his host, the fame of whose catastrophe has filled all lands, in lasting testimony both to the power and the faithfulness of God, so will it again be done when the “sudden destruction,” which has so long impended over an unrepentant world, shall be at last permitted to descend (1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 2:8-12).<sup>9</sup>

### ***Responsibility for the State of Heart Which Incapacitates Man from Believing God***

It is noted in Ezek. 36:26 that man has a stony heart. This was acquired in the fall of Adam. And, we must remember that Israel is representative of the first man (as fallen), under testing, under probation, to see if he was recoverable

8. Compare Psa. 136:10-21, where Jehovah's mercy to His chosen is declared to be the motive and measure of His righteous acts of judgment, whether upon the Egyptian or the Amorite.

9. *Notes and Reflections on the Epistle to the Romans*, London: Yapp, pp. 192-194.

from the fall.

The following quotation is from an article entitled, “Salvation is of the Lord.”

One point I would notice, before turning to the direct and copious testimony of Scripture on the subject before us; that is, the distinction between capacity to receive a testimony, and responsibility for rejecting it. A person who is, in fact, every way trust-worthy, asserts that he has witnessed a certain transaction. I immediately exclaim, “I cannot believe a word he says.” Now this may be quite true; and yet I may be altogether culpable for my incapacity. I may have hearkened to false reports of this person -- I may have suffered my mind to be prejudiced against him -- I may have got such thoughts of him, and such feelings towards him, that as a simple matter of fact, I am incapable of believing a word he says. But does all this exonerate me if he be really a credible witness, and if, in this particular instance, his testimony be true? No, nor does it shield me from the consequences of my unbelief, supposing that my life depends in some way upon the reception of his testimony. I am incapable of receiving, it, and yet I am responsible for rejecting it. I am responsible for the state of heart which incapacitates me for receiving it. Now this is precisely our natural state as it respects God. The melancholy fact, as largely and uniformly taught in Scripture, is, that Satan has so poisoned all the springs of thought and feeling in our nature -- that we have so hearkened to his lying representations of the character of God, that by nature we do not believe a word he says. His word goes with us for nothing. We prefer believing Satan's lies to receiving the truth of God. And this is the natural state of all men since the fall. Does this destroy our responsibility? Not in the least. That for which we are responsible, that for which we are condemned, is, that we have such thoughts and feelings towards God, as render us incapable of receiving His testimony; that our hearts are so blinded and hardened, that our own imaginations and Satan's lies seem to us more credible than the truth of God. Can it be any excuse for giving God the lie, to urge that we have such injurious, unworthy thoughts of Him, that we can do nothing else? No, this is not our excuse, but our condemnation.

This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, *and men loved darkness rather than light*, because their deeds were evil {John 3:19}.

If any should urge that we cannot be responsible for doing what is beyond our power, the plain reply is, *you contradict God's word*. Nothing can be more plainly stated, than that the law was given on purpose to prove that men could not keep it, and that men could not be saved by keeping it. And yet who will assert that men were not responsible for obeying God's law?

What is the consequence of all this? Why, plainly, that by nature we are

*lost*. This is what the Word of God declares; and that our only resource is, not any capacity in ourselves of any kind -- not any capacity we possess in our unconverted state, but the power of God to quicken those who are dead in trespasses and sins {Eph. 2:1}. It is by the Word that He does this; and the way in which he does it is, leading us by the Word to believe on Jesus. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" {Rom. 10:17}. Still it is HE who does it, *not* ourselves.<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Example of Showing Mercy: Israel's Case***

The case of Jehovah's showing mercy to Israel is traced by J. N. Darby thus:

Israel did pretend to take the ground of righteousness, as in Ex. 19, and what followed? The golden calf was made. Was God to share with the calf in having them as a people? No: by this, the very first link that bound them, that nearest to God, was broken; by this act Israel had forfeited everything; they had cast off the promises, which they had accepted on the condition of their own obedience (Moses might have had them) and the God that had made the promises, and who alone could fulfil them. Could God overlook this sin? Israel had undertaken to have the promises by their obedience; if God had dealt with Israel in righteousness, every one must have been cut off. What could God do but retreat, as I said, into His own sovereignty? There He had a resource; for if any of them are to be spared, it must be in this way of mercy. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Man is entirely lost, so now God says, I will act for Myself. Taking a truth in connection with all other truth gives it its right and proper place, and its own divine force. Turn now to Ex. 19, 20 and 21. Israel undertaken to have the promises on condition of obeying all that God would command. God had said, "If ye obey my voice"; they answer, "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do." But before Moses came down, God tells him,

They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them, they have made them a molten calf, and had worshiped it, and have sacrificed thereunto";

then,

the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people; now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them (Ex. 32:8-10).

