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CONTENTS

Misunderstood/Misused: 1 Cor. 9:27	1
The Expected Kingdom	3
Deliverance: Romans 7	14
God's Present Center -- Part 2	23

MISUNDERSTOOD/MISUSED TEXTS

1 COR. 9:27

But I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest [after] having preached to others I should be myself rejected (1 Cor. 9:27).

An Arminian, a person who believes in freewill and that a child of God can be lost again, would use this verse to prove his doctrine. One who believes in eternal security, such as C. I. Scofield, may say that this text means that a believer's service might be rejected. The text teaches neither thing.

The words are: "lest . . . I should be myself rejected." The text does not say 'lest my service be rejected.' What can be clearer than "I should be myself rejected"? Here we have "I" and "myself." It is not our business to change these words into 'service'. Note also that the Word does not say, 'Lest after having been saved"

You know that a counterfeit coin never was a coin of the realm that *became* a counterfeit. It always was a counterfeit. It was a counterfeit from the beginning. Judas, for example, chosen for service and to be with our Lord, was a devil (John 6:70). He was not a child of God for a while and then near his end he became a counterfeit. He was a thief (John 12:6), unclean (John 13:11,12), an unbeliever (John 6:64) and the son of perdition (John 17:12).¹ He also preached to others (Matt. 10:1,4) and was rejected. One can go so far in a false profession as to even preach to others and be rejected.

The word translated 'rejected' is often translated "reprobate".² It signifies one, or something, thrust away from, rejected by, God. A child of God does not become a reprobate. This text speaks of one like Judas. His *person* was rejected. He was a reprobate. It is a solemn warning to those making a profession of faith. Is it real? or is it, after

1. In the face of all this there are those who insist Judas was a child of God at one time -- so as to have a case of one being lost again. It may be thought from John 17:12 that the Father had given Judas to the Lord, but that is a false understanding of the text. John 18:9 expressly states that none given to Him were lost.

2. A castaway is a reject. He is a reprobate: Rom. 1:28, 2 Cor. 13:5,6,7, 2 Tim 3:8, Titus 1:16. The word is translated "rejected" in Heb. 6:8.

all, mouthwork? The end of a life of self-gratification, though also at the same time one of Christian profession, is rejection.

It is said that even Paul could not be certain about himself. Yet in just the previous verse he said, "I therefore thus run, as not uncertainly; so I combat as not beating the air." Paul was not uncertain. He believed -- and therefore disciplined himself for the Christian race. "I buffet my body, and lead it captive." There is an immense lack among professed Christians of self-discipline as God would have it. We eat what we "feel like," we go where we "feel like," we dress the way we "feel like," we think the way we "feel like" -- eating, drinking and being merry. This self-indulgence was far from the apostle who controlled himself. Self-control is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). He had Christ before the vision of His soul. He was in the good of what it meant that he was not his own (2 Cor. 5:15). His body was the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and he acted accordingly.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your intelligent service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of [your] mind, that ye may prove what [is] the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1,2).

For ye have been bought with a price: glorify now then God in your body (1 Cor. 6:20).

But I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest [after] having preached to others I should be myself rejected (1 Cor. 9:27).

Ed.

EXTRACT

He has no more to do, there is no more offering for sin; but through His work we have boldness to enter into the holiest. We have perfection of access into God's presence by the blood. We are brought there now in spirit, through faith, but soon He will come and take us as the fruits of redeeming love, in bodies fashioned like His own, radiant with glory.

G. V. W.

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

PART 1

THE EXPECTED KINGDOM

CHAPTER 1.1: *DID THE OLD TESTAMENT*

PROPHETS SPEAK ABOUT THE CHURCH?

'LITERAL' OR 'SPIRITUAL' INTERPRETATION

Students of prophecy are aware that there is a longstanding dispute regarding whether or not the prophets should be interpreted 'spiritually' or 'literally'. The spiritualizers say that the prophets spoke about the church. I trust to show that Scripture expressly contradicts such a notion.

Literalists believe that the kingdom prophesied by the O. T. prophets was offered to Israel and, Christ being rejected, it is postponed. This coming kingdom, of 1000 years' duration, is called the millennium.

Many literalists erroneously believe that the first question is whether or not the prophets are to be interpreted literally. That is, they begin with a discussion of "literal" versus "spiritual" interpretation of the prophets. Often they point out all the prophecies concerning Christ's coming into the world that were literally fulfilled and go on from there to show that prophecy must be generally understood this way. While I believe there is validity to such arguments, I suggest that the starting point for a Christian who understands the mystery spoken of in Eph. 3 is to begin with those Scriptures that tell us that silence was kept in O. T. times regarding the mystery. The denial of the force of these Scriptures simply shows that the denier does not understand in his soul the mystery. If silence concerning this mystery was kept in O. T. times, it follows that the prophets did not speak about it. It then follows that the prophets must be understood literally. Hence these Scriptures are flatly contradicted by those who 'spiritualize' the prophets in order to maintain a theological system, using various methods, a few of which

we shall examine further on.

How this bears on the subject of the expected kingdom is this: if the O. T. prophets are understood literally (with due allowance for figures of speech and symbols), then there is no fulfilment of the prophesied kingdom during the present period. In order to have these prophecies fulfilled now, it is necessary to 'spiritualize' the statements of the prophets so that no literal kingdom is meant. Among other things, appeal is made to the fact that the prophets do use obvious figures of speech and symbols and so it is claimed that when they prophesied about Jerusalem, Israel and Judah, etc. the church was meant.

Any sensible literalist allows, of course, for the use of figures of speech and symbols.¹ But, he says, Judah, Jerusalem and Israel mean just that and not the church. Accordingly, the new covenant (Jer. 31) is for the future nation of Israel during the millennium.

Let us now look at those Scriptures which show that the O. T. prophets did not speak about the church. It is claimed by spiritualizers of the O. T. prophets that the O. T. quotations found in Acts and the Epistles show that the prophets spoke of the church. Lord willing, numbers of these will be examined in future articles. Suffice it to say here that while those quoted texts will be fulfilled in the coming 1000 year reign of Christ, they are cited by the N. T. writers as having some bearing or application *in principle* meanwhile.

THE BEARING OF THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST ON THE QUESTION OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

From our vantage point of having the completed Scriptures, the *first* thing to be settled need not be 'literal' versus 'spiritual' interpretation.² What needs to be done first is to settle within one's soul the force of Rom. 16:25,26 (and several other Scriptures).

Now to him that is able to establish you, according to my

1. See W. Kelly's "Language of Prophecy" in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 13:49-54; and the first chapter in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, obtainable from Present Truth Publishers.

2. This is not to say that discussion of that matter is unimportant. I am speaking of priority from the vantage point of having the complete canon. The subject of interpretation is discussed in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*. The reader will also be helped in reading the articles on "Elements of Dispensational Truth" if he also obtains "The Mystery and The Mystery and the Covenants", available from Present Truth Publishers.

glad tidings and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery, as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages, but [which] has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations (Rom. 16:25).

Before proceeding it would be well to know what a New Testament mystery is and what this particular mystery entails. W. Kelly wrote,

We must, however, guard against the notion that "the mystery" or secret means the gospel. The gospel in itself does not and never can mean a mystery. It was that which in its foundations always was before the mind of God's people in the form of promise, or of a revelation of grace not yet accomplished. But nowhere in Scripture is the gospel called a mystery. It may be connected with the mystery, but it is not itself a mystery. It was no mystery that a Saviour was to be given; it was the very first revelation of grace after man became a sinner. The Seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. A mystery is something that was not revealed of old, and which could not be known otherwise. Again, you have in the prophets a full declaration that the righteousness of God was near to come; the plainest possible statement that God was going to show Himself a Saviour-God. So again you have His making an end of sins and bringing in reconciliation and everlasting righteousness. All these things were in no sense the mystery. The mystery means that which was kept secret, not that which could not be understood, which is a human notion of mystery; but an unrevealed secret, -- a secret not yet divulged in the O. T. but brought out fully in the New. What, then, is this mystery? It is, first, that Christ, instead of taking the kingdom, predicted by the prophets, should completely disappear from the scene of this world, and that God should set Him up in heaven at His own right hand as the Head of all glory, heavenly and earthly, and that He should give the whole universe into the hands of Christ to administer the kingdom and maintain the glory of God the Father in it. This is the first and most essential part of the mystery, the second, or Church's part, being but the consequence of it. Christ's universal headship is not the theme spoken of in the O. T. You have Him as Son of David, Son of man, Son of God, the King; but nowhere is the whole universe of God (but rather the kingdom under the whole heavens) put under Him. In this headship over all things, Christ will share all with His bride. Christ will have His Church the partner of His own unlimited dominion, when that day of glory dawns upon the world.

Hence, then, as we know, the mystery consists of two great parts, which we have summed up in Ephesians 5:32: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Thus the mystery means neither Christ nor the Church alone, but Christ and the

Church united in heavenly blessedness and dominion over everything that God has made. Hence, as we saw from chapter 1, when He was raised from the dead, God set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, "and put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." It is not said, "over the church," which would overthrow, not teach, the mystery. He will be over Israel and over the Gentiles, but nowhere is He said to reign over the Church. The Church is His body. I admit it is a figure, but a figure that conveys an intense degree of intimacy, full of the richest comfort and the most exalted hope. The saints who are now being called are to share all things along with Christ in that day of glory. Hence it becomes of the greatest interest to know what the nature of the Church is. When did its calling begin, and what is the character of that calling, what the responsibilities that flow from it? ³

3. *Lectures on . . . the Ephesians*, ch. 3. The following from J. N. Darby's *Collected Writings* 10:248,249 might provoke further thought:

. . . The mystery formed no part of revelation, no subject of promise. It was hid in God. I have already remarked that an historical type does not reveal a thing at all till the antitype comes. It is a simple history. Romans 16:25 does not simply relate to the preaching of the gospel, as is said. It speaks of a mystery kept secret since the world began, but not made manifest.

The bringing in of the Gentiles was not an unrevealed mystery. It is referred to in many scriptures; but Romans 16:25 speaks of a mystery kept secret since the world began, and to say that this is what is plainly taught in the Old Testament scriptures referred to is a bold defiance of scripture, and that is all. To say that "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people," and "I will set thee for a light to the Gentiles," is a matter kept secret since the world began, is to trifle with the word of God. The only thing it proves is that the writer is ignorant of the mystery, now it is revealed, and knows nothing beyond the passages quoted. The Lord, it is said, expounded after His resurrection the things concerning Himself. It is scarcely conceivable that He should have left out the calling of the Gentiles in His exposition. Concerning Himself is not concerning the Church, but as to His own person. The Spirit was to come to guide them into all the truth. It is expressly stated, that He was shewing them "that Christ must suffer and enter into his glory" (Luke 24:44-46). A person must be singularly hard driven up to quote such scripture as this, and in the face of positive scriptures that it is *now* revealed by the Spirit, and had been kept secret since the world began -- hid in God. The calling of the Gentiles is not in itself the formation of the Church. "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people" is a different thought. It justifies blessing to the Gentiles
(continued...)

If Rom. 16:25,26 were simply received into the soul, one would understand that the O. T. does not speak of the mystery of Christ and the Church, which is His body. It expressly states that "silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages." Why not bow to the fact? But that would mean acknowledging that the prophets did not prophesy concerning the church. Types are not prophecies; nor is a type the uttering of something about the church, nor the uttering of anything else. "Silence" is the word. The truth of Christ and the Church "has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures." These prophetic Scriptures are New Testament writings. These things are now made manifest by this instrumentality "according to the commandment of the eternal God." All has unfolded as it has because He is sovereign and has commanded it to be thus.

And what are we to do? Obey. ". . . made known for obedience of faith to all the nations." What was made known? The mystery. Rom. 1:5 speaks of "obedience of faith among all the nations." I believe all Christians, sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13) have participated in what Rom. 1:4-6 refers to concerning "obedience of faith". But at the end of Romans we find something further made known for the

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which the Jews would not hear of, "forbidding to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved." But it treats the Jews as God's people, whereas in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile at all

. . . No one denies that Christ spoke prophetically of the Church, though the Church itself was not yet revealed; but John 10:16 does not even do this. Gathering individuals into a flock does shew the calling of the Gentiles, which had always been revealed, and approaches the outward state of things here. But the doctrine of the Church is not in it at all (that is, of the body of Christ). All this still only proves (what indeed makes all plain, as to the whole of these teachers), that they have not the scriptural doctrine of the Church at all. John *never* speaks of the Church -- once of a local church -- but never of *the* Church, but of Christ and individuals. None of the apostles speaks of the Church, nor uses the word of Christians as a whole, but Paul. It was a dispensation committed to him, as he tells us. Christ prophesies of it; the Acts relate historically its being founded; but no one speaks of it as a teacher, or doctrinally, but Paul. The nearest approach is an allusion in 1 Peter 2 to the temple: "We are built up a spiritual house." T. M. is forced to admit that this purpose of God in gathering the saints into one was revealed in a manifested form and visible unity, never known or seen before. It is easy to say, never known or seen. When did it exist before? Where was the head to which the body was to be united? or did it subsist without any head at all?

"obedience of faith". Here, the mystery is brought forward (a subject not developed in Romans). In Rom. 1 it is a matter of our calling: in Rom. 16:25,26 it is a matter of the mystery. There are many who have "obedience of faith" regarding their calling, but not "obedience of faith" regarding the mystery. I hardly think there is "obedience of faith" regarding the mystery when Scripture says *silence* was kept concerning it and a Christian labors to prove that silence was not kept in the O. T. concerning it. The force of Rom. 16:25,26 is resisted because to receive what it says means that some highly developed theological systems will collapse. Some opposers will point to Eph. 3:5:

. . . which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in [the power of the] Spirit . . . ⁴

Such would say that it can be found in the O. T. prophets but not to the degree "as it has now been revealed." That is the use made of *as*. So instead of understanding *as* in the clear light of Rom. 16:25,26, they want to understand Rom. 16:25,26 according to this view of the force of *as*, and, in effect, make "silence" mean 'talk'. Eph. 3:5 means that it was not revealed then -- as it has been revealed *now*. Not comparison of degree, but contrast is meant -- not then, but *now*. In fact, Col 1:26 says it is now made known. Eph. 3:8,9 also is relevant:

To me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ, and to enlighten all [with the knowledge of] what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things . . .

Here we learn that the mystery was "hidden throughout the ages *in God*." It was not hidden in the O. T. Types have nothing to do, really, with the issue. They are history, incidents or persons, not prophecy or revelation. The issue is that the O. T. prophets did not speak of the mystery. There was "*silence*" about it; it was *hidden in God*, not in the O. T., not in the prophetic utterances. Col. 1:26 speaks of it also:

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

. . . the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been made manifest to his saints.

I suggest, therefore, that "obedience of faith" in respect of the mystery will acknowledge that these Scriptures declare that the O. T. was silent about it. Thus the issue of 'literal' versus 'spiritual' interpretation of the O. T. prophets to see if they spoke about the church or not is settled by the *express* statements of Scripture itself. (Of course, the use of figures of speech and symbols is a subject of inquiry, but in no way affects the issue.) What this means is that the O. T. prophets really meant Judah, Israel and Jerusalem (not the Church), and thus they have to be understood that there will be a future for national Israel. Also, the Church is not the continuator of, or the spiritual, Israel. And in that day of Israel's glory, when she is purged of every rebel (Ezek. 20) and all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26), Israel will not be part of the church.

What this also means is that the expectation of a literal kingdom over which Messiah would reign was, and is, a valid expectation. Spiritualizers vehemently denounce this expectation, some even claiming it led to the crucifixion. Lord willing, we shall address the subject of the validity of that expectation, shared by the remnant that received the Lord Jesus, though their timing, not the expectation itself, was wrong.

It is admitted by opponents of a future kingdom for Israel that if the O. T. prophets are to be understood literally, they do indeed prophesy such a kingdom.

The importance of Rom. 16:25,26 to this matter is too great for us to fail to take notice of how those exegetes who are spiritualizers of the prophets attempt to nullify the force of the statement that "silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages." Now, either silence was kept or it was not. Spiritualizers of the prophets are compelled by their theological systems to say that silence was not kept. Consider how the amillenarian J. Murray, commenting on Rom. 16:25, thought he was doing justice to the O. T. revelation (meaning that he finds the mystery in the O. T.):

The clause "now is manifested", when taken in conjunction with the emphases on "silence" and "revelation" in verse 25, might create the impression that there had been no revelation whatsoever of this mystery in the O. T. Scriptures. This impression, however, is decisively excluded or corrected by the words "by the scriptures of the prophets". These are the Scriptures to which Paul appeals repeatedly in this epistle for confirmation of the gospel he preached (cf. especially in this connection 1:2; 3:21; 11:25,26). Hence the O. T. was not silent on this

mystery; it was the medium of revelation concerned with this subject.⁵

Another amillenarian, W. Hendriksen, wrote:

It was this mystery that had been hidden for long ages past, for though the decision had been made in God's eternal plan and though even during the old dispensation there had been foreshadowings of the realization of God's promise of salvation for both Gentile and Jew, the period of fulfillment on any large scale had not been reached until now. But *now*, the new dispensation having arrived, and the gospel being proclaimed far and wide, this mystery was being made manifest, was becoming abundantly clear. It was being manifested in *the fulfillment of prophecy*. Think of Gen. 12:3; 22:18.⁶

These Scripture references, and others similarly cited, will be fulfilled in the millennial reign of Christ.

J. Murray virtually (erroneously) equates Paul's gospel and the mystery. That appears, at first sight, to help the system because there are O. T. Scriptures that speak of Gentile salvation (it is millennial) and they say that was a prediction concerning Gentile salvation now. Thus by virtually equating Paul's gospel and the mystery, they think that they can find the mystery in the O. T. predictions of Gentile salvation.⁷

Note well that J. Murray attempts to circumvent the force of "silence" by stating that "by the scriptures of the prophets" is meant the O. T. prophets. And having done *that*, he boldly contradicts the text and says, "Hence the O. T. was not silent on this mystery; it was the medium of revelation concerned with this subject." Such is theology; it can make black white and white black; it can make "silence" be talk.⁸

5. *The Epistle to the Romans*, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1968, pp. 241,242. Used by permission.

6. *Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, 1981, v. 2, p. 517.

7. Paul's gospel and the mystery, though connected, are not the same thing. Additionally Paul's gospel has aspects that are not the subject of O. T. prophecy. The reader may obtain the pamphlet, "Paul's Gospel", from Present Truth Publishers.

8. Something analogous to treating "silence" this way is *necessary* also in the case of Eph. 3:5. Commenting on this, E. K. Simpson, (*Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott (1957), p. 72), boldly says: "Hebrew prophecy had not been silent
(continued...)"

If commentators so handle Scripture, of what use is it to begin by discussing 'literal' versus 'spiritual' interpretation?

J. Murray speaks of "by the scriptures of the prophets". W. Kelly expressly addressed this issue:

. . . Carefully remark that the true word and thought is "prophetic scriptures," that is, not "the scriptures of the prophets" or O. T., but those of the New Testament, for we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Paul's writings, for instance, are prophetic scriptures, and in some of these the mystery of Christ and the church is fully made known, not merely touched on as in Romans 12:5.⁹

Another said:

Accordingly there is no article with "prophetic scriptures", as would be correct if "the prophets" had been meant; whereas the anarthrous form was requisite, if new scriptures were intended, written by those who had prophetic gift, whether by apostles who had that gift also or by such as Mark and Luke, who were prophets inspired to write though not apostles.¹⁰

The NASB says "and by the Scriptures of the prophets". In this particular case the NIV is somewhat better, though it adds the article "the": "the prophetic writings". A. Marshall's *Interlinear* has "through

8(...continued)

respecting this divine secret (cf. Isa. 56:5)." This shows that he does not understand the mystery. So J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, Baker: Grand Rapids (1979 reprint of 1883 ed.), p. 219:

The general sense of the verse is evident. The apostle does not seem to deny all knowledge of the mystery to the ancient world, but he only compares their knowledge of it, which at best was a species of perplexed *clairvoyance*, with the fuller revelation of its terms and contents given to modern apostles and prophets.

As to "hid in God", he says, "not concealed from the ages, in the sense of Macknight, but hid from of old." Thus are the words of God contradicted to sustain a theological system.

9. *Notes on . . . Romans*, in loco. So he says in his critique of the Revised Version in *The Bible Treasury* 13:352. See also New Series 3:31, 4:127 and 6:12; and *The Present Testimony* 10:103.

10. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:128.

writings prophetic".

With W. Kelly's translation of the passage, we close this notice of how those who spiritualize the O. T. prophets *must* attempt to evacuate the word "silence" of its force:

Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery kept in silence in times of the ages but now manifested and by prophetic scriptures according to commandment of the everlasting God made known for obedience of faith unto all the Gentiles, to God only wise, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages (or, for ever), Amen. (Rom. 16:25-27).

We have had before us this:

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

How do you insist God state it before you will accept it? ¹¹ If the above cited Scriptures make it clear to you that the prophets did not speak of the Church; if you see that the mystery was "hid in God" and not 'hid' under terms like Judah, Israel and Jerusalem; ¹² then you will

11. The attempted circumventions of these Scriptures by the above cited amillenarian Calvinists remind me of a conversation I had with an Arminian involving the word "*impossible* to renew again to repentance" in Heb 6. He coolly stated that "impossible" meant "nearly impossible."

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

also see what the nature of the kingdom is that was announced by John the Baptist and our Lord. It is that literal kingdom over which Messiah would reign, about which the prophets did indeed prophesy. You should also see that the way of interpreting the prophets has also been settled. We will next consider the subject of the expected kingdom, its announcement and its postponement. Since the O. T. prophets did not speak of the church, it follows that the kingdom they prophesied was a literal kingdom for national Israel composed of saved Israelites. Thus, this is the kingdom announced by John the Baptist and our Lord. And, as I hope to make clear, not only did the rejectors of our Lord expect a literal kingdom, so did the Jewish remnant who accepted our Lord when He was here.

Ed.

(To be continued, God willing).

12(...continued)

see, God willing, that our Lord and the remnant in His time here understood the prophets literally.

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

DELIVERANCE: ROMANS 7

THE PRACTICAL USE OF DELIVERANCE

In the following letter I suppose J. N. Darby wrote about putting deliverance into practice.

. . . I know well how few know deliverance; but it is a great thing to know that I, a poor worm, should be before God and the Father in the same acceptance and favour that Christ is, loved even as He is loved. But it is the greatness of infinite love. Then it is not generally preached with intelligence; next, it is experimental; and, above all, we must be in earnest to have it. Who is willing to be dead to what nature and flesh would desire? Yet that is the only way of deliverance. People will tell you it is our standing in Christ. I admit it as Colossians 3, and as faith owns in Romans 7 and Galatians 2; but who is willing to be in the standing? It is standing, or else we are in the hopeless effort of Romans 7, or an honest monk's labour, which I have tried; and even if we have experimentally learned, as it must be learned, who is carrying out 2 Corinthians 4 so as to have the conscience living in it by an ungrieved spirit? But if experimentally taught, it is of the greatest use to souls; and the joy of being blameless in Christ before God is exceeding great, and one that is eternal and divine in its source and nature -- a wonderful thing; "for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The world is a terrible snare, and a subtle one, and greatly hinders this deliverance. A soul enjoying deliverance has its object elsewhere. (See Rom. 8.) Then we must remember, "the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." I press, when souls are in earnest, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." For we learn we are without strength for deliverance, and walk in the sense of it if we can be used in service; but His grace is sufficient. Knowing we are nothing is the place of blessing, for then God is everything; and the place of strength, for then Christ can put forth His strength.¹

WHAT ABOUT UNSEALED SOULS AT DEATH?

W. K. wrote,

There are no souls that have looked to Christ but what God will give them the Spirit of adoption, and they will thus be brought into full

1. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:90,91 (1880).

blessing. But often this may be upon a death-bed, which ought not to be the case with a Christian.²

Another remarked,

There are many *quicken*ed souls who are not sealed, but no Christian ever *dies* and passes from this scene, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is since Pentecost, without being sealed. This is why you see cases in which there was no liberty, or peace with God, enjoyed during the lifetime, with occasional gleams of joy; and yet when on a deathbed they have got perfect peace with God, and are sealed.³

WHAT ABOUT OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS AND ROMANS 7?

The question that arises is this: since Old Testament saints were not sealed with the Spirit, was their state as is described in Romans 7? The answer is no. J. B. P. wrote:

... They had simple childlike faith in God, and in His Word, -- a faith given by God in the coming Messiah, sustained by Him, and which God did not disappoint, for He uses this resource in this world, and afterwards took them to heaven. But to apply to them, either as regards spiritual intelligence, state, or condition, truth, which for its revelation and subjective realization depended on the accomplishment of atonement, and on the descent of the Holy Ghost, is altogether a mistake, and (though unintentionally) disparages virtually the work and person of our Lord. The Epistle to the Romans, for example, is written from a Christian standpoint: the spiritual experience and privileges, therein spoken of, must be taken as in the light of Christianity, and can be understood only from the Christian position, and by the Christian sense. The sins of the Old Testament saints are said simply to have been "passed over," or pretermitted (Rom. 3:25). In fact the value and effect of the work of Christ could be known, in the intelligence and power of the Spirit, only after Christ had suffered, been raised, and was glorified. And the personal and practical state is necessarily and at all times contingent on the revelation which God gives, varying in degree with it in such a way that whilst in each dispensation individual and personal faith and apprehension varied, yet dispensational light, state, standing and privilege vary also, as a whole and as a system, -- the Christian economy being the climax and perfection of all, and justification of life, and life in resurrection, being characteristically

2. *Galatians*, pp. 66,67. Cp. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:117.

3. *Words of Truth* 3:138.

Christian privilege. In Rom. 7:14-24 the man spoken of has light beyond that of an Old Testament saint, but not up to the full Christian standard. As to the divine nature there was that in the saints of Old Testament times which through grace enabled them to please God up to the light He gave them. They were born of God, and therefore feared, trusted, and obeyed God. But we must distinguish between the quickening grace of the Spirit, and the Spirit as indwelling and so the seal of accomplished righteousness. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," could not have been said till the Spirit was given. It is a test now, but would have been no test then, because, though born of God and by the Spirit, they had not the gift of the Spirit. Nor in their case was the distinction brought to light between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, because flesh and Spirit were not then known to be irreconcilable. Without this profound and Spirit-taught knowledge, they simply walked in the fear of God, and with the sense of His mercy which enabled them to say, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no flesh be justified;" whereas the Christian knows that he will never come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.

As soon as our Lord came into the world, hearts were opened to see in Him the Saviour, and to receive Him as such. Simeon takes up the blessed Infant in his arms and said, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant, O Lord, depart in peace according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." And when thirty years after, that Blessed Man, anointed with the Holy Ghost, went forth upon His mission, far surpassing any that the Old Testament saints knew was the privilege of those who saw, heard, and received Him. In short His appearance in the world constituted an epoch (1 John 1), a fresh starting point in every sense, and in all God's dealings with men, either spiritually or temporally. Saints were not merely quickened but made "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," with the Spirit of adoption given to enjoy it and cry to the Father.⁴

SUBSEQUENT CONFLICT

Romans 7 and deliverance is a question of the conscience not knowing **acceptance**. One under law, in conscience, with the sentence of death written there, could not know acceptance in the Beloved.

After deliverance, it is a question of being **acceptable**, or agreeable, to God in our conduct. Are we manifesting our deliverance in practice,

4. *The Bible Treasury* 15:19.

are we enjoying our liberty (freedom from self to please only Him)?⁵

In contrasting the two situations, J. N. Darby wrote,

... conflict with one who ties me down is different from conflict with one whom I have power to tie down.⁶

Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea brought them into the wilderness; and the wilderness is the place of the detection of the workings of the flesh after deliverance.

With the preaching of a fuller, clear gospel a soul may be quickened during the preaching and believe on the work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and be sealed. He still must learn self, but this will be a modified form of learning it compared to being actually in the Romans 7 state. J. N. Darby wrote,

... In my case, like thousands of others, before I got forgiveness I had found out what I was; I learned the seventh before I learned the third. But when a full gospel is preached and forgiveness known, the knowledge of self will still be by law, but the form of it is modified. The way more often is, "I hope I am not deceiving myself; I thought I was forgiven. How is it I do so-and-so? how is it I find this power of sin still here?" The flesh is never changed. The truth is they are distinct points, and treated apart; only self-knowledge is the deeper point, and so treated last. But it is law, not for condemnation, but powerless to free, though it may kill and condemn too. (Compare 2 Cor. 3.)⁷

Again, I repeat, it [Romans 7] is not the state of one who has been set free, but of one who has not: and this paper plunges the truth and souls into confusion by seeking to make out that it is the condition of one who has received the Holy Ghost. It is not that there are not those who have the Spirit, who may not have to pass through the experience in a modified way, as the effect of bad teaching or not having previously learned themselves; but this is not Romans 7 in the principle and true force of its instruction. Of course it is the experience of "a saint," if by saint is meant one who has been truly born of God. All question of fruitfulness only comes after the "saint" has

5. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:326.

6. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:147.

7. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 21:179. See also vol. 29:458,459; 31:279; 26:407,408; 23:334; 21:179; *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:418,419 (old ed.).

been set free from the bondage of sin.⁸

I would add, as a further help, that if there is heart indifference, or even sloth, it is not surprising that we do not find deliverance, or if there is a walk contrary to the mind of the Spirit, or what a Christian should seek, deliverance by the power of the Spirit is hardly to be looked for. But further, if a person who has found deliverance is so walking, though the soul may not get back into uncertainty as to its standing, or return into a state of Romans 7, yet the Spirit which is the power of this new state, being ever grieved, and so communion with the Father and the Son lost, though not the knowledge of the relationship, the affections not being filled with what belongs to this new position -- all is confusion and obscurity in the soul. One is a child, but where is my father? I belong to heaven, but where for me is the heaven I belong to? What I know of both serves but to make me sensible of my actual loss of them. Hence, though it is not subjectively a question whether I am a son, it is objectively a failure of what a son enjoys, so that darkness is on the spirit. I hardly know whether I can call myself so, though I do not doubt it. For this the only remedy is humiliation, and drawing near to the Lord, and giving up the hindering idol.

In dealing with the souls of others, the first point is to discern whether the soul is really delivered, or if it be negligence when it has understood its position in Christ before God. This is a matter of spiritual discernment. Where there is a legal and self-judging temperament, it is not always so easy. And we must remember that there are many true souls who do cry, Abba Father, with God, but through bad teaching are afraid to take their place in acceptance; these we must seek to make clear by the word.⁹

GALATIAN ERROR

The Christian reader may perhaps ask the following question, viz.: If the one in Romans 7 is not sealed, how is it that my experience answers *apparently* in so many respects to the state described in Romans 7? I reply, that it does answer *apparently*, but only *apparently*; but the reader may respond-- But I am sometimes wretched, just as the one in Romans 7 is wretched; yes, and it may be true that one who has been sealed may be wretched as well as the one in Romans 7, but this by no means proves that even the experience of the two are alike.

Now in order to understand the *apparent* similarity, and at the same time the real difference in the experience of one in Romans 7 and

8. J. A. Trench, *An Answer to "Life and the Spirit,"* p. 13.

9. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:304.

of one who is sealed, it is needful to turn to the epistle to the Galatians, which is addressed to those who, *after* being sealed, desired, through the deceitfulness of the flesh, to be under law, for this is the result of the flesh acting in the Christian, who may thereby be entangled again in the yoke of bondage, may yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, may seek to become perfect by the flesh, and be wretched. (See Gal. 5:1; 3:3; 5:15 and 26; and Rom. 6:13.)

The experience of the Galatian saint may be in many respects *apparently* similar to the experience of the one in Romans 7, but the Galatian saint is not in the flesh, though the flesh is in him, and his experience, when rightly understood, is quite different from that of the one in Romans 7.

The Galatians, being Gentiles, had never been under the law, but had been amongst those who had been carried away to dumb idols (1 Cor. 12:2). From this state of blindness and lawlessness they had been delivered, and the apostle could write to them as those who were the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, who were standing in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, and who had received the Spirit of the Son into their hearts by which they cried, "Abba, Father." They had run well, but became hindered from obeying the truth, and were desiring to be under law, and were observing (as many now do) days, and months, and times, and years. The apostle designates them as turning *again* to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desired *again* to be in bondage. This is remarkable as showing that the Galatians, in desiring to be under law, were turning to the very principles which they had followed as heathens. In order to preserve them from such foolishness, he shows that those Jews who, like himself, had been under the law, but who had believed in Christ, were under it no longer, and writes to them thus, viz., "But *before* faith came, we *were* kept under law" (Gal. 3:23); "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24); "Even so we, when we *were* children, *were* in bondage under the principles of the world, but when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law, to redeem them that *were* under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:3,4,5).

Now, *after* faith had come, those who, as the apostle, had been under the law were no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:25); they were then the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26); and thus having become sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Their position was thus completely changed, they had passed from the first state described in Romans 7 to the second state therein described.

It is well to notice that although *faith* is not once mentioned in Romans 7, yet faith is shown in the exclamation, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and thereupon instead of "I" and "me",

mentioned in almost every verse of the latter part of Romans 7, we find the Spirit (who is not once mentioned in Romans 7) mentioned more than a dozen times in the first 16 verses of chapter 8. It is by the hearing of faith that we receive the Spirit (Gal. 3:2).

The Galatians were sealed, and though not in the flesh (Rom. 8:9), yet the flesh was in them, and its influence for evil is seen in the legality from which the apostle labors so earnestly to deliver them. This legality was manifest from their desire to be under law (Gal. 4:21), and the seeking to be made perfect in flesh (Gal. 3:3), and produced very sad results, for they seemed to count the apostle, who told them the truth, as their enemy (Gal. 4:16), they turned to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desired again to be in bondage (4:9), they did not obey the truth (5:7), but listened to those who were not rightly zealous after them, and who troubled them (4:17 and 5:10), and it was necessary to warn them not to bite and devour one another, lest they should be consumed one of another (5:15), and to exhort them not to be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another (5:26).

Such are some of the results when one who is sealed turns to law, he has *begun* in the Spirit, but afterwards seeks to be made perfect in the flesh; but he is never again in the state described in the 7th of Romans, though being wretched and entangled again with the yoke of bondage he may believe that such chapter describes his experience.¹⁰

A WORLDLY, CARELESS WALK

There are other causes of subsequent distress, such as a worldly, careless walk. In his paper "Deliverance From the Law of Sin," J. N. Darby wrote,

... You cannot accuse a dead man of a perverse will or evil lusts. But the flesh is in me. Now, captive to the law of sin in my members is not the place of conflict nor of victory, any more than Israel had to fight in Egypt. There may be carelessness as regards our communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; but this is only deadness of soul, and the power of present things, the want of spiritual feeling. But if we do not mortify the deeds of the body, there is a positive evil power at work, positive evil rises up; if there be conscience, the sense of a bad state is there, and a worse one if there be not -- the spiritual judgment is deteriorated. The flesh has a power which does not answer to deliverance, and we see persons who have

10. A. B. Pollock, "Remarks on Romans 7," pp.10-12. See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 31:261, and W. Story, "A Brief Review of a Book Entitled 'Life in Christ and Sealing With the Spirit'," pp. 22,27.

not lost the sense of their standing with God, and are in that sense at liberty, in whom the flesh works as if spiritual power in Christ were not there.

Now, in such cases, the remedy is not to deny the deliverance; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Entangling the soul again in the yoke of bondage is not what gives power. Slaves are not combatants, the yoke has to be broken. Where there is liberty and spiritual power, there is conflict. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Hence it is so beautifully put in the end of Romans 6. Now you are free, dead to sin, and alive in Christ to God, to whom are you going to give yourselves? to sin, or to righteousness and God, with fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life? Such is God's way, by freeing us from the *law* of sin, and putting us in the liberty of adoption with Himself, to set us in the conflict, to realize fruit unto holiness here. Our standing is perfect, our state in no way; . . . Still, down here, we are passing through temptations and snares, and watching and praying constantly is needed not to enter into them, because the disposition of nature, if not will, is there. Power is there in Christ for us. We are not under the law of sin, but spiritually free, and there is no excuse for failure, but we do all fail. Where there is not diligence in watching and praying, we do not lose the sense of our position, but we act inconsistently with it. A son may never for a moment have such a question rise in his mind, but he may be a naughty, rebellious son.

So sin has power over the unwatchful unpraying believer, who yet never doubts of his place in Christ when he has been set free. He is not a slave, but a son, but more faulty than if he were a slave. He is not under the law of sin, but he is practically governed by it in his ways, because he is not profiting by the grace and power of Christ, his conscience and heart keeping far away from Him. The standard of his Christianity becomes frightfully lowered, and he sees "no harm" in things from which, in times past, he would have shrunk -- not because they were prohibited, but because the life and Spirit of Christ in him found no food or attraction in them, but the contrary. Yet he may not have lost the sense of his place before God; in that sense he has deliverance, as a child goes on in the sense that he is a child, though heedless of his father's will, and of his father's pleasure. But this is a sad state. The remedy is not making him doubt of his adoption, but pressing with the claim of Christ's love his walking worthy of the calling wherewith he is called.¹¹

11. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:329-331. See pp. 324,325. See also 29:461,462; A. P. Cecil, "A Sequel in Answer to the Tract on 'Life in Christ and Sealing With the Spirit,'" pp. 26,27.

Instead of making certain cases a rule by which to interpret Scripture, "we are not to make human inconsistency the criterion of divine truth, but the reverse."¹²

DEFECTIVE TEACHING

Some difficulties after deliverance are caused by defective teaching.

Now when Christ is at all truly preached, even where the efficacy of His work is not clearly applied, still what has that efficacy is placed before the soul as a truth. According to ordinary evangelical ministry, people are told they must be born again -- quite true -- and to examine themselves if they are; and if the value of Christ's blood is spoken of, they are carefully warned and guarded, lest they should have any false confidence, not to deceive themselves, etc. The effect is, that the mass (where the word reaches the soul) remain in the spirit of bondage, and searching their own state to see if God can accept them; the ground may be laid, but are they fit for heaven? the efficacy of the blood being a resource at the end of their career, many truths for living by, as men say, one to die by. A few, in whom the Spirit of God made it a felt need, do realize forgiveness as a present thing, and even that of attainment; consequently, being sealed, they cry to God, Abba, Father, but remain in the spirit of bondage after all, thrown back on their self-examination, and the judgment they can form of themselves, not here fully seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, in true holiness and divine life, but turn even this into a question of fitness, that is, of righteousness, and true holiness is lost, as is divine righteousness. Acceptance, save as a thing in the air, is not known. And such is the state of the Christian world. Let watchfulness, diligence of heart, the fear of God, working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, be pressed on the redeemed and saved with all diligence, but on such as such, and when they are such. For though we have the assurance of being kept and confirmed to the end by divine power, yet if we are redeemed, and because we are, we have the wilderness to pass, where all is sifted and tried in us (John 10; 1 Cor. 1). . . .¹³

Ed.

12. A. C. Ord, *The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Spiritual Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost* . . . p. 50.

13, *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 31:279. Cp. p. 276. See also: J. A. Trench, *op. cit.*, p. 23; W. Story, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28; A. P. Cecil, *op. cit.*, pp. 26,27.

GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH

PART 2: THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Our first consideration as to the above subject concerned *the house of God*. In continuing to look into the scriptures we purpose to look into that aspect of the house as *the Temple of God*, not to divorce this from the previous establishment in the saints as forming God's present House on earth, but rather to find the connection between the two as involving the same saints. That there is a connection is clearly understood from the several passages in the New Testament which refer to the saints of the present day of grace being both the House and the Temple. Our desire is, not to divide the one truth from the other, but to distinguish them from one another. These are two wonderful, concurrent aspects of the same company during the present time. Translation of those who compose both spiritual edifices into the glory will occur at the rapture. They will then be with Him who has done the work, through His death and resurrection; the work which has established both house and temple for God's glory and pleasure.

In turning then to the scriptures to be taught by the Spirit as to this unfolding of God's dealings with man in grace, we seek only to present some thoughts with the view that they should be tested by the scriptures as to their validity and acceptance, for the furtherance of the glory of God in our souls and the more intelligent response to God in the purpose for which He has formed both for Himself.

We instinctively think of the building that Solomon erected in Jerusalem when we think of the Temple of God. But, have we thought that that building was more often referred to as the House of God than it was as the Temple of God? From the time that king David first thought of building it until it was actually constructed by his son king Solomon, some years after David's death, it was almost always called the House of, or for, Jehovah. It is this that first drew one's thoughts to the detail given to us by the Holy Spirit, and we must always take account of the precision with which the Spirit has indited all the Word of God, to find that there is a distinction made between the House and the Temple even though they are both in the one building. Perhaps the

first thing that ought to be noticed is that while the whole structure is definitely called the House, it is also clear that the eastern portion was referred to as the Temple. In 1 Kings 6:3 it says, "And the porch, in front of the temple of the house, . . . in front of the house." Then in verse 5 it says, "And against the wall of the house he built floors round about, against the walls of the house, round about *the temple and the oracle*." Verse 16 says, "And he built twenty cubits of the innermost part of the house, . . . to be the oracle, the most holy place. And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long." Then in verse 22 it says, "And the whole house he overlaid with gold, the whole house entirely." These passages show that the whole building while being the house, in general, contained the eastern portion as particularly identified as the temple. One has wondered what this distinction has been made for and it is only as a suggestion that while for the special privileged portion of God's specially chosen people, in Israel, it was entirely God's house as His dwelling place among them, yet it was also the center where His glory was displayed as an outward and public matter and which formed the center on earth for all to approach Him on the basis of His display to men. We learn from the portion in the book of the prophet Ezekiel 47:1-12, in conjunction with the related passage in Rev. 22:1--2, that in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ blessing will flow out to both Israel and the nations; so beautifully typified in Ezek. 47:9, "whithersoever the *double river* shall come, shall live."

In this very brief review we have perhaps gained some impression as to the Temple of God as being a glorious display of His presence to man generally with consequent outflow of blessings to man simply because He is the source of all for man, and being in the midst of Israel on earth He must (because of Who He is) bless man firstly in Israel and through them to the nations also. This did not take place while God was in the Temple which Solomon erected, because God's presence there and continuing recognition of that building as His house was conditional upon the faithfulness of both Solomon and his sons. All failed in their responsibilities and so God's presence on earth subsequently departed from the Temple, as shown to Ezekiel in vision. But praise His glorious Name, He will not be denied His purpose in regard to the earth and the blessing of man on it. He will return to the Temple when built in the land in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, but then it will be entirely based upon the faithfulness of Him whom He sent into this world nearly two thousand years ago, His own blessed eternal Son who completed the work on Calvary's cross whereby God can fulfil His own purposes of love totally and entirely independently of man's responsibility. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and whom I will I pardon" has always been God's exclusive prerogative, but

it will be exercised in a coming day as the result of the faithfulness of His dearly beloved One.

It would seem that God makes a difference between what He has and does for those whom He chooses and those who are brought in to share in the blessings of the Kingdom when established on earth. To His own chosen ones, whether in Israel or the Church, there is the special intimacy of His House for them as His family -- the one on earth and the other now on earth but soon to be in heaven. While there is concurrently the glorious participation in all that is contained in the Temple functions in regard to worship, praise and thanksgiving, and God's glories are manifested to all, with His blessings dispensed to all, there is, at the same time, the unmerited privilege of knowing the One whom we worship both as our Father and our God through our Lord Jesus Christ -- all hindrance to such relationships being for ever removed by God's acceptance of us in His Beloved Son, through the redemption effected by His precious blood. This latter position far exceeds all that Israel knew or will know, and our place and portion both in the world to come and the eternal state will remain unchanged except for the greater and deeper and higher realization of them when we are with and like Christ Jesus our blessed Lord.

In continuing our examination of the Word regarding the Temple of God, the associated thoughts are included as contained in --

A Holy Temple in the Lord, and A Spiritual House.

The main features then attaching to the Temple are suggested as --

Universal display, universal blessing, universal worship.

In suggesting that these features are universal in their effect it is not to say that they were so in the days of Solomon, but that was God's intention, and it will be so in the world to come, He had in view the universality of these things, but that due to man's failure in His people under the Old Covenant they will not be attained until Christ reigns supreme and God has His rightful recognition on the earth. The display of God's glory is clearly conveyed in the description given as to the majestic size, the frontal impression as to its grandeur and the apparently unshakable stability.

The outflow of blessing, having its center in the Temple, is likewise seen in the wealth of all that God had given to Israel when in the land, but more clearly conveyed in type by the river which issues forth "from under the threshold of the house eastward" (Ezek. 47:1), and which enlarged as it flowed onwards; coupled with the record as to the future in Rev. 22:1-2, ". . . of the river, on this side and on that side, the tree

of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree for healing of the nations." No doubt this portrays blessing for Israel in the 'fruits' and the Gentile nations in the 'leaves of the tree'.

Now in relation to the matter of 'worship' we seek to link this with the New Testament scriptures as well. Before doing so another portion in Rev. 21:22 should be considered. This verse says, "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb." This is very significant, for there is no scripture to instruct us that what is true of the saints of the present time, as being God's Temple on earth, is true of them in the world to come, or the eternal state. God has replaced that which was His Temple in the past three times: Solomon's was followed by the Lord Himself (being the Temple), and He was taken up into glory and the present Temple on earth in the saints continued from His display while here, not of course in the same degree. So, since there is no scripture to show that the present temple continues into the heavenly scene but, rather, Rev. 21:22 definitely states that God and the Lamb are the Temple in that coming day of display, we must accept that the saints are displaced as being God's Temple by God Himself being such in the absolute and perfect effectuating of that which man failed to achieve for God. Instead of man, even though saints, being the display of God's glory to this scene and forming the center from which it emanates, and to which all are drawn in worship, God Himself will be seen in this way -- no doubt, since God is not in His Person ever visible to man, all will be actually seen in the Lamb. Beyond the world to come, that is in the eternal state, we only know that God "shall tabernacle with them (i.e. men)," Rev. 21:3. The place that the saints of the day of God's grace occupy in the world to come is stated in Rev. 21:9-22:5 -- blessed and wondrous place, occupation and relationship with God, but not to the detraction from God in His own glory but the enhancement of it.

From Ezek. 40-43 we gather that in the world to come there will be an earthly Temple in Jerusalem which will be filled with the glory of God. There will also be the display of God's glory, in the Lamb as the Temple, in the heavenly scene. This latter display will be associated with the "holy city, new Jerusalem" (which is formed by the heavenly saints) through which the blessings of the Kingdom will be administered through the earthly Jerusalem to both Israel and the Gentile nations. Bearing all this in mind then, we return to the New Testament references for the link between the saints now down here forming the Temple on earth while waiting for the "summoning shout" which will translate them into the glory of and with Christ.

The apostle Paul uses the term Temple in four passages only:

1 Cor. 3, 1 Cor. 6, 2 Cor. 6, and Eph. 2. In 1 Cor. 6:19 the reference is to the individual body of the saints, as being the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Cor. 3:16-17 the statements are decisive, in that it says that "ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you," and again, "for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." This passage contemplates all the saints of the present time as a corporate entity, and as linked with the 6th chapter surely it would be a structure, spiritual in nature, composed of all individual saints built into one thing. The contextual consideration as to the workmen and the materials used in the superstructure is another aspect which is not part of our considerations now.

Both these passages in the 1st epistle look at the temple in a complete form, for the individual is certainly complete and thus the corporation of which each part is complete must also be complete.

In 2 Cor. 6:16 the context indicates that individuals are in view for the activities and associations mentioned are true of the individual. But, the continuing words down to verse 18 show that the corporate thing is also involved as affecting God's dwelling place and the relationship between Himself and the saints. Again, the whole thing is looked at as complete.

However, in the passage in Eph. 2:21 there is a distinction in that the building is not complete but "increases to a holy temple in the Lord." There is an apparent contradiction between these first passages and the last. But we know that even if there appears to us to be a contradiction there cannot be, for it is God's Word. One suggestion that could satisfy this apparent discrepancy is that on the same principle that scripture takes account of time, in many passages, so does it take account of what can be considered as complete in its partial stage of erection. We well know that time was reckoned as a part of a day being counted as a whole day, and so for a night or a year. So, in the same way, the continuing building in Eph.2 can be looked at as of functional use even though it will not be completed until some future time.

If this is acceptable then the typology contained in the material Temple, which has been presented above, can apply to the present spiritual building in all of Paul's references to it. We are then directly forming the building of God during the present time on earth, for the display down here of His glory, for the outflow of His blessing to men, and for the continuance of all that forms worship of God in His own presence. This is what is according to God's thoughts, but the sad fact is, as always before, we have failed to measure up to His thoughts and

have failed to implement His intentions. Thus, it still awaits the bringing in of the world to come in which God Himself will be the Temple in the display of Himself from the heavenly scene, and that in the Person of the Lamb in the midst of the "holy city", when He will also administer all blessing (directing it through the saints of that 'holy city', who will channel it through the Jerusalem on earth) -- what a glorious vista of God's perfect ways in accomplishing His own counsels of grace that He integrates the supreme place of the Son with the subservient place of the saints on high together with those on the earth, and all for His pleasure and glory and the blessing of men. May we ponder all this scene for the clarification in our souls as to its perfection and suitability to the infinite God who initiated it all and will finalize it all for the transcendent glory and honor of His beloved Son.

In connection with the passage in 1 Pet. 2:5, "a spiritual House," again we find that it is not a completed building but is one in process of building and that by the addition of "living stones" as they come to the One who is inherently "a living Stone". What a beautiful description this is of the saints of the present day of grace, that as deriving life from the blessed Son of God and in touch with Him, all together form the blessed sphere of divine interest for the continuance of offering to God what delights Him in all that is contained in those typical sacrifices of old but which in their spiritual value form the substance for us to render to God for His appreciation and, surely, for our joy in being able to do so. In this most precious aspect of our function while down here, in the scene of failure on the part of all that preceded in Israel, does it not become us to be in the divine intelligence of what is involved and not to be automatons in simply carrying out a routine which we do not understand nor really participate in? This brings before us the subject of worship which was mentioned earlier, and concerning which, perhaps, we little understand.

Peter was not given, by the Spirit of God, to take up the subject of the 'family of God', nor the Temple in its outward aspect, but do we not get the function of those who are engaged in the inward activities within the Temple? One's thoughts turn to Luke 1:8-10 in regard to Zacharias and those of Israel who still were outwardly maintaining what was required according to the Levitical laws -- but how far removed they were from all that satisfied God in it! In this delightful portion we find one who indeed was faithful to God within the limits of what was possible at that time, within the Temple in occupation with that which was part of his function as a priest of God. Is there a more precious portion for us to be likewise engaged in than that typified in the 'burning of incense'? Within the 'Temple' and in the very 'House of God' we can be fully engaged with the eternal preciousness of Christ to

God, knowing something of what it means in our own hearts. Peter clearly includes this in the passage referred to in 1 Pet. 2:4 and 7: "a living Stone (Christ) . . . with God chosen, *precious* . . . To you therefore who believe is the *preciousness*."

Again, beloved, we have the connection with the consecrated priests of Ex. 29. 'Consecration' means 'having the hands filled'. What a blessed contrast as applied to us today! Once our hands were stained with the guilt of our sins and our part in the death of the sinless Son of God. Now, through God's marvelous mercy, love and grace we are cleansed and brought nigh to Him -- for what? To simply receive from Him the continuation of blessing that results to us because of the death of His Beloved? No, no, we are to be in the presence of the One to whom all worship is due with our cleansed hands filled to their fullest capacity with all that speaks to God of the One so eternally precious to Him. God's portion must come first in all that occupies us, then we shall derive the subsequent blessings through rendering all to God for His pleasure and glory. This most elevating theme would delight our hearts to follow further, but it is not the subject of the present article. However, the presentation by Peter is in full accord with what we have tried to show in that by Paul: Paul takes up the outward aspect of the Temple and Peter takes up the inward, but both are counterparts and essential for us to be aware of and maintain while we are in this world where the glory of God in the saints, the blessings of God through the saints, and the worship of God from the saints is so inadequately seen and rendered. May we be more and more concerned about this and seek in God's grace to answer to His desires more faithfully and responsively.

The final point to be mentioned, but not exhausted, is the true character of worship. For this we turn to the precious words of our Lord Jesus Himself, in John 4.

It is, as we would expect, always a wonder to consider the Lord's own words for they inevitably contain far more than we can extract from them. However, His statements, in themselves, are simple and if we only take them in the simplest way we shall get immeasurable gain from them. The Lord said, first of all, "ye shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father." This, initially, removed all thought from the place of worship as being a physical one. Then He directs our thoughts to worshipping the Father. This can only be done, as is evident, by those who know God as Father -- so a new relationship must be established which was not known before. We can now praise God that we are brought into this new position through our Lord Jesus Christ. Such as ourselves, saints of the present day of God's

grace, are those to whom the Lord refers in verse 23 as "true worshippers" for we worship Him in this known relationship. Furthermore, the Lord said, "for also the Father seeks such as His worshippers" after having said, "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." What an inestimable privilege is ours to be both in the right relationship and in the right attitude to participate in the most intimate function afforded to any saint at any time! Worship does not consist in the performance of any ritual, no matter how ordered of God in the past, neither is it contained in any vocal expression, no matter how much it results from worship and flows out from it from hearts full of the glories of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal delight of the Father. No, it is the activity of the heart in response to the revelation of the Father in the Son which instinctively draws out adoration and the outpouring of love for Them which They have instilled into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. It is "in spirit and truth" that worship is conducted in the presence of God in the blessed relationship as His children when we feel as king David did when he expressed his inmost feelings towards God, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name!" (Psa. 103:1). Our place and privilege far exceed that of David, but does our worship exceed his? It should do. Although the Lord presents first the highest aspect of worship as to the Father, He does not leave out that which will be the portion of those on the earth in a coming day. For He said, in verse 24, "God is a spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." It might be thought that this is virtually the same thing as He had said previously. Is this so when He changes from the worship of the Father to the worship of God? It is suggested that "worship of the Father" is the highest order of worship and the portion of the saints who form the "assembly of God", while the "worship of God" is that which is available, and reserved, for the saints of the coming day of display when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

This, then, completes our little and inadequate presentation of the aspect of the Temple being God's present center of interest on the earth, with the hope that it will further a searching out of these things and stimulate a more intelligent response to God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit which will be worthy of Him for the fulfillment of His purpose in leaving us here -- as a "kingly priesthood . . . that ye might set forth the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light;" knowing that "in his temple doth every one say, Glory!" and having the desire expressed by David, "One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my

life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire of him in his temple."

In subsequent articles we purpose, if the Lord will, to take up the subjects of the Assembly of God and the Body of Christ.

A CONSIDERATION OF 1 COR. 3:12--17 IN REGARD TO MAN'S WORK AND THE MATERIALS USED IN RELATION TO THE TEMPLE OF GOD:

Paul is addressing those who are true believers and who, as such, constitute the Temple of God. Verse 16 is quite definite as to their being the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelt in them. This identifies the Temple as being not only constructed of material which Peter defines as "living stones", but in verse 11 establishes that the structure is founded upon "Jesus Christ".

The question to be answered is as to the evident addition which man can do with either good or bad material, and can even attempt to destroy the Temple.

It is confirming to our souls that the work in the Temple as a main structure is "God's building" (verse 9), but we learn much from the list of materials given in verse 12 as to how we are to understand the matter of responsibility connected with man's work. Gold, silver, precious stones, were all materials that were actually used in the construction of the physical Temple in Solomon's day. But, they were for covering the walls or furniture, or embellishing them as seen in the 'precious stones'. Each of these items was acceptable to God for His dwelling place on earth and each would withstand the application of fire without losing their value or usefulness -- that is, each would stand the test of God's judgment as to being suitable for Him. These material items, of course, we know convey in type precious teaching as to the glories of Christ. However, in the combustible materials, "wood, grass, straw," we have a distinctively different class of materials, all of which would be consumed by fire, leaving nothing but ashes behind. If the first three items typify various glories of Christ, then the last three would typify various aspects of man in the flesh. This makes it evident that such could not be allowed in anything that is of or for God, for the flesh is condemned through sin.

In line with these thoughts, then, if it is not the main structure that man can add to the building, because this was made of stone, but man can add something of value for God or to be rejected by God, and there being three categories of workmen -- what do we learn from these

verses?

There is no doubt that the two first mentioned are those workmen who, in themselves, suffer no personal treatment from God as the third one does -- that is, "him shall God destroy." Anyone subject to God's destruction cannot possibly be one who is saved and blessed, so it is evident that such a person is one who does not belong to the structure at all and whose purpose is to bring it down. This, of course, is Satanic delusion, for God's building is indestructible -- but did not Satan attempt to destroy the blessed Son of God when He came into the world, when Herod gave his edict to destroy all males under two years old? This class of person can engage in the destructive work either from inside or outside the building. Did not Paul warn the Ephesians of "grievous wolves" coming in not sparing the flock, and of those even among them arising to pervert? Then Peter warns them of the "false teachers" that would "deny the master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." John also exposes those who had been among them as having gone out because they "were not of us" -- and these he calls antichrists". Then Jude reveals that "certain men have got in unnoticed, . . . ungodly persons, . . . denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." Indeed these are they who seek to destroy the Temple of God.

The workmanship of man as it affects God's building is, therefore, not a question that man can have anything to do with the essential nature of that building, which is entirely in God's hands to build. However, man can, whether a believer or an unbeliever, be adorning or seeking to destroy it. In the first case believers would be involved, in the second case only unbelievers would have either the desire or make the attempt to destroy what is of God. That there is much activity among the profession of Christ's Name to destroy all that is contained in that precious Name is only too evident all around. Also, that there is much of man's work which is only the presentation of the flesh, even though on the part of a true believer, is much to be mourned and confessed as dishonoring to Christ but not destructive of His Person or Work -- such work will be judged and eliminated in the coming day of Christ, although the workman (as a believer) is saved and not judged personally. How happy it would be if we were of the remaining class of believer who contributes what is expressive of the glories of Christ for the pleasure and glory of God in His present Temple on earth as found in the saints, and to "set forth the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness to His wonderful light" (1 Pet.2:9)!

J. Pascoe

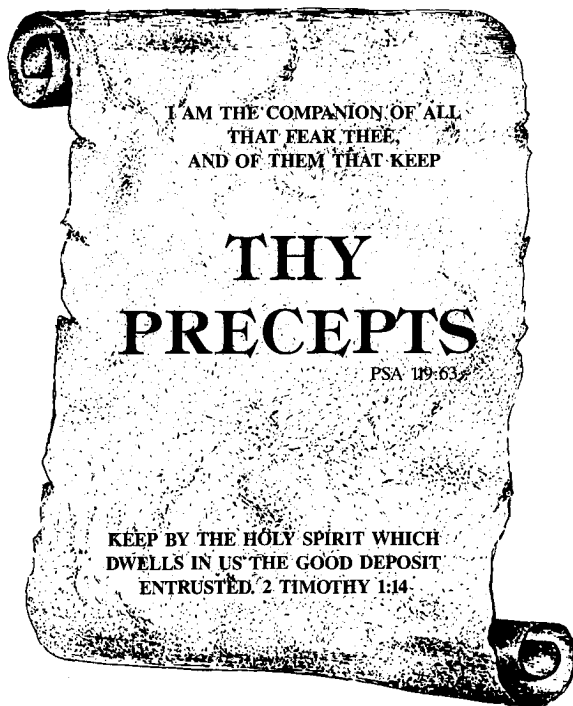
(To be continued, Lord willing)



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CONTENTS

The Power of Negative Testimony	33
The Lion of the Tribe of Judah	37
God's Present Center of Interest on the Earth	39
Is He With You?	52
Have You Perfect Love?	55
Elements of Dispensational Truth	58

THE POWER OF NEGATIVE TESTIMONY

We have numerous instances in Scripture of those who, with noble faith, stood forth in the face of numerous adversaries to testify for God and triumphed; such as Moses, when single-handed, he came down from the presence of God from Mount Sinai and, in splendid zeal for his Master's glory, stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Or such as Elijah, who, when iniquity had reached its culminating point in Israel, confronted all the prophets of the groves and the prophets of Baal, and received at God's hand a magnificent answer to his faith and courage.

Instances such as these may well be termed "Positive Testimony," for in the energy of the Spirit they stood forth, and were victorious in whatever circumstances they were placed.

There is, however, another character of testimony that the Word of God unfolds to us, which, I think, may not unsuitably be termed "Negative," seeing it is rather *the refusal* to take part in anything that is not of God than a positive triumph over the enemies of God. In it faith may not be exhibited in so bold a character, but yet a faith that is very precious to the Lord, and what He surely has a right to expect from each of us. We may not have the energy of a Gideon, or a Paul, to push our "pound" in the world and gain ten pounds "by trading," -- but the feeblest and the weakest may, by refusing to consent to the ways of the "world which lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5:19), give our money to "the bank," that when He comes He may receive the same with usury (Luke 19:11-27).

Let us ponder for a little on a few of the many instances in Scripture as to the nature and power of "Negative Testimony."

We have noticed the testimony of Elijah in the face of the worshippers of Baal. Contemporaneously with him we find honorable mention made of "seven thousand in Israel; all the knees which have *not* bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath *not* kissed him" (1 Kings 19:18). It was a time when iniquity abounded. Ahab was on the throne of Israel and "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." He had married the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him; and as if to put a crowning point to the wickedness of that time, the Spirit of God records that in his days Jericho, the city of the curse, was rebuilt, and Joshua's prophecy concerning it accomplished (1 Kings

16:34; Joshua 6:26). The altar of Baal was conspicuous in the idol's temple which Ahab had built in the royal city, and the prophets of the Lord were at the mercy of a ruthless queen, while Jezebel's table was the resort of the votaries of Baal. The altar of the Lord likewise was broken down.

At such a time as this, the Lord turns with satisfaction to the seven thousand who had not joined the crowd of Baal worshippers, nor rendered the customary sign of homage to a Gentile idol. The king, the queen, the court, the people, all had gone aside from the worship of Jehovah, but yet these seven thousand -- the perfect number -- maintained their place of negative testimony, and consented not to a false religion, or the apostasy of a corrupt people. I do not say they had the magnificent energy of Elijah; but their quiet, unpretending, patient testimony against the current evil of the day had its own weight in the sight of God and carried its own power, and more important still, it went up as a sweet savor to the Lord, who had "reserved" them to Himself; He was glorified in them.

Let us now turn to another scene -- Jeremiah in his 15th chapter says (vs. 16 and 17), "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat *not* in the assembly of mockers, *nor* rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation."

The scene is laid in *Judah* now. Israel had passed into captivity; and the Lord's long-suffering in sending to them "messengers, rising up betimes and sending," had almost come to an end with respect to Judah also. And yet, though the sin of the people was such that the Lord had nothing for *them* but "the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy" (chap. 15:3), He has still a solitary witness who, having esteemed the words of Jehovah's mouth "more than his necessary food" and conscious that he still bore the name of the Lord God of Hosts, would *not* sit in the assembly of the mockers, *nor* share their joy while all was in confusion and idolatry around.

Filled with indignation at the apostasy, he sat alone (yet "not alone"), and maintained his place of *negative testimony* against the nation that had so sadly fallen from its place as Jehovah's witness to the nations around. God was glorified in Jeremiah, though Jeremiah was "in derision daily;" mocked of "every one;" put in the stocks; cast into a prison and a dungeon. The Spirit of God takes pleasure in recording that he sat not in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced; that he sat alone because of God's hand.

Another scene now passes before us. Both Judah and Israel had gone into captivity and the palace of the King of Babylon had become the abode of certain of Israel's children, princes of the house of David. It was not now the voluntary idolatry of an apostate people that tested the faith of those whose

hearts still beat true to Jehovah, but the enforced homage under pain of a cruel death to an image of gold which the king had set up in the plains of Dura. Forgetful of the "God of heaven" that had placed all things under his control (chap. 2:37,38), he had, perhaps in imitation of what he had seen in his vision, made a universal center of worship and thus, independently of God, sought to exercise a universal control over the religious feelings of his subjects on pain of instant death.

Most refreshing it is to turn aside from this sad scene of Gentile apostasy (another testimony to the universal ruin of man), and witness the faithfulness of the "children" who would *not* obey the mandate of the king. In vain the musical instruments sounded; in vain the Chaldeans accused, or the king threatened: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are *not* careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O king; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will *not* serve thy gods, *nor* worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (chap. 3:16-18), was their answer; and they preferred the burning fiery furnace to a breach of the first commandment of Jehovah.

Surely there was a power in testimony such as this; not perhaps with the "positive" character attaching to it as when Daniel "prayed and gave thanks before his God," *with* "windows open towards Jerusalem," in defiance of the restriction recorded in chap. 6. But God was unquestionably glorified in this, the *negative testimony* of these three faithful children of Judah.

The book of Esther affords us still another instance of this character of testimony. The second monarchy (the breast and arms of silver) had succeeded the kingdom of Babylon (the head of gold), and the King Ahasuerus "reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces," while Haman, a descendant of Amalek (the inveterate enemy of God's people -- Gen. 25:22; 36:12; Ex. 17:16; 1 Sam. 15:33) was the king's prime minister. At this time a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, sat in the gate of Shushan the palace. Now the king had specially commanded that all his subjects should bow and reverence Haman, in professed subjection to the man whom the king delighted to honor. "But Mordecai bowed *not*, *nor* did him reverence." Great as the king was, and vast as were his dominions, Mordecai yet remembered that his obedience to the king must be subservient to what he owed to the Lord; and he absolutely refused to do honor to the hereditary enemy of his people; still, though in disgrace, the people of Jehovah.

Twelve months the prime minister cast the lot, and then obtained the king's favor and consent to destroy the whole race of the Jews. The decree was written and the posts sent out, with the sentence that they should be slain; but still the faithful Mordecai retained his place of *negative testimony* for the God of Israel. I do not dwell upon the story, beautiful though it is, of

his fasting and prayer; of how Esther was encouraged by his faith; and the people were delivered and their enemies slain. But I desire to show how that the Lord's glory was accomplished by the patient testimony of His servant, who preferred death to disobedience to what, although not an actual command, he well knew was the general tenor of the mind of God.

Let us now briefly turn to the standard set up for the instruction of the Jewish remnant in the latter days (Psalm 1:1). "Blessed is the man that walketh *not* in the counsel of the ungodly, *nor* standeth in the way of sinners, *nor* sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Here again do we find the same principle -- only *One* has as yet fulfilled it, but He went far beyond it, for, as we know, the path of Christ went far beyond even this. But still God expects that in the latter days there will be those to whom the *counsel* of the ungodly will have no charm, to whom the sinner's *way* will be the way of death, and to whom the scornful's *seat* will be a place that leads to "judgment."

We cannot question that in "the time of Jacob's trouble" God will have an "elect" people who will occupy the place of *negative testimony*, and accomplish, by refusing to consent to the evil around them, His purposes of glory in their walk and conversation. But meantime the Church of God is instructed to occupy the same position, and in the touching epistle that shines preeminent among the seven to the Churches, we find the same privilege entrusted to us, and the same responsibility impressed upon us, at which we have briefly glanced in the various scenes that have come before us.

"To the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write, -- These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my words, and hast *not* denied my name" (Rev. 3:7,8). Here again we find that *negative testimony* obtains honorable mention from the Lord.

We are but a "feeble folk" (Prov. 30:26; Neh. 4:2); but the Lord is pleased to recognize us as walking in obedience to His word (John 17:6) and as not denying that precious name by which He has unfolded Himself to us, (for a name is the expression of what He is,) as the Holy One that is intensely separate from evil, and the True One that is of necessity the contrary of everything that is false and hypocritical. He has bestowed a life, "which after God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:24), upon us; and it is our privilege to follow the instincts of that life, sustained by the Holy Ghost, in refusing association with everything that is contrary to Him who is holy and true.

The corruption of Thyatira may surround us -- the deadness of Sardis may be side by side with us; and our feeble testimony may produce the

nauseous lukewarmness of Laodicea; but be it ours, with that true love which abides in the light (1 John 2:10), to patiently and yet scrupulously reject everything that savors either of unholiness or falsehood, as contrary to His name!

The hereditary and successional religionists may, and will, assert their claims; but, "gathered to His name" we must *not* disgrace but, in quiet dependence on Him, maintain our place of *negative testimony* until He comes, the crown of our hopes, who shall bring us to a place where we shall exchange our position of utter weakness for one of perfect strength; and where we shall go no more out, who are cast out now; and where we shall be publicly owned as His, who are now scarce allowed to belong to Him; and where our association with Him here will meet its full reward in absolute association with Him there. He has said, "I come quickly;" our hearts respond, "Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!"

D. T. G., *Words of Truth*, vol. 6.

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

The names and titles given to the Lord Jesus in the Word of God are many and varied in thought. They speak of His attributes, of His glories, and of dispensational relationships. The One whom God delights to honor is thus placed before man according to the varied glories which are, and will yet be, His. And these varied names and titles, so full of significance, call forth worship and homage from hearts that are won to Him, when their meaning is entered into.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah is one of His titles and is given to us in Rev. 5:5. "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Here we have the Lord Jesus introduced in connection with the earthly purposes of God. David, the son of Jesse, was the one whom Jehovah had chosen to be king of Israel, as we read in Psa. 78:70, "He chose David also His servant and took him from the sheepfolds." David was marked as "the king" and this title brings before us God's purpose as to Christ in connection with Israel on earth.

In Rev. 5:5 the One who can step forward when all others have failed -- not one in heaven, in earth, nor under the earth, being worthy to open the book and loose its seals -- is the blessed One who comes, according to God's purpose, in the royal line of Judah, and who, because of this, is termed "The

Lion of the tribe of Juda." He alone can take the book, open its seals and unfold those things which are coming to pass upon the earth. He is the worthy and powerful One, but not manifested as such till all others have been proved unworthy to undertake such a work. How suitable and appropriate is the name, "The Lion of the tribe of Juda." We know Judah was the tribe from which Christ, or Messiah, came, and the name "Lion" gives the thought of majesty and power, so Jacob compared Judah to a lion in Gen. 49:9, "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall raise him up?"

The same symbol is used in connection with Israel and awaits fulfillment in a future day, "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat the prey, and drink the blood of the slain" (Num 23:24).

The Lord, in His character as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is the One who will bring this about. At present He is still despised and rejected by man; but accepted of God, and seated at His right hand, He awaits the time when He will make His enemies His footstool, and all things shall be put in subjection under Him. Then His lionlike character of power and majesty will be manifested.

Another very important point which this portion brings before us is that He does not take the place of opening the book because of His divine glory or because He is worthy, but because He "prevailed". His victory through His death is what is made prominent.

The Lord might, at any time, have taken that book and opened the seals, because of His personal worthiness, but had He done so on that ground we could not have known the wonderful unfoldings (or the secrets) of the book. No, He would not thus open the seals, but by having become man, and still being a divine person, He had power to go down into death and to rise victoriously. He overcame, He conquered, or as the Scripture says, "He prevailed;" and on that ground He takes the book and opens the seals and can unfold to us, through John, what is to take place on this earth after He will have His Church with Himself in the glory. . . .

Dear reader, do you rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ will yet have that place of honor and glory, or do you fear as you think of this? If you know Him in His Lamblike character, that is, as the One who has been a sacrifice for sin, and can say, "He died for me," you will rejoice that He will have His rightful place; but if you are not able to say so from the heart, you may well fear and tremble at the thought of His coming power and glory. Man must have Him as His Saviour, or as his Judge. Which will it be with you?

J. T. Armet

GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH

PART 3: GOD'S PRESENT CENTER; THE ASSEMBLY

It is the intention, in this article, to consider the Assembly in its true constitution rather than with its failure in responsibility, which is clearly a fact necessitating judgment as in Rev. 2 and 3.

The foremost thought as to the Assembly is -- "**Christ loved the Assembly, and has delivered Himself up for it**" (Eph. 5:25). This is not said as to any other aspect of the same company of saints, that is, The House, The Temple or The Body. This has some significance in that it is not said concerning these three features of the Lord's own that they are transferred to heaven. In Eph. 5 we learn that the Assembly is presented to Himself as a "glorious" Assembly, and this (because of its then condition) must take place in His own glory. So, we look for our Saviour to call us to Himself, as in 1 Thess.4, and we can rejoice and anticipate the wondrous fact that we are destined to be His Bride. In view of this should we not be more energetic in our love for Him since the bridal relationship is the end which He had before Him when He gave Himself for it. This is not exactly for each individually, though this is gloriously true, but for the whole company as one to share equally in His eternal love, in which there could be no allowance for distinctions in His love differentiating between one and another in His one Bride.

Returning to the thought of The Assembly being transferred to the heavenly scene for eternal continuity (Eph. 3:21), it seems to be the assumption that the saints of the present day of grace fulfil the characteristics of the House, Temple and Body beyond this scene. In previous articles it has been shown that in the glory there is the Father's House, in which we abide with Christ, and that the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple in the "holy city, Jerusalem" in display in the Kingdom reign of Christ, with no scripture to indicate that we are either then. Our proposed further article on "The Body" will take up details as to it, but again there is no scripture that warrants the thought that it is seen as such in the glory with Christ. If the writer is wrong in these three points (or any other) he will readily accept correction as to it.

In the use of His title "Christ" in Eph. 5 the Holy Spirit links the Assembly with the One who is glorified as Man, and anointed by God in relation to all His rights on the earth connected with Israel, according to Psa. 2:6, "I have anointed my King upon Zion, the hill of my holiness." Psalm 8, of course, extends the sphere of His reign over the whole earth as Son of Man. But, whatever the position He fills, wherever He may be, we shall be with Him as His Bride, and fulfilling the purpose of His heart regarding us as to satisfying His love, and sharing with Him in the administration of all that comes under His rule while the present earth remains: the bridal attachment to Himself will continue for ever (Rev. 21:2), praise His holy and adorable Name!

The subject of the Assembly as seen down here will be considered under the following six glories:

1. CHRIST THE FOUNDATION
2. CHRIST THE BUILDER
3. CHRIST THE HEAD
4. CHRIST THE CENTER
5. CHRIST THE LEADER
6. CHRIST THE OBJECT

This will surely impress upon our hearts that CHRIST IS ALL. Without Him we have nothing and shall be nothing but occupants of the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. May we more intelligently render to Him all we have and are.

All the above, as concerning our blessed Lord and Christ, can only be true as in relation to believers who are sealed by the Holy Spirit, the One who is the operative power for us to respond to the One who loves us and has given Himself for us.

CHRIST THE FOUNDATION

We have the Lord's own words in Matt. 16:16 when He first intimated that He had in mind building something for Himself (as yet unspecified as to detail). There is no doubt that the Foundation is Himself. This was expressed in the revelation of the Father to Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Foundation then is the Person of Christ, who is the eternal Son. Does this not teach us that the absolutely essential ground and support of the Assembly is the real Person of the Son as a glorified Man? In this we have the combination of the truth as to His perfect continuing Manhood and His eternal Deity. This truth presents to our hearts for adoration and praise the Man in the glory of God, Whom we shall soon see with our eyes but Whom we now see by faith -- it is not a mystical dream

but an eternal reality.

Being eternally "God over all blessed for ever" (Rom.9:5) yet now in Manhood and being Himself the Foundation of His Assembly gives stability and permanency to what He does in the building of His Assembly. The change in place and condition of the Assembly from earth to heaven, from bodies of humiliation to bodies of glory like His own, does not affect the perfection of what He does, but confirms it.

CHRIST THE BUILDER

Not only does our Lord Jesus form the Foundation of that which is built upon It, but He is the One who builds the Assembly upon Himself. In this we have eliminated all the work of man and all his failure in responsibility as to allowing any not of His building to be included when we are found together as the tangible expression of His Assembly. Failure with us is all too true, but would not be if we were sensitive as to what the Spirit does in gathering to the precious Name of Jesus, our Lord. The outward appearance of the Assembly is certainly not now perfect as it will soon be seen to be when with Christ in His glory, but this does not touch the reality that what our blessed Lord does is perfect in adding such as "were to be saved" (Acts 2:47). Our Lord alone knows, infallibly, and adds those whom His Father has given to Him out of this world, and not one other than these can be included. The composition of this object of His own love and delight is not evaluated by our assessment of it, but entirely according to Him whose eye and heart detect anything not of Himself. This should deeply exercise us all, who are His, that we are not careless in allowing any to be included when the Spirit brings His own together in the expression and for the function of His Assembly. This will, no doubt, be labelled as ultra exclusivism, but we have no right, but rather the reverse, to allow what God does not allow and to include what He does not include. But, this is a digression and not the purpose of our article. What Christ builds is for Himself alone and the purpose for which He builds it must be preserved in our affections for Him such that we answer to His purpose and, with no admixture foreign to Him, can bring to His heart the joy and delight to which He is absolutely entitled, because He loves the Assembly. We must not forget that God said to Israel, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Is not the Lord likewise 'jealous' as to those whom He alone builds together to be for Himself? This is not a matter to be postponed until we are perfect in His glory above, but to be operative with us all now on the earth.

We must not lose sight of the abstract existence of the Assembly as a global reality insofar as God is concerned, and as built by Christ Himself. However, the functional activities as the occupation of those who comprise His Assembly can only be carried out as we are gathered together in His

Name by the Holy Spirit. In this regard also, we cannot think that the Holy Spirit would gather any but those of the Lord's own who are in a suited state of soul, else He would be acting contrary to the holiness of the Lord and His own. There is never any inconsistency between what the Lord does and what the Holy Spirit does, for They are One. If the Lord builds His Assembly then the Holy Spirit would only gather such IN assembly, and this we must maintain while we are down here for His glory and honor.

A further thought in keeping with this is that what Christ does is to build His Assembly absolutely holy as He is holy; -- not that we are personally absolutely holy in conduct, for we shall not be until we are in His glory, but the character of what the Lord does is holy. That is, He does not include sinners but saints in His Assembly, and as He takes His place in the midst of His own as in assembly He cannot accept any sin on the part of any of His own which remains unconfessed -- for this would be an unholy state. This is a very solemn matter for us to consider and to act upon, and is included in the requirement in 1 Cor. 11:28, "But let a man prove himself and so let him eat."

CHRIST THE HEAD

As HEAD of the Assembly (Eph. 5:23) which He builds, and does not delegate to another, He occupies the supreme place as given to Him as "Head over all things to the Assembly . . ." (Eph. 1:22). Can we apprehend the greatness of this? Not only is He Head OF the Assembly, but as Head over all things He is given (by God) TO the Assembly. Beloved saints of God, how truly we can say that "we are His" and "He is ours"! May we ponder this and with united hearts and voices thank and praise Him for it. Let us submit ourselves entirely to Him as our Head, conjointly, for there is no one (nor anything) greater in the whole universe than Him Whom God has raised from among the dead and given Him glory at His own right hand, with a Name which is above every name, in a position far above all principalities and powers. We are identified and associated with Him for God has set us down in the heavenlies in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Eph. 1:3). However, we must not digress into this heart-absorbing subject, but it is commended to all His own such that we may all the more yield ourselves, in our whole capacity, to His heart's desires and realize the greatness, the infinite and eternal greatness, of our beloved and glorious Head of His Assembly.

As the Head He controls, directs and supplies all that is needful for the welfare and activities of His Assembly. Since He gave Himself for it then He has absolute title to both possess it and derive from it all that it can render to Him. May we be found ever delighting to do this out of full hearts and dedicated lives while still here in the scene of His suffering and death, while

waiting to be translated to His present place of glory and honor. We must not omit, too, that our glorious Head, Who will soon claim His heavenly Bride (His Assembly), also has His earthly bride in the saved ones of Israel in the world to come. Their expressions of love are contained in the Song of Solomon 7:10, when declaring, "I am my Beloved's and His desire is toward me." We have a much higher and greater portion than they, -- may we value Him accordingly.

CHRIST THE CENTER

Without a Center there would be no cohesion and no concentration. How blessed it is for all who are truly in God's Assembly to realize that there is One Who, having built it, is the Focal Point of all attention and response. There is no independency on the part of those who form this special structure for the Lord's own joy; there is no going in all directions as if there is individual choice.

There is the wonderful truth that all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ constitute His Assembly regardless of geographical location, but this is the abstract aspect which does not become identifiable until all are presented to Himself, "a glorious Assembly" (Eph. 5:27). However, there is concurrently with its universal existence the local portion of it wherever there are saints living in a recognized area. The sad and dishonoring fact today is that even locally it is rare that all saints are to be found walking together in fellowship. But, where there are saints who bow to the authority of the Lord, the leading of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God, and do walk together in fellowship, then is to be seen the real *expression* of the Assembly in that place. The Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Center of such gatherings for He said, "for where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). This is a wondrous and glorious truth, and privilege available to all His own who do "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom is with some" (Heb. 10:25). This places upon all believers the solemn responsibility as to not refusing to obey God the Spirit Who would lead all believers to the one place in each locality where the Lord would take His place in their midst. Also, the Holy Spirit would activate us in accord with Heb. 10:19-22 to enter into God's presence, through the "veil", to minister to Him in the sanctuary.

Do we all understand these precious truths and yield to the Holy Spirit as to them, respond to the Lord Jesus Christ as in the midst, and minister to God for the joy and pleasure of His own heart?

The word employed by the Holy Spirit in Heb. 10:25, "*assembling ... together*" (one word in the original) is EPISUNAGOGÉ, which is the same word used by the Spirit in 2 Thess. 2:1, "*gathering together* unto Him".

Thus, as we do not gather ourselves together to the Lord when we meet Him in the air, for He comes Himself and calls us up to meet Him there in the exercise of His own power, so it would be that the Holy Spirit gathers together the saints for the purpose given in this scripture. In verses 24 and 25 we learn that it is "for provoking to love and good works" and "encouraging one another". This gives a solemn aspect to "forsaking . . . as the custom is with some", for it is both refusing to respond to the Holy Spirit and neglecting that which we should maintain according to God's Word. It is not for us to choose to be at the "breaking of bread" and consider that enough. If this is the case then we should realize that we are not in the right state of soul even to be at the most precious meeting with the Lord that is open to us. The Spirit would gather us together for prayer --the most neglected of all meetings, and the answer to our present state of spiritual dearth. Further, the Spirit would gather us together for the ministry of that which is so needful to our souls in "edification, and encouragement, and consolation" (1 Cor. 14:3). Have we forgotten that our blessed Lord and Saviour is the Center of all of these gatherings? Do we so little esteem Him that we value being somewhere else rather than in His presence? Do the things of this world appeal to our hearts more than His loving presence and outflow of His grace? Alas, it seems all too true; for the attendance at meetings convened by the Holy Spirit of God is self-evidently the testimony, in the case of most saints, that the Lord Jesus is not the "all in all" to their hearts. May we all be stirred up to be faithful and responsive to Him who *died* for us and *lives* to have us for and around Himself, both here in the scene of His death, and soon in the scene of His present glory. However, let us also not forget that the Spirit being Holy, and the Lord being Holy, demands that we are holy too in order to be suited to His presence and there without limitations be free to render to Him the fullness of redeemed hearts and receive from Him the fullness of His love in all that love now provides to sustain us here while waiting for Him to come.

A point which should exercise us all in this respect is that we are so ready to be at various other occasions when saints are together, of their own volition (and not necessarily wrong in so doing) -- such as social occasions, gospel meetings, weddings and funerals -- but then find excuses for failing to be at the prayer meeting or to receive needed ministry which may jolt our conscience as well as fill our hearts. It is suggested that Heb. 10:25 would be the Christian equivalent to the "set feasts of Jehovah" (in Lev. 23) insofar as they were "holy convocations" (or gatherings together). "Set feasts" are 'fixed times for drawing near to God' (see footnote in the New Translation by J.N.D.), and the "gatherings together" must be in *holy* conditions. In the case of Israel it was legally obligatory for them to fulfil the requirements of God to the letter. For us today it is not a legal demand, but a loving demand upon our hearts that we should be found as often as the Spirit leads to be in

the holy Presence of our Saviour. Let us remember that no matter how strong a magnet may be it will have no effect on iron filings if they are beyond a certain distance from it. However, if within the radius of its magnetic field, then there is no restraint to being attracted to the magnet. Oh dear saints of God! may we "keep ourselves in the love of God" having "prayed in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 21 and 20), for "the love of the most shall grow cold" (Matt. 24:12). Our faithful and beloved Lord asked His own, "Will ye also go away?" The Lord is the Center of His Assembly, but there are certain things that can hinder the free reciprocal flow of love and worship and praise from our side. We are told not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed" (Eph. 4:30); and we are also told to "quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). Let us all, sisters as well as brothers in Christ, take this to our consciences and search out our conduct as to whether we are guilty of doing either of these. Let not the sisters think that these instructions do not apply to them. The word in Eph. 4:30 is in connection with our individual conduct at all times in every place, as the context clearly establishes, and how often we find we behave contrary to our Lord Jesus Christ! In our domestic spheres we, perhaps, have the most testing set of circumstances to prove whether we "grieve the Holy Spirit". Husbands, in relation to our wives -- do we love them as we love ourselves? No husband, a Christian one at least, would say that he did not love his wife. But, this is not what the Spirit of God says through Paul. It is to love my wife "as I love myself". If I am short tempered, irritated, harsh in manner or words, neglectful of all the little things that make up my life as pleasurable when it comes to considering my wife, then I give cause to grieve the Holy Spirit. Do I impose my likes and dislikes, my ways and will on my wife? -- then I am grieving the Holy Spirit. We find none of these things in our blessed Lord when He was among men, and He always acted in the power of the Holy Spirit as anointed by Him, and as One with Him. Wives, are you subject to your husbands in everything? Is your conversation such that "even if any are disobedient to the word, they may be gained without the word by the conversation of the wives" (1 Pet. 3:1)? This is often applied to wives of unbelieving husbands, but it equally applies to husbands who believe but who are "disobedient". Is your "adorning" "the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price" (verse 4)? Many passages could be quoted addressed to both husbands and wives, but may we realize that our married status is a picture of that glorious relationship between Christ and His Assembly, and we must love as He loves. How much more would there be liberty in our meetings if our home lives were right! Then, when "gathered together" is it only the brothers who can "quench the Spirit"? No! Sisters have as much effect on the Spirit's liberty as the brothers. Not in the same way, for sisters are not permitted of God to take public part, vocally, in the "gatherings" as speaking for the Spirit on behalf of the Assembly. Brothers can be, and are

all too often, guilty of "quenching the Spirit" by either speaking when they should not, or not speaking when they should. Do we not experience the former when we realize that the meeting is bereft of spiritual power? The one who has thus spoken quenches the Spirit in that the one whom the Spirit would have used is, perhaps, stopped, or delayed. Then, a brother may, through a wrong sense of 'humbleness', restrain himself from acting upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, or nervousness may be the hindrance. In both cases there is a sense of self which overrides the authority of the Lord and the leading of the Spirit when the Lord is the Center of His own and the Spirit is the Power of response. Oh! that we may all be more sensitive to the Lord's being really in our midst, and the Spirit's being the One Who alone knows what is the best suited for the occasion to please the Lord! All too often our meetings seem to be a 'set ritual' of 'formally correct' procedure, but let us cast off traditional practices and let the liberty of the Spirit and the joy of the Lord be that which shows itself when we are with Him. We say the "old man" is dead, -- let us act accordingly such that the "new man" alone is active in the life of the 'divine nature' which we have received of God, and in which we should walk in 'newness of life' to please Him Who has given it to us.