Then Moses says, "Forgive them their sin." Here the mediator is brought in, a figure, of course, of the true Mediator. Moses goes up to make an

10. *The Present Testimony* 2:326, 327.

atonement for them; "Peradventure<sup>11</sup> I shall make an atonement for them." But let us see the effect of his mediation. First, God says, in Ex. 33:3,

I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way:

but

I will send an angel before thee (v. 2).

Then in v. 7,

Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp:

then in v. 13, Moses says to God,

Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people.

And God replies, "My presence shall go with thee" -- not with the people, but with the mediator. And then God proclaims the name of the Lord to the mediator, at the same time bringing out this principle,

I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

When Moses pleads with God for Israel, notwithstanding all their departure from God, yet Moses identifies them with God, and says, "Thy people which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt"; while God calls them the mediator's people. Remark here, in passing, one thing most beautiful to observe: God, after first threatening to consume them, by coming up into the midst of them in a moment (Ex. 33:5), had said (v. 3),

I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people.

Yet Moses says in Ex. 34:9,

If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go up amongst us, for *it is* a stiff-necked people.

Grace had come in in the interval, God's goodness had passed before him. This changed all, and the people being so stiff-necked, Moses says, we cannot do without God; so that Moses, when once the foundation of grace is laid, makes the very condition of the people, which would have led God

11. Though we have here the general analogy of mediatorial intervention, remark here the difference of that of which it was a shadow. Christ is gone up because He has made a perfect and effectual atonement, the efficacy of which He presents on high so as to secure our blessing; that, of course, Moses could not do. There is no "peradventure I shall" for us; He has made it before He went up to God to appear in His presence for us.

to consume them, or at least not go amongst them, the reason for God's going up amongst them. It is a question of who is to go up; therefore Moses says, Do thou, O God, go with us. Grace had come in and therefore he could say to God, Go with us; thus bringing in God for us. The moment grace is brought in, even in the way of government (and here the question is one of government), we feel that our very sinfulness is a reason why the presence of God cannot be dispensed with.

We will now turn again to the subject of descent. We have seen Paul saying, If you Jews will have the promises by descent, then you must let in the Ishmaelites {from Ishmael} and Edomites {from Esau}; and, on the other hand, if you say you will have them by righteousness, you know that if God had dealt with you in righteousness there would not have been one of you here at this moment; say now (and you, my reader, ask yourself the question), will you be willing to be dealt with in righteousness? No, you would not; then do not you talk about it, until you can go to God on that footing. But if, says Paul to Israel, you still say, We will have the promises by righteousness, the golden calf has proved, at the very outset, that you cannot have them on that ground, and that your mouth must be forever closed. But if you have such a conviction of sin as stops your mouth about righteousness, and so excludes all boasting, you will rejoice in the "mercy" and "compassion" of God, who retreats into His own sovereignty, that He may know how to spare; because in thus sovereignty He can shew mercy. If I am convicted in my heart of sin, I shall be glad enough to hear of grace, be it ever so sovereign:

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

God is not bound up to righteousness; He can show mercy, and "whom he will he hardeneth."<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Example of Hardening: Pharaoh's Case***

For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very thing I have raised thee up from amongst [men], that I might thus shew in thee my power, and so that my name should be declared in all the earth (Rom. 9:17).

Here we have one of those interesting personifications of the Word of God. It was the Scripture that spoke to Pharaoh, the Scripture for which he showed utter contempt, but which triumphed over him as it will over the modern detractors in the Gentile profession of which we will speak in Rom. 11. An unbelieving Jew, as well as a Gentile, had better look to the warnings in Scripture about hardness of heart.

12. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 33:396-398.

Here are some general remarks by J. N. Darby on hardening:

Turn now to Pharaoh's history. "The scripture saith, for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." And here, I would say, I do not wish to enfeeble or escape the full plain sense of this passage, because it has been made a doctrinal question. There is a hardening in certain cases. It is impossible that God can make or tempt a person to be wicked; but He can harden, and give up the sinner judicially to blindness. I would here speak with reverence; but the scripture is very plain. Mark God's ways, and first with the natural man, and how it ends. See Rom. 1. After giving a long detail of wickedness, he says, in v. 24, "wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate mind to work all uncleanness." In v. 25, "they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator." "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections." And then in v. 28, "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Now in all this history, it is to be observed that God does not make man wicked, but simply gives man up to what he is. Again, of Israel God says, "make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes." And so with professing Christians in this last dispensation of mercy, "Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." It would be a horrible blasphemy to say that God made them wicked. But those who received not the love of the truth were judicially sent strong delusion.<sup>13</sup>

A Calvinist will, of course, reject this because he connects hardening with his idea about an election of reprobation. Thus, to the Calvinist, the hardening does not follow after the fact (as we just saw actually is the case in Rom. 1) but is part of the decree of reprobation. And so it will not be allowed that Pharaoh first hardened his heart and then God hardened it. James R. White wrote:

To say the Pharaoh hardened his own heart first 1) ignores Exodus 5:1, 2 and assumes that this is *not* the fulfilment of Exodus 4:21 and 2) assumes that the hardening of his heart by God is somehow "based upon" or dependant on Pharaoh's actions.<sup>14</sup>

The reverse is the case. 1) it is *he* that *assumes* -- assumes that Ex. 5:1, 2 fulfils Ex. 4:21; and, 2) appears to do so because he *assumes* the case is in accord with

13. *Collected Writings* 33:398, 399. See *Notes and Comments* 1:208, 209 for a discussion of words in Hebrew for harden; and p. 280 for Jannes' and Jambres' role, by Satan.