CHRIST THE LEADER

Having the Lord as the Center of all Assembly gatherings we need Him also as the Leader of the Assembly. It is not that we find this expression in the scriptures, although we do have the reference to our blessed Lord as "Leader of their salvation" (Heb.2:10). The epistle to the Hebrews addresses the people of God, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the similitude of those whom Stephen described as "the Assembly in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) when referring to Israel in the wilderness having God dwelling in their midst. Surely we can see the character of the present Assembly in the Hebrew epistle, especially with so much in connection with "our Great High Priest". As God ordered and maintained His chosen people around Himself at all times, whether when on the move or encamped until the Cloud moved on, so does the Lord delight to have His saints today around Himself in Assembly. This should be a normal association with Him on the part of all His own while we are still in a hostile world which is totally non-productive of anything suitable for the saints.

We still need leading and guiding and feeding, and who else can or would do this for us than our blessed faithful Leader? Not only does He do all this for us, but He also fulfills "I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises" (Heb. 2:12). Perhaps we concentrate far too much on the obtaining of blessing for ourselves when we are together in true assembly, and forget the greater occupation in the Person

of our Saviour, and what He declares to us as to His God and Father, and in following after Him in the singing of praises to Him. May this be more considered by us when together in His presence, such that the prominent place is given to the Lord and all hearts and voices rise up to God our Father, as He leads them there.

We have the One Who has walked this pathway before us and that to the absolute satisfaction and glory of God His Father, Who sent Him into this world to do His work. He is in every aspect our Leader Who delights to bring "many sons to glory", but let us not forget that it was through sufferings as a Man down here that He learned what obedience entailed (Heb. 5:8). Our Lord Jesus is 'perfect' in His capacity as our Leader to take us all the way through this 'wilderness' world to reach the glory to be with Himself, and so shall we be saved as to all our circumstances and experiences down here. Our finite minds have difficulty in grasping many of the wondrous things which relate to us as made ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. Most seem to get no further than rejoicing in the knowledge of their sins forgiven. Some advance to realize that earth is not their permanent place, but that they will some day be taken to heaven. Relatively few get beyond this to be engaged, not only in further portions which are ours, but, in what is higher still, to that which accrues to our blessed Saviour as the "fruit of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). This, beloved saints of God, goes far beyond the limits of Israel, glorious and satisfying as this is to Him, and embraces the total result of His work to be seen in both the present heavens and earth and then eternally in the new heaven and earth. May we realize the joy of being in His presence and learn of Him, and be led by Him into a greater extent of His glories than we can possibly contain within ourselves while we are here, such that our hearts and voices may be fully occupied in His praises, and ascending to God our Father in worship and thanksgiving. He is indeed our Leader, but how often we take the lead in our selfish hearts and wilful ways, only to dishonor Him and ruin our blessings and joys.

CHRIST THE OBJECT

What has been before us so far leads us to the climax which should engage every one purchased by His precious blood and brought into His Assembly, that is, HIMSELF exclusively.

It might be thought that in saying this it is suggested that we should do nothing else than be occupied in being together in one place to be engaged in worship, adoration and praise of Him. It is certainly one's own desire that this were true of us all, but, if it were the case, we would not be down here but in the glory with the One Who loves us and Whom we love, in the Father's house. No! But let us not think that there are no other spheres in

which we can be occupied with Him. All our lives from awaking to going to sleep each day should be spent in occupation with Him and His interests and not our own. This should be true of the universal Assembly all the time. Whether in worship or service Christ must be the Object before our hearts and minds, in order to please God Who delights in His beloved One. We must take our example from what we learn in the scriptures as to what God thinks of, and does for, His only Son.

From Proverbs 8 we learn that He was with Jehovah as "anointed" from eternity (see footnote in J.N.D. translation). This is something we cannot understand, but can rejoice in by faith, receiving it as involving the Son of His love or, as that same Proverb says in verse 30, "I was by Him the Nursling of His love". How beautifully tender this is as expressing in our language something of the nearness and appreciation of the Father for the Son! Even then His "delights were with the sons of men." In creating the universe "all things received being through Him, and without Him not one thing received being which has received being" (John 1:3). The purpose for the creation of all things as by Him was "for Him", as stated again in Rev. 4:11, "for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were, and they have been created." Do we delight to be told that "The Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in His hand" (John 3:35)? Are we not directed to the Son in the scriptures over and over again? Attention was focused on Him at His birth into this world, "today a Saviour has been born to you in David's city, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Again, as a Child when brought into the Temple and Simeon took Him into his arms and said, "... a Light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32). Then, at His baptism by John at the Jordan when He was praying, "the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a Dove upon Him; and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I have found My delight" (Luke 3:21-22). Was this someone different from the One spoken of in Proverbs 8? Oh no! He was the Same, from everlasting, although now seen in this world as a Man in His unique and absolute perfection -- mystery beyond our conception, but true. Then, again in Luke 9:35 we read, "and there was a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him." Yes, those with Him saw something of the glory of the kingdom, but what they actually saw was the glory of His Person, for without Him there is no glory. On the cross -- O dreadful guilt of man! -- He stood out in all His glory once again as He "cried with a loud voice and said, Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). Who else could do this than Himself? -- the eternal Son of God Who took to Himself Manhood and laid down His life, no man taking it from Him.

Now, we "see Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). Well might the eyes of our hearts be riveted upon His glorious Person, and

our love perpetually flow out to Him, while we worship Him and serve Him in all the details of our lives, until we see His blessed face in the glory of God. When God's time comes we shall see Him, as upon our faces, and joining in the acclamation, "We give Thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, He Who is, and Who was, that Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast reigned." To close the whole scene of sin and dishonor we shall see the One Who died for sinners sitting on the Great White Throne in final judgment on those who have refused Himself and the work that He has done on the cross to save them, if they had only believed on Him, and will consign them to the lake of fire for eternity (the same duration that we who have believed on Him shall spend with Him in His glory in the Father's house). May no reader of these lines remain in his sins for one second longer, but repent, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal and only Saviour, and join with us in rejoicing in Him.

We have by no means exhausted the theme of our blessed Lord and Christ Who loved the Assembly and gave Himself for it, Who is its Foundation and Builder, Who takes His place as its Head for it is His possession, of which He forms the Center and acts as its Leader right into eternity, when He will be the eternal Object of all who are with Him there, cleansed by His precious blood shed on Calvary's cross. It is our blessed privilege to be in that precious Assembly: may we realize it and be found continually answering to His purpose in having us part of it for His joy and glory.

SOME SUPPLEMENTARY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CHURCH AS THE BRIDE AND AS THE WIFE

Since the Assembly is transferred to glory (at the rapture), and presented then by the Lord to Himself (Eph. 5), the reference to 'wives' and 'husbands' in Eph. 5:22-33 clearly indicates that the assembly becomes to Him His bride, and His wife. Both of these terms are used in scripture (as directly referring to the church) only twice each, and all of them are found in the book of Revelation. The precious term 'bride' is found in Rev. 21:2 & 9. The associated term 'wife' is found in Rev. 19:7 and in Rev. 21:9.

It is instructive that the first usage is the term 'wife' (Rev. 19:7) and is linked directly with 'the marriage of the Lamb' -- "for His wife has made herself ready." The 'marriage' is not mentioned in the other passages. Also, the 'bride' is only mentioned in connection with the 'holy city', with no mention in this case of 'the marriage of the Lamb'.

We know that no scripture is carelessly worded since it was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of Truth; so we desire to derive some teaching from these passages.

We understand that Rev. 21:9 relates to 'the world to come', i.e. the kingdom reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, while Rev. 21:2 relates to the eternal state. Rev. 19:7, however, is during the interval between the rapture of the Assembly to glory and Christ taking up His great power and reigning over this scene. This, then, places the period of preparation of the 'wife' as taking place in glory prior to coming out with Christ in His millennial reign. The 'bride', however, is only seen in display in the kingdom and in the eternal state. We understand something of these relationships in our natural earthly marriages -- that the first thoughts entertained in the heart of any bridegroom are love for (to the exclusion of everything else), and joy in the beauty of his bride. Whatever may follow as the consequence of taking a bride for the satisfaction of his heart, this relationship should predominate and continue for as long as the marriage lasts. There does follow, however, that which is inevitably the portion of the bride as fulfilling a most necessary function, -- as a wife, the complement of her husband. Do we not find this, in scripture, as applicable to the Assembly? In Eph. 1:21-23 we read, ". . . but also in that to come (the coming age); and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him [to be] head over all things to the assembly, . . ., the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Is not this a beautiful revelation to our hearts of the place which our blessed Lord will fill in that coming day of display in the world to come, and we shall be identified with Him as His **fullness**! Would there not be something lacking if we were with Christ simply as His Bride in that coming day, as an adornment for Him but without any part in the administration of His kingdom? This would not satisfy His heart; and so we are not only to be the dearest and nearest object to His heart in love, but He associates us with Himself in all that He has in His kingdom as His 'wife'.

We learn from other scriptures that there are distinctions of service and position for His own in the kingdom. For example, in Matt. 19:28 we learn that the 12 apostles will be sitting on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. We know too that there will be awards given by the Lord at His 'judgment seat', according to 2 Cor. 5:10. Could we not connect the thought of the 'wife' and "His wife has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7) with both Eph. 1:23 and 2 Cor. 5:10? One would suggest that the Bema, the judgment seat of Christ, is that final preparation of the bride for her beloved Bridegroom, by which the "wife hath made herself ready." It is there at the judgment seat of Christ where everything connected with our responsibility during our earthly pathway is reviewed by Him. It is then that He assesses what is rewardable and in keeping with Luke 19:12-17 makes the presentation of those rewards. Thus the "wife has made herself ready." Although there are individual and special awards for exercise during the reign of Christ, it is suggested that there is also that which includes all the saints as His "wife". In Rev. 19:8 we read of the wife that "she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the

righteousnesses of the saints." This would seem to be that having dealt with all the elements in our responsibility while down here, and everything having been settled as to the past walk, Christ then adorns His wife with that which is for His glory in the "righteousnesses of the saints". It seems as if He would display her in everything attributable to her which is in accord with Himself, for He will judge the world in righteousness, and no accusing finger can be levelled at her when thus displayed.

As to the Bride, surely our hearts well up to Him in anticipation of soon being taken and presented to Himself as such. Bridal affections are not produced at the moment of the wedding. So, the appeal in Rev. 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come," is that of those who understand that the Bridegroom cometh. Do our hearts yearn after Him and do they join with the Spirit in that longing that He should come?

The preparation of the Bride would seem to be taking place during the time we, who compose that bride, spend down here while waiting for Christ to claim us as His. It would seem a very strange thing if we, that is all who will be included in the Bride, were not ready until the moment of the wedding. The natural analogy is suitable to illustrate this, for no Bride arrives at her wedding unprepared for the eye and heart of her Bridegroom. According to Eph. 5 Christ presents the Assembly to Himself "glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things; but that it might be holy and blameless." Would this not be the first moment when the Lord calls all His own to meet Him in the air? Has the Lord not given Himself for His Assembly, His Bride, and has waited long to have her with Himself in glory? Is it not also that we can see the infinite love of His heart for her that at this first meeting there is nothing which would affect the mutual response in love, unaffected by anything which must be brought into review at the 'judgment seat'? One's own thought is that the Bride is complete and absolutely ready for the wedding when the Lord transforms and translates her to meet Him in the air. Then the "marriage of the Lamb" would occur sometime after that, either concurrently with or to be followed by the "judgment seat" when the outcome will be that "His wife has made herself ready." Then in due time she will be seen with Him as His Bride and Wife (Rev. 21:9) during the administration of the kingdom -- as His Bride, the dearest object of His affections, as His Wife, the "complement" of "Him who fills all in all" for the duration of the millennium. Finally, when time ceases and God's eternal purpose has been reached according to His first thought as to the glorious Person of His own dear Son, then she is eternally seen as "a bride adorned for her Husband" -- His eternal delight. These thoughts are put forward to encourage occupation with this delightful subject and to have our hearts drawn more entirely out to Him Who loves us and has given Himself for us, that He might have us eternally for and with Himself to bestow His eternal love continuously upon her, His Bride --and each of us,

dear fellow believer, will share in it all. We trust that they commend themselves to the reader.

Worthy of homage and of praise,
 Worthy by all to be adored,
 Exhaustless Theme of heavenly lays,
 Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus Lord.

-- Miss Wigram

J. Pascoe

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

IS HE WITH YOU?

And the child [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers (Luke 2:40-47).

It is my desire to bring this passage before you in its reference to recovery -- recovery of soul. In a natural way, only let God lay His hand on us in sickness, and we want recovery; and if we have not prayed for weeks, we commence then.

There are many saints of God in bad spiritual health because of indifferent living, and they do not appear to know of their condition. It is a good thing when the need of spiritual recovery is felt; that is one step towards improvement. I do not speak of salvation. Thank God we have been brought to know our moral unsoundness, and through the Lord Jesus Christ we have been made whole. We are assured our *future* is secure, hence we

need not dwell on that. Our continual exercise should be as to the *present*. "And herein do I exercise myself," etc. (Acts 24:16).

It is interesting to notice in this passage of Scripture the Lord Jesus grows and waxes strong in spirit. He is filled with wisdom, and the grace of God is upon Him. In applying this to ourselves, we remember that it is not the Lord growing, but *our apprehension* of Him that enlarges as time goes on. Let us ask ourselves, "Is my appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ increasing?" What pleasure and delight Jesus' parents must have found in Him as He exhibited divine wisdom and grace in His life.

They go to Jerusalem as the custom was, and when the feast is over they return. Everything seems prosperous, and doubtless they are happy *in themselves* as they start away home. All seems as right as when they were coming, (how often all seems right with us,) but one thing made all the difference. *Jesus was not with them*. He tarries behind -- tests their affection and interest in Him, as it were. We would think that His parents would not have let Him out of their sight! They start away and He is not with them, and we read, "Joseph and His mother knew not of it."

They *suppose* Him to be in the company, and they go a day's journey. The *fact* is this -- they have lost the Lord; that is, His company, His presence.

At night the caravan stops, and Joseph and His mother want Jesus. It does not say what for, but the point is, they want Him and He is not there. He is sought for amongst the kinfolk and acquaintance, and then they turn back to seek Him. That was a good step. Abraham had to do it; many since have had to do it, and so must we. If there has been departure, you must go back to the place of departure. Likes and dislikes have no place here; the flesh has to go, and there must be confession.

"And it came to pass that after three days they found Him." After three days. They had only gone one day's journey without Jesus, but it took three days to recover Him. Is not this full of significance to us? Can we imagine the anxiety to His parents? It is not difficult to see the lesson, but I trust we may each *learn* it.

We become a little careless in our walk, losing sight of Eph. 5:2, or as to our conversation (see Phil. 1:27, first clause). Perhaps we are not particular as to the company we keep, and find ourselves like Peter in John 18:18 -- accepting hospitality from the wrong people, which resulted, as we are all aware, in grievous consequences. However, we find Peter learned the lesson and, in Acts 4:23, he in company with John seeks the right company.

Over-occupation with kinsfolk or acquaintance -- indeed it takes very little -- the most apparently harmless thing will upset us, and interrupt

communion with the Lord Jesus.

We suppose Him to be in "the company" and soothe ourselves with this, as if others can enjoy Christ for us. It comes to this -- we have lost touch with the Lord, and we know it not. We may attend all the meetings, but are we in company with Him? It is a question of heart-fellowship with the Lord. If we have not the strength and confidence of His presence (Exodus 33:14,15) we are like Samson when he lost his strength -- he "wist not that the Lord was departed from him," but he was in fact just in the condition for the enemy to overpower him. Nehemiah says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

The Lord Jesus does not compel us to have His company. It is there for us, and He delights in our fellowship, but if we do not want it we do not get it.

So we go our day's journey without Him. We may feel contented, but in reality it is a sad day's work. Then something comes along -- trouble or sickness -- (1 Cor. 11:30), and we wake up to the fact that we are out of touch. Has the Lord forsaken us? No; it is not that. We have gone a day's - perhaps a month's or even a year's -- journey without Him. It is a good thing when we wake up to it, and better still when we turn back to seek Him.

But depend upon it, there will be three days' seeking. This is a solemn thing, but God must teach us. We cannot play fast and loose with divine privileges. We are in the school of God, and there will be exercise and perhaps anxiety, which will cause us to value His presence more.

Has not this been the experience of some who read this? The realization of the joy of the Lord's presence with us (I speak of the individual experience) cannot be put on for Sunday, like our best clothes. Some have gone through deep soul-exercise, and cried out, almost in despair, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12).

Thank the Lord, He recovers us in His good time. We regain His company, *but we never regain lost time.*

Dear brethren, our time here is but short. Do we spend our years as a tale that is told? (Psalm 90:9). Let me say this: our lives will be unsuccessful, and in the light of the judgment seat of Christ a miserable failure, unless we are here for *His* pleasure.

What joy to the Lord Jesus to have us going on in, and valuing, His company! Do we minister pleasure to His heart in this way? How blessed to keep in touch with Himself, and, by a prayerful and humble walk, avoid such an experience as the Scripture before us depicts.

May these few remarks be an encouragement and a warning to us, so that

we may with increased purpose of heart cultivate communion with Himself. This will bring glory to the blessed Lord Jesus, and much gain to ourselves.

Oh! that each one may, through grace, be able to turn to the Lord and say, in regard to their individual and daily walk, "THOU ART WITH ME; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). This is the satisfactory reply to the question heading this paper.

To Every Man His Work

HAVE YOU PERFECT LOVE?

Such was the question an aged Christian asked the writer a short time ago. The earnest manner in which he made his inquiry showed how long and how anxiously he had been seeking perfect love, but seeking it where it was not to be found. He said, "A person called on me lately and said he had had perfect love for five years: have you perfect love?" "Yes," I said, "I have had perfect love about fifty-two years. Nay, I may go back fifty millions of years, and that love was perfect. But mark, it was, and is, not my love to God; no, it was the love of God to me."

My aged friend had made the common mistake of seeking perfect love in himself. This, no doubt, had hindered the progress and joy of his soul and his life, and sadly blighted his service. To use his own words -- though we hope he was mistaken -- he said all would have to be burnt up, and he be saved so as by fire. He could not remember a single soul converted to Christ through his long ministry.

We believe many souls, even aged Christians, are under this serious mistake, seeking for perfect love in themselves. Not having clear views of divine grace, they will turn to such a Scripture as Luke 10:25-29; and supposing that the Lord preached the gospel to the lawyer who came to Him tempting Him, they conclude that the way to obtain eternal life is to have perfect love; to love God "with all thy heart," etc. Now it was just because man had not done this, and had no strength to do this, that Christ died for the ungodly. It was the law: and the apostle says, "If there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21). Trying then to find perfect love to God in myself, is trying to be saved by the law.

There is however another Scripture grievously misunderstood by those who are seeking perfect love in themselves. "Herein is our love made

perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). The question here is this, Is this the correct translation, or the reading in the margin? "Herein is love with us made perfect," etc. "Herein" - in what is that love made perfect, even right on to the day of judgment? Is it our love to God, or His love to us? As it says "Herein," let us examine carefully the context. The apostle, conscious of inspiration, could say, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us." It is not he that heareth the church, but he that heareth the words of the inspired apostles. Let us then, believing this, hear what John says on this subject of love with us made perfect. All who do not receive the inspired word are in error.

What then is the source of this love? In us, or in God? "Love is of God." Its source is of God. Is it divine, or human? "God is love." It is His very nature. If we love, it is a proof we are born of God -- have His nature.

God has manifested his love in two things, and both prove this perfect love to be of Him, and not of us.

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through him*." Yes, the love of God was perfect to us, when we were dead in sins. In this very thing God has commended His love to us, in that whilst we were enemies Christ died for us. The cross manifested the perfect love God had to us, before the foundation of the world. Jesus asks, and waits for the time when the world shall know that God has loved them as He has loved Christ. Yes, this is perfect love from all eternity (John 17:23). And Jesus says to us, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). Such is the perfect love of God to us from all eternity. That love stands out in all its eternal perfection when we had no love to God. All was forfeited through sin. He sent His Son that we might *live through Him*.

But there is a second proof that it is God's perfect love to us and not our perfect love to Him. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." That love which gave the infinite Son which dwelt in His bosom, surely is perfect love. The cross reveals the hatred of man, not his love to God. But it reveals also the perfect love of God to us. Meditate on this, and seek not to reverse this by finding perfect love in self. If we love, it is the proof that God dwells *in* us, and His love, not ours, is perfected in us. Can you say, I have known and believed the love that God hath to us? God is love. Do you really know and believe this?

Thus the context shows most conclusively that it is not our love to God that is perfect, but His love is perfected with us, or "Herein is love with us made perfect." Since God has loved us from all eternity, even as He has

loved His only begotten Son; and through that Son has given us eternal life, and provided for the display of His love to us, through this moment of time, and to all eternity -- having given us life that can never perish -- having brought us into favor in Christ that can know no cloud of change -- having loved us in Christ with a love from which nothing can separate us -- having by His atoning blood cleared away according to His glory all our sins and defilement -- we can indeed say, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is so are we in this world."

Yes, the knowledge of and belief of this perfect love casteth out fear. How can we fear the One who so loves? The effect of this is there is no fear in love. There is no effort, but "We love him because he first loved us." And His love is shed abroad in our hearts.

Oh, what a contrast this is to the vain effort to find perfect love in ourselves! There is however one serious question, If the love of God is thus perfect to us, how is it we abide so little in the full enjoyment of His perfect love? Let us hear what Jesus says as to this. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:9-11). Is not this the solution why there is so little *enjoyment* of the perfect love of God to us in Christ?

Are we doing our own will? Why are we doing this or that? Is it because others do so? Did Jesus ever walk by such a principle? Did He do anything because the scribes and Pharisees did it? He would do nothing but that for which He had the word of the Father. He could say, "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

How can we be filled with His joy if we are not seeking to do His will? Only let us sit down and write all we do for a week, even religiously, and we shall be astonished how much we do simply because others do so; without a command from the Lord, or an intimation in His word that such is His will.

In these last days He commends us to Himself and the word of His grace. If then we turn to what calls itself the church, or to human ordinances, or to man in any form, can we expect anything but leanness of soul?

May the Lord use these meditations to turn us to Himself, the source of perfect love; and to keep His commandments; to own the whole inspired word of His grace as the will of the Lord; and however it may differ from the thoughts and ways of men, we shall find, just as we keep His commandments, so shall we abide in His love.

But let us beware, on the other hand, of turning from the good and perfect love of God to the law, or the principle that God will love us if we only first love Him with all our hearts. Surely man has been fully tried on that principle, and nothing was found in him but hatred to God. Does not the cross at the end of the trial of man fully prove this? whilst it brings out the infinite love of God to us. We love Him now, because He thus first loved us. To Him be all praise.

Things New and Old 29:267-273.

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

PART 1 (Continued)

THE EXPECTED KINGDOM

CHAPTER 1.2: WHAT SHOULD

THE JEWS HAVE EXPECTED?

INTRODUCTION

The word "millennium" refers to the 1000-year reign of Christ. This reign is often spoken of in the prophets. Revelation 20 tells us its duration -- 1000 years. Premillenarians believe that Christ will come before the 1000 years.

The 1000-year reign will be preceded by a period a little longer than seven years.¹ A premillenarian who believes Christ will come for us at the end of the seven-year period (involving the great tribulation) is called a post-tribulationist. A premillenarian who believes Christ's coming is one coming but in two aspects (a pre-tribulation rapture and an appearance in glory after

1. See the chart in *Daniel's 70th Week and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, obtainable from the publisher.

the tribulation) is generally called a pre-tribulationist ² and a dispensationalist.

There are postmillenarians. They believe a golden age will be brought in by the preaching of the gospel and Christianity permeating the world until it is more or less Christianized. They hold that the millennium need not be a literal 1000 years.

Then there are amillenarians, those who believe the 1000 years is a symbolic number referring to the present period from the cross until Christ comes and introduces the eternal state.

These last two groups in particular deny a future, distinct, political kingdom of which national Israel is the center and over which Christ will reign. This necessitates a denial that John the Baptist and our Lord announced the kingdom as those who hold dispensational truth (in some measure) understand this announcement. By 'spiritual' interpretation they alchemize the prophetic declarations in the O. T. into prophecies concerning the church -- hence it follows, not only for amillenarians but for postmillenarians also, that the announcement of the kingdom by John and our Lord had to be the announcement of a spiritual kingdom, not a literal one. This literal kingdom we shall call, as others have done, a temporal kingdom; though as we shall see elsewhere, God willing, those composing the nation of Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26, etc.) and this will entail much spiritual blessing for Israel. Thus the nation, which will experience a national adoption under the new covenant (Rom. 9:3-5), will also enjoy spiritual blessings of the new covenant.

A JEW HAD TO EXPECT A TEMPORAL KINGDOM

To speak of the "postponement" of the kingdom, implies that the temporal kingdom was announced by John and our Lord in accordance with the prophecies of the O. T., literally understood. This view of the matter is consistent with what we have seen in Rom. 16:25,26, Col. 1, and Eph. 3. Both John the baptist and our Lord announced the kingdom predicted by the prophets.

It is obvious that the prophets used the terms Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, etc.; and it is alleged that this means the church. *How was a Jewish reader of the prophets supposed to know that?*

The well-known amillenarian, O. T. Allis, in his polemic against dispensational truth, admitted this:

2. There are other variations, such as partial rapturists and mid-tribulation rapturists.

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

In the previous article we noted that V. S. Poythress, in seeking to show that a Jew did not need to take the prophets literally, cited passages of figurative language and stated that the readers "would not know exactly to what extent a metaphorical expression of truth was at work."⁴ Concerning Ezek. 44-46, he wrote: "Was the Old Testament hearer obliged to say that the passage must be interpreted in the most obvious way?"⁵ Well, of course there is an obvious way to understand Ezek. 44-46 and that is in a literal way -- which he admits is the obvious way.

Why should the Jew of, say, A.D. 25 have understood the prophets other than literally? There is no valid reason whatsoever. This is an interesting fact in view of the vehement denunciations, regarding the expectation of a temporal kingdom, made by opposers of dispensational truth. The language is quite intemperate, especially considering the obvious truth in the citation just given above, coupled with the fact that a Jew could not do other than understand that the prophets meant Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, etc. by such terms. Let us hear a few of these denunciations of the Jews who understood these terms literally.

The amillenarian P. Mauro wrote,

There are also prophecies concerning the "remnant of Israel" that would return to the Lord in the latter days. Now it is not surprising that the utterly degenerate and carnally minded Jewish teachers of the times of Christ should have interpreted prophecies of that class as foretelling the restoration of the nation and its earthly grandeur; but for Christian teachers to make that mistake is surely inexcusable, seeing that, as has been shown in Chapter II of the present volume, the Holy Spirit, by the apostle Paul, has made known that such prophecies and promises have their fulfillment in *God's new covenant people, the true "Israel of God."*⁶

Paul, of course, taught no such thing. But even supposing he had, the "utterly degenerate and carnally minded Jewish teachers" did not have Paul's writings when the Lord was here. There was no reason for them to 'spiritualize' away the prophecies, the actual words of which speak of a

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

4. *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 99 (1987).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

6. *The Hope of Israel*, Swengel: Reiner, n.d., p. 84.

temporal kingdom. Mauro, however, appears to blame their degenerate, carnal mindedness -- so they ought to have spiritualized the prophecies. Why, he does not say.

We come now to a worse charge, namely, that the expectation of the earthly kingdom led to the crucifixion. R. Zorn asked:

Should we then continue to recognize a view that originated with the exegetical compromises of Judaism whose efforts, not only resulted in the violent wresting of Scripture along the erroneous byways of carnalistic notion and materialistic misunderstanding, but tragically led to the rejection of the Saviour Himself at the time of His first advent? ⁷

If these claims are true, it follows that John the Baptist and our Lord did not confirm the expectation of a temporal kingdom and so O. T. Allis asserted that:

The Kingdom announced by John and by Jesus was primarily and essentially a moral and spiritual kingdom. ⁸

Again,

... from the very outset Jesus not merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed, the expectation of the Jews that an earthly, Jewish kingdom of glory, such as David had established centuries before, was about to be set up. ⁹

In the next article, when we see that our Lord spoke to the disciples about the kingdom, and even during 40 days after the crucifixion, keep in mind this allegation that our Lord "quite definitely opposed the expectation . . ." This assertion is "quite definitely opposed" to the facts of the matter.

Notice that there is an implicit pretension to spirituality if one denies a coming, temporal kingdom with Israel ascendant. The truth is that the denial is *unspiritual* and *Judaizing* for two reasons:

1. It transmutes the prophecies of the kingdom into "spiritual" blessings for the church, thus substituting something else for the true, distinctive blessings of the church.
2. It substitutes for the truth their particular notion of a unified view of

7. *Church and Kingdom*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962, p. 124.

8. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 70.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Scripture. In practical result, the postmillennial/amillennial scheme and covenant theology find the locus of Scripture to be in the salvation of the elect in all ages and in the idea of covenant. The ages are thus viewed as the unfolding of God's salvation and covenant. There is indeed truth in the thought that the ages display the unfolding of God's salvation, but it is a serious distortion to make this central. Doing so results, practically, in substituting benefits to man and results produced by man, for God's purpose and power. This may be done unwittingly and by Calvinists no less.¹⁰

The truth is that God's self-revelation and His glory in Christ is the purpose of creation and the theme of Scripture. This glory is manifested in three spheres, the heavenly and earthly and the infernal.

1. There is Christ's glory in the church as one body in heavenly places as the principal (but not only) exhibition of grace.
2. There will be Christ's glory in government in the earth with Israel as the center, in the very place where He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross.
3. All judgment has been committed into the hands of the Son of man, and all that are inconsistent with the glory of God shall be cast into the lake of fire.

We shall now turn directly to the quoted objections and consider first the allegation that the Jewish expectation of a temporal kingdom is an "exegetical compromise of Judaism". This means that the Jews should not have understood the prophets literally. The Jews really had no basis for doing anything else than understanding the prophets literally. I remind you again of what the well-known amillenarian, O. T. Allis, rightly said:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.¹¹

It is obvious that the prophecies are so written that, as a matter of fact, they do speak of a coming temporal kingdom. It is only by a process of 'spiritual alchemy' that these prophecies are transmuted into what they are not. The question is: what right did any Jew have NOT to understand the prophets literally? The answer is: they had no right, no Scripture, no word from Jehovah not to understand their prophets literally. They had no grounds for understanding Judah, Jerusalem and the house of Israel to refer to anything

10. The doctrines of grace, rightly apprehended, and dispensational truth are compatible. For one aspect of this see "Freewill? or Not of Him that Willet", obtainable from the publisher.

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

but Jewish things, not the church. Our brethren have castigated their understanding the prophets literally on this particular matter, but give no solid Scriptural reason for this. Could anyone dream for a moment that there is something in the prophets that told the Jews to envision the kingdom as the amillenarians and postmillenarians envision it? Could our brethren even for one moment seriously mean for us to believe that when God spoke to the Jews about a new covenant with Judah and Israel, they should have known that what He really meant was the church? They had no knowledge of the church (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3; Col. 1).

The following quotation ought to speak to our CONSCIENCES about these things:

... Amongst the hearers were two Jews. A discussion took place, in the vestry, between them and the preacher, on the subject of a psalm which contained a prophecy referring to the restoration of the Jewish people. The pastor maintained that it could not be understood in the sense of a national restoration. The Jew who spoke answered him: "How then can you be surprised that we should deny what you call the incarnation?" "What!" said the clergyman, taking a Bible, "is it not written: 'And, behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end'?" The Israelite then asked the minister to take up with him again the different parts of this passage, which he did accordingly, and after having read the two or three first sentences, the Jews were convinced that they were to be interpreted literally; but, when they came to these words, 'And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob,' etc., the pastor said, This signifies that He 'shall reign in the hearts of His people.' "If it is thus," replied the Jew, "if it is not in Jerusalem, where David had his throne, where he reigned, then I deny that Mary had a son. I affirm, for my part, that what is said on this subject signifies nothing else, save that the Messiah was to be pure from His birth, and that this is the true meaning of these words 'a virgin having a son'. You see I only follow your mode of interpreting the end of this passage. I apply it to the beginning, and by this means I deny the incarnation." "But," replied the minister, "we admit the literal interpretation of this part of the passage, because the event has proved that it was to be understood thus." I shall never forget with what an air of disdain and contempt the Jew then said: "Oh! you believe this, because it has happened, -- as for us, we believe what is written, because God has said it." We ought therefore to take heed in what manner we interpret prophecies; for, you see, if we deny the privileges promised to the Jewish nation, we shake thereby even the foundation of our faith. I take occasion here to observe that there is a great difference between figurative language and a system of spiritual interpretation, still too much in vogue. There are facts foretold in figurative language which have been or which will be fulfilled literally. . . . Prophecies, describing the future glory of the Jewish people under the

emblem of a mountain, raised above the hills, and to which all the nations shall resort, are quoted in all Catholic catechisms, as proofs of the infallibility of the Church of Rome, whose authority, they say, is to extend over the whole world. They say, moreover, that the geographical position of Rome proves that these promises really apply to her. And truly, if Jerusalem in the prophets signifies the Christian Church, it seems that these promises concern the church of Rome, which, alone on the earth, has raised these pretensions to infallibility, universality and dominion. Whilst robbing the Jewish nation of those prophecies which belong to her, to apply them to the Christian Church, Christian controversialists can with difficulty contest the pretensions of the Church of Rome. But Jerusalem never means the Christian Church -- it means Jerusalem; Judah means Judah; Ephraim means Ephraim, and not France or England. Let us call everything by its proper name. Thus we shall understand better the grand but yet unfinished work of our glorious God, that work which, relatively to the Jews, among others, is not yet fulfilled. It is for divine reasons that the Jews have been preserved in the midst of the nations, as a separate people, waiting for the King. This King, the last King of Israel, is still alive.¹²

Neither is it true that though the Jews should have understood the prophets literally, yet they forfeited the kingdom and *now* we should spiritualize the prophets. "The gifts and calling of God [are] not subject to repentance" (Rom. 11:29). Furthermore, such a notion is self-defeating if one regards the church as the continuator of Israel. It is necessary to the system to find *prophecies* of the church in the prophets (in defiance of Rom. 16:25, etc.), not merely a totally new meaning attached by hindsight.

Next, we purpose, God willing, to consider the expectation of the remnant and our Lord.

Ed.

(If the Lord will, to be continued)

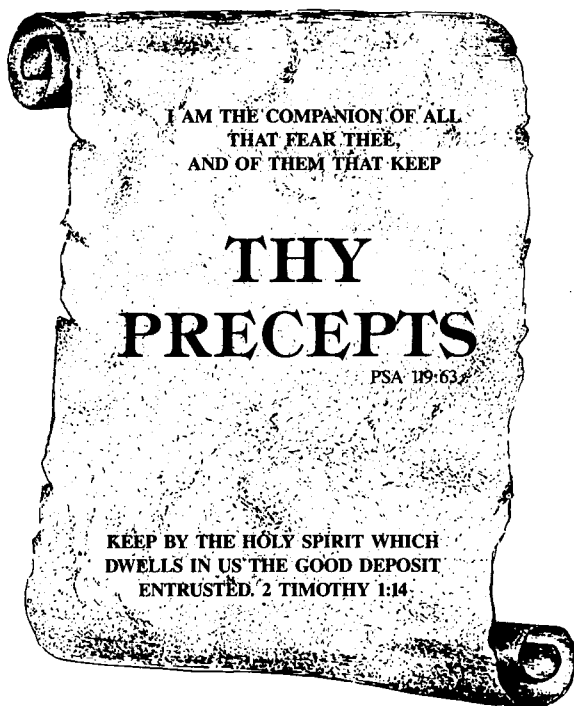
12. *The Prospect* 1:29.

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CONTENTS

A Word to Parents	65
The Body of Christ	71
Friends of God	81
The Great Reversal	86
What Did the Godly Remnant Expect?	87

A WORD TO PARENTS

For they indeed chastened for a few days, as seemed good to them; but he for profit, in order to the partaking of his holiness (Heb. 12:10; J. N. Darby).

CHASTENING FOR PROFIT

The above Scripture states what parents generally do and it contrasts their conduct with what our Father does. He chastens ¹ us for profit in order to the partaking of His holiness. ² Parents, however, have other motives in view and therefore do what seems good to them. If that is what we parents do, the results may be disastrous, but certainly less than what God desires. He ever has our profit in view; and that is that we may be like Him. We should learn from this what the grand object of chastening our children is. Should we not be concerned that our objective in regards to our children be God's objective?

Does not the phrase "as seemed good to them" point to *self*? Self often has a place in this kind of chastening. Self is pleased in the matter of chastening. How does this show itself? Well, one may chasten a child, strike a child, in a bad temper. This is venting anger on the child. It is true that the child may have done wrong. Also, its behavior might have been embarrassing to the parent. Perhaps it is only on embarrassing occasions that the parent chastens, and more because of the embarrassment than that the child be brought into the presence of God about it. Temper, and motives like embarrassment, are "self." They do not seem to go along with praying with the one needing chastening. But bringing the precious soul of the child into the presence of the Lord, looking at the sin as in His sight, and being before Him concerning disobedience to the Word and will of God, (as well as that of the parents, teacher, etc.), are things morally suitable to chastening that has for its object "the partaking of His holiness." The Scripture speaks of God's chastening being "for profit" and this should likewise be a parental motive.

It is indeed true that Scriptural chastening is difficult work. It involves

1. Chastening means to train, involving instruction, correction, reproof, admonishment and the rod. But it is necessary to do these things in the fear of God, with prayer and bringing the child before God and His Word. Doing these things in a bad temper is a sort of training also, the fruit of which a parent will regret.

2. Holiness in a Christian is separation from evil unto the Lord.

time, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline. Sad to say, it may even involve resisting some who speak and frown in disapproval of godly chastening -- yes, not only relatives, but Christians. But, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. 13:24).

CONSISTENCY

Also important is **consistency**.³ Inconsistency is very destructive of godly discipline. Let us look at several ways in which parents may strive for consistency, as well as considering some inconsistencies, looking to our Father for grace to correct ourselves where needed.

1. A most important consistency is to tell the child to do something and then to chasten when the child does not obey. Not chastening the child makes a mockery of the parental authority and responsibility God has given. This is an offense against the One who has placed the child in your care and said to you, "Bring him up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord." If you do chasten the child, you are training the child to respect your authority, given of God, while you pray to Him to save the child and that this child may obey God. Why should he obey God Whom he cannot see, if you withhold the chastening, thus training him to disobey yourself, whom he can see? Such training is training to flaunt authority and where do you think that will lead?
2. Another aspect of consistency in chastening is one time telling the child to do something and chastening for disobedience and the next time chastening him again; and again. We may just 'not feel like doing it' the second time, etc. Or perhaps we feel weary. But that is serving self, not seeking the good of the one committed to one's trust. Why expect to rear stable children on a see-saw of discipline? A consistently firm hand attached to a loving heart is what is needed. Is not our Father like that?
3. One of the objects of consistency is getting the child's attention and obedience the first time it is told to do something. Words spoken with clarity and ordinary tone (with consideration given to competing sounds in some cases) establish the child's responsibility to hearken and respond. Shouting and screaming, or begging, is not proper training. On the other hand, where is the consistency when parents tell their children to do something two or three or four times before their voices get loud and insistent enough that the child discerns that the time to obey has finally come? After all, it has been trained to know that if it does not obey the first time told, or the second, or perhaps the third, the parent will give up and the child will avoid chastening

3. Consistency involves acting uniformly in similar circumstances. If a parent requires obedience one time and allows disobedience to pass unchastened another time, that is inconsistency. It means that the parent is not constant.

and still not have to obey. Not only is the child manipulating the parent; this is another way to develop self-will in the child. What is the root? Why, the root is the self-will that will not train the child to obey as the Word of God indicates.

4. And then there is the case of the child who is told by the parent to do something and the child says, "No!" Chastening in such cases must reach the child's will such that the response is changed to "yes". There are cases where, instead, the parent does the thing the child was told to do. Oh what training this is! In such cases the child is being trained to say "no" to God.

5. There are cases where a child strikes the parent; or, throws itself down in a tantrum. Worldly wisdom says just ignore it and it will change its behavior when it sees it cannot get its will that way. I ask you, is society thriving on this sort of advice? Is that what we learn from God's Word? On such occasions the child must be firmly and lovingly trained that it *must* obey the parent's will!

6. A manifestation of inconsistency is the chastening of children at meetings (if done at all) while being slack at home. If there is diligent chastening and training at home this will reduce the need for it at meetings. This is due the Lord and His people. But think of this also: if you chasten at meeting but slack off at home, you are training the child to equate going to meeting with being chastened. What attitude do you expect that to produce in the child? ⁴

7. Sometimes, if not always, when children are visiting somewhere, they take liberties in the houses of others. This may be because parents do not train them in their own house, or because parents do not put a stop to it when visiting. Well-behaved children are a pleasure to be with. Mis-behaved children are the result of lack of proper training and indicate that the parents are deficient in self-discipline -- unless they did not know their responsibility. But it is hard to plead ignorance.

4. In connection with the subject of behavior in the meetings of Christians, one might point out that proper training at home in connection with family reading of the Word and prayer would have the tendency to diminish problems in meetings of Christians. Children must be trained in reverence for the Lord and His Word. This will result in their not whispering or making faces at others; or agitating and pinching those who are younger. Frequent visits to the bathroom are generally a ploy to obtain some diversion for themselves, but it can be disruptive to others. Children may be trained to open the hymn book and sing *softly*; and open their Bibles reverently when the Word of God is being read. Train them in this at home. It is consistent with such training to prohibit them from chewing gum on such occasions. The allowance of such conduct leads to a sloppy attitude, sloppy appearance and sloppy postures in the meetings (and when the Word of God is before us) when they are older; and not being trained, they will tell the parent what they are going to do, and when. As time goes on, it is noticeable that children are at a younger and younger age when they start telling the parents what to do and what they will do. The lack of training leads directly to disrespect for God and parents.

PROMPT OBEDIENCE

Our children must be lovingly and firmly taught from their youngest years to obey -- to obey the first time they are told. And this means that the parents must be united before God to rear them for Him, in self-judgment, in self-discipline, and in consistency. If the mother undermines the chastening of the father, or vice versa, by untimely comforts, the child thus learns that there is no consistency in the home. Inconsistency tends to the development of instability as the child matures. No proper chastening leads to a self-willed personality that will have difficulty in employment. Harsh chastening, and chastening without prayer and love, and without bringing the child into God's presence, tends to produce its like in mature years. "And be not weary in well-doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not" (Gal. 6:9). And God, in the face of our mistakes and failures, comes in in blessing. But let us not presume upon His mercy by indulging self in the rearing of our children and then expecting Him to bless. Another wrote,

Children are called to yield implicit obedience to their parents. This is the divine rule. Parents, on the other hand, are to beware of provoking their children to wrath by arbitrary conduct, by exhibiting partiality towards one more than another, and by needless crossing of the will of the child merely to make a display of parental authority. The child should ever see that the parent has his real interest at heart, and that true love is the motive spring of every act. But we must insist on the obedience of children, and that in the face of this age of independence - an age specially marked by disobedience to parents, and not only disobedience, but, in many cases, gross disrespect. Many of the young people of the present day seem to regard their parents as belonging to the old school, and as being deficient in education. Hence, the readiness to contradict their parents and set up their own opinion. All this is at once unnatural and ungodly. It ought not to be tolerated. . . . Need we add that in all matters where God's authority is concerned, it must rise above all other claims? Oh! for the adjusting power of grace and truth! ⁵

ELI'S CASE

Our Father's chastening has holiness in view. So should it be in the chastening of our children. Eli is such a sad example. Yes, it is true that he cared for the Ark of the Covenant. Well as that was, that did not make up for his handling of his sons. Warned by a man of God (1 Sam. 2:26-36), he did not cast himself down before God in repentance, but allowed the evil behavior to go on. At last the boy Samuel conveyed the message again.

5Things New and Old 11:264.

For I have declared to him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he hath known: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not (1 Sam. 3:13).

And did he then cast himself down before God and own it all? No. The habit of his life was ingrained. Here is what he said:

It is Jehovah: let him do what is good in his sight (1 Sam. 3:18).

I do not know if he thought that was a pious thing to say. There are Christians who think so. Would not piety rather have led him to seek the Lord, humble himself, seek mercy, and rise up and deal with the evil? His pious sounding words were no substitute for that. Oh, yes, he had said to his sons, "Why do ye such things?" (1. Sam. 2:23). But these are empty words and it seems that his other statement went together with this.

HANNAH'S EXAMPLE

In contrast to Eli, the holy Hannah said,

"For Jehovah is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed (1 Sam. 2:3).

Hannah wanted a man-child, but not for self-indulgence, not to live through him, not to be some great credit to the family through accomplishments. She wanted a man-child to place at Shiloh so God would use him to judge the evil there. It was God's glory and holiness that filled the vision of her soul. Her request was granted and as soon as Samuel was weaned she placed him at Shiloh. This was exceptional. What mighty prayers must have followed the boy Samuel that he be kept! And God answered Hannah's desire concerning His glory and holiness.

DAY CARE (OR EVENING CARE)

Placing children in other's homes or day schools or with baby sitters so we can do our own will has no precedent in Hannah's case, of course. (I am not speaking of an occasional time in order for the parents to have a few hours alone together, and where they see to it that their children are cared for in a godly way.) We parents have the responsibility to rear our children so that, God blessing it, they become partakers of His holiness. Certainly circumstances may arise when someone else will have to care for the children for a shorter or longer period. But the tendency of our hearts is to be lazy, undisciplined and selfish, and to treat our children, not as charges to be nurtured in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, but as objects of our own pleasure. Yes, there may be some discipline and admonishment but this seems to be a sprinkling of a condiment on the fruit of self-seeking and

pleasure. It is sparing self. "We do not judge the flesh in others because we do not judge the flesh in ourselves", someone said, and this has application in the family. There is lack of Scriptural discipline because we parents are not self-disciplined. Society is feeling the results of this very heavily -- but Christians are also feeling it, much to our shame, but worse is the shame brought upon our Lord.

FATHERS AND COMMUNICATION

Preceding the text at the head of this article, we read "Moreover we have had the fathers of our flesh as chasteners . . ." (Heb. 12:9). This certainly seems to refer to the normal and proper order, fathers. We have brought children into the world and it is right that we chasten them as required. We must begin early in their lives, *very early*. When small, there are many relatively smaller matters that a mother will correct, it is true; but it is most important that the father be involved. There is a growth of the family *together* and the little child needs the sense of the interest of the father, not only as kissing and hugging it and truly loving it, but that the father will put a check on its self-will. Communication with the child needs to be developed at an early age. It is fearfully late to begin trying to open the channel of communication with the child by the time it is a teen-ager with the attendant greater stresses. The cultivation of trust and respect must begin early. The little heart must be won in an atmosphere of interest, play, communication, loving counsel, Scripture reading, prayer and chastening. Such an atmosphere shows the child that it has a father in whom confidence can be placed as it grows in the sense that the father has its best interest at heart -- including that the father will call a halt to self-will. This is the atmosphere in which mutual, trusting communication can take place. You must commune with your child. You must listen! Patiently listen. How else will you find out what goes on in the mind? You must listen *calmly*. How else will you find out what goes on in the mind? Do you talk to people who react in hostility and loss of temper to what you say? Why would you expect your child to talk to you about certain things if you so react? An atmosphere of love, communication and proper firmness does not come automatically because one has brought children into the world. It must be prayerfully developed, nurtured, cultivated. This is growth as a father. Being a true father is more than being able to produce offspring. *Father* ought to be a precious word to us, a most precious word. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our Father, Abba Father. That ought to speak volumes to our hearts. Think of that relationship and what He is to us and what He has done to make His heart known to us. This ought to exercise us regarding our children. May we bow low before Him with Whom there are mercies, make confession, judge ourselves, and seek of Him a right way. He desires to bless.

Ed.

GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH

PART 4: *THE BODY OF CHRIST*

INTRODUCTION

It is now intended to look into the blessed subject of the Body of Christ. It must be constantly borne in mind in each of the aspects which have been considered, together with this one, that the same saints are involved in each. What a wonderful scope this presents to our hearts for further study of the Scriptures as to them all, for only the Holy Spirit can enlarge the content of each to those who meditate in dependence upon Him. There is, perhaps, a tendency for our hearts to be overoccupied with all that results to us consequent upon the death and resurrection of our blessed Saviour and Lord. This is the lower consideration in any divine subject, although proper in its place, for what is for the glory and pleasure of God must have the first place; for, "all things were made by Him and for Him, and by Him do all things consist." Our blessed Lord said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13). So, He must be pre-eminent in all that we have presented to us by the Spirit, for this is His purpose with all saints; for "He shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you" (John 14:26). Also, "He shall bear witness concerning Me" (John 15:26), and "He will announce to you what is coming. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you" (John 16:13-14).

So, to review, in the House of God the prime thought is that God Himself takes up habitation by the Spirit, and the Father delights in His family (of saints). Regarding the Temple of God, it is God who must be seen through the saints in displaying the glory of God in this world at the present time, until the Lord of glory shall fill the whole scene. Then, as to the Assembly, the special purpose for the time being is for the Lord to be in the midst, as gathered together unto Him by the Holy Spirit, for His own pleasure in His saints (those for whom He died) while waiting the translation of the same to His own sphere of glory above all this scene. Now, in the Body of Christ we have the pre-eminent thought that the Lord Jesus Christ should be presented and represented in this scene of violence and corruption, from which He has been cast out by man and is still despised and rejected by men. When we are all transformed and translated from this world to the place of eternal bliss

and joy with and like Christ Jesus our Lord, then things will be rather in reverse to what they are now. In that blessed eternal condition of glory with the Son of God we shall not form the House of God, but we shall be in the Father's House with the Son. We shall not then be the Temple of God, but we shall be in the "Holy City", which will have the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb in it as the Temple, in the absolute display of glory which will command the worship of all to Him. The Assembly, when completed, will be taken up into the eternal relationship with the Lord as His Bride, and function as His Wife during the reign of glory which He will establish and maintain for 1000 years in this creature scene which was made by and for Him. As to the Body, we read nothing of this continuing into the heavenly realm; but it appears to be a formation, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the present, to express the One who was (but is no longer) here, its glorified Head our Lord Jesus. None of the present features of the Body will have a place or function in the heavenly scene, for the Lord Himself will then be pre-eminent and prominent and in full control and authority in and over the universe of His creation.

These thoughts are given out in a very simple way and limited in their expressions for all to ponder as before the Lord and in dependence on the Holy Spirit for confirmation of them as according to the overall teaching of the Word of God, which must be the test of all our thoughts and expressions while we are in the condition of only "knowing in part" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Now, to return to our subject concerning *the body of Christ*, it is purposed to examine our subject under several headings:

1. The Identity of and Purpose for the Body -- Eph. 1:23; Eph. 4:4; Eph. 5:30, and Col. 1:18.
2. The Constitution and Relationships of and in the Body -- 1 Cor. 10:16-17, and 1 Cor. 12:12-27.
3. The Development and Responsibilities of the Body -- Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:12-16, and Col. 2:18-19.

In the Scriptures given above are to be found all the references to the Body of Christ in the sense in which we are concerned in this article.

THE IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

Eph. 4:4 gives us in a simple, but profound, statement the absolute truth as to there being but ONE body. This entirely does away with any idea that there can be any other body recognized by God.

This term "body" assumes different senses as commonly used in English: e.g., a dead corpse is referred to as a body; a group of people is called a

body of people; the main structure of a vehicle is called the same. However, in the scriptural use with which we are concerned, it is analogous to a living human body that we understand the Spirit's use of it -- not, however, to the personal, sinless, holy body of our Lord Jesus when here as Man, for there was no analogy but a reality in Him. The Holy Spirit uses the term "body" in connection with the saints of God as the expression of Christ but in a spiritual application.

Many of the Lord's own are identified with many different systems of men which are all a contradiction and denial of the truth of the one body of Christ. There are many bodies of professing Christians but only ONE body of Christ, which is composed of all Christians throughout the world. There is, therefore, only one membership of the one body which is recognized by God and referred to in Scripture, and all other memberships in anything else (whether social, professional, industrial, commercial or religious) are wrong, since they all displace what the Spirit of God has done in relation to all saints on the earth, in forming them into the ONE body of Christ. Accepting then, as we must on the authority of the Word of God, that there is only one body of Christ, then Eph. 1:23 and Col. 1:18 both instruct us as to the identity of this body. It is composed of exactly the same ones as are in the Assembly, and we saw in the last article that the Assembly is practically composed of all the saints of God on earth. Just as the Assembly is exclusive of all but those whom Christ adds to it, and these must be only those who are saved by His precious blood, so is His body an exclusive membership of all who are baptized into it by the Holy Spirit. Let us not get mixed up in our careless approach to these matters as influenced by the failure that has come in among the beloved saints of God, and the resultant outward contradiction which is currently to be seen in what is called "christendom", with its many divisions. It is amazing how much our understanding of the truth of God has become distorted by what man has done rather than accepting simply what God's Word tells us.

With these three scriptures, then, we can see clearly that there is one body of Christ (and not many); that Christ is the Head of His body -- which makes the complete entity identifiable as Himself. Eph. 5:30 presents this to us in that "we are of His flesh, and of His bones." This is a very important Scripture, but we must not derive from it more than what is right to extract from the human terms used. Our thoughts go back to the occasion when the Lord was in the room with His disciples after His resurrection, and He showed to them His hands and His feet -- what a wondrous occasion for the disciples to be allowed to see their, and our, blessed Saviour alive, but in a glorified body! He was not only visible to them, but also tangible, for He said, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see Me having" (Luke 24:39). This gives us some light as to the meaning of the apostle's words in Eph. 5:30. At the time the Lord spoke He was a Man with

a glorified body not subject to physical restrictions as we are, as was evident by the fact that He appeared to them as having entered the room which had the doors shut and they had not been opened to admit Him. He is the first, and only, Man that has come out "from among the dead", and so He is called the "*firstborn* from among the dead" (Col. 1:18) -- does this not thrill our hearts that, as in death, so in life, in resurrection He has the pre-eminence? Likewise He showed Himself to others of His own as recorded in 1 Cor. 15:5-6. There is no record that anyone apart from His own ever saw Him on earth after His resurrection. He manifested Himself to His own in fulfillment of His own words before He left them to go into death when He said, "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again a little while, and ye shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father" (John 16:16). In this revelation of Himself they had the testimony as to His continuing life in the power of resurrection. They could apprehend Him, but the world could not. So, the apostle presents us as in that way characterized by His state as glorified in body and though absent personally we are here to represent Him to the world. There is a similar expression used by the Spirit of God in connection with the tribes of Israel who came to David in Hebron and spoke, saying, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" (2 Sam. 5:1). Evidently they did not mean that they had any physical part in David, but that they were identifying themselves with him in that, to all, they were as he -- in other words, they were pledging themselves to stand for him. While the Lord was on earth He bore witness to the Father, and during His absence (and until He comes again to receive us unto Himself) His own are to bear witness of Him. We learn this in John 15:27.

They had known Him in His life on earth and were eyewitnesses of His majesty, sufferings, manner of life and testimony for God. Now, during His absence from this scene we have to maintain testimony to Him (not only individually but in a special way, corporately) as His body. This is both a special privilege and a tremendous responsibility in which we have failed.

Of course, it is known that John does not present the truth of the one body, nor of any corporate relationship; but surely the words of the Lord which John records contain the truth as it is to be worked out when the body was formed by the Holy Spirit. The Lord had spoken of "one flock" in chapter 10 of John's gospel, and in chapter 11 Caiaphas spoke prophetically concerning the Lord that "He should also gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad." It was evidently not the Lord's intention that His own should be isolated individuals, but it awaited the descent of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work of unification. There is the individual position in blessing and testimony, but the greater effect is to be realized in the collective relationship. It is not without significance that the word which the Spirit uses, through Caiaphas, and translated "gather together", is the same word as in Matt. 18:20 in connection with "two or

three are gathered together". While John always speaks of what is individual, yet there is no inconsistency with the truth brought out later through the apostle Paul that those same individuals are composite members of the body of Christ. This illustrates that we must not isolate one portion of Scripture from another for, according to Peter, "the scope of no prophecy of Scripture is had from its own particular interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20) and certainly the word through Caiaphas was prophetic.

In this article we are not considering all aspects of truth, but simply one as it relates to the body of Christ -- and particularly the prime purpose for its being formed down here in the absence of its Head, and that is that it should bear witness to its Head and represent Him before men. In John 15:26 we have the Holy Spirit testifying to us concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and then we are to testify of the Lord to the world (vs. 27). There are, of course, other features involved in the body which we shall now consider.

THE CONSTITUTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Having identified the body as not only belonging to Christ but actually being the representative of Christ in this scene, we learn from 1 Cor. 12:12-27 more as to the constitution of that body and its interrelationships. It is noticeable the times that the Holy Spirit restates the essential fact that not only is there but one body, but that the body is one in itself. That is, that there cannot be anything in the nature of superfluity, deficiency or redundancy. What God does He does perfectly. This applies to the natural creation when first created; again, when re-ordered for the introduction and blessing of man in it; now, in the formation of the body of Christ we find the same perfection displayed, but which is beyond the reach of Satan or man to touch and spoil it.

So then, the positive statement in vs. 12 is "the body is one" and "hath many members" -- yet it is still one body and no thought of abnormality attaches to it. We do not have such perfection in our human bodies because sin has affected them, little or much. What a wonderful display of Christ there would be if the perfection of the work of the Holy Spirit were seen in this world as was intended! For a very short time there was something of it when the saints at Jerusalem were first bound together and formed the one and only body. However, as with everything in which man is involved, failure soon came in and spoiled the outward display of the perfection that still exists in the eyes and heart of Christ, who sees His body as according to the Spirit's work. This is understood to be the force of, "So also is the Christ" (vs.12). Then in vs.13 we get that we are all (i.e. saints) baptized into one body, by the one Spirit, and that without distinction as to being either Jew or Gentile and, further, "have been all made to drink into one Spirit." In this body of Christ there are not two or more sections, or anything

like the thought of 'twins', let alone the multiplicity of bodies of saints that there are today. Furthermore, all saints are brought into the same participation in all the fruit and power of the Spirit of God -- the Holy Spirit will not act in relation to what man has set up for himself, but forms and acts only in relation to the one body of Christ. Should we not give more attention to this as to our identity with saints and seek in the Lord's grace to walk in the truth of this great establishment, in the one body, and thus effectively show forth Christ to the world? Now, from vs. 14 to vs. 20 we have the interrelationship between all members of the same body. The place in that body is not left to our choice, as vs. 18 clearly states, "God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." It is not simply that God has set us in our geographical place, but rather that He has chosen our place in relation to our function in the body of Christ, apart from where we might live. It is, therefore, a very solemn thing for any to question their place or fail to carry out their function, for both are necessities for the normal activities of the body in order to respond to the direction of the Head, which is Christ. As in the natural body all members below the head are subordinate to the head, so should this be true in fact as to the saints in the body of Christ.

From vs. 21 to vs. 27 we get a further development from the interrelationships to the interdependence of the members of the one body. As in the natural body it is a normal condition that any one member depends upon all other members for the full capacity of the body to be realized, so is it in the spiritual body of Christ. There is no such thing as independence in a perfect natural body, nor of being able to do without any member. Naturally, we do not know what perfect health is, but, through the deficiencies which have resulted from the effects of sin, man has learned to get along at a sub-perfect level and has adjusted to the inadequacies imposed. This is easily understood if we consider the effects of losing an external member of our natural body. Even losing a finger entails an imbalance in performance of the hand, but without a finger the hand is still useful though inefficient to some degree. This has, perhaps, been the unrealized thought with many in the present state among the saints of God through the many divisions which have been introduced by man, that though many members of the one body are not in relation to the others as they should be, nevertheless we can function acceptably without them. This is a totally wrong thought, even if not clearly defined or expressed in this way, for the Word of God definitely states the opposite. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee . . ." etc. (vs. 21), and vs. 22 takes it even further, "Nay, much more those members of the body, which *seem* to be more *feeble*, are *necessary*." Yes, we do not think rightly if we do not understand the vital importance to our blessed Lord of every member of His body; and we do not act rightly if we presume to be able to function for Him without all members being integrated

as one. If we slight any one member of the body we are slighting Himself, whose body we are and of which He is the Head. The truth as to the oneness of the body is not in the least affected by the practical display of it, which is far from consistent with the truth. What the present state of the saints shows is that we are not subject to, in obedience, our blessed and glorious Head. It would be as if our natural members were to act independently of the control of our head such as in involuntary actions of arms or legs. A brother in Christ who was suffering from muscular dystrophy told the writer some years ago that his bodily ailment started when he was about 15 years old, and the first symptom was that he found he could not control the actions of his leg which persisted in flying off from a straight course. How true this is as an illustration of what has affected the body of Christ in our day! Failure (which is sin) has come in to cause many members to act in uncontrolled self-will quite contrary to the control of the Head. As in the case quoted, there was no failure in the head of the brother, so there is no failure in our glorified Head, but the disease has affected us in that we are not willingly under His control. Similarly, as the whole of the brother's body was affected by the members below his head being all diseased, so is Christ's body seriously affected by even one member not acting according to the truth.

Let us ponder the importance of vs. 24 -- "God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to the part that lacked." The verb "tempered" is the same word as used in Heb. 4:2, "not being *mixed* with faith." "Mixed" or "blended" is the thought in what God has done as concerning the placement of the members of the body of Christ. Let us bear in mind that what God has done is not only for the blessing of man, but primarily for His own glory and the exaltation of Christ, who is supreme above all. We are so prone to be introspective and relate everything to ourselves first: if we reversed the order and referred everything to God first, then we should experience more fully and deeply the wonders of divine grace. So, in the matter of our place in the body of Christ, if we realized that the prime purpose for the body here on earth is to represent Himself in a world that hates Him, then we should be more exercised before Him to walk in the truth of the oneness of the body, by rejecting every membership and association not according to God's Word. The effects of "suffering" and "being honored" (vs. 26) are, probably, the least understood and realized of all the factors involved in this subject. It is all too often referred to in the question of "suffering" that it means in the sphere of trial or persecution. No doubt these are sometimes the case, but certainly not always so -- in fact they are not, today, the most common thing. Do we not understand that if one member is not acting in its divinely appointed place, according to the will of God as to its function, not only is that member "suffering" but that all members suffer with it? The detrimental effect is not only as it applies to the members down here, but it has an immediate and much more intense effect

on our adorable Head.

What cause can there be for the spiritual lassitude, the accompanying worldliness and the resultant lack of testimony to our glorified Head other than the fact that His members are not living in total and exclusive subjection to His Headship? All forms of attachment to this world are a symptom that we are not aware of our union with a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified by the world and cast out from it as not wanted -- let the word "member" never be true of us in any connection other than with the One who loves us and has given Himself for us.

Why is it that the world is not seemingly at all affected by the presence of the body of Christ visibly before them? The answer is simple -- because it is not visible. Why is it not visible? Again, the answer is simple -- because it does not act subserviently to its Head and obey His directions and derive all its spiritual sustenance from Him. At the beginning of the existence of the body on earth there was the intended result because it was visible before men and affected them. The effect is twofold: either there is a recognition of God and a bowing to His decrees, or there is a rejection of the testimony rendered and an obliteration (at least a rejection) of those who present that testimony. This can be seen in the record in Acts 2:37 and Acts 9:1-4. In the case of Peter pressing the truth upon the Jews who had heard the preaching of those just then filled by the Holy Ghost (when He inaugurated the body on earth), it reached their consciences and they cried out, "What shall we do, brethren?" Then we learn, vs. 41, "Those then who had accepted his word were baptized; and there were added in that day about three thousand souls" -- what a wonderful result from a united testimony! Then, in the case of Saul of Tarsus, the ultra-religious Pharisee, he hated the very Name of Jesus and used all his energies and authority from the priests to persecute the saints, such that the Lord had to charge Him with persecuting Himself (Acts 9:4). What a merciful Lord we have in that He saved Saul and used him as His special vessel of service as Paul the apostle! Why do we not see and hear of such results today? Is it because our Lord has no longer any power to save, or the Holy Spirit any power to reach consciences? Away with such a blasphemous suggestion and let us recognize and own that the fault lies with ourselves and be humbled before Him about it.

One more aspect as to the relationships which are the portion of the whole body is to be found in 1 Cor. 10:16-17. This is an often quoted Scripture, but perhaps its implications are not fully appreciated. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" What could present the truth which we are considering more intimately than this? The first fellowship spoken of is that of the "blood of Christ", and this is absolutely essential before any other communion is possible. Without the

shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ there would be no saints of the present day of God's grace to form a body of Christ on earth. The saints of the Old Testament dispensation did not form a body of the character which we form today. There was no living link with One who, having come into this world, died and rose again and ascended to the glory of the Father. The Holy Spirit did not come down to this scene to indwell the saints and form them into a body. No! this was consequent upon the Son of Man (who is the Son of God) finishing the work of redemption on the cross and having shed His precious blood, defeated the enemy of both God and ourselves in the very domain of his power (in death), and from the Father's presence in glory sending the Holy Spirit who then acted in His own divine power and formed the one body composed of those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22) is God's dictate and the Holy Spirit (being God) cannot seal by His indwelling presence those who are sinners, but only those of whom it is true that Christ "has washed us from our sins in His blood" (Rev. 1:5). This then is the circle of fellowship spoken of by Paul in 1 Cor. 10:16. As a prerequisite to the fellowship being established there must be the essential cleansing by the precious blood of Christ, whereupon the Holy Spirit adds such to the one body, already formed on the day of Pentecost.

Vs. 17 confirms this precious truth in the figure of "one loaf". The one loaf on the Lord's Table as His chosen means of remembering Himself is, at the same time, the expression of the fellowship of the one body in which all saints on earth are viewed. The blood of Christ answers for all our guilt and the loaf typifies our relationship both to one another and to our adorable Head as expressing the 'one body'. When saints break bread together, with the Lord in the midst, it is not as doing it individually in isolation from the others who are likewise doing it. No! The beautiful oneness is demonstrated by our breaking the same loaf and partaking of it together both in fellowship with each other and, above all, in the spiritual link that exists between us and Himself. There should be no dead formality or routine procedure connected with this greatest privilege available to all who are the Lord's own, who are walking in holiness and righteousness before Him. In suggesting these few thoughts it is not to get ourselves occupied with our privileges when we partake of the Lord's Supper, but to draw our hearts more fully and more intelligently out to Him in responsive love while remembering Him, until we see Him face to face in His glory above, and showing forth His death until He come. In connection with both the remembrance of our Lord Jesus and the truth which we have presented in connection with it as including the fellowship of saints in the one body, it is necessary to point out that there is no true expression of the oneness or communion if more than one loaf or one cup are employed. This is not an uncommon thing in christendom, but, sad to say, it is also not unknown among those who profess to be gathered

together in His Name. Carelessness has crept in regarding the exactitude of what is done, which is supposed to be what the Lord introduced, but which has ruined the meaning of what He gave His own to do. In Matt. 26:26 we read, "Jesus, having taken *the* bread and blessed, broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat . . ." The excellent Authorized Version of the Scriptures loses this definiteness by leaving out the definite article "the" in connection with bread. It was not a casual move which the Lord made, but a specific one of taking "the bread". We realize that the words which He used in connection with it refer especially to His own precious, holy body which was given for us, but He also knew that the truth which He gave to His apostle Paul to teach us was also there, that of the one body constituted in the saints. The truth as to Himself must, of course, predominate, but the subordinate truth of the communion of His body on earth in the saints must also be maintained. Then, the same scripture continues, "And having taken *the* cup . . . He gave *it* to them, saying, *Drink* ye all of *it*." Again there is the unmistakable definiteness and exclusiveness in the article and the singular pronoun "it". To change in any way what the Lord gave us to do for Him not only sets us in higher authority than Himself, by making any such change, but destroys the meaning which He gave to it and which the apostle was given to enlarge upon in his letter to the saints in Corinth. This is a very solemn thing to consider and even in a lesser light it is direct disobedience to His word. We have no prerogative to change anything no matter what the excuse given for so doing.

It might be said that to insist on having one loaf and one cup is a legalism. Let any who so speak do as they please; but to not do as the Lord did is to set our own standard and is an indication that we do not love Him, for He said, "He that loves Me not does not keep My words" (John 14:24). On the one hand we are expressing our love for Him in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup, but on the other hand we are denying it by disobedience to His words. May this be deeply impressed upon all our hearts such that we pay greater attention to what we do as being entirely in keeping with the Lord's words, and not allowing the convenience of the flesh to change the slightest detail. The importance of the one loaf and the one cup in connection with the fellowship expressed thereby is that plurality with either destroys the actual expression of the oneness of fellowship which is the truth which gives value to our blessed Lord to have His own around Himself in remembering Himself, that they are one in so doing. It was the case with the disciples who first partook of the Lord's Supper on the night of His betrayal, that they did exactly as He said to them. This is not left to conjecture, for the Holy Spirit very carefully records that they did so, in relation to the cup (for it is always the cup that is affected rather than the loaf), for in Mark 14:23 we read, "And having taken *the* cup, when He had given thanks, He gave *it* to them, and *they all drank out of it*." If it were not

an important point why did the Holy Spirit include the word "out" as to *all* drinking from the same cup? It is for us to show our love for Him in absolute obedience and not to assume any license to amend anything which He said or did: -- but this brings before us the danger of doing anything mechanically and repetitively without realizing the full import of what we do.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

J. Pascoe

FRIENDS OF GOD

The Lord Jesus speaks of this privilege as belonging, through divine riches of grace, to His saints, when He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

This friendship, this communication of secrets, gives a wondrous sense of gracious and confiding intimacy. When we pray we feel that we *need* something: when we serve, or when we worship, we judge that we *owe* something; at least that *He* is worthy; but when we are receiving communications (not commands as from a master, but communications as from a friend) we listen, without any necessary reflection upon our own condition, freed of all sense of either need or obligation. Our proper attitude then is neither standing, like Martha, as to serve, nor kneeling, like Mary to worship: but like Lazarus, sitting (John 12:2).

The inspirations of a prophet are not equal to the divine communications which a friend receives. They do not intimate the same nearness or dignity. A prophet receives an inspiration as a vessel or oracle, and he may understand it or not: a friend *learns* secrets on the ground of *personal confidence*.

All the elect are, I grant, according to the grace and calling of God, endowed with this privilege: but among them, I believe, *Abraham, Moses, David* and *John* had it very conspicuously. They illustrate it.

Abraham was told what the Lord was about to do with Sodom. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" says the Lord: and then tells him of the business which was then taking Him down to Sodom (Gen. 18).

What a moment it was! The Lord had come to Abraham's tent at Mamre,

and there sat at his table and his feast. The *Judge* of Sodom was communicating with the *conqueror* of Sodom; the divine Judge of that vile, reprobate place, conversing with him who had already through faith and the victory of faith, refused all its offers. Again I say, What a moment! And in the confidence which all this inspired Abraham drew near and stood before the Lord, while the attendant angels withdrew and went on their way. Full of blessing indeed this is.

And so Moses in his day: for we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33:11). Wonderful! The Lord dealt with Moses as a man will deal with his friend. He talked with him (v.9). We are not told what He said, because it is the business of the passage rather to exhibit this grace of intimacy, or divine friendship, than to convey information to us. But we do learn the use which Moses makes of this gracious friendship, the very same use which Abraham of old had made of it. He speaks to the Lord about others, just as Abraham had done. He pleads for Israel, as the patriarch had pleaded for Sodom. The Lord had approached Moses as His friend: He was not receiving him as His suitor or His debtor: it was fitting, therefore, that Moses should occupy the place and the moment in a manner which showed freedom from himself.

And never, I may say, was Moses nearer to the Lord, not even when on Pisgah He was showing the land to him in its length and breadth. Indeed the two places were of like elevation, for the Lord was communicating to Moses in each of them. Here He "talked" with him, there He "showed" him. In spirit they were the same place, and that the highest: such as he and Elijah afterwards filled on the holy mount: for there, as we again read, they "talked with Jesus" (Luke 9:30).

And so David, as we see in 1 Chronicles 17. David was a *penitent*, wearing sackcloth in the day of the plague, and going up Mount Olivet with dust on his head in the day of Absalom. He was a *worshipper* too, singing and dancing, as he bore the ark of the Lord to Zion. But David was a *friend*, as Abraham and Moses had been. He received communications from the Lord through Nathan: and then, as one whom the Lord, in the ways of His grace, had thus endowed and privileged, "he went in," as we read, and "sat before the Lord."

Beautiful and wonderful, but withal right. To have stood or to have knelt then would not have been obedient or holy: for holiness is consistency with God: and if He "mourn" we are to "lament": if He "pipe" we are to "dance": if He convict and reprove us, we may be in sackcloth before Him: but if He deal with us face to face, as a man speaketh to a friend, we may and should sit before Him.

But again, John was the nearest to Jesus at the last supper. He lay on His

bosom. And thus it was he who reached the secrets of that bosom. Peter in the distance *used* John's nearness, and the Lord *admitted its title*, and gave him the privilege of it. John pressed that bosom afresh, in the confidence of an Abraham or of a Moses, that the secret which was there would make itself his (John 13:25).

Surely all this tells us of the peculiar grace of this wondrous thing, this state and relationship of "friends" into which the Lord has called His saints. And we see the glorified saints in the full use and joy of this privilege: for on the holy hill (to which I have already in a passing way alluded) Moses and Elias "talked" with Jesus. Sharing the glory they knew the *privileges* of it, while Peter beholding it felt the *power* of it, saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. 17:3,4).

It is not to present something strange or striking that I notice all this, but rather to aid the soul in assuring itself of that love wherewith the elect are loved: a love which gives us a place where, forgetting both our need and our obligation, neither kneeling to supplicate nor standing to serve, we may sit to listen, and receive communications, as a man is talked with by his friend. And when we see this to be a way of His grace, we may be still conscious of slowness of heart in ourselves: but we cannot but know that we are in possession of a love on God's part which passes knowledge.

To Every Man His Work

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FATHER

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17). This passage introduces us to the government of the Father, which, it may be observed, is not exactly the same thing as the government of God. The latter has more direct reference to the earth and the world -- that economy of things from which we are morally delivered by the death and resurrection of Christ, that scene in which God's throne has been usurped by Satan, and where the "rights of man" have displaced the rights of God.

But if men of the world refuse Him His place of government as God, ought not we as saints with ready hearts so much the more to make space for the government of the Father?

In the fourteenth verse we get the beautiful term the Spirit of God uses in speaking of those who answer to His word; viz., "children of obedience."

All such will be found calling on the Father. He, in short, who has the Spirit of adoption cries, "Abba, Father." Well, the Father holds in His hand the sovereign administration of the affairs of His family, and grace and government go along together. It is ever so; for God is sovereign, and He must be.

Because through grace God's grace is so precious to us, we are in danger of losing sight of His governmental dealings -- this government of the Father.

In the present day the decay of filial piety and of reverence for parents has told upon us seriously, and those marks of the last days which Paul describes to Timothy -- "disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection" -- are becoming more and more pronounced; so that, even in the natural relationship, children rarely render, and parents rarely expect, the honor and reverence which are not only morally becoming, but which God accounts to be due from one to the other. In result parental government is relaxed, and often the merest semblance of it prevails even in the families of believers. And, alas, it has even become an open question now, to be debated in daily papers and religious journals, whether wives ought in these days to obey their husbands, and Christian teachers, so called, are not wanting who have the temerity to take the negative side. What a terrible indication is this of the last days!

Accordingly in divine things the government of the Father is little recognized or understood. The thought of the Father has carried with it, and rightly so, the blessedness of a known relationship of the highest character, which blessedness has been enjoyed according to the degree in which the Spirit has been ungrieved and the affections divinely engaged; but yet in connection with this how little place has been given to the direct government of the Father in that peculiar sphere which is constituted by the saints in their relationship of children to Him. To many such the very thought of government would savor of legality, and possibly be refused as anomalous.

But it is an ever-abiding principle that "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness"; and though grace be regnant now it is true, yet is it still further true that "grace reigns through righteousness." While therefore our souls hold fast to the blessedness of this relationship in respect to the renewed affections, we must no less recognize that it demands of us a wholly surrendered will. If it be true that "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other," then what God hath joined together may not be put asunder, grace and government may not be severed. When the loving heart and the broken will keep company together, the Father will assuredly find His delight in each. But He is no respecter of persons; all man's pretensions must give way; He respecteth no man's person, but judgeth according to every man's work. "His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth *the righteous*" (Psa. 11:4,5).

What then? Then falls upon the opened ear the weighty exhortation, "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

What a mighty motive have we had before us! He who has called us has called us to the relationship of children; the Holy Ghost seeks to fashion us as "*obedient children*"; the children call upon the Father, who respects not our persons, but governs according to our works and ways within His family circle, administering there His own blessed will, that we may give no place to ours. What an appeal this makes to us to walk softly, retiringly, meekly, with guarded footsteps, giving no place to the will of the flesh! In God's government of the earth He is met by Satan's power as god of this world, and by the men of the world carried along in the strong current of utter godlessness. But the Father in His governmental dealings with His children is -- alas, how often! -- met with the flesh in us -- unjudged, uncurbed flesh, the allowance of which is seen in the working of the natural will, which is totally unfruitful toward God, and can only chafe under His government. What marvel if, when this is allowed, the Father has to lay His chastening hand upon His child! Whom He loves He chastens, that He may not condemn with the world. And when the exercised heart has been fittingly broken down before Him, how graciously, in forgiveness of His child, does He remove His afflictive hand, and nothing remains but to reap in lasting result "the peaceable fruit of *righteousness*." (Note the word.)

But in the words, "Forasmuch as ye know," etc. we have coupled with this exhortation of Peter the divine basis of the ways of the Father with His children; viz., that we are redeemed with the precious blood of God's immaculate Lamb -- the One who from before the foundation of the world was foreordained for this blood-shedding, but now is risen and glorified! Blessed ground upon which the Father claims from us the allegiance of beloved children, that He has redeemed us at the mighty cost of the blood of that Victim, who from all eternity was the Son of His love, and has been manifested in these last times for us that our faith and hope might be in God.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (vs. 22). Their souls were purified in obeying the truth; this was *light*, divine light, illuminating their souls; their hearts were purified by faith; and now the apostle exhorts to *love*, that other thing which in Scripture God Himself is said to be. Their souls were purified, they obeyed the truth, and had genuine love to the brethren, but he urged them to it afresh with purity and with fervency.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God"; it is of His nature, and comes from Him. Thus, when it flows forth from our hearts it should have for its special objects those who are the special objects of His own love; and when in purity and in fervency, it is only the more like His. For we are

born of God by the incorruptible seed of His own word, which liveth and abideth for ever; while, on the contrary, all flesh is before God as transitory as the grass, and all its glory as fading and fugitive as the flowers of the field!

"But Thy compassions, Lord, to endless years endure,
And all Thy people ever find Thy word of promise sure."

Words in Season 9:301-304

THE GREAT REVERSAL

The enemy works as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, or as an angel of light -- duping even many believers. While resisting the inroads of modernism in a Presbyterian group, J. G. Machen wrote,

The enemy has done his deadliest work when he has come with words of love and compromise and peace.

He was later cast out by the liberal/modernist/moderate element when it eventually gained control.

Many years ago, when the Lord gave grace to withstand a compromise, an elder brother, a minister of the Word, said to me, "Some brethren want the last pound of flesh." Coming from Shakespeare, the character of such a statement is more easily discerned than "words of peace and love" are, since "words of peace and love" appear to come from a Divine source. The enemy has been successful in inculcating a "great reversal" in the minds of many. The thought in the minds of many is: love and peace, and also truth -- like Mordecai (Esther 9:30) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:19; cp. Isa. 39:8). But the Word teaches this:

These are the things that ye shall do: Speak truth every one with his neighbor; execute truth and the judgment of peace in your gates" (Zech. 8:16). For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in [the] Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). But youthful lusts flee, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22).

The enemy's work may be a "great reversal", but there will be a greater reversal at the judgment seat of Christ, where our works will be manifested and where the divine order laid down in the Scripture of Truth will be upheld.

Ed.

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

PART 1 (Continued)

THE EXPECTED KINGDOM

CHAPTER 1.3 *WHAT DID*

THE GODLY REMNANT EXPECT?

THE EXPECTATION OF THE REMNANT AND OUR LORD

Why Our Lord was Rejected

Having seen that it was not only proper, but incumbent, too, for a Jew to understand the prophets literally, we shall now see that the godly remnant in our Lord's time on earth, and He Himself, understood the prophets literally. In reply to R. Zorn we point out that this expectation of the remnant concerning a temporal kingdom, this alleged "exegetical compromise of Judaism", did not cause the godly remnant to reject Christ. Thus the allegation that this expectation led to His rejection and crucifixion is false and is mere dust that clouds discernment.

The reason for the rejection of the Lord was because the sovereign God, to Whom are known all His works, offered the kingdom in the Person of the meek and lowly One. This was a test to bring out the moral state of the people. The first man (1 Cor. 15:47) was still being tested and now the greatest and final test, while the first man was not yet judged and set aside in the cross, was being conducted. So the first man, tested in the persons of the favored people, was put to the final moral test (see Matt. 23:33-46). This test resulted in the full, final exposure of the heart of man; and so the first man's standing was judicially terminated in the death of Christ. Hence a Christian can say "I am crucified with Christ".

It has been asked, if Christ came to offer an earthly, Messianic kingdom,

why did He not accept the desire expressed in John 6 that He be king? The answer is found in v. 26: "Ye seek me not because ye have seen signs, but because ye have eaten of the loaves and been filled." It was a false basis. Their god was their belly. The kingdom was presented in the Person of the Lowly One and they really were not interested in Him as His searching words soon brought out (cp. vv. 42,64-66). Their moral state was at issue. They were unfit for the kingdom. Thus God sovereignly brought about, through the utilization of that awful moral state, the crucifixion of Christ. Then there could be brought out that aspect of glorifying Himself in Christ in the heavenlies: the saints are now a heavenly company, seated in Christ in the heavenlies. This was a secret, hid in God, concerning which silence had been kept. This left the ancient promises and prophecies in force; but the work on the cross effected the moral basis upon which God will yet, sovereignly, bless His ancient people. (We shall consider this again when looking at John 11:47-53.)

And meanwhile, there has been brought out another mystery -- something hidden from the prophets and Old Testament saints. There has been introduced a *mystery* aspect of the kingdom. The Lord's rejection is especially marked in Matt. 12; and then the Lord began speaking (Matt. 13) of the mysteries of the kingdom. The reader would do well to read W. Kelly's exposition of Matthew on chapters 12 and 13.

The temporal kingdom is therefore **postponed** until God has completed His work with the church. When the saints have been brought above to the Father's house, the judgments against the apostates will commence. And during that time a Jewish remnant will be formed, by sovereign grace, of course, and be made ready for the King. We must now leave this brief sketch and examine the expectation of the Jewish remnant when our Lord was here.

The Expectation

Zacharias. "And Zacharias his father was filled with [the] Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying . . ." (Luke 1:67). Now, surely we do not expect the Holy Spirit to put forth a carnal, rabbinical, degenerate idea concerning the kingdom, do we? What did Zacharias prophesy? "Deliverance from our enemies and out of the hand of all who hate us; to fulfil mercy with our fathers and remember his holy covenant . . ." (Luke 1:72,73). It is clear that he was referring to national deliverance and the temporal kingdom.

Mary, Our Lord's Mother. Mary was told this: "He shall be great, and shall be called Son of [the] Highest; and [the] Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages, and of his kingdom there shall not be an end." Do you really,

seriously, think that Mary understood and/or God meant that this was a promise that her Son would reign in heaven over the church? And if the prophets were to be understood literally, can you think of better words to confirm the promises? Indeed our Lord became a minister of the *circumcision* to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. 15:8).

Simeon. "This man was just and pious, awaiting the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). It is idle to think he was waiting for a spiritual kingdom. His attitude is put before us in Scripture as commendatory.

Anna. She "spoke of him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38; cp. Luke 24:21). Is it even necessary to say that she wasn't waiting for the work of redemption on the cross, but, as others, was waiting for Messiah to deliver Israel?

The Disciples. Do you think the disciples were thinking about who would be greatest in a spiritual kingdom (Matt. 18:1)?

The Mother of James and John. She wanted her sons to sit on the right and left hand of our Lord in His kingdom. She couldn't have had in mind the present period (Matt. 20:21). The Lord sanctioned the expectation of such a kingdom.

James and John. They had the same request as their mother (Mark 10:37). They wanted to sit on His right and His left "in Thy glory". Could anyone think they meant in heaven now, or in the eternal state?

The Disciples Again. Just shortly before going to the cross the Lord told them a parable because they thought the kingdom was going to be manifested immediately (Luke 19:11-27). This was after three years of listening to our Lord. *Note well that this expectation just before He was going to the cross shows what the expectation was regarding those saints cited above.* Well, it was not going to be manifested immediately. The man in the parable went away to get a kingdom and return. He is waiting now until the appointed time.

Joseph of Arimathaea. He is another one "who also himself was awaiting the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:48). The way the Spirit seems to commend these saints in such an expectation ought to concern the opposers of the temporal kingdom.

The Dying Thief also did not spiritualize away the earthly reign of the Son of Man. He requested that the Lord remember him when He came into His kingdom. But, rather, he would be in paradise that very day and not wait for blessing until Christ appears to set up the kingdom in power and glory.