14. The reference has escaped me, but p. 221.

the Calvinistic election of reprobation -- a teaching which is not true.<sup>15</sup> The fact is that Pharaoh's hardening by God is *a judicial act of God's moral government in the world*. In Ex. 3:19 it is stated by Jehovah that the King of Egypt would not let them go. That was indeed the case, but the fact is that God acted upon a heart already hard, the hardening by God being historically noted as occurring *after* the notice that Pharaoh hardened his heart (though God predicted that He would harden Pharaoh's heart) -- and that is the patent fact. God does not make the heart evil, but it being evil and manifesting its hardness in rejecting the testimony brought to that heart, God confirms such a one in his manifested obduracy. Psa. 105:25 and Ex. 12:36, do not alter this fact, nor does Prov. 21:1. God hardened Sihon also (Deut. 2:30) as he subsequently did with Canaanites (Josh. 11:19, 20). In cases such as Pharaoh's, where sufficient particulars are given, we can see that God's judicial act of His moral government in hardening fell upon them after certain conduct. This is also quite evident in Rom. 1:24 ("wherefore God gave them up . . ."), Rom. 1:26 ("for this reason God gave them up . . ."), and Rom. 1:28 ("And according as they did not think good to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind . . ."). See Isa. 6 for Israel and 2 Thess. 2:10-12 for Christendom.

If it was not for the false notion of a decree of reprobation, why would any man endeavor to find hardening connected with a decree of God in eternity?

**Hardening, then, follows man's manifested infidelity in view of some testimony that God has provided.**

Judas is a most awful case:

But nearness to Jesus, without faith in Him, if the heart overcomes the influence of His presence, hardens in a terrible manner; the morsel which showed that one was eating of the same dish, the morsel which Judas received, dipped by His hand, is but the sign of Satan's entering into his heart. Satan enters into this heart to harden it, even against every amiable sentiment of nature, against every remembrance of that which could act upon the conscience. There are many unconverted persons, who would not betray an intimate companion by covering him with kisses; many wicked people that would have remembered the miracles they had seen -- perhaps done themselves. Covetousness had been there, it had never been repressed; then Satan suggests to Judas the means of satisfying it. For myself I have no doubt that Iscariot thought that the Lord would escape out of the hands of men, as He had done, when His hour was not yet come: his remorse, when he knew that Jesus was condemned, makes me think it

15. The subject of election is dealt with in my *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

-- a remorse which only found other hearts as hard as his own, and indifferent to his misery; an appalling picture of man's heart under the influence of Satan. Then, almost the final phase of this influence, Satan hardens Judas against all feeling of humanity, and of man towards the man of his acquaintance, and finishes all by abandoning him, giving him up to despair in the presence of God.<sup>16</sup>

Man's continued indulgence of "sin in the flesh" hardens the conscience. Stephen charged his hearers with stiff-neckedness (Acts 7:51). The history of Israel under the law was a history of this:

. . . ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers, ye also (Acts 7:51).

This is exactly what the first man uniformly does. Stephen addressed their consciences, but they hardened their hearts and killed him. God does warn against hardening one's heart (Heb. 3:8, 15; 4:7). This does not hinder God's acts of hardening in due time if He so wills. Moreover, He utilizes evil for the accomplishment of His holy will (Judg. 9:23; 1 Chron. 21:1; Judas' case; etc.) though He does not create *moral* evil. That would be contrary to what He is: light (1 John 1:5).

W. Kelly observed:

Anything that distorts or even ignores the revealed character and mind of God is false, and will always be found to issue in wrong deductions. But in general the fault does not so much consist in mistaken deductions from scripture, as in human preconceptions and mere theorizing. There are Calvinistic speculations just as much as Arminian. It seems to me that both schemes are beyond question partial and do violence to the truth. The practical lesson is to cherish confidence only in God's word. We may safely rest, as we are bound to rest, in His revelation.<sup>17</sup>

An excellent article "The Sovereignty of God and the Responsibility of Man" with a chart concerning Pharaoh hardening his heart, and Jehovah hardening his heart, is found in *The Bible Treasury* 9:345-347, and reproduced in my *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*.

### Conclusion

So then, to whom he will he shews mercy, and whom he will he hardens (Rom. 9:18).

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

16. *Collected Writings* 33:244.

17. *Introductory Lectures to the Minor Prophets*, "Obadiah."

## *Genesis 22:5*

Gen. 22:5 says, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship." Why did Abraham tell his young men to abide there if he had brought them so far? What truth is hidden in these words? Is there some connection with Israel as distinct from the Gentiles?

Answer:

There is nothing like the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ is central to a Christian's life and spiritual health. Oh, Lord Jesus, let me abide close to Thy cross! There we find peace for our souls and there we see the love of God. There also we find that we are separated from the world.

Abraham and Isaac are the two principal persons in Genesis 22. Abraham is the father. He has one son, his beloved and only son. (Ishmael does not count because he was not a son of promise.) And the father is taking his only son to offer him up as a burnt offering to God at a place near where the city of Jerusalem would later be located. So Abraham is like God the Father and Isaac is like the Lord Jesus Christ because the Father gave His only begotten Son to die for us upon the cross. Is it any wonder that most men who expound this chapter write about Abraham and Isaac only? It is not often that anyone thinks about Abraham's two young men.

But if you and I were to be transported back in time so that we were there, we would not have a place standing beside Abraham (because we are not worthy to stand in the place of someone who is like God the Father) and we would not have a place standing beside Isaac (because we are not worthy to stand in the same place of someone who is like the Son of God). But we could stand with Abraham's two young men. And with them we could witness all that happened.

Abraham's two young men were witnesses, because the Bible says:

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established (2 Cor. 13:1).

These two witnessed the journey for three days. The journey separated them from the world in which they lived, a good result for themselves. Then they witnessed the place afar off, but they came no closer. Yet, they saw everything that man could see. Nothing was hidden from them that man could see.

Do not think that they were too far away to see anything at all. Smoke rises high in the sky and they were close enough for Abraham to see the place afar off. And the flames of a fire at night will be seen at great distances. There was plenty to see and to bear witness.

But the two young men could not come closer to the place where Isaac was to be sacrificed. Why? Well, because they would have had to die if they came

closer. Of course, they would! Do you think that Abraham who was commanded by God to slay his son whom he loved would have let any other young man remain alive at that same place of sacrifice? Did he not already know about the idea of one life being given for another? Did he not know about vicarious sacrifice? Yes, he did. Those two young men were not as worthy as Isaac; they were not born of promise; and their living or dying had nothing to do with the inheritance promised to Abraham. Do not think that anyone could come lightly to such a place as the place where Abraham was to slay his son!

A second reason why they could come no nearer is that God's command had not called them to the place where the burnt offering was to be offered up. That was a holy place. And what happened there was not for curious eyes to see, not even for witnesses to observe, not for anyone to experience or know except for Abraham and Isaac alone from all others but together with each other. Perhaps, we can understand more easily why the young men were not taken farther if we read a little in the New Testament also.

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy: and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him (Mark 14:32-34).

The Lord Jesus and the Father Who was with Him went with the disciples to Gethsemane. Do you believe that? Then the Lord left most of the disciples and took (not two young men but) three men farther. The three were enough for a complete witness to fully establish what they could bear witness to. Then He left the three of them and went "forward a little." Why? Why did He bring them so far and not bring them all the way? The Father was there, because the Lord Jesus spoke with Him in prayer. And it was a holy place, not for man's intrusion. OH! What sorrow the Lord passed through as He, Who knew no sin, anticipated being made sin for us!

In Luke 22:41, we learn exactly how far the Lord Jesus was from His disciples. He was "withdrawn from them about a stone's cast". Now stoning to death is the penalty under the law of Moses for sins. Why could not Peter or James or John have gone farther? Because they were not sinless, like the Lord Jesus was. He and He alone could atone for our sins because He had no sins of His own. But to go to the place where sins were borne, even in anticipation as in the garden, was not possible for any of the disciples. They were kept separated from that place by the distance of the penalty of stoning to death for sins.



Does that help to explain why Abraham's companions were kept from Mount Moriah? To me, it is a help. Remember also, that at the cross itself God drew to Golgotha large numbers both of Jews and Gentiles, but when the time came to lay upon the Lord Jesus all our sins, He turned it all to darkness for three hours. What happened there was not for man to watch.

The Lord Jesus took three disciples onwards from the others, but how many were they who accompanied Abraham and Isaac? Was it only two young men? Was there not also an ass? How many was that in total? Well, it was two or three, depending on whether you count only the two young men or whether you include the ass, which is not forgotten in Genesis. So it was the same number as the number of disciples that the Lord Jesus took with Himself at Gethsemane.

Your question asks if there is some connection with the distinction between Israel and the nations, and I think that there is. "Two" in the Bible is connected with sufficient testimony and Israel had sufficient testimony to the truth of God in that they were given the covenants and the Old Testament scriptures. So the two young men may represent Israel. Where then is a figure or symbol of the Gentiles? Do you see him there? Yes, it is the ass. Not easily controlled, very stubborn, wild by nature, the ass is a suitable symbol for the Gentiles.