Peter, too, would not spiritualize away the earthly reign of the Son of Man. He was an eye-witness of His majesty, in the mount (2 Pet. 1:16-18). And

this explains, simply, Matt. 16:28. Those on the mountain (Matt. 17:1-9) saw a preview of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Was that the so-called spiritual kingdom? Not at all. Matt. 16:24-28 shows the Lord addressing His disciples. *Some* would not taste of death till they saw Him coming in His kingdom. It is plain that *some* tasted of death who did not see Him coming in His kingdom. So Pentecost was not the coming of the Son of Man, since *all* the apostles were there, except the son of perdition. At any rate, Peter, James and John did see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, on the mount of transfiguration, -- where, by the way, we have a mixture of heavenly and earthly things so objectionable to the opposers of dispensational truth.

John the Baptist. Our brethren who do not believe that John and our Lord offered a temporal kingdom have rightly said that the Jewish leaders believed in a coming, literal kingdom. We have been seeing that the Jewish remnant, in the time when our Lord was here, shared this view. The magi expected this also (Matt. 2:2), and it worried Herod (Matt. 2:3) as well as all Jerusalem (Matt. 2:3). There were many who had a stake in the status quo. There was a great crowd, too, who shouted "Hosanna to the King of Israel" (a few days before they turned on Him). They hardly meant 'King of the Church' (which He is not now either, theology notwithstanding). They, too, were expecting "the coming kingdom of our father David" (Mark 11:10). And well they might, for Daniel's 69 weeks (Dan. 9) was just expiring. But they grasped not the meaning of what Dan. 9:26 said of the Messiah: "And shall have nothing." Messiah would not actually have that kingdom at His first coming.

The fact is, then, that the Gospels depict the expectation of a coming, temporal kingdom as a general expectation of leaders and led. **Had John come announcing a spiritual kingdom, he would not have been regarded as a prophet:** because, that would have been opposed to the general belief concerning what the Old Testament prophets had said. He came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 3:1). Is it not clear that this was an announcement of the literal kingdom predicted by the prophets?

The fact that it is so explains Matt. 11:3. His difficulty was that he, the forerunner of this King, was in prison. Perhaps then, He was not the coming one?! No doubt, as with many others of the faithful remnant, he did not harmonize the Lamb and the Lion aspects of Christ's two comings correctly. How could he, the forerunner, be in prison when the deliverer of Israel (Luke 1:71-75) was there, especially considering John's father's inspired declaration (Luke 1:67)? So it is evident that he was expecting the restoration of the kingdom. Was he a carnally minded Jew too? His preaching concerning the kingdom was therefore understood by himself to refer to the restored

kingdom of Israel.

Our Lord. Our Lord preached this message also, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 3:17). We maintain, then, that our Lord preached the coming of a literal kingdom besides subsequently introducing a mystery form of the kingdom, a form that exists now. Furthermore, we maintain that our Lord never corrected the expectation of the earthly kingdom; He never told anyone that there was never going to be such a kingdom. He did this neither before His death nor after it. What had our Lord taught the disciples to pray? "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven." It is plain that this prayer refers to earth, and a kingdom on earth. Why pray for it to come if it came already when He came? It refers to the manifested kingdom, the restored kingdom of Israel through which Christ will administer His reign, and which, not having yet been fulfilled, is yet future.

Luke 17:21 does not contradict what has been said. The kingdom of God was in the midst of them as embodied within His Person. The offer of the kingdom entailed the acceptance of His Person and was a moral test meant by God to manifest the moral state of the nation of Israel and its leaders. They rejected Him and thus rejected the manifestation of the temporal kingdom.

Furthermore, our Lord told the apostles that they would sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29-30). Does that sound like He was "spiritualizing" the prophets? I hope no one thinks that the 12 apostles are going to judge the 12 tribes of Israel during the eternal state or are doing so now: or that they are judging the church now.

Our Lord and the Two Disciples. In considering the case of the two disciples to whom our Lord spoke on the way to Emmaus, we shall observe something that bears on the matter of why the Jews rejected our Lord. It was not, it has been pointed out, because they erroneously expected a temporal kingdom. It is clear that these two disciples shared this expectation, the redemption of Israel (cp. Luke 2:38). "But we had hoped that he was [the one] who is about to redeem Israel. But then, besides all these things, it is now, today, the third day since these things took place" (Luke 24:21). Their hope was dashed. They had expected a national deliverance and now He was dead. What was their trouble -- that they interpreted the prophets literally? Obviously not. They looked at the Scriptures *selectively* (as those do who spiritually alchemize the Old Testament blessings into church blessings and leave the curses to Israel). Our Lord pointed this out to them: "O senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them

in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

Recall that the amillenarian, O. T. Allis, had claimed that "... from the very outset Jesus not merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed, the expectation of the Jews that an earthly Jewish kingdom of glory, such as David had established centuries before, was about to be set up." We have already indicated that a change came about in the ministry of Christ regarding the introduction of the subject of the mystery aspect of the kingdom -- so our Lord after that no longer spoke of the kingdom *as at hand*. However, our Lord never opposed the thought that a temporal kingdom would be set up. Notice that He actually affirmed that expectation to these two disciples. He told them that they were "slow of heart to believe in *all* that the prophets had spoken." He did not tell them that the part they had believed was wrongly understood by them. What had they believed? --the part about the temporal kingdom! Wherein lay the trouble? -- in not believing about the sufferings of Christ.

We claim that our Lord did here actually confirm their understanding that there would be a temporal kingdom.

In view of the expectation of a national kingdom by the remnant, and our Lord's confirmation of the validity of this expectation, consider the following remark:

... that doctrine was the very cornerstone of the creed of apostate Judaism in its last stage, and the prime cause of their rejection and crucifixion of Christ ...¹

So in effect this means that the godly remnant held to the "cornerstone of the creed of apostate Judaism."

After the 40 Days. It is remarkable, too, to consider that the Lord spoke to the disciples for *40 days* after the resurrection "speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Is it not strange if there was not going to be any national restoration of the kingdom that after all of that they still ask the Lord, "Is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). What! Forty days on things pertaining to the kingdom and they still didn't find out that they were all wrong, that there was not to be any such kingdom, that those prophecies weren't meant literally? -- that that doctrine was not only carnal but the cornerstone of apostate Judaism? One would have thought that was sufficient time to disabuse their minds of that grossly carnal, rabbinical, ruinous, ² literalistic expectation? And NOW does the Lord at last tell them they have a wrong expectation? No, He points out that

1. P. Mauro, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 34.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 77,79.

it is *not yet the time for it*, thus once again confirming that expectation.

It is very plain that the disciples were still expecting the kingdom in power. Did the Lord tell them that their expectation was wrong? Will any man affirm it? He told them that it wasn't for them to know the times and the seasons. Their expectation, then, was correct; their time was wrong.

O. T. Allis says that the disciples apparently expected an Israelitish kingdom. Why *apparently*? The words are extremely plain, their expectation very transparent. But he refuses to have it that way; namely, that their expectation was right though the Lord corrected them as to the time, or he wouldn't hold his views.

But what is so interesting about his reply is this: he criticizes C. I. Scofield for saying that Jesus gave *one* answer to the disciples' question, that "the *time* was God's secret". O. T. Allis says the Lord gave "two" answers and it is the second one which is important in this discussion, and it is found in v. 8. That is, the kingdom was not an Israelitish one, but world-embracing. This is O. T. Allis' answer concerning the temporal kingdom.³ Did our brother forget the "other" reply? He said there were "two": why did he by-pass the first (if there are two)? This is tantamount to allowing the first to stand and trying to get around it by getting the eyes on something else and making the second reply contradict the first.

Philip Mauro understood their words correctly. In another connection he says, "We are not inquiring whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was and is the true King of Israel; but whether or not He *at His first coming* offered or proposed 'to restore again the kingdom to Israel'."⁴ He quoted these words from Acts 1 and this indicates that he understood well enough the disciples' question. Implicit in his statement is that after three and a half years of our Lord's ministry they were still expecting a temporal kingdom.

R. Zorn claimed, ". . . [Acts] 1:6 where the last flicker on the apostles' part of the hope that national Israel once again be a political theocracy is mentioned."⁵

These remarks implicitly admit what has been pointed out in detail above; namely, that the remnant expected a temporal kingdom and even did so 40 days after the Lord's death, 40 days while He, in resurrection, had spoken to them things concerning the kingdom of God. Our brethren expect us to believe their incredible notion that our Lord ". . . from the very outset . . . not

3. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 312, note 1.

4. "More Than a Prophet", p. 33.

5. *Church and Kingdom*, p. 49.

merely gave no encouragement to, but quite definitely opposed" the expectation of a temporal kingdom. I suggest that such statements plainly illustrate the power that an unscriptural theological system has upon the mind.

After the ascension of the Lord the disciples had to wait the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4) and of Christ also (Acts 1:8; John 15:26), i.e. the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit would lead them into all truth (John 16:13), bring things to their remembrance (John 14:26), show them things to come (John 16:13), and communicate the deeps of God (1 Cor. 2:10). They had to wait on God and His time concerning what might occur now that the Son of Man ascended up where He was before (John 6:62) and before He returned to set up the kingdom. We shall consider these and other matters in Part 2, Lord willing. But first we must see that provision was made in the death of Christ for the nation, as such.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST PROVIDES SPECIFICALLY FOR ISRAEL'S NATIONAL FUTURE

The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man does many signs. If we let him thus alone, all will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, Ye know nothing nor consider that it is profitable for you that one die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish. But this he did not say of himself; but, being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should also gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. From that day therefore they took counsel that they might kill him. (John 11:47-53)

With this Scripture we conclude. Here the heart, the state, is exposed. The self-interest, the place they had, was at stake. The motive for killing our Lord is clear. The human heart is depraved.

Note well that Caiaphas prophesied, -- "but this he did not say of himself." No. It was the Spirit of God Who made what was in the heart come out of the mouth. The purpose to kill our Lord, uttered by the high priest, is seen by the Spirit to be a prophecy of the death of the Lord Jesus *for the nation*. But it is added by John, "and not for the nation only, but that he should gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Thus two of the results of the death of Christ are brought out here. One is the gathering together into one of the children of God that were scattered abroad. The work of Christ on the cross laid the basis for this and it was

realized at Pentecost.

The other result is for the nation of Israel. Our Lord was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom. 15:8). His death included dying for that nation. His work has laid the righteous basis for God to form a nation of saved persons (Rom. 11:26). When the kingdom is established by divine power all the rebel Israelites will have been purged and the righteous remain to form the nation. Thus the nation will be composed of a spiritual people.

[As] I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, verily with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I reign over you. And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face. Like as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord Jehovah. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I [am] Jehovah. (Ezek. 20:33-38)

Besides those brought out of the countries, God will do a purging work in Palestine wherein two thirds shall perish (Zech. 13:8). Thus shall the Deliverer turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance. (Rom. 11:25-29).

. . . and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day (Zech. 3:9).

Thy people also shall be all righteous (Isa. 60:21; see also 59:20,21; 65:9; 66:7-9; 4:4; Zech. 3:9; 12:10; and Psalm 22:31).

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power (Psalm 110:3).

This is God acting sovereignly to bring to pass that which was uttered in the power of the Spirit by the mouth of the O. T. prophets. Meanwhile, through the work on the cross, the righteous basis upon which to deal with the nation has been laid. In that coming day they will be under a new covenant.

Behold, days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day of my taking them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will pardon their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

. . . and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20:38).

. . . who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises; whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen (Rom. 9:4,5).

In Rom. 9:3 Paul says that these Israelites are "my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And to whom does he say the covenants belong? Yes, to them. But in that day when Christ reigns on His own throne they will not only be kinsmen according to the flesh; they will all be righteous. They will all be Israelites indeed. They will all be the "*Israel of God*" in that day. They will experience the blessedness of the covenant with Abraham and David, and of the New Covenant. Christ died for that nation and it is based upon that work that God can righteously do all those things and make good the ancient promises. This is His moral way.

I would conclude by calling your attention to Rev. 3:21 which indicates that the Lord is not yet seated on His own throne (the throne of David), but on the Father's throne (cp. Matt. 25:31). The reign of Christ predicted by the O. T. prophets has not yet commenced. Now, may the Lord direct our hearts and understanding to know more of the mystery of Christ and the church, and give us to walk in accordance with *our* calling.

Ed.

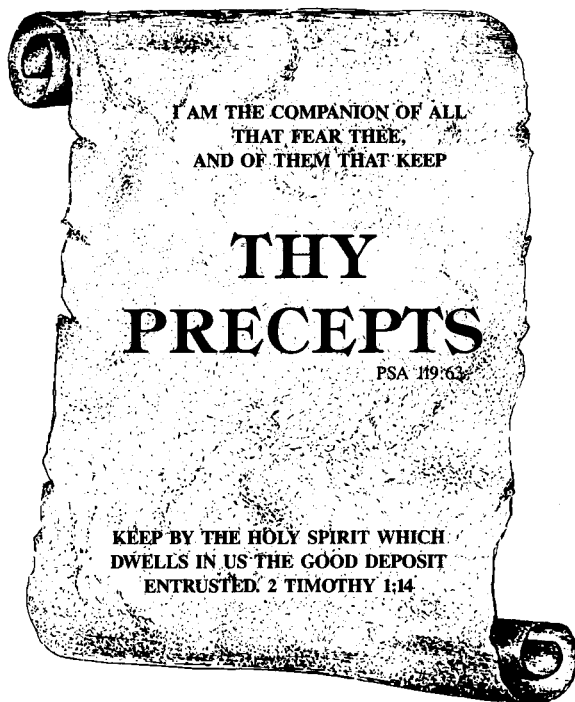
(To be continued, if the Lord will).

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I AM THE COMPANION OF ALL
THAT FEAR THEE,
AND OF THEM THAT KEEP

THY PRECEPTS

PSA 119:63

KEEP BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH
DWELLS IN US THE GOOD DEPOSIT
ENTRUSTED 2 TIMOTHY 1:14

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CONTENTS

Self-Examination: When is it Useful?	129
The Proper Duty of the Saints Now	130
The Body of Christ	131
The Postponement of the Kingdom	137
Extracts	145
Three Men Named "Savior"	146
Overcoming	151
Observation	151
The Blessed Trinity and Related Truths	
Concerning the Father and the Son	152
Fragment	157
Preserving Books and Pamphlets	158
The Effect of Association	159
In Christ/In the Lord	160

SELF-EXAMINATION

WHEN IS IT USEFUL?

A great deal has been said to warn the believer against the evils of self-occupation. There is sometimes, however, a tendency, on the part of those who rightly desire to guard against these, to neglect the very necessary exercise of *self-examination*.

Self-occupation is a state of soul that leads to disappointment and despondency, for it generally implies an expectation of good from that which can only produce evil, from the flesh which God has exposed and judged at the cross. But *self-examination*, with the right object in view, would result in a closer communion with the Lord, a more godly walk, and a tender conscience.

Perhaps some will say, in answer to this, "But am I not always to keep my mind fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ?" No doubt if we actually did this we should never require any examination of self, for "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John 3:6). Often, however, the Christian gets his mind occupied with the things of earth, the necessities or the cares of life claim his attention, or he may even become attracted by the pleasures of the world. The mind, too, may get unduly cumbered with much service, even with service for the Lord, or the wrongdoing of fellow-Christians may divert the mind from Him. We have the old nature still with us, ever ready to assert its unchanging tendency to evil. We are, moreover, very easily deceived, and while we imagine that we are pursuing a right course, we may really be following a very wrong one.

Self-examination may be exercised for the following objects:

1. *Detection of Evil in Motives or Actions* (1 Cor. 11:28,31). In the proportion that evil exists in our mind or ways unjudged by us, will be the loss of communion with the Lord. If therefore there is a lack of joy and the conscience has not already been blunted (which is, alas, too often the case), the practice of self-examination in the presence of God will generally make manifest the cause. Before the Christians at Corinth partook of the Lord's Supper (which is a practical expression of communion), each one was exhorted to *examine himself*. They were also told in the same chapter that because they were not judging themselves, the Lord had to chasten them.

2. *The Maintenance of a Good Conscience* (Acts 24:16). Said the apostle: "Herein do I *exercise myself* to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man." This was in no wise inconsistent with the knowledge of the grand truth of the Christian's high calling that had been revealed to him. This desire might well possess the oldest Christian as much as the one just recently converted. It should be carefully noted that the word "always" does not apply to the exercise, but to the result of it. The exercise is only a means to an end (because of the possibility of failure), and must not be an absorbing object.

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, *looking unto Jesus . . .*" (Heb. 12:1,2). Not only must the Lord Jesus be our Object, but also His life in this world is the pattern for ours. Every lovely trait was exemplified in that wonderful pathway, and we are exhorted to let His mind be in us, and also to walk as He walked. I say this because we are prone to derive our standard of Christianity from the ways of one from whom we have learned helpful lessons. Unconsciously the spirit of the teacher is imbibed with his ministry.

Our introspection must be in the sight of God, in the light of His Word, and with the sole and whole-hearted desire to please Him. Nothing pleases Him but the Lord Jesus Christ and what bears His stamp.

Familiarity with the truth, unless coupled with soul-exercise, tends to deaden the conscience. If a Christian becomes familiar with Scriptures which condemn certain things in his life, without its resulting in self-judgment, his conscience is thereby blunted, and he becomes unable to realize his lack of Christian grace and his proneness to failure.

3. *Showing Us if Our Love is Waning* (John 21:16; Rev. 2:5). The Lord knew of Peter's affection for Him, yet He desired him to search his own heart in reference to his love.

We find that the church at Ephesus left its first love, though retaining its outward activities in the defence and propagation of the truth. As our tendency is so much in the same direction, should we not test ourselves at times as to whether our love is waning? How often do we speak of the Lord's unchanging love to us by way of excuse for our own lack of love in return! *His* love has, indeed, to occupy our hearts and not our own, but that cannot be the case if ours is growing less instead of more. Search should be made to remove the hindrance so that He may be alone the Object of our affection. He alone can produce love, but we may hinder its effect in our own hearts.

Wm. A.

THE PROPER DUTY OF THE SAINTS NOW

The proper duty of the saints now is by secret association with Christ to withstand evil, that they may be fashioned in suffering and grace with Christ. There all the fine traits of fellowship with Christ are brought out, "the trial of your faith," etc. The vessel of earth being put into the furnace, it shines forth, when it comes out, with all that was in its Master's mind.

Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 32:378.

GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH

PART 4: THE BODY OF CHRIST

DEVELOPMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The precious body of Christ (precious to Himself, and should be viewed in this light by all saints) is not a dead corporation nor unruly in its behavior. If it is either, then there is something radically wrong with such a thing and serious questions should arise as to its reality. Again, in reference to our natural bodies growth is the first and automatic thing that takes place from the moment of birth. If this is not so, then there is something abnormal and the cause would be investigated. But, how slow we are to learn from what is natural so that we would be more attentive to applying the principles to what is spiritual, and of far greater significance and importance. There is individual growth in our spiritual lives which Peter speaks of in 1 Pet. 2:2, "As newborn babes desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word, that by it ye may grow up to salvation . . .," but this is not what applies to the body of Christ. In Eph. 4:12-16 we get the growth of the corporate entity; otherwise the body of Christ would get totally disproportionate in its several members, as some would develop more than others. The gifts which the ascended Christ gives are the persons enumerated in v. 11, who are in the Assembly -- according to 1 Cor. 12:28. However, in Ephesians the presentation is that they are for the benefit of the body of Christ, "for the perfecting of the saints; with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ." Here we have a twofold objective as the purpose of the gifts being given by Christ. Firstly, it is "for the perfecting of the saints" -- which applies to bringing to completion, according to the mind of Christ, the whole company of the saints. Secondly, it is "with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ . . ." -- which is the development, or building up (as the word really means), of the corporate body. How instructive it is for us always to keep in mind that the Spirit of God never dissects the truth into isolated parts, as man has done and so ruined the unity of truth. Here in Ephesians we have both the aspects of the "saints" and the "body."

In the first part there is a need for each one to be brought, through the ministry of the gifts, to the "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (v. 13). "The faith" does not consist only in the facts as to our individual sins being forgiven, for this is but one element in "the faith." "The faith" embraces all the truth that has been given to the saints, as Jude wrote,

"exhorting you to contend earnestly for *the faith* once delivered to the saints." Included in this is the whole revelation of God in Christ and all that has been achieved through Him and will yet come to light as the "fruit of the travail of His soul." As Eph. 4:5 also states, "There is one faith," and it is to the end that we are all made complete in this faith that the gifts have been given, and the end result is that "we all arrive at the . . . knowledge of the Son of God." We find something of this in the apostle Paul. He had a revelation directly from the glorified Christ which not only set him on a totally different course from that which he had been following before, but brought him to the realization of "the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given Himself for me." And so he could say, "no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The "faith of the Son of God" leads to and ends in "the knowledge of the Son of God." Oh, that we were all at this stage where nothing counts in this world but the glorious Person of the Son of God! -- and nothing in the world to come will diminish this, but will enhance it, and in the eternal state He will be truly everything to all.

Regarding the second part, since the body of Christ was formed to be the only outward representation of Christ in this world, it is still needful that all its members are "built up" (the literal meaning of 'edified') to the "full-grown man" (v. 13) and not to be in a state of abnormality. The whole body must be in perfect accord with its Head and so reach the "measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ." A babe is vulnerable to all the adverse elements in the world and needs the protection of the parents to preserve it, and through proper parental care to reach the fullness of mature growth. So in the spiritual sphere we are subject to all the many varieties of "systematized error" (v. 14) which would affect our growth as a unified body to the dishonor of our blessed Head. The 'normal' growth of the body of Christ would be achieved by "holding the truth in love" (v. 15) as under the ministry of the gifts such that "we may grow up to Him in all things, who is the Head, the Christ." Where can such a wondrous "body" be seen in this world at the present? We have to own with deep shame that the outward expression has long ago disappeared from the sight of man. However, we must not forget that the "body of Christ" still exists on the earth and its paramount purpose has not been cancelled by God, and we can still walk in the truth of this precious divine reality, even though but a few are gathered together to the eternally delightful Name of Jesus, our Lord, in the recognition and owning of the truth of the body and the headship of Christ, as the One to whom His body is joined in the power of the Spirit. This then leads us to consider the RESPONSIBILITY of the body of Christ.

In the 10th verse of Colossians 2 we learn that "and ye are complete in Him" -- what a strengthening of our weak faith to be assured of this! Only "in Him" are we complete, that is we lack nothing, for we derive everything that is needful for us from Him. Why then do any give their ears to those whose intent is to "delude you by persuasive speech"? It might be asked, "But how do I know that anyone is seeking to delude me?" There was a word of warning to

Israel in the Old Testament which was needful for them and now for us. In the prophecy of Isaiah we learn that Israel would be taken into captivity by the King of Assyria because they had turned away from faithfulness to their God. But God gave a needed encouragement to those who would be enticed to "seek unto the necromancers and unto the soothsayers, who chirp and who mutter" to say, "Shall not a people seek unto their God? Will they go for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, for them there is no daybreak" (Isa. 8:19-20). The same principle is true for us today. Is what we hear according to the Word of God? The Jews in Berea were called "more noble than those in Thessalonica, receiving the word with all readiness of mind, daily searching the scriptures if these things were so" (Acts 17:11). Even though it was the apostle Paul who had spoken to them, yet they checked into the Word of God to establish that what he had said was to be found there. In connection with our subject, we must confirm all that we hear, even from a gift from Christ, that it accords with the scriptures. Even a gift is not infallible and we can be misled if we do not check what we hear. It is not to advocate a suspicious mind (for this is destructive to our faith), but in 1 Cor. 14:29 we are instructed by the apostle Paul, with the authority of the Lord, "let the others judge." What does this mean? Why, whatever the two or three prophets say in prophetic ministry must be judged by the one who hears it. It is essential that we refer always to scripture to be assured that it is according to the Word of God, that the gift is edifying us as to the truth of Christ.

It might be asked, "But are we only edified by gifts?" Based upon Eph. 4:10-15 it is most certainly the case, not forgetting that *all* existing gifts are needful to this end. Then it might be added, "But what about 1 Cor. 14?" There is no inconsistency in this passage with Eph. 4, or what has been written above. The activity of the prophets in prophesying is the result of the gift of the Holy Spirit who alone empowers anyone to speak for God, but it is on the authority of the one Lord that anyone speaks on such occasions.

The development, then, of the body in full accord with true spiritual growth in the Lord would result in all activities of His body being entirely in subjection to Himself as its Head, from whom all control and direction comes, and through whom all nourishment is received, and according to whose authority everything is done for His glory and honor. Now, as to where responsibility comes in regarding this matter, it is that every one of us must judge what we hear which is given out for the edification of the body: and, the gifts are very solemnly responsible for what they say. There is another passage dealing with this point. In Rom. 12:4-8 we have the responsibility of maintaining the place in which we are set in the body. Sad to say, there are some who make it clear that they are not content to keep the place allocated to them in the body as set there by God, according to His choice. In this there is displayed disobedience to the Head in His authority over all members. The Spirit of God makes a distinction in the body in that "all have not the same office" (v. 4). There are, evidently, some

members who are publicly in sight and others who are not, but function in a hidden manner, -- but nevertheless equally important to the wellbeing of the whole body. It is little realized by many that the hidden members are active in very vital functions without which the body would not operate at all. This is not giving to them any more importance than the outwardly visible members, but so that the truth of the oneness of the body may be upheld as it is sought in this article. *Every* member is essential and thus does Christ view them. To desire to be what God has not given us to be is to make the whole body suffer, for instead of mutually dependent activities for the good of all and the honoring of the Head, there will be the destructive work of Satan in discordant behavior and disruption of the co-ordinated movements of all under the blessed control of our glorious Head. No wonder that the world looks at Christians as a self-centered and self-seeking lot of people making high, and to them pretentious, claims, but totally inconsistent with their profession. May we all take this matter before the Lord as to our individual responsibility in the dishonor brought to His Name, and owning our failure seek (in His grace) to walk according to the truth for His Name's sake. There is a further point in this passage (v. 6-8) in that "having different gifts" we are to exercise them according to what is given us to do and not to assume any role not given specifically to us. It is a common failure in christendom at large (and none are exempt from it) that one man attempts to exercise all gifts, as presumably conveyed to him by education and ordination, but this is a definite setting aside of the Holy Spirit who gives to every man severally as He will. There is clearly the individual responsibility placed on each gift to exercise his gift and that only. It is also a grave failure to allow any gift to lie dormant. The apostle Paul had to write to Timothy and arouse him by saying, "For which cause I put thee in mind to rekindle the gift of God which is in thee. . ." (2 Tim. 1:6). So, there are the two sides to consider: one, that on the part of every member of the body there is a place and a service for everyone to fulfill without desiring or attempting to usurp the place or service of another. Secondly, those who have a special gift given to them by the Lord should exercise it as intended, in the power of the Spirit, for the good of the whole body, but should watch that they do not trespass into the area of gift which they do not possess.

The final consideration is, perhaps, the key to the whole matter as to why we have failed to be what we should be in our place in the body of Christ, such that the world would recognize it and be affected by it. We get a solemn and needed word in Col. 2:18-19 which says, "Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize, doing his own will in humility and worship of angels, entering into things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and *not holding fast the Head*, from whom all the body, ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God." The root of all the problem is in "not holding fast the Head." The first thing that might be asked is, "What does it mean to 'hold fast the Head'?" An old brother with many years of experience was once asked this question, and his reply was, "Maintaining contact with the Head." It might be thought that all members in

a body are automatically in contact with the head. Oh no! There is a great difference between being joined to the head and being in contact with it. To be in contact means that there is a constant flow of control and direction to and a suited response from each and every member, in co-ordination with every other member. To be joined could mean that a member is outwardly part of the body but is totally unresponsive. The writer has a natural brother who was stricken with poliomyelitis shortly after birth and from then he lost the usefulness of one leg, which never developed as it should have done. The leg was still recognizable as a leg, but it was of no value for the purpose of walking or any other activity in which legs play an important part. It had lost contact with its head and was unresponsive to any control or direction -- and did not benefit from the nourishment which was available to it. Yes, it is our responsibility to "maintain contact" whereas it is the work of the Holy Spirit to form us into the body and, if our state is right, to empower us to act for and glorify our Head and contribute to the overall blessing of the body. The next question might be, "Then how do we maintain contact with the Head?" Further, there are many who seem to rely on, "But surely having the knowledge and profession of truth keeps us in contact with our Head?" A well-known gift from the Lord in the last century, who had a more extensive knowledge of truth than almost anyone else, said, "The truth will not keep us, only a close walk with Christ will." This is correct, whether we like to accept it or not, for the evidence is irrefutable. The evidence is that those who were, in the Lord's wonderful mercy and grace, brought out from the systems of men during the early part of the last century and were found truly gathered together to the Lord's Name, have become a splintered proof that the knowledge and profession of truth did not keep them all in contact with the Head -- or there would not now be the numerous, and dishonoring, separated companies of saints who all claim to be "gathered together," yet do not walk together in fellowship. This is not an attempt to suggest that such should sink their differences and get together again -- no! Judgment of failure and the cause for division must first take place and then a return to the point of first departure would result in restored oneness and fellowship. Occupation with Christ in His present place in the glory of the Father is the antidote to all that is in the world which would draw our hearts away from Himself and completely stunt our growth in Him and ruin our testimony to Him.

Another necessary word in this regard is that of Jude, "But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21). There are four things here that are needful for us to maintain contact with our exalted Head. "Building," "praying," "keeping," "awaiting," and all four are dependent upon ourselves in acting together before the Lord to do them. The work of the Holy Spirit always results in 'unity'. He has formed "the body of Christ" and it is one and only one. He ever acts for and in the interests of God in the eternal unity of Deity. We are not told to keep the unity of the body, but to use diligence "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the

uniting bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). This scripture is commonly abused in its usage as if we must all physically stay together in order to comply with what this word says. If this is the case then we are all wrong except we return into the fold of the Roman Catholic system which is, without any doubt, the continuation from the oneness first known among the saints of God: but the system has entirely departed from the oneness established in the power of the Holy Spirit and in no way whatever does it make any attempt to "keep the unity of the Spirit." The use made by many would mean that, in order to keep the unity of the Spirit, anything and everything must be allowed provided we stay together. The 'unity of the body' and the 'unity of the Spirit' are quite distinct things, although the 'unity of the Spirit' is found, in one result, in the true 'unity of the body'. If we maintained the 'unity of the Spirit' we would not tolerate any evil being present nor any unbeliever included when we are 'gathered together', nor in any of our associations in fellowship. As the gift referred to above in the last century taught us faithfully, "Separation from evil is God's principle of unity." To "keep the unity of the Spirit" is to respond to what the Spirit has already done with all saints, whether in the Habitation of God or the One Body of Christ, by walking in the truth of them, when we shall find that as all saints do the same the unity of the Spirit would be evident.

Let this article then end with an overview of the subject:

- There is one body.
- It is composed of all saints on earth at the present time.
- It is identified as 'the Christ' and is for the purpose of presenting and representing Him down here while He is waiting to translate us to Himself into the Father's house.
- All members of the one body are interrelated and interdependent and joined together and to the Head in glory by the Holy Spirit.
- It grows through the ministry of the gifts given by Christ (its Head) with a view to maturity according to Himself.
- It is responsible for its activities and exercise of functions and to be always in living, responsive communication with its Head.

May all this characterize us while we wait for Him to come, for His glory.

J. Pascoe

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

PART 1

THE EXPECTED KINGDOM

CHAPTER 1.4: THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

In the previous article in this series we reviewed the expectation of the kingdom by John the Baptist, our Lord, the apostles and the remnant, and found that they all believed in a literal kingdom. We saw also that the death of Christ provides for Israel's national future. The literal kingdom was not, of course, inaugurated and it is postponed, so to speak. We shall now specifically consider this postponement; first considering why the offer of the kingdom was rejected by Israel, and then reviewing God's use of Israel's stubbornness. In concluding Part 1 we shall answer the charge that our view of the offer of the kingdom makes God guilty of making an immoral offer.

By the "postponement" of the literal kingdom I do not say or imply that it was God's intention to inaugurate that kingdom when our Lord was here, though there may be some who think that. Nor does it imply that the cross was unforeseen and an accident -- a foolish notion indeed. It does mean that the kingdom will be inaugurated *after* God's present work of forming that company which will be displayed in heavenly glory when Christ Who is our life is manifested (Col. 3:4). God has arranged all. In the meantime a mystery form of the kingdom has been inaugurated, a form unforeseen by the Old Testament prophets. Also in the meantime, Christ is seated with "my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). He is not yet upon His own throne; but the present overcomer is promised co-enthronement with Christ when Christ does sit on His own throne (Rev. 3:21). It is not now the kingdom and power, but the kingdom and patience (Rev. 1:9).

WHY WAS THE OFFER OF THE KINGDOM REFUSED?

Non-millenarian opposers of dispensational truth suppose that, since the Jews did expect a literal kingdom (they did, you see -- based on the Old Testament prophets), they would have accepted it had it actually been offered to them. Since a literal kingdom was not inaugurated, they conclude that the preaching of John and our Lord never referred to a literal kingdom but referred to a spiritual kingdom. We have already seen that they preached about a temporal kingdom. Such objectors fail to see the purpose of God, fail to come to grips with the ruin of the first man, and fail to see that God presented the kingdom in such a moral way so as to test and reveal the state of the first man even in the favored nation, this test receiving its fullest expression in the rejection of Jehovah-Jesus.

Both John and the Lord Jesus preached "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). The Lord preached "the glad tidings of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23) -- the good news that the kingdom was coming. It seems that the phrase "the kingdom of the heavens" derives from Dan. 4:26. As used by John and our Lord in this preaching, it refers to the reign of the heavens as manifested on earth under Messiah's rule before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

The key word in connection with John's and our Lord's preaching the kingdom had drawn nigh is the word *repent*. So that while the kingdom was promised to Israel, there were suitable moral conditions for its inauguration. The fact is that the offer of the kingdom came in the Person of the lowly One Who called for repentance. The offer thus was a test of the moral state of Israel as a people. The Jews needed to repent and submit to the Lord Jesus. Only a very small company received the Lord Jesus.¹ In a previous article it was pointed out that even after our Lord's resurrection, after the 40 days, the disciples asked, "Lord, is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). This expectation was correct, but the time was not yet. If they were expecting a restoration of the kingdom to Israel at that point, what do you think they were preaching about when the Lord sent the 12 and told them: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 10:7)? Do you think the Lord was directing them to preach about a kingdom such as we are in now? And when the 12 preached, do you think that is what they meant by their words? There is no absurdity, no difficulty, when we see that the preaching of John and the early preaching of the Lord and the 12 referred to the promised reign of the Son of David over Israel. The facts are, then, that the literal kingdom was preached, but there was no turning to God by

1. When Christ comes again, there will be a remnant of Israel which will form the nation consequent upon the destruction of all the rebels (cp. Ezek 20, for example; Zech. 3:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:25-29; etc.). Thus God will bless Israel in accordance with His holiness and moral ways.

the nation. The lowly and meek One was not to their liking. *They would have the kingdom, but not on God's terms -- repentance, and acceptance of the Lord Jesus.*²

Thus was the state of the first man brought into bold relief. Instead of their accepting Him, they crucified Him -- but this was how many Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled. And that very work accomplished on the cross made provision for the national blessing of the nation as such, as John 11:52,53 declares. No man can be saved, past, present or future, apart from the work on the cross -- and even the national blessing of Israel is founded on that work.

It does not follow, however, that "the next thing in order" concerning 'God's program' was the national restoration of Israel. The unfolding of the ways of God was:

- (1) The offer of the kingdom in the Person of Christ on the grounds of their repentance and acceptance of Him,
- (2) The rejection of Himself and His crucifixion,
- (3) The abeyance of the gospel of the kingdom and the postponement of the kingdom, and
- (4) The unfolding of the secret, the mystery, hid from ages and generations,³ hid in God, a mystery as to which silence had been kept.

GOD'S USE OF ISRAEL'S STUBBORNNESS

As God used Pharaoh, as He used Balaam, or Judas in our Lord's case, as He in His sovereign disposition pleased, so He used the rejection of the kingdom in the Person of Christ. God indeed means to bless Israel nationally (Rom. 11:25-29) and He will do so. But there was a secret undisclosed to the prophets that God meant to reveal after the great foundation for all blessing was laid in the work upon the cross, where God's nature was displayed and Himself glorified and vindicated with respect to the question of sin. We turn now to help from W. Trotter on the subject of how God used Israel's stubbornness.

2. Referring to John 6:15, G. Murray remarks, "The truth is that instead of offering the Jews an earthly kingdom, the Jews offered the kingdom to Jesus" (*Millennial Studies*, p. 69). See how he misses the simple, grand truth! They wanted Him as king on *their* terms. They refused Him on *His* terms. Their terms involved no repentance, no moral judgment on their ways, no obedience to the will of God as expressed in the Lowly One. Their terms were -- bread in the stomach. Their god was their belly. There were spiritual requirements which they were not prepared to realize in their lives. Whenever man is tested, he proves the heart is deceitful and incurable. So instead of seeing this remarkable contrast, non-millennarians stumble on it.

3. Both from times and from persons.

A vineyard let out to husbandmen is the figure employed by our Lord, to set forth their privileges and responsibilities, and to describe their guilt (Matt. 21:33, etc.). It is not, as in Isaiah 5, the fertility of the vineyard that is in question, but the honesty of the husbandmen, and the consequent productiveness to their lord, of the grounds entrusted to their care. "When the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits." Thus had the prophets been sent to Israel. With what result? "The husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another." Thus had Israel dealt with the prophets who had been sent to them. But great is the divine longsuffering. The owner of the vineyard had patience with the husbandmen, and "sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise." Was there no hope remaining? Could no further means be tried? Yes: "last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son." Such, therefore, is one aspect in which the mission of Jesus is to be viewed. No doubt He came to reveal the Father, and to accomplish redemption by the sacrifice of Himself; but He also came seeking fruit on God's behalf from those who were responsible for rendering it. Before He became the sacrifice for human guilt upon the cross, He was presented as the final test of man's condition before God. Israel was the theater in which the experiment was made: but it was human nature itself -- man, as such -- that was put to the test. With God in the distance, or behind the veil, man had, with every lesser advantage of laws, messengers, prophecies, warnings, promises, made no return to God for the pains bestowed; would he, now that God was revealed in the person of His Son, be more submissive or obedient? Alas! "when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The last astounding proof of God's forbearing love, of patience which nothing yet had sufficed to exhaust, drew forth from man -- from Israel -- the expression of intense and complete hatred. They cast Him out of the vineyard and slew him!

The application of this parable was left by the Savior to the Jews themselves. He asks them what might be expected to be done by the lord of the vineyard to these husbandmen, and they are obliged to reply, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto others." He then reminds them of the Stone rejected by the builders, and of its high destiny to be the Head of the corner, and adds, "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

But it was not only as the representative of God's *claims* -- as seeking fruit -- that the Jews rejected their Messiah: -- it was also as the revealer and expression of God's perfect grace. A certain king makes a marriage for his son, and sends his servants to call the invited guests -- such as were bidden: "but they would not come" (Matt. 22:1-14). Nothing is *claimed* of the guests at a marriage feast; everything is *provided*, and the guests partake freely of the bounty of their host. But the grace which thus provides all for man, and makes him welcome to the whole, is as unwelcome to his heart as those righteous claims of God's holy law with which he refuses to comply. "They would not come." But what cannot grace do? The death of Christ is itself made the ground of new invitations! "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed,

and all things are now ready: come unto the marriage." What can be represented here, but the ministry of the apostles to Israel after the death and resurrection of their Lord? Alas! it was with the same result; save where sovereign grace imparted a new life and thus subdued the opposition of man's will, these further invitations met with no better reception than the former. "They made light of it . . . and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them." It was for this rejection of the gospel of an ascended Christ, proclaimed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, that judgment was executed on Jerusalem and the Jews. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Nor was it till they had thus rejected mercy, offered to them in every form, and pressed on their acceptance in every way, that the proclamation of heavenly mercy went forth universally: -- all being now indiscriminately bidden to the feast. "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

If we turn now to the early chapters of the Acts . . . we shall find that what they present is, this lingering of divine mercy over Israel, before the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. They had indeed committed an unparalleled crime in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, and in a certain sense filled up the measure of their iniquity. But the vine-dresser had interceded for the barren fig tree (Luke 13:8); Jesus, on the cross, had cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:" this, their ignorance, thus pleaded by the Redeemer on the cross, is precisely what the Holy Ghost admits by Peter in Acts 3:17; "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." So far were they, in answer to the intercession of Jesus, conditionally forgiven, that instead of judgment being instantly executed, full, free, absolute forgiveness was proclaimed to them, on condition of their repentance. Observe too, that it is national forgiveness of which the apostle treats, and the restoration of their forfeited national blessings, even including the return of Jesus Himself. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that (see the Greek ⁴) the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord: and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Forgiveness of sins, and the time of refreshing, or restitution, of which all the prophets had witnessed, as well as the return of the Lord they had rejected, are here proposed to the Jews on condition of their repentance. This was the only condition on which Old Testament prophecy had suspended the arrival of these bright and happy days for Israel; and on this condition they are still held out by the apostle. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." He well knew that they who had rejected and crucified a humbled Messiah on earth would still reject this Holy Ghost-testimony to an ascended and returning Christ; and everything which ensued was arranged of God accordingly. But if Jesus Himself, looking down upon Jerusalem and weeping over it, could

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

say, "If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" we need not, in the unchangeableness of God's purposes, find any difficulty as to vast and wondrous results depending on Israel's repentance, as taught in Acts 3, even though it was surely foreknown of God that they would persist in their sin, and that wrath would come upon them to the uttermost. We may well understand that what was long afterwards said by Paul to the Jews of a certain locality was true of the whole nation: "*It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*" (Acts 13:46). The martyrdom of Stephen terminated for the present all hopes of Jerusalem's repentance, or of Israel's reception of the Lord whom they had crucified; and seeing that every Old Testament prediction of the kingdom, or the millennium, treated of its establishment as dependent on Israel's conversion, that also was indefinitely postponed; and thus was the way prepared for the revelation of the mystery, till then necessarily concealed, that the period of Christ's rejection by Israel and the earth, should be occupied in the calling and formation by the Holy Ghost of "the church" -- the elect body or bride of Christ -- to be the vessel of His sympathies and sharer of His rejection while He sits on the Father's throne on high; and also to be the sharer of His glory when He shall "take to him his great power and reign" upon the earth.⁵

We may conclude, with W. Trotter, that God used Israel's stubbornness:

1. As the occasion of giving the kingdom to "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,"
2. As the occasion to turn to the Gentiles,
3. As the occasion to send forth the gospel of the glory (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11) universally,
4. As the occasion for the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church.

DOES "THE POSTPONEMENT THEORY" MAKE GOD A LIAR?

The Charge

Opposers say that there could not have been an offer of a literal kingdom because the Lord had to suffer, according to prophecy. Such an offer would contradict 1 Peter 1:11 and so it would not be a *bona fide* offer. The tack taken in this argument is to make those who hold dispensational truth look as if they are making God guilty of a fraudulent offer and thus they think they have made "the postponement theory" look foolish. What this objection means is that it would be immoral for God to offer the kingdom to Israel if He had purposed that it not be accepted. How could He rightly tender an offer He had no intention of making good? So, you see, it appears to them that 'dispensationalism' makes God a liar.