And so there they are in Gen. 22:5, symbols of Israel and the Gentiles as close to the place where the great sacrifice is to be made as man could be brought. If they were closer, then the penalty of sins (death) would fall on them. If they were farther, they would not have had the privilege of bearing witness to what happened that day.

Is this not the place of the assembly of God? On the Lord's day we remember the Lord Jesus Christ in His death as gathered together around Himself by His Spirit. And we look back to the cross, spiritually coming as close as it is possible for man to come as we show forth His death until He comes again for us from heaven. It might be that we are only two or three in a certain place. But we should not be discouraged by such small numbers, because Gen. 22:5 speaks of the two or three who went with Abraham and Isaac until they were as close as they could be. Never before in the history of the world had anyone had so great a privilege as those companions of Abraham.

D. P. Ryan

### Quote

We should ask our hearts if there is any one hard thought that we have against a brother; for in that, communion is checked."

## On Cremation

Bible references concerning burning bodies and cursed things:

- |                  |                      |                 |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Deut. 32:22   | 6. Gen. 38:24        | 11. Matt. 13:30 |
| 2. 1 Kings 15:13 | 7. Lev. 21:9         | 12. Luke 3:17   |
| 3. Jer. 21:10    | 8. Josh. 7:15, 25    | 13. John 15:6   |
| 4. Mal. 4:1      | 9. 1 Kings 13:1-3    | 14. Heb. 6:8    |
| 5. Amos 2:1, 2   | 10. 2 Kings 23:15-18 |                 |

As the lake of fire demonstrates, burning is a sign of judgment. The bodies of believing Christians are not to be burned.

Among OT examples of burial, rather than cremation, are:

Abraham buried Sarah

Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham

Jacob and Esau buried Isaac

Jacob buried Rachel and Leah

**God** buried Moses

Israel buried Aaron, etc., etc. Not one was burned.

Christ, our example, was not burned, but buried.

Lazarus was raised from burial, not ashes.

Early Christians **never** burned their dead. Only pagans did so.

Our bodies are not our own but belong to God; so we are not permitted to do with them as we please, but as He pleases as our Owner (1 Cor. 6:9, 20).

References: *Cremation is not for Christians*, by Alfred Levell.

*Cremation: Is it Christian?* By James W. Frazer.

T. J. Knapp, 2007

### Quote

"Real humiliation is exhibited, not in the greatness of what we do, but in the principle of obedience."

"There are two ways in which Satan acts: by power in the world, and by deceit in the church."

## Ten Designations of Our Lord in John 1

### Gems of a Jewelry Store

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. The Word -- God (1:1)    | 6. The Son of God (1:34)         |
| 2. The Life (1:4)           | 7. The Master (Teacher) (1:38)   |
| 3. The Light (1:7)          | 8. The Messiah (Anointed) (1:41) |
| 4. The Only-begotten (1-14) | 9. The King of Israel (1:49)     |
| 5. The Lamb of God (1:29)   | 10. The Son of Man (1:51)        |

These are indeed gem-jewels describing our Lord and Savior, Whom, having not seen, we love and value like a priceless jewel of priceless value. However, He needed no cutting and polishing as we do. The more He was tried but the more was brought into view the luster and glory it is our privilege to see in Him.

T. J. Knapp, 2007.

### Authorization

But it is well to remember that God's work does not need authorization. From whom is it to receive this? God assuredly needs none to work, or make others work, and he who pleads ecclesiastical authority for working proves that it is not God who is working, for who can authorize Him?

*Collected Writings* 24:172.

### Quote

"When we think we are dealing with people, it may be that God is dealing with us, and proving what is in us, whether love is in us."

"The Lord's plan to deliver His people is to draw out wickedness against them in all its force. This is very alarming in itself, but it is God's way of delivering, because the effect is to break down the flesh, to show that we have no strength at all. And this is our victory; for then the question is between God and Satan, and not between us and Satan."

## Moses' First and Second Coming

The following appeared in *Precious Things*, London: Horner, pp. 97-98 (1861).

### MOSES A TYPE OF CHRIST

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, Like UNTO ME; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you: and it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:22, 23).

When Moses came as Israel's friend,  
His brethren cast him out:  
When Jesus came unto his own,  
His own received him not. <sup>1</sup>

"Who made thee ruler and a judge?"  
To Moses was their word.  
"We will not have this man to rule,"  
They said to Christ our Lord. <sup>2</sup>

Rejected Moses went away,  
Thus treated with disgrace:  
So Christ the Lord has likewise gone,  
And left the Jewish race. <sup>3</sup>

But Moses then took care of sheep,  
Within a stranger's land;  
So now poor Gentile wand'ring sheep  
Are kept in Jesu's hand! <sup>4</sup>

As Moses married far away,  
Cast off by Israel's pride;  
So Jesus sought poor Gentiles out,  
And took them for his bride. <sup>5</sup>

1. Acts 7:23-28; John 1.

2. Acts 7:27; Luke 19:14.

3. Acts 7:29; Matt. 23:38.

4. Ex. 3:1; John 10:27, 28.

5. Ex. 2:21; Eph. 2:10-13, 5:23.

To Moses Midian's land was strange,  
 The land thought him so too;  
 So is this world to Jesus now;  
 Ah, is it so to you? <sup>6</sup>

When Moses and his wife were one,  
 She was a stranger then:  
 So oneness with our living Head,  
 Now separates from men. <sup>7</sup>

But all this time poor Israel lay,  
 Beneath the tyrant's frown;  
 So still Jerusalem lies waste,  
 And still is trodden down. <sup>8</sup>

At length their cry came up to God,  
 He saw them sigh and weep;  
 And so again when Israel cries,  
 The Lord will wake from sleep. <sup>9</sup>

This Moses whom they once refused,  
 Was sent in their distress;  
 So Jesus whom they crucified,  
 Again will come to bless. <sup>10</sup>

The Lord will come, with all his saints;  
 O may I of them be!  
 Yes, Lord, I know thy precious blood  
 Has ransomed even me. <sup>11</sup>

### Quote

“May He who works in His people to will and to do of His good pleasure {Phil. 2:13}, work out His own truth each day in our souls, delivering us from that great work of Satan -- a form of godliness without the power.”

### Obedience

6. Ex. 2:22; John 18:36.

7. Ex. 18:2-6; 1 Pet. 2:1.

8. Ex. 2:23; Luke 21:24.

9. Ex. 2: 23-25; Psa. 78:65.

10. Acts 7:35; Zech. 12:10, 14:3.

11. Zech. 14:5; Heb. 10:14.

To you who, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, have been led to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and who can trust to the promise, that “your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake” (1 John 2:12), nothing now is so important as how YOU ought to walk, and to please God (1 Thess. 4:1). You have, through the free love of God, been washed from your sins in the blood of Jesus (Rev. 1:5). You are not of the world, but chosen out of it (John 15:19). It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32). You are now, therefore, the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Nothing can separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39). You wait in this world the appearing <sup>1</sup> of your Lord Jesus, from heaven, who shall change your vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body (Phil. 3:21). Your great object, then, during the period that your Father leaves you here, should be to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His (1 Cor. 6:20); to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. 12:1).

But there are those who, professing to know these things, and appearing to desire the glory of God, are yet not acting in accordance with His word. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2). They desire to be engaged in His service, but suffer themselves to be led away by their own suggestions: too often deceived by the idea that, if they are sincere, all is right. Honest intention is of great value in its proper place, but much wrong may be, and often is, done in great sincerity. You then, beloved brethren, will remember that God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts; and that a

casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5),

is the only part that belongs to us. “Suffer little children to come unto me,” said Jesus, “and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16); because there is humility, simplicity, and obedience, -- a mind that, instead of setting up and following its own reasonings, is readily subject to a father's word, *upon its own authority*. The path of obedience, then, is the path of duty and of blessing. It is the only proper place of the creature, because God must in all things be supreme: upon this depends *sin* and *righteousness*. There is nothing so humble, nothing so steady, nothing which so much marks the presence of the Holy Spirit, or is so opposed to insubordination, and which so utterly puts to silence every ungodly suggestion, as obedience.

Sin is *lawlessness*, or doing one's *own will*; “but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:17). “If ye know these things, happy are ye if

1. {Our bodies shall be changed at the rapture of the saints and we will be manifested in glory with Christ at the appearing (Col. 3:4).}

ye do them” (John 13:17). This is taught in the Holy Scriptures in the strongest manner. The first Adam, and the second {last}, the Lord from heaven, the great heads and types of ruin and of blessing, are thus distinguished, as the disobedient and the obedient ones:

As by *one man’s disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous (Rom. 5:19).

The first Adam did *his own* will, and he perished by it. He was put under a trial of obedience. God said, Thou shalt not eat; he did eat, and was ruined (Gen. 3). The wages of sin, {which is} death, followed the consequence of his own act. Sin was *disobedience*, in-subjection to God, the wide open door to every evil. Precisely the opposite was found in the perfect and blessed Savior. Would you know His character in his own humble, holy, and perfect declaration of it?

Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart (Psa. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7).

So we read in the course of his life on earth,

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work (John 4:34).

This character was stamped upon every thing he did.