5. *The Bible Treasury* 1:40,41.

Refutation of the Charge

The charge is man-centered. It considers that it would be wrong for a man to make a fraudulent offer and reasons as to what the omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign God may and may not do. God's offer of the kingdom was conditional, not fraudulent. The purpose that it not be accepted was in Israel's heart, for they would not have it in the Person of the meek and lowly One. The flesh will not have Him. "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). His rejection was inevitable -- since the flesh is what it is. And so the rejection of the kingdom, as connected with the heart's acceptance of Him, was inevitable. Perhaps God's way in offering the kingdom to Israel might be easier to understand if we recall other things that God did when the outcome was inevitable.

The goldsmith does not apply Aqua Regia to gold in order to prove that gold will dissolve, but to demonstrate that it will not. Take the temptation of the Lord in the wilderness. I don't know how many teach the blasphemy that Christ could have sinned. Why the temptations, they say, if He couldn't sin? By this reasoning they turn it into a question of the morality of God (and show at the same time that they don't understand what "sin" -- not "sins" -- is). The temptations occurred to show that He could not sin. Adam was *innocent*; Christ was *holy* (Luke 1:35). The Aqua Regia proved that the Gold could not dissolve. This point a Calvinist who believes in the impeccability of Christ might concede, while an Arminian will not. So let us consider another example.

An Arminian will assert that God will not command a person to do what he cannot perform. Another wrote,

God knew men would break the law; yet He gave it, that what was in man's heart might be manifest. God knew that Israel would, by their sins, forfeit the land of Canaan, and have to be scattered, as at present. He told them that He knew this before He brought them in (see Deut. 31:16-21). Still, He brought them in. He knew that they would reject the prophets and messengers by whom He spake to them, and offered them forgiveness and mercy, if they would but repent (see Ezek. 3:7-9). Nevertheless, He sent them, rising up betimes and sending. Was their responsibility diminished by God's foreknowledge of the manner in which they would treat the messengers of His mercy? Surely not. So when, last of all, He sent His Son, sent Him as the One born to be King of the Jews, He knew all that they would do unto Him. From the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, to the last taunt that was addressed to the holy Sufferer on the cross, God foreknew all.

Why should this hinder Him from presenting the kingdom to them, and offering them its felicities and its glories on condition of their repentance, any more than the foresight of their failure under any former test should have

hindered Him from applying it? God would make manifest what man, what Israel, was, and so appealed to them in the most affecting way, through the medium of the hopes which, for so many generations, had been indulged by them as a nation -- hopes based on the prophecies And they understood that Jesus claimed to be the One Whose coming was the object and center of their natural hopes. The superscription in Latin and Greek and Hebrew, placed over the cross by Pilate, told plainly enough that it was as King of the Jews He was rejected by the nation. Thank God, He did foreknow what they in the hatred of their hearts would do. Their sin has thus been overruled to our salvation: their fall has become our riches. In due time, when the church has been formed and perfected, and caught up to meet its Head in the air, when all the "mysteries of the kingdom" have had their accomplishment, Israel, as we have seen, humbled and broken-hearted, shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah; and the kingdom shall be established manifestly and in power. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"⁶

A similar issue should rather be raised with the non-millenarian view.

DOES THE NON-MILLENARIAN VIEW MAKE GOD A LIAR?

Let us consider several statements by the amillenarian, O. T. Allis:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.⁷

What here concerns us is the phrase "thy people." From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah's [Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel⁸

So the Old Testament prophecies could, as a matter of fact, be "literally interpreted." (The godly Jew then really had no other choice.) It is the New Testament which allegedly gives a larger meaning and scope. The Old Testament prophecies "seem to be restricted to Israel." And how was the godly Jew to know that it only *seems* that way and there was going to be a New Testament that would give a "larger meaning and scope"? If the meaning and scope were enlarged, what was the meaning and scope in the Old Testament before it was enlarged in the New Testament? What was Daniel to understand by "thy people" before this term was allegedly enlarged? This raises the question -- was God deceiving Daniel and the Jews? So, after all, God did tell the Old Testament Jews that there would be a literal kingdom, and the expectation of it was right. We have seen in previous articles that the Lord and the remnant believed in such a kingdom. They had the Old Testament prophecies

6. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 3:24.

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

8. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 209.

about it. Recall the preaching of the 12 concerning the kingdom (Matt. 10:7) which was discussed earlier in this article. Would it not be immoral to have the 12 preaching about a literal kingdom when the Lord knew it was a spiritual kingdom? If and since, as we have seen, they expected a literal kingdom, it follows they preached a literal kingdom. If, then, there is a question of the morality of God involved, the problem is with the non-millennarians. Dispensational truth is free of any such involvement.

WHAT IF ISRAEL HAD ACCEPTED?

It is best to avoid "what if" inquiries for the purpose of figuring out what might have occurred. Why waste time on what if Adam hadn't sinned; or, what if he had eaten of the tree of life; or, what if Satan had not fallen; or, what if Abraham had not left Ur; or, what if Israel had kept the law; or, what if the Lord had not been crucified; etc. etc. God utilizes a Pharaoh, a Balaam or a Judas. He is sovereign and works His own pleasure. He sends a judicial blindness, too (Isa. 6:9-12; Rom. 11:25), always in His own moral way, consistent with what He is in His nature. The Judge of all the earth does right and known unto Him from the beginning are all His works.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

EXTRACTS

We do not judge the flesh in others because we do not judge it in ourselves.

* * * * *

We are weak in proportion to our importance before men; when we are nothing, we can do all things, as far as human opinion is concerned. We exercise, at the same time, an unfavorable influence over others in the same degree as they influence us -- in the same degree as we yield to the influence which the desire of maintaining our reputation among them exercises over our hearts.

* * * * *

A heavenly life will never be found, save in one who is in present communion with Christ about the place to which He is leading us: and a heart can never be abiding in communion with His heart and be identified with the world that does not know Him.

THREE MEN NAMED "SAVIOR"

We shall consider briefly three men of Scripture who bore the name of "Savior," the same name as that given to our Lord Jesus Christ:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

The first of these three men who were named like the Lord Jesus is mentioned in Acts 7:44,45:

Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.

Hebrews 4:8,9 also speaks of the same man, this Jesus who was with the tabernacle when the tabernacle was brought into the possession of the Gentiles to make a place for the children of Israel:

For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Now, we could read more about this man in the Old Testament book called the book of Joshua. In fact, if you ask those who know Greek to tell you the name of that man who led the children of Israel across the Jordan and into the Land of Promise, they will say, "In the Greek language, his name is Jesus." Thus, we have in Joshua a man who bore the name of "Savior."

Joshua was called Oshea the son of Nun in Numbers 13:8,16. Why Oshea? That is the part of his name that means "Savior", and the first letter of Joshua "J" is an abbreviation, so to speak, for "Jehovah;" so that the letter "J" and then "oshea" together means "Jehovah the Savior." Likewise, the name "Jesus" has the same two parts. The first part refers to Jehovah and the last part of the name signifies "Savior": Jesus--Jehovah the Savior.

Now, there are several men in the Bible who had the name "Savior." But, you know, we are called by our Savior's name, too. Every one of us who belongs to the Lord Jesus is identified with His name. What a privilege to think of our being identified with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! And what a responsibility that our lives should show that we have been with Jesus and that we are called by His name! Of Adam and Eve it is said, "He called their name Adam" (Gen. 5:2). So, when Eve was seen doing anything, people could say, "Well, that was Adam." Thus, the things that she did reflected upon him because she bore his name. In a similar way, the things that Joshua did are forever connected with the precious name by which he was called.

While Joshua had the name of Savior, he was not up to it. The book of

Hebrews says, "if he had given them rest." This means that Joshua did not give them the real rest. So Joshua, the man who bore that name of "Savior", was incapable of living up to that name. No doubt, he did his best: he was valiant against the enemies of Israel and he was a faithful man. And yet that name was greater than he.

What lesson can we learn from Joshua that might help us as Christians to live in a way that would bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ? Consider again Acts 7:44:

Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness.

And perhaps you have noticed when reading of Joshua in the Old Testament that he was identified with the tabernacle. When Moses went in to visit the camp or when Moses went outside the camp, it seems that Joshua was always there at the tabernacle, where God came down to meet His people. And it is the same with us; the secret of strength, really, is walking close with God and remaining in His presence. There are so many things in life that come in to interfere with the sense of being in the presence of God, the realization that we have to do with Him directly. And yet if we want to live so as to bring glory to that name by which we have been called, we would do well to be like Joshua and be much in the presence of God.

A second man who had that same name is mentioned in Colossians 4:10,11:

Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye have received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) and Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

One of the helpers of the apostle Paul was Jesus. He bore that same name, "Savior." This man, however, had a remarkable second name: he was "Jesus, which was called Justus." "Justus" means "the Just" and refers to righteousness. This second name may remind us of 1 Peter 3:18:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, . . .

Now Christ is not merely called the Just; Christ *is* the Just One. This man, Paul's helper, was only called Justus, but the Lord Jesus is the Just One. The Lord Jesus suffered, the Just for us the unjust. So, it is certain that this man Jesus called Justus, Paul's helper, did not live up to his name, just as Joshua did not live up to it either.

And yet, he must have had a good testimony so that those who knew him could call him Justus. If he had been known as a thief or a liar, they would not have called him that. To live up to the name of Jesus called Justus, he had to maintain practical righteousness. As Joshua remained associated with the presence of God, Jesus called Justus reminds us of practical righteousness. If we desire that our lives should bring glory to the name of the Lord Jesus, we must live in the way of righteousness. Lives that are honest in the sight of all

men and before God, too, are lives that bring glory to Him.

A third man that bore this same name of "Savior" was the prophet Hosea. That is, he shares that second part of the name of Jesus. Hosea--Savior. The first three chapters of the book of Hosea tell us much about his life:

The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son (Hosea 1:2-3). And she . . . conceived again, and bare a daughter (Hosea 1:6). Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son (Hosea 1:8). Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts (Hosea 2:2). And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now (Hosea 2:7). Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her (Hosea 2:14). Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee (Hosea 3:1-4).

Thus, the prophet Hosea and his wife and family were for signs and wonders in Israel. His children's names all had meanings: his little boy was named "Not-my-people" and his little girl was named "No-mercy." What a solemn thing to have a little girl, a baby daughter, and name her "No-mercy"! What a sign in Israel! What must the neighbors have thought! They knew that he was a prophet of the Lord as well. And this prophet and the affairs of his family were by God's ordering, to reflect the relationship between the nation of Israel and their God. The trouble that Hosea had with his wife reflects the trouble that God had with His people Israel. They rejected the Lord and turned after idols; their hearts were not true. And Gomer, Hosea's wife, was an adulteress and how that must have hurt the heart of Hosea!

Hosea's wife bare *him* a son (Hosea 1:3) and in verse 6 it says that she bare a daughter and the striking thing is that it does not say that she bare *him* a daughter. And the same is true of the third child in verse 8; it does not say that she conceived and bare *him* a son. That was true of the first child, but evidently not of the other two. They were children of her whoredoms; she was an adulteress. Luke writes about the prodigal son and how the prodigal son got far away from his father. But the book of Hosea is about a prodigal wife who got far away from her husband and sinned grievously and ruined that home. If these chapters are read in their entirety, it can be seen that all these things that are written have something to say about both Hosea's family and also about the

nation of Israel. For example, it says in Hosea 2:7 "the day is coming when she shall say, I will go and return to my first husband." What does that mean? That means she had left her husband previously, doesn't it? She had a husband; she had a home; she had three little children, and she left them. She departed from that house. It was a broken home, and there was Hosea, and his name meant "Savior" and just think of what happened to him! He could not save his family from the ruin that came in through his wife's sin. Just like that man named Justus, just like Joshua, he could not live up to the name of "Savior." No one has ever lived up to that name like our Lord Jesus Christ, Who did so perfectly. But oh, how Hosea must have felt the shame of the ruin of his house. It doesn't say explicitly that he was left with the three children, but I don't believe she took her children with her when she went after her lovers. That is not the way of the wicked, is it? So there was, perhaps, an abandoned family as well as an abandoned husband; there is evidence of great wickedness in that household. Possibly, none can feel the agony that must have been in the heart of Hosea save those who have passed through similar circumstances.

Now Hosea certainly knew the law of Moses. The punishment for such as Gomer was that she should be stoned to death for she committed folly in Israel (Deut. 22:22). There is, however, a vast difference between law and grace. And Hosea had a most unusual privilege in his life. In Hosea 3, we do not read of how Hosea put into effect the law of Moses. Instead Hosea was given an opportunity to display the love of God:

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel (Hosea 3:1). So I bought her to me (Hosea 3:2).

Who did he buy? Well, there is an adulteress in the book of Hosea. Her name is Gomer. Some persons who have studied the book of Hosea have supposed that some other woman is meant here, because it is scandalous or ridiculous to suppose that Hosea could have received back a wife who had sinned as horribly as Gomer did. Yet Jehovah's love for Israel is of exactly that character and is neither scandalous nor ridiculous, but divine. So I judge that the woman of Hosea 3:2 was Gomer, or, if not, that the moral lessons to be learned about the love of God are the same as if she were. Moreover, Gomer had entered a path of sin when she became an adulteress. So it is not incredible to find that she, at the end of her wicked course, was evidently sold for a slave. She thought she would go and live a life of pleasure and found herself like the prodigal son of the New Testament; she found herself in hard times, indeed, and was to be sold. Moreover, Gomer was beloved of her friend. Even after all her sin, someone still loved Gomer. Who loved Mrs. Hosea? Why, Hosea did! Yes, he did. How do we know that he loved her still? Why, Hosea bought her!

What a lesson for our hearts in connection with that name by which we are called, the name of the Lord Jesus! We ought to show the love of God in our lives. Are we tempted to hold back and say, "Well, no, there's no legal requirement that I should do so, and I've been insulted enough, I've had enough

dirt heaped upon me. I don't have to stick my neck out again any more." Well, just think of this man Hosea who bore that name and, in the days when Israel was under the law, was able to show love towards that wicked woman, his wife, in a most remarkable way. He bought her! He didn't overlook her sin, because he said, "Thou shalt abide for me many days" (not specifying the end); "thou shalt not play the harlot and thou shalt not be for another man. So will I also be for thee." Why, he wanted her back, didn't he? It cost him something; he paid for her. And the same is true, I believe, in our lives today; if we are to show the love of God in our lives today, if we are to live so as to bring glory in this way to that name by which we are called, it will cost us something to show the love of God to others.

What was the price that Hosea paid? Fifteen pieces of silver and one and a half homers of barley. Where did Hosea get all that money? True prophets have never been popular; seldom are they rich. Why was the last portion of the price paid in barley (a cheaper grain than wheat) instead of with some lesser coins? The combination of silver (a possession of the rich) and barley (a despised food of the poor) is unusual. Could it be that Hosea had so completely sold all his possessions to get the silver to buy back his wife that he was reduced to eating the least desirable food available? Then to have added the barley to the silver would have been to surrender all that he had in order to buy her back. Such love in the case of Hosea seems hard to imagine, but the love of the Lord Jesus Christ has just that character (Matt. 13:44-46).

How could Hosea have continued to love his wife as he did? Why did he want her back? Feelings of shame and outrage would tend the other way. Also, he lived among people who had the custom of writing "bills of divorcement" (Matt. 19:7-8). To want her back would, perhaps, not be an attitude that his neighbors could understand. No doubt, they would think, "Good riddance, you are better off without her." . . . Yet, he was her only friend and she was still "beloved of her friend," Hosea. As Jehovah loved Israel, so Hosea loved his wife.

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them (Colossians 3:19).

This verse supposes provocation from a wife because it says, "be not bitter." How much grief can a man take before his heart is turned away? Perhaps, the answer depends on how much love was there before.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

In like manner, Christian wives are told to submit to their own husbands.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22).

If a husband acted as badly as Gomer did, could a wife respond with a submission as true and steady as Hosea's love was true? Following the example of Hosea's devotion would heal many a home ruined by sin and strife:

he kept his heart as it should have been until the right time came for the recovery of his spouse. Where there has been a history of physical or mental abuse, careful attention to seeking God's time for reestablishing a broken home will preserve from jeopardy those whose hearts are stayed on Him.

Thus, each of these three men named "Savior" has a spiritual lesson for the Christian. Joshua depended upon God in being close to the tabernacle all the time. Jesus called Justus fulfilled the claims of practical righteousness. And Hosea, when he did not have to do so according to the requirements of the law, showed self-sacrificing love to the person who had caused him the greatest hurt and shame.

D. Ryan 1988

EXTRACT ON OVERCOMING

Let us take a lesson from Saul as to overcoming. He vanquished the Ammonites; but the Philistines whom he was raised up to overcome, he never did. If people do not discharge the duty given to them, it matters little how much else they do.

OBSERVATION

The old prophet of Bethel was even kindly, in a way, though he lied. He gave the man of God from Judah an ass on which to ride home, but the sovereign God utilized it to show that it was His hand that caused the death of the man of God (1 Kings 13). The influence of age, position, experience, hospitality and kindness ought not to swerve us from the path. The man of God from Judah withstood the *power* of the King; but though the charge given him was clear, he did not withstand the *seduction* of the old prophet. Let us beware. Someone once remarked that of kindly brethren there were not a few, but how many faithful?

Ed.

THE BLESSED TRINITY AND RELATED TRUTHS CONCERNING THE FATHER AND THE SON

In Hebrews 1:1,2 we are told that God has spoken "in Son" in contrast to His speaking by means of prophets previously. Now no longer does He speak by an instrument but directly Himself, THE SON. Apart from Him there is no real understanding of the Deity Who formerly spoke of Himself by the Name of Jehovah, the covenant name of relationship to the nation of Israel. This name Jehovah revealed His character as the Eternal; that is the ever existing, self-existing One in contrast to all else of His creation whether matter or flesh, whether angels or men. What a blessed privilege we have to hear His word and know the truth, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27).

The wise of this world know not His glory nor Person, and from them this wisdom is hid that they might be confounded and humbled because of their self-vaunted wisdom and strength. This is confirmed by verses 25,26 of this same chapter, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Again, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:7,8). The wise and mighty of this present world are totally incompetent to grasp these mysteries of God.

How it behooves us who know them by grace to walk softly and humbly in the presence of Majesty and when taking up such holy and lofty themes concerning our Creator-Redeemer. We must tread these holy avenues with unshod feet like Moses of old in the Presence of the burning bush. As those called "babes" by our Lord, ours is to render that praise from our mouths which He has perfected (see Psalm 8:2, J. N. D. trans.). But, apart from what He is pleased to reveal, we ought to be content and subject to the limits He has ordained upon us that we be not inquisitive or presumptuous to understand the great "Mystery of Godliness" in its fullness. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me" (Ps. 131:1). Under such precaution and reverence I would offer a few precious gems He has revealed,

for our enjoyment and profit to share together that He Who is "the Preciousness" may become more precious to our souls resulting in praise and thanksgiving.

As noted above, Hebrews 1:1 declares God's revelation "in Son" giving us the blessed fact that the Son is the outshining of His glory, the exact image of His "essential Being"¹ (v. 3); and He is "the only begotten Son, which IS in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). We may thus expect the particular attack of the enemy will be directed against the Son as the present revelation (and now complete) of the Deity. It is here I shall concentrate my observations both as to His Person as Son and revelation of the Trinity (3 in 1; 3 in Persons, 1 in Substance or Being -- see footnote #1), but this is an unexplained mystery.

"God was manifest in the flesh . . ."; "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word became flesh . . ." (1 Tim.3:16; John 1:1 & 14). Here we have declarations by Paul and John under the Holy Spirit's inspiration concerning Him Who is the Word, even the Son. What an advance in revelation we are given by the coming of our Lord into the world. It is in view of this new condition of flesh that He is addressed by God in Psalm 2:7 as "My Son," and "this day have I begotten Thee" and, in Luke 1:32 to be "*called*"² Son of God." In each portion the term Son implies relationship; "I have begotten Thee" implies ORIGIN but not creation or beginning, as falsely deduced by unholy thought put forth by Arius, elder of Alexandria in the 4th century, and C. T. Russell in modern times. Ample scripture elsewhere conveys His eternal relationship to the Father ere time began. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee BEFORE THE WORLD WAS." ". . . Thou lovedst Me BEFORE the foundation of the world. . . ." "Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, BEFORE Abraham was, I AM" (John 17:5,24 and 8:58).³ The reaction of the hearers to this last statement of the Lord indicates that they well understood He was declaring Himself God and they would have stoned Him for that! (v. 59). See their reaction, in a similar way, to His words in John 5:17,18. His declaring God is His Father and that He is the "I am" conveyed Deity to them and He did not deny their judgment as being a true one, that is, the Son in Deity is equal to the

1. The use of "Substance" in J. N. D.'s translation, or "essential Being" in Hebrews 1:3 is more in accord with the truth than Person, for the Son is not revealing only a Person of the deity but God Himself, a Being, before only partially revealed by His names given in the O.T. twilight manifestations. Cf. J. N. D.'s note to this verse.

2. Notice "*called*," not "*became*," the Son of God -- a vast difference!

3. The last quote does not directly state nor infer any relationship as Son and Father - it establishes that He is God. We know He was ever the Son and many other passages clearly declare it, e.g. John 16:28. In John's gospel alone there are at least 16 direct statements that "the Father sent the Son"; and in another nine the Father is clearly inferred. Likewise, John 3:16 states, "God . . . sent His only begotten Son."

Father!

How blessed to think of our Saviour, The Son, entering an entirely new condition! He, The Son, was now found in flesh of men as Man, "[the Lord] out of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47, J. N. D. trans.). This is moral origin; not 'manhood' from heaven as if His manhood was eternal. Now for the first time He could feel in Himself the conditions we are in apart from sin itself. He BREATHED in dependence; was WEARY in travel; was HUNGRY for food; was THIRSTY for drink; SUFFERED pain in soul and body; SLEPT for rest; knew EARTHLY relationships in father, mother, and brethren; recognized SUBJECTION to earthly authority, both parental and govern-mental; GREW in wisdom and stature; LEARNED what obedience entailed, by suffering for righteousness and truth; and, finally, EXPERIENCED death solely on our account as sin bearer. What a host of conditions He entered as never experienced before as One of the Triune God. Have we not gained immeasurably by His incarnation which "opened first the tale of grace" (hymn 39, v.4, in L. F. 1881)? It is the union of Deity and humanity in One that "forms the fountain of love in His heart" (hymn 61, vv. 1,2, L. F. 1881).

But, in this new form in Manhood He begins to speak of "My Father" to His earthly parents, when they sought Him as supposedly lost. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Later, when weary at the well in Samaria, He declares to the woman of Sychar the WORSHIP of the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:21 & 23). Later Paul, in Ephesians 2:18, speaks of access to the Father, through Him, by the Spirit; "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Here is a direct setting forth of the Trinity. So, also, the coming to the Father is solely by Him in Whom the Father dwells and by Whom He is revealed, "... no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"; "... He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; "... the Father that dwelleth in Me" (John 14:6,9-11). Thus, what was true of the Trinity in eternity before time began was true also in time when He was here on earth.

But, we must not mistake the DECLARATION of His Father with the ever-existing relationship He has always -- present, past, and to come. No question as to it can exist for the faithful as His prayer in John 17 indicates. In His prayer the Lord says (v. 5), "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee *before* the world was." Then, in verse 18, "As thou hast sent Me *into* the world. . . ." And again, "... Thou has *sent* Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me" (v. 23). Finally, "... for thou lovedst me *before* the foundation of the world" (v. 24). All these utterances are an unmistakable reference to a relationship existing before time. Here too, of course, we must be aware that Satan sought to blur this real, eternal relationship by two early so-called "fathers" in Christianity. One, Arius of Alexandria, Egypt, stated that the Son was God's first creation before time, and thus our Lord was not co-equal eternally with the Father but became a kind of demi-god by whom God created everything else. This was revived in the 19th

century by C. T. Russell (a renegade Baptist pastor), the founder of the Watchtower Society, falsely named "Jehovah's Witnesses." Secondly, another early 'Christian' teacher, by name Sabellius, sought to explain the Trinity relationship as simply *manifestations* (emendations) of the One God, rather than three distinct co-equal Persons. In either case we have lost the truth of His eternal Being as the Son of the Father in equality -- i.e. a false Christ is presented by man's imagination, therefore, in attempting to explain the inexplicable. This error concerning His eternal Sonship was revived, also, in 1929 at Barnet, England by the late James Taylor Sr.,⁴ without rejection or protest from within his particular section of 'Exclusive Brethren,' (known as Raven/Taylorites) although it was ably opposed and rejected by others among so-called 'Exclusive' and 'Open brethren.'

On these fundamentals, numerous sects in Christendom are in error, along with other unscriptural thoughts such as the capability (perish the thought!) of our Lord's human nature sinning. All such careless, or worse, purposeful thinking is fatal to a Divine-Saviour-Lord for us, and is Satan's design in malice toward the Son. Proverbs 8 is a veiled, but unmistakable, reference which speaks of a relationship to another though neither is named directly.⁵

To His brethren, conveyed by Mary after His resurrection, He says, "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (John 20:17). Here we are brought into the blessedness of the new character that was added to His eternal relationship:⁶ we are joined with Him in resurrection. Yet, we are never taught in Scripture that we are made a part of, or brought into, relationship in Deity as He was, the eternal Son with the Father. Our relationship is with God the Father and Son in resurrection and on redemption ground solely, but most blessedly and intimately (2 Pet. 1:4).

As to the Trinity we have ample witness in the Hebrew Scriptures of Its existence in the Godhead both in the use of "Elohim" and in direct conversation within the Deity. Every Hebrew scholar and speaker of that language knows that the word for God (Elohim) is a plural form, i.e. having more than Two as subject. C. I. Schofield says, "The word Elohim is a compound word formed from "El" (an oft occurring word for God in Scripture) meaning "Strong One," and "Alah" meaning "to swear." Thus we have an Almighty-Assuring

4. [J. T., Sr. said, in a letter, that he received this doctrine (the temporal Sonship teaching) from F. E. Raven when F. E. R. visited America. Ed.]

5. The name Wisdom has been given to Him as Son (cf. Matt. 11:19) though the relationship is clearly stated in, "I was *by* Him as One brought up *with* Him and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him . . . (Prov. 8:36).

6. That is, His being found in *Manhood* as Son to the Father, so we enjoy now this relationship.

God known by this name. It is used about 2500 times in the O.T.

Again, the Hebrew language has the character of designating single, double and plural (or more than two) numbers by its written structure. Thus here the word Elohim conveys three specifically. Now in the four places in Scripture where we have the Godhead speaking within itself, we have this plural form joined to a singular verb. They are: Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8. In each we have "us" and "our" used denoting more than one in conversation. Please read each passage carefully. Note the singular verb.

When we come to the N.T., of course, it is in the plain relationship set forth by our Lord's references to His Father Who sent Him that He is equal to sending the Spirit, along with the Father and declaring His eternal existence with the Father. The references are multiple for any interested enough to follow them out with blessing to their soul and not mere knowledge gained.

Having written of the Son's relationship to the Father, we find conversely that several instances in Scripture speak of the Father's relationship to the Son, likewise.

In Ps. 2:7 we have the first of several declarations of the Father to the Son in Manhood. Here it is prophetic and hence Jehovah, not the Father Who was not yet revealed, but the same God never-the-less. Our Lord is addressed prophetically as Son in the new condition, which He would be taking in flesh and blood. It is as to this new state that He is addressed as "begotten." It does not touch His eternal Sonship ere time but brings before us the new relationship as Man, that is of Divine Origin. This portion (Ps. 2:7) is quoted three times over in the N. T.; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5 and 5:5. The reference in Acts is a little confusing in the A.V. by the addition of "again," leading to the suggestion that resurrection is the subject. J. N. D.'s translation leaves "again" out as the thought is not resurrection as it is in the next verse. The thought, rather, is that Christ has been raised up in due time as a Saviour-Messiah by incarnation. Then the raising up again of the crucified One is brought in in the following vv. 34-37. The next two quotes in Heb. are blessed too. Chap. 1:5 speaks of His special address as "Son" in contrast to angels who though sons of God by creation (Job 1:6; 38:4-7) are never addressed by God the Father as "My Son." Heb. 5:5 places His Priesthood upon His Sonship likewise, as addressed by the Father who makes His Son a Priest for ever.

During our Lord's sojourn here He was addressed again by the Father three times, twice publicly and once in the privacy of the three disciples, Peter, James and John. The first occasion was at the baptism by John. It is recorded by all four evangelists but the spoken words, "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" are not recorded by John. We know that there is inspired purpose in this as John gives the divine character of our Lord and the words quoted apply to His Manhood which the three other evangelists give. John declared, "And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:34). We find the recorded words in Matt. 3:17 make it an address to the bystanders, "This is

my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Compare with this Isa. 42:1, where as Servant-Elect He is spoken about and in line with Matt. 12:18-21 as the blessed Son-Elect, Who performed all works of mercy in power, healing all that were oppressed in mind and body by Satan.

On the mount in the presence of His disciples the Father speaks of Him again as "My beloved Son," with the added injunction "hear ye Him." It is well that we hear Him speak to us His mind through the written Word. That message is given to those who are His own and delight to hear His voice as the Shepherd Whose will is perfect for His sheep. This scene was in Kingdom anticipation as the Lord was glorified before them.

The final public manifestation of the Father and the Son is found in John 12:27-30, although in this case the general public listeners did not understand the message to the Son as the disciples did on the mount. "Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." How beautiful as we read shortly in John 17:1 the Son's request of the Father, "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Even His own glorification in the Father's glory was involved. It is to this end the Kingdom is finally delivered up by the Son of Man, that God even the Father, Son and Holy Spirit might be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Holy mystery, may His Name be adored.

T. J. Knapp

A FRAGMENT

(1 John 3:1-3)

I am going to be like Christ in glory; then I must be as like Him now as ever I can be. Of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts full of it.

Remember this, that the place you are in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for this, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question of our sins with God: now He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." If I know He is in me, I am to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved me with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him; my *business* is to glorify Him in everything I do. "Bought with a price" -- that is settled: if bought, I am *His*. But, beloved friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which cleaves to *Him*, especially in these last evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh! if Christians were more thoroughly *Christians* the world would understand what it was all about.

The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ, that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ; and for those who do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us, and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.

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THE EFFECT OF ASSOCIATION

In every association, and the more so the closer it be, the tendency of human nature is to descend morally rather than to ascend; therefore the great wrong, and loss to one who allies himself with what is morally or spiritually beneath him. Such associations cannot long exist without affecting either the higher or the lower element; and the tendency of the higher sinking to the lower is because there is in us a kindred evil to any that we are brought in contact with, and this contact must occur the moment the communications are on equal terms. By equal terms, I mean where I can freely blend, accommodating myself to a lower order of things than my light would approve of. When this inequality exists as to the things of God, it is, of all cases, the most to be deprecated, for, apart from the question of the sacrifice of truth, the highest ideas and sensibilities on the most valued subject must remain unimpaired; and the consequence invariably is that either both parties gradually decline, or the one emerges and every day feels the other more unsuitable and irresponsive to the better activities of the soul. We should bear this in mind, whether as to natural or spiritual associations, for to deprecate such inequalities is not high-mindedness; quite the contrary: the more I know of the Lord or His truth, the less I must think of myself, but the more zealous I must feel for His honor.

But though always to be deprecated, it is too true that these inequalities exist, and are constantly entered on; and still more, -- I observe that the Lord often *permits* us to do things and enter into alliances which indicate the true condition of the soul, or at least meet a line in us not yet subdued. One of fine spiritual sensibilities will not find much interest in one below them. If I do, however I may think or imagine that I feel so, my company reveals my real likings, and because I don't judge myself on account of my real likings, the Lord allows me to bind myself to that which truly indicates my predilections, and thereby carries on the discipline needful for me. The Lord must have seen Peter carrying the sword, and yet He never rebuked him for it until he had committed an overt act, and Peter might have alleged that He told him to take it: but it was needful for Peter that *his own act* should expose how little he was in sympathy with his Master's mind. It is humbling when the low state of our souls necessitates such a course of action on the Lord's part, but it may be the only way to convince us of the subtlety of our hearts.

When an unequal association is entered on irrevocably (for it is not always possible, or even allowed to us, to retrace a false step), the position, even if not actually wrong, is *always perilous*, and the only way to avoid a fall, towards which there will constantly be a tendency, is to lean on the Lord and seek His strength to maintain, unflinchingly, the measure of light which we have received. Light is most generous and expressive, and always communicative of its power to aid anyone in darkness. If I have light and am walking in the

light, I shall know the gentle, insinuating, yet direct and effectual way in which light encounters darkness; but if I assume darkness in order to spare darkness, there is no doubt but that my light will be turned to grievous darkness. There is nothing more difficult than to maintain to a Christian below you in light and knowledge of the Lord's grace (though *possibly* above you in practice), that power of testimony to truth which would make his conscience feel that your presence was acting on him, and that you, on the other hand, are not surrendering the truth of God in order to be in fellowship with one below it. It is very searching (but let us not shrink from it) that light is often, as it were, absorbed by ourselves, and when it is so, there is no emanation, or testimony of its power. "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give light." I understand by this passage that if I am myself under the influence of light perfectly (i.e. if the light has taken possession of me), then others will see it, as the shining of a candle. That it is not so with us may account for our constant failure in setting forth a power of light. Not being under the influence of it ourselves, it does not emanate from us as the clear light of a candle. In conclusion, I may add that the lower element gives way to the higher one *if the higher one abides in itself*, though this must necessarily be with more or less painful action on the one in darkness; but the lower corrupts the higher *the moment* the latter stoops to fellowship with it. May we seek to walk with the Lord in His elevation, and not oblige Him to descend in His ordering for us to our own level.

IN CHRIST/IN THE LORD

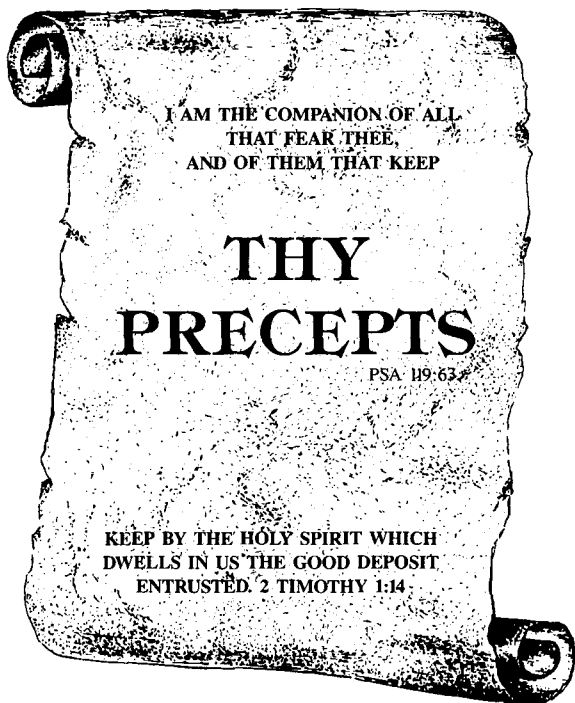
Q. 1. What do you consider the force of the two expressions, "in Christ" and "in the Lord"? **2.** What means, as said of marriage, "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39)?
G.B.E.

A. 1. Though they approach nearly, there is a shade of difference, the first rather expressing privilege, the latter responsibility. **2.** This is certainly so in the case proposed. Two persons might be "in Christ", truly attached in affection, but the one entering into the full relationship of the Christian, the other hardly rising in faith or practice above a simple believer, content with remission of sins and general care as to moral walk, and in a false position ecclesiastically. Would it be "in the Lord" for such to marry? Can two walk together before Him who are not agreed in a duty so important for His glory?

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CONTENTS

The Blessedness of the Person	161
Jezebel, "That Cursed Woman"	169
Elements of Dispensational Truth	174
Deplorable Date Setting	179
Schism / Heresy / Heretic	181
The Seeing of God	184
The Lord's Love	189
Guidance	190
Secret Association	191

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PERSON

EDITORIAL NOTE

The paper, *The Blessedness of the Person of Christ in its Unity as Presented in Scripture*, by A. C. Ord, was written to expose the evil doctrines of F. E. Raven regarding the Person of Christ. This paper occupied 48 pages. If the Lord will, it will be presented serially in Thy Precepts.

It has often been at the times of crises among the Lord's people that some of the best papers on truth under attack were written. The bulk of the papers written by A. C. Ord appeared at such junctures and they were all marked by deep acquaintance with the truths that he so ably defended. I would suggest that he answered very markedly to the character of Phinehas, the warrior priest, with whom God made an everlasting covenant of the priesthood -- a covenant that will find expression in the millennial reign when the sons of Zadok (progeny of Phinehas) minister before the Lord (Ezek. 40-48).

The reader, I trust, will find his apprehension of the glory of the Person of Christ much enlarged by following this series carefully and prayerfully. We will begin, then, on page 8 of the original edition of his paper.

A. C. Ord's references to the *Collected Writings* and to the *Letters of J.N. Darby* refer to the G. Morrish ed.

Ed.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN ITS UNITY AS PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE

By A. C. Ord.

[F. E. Raven] said, "Where the idea of unity of a person is got from, I know not. It seems to me *perfect nonsense*."

What Mr. Turpin says is this:

"The holy mystery of His blessed Person is attempted to be unravelled and explained after a fashion that *one's whole soul shrinks from*; and the end must be that adoration and worship will be superseded by reason and speculation. May God in His great grace and goodness avert such a consummation as this, is one's constant, earnest cry . . . How well it is said" (by Mr. Darby), "that 'we must take care not to pretend to know all that concerns *the union of humanity and divinity in the Person of the Lord. This union is inscrutable*.' "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Jesus grew in wisdom. What has made some Christians fall into such errors is, that they have wished to *distinguish* and explain the condition of Christ as man. We know that He was and is God; we know that He became man, and the witness to His true divinity is maintained in that state of humiliation by the *inscrutability of the union*. One may shew that certain views detract from His glory, and from the truth of His Person; but I earnestly desire that brethren should not set to work to dogmatize as to His Person. They would assuredly fall into some error. I never saw any one do it without falling into some unintentional heresy. To show that an explanation is false, in order to preserve souls from the evil consequences of the error and to pretend to explain the Person of the Lord, are two different things.'

"Again," Mr. Turpin continues, "the same writer says, 'I dread dissecting, if I may venture so to speak, Christ; it is not the way to honor Him. Very few will speak so as not to commit themselves; "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." We may know many precious things of Him which enable us to condemn error, but nice definitions of what He was, and how He was it, human language and human thoughts are not competent to, I judge.'"

(*Helps in Things concerning Himself*. No. 34; pp. 254-256.)

But perhaps it may be doubted by some whether Mr. R. really holds such sentiments, or means what his words appear to convey. Alas! there can be no

1. The italics are by A. C. O., in this, and quotations generally.

question on this head; for the system of doctrine elaborated by Mr. Raven is painfully complete in its character, and is carried out in all points in which it could be applied to the Person, the Work, the Titles of Christ, as well as the relations in which He stands to us, or before God on our behalf.

Moreover, this is not only stated and developed, but passages are quoted from his opponents, in which the common faith of Christians is expressed, in order to condemn and repudiate them. Quoting Mr. Hunt, he says:

"The phraseology in which Mr. Hunt couches his own belief, such as *God and Man one Christ*, and God becoming the woman's seed, is not the language of Scripture, nor, in my judgment, conveys at all accurately the truth of Scripture." . . . "The fact is that those who have left us have no sense of the reality of the incarnation of the Son, and are fast travelling in the direction of the *profane thought* of M. Favez, their leader in France, that the Son of Man is man united to the divinity." (A Correspondence, page 10).

Yet Mr. Darby says, in *Collected Writings*:

"Christ's humanity was united to Godhead, which no one else's humanity ever was" (vol. 15:229).

It may be thought that because Mr. Raven does not deny either the divinity or the humanity of Christ, his views are less serious on that account. But such is not the case, inasmuch as the separation of the natures involves the dissolution and ultimate loss of His Person, and all the blessed results for faith which flow from it, in all that He has undertaken for us. This will be shown in the sequel.²

We give some further extracts from Mr. Darby's writings, showing the importance of the subject, as well as his views upon it, not that we own any standard but Scripture, but because of their intrinsic value, and because they are accepted and appealed to by Mr. R's followers, in support of their own views.

"If we regard the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, Immanuel, God with us, the One testified unto by Jehovah of hosts as 'the Man My Fellow' (Zechariah 13:7), Him who fills the highest heavens, and yet was down here a babe in a manger, who could command the waves, and still the storm, but was buffeted by His creatures -- how fearfully and wonderfully made"! . . .

"'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' has thrown the efficacy of what He Himself is into *all that He has done*. He offered *one* sacrifice for sins, of abiding efficacy. He has 'obtained *eternal* redemption' and brought in '*everlasting* righteousness,' He has 'perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified.' He is 'consecrated' a priest '*for evermore*.' (Heb. 7; 9; 10). *All the value of the work and offices of Christ flows from the glory of His Person.*" (Ps.

2. In this paper, for the strengthening of faith, we have sought to unfold the manifold glories of Christ, and not merely to controvert error; for we have found that these views, even where they were not received as truth, yet often leave a blighting effect upon the soul, as a kind of mist which Satan uses to darken the beauty and excellency of His Person.

139, *Practical Holiness*, by J. N. D.)

"Thus we have a revelation of heavenly things brought directly from heaven by Christ, and in His Person. He revealed them in all their freshness which was found in Him, and which He, who was ever in heaven, enjoyed; He revealed them in the perfection of the Person of Him who made the glory of heaven; whose nature is the atmosphere which all those who are found there breathe, and by which they live; He, the object of the affections which animate this holy place, from the Father Himself, down to the last of the angels who fill heaven's courts with their praises, He is the center of all glory. Such is the *Son of Man*, He who came down to reveal the Father -- truth and grace -- but who divinely remained in heaven in the essence of His divine nature, in His Person inseparable from the humanity with which He was clothed! *The Deity which filled this humanity was inseparable in His Person from all the Divine perfection, but He never ceased to be a man, really and truly man before God.*" (J. N. D. *Notes on the Gospel of John*, p. 37).

"It is a great mistake to suppose that because people have not intelligently received an evil doctrine they have not suffered by it. The plain simple notion of Christ is undermined, and power against evil and for good destroyed, though the soul is unaware of it. The sense of the evil is utterly enfeebled, and Christ practically lost." (*Collected Writings* 15:210, note).

There are four great fundamental points on which we join issue with Mr. Raven in reference to the Person of our blessed Lord. And we affirm that on each of these points the Scripture teaches that which completely overthrows Mr. Raven's system of doctrine.

First, as to the union of the divine and human natures in His glorious Person, we affirm that this unity is everywhere implied or expressed in Scripture.

Secondly, as to the names, titles, or designations that He bears, we assert that they all, without exception, include or carry with them Divine attributes.

Thirdly, as to the relations, positions, and offices, between God and man, which He fills, we declare that they all, and in every aspect, imply and involve the whole glory of His Person.

Fourthly, as to the work of expiation which He has accomplished, we appeal to every Christian that the thought as well as the reality of what He was, as God, in accomplishing it, must always and of necessity be brought into it.