He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men {Phil. 2:7}:

and as the Lord’s service was perfect, so was it unceasing; for, loving his own, he loved them unto the end, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8): for although willingly doing it, “*this commandment had he received of his Father.*” He could say, Mine ears hast thou opened, [or digged (Psa. 40:6)] the Lord God had opened them.<sup>2</sup> He was not rebellious, neither turned away back; but gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair (Isa. 1:6); nor did he hide his face from any sorrow unto which obedience brought him. Obedience was the principle on which he acted in the temptation. “It is written,” was ever his reply to the tempter’s suggestions; but the one sentence, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,” stamps the character, and fully shows the principle of the life of the holy Jesus. He was the pattern of obedience.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8).

2. Jesus is here represented with a bored, or opened ear, as the sign of perpetual and willing service. When it was lawful for a servant to go out free, but yet when he plainly said, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then he was brought to the door-post, and his master bored his ear through with an awl, that he should serve him for ever. (See Ex. 21:5, 6.)

The full contrast to all this is in Antichrist,

*The king shall do according to his will* (Dan. 11:36).

This is *his* principle; he shall do according to *his* will, and *magnify himself*. And as we find obedience in its perfection in our Lord’s constant walk, so are his children<sup>3</sup> called to follow him. They are

elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:2).

This is that to which the believer is sanctified, or set apart;<sup>4</sup> and so it is written, when the contrary state is spoken of:

wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. 1:2).

Nor does anything ever alter this principle; nothing but sin can ever draw a man away from it; the *doing our own will is always sin*; the acting of the old man {the old nature} is not subject to God, or it would do *his* will, not *its own*. This character must be maintained in all the trying circumstances of refusing obedience to the authority of man, when it is contrary to the mind of God.

We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

It can be forsaken in no instance, without breaking through the principle of being “followers of God, as dear children” (Eph. 5:1). It is the great exercise of life toward God.

The previous step to blessing *to the Lord’s {God’s} children* is obedience.

If any man will *do his will*, he shall know of the doctrine; whether it be of God (John 7:17).

The same truth is very distinctly taught us in John 14:21, 23,

He that hath my commandments, and *keepeth them*, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

3. {We are the *children* of the *Father*, not the Lord’s children, but the point about obedience is, of course, true.}

4. {This fact needs more emphasis. The obedience to which we are sanctified, or to which we are set apart, is Christ’s obedience. That is, the character of His obedience is the character of the Christian’s obedience. How should the Christian obey? Look at Christ and we will see how we ought to obey. He is the standard and model.}

*Nothing can be more distinct than the free salvation of the sinner, through the obedience of Christ; and the certainty of blessing to the saint by obedience to the word. Christians, then, are not to wait for blessing in order to obey, but to act on the command, and blessing will follow.* They are already justified (1 Cor. 6:11), and when justified, blessing follows their obedience. *“To him that hath shall more be given.”* The redemption of the church is now complete; *for by one man’s obedience* shall many be made *righteous*; but to the redeemed, obedience goes before the enjoyment of blessing. Thus Saul, struck to the ground, says,

What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into Damascus; and *there* it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed thee to do (Acts 22:10).

He went and received comfort and blessing through Ananias, who was then sent to him. He acted in obedience *in the first instance after believing*. So the poor blind man, a pattern and type to us, was directed to

Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing (John 9:7).

Having been obedient, he was enabled to teach his teachers; and being cast out for it, the Lord finds him in this case, and reveals himself unto him.

But, beloved brethren, the path of obedience must ever be a path of trial to the flesh. “In the world,” said our Lord to his disciples, “ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). “And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus,” saith the Spirit by Paul, “shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). Has this word ceased to be true? or is it inapplicable to the Lord’s children in these days? By no means. Why, then, it may be asked, is the profession of Christ one now of such comparative ease and quiet? Simply because it is an unfaithful one; because there is so much a form of godliness without the power, and so few are found living godly in Christ Jesus.

The path of obedience is the path in which Jesus walked, and he has left us an example to follow his steps; but conformity to the world, and the friendship of the world, though they are directly forbidden to the Lord’s {God’s} children, are too plainly and grievously the order of the day. The Church’s character in the world should be that of a light in a dark place. Jesus, when in the world, was the light of it; and he has said to his children, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:14).

The world crucified the Lord of Glory, because men loved darkness rather than light. The world hated him, because he testified of it, that its works were evil (John 7:7).

And let not his disciples, when brought into a position of testimony, marvel if the world hate them; for our Lord Himself said,

Ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (John 15:18-20).

The things of Jesus are shown unto God’s dear child, by the Holy Ghost presenting them with power to his conscience, that his light may so shine before men, that they may *see* his good works. His good work is ‘the obedience of faith’: and in the teachable child-like spirit, that a knowledge of his own evil will ever promote, he will be ready to suspect and lay aside the suggestion of his own mind and the wisdom of this world, and bring every thing he is called upon to say or do to the light of God’s most holy word, proving all things, and holding fast that which is good. May you, dear reader, be thus directed, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

(*Precious Truth*, London: Broom, pp. 25-36 (1861).