Far be it from us to pretend to comprehend or explain the mode or manner of the precious and all-important union of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ. The very thought of thus subjecting that ever blessed Person to such intrusion of the human mind is abhorrent to us. Love and loyalty alike forbid the thought of thus dishonoring, by irreverent curiosity, Him whom faith, whilst allowed to gaze on His perfections, contemplates with holy adoration and worship. But whilst owning that in the depth of His Person this Holy One of

God is altogether unfathomable,³ yet we may bring forward the universal testimony of Scripture as to *the fact*, the necessity, and the display of this unity; for all this is distinctly revealed to us.

First, then, as to the union of the divine and human natures in His glorious Person; we affirm that this unity is everywhere implied or expressed in Scripture.

In Matt. 1:23 it is written, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Here it is evident that under the same designation of "*His Name Emmanuel*," the Spirit includes both the child conceived and brought forth, and the infinite Emmanuel, thus expressing not only Godhead, but God in the new condition of manhood in our midst, that is, God with us. So in Isaiah 9:6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . . and *His name* shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God." That the same Person should be both a child born, and the mighty God, is neither conceivable, nor possible, nor can be in any sense true, but by the union of the divine and human natures in that Person. John the Baptist puts this in the most striking light when he says, "After me cometh *a man* which is preferred before me, for *He was before me*" (John 1:30). As to His human nature, the Lord came after John, as to His divine, He was before Him, and He founds His exaltation as Man on the fact that He was before him, the Baptist speaking of Him unequivocally as one Person, both before him, and after him. This could only be on the ground of the unity of the Person. We see the same in the Lord's own testimony of Himself, when He says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). It is impossible, unless we hold the heretical notion of the existence of the humanity of Christ before His incarnation (and so misinterpret, in a wholly novel way, passages of this kind) to give them any real signification, unless we take them as expressive of the unity of the Person of Christ; this unity being so real, that what was proper to one nature could be thus applied to the other. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where *He was before*?" (John 6:62).

In Isaiah 50 the Lord gives this challenge to Israel, as regards His divine Person when manifested in the flesh, "Wherefore, when I *came*, was there no

3. Even in our own persons we have an illustration of this incomprehensibleness, for we also are constituted of two natures, body and soul being united in one person. But *how* these two natures, the physical and the spiritual, are united, or how they mutually act and react upon one another is beyond our power to conceive or fathom; and though the natures are distinct, to separate them in practical actions is impossible. I take up a child in my arms and embrace it; a man would be a fool to say "You did this with your body, not with your spirit" for, being but one person, none can say how far my spirit entered into the action. If we are thus baffled, and get out of our depth in attempting to penetrate the mystery of our own being, how much more, without making a parallel, must this be the case with the infinite Person of the Son of God.

man? when I *called*, was there none to answer. Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness . . . I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." And He continues, "The Lord God hath given me *the tongue* of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (vv. 2-4). The same Person speaks throughout as "I" and "Me." He who clothes the heavens with blackness, as the mighty Creator, is the obedient One, who, as Man, has received the tongue of the learned, and submits to His Father's will, exposing His face even to shame and spitting (vv. 5,6). The same Person in John 8, who, little more than thirty years of age, was about to be "lifted up" as man from the earth, declares "before Abraham was, I am," thus applying to Himself the eternal self-existent name of Jehovah. In John 18:4, "Knowing all things that should come upon Him," He presents Himself to those who came to take Him in Gethsemane (responding to the title "Jesus of Nazareth," which distinctly involved His humanity) with the words "I am (He)"; yet these words sufficed to render them powerless, and they go backward, and fall to the ground. He moreover protects His own, whilst delivering Himself up, that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, "Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none" (vv. 5-9). When He invites the recognition of His Person as "the Son of God," by the blind man (whose eyes He had opened, and who had owned Him as "a prophet," a "man" who was "of God," and who now answers Christ's invitation to believe on "the Son of God," by saying, "who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"), He says, "Thou hast both *seen* Him and He it is that *talketh* with thee" (John 9:17,33-38). The statement in John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth," is alone sufficient to establish this unity; for in saying that He who is God, the Word, and the Creator, became flesh, the apostle does not imply that He assumed another personality, but that the Person of the Son, who had existed from all eternity, assumed manhood, and displayed the divine glory in that manhood, and as Man. Thus also, in Philippians 2, He who subsisted in the form and glory of God, "*took* upon Him the form of a servant, . . . and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." All was *Himself*, and the same person, whether in the form of God, or humbled as a servant here.

In Zechariah 9 Christ takes His place as the Shepherd of Israel, who feeds His flock, but is rejected by the nation, and specially by their leaders, and then He is sold for thirty pieces of silver; all this distinctly brings Him before us as man. "And I said to them . . . Give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for *my* price thirty pieces of silver." But the prophet adds, "And the Lord" -- that is Jehovah -- "said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that *I* was prized at of them." For the man so treated, the Messiah and Shepherd of Israel, is Jehovah also (vv. 12-13).

In Isaiah 40, when the coming of Christ in glory is announced, Zion is

exhorted to lift up her voice with strength, and "say unto the cities of Judah, *Behold your God*. Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand. . . . Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." This is evidently Christ; but the Holy Ghost proceeds to say, "*He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom,*" etc. (vv. 9,10,11); continuing, in the same Person, the shepherd character and tenderness manifested in Him as man, whilst He is God, and acts and judges as such. In Zechariah 14:3-5 the same event is in view, and Christ is referred to as appearing, for the deliverance of His people, in divine glory as Jehovah, "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations; . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." But His Person, as man, is distinguished in the words, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," which cleaves asunder, in testimony to the glory of Him who frequented this spot, in the days of His humiliation upon earth.

In Romans 1:3,4 the gospel of God is declared to be "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we have His full title. Then His humanity is especially marked as characterizing His person, in the words. "*Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh,*" as well as His power displayed in resurrection as the Son of God, "and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Similarly, in Romans 9:5, His humanity is *first* brought forward, as marking what He is personally, and quite as distinctly as His divine nature, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, *Christ came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Indeed the passages which indicate unmistakably the unity of the Person of Christ are innumerable. Many of them will be noticed as we proceed. (Compare among others John 20:27,28; Micah 5:2; Psalm 45:7; Col. 2:9; etc.)⁴

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

4. See also chapters 3 and 4, in *The Glory of the Person of the Son of God*. Carter, 13, Aldine Chambers, Paternoster Row.



JEZEBEL, "THAT CURSED WOMAN"

To all devout readers and lovers of the Bible the name of Jezebel connotes with all that is base, vile, despicable and wicked, in connection with female character and conduct; it is a name suggestive of infamy of the most degrading, the most abhorrent kind, and no name in all the annals of history, either sacred or profane, can give rise to more feelings of revulsion than does the notorious name of "that woman Jezebel."

This name, as often happens in personal nomenclature, in its meaning, denotes the very opposite of the character of the one bearing it. It here, like our more familiar Agnes, signifies *chaste* (Latin, *sine coitu*), according to the Hebraist Gesenius. The name of Isabella "the Catholic" was said by the persecuted Jews of Spain to be a derivative or modification of Jezebel; in fact the name is so near akin to Jezebel in the Hebrew that it is suspected that the Jesuits (Romanists) have so tampered with the resemblance as to make them appear unlike as possible in modern language. A note however in *Smith's Bible Dictionary* says, "Whether the name Isabella was originally connected with that of Jezebel is doubtful."

She was as to her ancestry daughter of Ethbaal "king of the Zidonians," a Phoenician princess and the union by marriage therefore with the Israelitish Ahab was effected probably more from motives of political advantage rather than by the sentiment of affection, as is, or should be the primary motive in all matrimonial alliances. The union was in direct conflict with the express commandment of God; for while others, prominent in the national history, contracted marriages with Gentiles, from Moses back to Solomon through David, intermarriage with the cursed race of the Canaanites was another matter entirely and was sternly prohibited the Israelites by Jehovah their God, who had commissioned them to exterminate them utterly, a command that extended to no other race of Gentiles. And in addition to this unabrogated prohibition, the antecedents of Jezebel were of such evil character as should, of itself, have prevented any thought of marriage with one of such ancestry. "The royal family of Tyre was remarkable at that time both for its religious fanaticism and its savage temper. Her father Ethbaal united with his royal office the priesthood of the goddess Astarte, and had come to the throne by the murder of his predecessor Phelles. The next generation included within itself Matgenes, king and priest of Baal, the murderer of Pygmalion, and Elisa and Dido, foundress of Carthage" (*Smith*). How true that though godliness does not reside in the blood, it not infrequently does seem to follow in families, as on the contrary wickedness often appears to run in lines of ancestry, as seen here in the case of the wretched wife of unhappy Ahab.

Of such unpromising stock came Jezebel, and, as has been remarked, "the character of the queen gave additional force and significance to what might else have been regarded merely as a commercial and political measure, natural to a

king devoted, as was Ahab, to the arts of peace and splendor of regal luxury." He was, in some respects, another Charles II of England, devoid of morals and much else that made him utterly unfit to occupy a throne dependent for its continuance on the blessing of God.

The dire consequences of this ill-advised union extended through Jezebel's daughter, the wholesale murderess Athaliah, down from the northern kingdom of Judea and the concealed purpose of Satan in the transaction was doubtless the corruption of the entire nation through idolatry, with its ever-accompanying licentiousness, with the complete extinction of all pure worship of and obedience to the one true God of Israel, God of heaven and earth, Jehovah, the great I AM, discovered to Moses in or at the burning bush.

There has been considerable discussion as also disagreement among the learned as to the age of Jezebel when this disastrous marriage was contracted. According to Smith, "if we may trust the numbers in the text (and why not, pray?) she must have married Ahab before his accession: He reigned 22 years; and 12 years from that time her grandson Ahaziah was 21 years of age. Her daughter Athaliah must have been born therefore at least 37 years before." We ourselves, it must be confessed, have little taste (and less ability) for questions of chronology; and here, where "authorities" themselves differ, how may we the "laity" hope to arrive at any definite or satisfactory conclusion? However, it appears probable that Jezebel was considerably the senior of her Hebrew husband, and ruled him, as often happens under like circumstances, with an almost iron hand. And whoever must have been responsible for the ill-starred match, it must have been often and bitterly regretted by the unfortunate husband. Excepting for his abject subservience to his haughty wife, he reminds us much of England's blustering Henry VIII.

Our purpose however is not so much to dwell on or seek to analyze the character of Ahab but rather to enlarge on and scrutinise the conduct of the wretched woman of our unattractive study. Haughty, imperious to a degree, determined always to have her way, she ruled in the palace as no woman in the annals of all history ever ruled and tyrannized anywhere. She appears as a combination or composite of both England's "bloody Mary" in her murderous, fanatical persecution; and her sister, the indomitable Elizabeth, strong in her imperious will, though this last, fortunately, had no grovelling husband over whom she might tyrannize and whose life she might make miserable, provided she had a spark of English self-respect and independence of character.

Jezebel, like Elizabeth, could swear, for on learning of the slaughter of her 450 priests of Baal, she swore most horribly as to what she should do to the fearless prophet responsible for the extermination of her favorites, the pampered prophets of her detestable worship of the Baal of her fathers. "As surely as thou art Elijah and as I am Jezebel (LXX), so God do to me also and more also, if by this time to-morrow I make not thy life as the life of one of them." Poor Ahab, if we may so speak or commiserate so despicable a man, to

be inseparably linked to such a she-wolf. Did his living with her have anything to do with his later disposition - for he seems to have been at the first a not really bad man. "This unsuitable alliance proved most disastrous to the kingdom of Israel; for Jezebel induced her weak husband not only to connive at her introducing into the nation the worship of her native idols, but eventually to become himself a worshipper of them, and to use all the means in his power to establish them in the room of the God of Israel." Such men cannot say in extenuation of their sin, "The woman that thou gavest me," as did Adam of old; yet even such an one as Solomon, who was so "beloved of his God," permitted "outlandish women to turn away his heart from following his God." These were his foreign wives -- and unlike Ahab who had but one, Solomon had dozens if not scores. Oh, the almost irresistible influence of wives over husbands; if good, as so many, thank God are, well, blessedly well; but if ill, alas! alas! as we see both in Scripture as also in everyday life. Let men beware, then, as they make choice of a life partner; and if Christians, let them seek help and guidance from God, or rather, look to Him to both choose and bring together and create love in the heart for the Sarah, the Rachel, the Ruth, the Hannah, to whom He would have them joined in holy wedlock. Amen!

Ahab was just such a character as a woman of Jezebel's stamp could mould to her determined will and induce to persecute those who appeared to oppose the royal will. He was much like the enigmatical Robespierre, who while in the early stage of life appeared averse to persecution and bloodshed, became later like a tiger, almost, in his thirst for blood, pleased if he could but see it roll in torrents from the guillotine. So while some wives prove the making of otherwise worthless men, others, as Jezebel here, appear to destroy whatever may have seemed amiable and worthy in their unhappy husbands. We would hardly venture to suggest that Jezebel was the ruin of her husband Ahab though she certainly did at the close accelerate his untimely end. A woman who could defy or think to intimidate such an executioner as Jehu would stop at nothing with such a ductile man (if *man* he may be called) as Ahab.

When he lies puling and pouting on his couch, like a spoiled, pampered, whining child, over the just refusal of Naboth to sell or to exchange with him the coveted vineyard, she rises to the occasion. She addresses him as an incensed dowager might speak to her footman, saying tauntingly, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise," she commands, "and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." For the law of God as given through Moses she cared not a whit. His people were enjoined that they should not alienate their landed properties, either by sale or inheritance, that they might ever remain in possession of the family or tribe. Ahab probably knew or should have known this wise provision against the ultimate poverty of any in Israel, which was not obstinacy on the part of Naboth.

She at once writes letters to the elders or senators of Jezreel, ordering what should be done to secure the vineyard to her petulant spouse, by the judicial

murder of the unmovable Naboth; and as Keil well remarks: "That the elders of Jezreel, instantly complying with the command of the queen, show themselves ready for her ungodly commission, presupposes deep moral degradation as well as slavish fear of her detestable tyranny." Yes, low, low indeed had the morals of even the elders of the nation sunk, that this order of the murder of one of its most just citizens, was so promptly executed. We care not to linger over the execrable scene, but draw over it the curtain of silence and thank God that a like tyranny has not overshadowed our own fair land, to make subjects so abject as were these of Israel in the dark days of Jezebel.

The deed accomplished, the despicable murderers sent to Jezebel the message, "Naboth is stoned, and is dead." "To her and not to Ahab was sent the announcement that the royal wishes were accomplished, and she bade her husband go and take the vacant property, and on her accordingly fell the prophet's curse as well as on her husband." Her pronounced doom, her more than merited punishment, lingered long but the terrible judgment slumbered not. "We hear no more of her for a long period. But she survived Ahab and still, as queen-mother (after the oriental custom), was a great personage in the court of her sons, and as such, became the special mark for vengeance when Jehu advanced against Jezreel to overthrow the dynasty of Ahab." "What peace," he replied to the question put to him as he approached, "so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" (2 Kings 9:22). "But in that supreme hour of her house," writes Smith, "the spirit of the aged queen rose to the dreadful emergency. She was in the palace, which stood by the gate of the city, overlooking the approach from the east. Beneath lay the open space under the city walls. She determined to face the destroyer of her family, whom she saw rapidly advancing in his chariot."

There she stood, proudly as ever, with her face painted becomingly (as she thought), her "hair-do" arranged as became a lady of her rank; from the latticed window of the tower of the gate she gazed defiantly down upon the zealous executioner. "She saw that her doom was sealed," one writes, "but she was determined to let it be seen that she feared not, mourned not, and to cast one bitter and burning word upon the head of the destroyer, such as should haunt and scorch him all his life. When he looked up she returned his glance with a stare of defiance, and cried out, Had Zimri peace who slew his master? The coolness of this iron-hearted man is astonishing," says Kitto. And quaint, trenchant Joseph Hall, "Ahab wanted neither wit nor wickedness; yet is he in both a very novice to this Sidonian dame. There needs no other devil than Jezebel, whether to project evil, or to work it. She chides the pusillanimity of her dejected husband, and persuades him his rule cannot be free, unless it be licentious; that there should be no bounds for sovereignty, but will. Already hath she contrived to have by fraud and force, what was denied to entreaty . . . How present are the wits of the weaker sex for the devising of wickedness!" Kitto marvels at the "coolness" of the iron-hearted Jehu; is not Jezebel more than his equal for coolness as she looks unflinchingly down upon him from her

lofty window, and puts to him the taunting question as to a former slayer of royalty!

"Throw her down," orders Jehu laconically, to the chamberlains in waiting at her side. "The palace was apparently rife with traitors," writes one in *Expositors Bible*. "Ahab had been the first polygamist among the kings of Israel, and therefore the first also to introduce the odious atrocity of eunuchs. Those hapless wretches, the portents of Eastern seraglios, the disgrace of humanity, are almost always the retributive enemies of the societies of which they are the helpless victims. Fidelity or gratitude is rarely to be looked for from natures warped into malignity by the ruthless misdoings of men. Nor was the nature of Jezebel one to inspire affection. One or two eunuchs immediately thrust out of the windows their bloated and beardless faces. 'Fling her down!' shouted Jehu. Down they flung the wretched queen (has ever queen died a death so shamefully ignominious?), and her blood spurted upon the wall, and on the horses. Jehu, who had only stopped for an instant on his headlong rush, drove his horses over the corpse, and entered the gate of her capital, with his wheels crimson with her blood. History records scarcely another instance of such a scene," etc.

We could here conclude our study of this woman, save to remark that her name was long remembered with her hateful deeds; and so late as the beginning of our era the name was used as the symbol of that which is abominable in the Christian church: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Rev. 2:20). Alford and others read here, thy wife, a reading noted in Darby's translation, with some others; it has some authority and was doubtless in allusion to the statement of 2 Kings 21:25; "Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness: whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."

So we bid a not regretful farewell to this wretched woman, this fury, "a Sidonian princess born"; "and the world, and Israel in particular, was well rid of the despicable creature as the willing eunuchs hurled her from the tower of the gate to her deserved doom. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord," might not only Israel but *all* men say: "but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (Judges 5:31). So, too, when Great Babylon shall be destroyed (of whom Jezebel was the fitting counterpart) shall the triumphant proclamation be made, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." And we of today rejoice likewise, if only in anticipation, at the final overthrow of that which is so fittingly represented by both Jezebel and Babylon, master corrupters of the earth and persecutors to the death of saints and apostles, with the prophets who have ever witnessed against their idolatries and accompanying wickedness.

Space may yet be given them to repent; may they then profit by this grace afforded them and "repent and believe the gospel." Amen. C. Knapp

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

PART 2

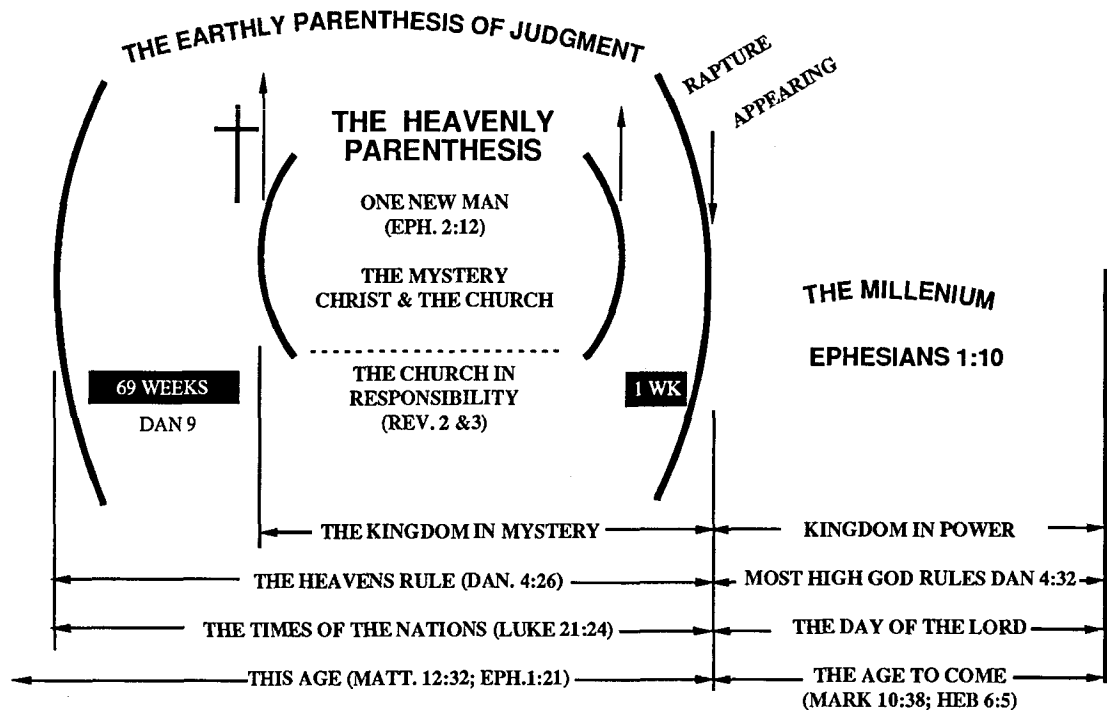
THE TWO PARENTHESES

CHAPTER 2.1: THE GENTILE PARENTHESIS OF JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION

In Part 2 we will examine the subject of the two parentheses. These two parentheses, the Gentile parenthesis of judgment and the heavenly parenthesis, are illustrated on the chart on the following page.

A parenthesis "()" interrupts a sequence (just as this parenthesis does) without otherwise affecting it. The word "parenthesis" was used in the early 1800's in connection with the unfolding of dispensational truth, to indicate something that God has brought about in connection with a sequence of His dealings. There are two of these parentheses. One has to do with the heavenly sphere of God's glory in Christ; and the other is connected with the earthly sphere of God's glory in Christ. Recall that God has ONE purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ -- and this glory will be displayed in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly (Eph. 1:10).



THE EARTHLY, GENTILE PARENTHESIS OF JUDGMENT

In this chapter we will consider the wider of the two parentheses,¹ namely, the earthly one, the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel.² Israel will be at the center of God's display of His glory in Christ in the 'earthly places' during the millenium. The setting aside of Israel and the removal of God's throne from Jerusalem is an interruption in the development of God's ways in government in the earth. Of course, this interruption is part of God's ways with man for His own glory.

This period has been called a "parenthesis" because it is a period of time during which God's "reign" in Israel is interrupted. The administration of God's direct government in the earth began with David. Saul's reign was *provisional*. By that I mean that it was something provided by God, in response to the people's request for a king, in order to bring out the state of the people.³ His choice was Zion and David (Psalm 78:65-72). The throne of David (B.C. 1011) and Solomon (B.C. 971) was called the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23). This was the seat of God's direct government in the earth. David and Solomon together are a type of the Lord Jesus as coming from heaven (Rev. 19) to conduct the war of the great day of God the Almighty (Rev. 16:14) and then to reign as the Prince of peace.

But Solomon, who sat on the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23), was unfaithful (1 Kings 11). So God chastised the nation through the division under Jeroboam (B.C. 931) and the kingdom split in two (1 Kings 12). Still, the throne of Jehovah remained at Jerusalem. After a while the 10 northern tribes (often called "the house of Israel" and sometimes "Ephraim") were taken captive by the Assyrians (B.C. 722). And finally rebellious Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 606/605). A 70 year captivity of Judah then commenced (Jer. 25:1-14; 29:10), a year for each sabbath year not kept for 490 years (2 Chron. 36:21). The end of this 70 year period did not, however, restore the kingdom to the house of David in Jerusalem.

The capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was used by God to bring to an end God's *direct* government in the earth through Israel for much more than 70 years. The removal of this direct government is reflected in Scripture in

1. As can be seen in the illustration on the previous page, there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis.

2. W. Kelly, *An Exposition of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, 1947 reprint, p. 155. In *Lectures Introductory to . . . the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, 1874, he called it "the parenthesis of Gentile empire." See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 2:53 (1830); *The Bible Treasury* 11:180,181; 12:8; 9:344; *The Prospect* 1:148.

3. There is something analogous to this concerning Shiloh, where the tent of meeting (the tabernacle) was located, until God's choice of Jerusalem was manifested (1 Chron. 20:18-22:1; Psalm 78:65-72). Shiloh was *provisional*, to bring out the state of the people.

several ways:

1. Notice that in the book of Daniel God is referred to as "the God of the heavens"; notice also the statement, "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26).
2. In a vision, Ezekiel saw the Shekinah remove (Ezek. 10:18; 11:22). The time will come when it will return (Ezek. 43:1-7; 44:1). During the interval of its absence, the heavens rule rather than God exercising *direct* government in the earth in Israel.
3. God pronounced Israel to be Lo-Amni, meaning "not my people" (Hosea 1:9). They are not outwardly owned as His people from then until a coming day when they will be called Amni, meaning "my people" (Hosea 2:1).
4. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (Daniel 2) in which an image depicted four Gentile empires. This image depicts Gentile rule from Nebuchadnezzar until the smiting stone falls upon the feet of the image and smashes it. Christ is the smiting stone and when He comes from heaven (Rev. 19) to conduct the war of that great day of God the Almighty (Rev. 16:14), He will bring Gentile dominion to an end and reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).
5. Daniel had a dream (Dan. 7) in which these four empires are depicted in their beastly character.
6. Our Lord called this period the times of the Gentiles (nations; Luke 21:24).

These conditions exist during the time designated by "the Gentile parenthesis of judgment." It is a time of Gentile dominion brought as a chastisement, a judgment, upon Israel, but it will come to an end when God establishes His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2). This will end the period when God is not directly exercising government in the earth in Israel.

FAILURE MADE GOOD BY CHRIST

The failure of kingship in Israel led to this parenthesis of universal Gentile dominion. Behind this failure was God's purpose to have the people of Israel representatively in the land (though under Gentile dominion) when Christ came the first time, in order that Christ might be universally rejected by Jew and Gentile. Thus, at the end of the 70 years captivity, a remnant returned to the land (Ezra). Though not outwardly owned as before, as when the throne of Jehovah was in Jerusalem, God continued to work with this people (see Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) in view of the great test He would bring to pass connected with the Son come in holy manhood. This test, meant to bring out the state of the people, the state of the Gentile power -- yes, the state of the first man (1 Cor. 15:47). The rejection and crucifixion of Christ led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matt. 22:7; Dan. 9:26). Meanwhile, there is now "a remnant [of Jews] according to election of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

These are part of the body of Christ, looking at them in one relationship, and are also called "the Israel of God" when distinguished from believing Gentiles (Gal. 6:16).

All will be made good for God's glory in the second Man. Even the failure in kingship will be made good; for Christ will reign, reign perfectly, during the millennium, and *deliver up* the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24). All others had to have rule *taken away* from them. He, the Servant-Son, will glorify God in government in the earth, perfectly so, and then deliver up the kingdom to God. What a wonderful Person He is!

So the earthly, Gentile parenthesis of judgment, which is the times of the Gentiles, began with the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the deliverance of Jerusalem when our Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, comes to set up God's direct government in the earth in Israel. The smiting stone will come from heaven and grind to powder he on whomsoever He falls. The image will be smashed and that smiting stone will fill the earth. Then shall the knowledge of Jehovah cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

Oh, to walk here in the little remaining time so as to please Him! Think of Him Who is our life, and Him with Whom we are joint heirs. We shall be manifested in glory with Himself when He comes in the clouds of heaven with all His holy myriads to reign before His ancients in glory. Then shall our Beloved have His rightful place here where He humbled Himself to the lowest. Rich in glory, He stooped to the unspeakable depths of the three hours when the Holy One Who knew no sin not only bore our sins in His own body on the tree, but what was far deeper, was *made sin* for us. Everyone that humbles himself shall be exalted in due time -- and who so, and justly so, as our great Exemplar.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

DEPLORABLE DATE SETTING

In a postmillenarian periodical, M. R. Gilstrap, wrote:

I converted to postmillennialism in college, because I was attending a premillennial, dispensational Bible College, that wasn't a very popular decision. It wasn't long before I talked several of my friends into crossing the line with me. Being young and argumentive, we never tired of dialoging with premils. One of our favorite subjects was the rapture. Our favorite line of argumentation revolved around Matthew 24:32ff. There Jesus says, "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened . . . No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

We would begin by getting our opponent to admit that the generation of the fig tree started in May 1948 with the establishment of Israel. Then, we inferred that the rapture should take place in 1981 (1948 plus 40 years less 7 years tribulation) if we were working with a pretribulationist. Quite honestly, most of the folks I talked to (including professors) were willing to grant the above premises.

Most, however, were unable to give a satisfactory explanation for the last part of the verses quoted above. When queried whether such precise date-setting violated Jesus statement in v. 36, "No one knows the day or the hour," most often we were stonewalled (by students) or branded troublemakers (by faculty). No one had an answer.¹

"This generation" did not begin in 1948. "This generation" refers to a continuous moral class already existent when our Lord was here and will continue to exist until He comes in glory at the appearing. The regathering of Israel that the O.T. prophets predicted did not occur in 1948, nor will it occur until just after Christ's appearing in glory.

"Most of the folks I talked to (including professors)" who were willing to grant the above premises, had no scriptural warrant for such foolishness. These datings are all a figment -- but these notions seem to sell many books to the gullible and ignorant.

Concerning the Son not knowing the day nor the hour, it is the glory of Himself in holy manhood to have taken the place of the perfect servant. J. N. Darby and Wm. Kelly, two able textual critics, do not accept the notion that the autograph of Matthew's gospel (Matt. 24:36) contained the words 'nor the Son.' It is found in Mark's gospel -- written by a servant who had failed but was restored; and chosen by the Spirit to set forth our blessed Savior as the perfect servant. And this One so took that place, that in the God given, official capacity

1. *Dispensationalism in Transition*, Oct. 1988 (Vol. 1, # 10). Used by permission.

as Servant, acting perfectly in it, He stated that He did not know the day or hour. The servant does not know what his master does (John 15:15). As deity He, of course, knew all. J. G. Bellett explained this in 1834 or 1835. See comments on Mark 13:32.

The plague of date setting for the rapture continues unabated. It provides oil on the fire for those seeking to discredit dispensational truth. Edgar Whisenant, who wrote that the Lord would come during the feast of tabernacles in 1988 now finds where he (allegedly) slipped a year -- so 1989 is the year.² It seems to me that self-occupation and self-seeking are at the bottom of date-setting of the rapture, though they who do it generally profess that they have a spiritual burden to get the information out. Mr. Whisenant was asked why God chose him. He replied:

You'll have to ask Him when we get up there. But I'll tell you what I think. In 1973 I prayed, "Lord, I know you're going to give the solution to the end times to someone. Let it be me. I'll work for it, and I'll praise Your name in all that I do." Ten years later He gave me the solution. For the next six years I worked on putting together and distributing my research notes.³

Yes, "Let it be me." Ah, to be the one, after so many have failed! Meanwhile another book has appeared: *Blessed Hope*, 1996.⁴

All of this recent date setting results from placing weight upon the approach of the year 2000 or by assuming that the predicted regathering of Israel took place in 1948, which it did not. Some will even say something about the approach of the year 2000 and then state a disclaimer that they are not date-setting. Well, very strictly speaking that is true, but for all that . . .

Prophecy and dates recommence after the rapture. It is inherent in dispensational truth that the rapture is not dated. Indeed, it is dispensational truth that delivers from the date setting of historicism (history premillennialism). It was this that delivered J. N. Darby from date setting. Whereas opponents would make date-setting inherent in dispensation truth, it is a non-dispensational activity, not only foreign to dispensational truth, but repugnant to it and exceedingly unwholesome, and worse, for saints to be involved in it. Under the law, false prophecy was a capital offense. "But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, . . . that prophet shall die" (Deut. 18:20).

Ed.

2. He forgot about one year and also forgot about the shout (Matt.25:6) and now claims that shout took place in 1988; i.e. the shout was his book! "When Will Jesus Return? Edgar Whisenant: His New Predictions," *Charisma and Christian Life*, Feb. 1989, P.59. He distributed over 4 million books and will probably be at it again.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

4. *Biblical Perspectives*, Sept./Oct. 1988, p. 1.

SCHISM / HERESY / HERETIC

There has been circulated a leaflet, purported to be an extract from a letter written by a servant of the Lord whom I shall not name. The leaflet contains statements on the subject of "schism" and "heresy" which are the *diametrical opposite* of the statement of Scripture. Referring to 1 Cor. 11:18,19, the extract says:

There were schisms in the Assembly at Corinth, and the Apostle says, 'There must needs be heresies that they which are APPROVED may be made manifest.' He does not say, "That they which are CHRISTIANS may be made manifest." I believe the "approved" ones were in contrast with the "heretics," or self-willed ones. The meaning of the word "heresy" is self-will, which is the root of schism. Hence he says, "Let a man APPROVE himself, and so let him eat." It is not "examine" but "approve" - the same word as in verse 19. He does not say, "Let a man be a Christian and so let him eat."

When "heresy" or self-will is working, and "schisms" are apparent as the result, we have to "approve" ourselves, as regards our moral and spiritual conditions, and so take our place at the table of the Lord, where the most prominent is, not OUR rights and privileges or those of others, but the claims of Christ, as Head of the body.

... But the real meaning of the word 'heresy' is self-will; and wherever it works, its direct tendency is to produce a sect or a schism in the Assembly. It may be as to a matter of doctrine or a matter of practice; but whatever it is, self-will is divisive in its effect. Man has no right to exercise his will in the Assembly of God; if he does, he is a heretic, and the fruit of his work will be a schism in the Assembly.

The first sentence quoted is correct; and then the writer goes on to contradict, not merely himself, but the express statements of the text of Scripture:

... I hear there exists divisions [*schisms*¹] among you, and I partly

1. *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*, p. 716, indicates the following uses of this word:

σχίσμα *skisma*.

Mat. 9:16. and the *rent* is made worse.

Mar. 2:21. and the *rent* is made worse.

Joh. 7:43. there was a *division* among the people

9:16. there was a *division* among them.

10:19. There was a *division* therefore

1 Co. 1:10. (that) there be no *divisions* among you;

11:18. I hear that there be *divisions* among you;

12:25. That there should be no *schism* in the

give credit [to it]. For there must also be sects [*heresies* ²] among you, that the approved may become manifest among you (1 Cor. 1:18,19, J. N. Darby).

In this Scripture we are taught that at Corinth there were *schisms* existent within the assembly. Unchecked, *schism* leads to *heresy*, i.e. sect. The writer cited above says the opposite; namely, that heresy leads to schism. A schism is within an assembly where the saints have not yet broken apart into two separated groups. If such break apart into two separated groups, one or two sects (*heresies*) are thereby formed.

The word translated "sect" is *hairesis*. But the writer cited said, "... a sect or schism in the Assembly." Schism is not sect; heresy is sect. The article is quite wrong. And wrong teachings leads to wrong practice and injury to souls.

Concerning 1 Cor. 11:18,19, Wm. Kelly wrote,

We have here important help toward deciding the difference between these terms as well as the precise nature of each. Schism is a division within the assembly, while they all still abide in the same association as before, even if severed in thought or feeling through fleshly partiality or aversion. Heresy, in its ordinary scriptural application as here (not its ecclesiastical usage), means a party among the saints, separating from the rest in consequence of a still stronger following of their own will. A schism within if unjudged tends to a sect or party without, when on the one hand the approved become manifest, who reject these narrow and selfish ways, and on the other the party man is self-condemned, as preferring his own particular views to the fellowship of all saints in the truth (Compare Titus 3:10,11). ³

Among the more helpful comments on this subject are the following, referring especially to Titus 3:10.

2. The *Englishman's Greek Concordance*, p. 17, indicates the following uses of this word:

αἵρεσις *hairesis*.

Acts 5:17. which is the *sect* of the Sadducees

15:5. certain of the *sect* of Pharisees

24:5. of the *sect* of the Nazarenes:

14. the way which they call *heresy*,

26:5. straightest *sect* of our religion

28:22. for as concerning this *sect*,

1 Co.11:19. there must be also *heresies*

Gal. 5:20. strife, seditions, *heresies*,

2 Pet.2:1. shall bring in damnable *heresies*,

And for Titus 3:10:

αἱρετικός *hairetikos*.

Tit. 3:10. A man that is an *heretick*

3. *Notes on . . . Corinthians*, London: Morrish, p. 178, n.d.

Q. -- Titus 3:10,11, kindly explain, giving the significance of "heretic" and "reject." Is there any reference to reception or to excommunication? W.D.

A. -- "Heresy" is used by the apostle for a party of self-will, a faction which severs itself from the assembly. Such is the usage in 1 Cor. 11:18,19: "I hear that there are schisms among you (i.e., divisions within), and I partly believe it. For there must also be heresies (i.e. external division or sects), that the approved may become manifest among you." (See also Gal. 5:20 and 2 Peter 2:1). The precise meaning here comes out incontestably. Bad doctrine (the later ecclesiastical sense of "heresy") does not of necessity lead its advocate to form a party without; but schismatic feeling directly tends to this. A split within ere long issues in a split without; whereas heterodoxy seeks shelter within in order to leaven the lump if possible. So in Titus 3 the apostle directs Titus to have done with a man stamped as heretical after a first and second admonition. He had gone outside and was forming a sect. It was no question therefore of putting him without; for he had gone out himself, and refused admonition, perhaps repeatedly. He condemned himself in despising and abandoning God's assembly. You cannot put away one who has already gone away, though it may be announced for the profit of all. The word translated "reject" is not to excommunicate, but altogether general, and capable of application to persons inside (as in 1 Tim. 5:11) no less than to the outside maker of a school or sect; also to fables and foolish questions wherever they might be (1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:23). From its primitive meaning of deprecating and making excuse, the word acquires the force of refusing, rejecting, or avoiding. In no case is it applied to putting out, which is the function of the assembly and expressed by a totally different word. Among the Jews "heresy" was used indifferently for the parties of Sadducees, Pharisees, and Nazarenes.⁴

A damnable, or destructive, heresy (2 Pet. 2:1) is a heresy that involves fundamentally evil teaching. Hence its destructive character; i.e., it is destructive of the faith.

Ed.

THE SEEING OF GOD

THE ABHORRING OF SELF

There has been in our day a blessed action of God's saints, bringing them into a state conformable to the greatness and glory of the testimony the Spirit is carrying on for the honor of His risen and exalted Son. There has been a divine energy of the Spirit in the ministry of the Word which has gathered out a mass of souls professedly to Christ and the things above, "Where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," but wherever there is any extraordinary work of God it not only acts upon those who are its proper subjects but its moral force is extended to a "mixed multitude" who, from not being formed after a divine sort, but only in a human way, are carried forward in a natural manner; and instead of lending strength to the spiritual movement they become its weakness.

And even when there has been a real work accomplished in souls, there has been another source of weakness introduced: the persons blessed clustered in a natural way around the instruments through whom the blessing reached them, and this became a snare to both parties, and weakened the power of the testimony to the holy One and true, the Sovereign Opener. God was not fully trusted, but there was a natural leaning upon an arm of flesh, and when this gave way, many blessed, but unestablished, saints who had been rejoicing in the new life in the Spirit, and fresh blessing, gave way: for where faith was only in a leader and not in the living God, if his faith failed, and he became discouraged because of some "Perez Uzzah," those attached to him had not spiritual energy to stand fast in the Lord, hold on, and go forward. "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." As in human, so in spiritual "affairs," there is "a tide" which must be taken "at the flood" if any great spiritual achievement is to be accomplished. The flood came, but for lack of faith and "virtue" it has not led on to spiritual fortune, but has become dissipated into general failure.

If a ship is seen to be going to pieces on the shallows, what is the great and uppermost thought in the minds both of those who are in the ship and on the shore? The rescue of the passengers and the crew. Man the lifeboat, and strike out boldly through the stormy sea and save all you possibly can! And if there be religious shipwreck, is it not like God that there should be a fresh energy of the Spirit in rescuing shipwrecked saints, and bringing them to land? It was true moral condition that was wanting; and the pressure in ministry carrying many before it without chart, rudder, or compass, or the personal ability to profit by them had they possessed them, a break-down was inevitable; and it has come in the case of thousands. But is God to allow His children to perish in the storm? Will Christ Jesus not be seen walking on the stormy waves for the rescue of His imperilled disciples?

A sure work of rescue is being done, in the riches of God's grace, for such as have felt their misery as lost saints (as did Job), as truly as they had felt their misery as lost sinners. Job was what all would call a most beautiful character: yet it was a dreadful time to the "perfect" man of Uz when God allowed Satan to break him in pieces and his friends to charge him falsely, until he cursed the day of his birth; but it led to a blessed issue. Few saints have seen God and stood face to face with Him, until their utter evilness of nature has been seen in a truthful and humbling way that led them to thorough self-judgment according to the holiness of God. But Job had this when he is led to exclaim: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." He saw himself a ruined man in his circumstances when all the calamities detailed in the earlier part of the book overtook him: his friends, "miserable comforters" tried to ruin him in his character by proving to their own satisfaction that he must be a wicked man to be subjected to such judgments: but when he saw God it was neither in circumstances nor in character, he saw the ruin, but *in himself*. As Isaiah, when he saw God, cried out: "*Woe is me for I am undone*," so when Job saw God he saw the utter worthlessness of self (which he had not seen when all was going well with him), and he said, "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." In the presence of Satan when he smote him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown, "he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes." But when he saw God there is no thought of sitting down "*to scrape himself*" but he says, "*I abhor myself and repent*" - judge myself utterly good-for-nothing, and not to be improved by any amount of scraping: "*and repent in dust and ashes*." A true sight of God exposes a saint to himself so thoroughly that good self and bad self are equally an abhorrence. "I ABHOR MYSELF." God must have reality in His saints, however grievous it be to Him to bring them through the terrible ordeal necessary to secure it. That which they had, for faith, at the "Red Sea" must come in as trial, testing, and humbling in "the wilderness." By any means and every means: ruined circumstances, broken health, death in the family, character impeached by friends who profess to be "comforters," by inward agonies and outward neglect, Job had to be broken down, but it was a sight of God that produced self-abhorrence and true repentance. When he found out that he had been contending with God he said, "Behold I am vile," but when his eye saw Him, he said, "*I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." This sheds wonderful light on the Lord's words, "If any man will come after me let him *deny himself*": let him deny there is such a good-for-nothing person. Saints who see God now see the end of man in Christ's cross: "They that are Christ's *have crucified the flesh* with its affections and lusts," and thus, for faith, self is denied; and the man of faith speaks on this wise, "I have been *crucified with Christ*"; "Knowing that *the old man is crucified with him* that the body of sin might be destroyed." Job made a fresh start from the grave of self, as does the Christian from the cross and the grave of Christ, and "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning:" just as the saint of the

present time makes a fresh start from Christ's cross and grave in new life in "the second man," a new creation in a risen Christ.