### *Three Stages of Advance*

Not only has the Lord Jesus put away sin, but He has borne all your sins, and confessed them as if they were His own; and they are all gone. It is never said Christ died for the sins of the world. In Rom. 6 and 7, I am dead and justified from sin. Now I can reckon myself dead. It is not I; I have had enough of “I.” Now Christ is I. If I am alive through Christ, I died through Christ.

I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

A young man has had debts, but his father has paid them and made him a partner in his own business. Now he speaks not of my business, my concerns, etc., but our business, our concerns. But here, in Romans, he is keeping up the individuality; so we do not get union, or such words as “risen with Christ.” In Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians we see three stages of advance: in Romans, dead with Christ and alive in Christ; in Colossians, dead with Him and risen with Him; in Ephesians, dead in trespasses and sins, now quickened together, raised up together, made to sit together in Him in heavenly places. In Romans the individual is cleared from what he was as a child of Adam, and gets the privileges of a child of God.

*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 21:199.

## *The Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit*

Sin is always evil in God's sight, yet some sins have a feature concerning them that we need to note for our instruction, concerning both the offense to God as well as its instruction for us regarding His ways with man for ultimately displaying His glory in Christ in the heavenlies and in the earthlies.

A sin of most grave consequence, both personally and dispensationally, is recorded in Matt. 12:24:

This [man] does not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub, prince of demons.

Regarding this monstrous sin, our Lord said:

Every sin and injurious speaking shall be forgiven to men, but speaking injuriously of the Spirit shall not be forgiven to men. And whosoever shall have spoken a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming [one] (Matt. 12:31-32).

John the Baptist, the Lord Himself, and the Twelve (Matt. 10) had proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, i.e., that the kingdom was at hand. Opposition to the Lord increased and finally took the form given in Matt. 12:24.

The power that worked in Christ was always the Holy Spirit. Every word and work of our Lord was by the power of the Spirit. In Matt. 12, His power over demons was ascribed to Beelzebub, the prince of demons -- the illogic of which the Lord answered (Matt. 12:25-30). Blasphemy is injurious speaking, and these men thus spoke injuriously against the Holy Spirit's work in Christ.

This sin would never be forgiven them and those who committed it sealed their destiny.

It seems that this sin was one which could only be committed at that time, when Christ was here on earth and His works of power were attributed to Satanic agency.

The effect of this sin was two-fold:

(1) "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming one." These two ages are, of course, the Mosaic age in which the Lord was as He spoke these words; and, "the age to come" which is the age of the reign of Messiah, what we call the millennium. There are persons who place another age between these two, which they call the "church age." Well, perhaps this could be forgiven in the church age, since the Lord did not specify that these person could not be forgiven in the "church age."

In the pages of *Thy Precepts* (as well as in some books published by Present Truth Publishers) attention has been repeatedly called to the fact that there is no "church age." The church is above and outside ages, a heavenly body, though here as to responsible testimony.

The Mosaic *system* ended, as the rending of the veil clearly indicated, but the Mosaic *age* merely continued on. We are still in the Mosaic age, and it will be displaced by "the age to come," that is, the millennium. There is no church age between the Mosaic age and "the age to come" of which the Lord, for whatever reason which may be imagined, did not speak.

(2) Let us call the rejection of our Lord in Matt. 12 the *moral* rejection, as we may refer to the cross as the *formal* rejection. The cross was the seal of what occurred in Matt. 12. The one led to the other. Following the judgment pronounced by the Lord, consider what He said to the scribes and Pharisees. Then note his words in Matt. 12:46-50 where He speaks of the true relationship with Himself. It is not a mere relationship in the flesh. Thus we see here a break with the nation, the Old Israel.

Moreover, in the next chapter (Matt. 13) we see the Lord take the position, not of coming to seek fruit, but sowing, bringing something, bringing good seed. Matt. 12 is the great turning point in Matthew. In Matt. 13 a new form of the kingdom of the heavens is announced. It is a "mystery" form, which tells us that it was not spoken of in the OT. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, as at hand, was placed in suspension. That preaching will recommence by a godly Jewish remnant formed consequent upon the rapture of the saints.

Ananias and Sapphira committed a "lie to the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:3), the governmental/disciplinary consequence of which was that they fell down and expired. This was a dreadfully aggravated character of sin in view of the fact that the Holy Spirit had shortly before come in a special function and capacity as indwelling believers and having formed the church and taking care of Christ's interests in His absence. There are sins of this character also noted in the OT, such as the strange fire brought by rebels against the divine order (Lev. 10:1). They point to a character of sin rising up against something new that God is doing.

These two acted as if the Father and the Son had not sent the Holy Spirit of promise (see Acts 2:32, 33) to care for Christ's interests in His absence. Yet God does not strike in his governmental way with every one as in this case. The acting as if the Holy Spirit was not here to take care of Christ's interest in His absence is a characterizing sin in Christendom. His divine operations are routinely set aside. They pretended to grace they did not practice. Ed.

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