Not a few souls who had become stranded when the testimony of God as to Christ and the restoring work of the Spirit for His glory was presented, and the end of self shown in the cross, were so deeply moved by it that they seemed on the point of being willing to descend into the grave of self and flesh; when all at once they started back from the fearful ordeal that stared them in the face, when they saw that the demand was to part with all that flesh holds dear, and have a glorified Christ, and all that one finds in Him instead of self and man's world, including the world that is composed of a happy circle of saints. Being like Job, of a beautiful character and having a good reputation, and a circle of friends who would regard the devotedness that completely sets aside the first man and all his belongings, counting all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and being as singular as Paul who eventually lost all his Christian friends, and had to stand alone, only the Lord standing with Him, they shrank from being *so literally* for Christ, dreading the complete cutting off from the world which the cross gives, the entire abandonment of self as a thing to be abhorred, the parting from the delightful, yet self-centered, society of earnest Christian friends, and becoming "as little children," and as such to find themselves regarded as extreme, peculiar, assuming, or weak-minded by those who were wont to regard them with the highest respect and the most cordial affection. But there will be the abhorring and denying of self in every shape and form, if the Spirit give a true knowledge, spiritual apprehension, and enjoyment of Christ in glory. What was self to the angel-faced Stephen when he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God? Not so much as to make him distracted (though the stones beat upon his poor body) from exhibiting the power and grace of his living association with that glorified One, for he prayed for his murderers, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." What was self to the persecuting zealot Saul when from the brightness above the mid-day sun he heard "that Just One" say, "*I am Jesus* whom thou persecutest"; or when, as the Apostle from the Christ of glory and pressing towards Him as his goal, he could utter as his watchword -- "That I may win Christ and be found in Him" -- "*One thing*"! I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. For our living association is in heaven, "whence we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour."

The divine exclusiveness of the Spirit's action that leaves the saints with "no man save Jesus only," has proved too severe for even some of the foremost in zeal and service: they saw the consequences, stopped short, and failing in faith to go out stripped and bare, the cross on a naked shoulder, their hearts failed them to become wholly detached from the first man, and live and move and have their being in a risen Christ in a new creation; they listened to the counsels of their own hearts, aided by the siren voice of trusted friends, and with their desires for better things suppressed, they found their way back into the ordinary fellowship of unspiritual professors who refuse to allow that there

is any higher enjoyment of Christ than they themselves have known, or any deeper work of the Spirit than they have experienced. This knowing of men "after the flesh" took saints practically off the ground of resurrection, or rather showed it had never been known in the power of the Spirit in their souls, and that life only in Christ and new creation, where "all things are of God," was practically unknown. Though they have come out to Christ, in heart they have returned to Egypt, and they have failed to experience as a living reality in their souls either the deliverance of the Red Sea with its triumphant song - the humbling process of the wilderness where the only resource is in God, or the divine entrance into the practical enjoyment of Christ in glory, and all spiritual blessing in Him, through the dried up Jordan, where the Red Sea and the Jordan coalesce, and death and resurrection with Christ are made good in the soul in the solemn moment when the ark rested in the midst of the river; they have neither come to the twelve stones set up in Gilgal, nor to what is meant by the twelve stones now hidden in the bed of the river where the feet of the priests that bare the ark rested until all the people had clean passed over Jordan. Oh, what a falling of carcasses there has been in the wilderness! It is a solemn and salutary recollection for us all that only two men of the warrior host that came out of Egypt entered into Canaan: and that even the two most prominent leaders, Moses and Aaron, failed of entrance.

God must have reality in His saints: and He will ensure the having of it even if it should be by "terrible things in righteousness." But if we "hear the rod and who hath appointed it," and humble ourselves under it, we shall find that there is still the same mighty heart behind His "mighty hand." But whoever thinks of reaching the practical enjoyment of full blessing in Christ, while the world is clung to, self unjudged, and the holiness of God and the end of man in the flesh in the cross is not seen, and still to go on and prosper as if nothing had happened, will find that the Holy Ghost must refuse to have a heavenly Christ and His witness to Him identified with such lightness: God must have realities, and if His saints refuse to reach them in grace and by the Spirit's unfoldings of God fully revealed in Christ, He will have to break them in pieces by judgment that we may not be condemned with the world. Whatever the means, God Himself must do all; and it will be accomplished by His grace. God may use a Jehu and his false zeal for the Lord to inflict His judgment upon iniquity; but it is a Hezekiah's confession and "carrying forth of the filthiness from the holy place" that He employs to initiate the return to the worship of God in His appointed way, and to bring about a fresh work of general revival and joy, the like of which there had not been "since the time of Solomon." And grace alone secures holiness. "Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, *until they had destroyed them all.*" Blessed iconoclasm! God secures realities by the fresh action of His grace. And when we read of Hezekiah that "he in the *first year* of his reign, in the *first month*, opened the doors of the house of the Lord," we are prepared to hear of

the blessed time and work of grace that followed. His first concern was with the awful state of the "house of the Lord," and all his efforts were directed towards that which was central and essential - the having the house and worship of God in their midst according to His Word. His heart was set upon God Himself, and his soul was humbled by the utter desolation of His house; and while he makes the deepest confession of their sinful and miserable state, he set about having the worship of God in God's way, "And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves and worshipped. So the service of the Lord's house was set in order. And Hezekiah rejoiced and all the people that God had prepared the people for the thing was done suddenly."

It is the divinely-humbled soul God meets with His grace, and lifts up in the power of His Spirit, gives nearness to Himself in holy, happy fellowship, and uses for the blessing of others. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away." "Humble yourselves in *the sight of the Lord*, and he shall lift you up." Christ hath not given up His assembly, but ever nourishes and cherishes it; and God has not given up His family, but watches over them with that same love that He had when He chose them in Christ, and gave His Son to redeem them, a love from which nothing can separate them. Yet there would seem to be an election according to grace now in a fallen Church, just as there was an election according to grace among the Jews when their doom as a nation had been suspended over them. How few have responded to the extra-ordinary grace of God in bringing out the revived testimony of the apostolic times. And how many who are professedly attached to it know nothing about it; so that the work that has brought the multitude together in acknowledged unity needs to be done over again in the power of the Holy Ghost, linking the soul of the individual in living and conscious association with Christ and heavenly things. It was so at the beginning, and it will be so at the close. The Spirit had baptized the waiting disciples into one body and made them all drink one Spirit. But the word to the awakened Jews was: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, and ye shall receive *the gift of the Holy Ghost*." "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." This was the individual work at the beginning; and "if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto Him, and will sup with him, and he with me," shows the individual character of the work continuing to the close. When vessels to dishonor, like Hymeneus and Philetus, appear as they now do in the house of God, grace acts in individuals to bring out separation by personal purification, and we read, "If *a man*, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and

no man openeth. I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and not denied my name." The Word and Name of the Holy and the True, the Word as written, the Person as revealed, are all to the soul that knows the power of the gathering grace that causes saints to cluster around the glorious Son of God, and like the Annas and Simeons of the end of the Jewish dispensation "to wait for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour," and the promised "redemption" that shall be ours by resurrection or transformation when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven" to take us in glorious bodies like His own to the heavenly home in the Father's house, of which He hath spoken

The Bible Herald 5:1

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

The Lord takes notice of every circumstance, every shade of difference in assemblies, as also in individuals in them, thus showing that He is not indifferent as to the state of His people by the way -- their daily steps -- because He has secured blessing for them at the end. His love is not a careless love. We have all, more or less, lost sight of the judgment exercised by the Lord in "His own house;" and it is too frequently supposed that because the salvation of the saint is a sure thing God is indifferent about character here. But to love - this is impossible. A child would be sure eventually to inherit his father's property; but then what parent would be satisfied, if he loved his child, with knowing that? Would he not anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties, and ordering all things in his education so as best to fit him for his future destination? How much more is this the way of God's love with His children!

We have to remember that the Church, and indeed every individual saint, is set in the place of direct conflict with Satan, the more so because of the high standing and privilege given us in Christ. Now it may be in triumphant victory, as it is said, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). To effect the purposes of God's glory, coming in as it will by-and-by, when He shall establish His kingdom, we know that Satan must be fully dethroned; but in order even now, ere that time comes, that we realize our blessings in heavenly places, it is needful he should be practically dethroned from the heart through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Remembrancer 20:142,143.

GUIDANCE

One of the greatest evidences of how much Israel gained by leaving Egypt was that God marked out their way for them, and always guided them. At His word (of which the cloud was the expression) they journeyed, and at His word they encamped. The two grand characteristics of the wilderness journey were, the guidance and the manna. Practically speaking, we are now in the wilderness; and if we are enjoying manna, we may surely conclude that we are entitled to enjoy guidance. Few saints would deny their title to this great privilege; but many, who would aver that they receive and feed on spiritual meat, would hesitate to say with anything like confidence that they are guided as distinctly and positively as were the Israelites in the wilderness.

Now this should not be so; for *one* is on the same ground as the *other*: the cloud was attendant on the wilderness march as much as was the manna. True, to Israel both were visible to the natural eye, and both are spiritual now; but they are not more difficult of realization to the spiritual man; and if I can asseverate with thankfulness that I am divinely fed day by day, and if I can only know this spiritually, ought I not with equal certainty to be conscious of my guidance in the spiritual mind? If I am entitled to one, I am equally so to the other; both are connected with the wilderness, blessed evidence of God's care of His people thus cast on Himself.

Why then is one spiritual blessing admitted and owned while the other, though valued, is little known, and more or less doubtfully expected? The feeling of Israel in the wilderness was that they did not know their way; they had no idea of it; and were so completely cast on God for guidance, because there was no one else there that could guide them; nor had He, blessed be His name! any other thought than to lead them Himself.

The first feeling in my soul then for guidance must be that I am in a wide desert and that I have to depend on God, and on Him alone, to direct me. But how? By circumstances? *Never*. He did not guide Israel by circumstances improvised for the occasion, but by a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. These were *His own appointed agencies*. Anything below this is not guidance in its proper sense. It is true our gracious God, who, in spite of ourselves and our lack of dependence, will not allow us to lose our way, often uses circumstances to correct us and drive us back into the path of faith; and when *in* the path, He may allow them as helps to our weakness; but they do not mark the path; they are never intended to guide us; and I believe the watching of circumstances, as indications of the path, is a preventive to many true-hearted souls from enjoying this their real and rightful privilege in the wilderness way.

Psalms 32 gives us the filling up of the Lord's grace to us as to this blessed privilege. "I will instruct thee in the way thou shalt go." "*I will guide thee with mine eye.*" This is His appointed agency for us as distinctly as was the cloud

and the pillar of fire for Israel. But how am I to discern His eye? *I must watch for it.* If I do, I shall surely see it; if I do not, I cannot be guided by it. Where His eye is looking, there I ought to look. Unless I am spiritual, unless my soul is near Him, this will not be; I shall not look where He looks, and if I am looking to anything else for guidance, I shall not see His eye; but never is that eye hidden from the soul that watches for it. The "bit and the bridle" are God's *alternatives* for the soul that will not depend on Him, and be led by His eye; but the eye is there, lighting up the wilderness track for any who will discern and make use of it.

The Spirit has now come down to guide us into all truth; the spiritual man discerneth all things. The soul should wait on God, unable to proceed without Him, reckoning on His instructing it, and depending on nothing else for instruction but the spiritual sense of the direction of His own eye.

If I do this, I shall, as I go here or there, be assured that the eye of my Lord is directed that way; that such is the peculiar spot searched out by Him for me in the wilderness. The Lord lead us to exercise our souls more in this blessed nearness and dependence.

The Christian Friend, 1876, pp.99-101

SECRET ASSOCIATION

The proper duty of the saints now is by secret association with Christ to withstand evil, that they may be fashioned in suffering and grace with Christ. There all the fine traits of fellowship with Christ are brought out, "the trial of your faith," etc. The vessel of earth being put into the furnace, it shines forth, when it comes out, with all that was in its Master's mind.¹

JND was one that knew by practical experience what it meant to withstand evil. His life showed his secret association with Christ. It is to be feared that many of us are not practicing this proper duty of the saints now. We are in the time of 2 Timothy, *which began in Timothy's day.* Direct your strict attention to that fact! Our proper duty does not change from then until the Lord comes. Separation from evil unto the Lord is ever seasonable in such a day. It is to be feared that some of us have in our hearts a secret association with a duty-shirking notion; namely that we will go on with evil hoping that the Lord will soon come and thus we will have escaped the cost and sorrow entailed in the "secret association with Christ to withstand evil." Was the truth of His coming

1. *Collected Writings* 32:378.

for us meant by Him to ever be used as an excuse to avoid our "proper duty"? Just imagine He that is Holy and True saying to you, 'You just stay in that evil because "I come quickly."' Why, in view of His coming, the time in which to be faithful to Him is short; and we must be faithful *now*.

If at the judgment seat He asked why we stayed in fellowship with that evil doctrine and practice, with that giving up of the truth, with that which dishonors Himself, will we boldly say, 'Lord, I was expecting you soon, and thought I did not have to' (thought I would get away with disobedience)?

The church fell into ruin in the first century and has been in that irremediable state ever since. During the last century (1827 to be exact) the writer cited above saw from Scripture the fall of the church. He spoke of the "ruin of the church," a truth and a fact that the mass of Christians reject. And what is to be thought of those who profess to acknowledge the truth and fact of that ruin, and then use this to plead that we cannot help ourselves, we just have to tolerate the evil. However, there is no truth that excuses any of us from practicing separation from evil unto the Lord. God never, ever, gave the Christian any truth so that he would be excused from separation from evil unto the Lord. That would make God an accomplice to the evil. And if you use a teaching of Scripture to excuse yourself about going on in fellowship with evil, then so far as your act goes, you are making God an accomplice to your unfaithfulness to Christ. "The proper duty of the saints now is by secret association with Christ to withstand evil, that they may be fashioned in suffering and grace with Christ."

Rom. 12:9 says, "Let love be unfeigned; abhorring evil; cleaving to good." That is how to have true love. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. He who goes on with tolerated evil (it matters not that many will deny it is evil), *has a defiled conscience and is himself leavened by association with it.*

J. G. Deck once ran away from responsibility. He left England in 1852 and went to New Zealand, and yet many souls were saved in various parts through his ministry. He was recovered in the early 1870s through JND and G. V. Wigram. He said:

... in a work of Satan neutrality is impossible; and that if there is an attempt to shun the responsibilities and sorrows of a path of entire decision for Christ, the spiritual senses become deadened, the heart hardened, the conscience torpid, the judgment perverted, and soon hostility to the witnesses against the evil succeeds indifference to the truth.²

Ed.

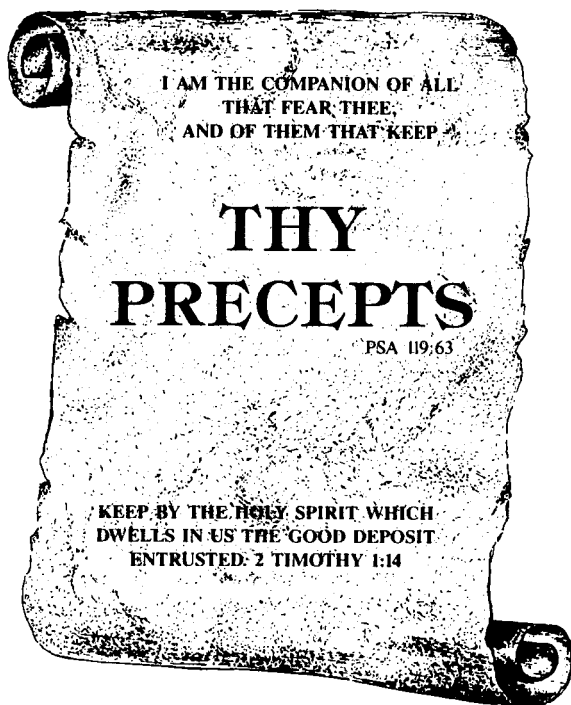
2. "Copy of a Letter from J. G. Deck of New Zealand on Vital Questions in connection with the Glory of Christ and Our Fellowship with One Another", p. 14.



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CONTENTS

The Blessedness of the Person of Christ	193
The Heavenly Parenthesis	199
Walter Scott: a Warning	204
The Slaying of the King's Sons	206
Put Thou My Tears Into Thy Bottle	208
Hannah's Prayer	211
"... With Such a One Not Even to Eat."	214
W. Kelly on America	224

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PERSON

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN ITS UNITY AS PRESENTED IN SCRIPTURE

By A. C. Ord.

(Continued from vol. 4, #5)

Secondly, as to the names, titles, or designations borne by the Lord, we assert that they all, without exception, include, or carry with them, divine attributes.

If we examine the Word of God, we shall find there is not a single name or title that is there applied by the Holy Ghost to Christ as man, even that which seems to be lowest in its relative significance, which does not involve and embrace the essential glory and power of His divine attributes. For if the unity of His Person is a fact divinely taught us, this is seen to be a necessary consequence, as the preceding section will have shown.¹

His titles, as the King of Israel, the Son of David, or the Branch (which involve dignities which have specially an earthly character), as well as others, which (though belonging to Him as man) have a wider range and signification, such as the Lamb, the Christ, the Second Adam, yet -- whether more limited in their application or otherwise -- all include, or are invested with, attributes, which no mere creature could exhibit, and with powers which no mere human being could wield, and present aspects of His Person, in which He receives

1. Mr. Raven affirms, in letters printed by his friend Mr. Boyt, that "What characterized the Second Man could not include all that is true of a divine Person, as self-existent, having life in Himself, omnipotence, omniscience, and many other attributes of a divine Person" (page 4). And this is repeated on page 6, and fully set forth in page 4, of Mr. R's letters in reply to Mr. Hunt's comments, giving us a further enlargement in confirmation of his views. These quotations are now fully guaranteed, either by Mr. R's own citation, or acceptance of them without objection, or by his reference to them and defence of them, in reply to Mr. Hunt. So that his followers are precluded from saying that they are garbled or unfair extracts, or that they do not really convey his meaning.
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divine worship, or honor, which belongs to God alone.

When offering Himself as King to the daughter of Zion, He claims the ass and its colt from its owners, with the words, "The Lord hath need of them," whilst the multitudes which accompany Him shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David! . . . *Hosanna in the highest!*" This is just what excites the jealousy of the chief priests and scribes, who, when they hear the ascription of praise from the children in the Temple, saying "Hosanna to the son of David!" recognize it to be that given in Psalm 118:25, "Save now" (Hosanna), "I beseech Thee, O Lord" (that is Jehovah); "O Lord" (Jehovah), "I beseech Thee, send now prosperity." They ask Him, "Hearest Thou what these say?" and the Lord, accepting this adoration, replies, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast *perfected praise?*" (Matt. 21:3,9,15,16). Their simple faith, which delighted the Lord, may well rebuke these lowering thoughts concerning Him.

In Jer. 23:5 and 6 we are told, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous *Branch*, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, *The Lord our righteousness.*" It is the King and Branch of David, through whose rule Judah is saved, and who executes judgment and justice in the earth, who is thus called "Jehovah our Righteousness." The Lord indeed intimates this glory of His Person, in the question which He addressed to the Pharisees, which silenced and confounded them. Citing Psalm 110 ("The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool"), He adds, "If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matt. 22:44,45). Moreover, as King in Psalm 45, He is declared to have not only His righteous reward of royalty, belonging to Him as man, but the eternal throne, which is His by right as "God" (vv. 6,7). As Son of man, and King in its widest aspect, He judges the nations, and passes the final sentence on them (Matt. 25:34-44). Also in Isaiah 11 we see the accompanying display of Divine power in the "Rod" that comes "out of the stem of Jesse"; for "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked" (vv. 1-2). In Rev. 5:6, we learn, that as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and as the Lamb that had been slain, He has prevailed to open the Book, which no man can look upon, and He is seen "in the midst of the throne . . . having seven horns and seven eyes," the fullness of power and intelligence, "which are the seven Spirits of God." As the stone laid in Zion He has also the same, "the eyes of the LORD" (Jehovah), "which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 3:9; 4:10).

The title of the Christ, the Anointed (in Hebrew, the Messiah), is of great moment. Attaching to Him distinctly as man upon whom the Holy Ghost descended and abode, it indicates in reality the glory of His Person. We shall find that this anointing is expressly intended to mark out who He is, and His personal worthiness and fitness to bear the honor or dignity it implies. In the

Old Testament, the anointing with oil, prefiguring the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, was conferred on those who were thereby constituted prophets, priests, or kings, being thus distinctly appointed by God as such (1 Kings 19: 16; Lev. 8:12 and 30; 21:12; Ps. 139:20). John the Baptist tells us that in this way it was intimated to him who the person, thus distinguished, was, though unknown to him before by any previous acquaintance. Thus was he to discern who it was that bore the personal title of the Son of God, and the Baptizer of the Holy Ghost. "And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:33,34). So in chap. 3, contrasting Him with all others, as men who are of the earth, and speak accordingly, he says of Christ, "He . . ." is divine, "cometh from above" and "*is above all*"; "and what He," alone, "hath seen and heard" (compare vv. 12 and 13), "that He testifieth"; so that receiving His testimony, is to "set to" our "seal that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (28-34). That is, He unites, in this testimony, His divine and heavenly *origin*, to the fact of the fullness of the Spirit present *in* Him; combining thus, in a double way, what is essentially heavenly and divine. For whilst prophets and others delivered the message given to them, but at other times spoke what came merely from their own minds -- what characterized Him was, that He, being God manifest, never spoke at any time and upon any subject, save the mind of God, and in the words of God.

In the account of the anointing given us in the Gospel of Luke 3:21,22, Jesus is specially seen as man, "being baptized and praying"; but, in His Person, He is the object of heaven, which opens over Him. The Holy Ghost visibly descends upon Him, and the Father expresses what He is to Him, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." For though seen in humiliation, He is the center of all the Father's counsels, and on Him rests all divine interest and affection. Thus it is, that the Holy Ghost testifies by His presence to His title to be thus honored as man, and to His glorious Person, upon which the thoughts and delight of heaven are concentrated. In Scripture, therefore, Christ, or the Christ (i.e. anointed), becomes the title by which His Person is specified or distinguished in its entirety, implying all that He is in Himself, on account of which He is the chosen and anointed of God (cp. Isa. 11:2, 61:1). Hence the Apostle John says, that "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is *the Christ*, is born of God" (John 5:1); and the Lord Himself connects eternal life with the knowledge of Himself, as bearing this title of "Christ" (John 17:3), which is made the test of the disciples' belief in Him (Luke 9:20); and this title is conjoined with that of the Son of God, as the means of receiving life, in John 20:31 -- "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name" (cp. Matt. 1:18 and 11:4).

For when we think of the Holy Ghost as God, to whom all creation owes its

existence, His finding One upon whom He can rest in His fullness, is the indication of the supreme excellence and worthiness that mark the Person, who is at one and the same time the lowly humbled man, and the true and only Son of God. And this is what gave its character and savour to all that He said and did, as did the frankincense to the Meat Offering. For the Holy Ghost's presence in Him is not as if it were needful to make up some deficiency, but that all the divine persons might have their share in the economy of redemption, as we are told, in Col. 1:19, that all the fullness of the Godhead *was pleased* to dwell in Him.² And, in accordance with this, we find that the display of His marvelous grace and greatness flow out from this "fullness" in manhood; whilst He is the image of the invisible God, and the glory of God shines in His face as the Christ (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:6). And as such He sits on the throne, and exercises judgment, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of *Christ*" (2 Cor. 5:10). Again, "As I live, saith the Lord (Jehovah), every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to *God*. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). Thus, where He is presented as the anointed man, the "Christ," or the One who has died for us, He acts in judgment as Jehovah, and as God to whom all as His responsible creatures must give account. Hence, when He is born in Bethlehem, the Angel announces Him to the Shepherds, as "a Saviour, which is *Christ the Lord*"; and when re-introduced into the world to come as "the Son," "the *First Begotten*," the Apostle, in bringing forward His personal glory, cites from the Psalms, "Let all the angels of God worship Him"; showing us, that when He receives *this* glory, even as the Son born in time, and recognized as the King and Anointed, He receives divine honor, publicly rendered by these most exalted of God's creatures (Heb. 1:6,8).

Indeed, creative power, divine virtues, and infinite fullness of grace, are constantly connected with His title as "the Christ," or as "Christ Jesus," and sometimes (because of His intrinsic Deity in the unity of His Person) with His pre-existence. "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:11). And, again, "Which was given us in *Christ Jesus*, before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). This was evidently before the assumption of manhood. "They drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). So also, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in *Christ Jesus*, who being in the form of God, &c" (Phil. 2:5,6). The Apostle Paul glories in his infirmities, "that the power of *Christ*

2. This shows the gravity of Mr. R's error in limiting this to His manifestation in resurrection glory, and his statement that flesh and blood had not revealed to Peter the confession that he made in Matt. 16:16, applied to the condition of the Lord Himself whilst on earth. He says, "The 'Living Stone' was Christ, as made known to Peter by the Father as the Son of the living God. Peter confesses Him thus, and the Lord says to him, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven'; which means, I judge, that *the flesh and blood condition even in Christ*, had not itself revealed it" (*Lectures on the First Epistle of John*, p. 71).

may rest (tabernacle) upon" him (2 Cor. 12:9). "Grace and truth," which are declared to be "the glory . . . of the Only Begotten of the Father," "came by *Jesus Christ*" (John 1:14-17); for God had come and was manifested in Him. From Him, as the Head, and as the *Christ*, "all the body . . . increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2:19, and Eph. 4:15-16). He dwells in the heart by faith, and, through Him, the soul is filled with ("into") "all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19).³

The Lord Jesus is seen, in His title as *the Son of Man*, in Rev. 1 with the divine attributes of the Ancient of Days (v. 14), and with the voice that marks the power of the Almighty God (Ezek. 43:2), "His voice as the sound of many waters": and as having re-established the rights, and displayed the glory of God on the cross, as regards sin and its reflection upon that glory, He has His place now, as Son of Man, in the glory of God. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John 13:31,32). Then again, as "Son of Man," He comes "with power and great glory," and "in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 24:30), -- always indicative of the supreme power of the Creator; and not only so, but "in His own glory, and in His *Father's*, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26). And sitting on a cloud, as "Son of Man," He executes the judgment, and reaps the harvest of the earth (Rev. 14:14).

Lastly, we have His designation as "The last Adam," or "the second man," for these titles are identified in 1 Cor. 15:45,47, and it has been assumed by Mr. R., in his reasoning, that they do not include those divine attributes which, as we have seen, everywhere else, and under all titles, characterize Him. We are told in 1 Cor. 15:21, that "since by *man* came death, by *man* came also the resurrection of the dead." We grant that here He is spoken of as raised by God, as the result of God's acceptance of and delight in that perfect and divine work in which He put away sin, rather than in the exercise of His power as the Son of God in His victory over death (John 2:19, Rom. 1:4); and that His kingdom is also viewed as conferred on Him by God. But there is more than enough to show in this chapter that the notion of any limitation of His power in this, as in other aspects of His Person, is only due to human imagination and unbelief; for

3. The following extract from J. N. D., sent by a friend after the foregoing pages were written, has just come to hand: "But though Christ be made Lord and Christ, as man, yet through His oneness with the Father, and His being the true God, *it runs up into a divine title*, just as in the case with 'Son.' He is in the place of Son, as Man, or we could not be with Him. 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' But it cannot be separated from divine and eternal Sonship. As Man He becomes and enters into -- is, in so far as He is a Man, in -- the relationship with the Father, as divine and eternal Son. In all the works of God we find this co-operation of the Persons. The Son wrought: yet He could say 'The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works,' and 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, the Kingdom of God is come unto you'" (*Letters of J. N. Darby*, 2:100-101).

He who is seen, in v. 28, to be "the Son," is, in vv. 21-26, as "Man," the subjugator of all things in God's creation, and the destroyer of death, which takes place, at the close of all, by His calling the dead out of the graves (John 5: 21-23, 28, 29). Mr. Raven's argument, that because we are like Christ, and to bear His image (the image of the Second Man, as we have of the first man), therefore divine attributes cannot be included in this title, or "it would be true also of us," -- is wholly without foundation. For, as "the last Adam," He is "a quickening spirit" (v. 45). Are we therefore "quickenings spirits"? And does not a "quickenings spirit" include divine power? And are we "out of heaven"? (v. 47). For, as Mr. Hunt justly remarks, John's testimony, twice repeated, disposes in a moment of this idea, stating that "He that cometh from heaven is *above all*" (John 3:31). So in John 1:14, the glory of Christ is seen as the only begotten of the Father, "full of grace and truth." And the apostle adds, "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (v. 16). Does it therefore follow that we have this fullness as He has? or that we display the glory of the Son as the only begotten, because we are recipients of that which *He* possesses in divine power and infinitude? Or are we to deny this to be a part of His divine glory, because we are made partakers of His fullness? or, as the apostle Peter says, "of the divine nature"? (2 Peter 1:4).⁴

As to this point and the second man not being "characterized" by the "attributes of a divine Person," we may draw attention to the following:

"Surely we shall reign with Him; but we shall receive neither the special glory, nor the attributes proper to the Son of man, for they belong to Jesus only."

(*Collected Writings* 28:476).

We see the same combination of glories, when, as man, or the seed of the woman, He bruises the serpent's head, and through death destroys him who had the power of death, delivering them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. 2:14, 15). Having, as He Himself tells us, come upon the strong man, and by His strength ("a stronger than he") having "overcome him, He taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:22). Though necessarily Man in accomplishing this, yet His divine power shines out at the same moment, as He tells us in the same passage, it is "with the finger of God" (v. 20) He casts out the devils; an expression always characteristic of Omnipotence. "This is the finger of God," said the magicians, when baffled in their attempt to imitate creative power in one of its lowest forms (Ex. 8:19). And again, "Thy heavens, the work of *Thy fingers*" (Psa. 8:3).

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

4. See chaps. 4 and 5 in "*The Glory of the Person of the Son of God*" where this subject is more fully treated.

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

PART 2

THE TWO PARENTHESES

CHAPTER 2.2: THE HEAVENLY PARENTHESIS

THE DESIGNATION "THE HEAVENLY PARENTHESIS"

Those who hold dispensational truth are often accused of teaching that God has two purposes. Perhaps some have said such a thing, but the fact is that God has one purpose: to glorify Himself in Christ. But the display of His glory in Christ involves two spheres: the earthly and the heavenly. Israel especially is connected with the manifestation of God's glory in Christ in the 'earthly places,' while the body of Christ is especially connected with the manifestation of His glory in Christ in the 'heavenly places.' Psalm 8 speaks of the Son of Man having dominion in the earthly sphere. Thus that is not one of the N. T. mysteries. But Eph. 1:10 tells us that Christ will head up *all* things, both the earthly and the heavenly. That Christ should head up the heavenly sphere was not revealed in the O. T.

The calling of the saints *now* is not part of the development of the ways of God in government in the 'earthly places.' Israel was, and will be, connected with that government in a special way. The body of Christ has not replaced Israel, nor is it the (spiritual) continuator of Israel. The body of Christ is not an earthly people as Israel was, and will be, but rather a heavenly people with a heavenly hope.

The Lord Jesus was "a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy . . ." (Rom. 15:9). So both Israel and the nations will be blessed. Note well, though, that Israel -- the nation, as such -- will be blessed. Why, Scripture expressly declares, and does so after Christ was exalted above, that the covenants belong to Israel, Paul's kinsmen according to flesh! (Rom. 9:4,5). Yet, right in the face of the express words of God, antidispensationalists will affirm that the New Covenant is for the church (and that is why they transmute the church into 'the spiritual Israel'). The death of Christ specifically provided for the future of Israel as a saved nation (John 11:51,52). The rebels

having been purged (Ezek. 20), all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26).

And so, under Messiah the millennium will be a great upward step and advance regarding God's ways in 'earthly places.' Concerning salvation, Israel will stand under the new covenant, with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10-13). Concerning government, the One Whose precious blood is the basis of their blessing under the new covenant, will reign. God will be glorified in Him in direct government in 'earthly places' in Israel. Christ will reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) and so Israel will be the head while the nations will be the tail (Deut. 28:13,44).

Viewed, then, from the standpoint of the development of God's ways in government in the earth and of Israel's knowledge of salvation (Heb. 8:10-13), when all Israel is saved (Rom. 11:26) and stands before God in national adoption (Rom. 9:4), when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9), when the Lord alone is exalted (Isa. 2:11), etc., etc., the millennial reign of Christ is an immense advance, a great upward step, compared to Israel's and the Gentiles' positions in the O. T. times. This is easily apprehended by those not given to spiritually alchemizing the statements of the prophets. Leave out the body of Christ (as connected with the heavenly parenthesis) and the *immense upward step* is quite clear.

Non-millennarians think of the millennium, as understood by us, as a retrograde, a downward, step -- because it is lower than Christian privileges. But this argument is based on refusing the truth that the body of Christ is connected with a heavenly parenthesis in the development of the ways of God in government in the earthly sphere. Such think of the church as the "spiritual Israel" and so there will be nothing after the church. But **this is what Judaizes** -- not dispensational truth.

We now come to the matter of designating the time during which the heavenly company is being formed. How shall we designate the present period? We want to speak of it in some way; just as we speak of the Trinity, though the word Trinity is not found in Scripture, yet the truth of it is.

W. Kelly called it "a heavenly parenthesis."⁵ This designation nicely contrasts it with the wider, Gentile parenthesis of judgment (which we previously considered in *THY PRECEPTS*, vol. 4, #5, with the chart of the two parentheses), which has to do with the earth and with Israel. He also called it "the Gentile parenthesis of mercy"⁶ and "church parenthesis."⁷ I suggest that the best is "the heavenly parenthesis." During the Millennium mercy will go out to the Gentiles also and so "the heavenly parenthesis" distinguishes more

5. *The Bible Treasury* 11:182.

6. *An Exposition of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, p. 155, 1927 reprint.

7. *The Bible Treasury*, New Britain, CT: New Britain Publishers, 1928.

sharply; moreover, "church parenthesis" does not directly address the fact that the body of Christ is heavenly. However, the description, "*a heavenly parenthesis*," contrasts well with the earthly hopes of the nation of Israel, and denotes that there is a special, heavenly people now being formed during a further development of the ways of God -- for His glory in Christ in the heavenlies.

We have noted previously that the period from B.C. 605/604, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem until the time of the appearing of Christ to smite the Gentiles is the period our Lord called "the times of the nations" (Luke 21:24). It is depicted by the image in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2). This was called the Gentiles parenthesis of judgment because this period interrupts God's direct reign in Israel. We noted that after B.C. 605/604, God continued to work with Israel, though they were not owned outwardly as His people, until that work ceased in connection with the rejection of Christ. This brought about another parenthesis, the heavenly parenthesis, from Pentecost to the rapture. After the rapture, God will commence dealing with Israel again, though they still will not be outwardly owned, the heavenly parenthesis that interrupted such dealing with Israel having been terminated at the rapture. Thus there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis; a heavenly parenthesis within a wider earthly parenthesis.

The heavenly parenthesis is not a subject of the O.T. prophecies. The O.T. prophecies about Gentile blessing will find their fulfillment in the millennium, the 1000 year reign of Christ. Except for the citations concerning the birth, life, death, resurrection and session of Christ at Jehovah's right hand (Psa. 110:1), the texts quoted from the prophets by the N. T. writers are millennial in fulfillment, but are used by the N. T. writers for a principle or partial application meanwhile concerning the ways of God. We will examine some of these in future articles, Lord willing.

THE O.T. PROPHECIES ALLOW ROOM FOR THE HEAVENLY PARENTHESIS

Daniel 9:24-27. This Scripture has been considered in detail in *Daniel's 70 weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*.⁸ It is one of those signpost Scriptures, so to speak, that, properly understood, point the reader to a premillenarian understanding of prophecy; i.e., that there will be an earthly kingdom, preceded by the advent of the King. Briefly, 69 weeks of years (483 years) have passed from the decree to restore and build Jerusalem (i.e., the walls would be rebuilt), given in Neh. 2., until the Sunday on which the King rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:5). The last week (7 years) is yet future and will just precede the second advent of the king. The heavenly parenthesis occurs during this interval between the first 69 weeks and the last week.

8. Obtainable from the publisher, www.presenttruthpublishers.com

Psalm 110:1. Here we see that Jehovah said to Adonai (our blessed Lord Jesus) that He should sit on His right hand until He makes Adonai's enemies His footstool. This allows room for the heavenly parenthesis to occur. During this heavenly parenthesis Adonai (cp. Matt. 22:41-46) is not on His own throne but sitting at Jehovah's right hand, as Psalm 110:1 says. Rev. 3:21 states: "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne." The Lord Jesus is not yet on His own throne -- though opposers of dispensational truth seek to assure us otherwise. But the time will come when He will sit on His own throne (a figure of speech for His reign). "But when the Son of man comes [or 'shall have come'] in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit down upon his throne of glory . . ." (Matt. 25:31). If there were a Scripture that stated Christ was on His own throne of glory now, it would have long ago been produced. The Scriptures are clear: He is not on His own throne now. Meanwhile we are part of the heavenly parenthesis -- waiting for, and with Him.

Daniel 7. The four beasts of Daniel 7 parallel the four sections of the image of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar as found in Dan. 2. In his dream, Daniel "beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit." Christ is not sitting on His throne now (Rev. 3:21). The time seen in the vision has not yet arrived. But there is room left for the heavenly parenthesis. After the close of this parenthesis these thrones will be set.

Amos 9:9-11 and Acts 15:13-18. Amillennarians and postmillennarians believe that the "tabernacle of David" is set up now and that Christ is on His throne now. But the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David will occur in the millennium. In Acts 15, James cited the passage against Jewish bias; to show that God intended to bless the nations. And, of course, He will do so according to many prophecies. But James saw that this prophecy had a bearing meanwhile on the Jewish prejudice against Gentile blessing. What was happening in James' day was not inconsistent with God's purpose, which included Gentile blessing. He cited the passage in order to show this. He did not cite it as if it was fulfilled, or fulfilling, in his day. Note that this is a general character of many citations from the prophets in Acts and the Epistles. What is cited is millennial in fulfillment, but has a bearing on some matter meanwhile. Lord willing, Acts 15:13-18 will be taken up in some detail in a future article. Here we merely note that before the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Hosea 3:4-5. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without statue, and without ephod and teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall turn with fear toward Jehovah and toward his goodness, at the end of days." It certainly seems clear that Israel has

been in this condition for a very long time. Nothing is said about the forming of one body, formed by the Holy Spirit and linked to a glorified Head in heaven. But it is clear that room is left for the heavenly parenthesis.

Isalah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-20. Isa. 61:2 says: "to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, *and the day of vengeance of our God.* . . ." Our blessed Lord Jesus read from this passage and did not read the emphasized phrase. It was not the time for Him to then proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God" (Luke 4:19). But He will do so in its own due season when He comes forth from sitting at Jehovah's right hand (Psalm 110:1-3; Rev. 19:11-21) to conduct "the war of [that] great day of God the Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). Between these two proclamations there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Zechariah 11:12-17. The 30 silver pieces foreshadow the price of the true Shepherd of Israel, Who was slain by the nation -- through the instrumentality of the Gentile power. But God will give them another, "a foolish shepherd," even the Lawless One who will do his own will. "Little children, it is [the] last hour, and according as ye have heard that antichrist comes, even now there have come many antichrists, whence we know that it is [the] last hour" (1 John 2:18). This is the final Antichrist of prophecy. Between the murder of the true Shepherd of Israel and the manifestation of the "foolish shepherd" there is room left for the heavenly parenthesis.

Daniel 11:35-45. Dan. 11:1-35 speaks of things historically accomplished. Not so Dan. 11:36-45. The king of Dan. 11:36 is one against whom the king of the south (Egypt) will push (v.40); and against whom the King of the North (Assyria, at least) will come as a whirlwind and overflow. This wilful king, whose territory lies between Egypt and Syria, is the (false) king of Israel. The Lord had warned that another would come in his own name and he would be received. This wilful king is the foolish shepherd, the Lawless One, the final Antichrist. Between verses 35 and 36 there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Daniel 8:22,23. We have just seen that "at the time of the end" (Dan. 11:40) the wilful king (the Antichrist) will be attacked by Egypt and overrun by the king of the North (Assyria). Dan. 8 shows us the he-goat (Greece) with a great horn (Alexander the Great) suddenly broken off and four horns, representing four kingdoms (v. 22) replacing the one horn. Alexander's empire was divided among his four generals. One held Egypt and is the king of the South. Another held Assyria and he is the king of the North. The geographical notices are referenced with respect to the location of Israel. There is an immense gap of time between verses 22 and 23. In v. 23 the prophecy speaks of "the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressor shall have come to the full, a king of bold countenance," etc., will arise, who will be broken by the Prince of princes. This king is not the Antichrist. He is the final king of the North. At any rate,

there is a gap of time between verses 22 and 23 that leaves room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Hosea 5:15. "I will go away, I will return to my place, till they acknowledge their trespass, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Jehovah came down, came in holy manhood. Jehovah-Jesus came to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), and surely the day will come when by the working of sovereign grace He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26, etc.). Meanwhile the Son of man has ascended up where He was before (John 6:62), until that people acknowledge their greatest trespass of all and seek His face, that face in which the creature dared to spit. It was the only sinless face this fallen world has ever seen. They dared to pull the hair from His face. Yet the day will come when they will know that "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, raised beds of sweet plants; His lips lilies, dropping liquid myrrh" (S. of S. 5:13). Oh, how they will acknowledge that great trespass (Zech. 12:10-14)! It is God Who will act sovereignly from Himself (Ezek. 20:37,38), to bring about a repentance suitable to His own glory and moral ways and to bless them under the new covenant. Meanwhile, there is room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Other Scriptures. The reader will also find, if he is willing to find, a gap in Luke 17 between verses 21 and 22. Also he would find this in Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Even the feasts of Jehovah (Lev. 23) allow room for the heavenly parenthesis. The first four feasts have been fulfilled but the last three will yet occur. The first four feasts occurred in the first and second months of the year and the last three in the seventh month. The seventh month foreshadows the summing up of the ways of God. The period between Pentecost and the summing of God's ways leaves room for the heavenly parenthesis.

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord wills)

WALTER SCOTT: A WARNING CONCERNING HIS BOOKLET "DOCTRINAL SUMMARIES"

A booklet by Walter Scott entitled "Doctrinal Summaries," currently in circulation, has been called to my attention by a reader of *Thy Precepts* who had written to a retailer of it, and received an unsatisfactory reply. This booklet

contains C. E. Stuart's fundamentally evil doctrine that Christ made propitiation in heaven -- not on the cross. This notion is based, as you may observe in the following quotation, on the sequence of events that took place on the day of atonement (Lev. 16). We will not here refute this teaching but rather call attention to it that you may be warned. W. Scott wrote:

Now propitiation, it will be observed, was effected by blood-*sprinkling*, that is, the presentation of the blood God-ward, not simply by blood-*shedding*. *Shed* at the altar, *sprinkled* on and before the mercy seat. The latter was the work of the priest, the former generally that of the offerer beside the altar. Christ as High Priest in the upper sanctuary, ¹ has made propitiation by His own blood (compare Lev. 16:14-17, the type, with Heb. 9:11,12, the antitype). ² This He alone could do in His character and office as a merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17, ³ where reconciliation should read "propitiation"). But He not only made it by His blood, but He *is* the propitiation, or blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. (1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25). . . . only in the heavenly Sanctuary, i.e., the immediate presence of God. He shed His blood as a Victim; by it He entered into the holiest as High Priest (Heb. 9:12). ⁴ Carefully distinguish between the blood *shed* and *sprinkled*. This latter effects propitiation.

In *The Bible Treasury* 18:60,61 (1890; article, "The Denial of Propitiating God by Sacrifice") W. Scott is criticized by W. Kelly thus:

But I affirm that the author has abandoned the truth of God on propitiation in a way which the simplest believer in the most unenlightened sect, if orthodox, would denounce as false and evil It is not merely (as in 1886) a fable supplanting the truth; it is since then an open contradiction of a most essential element of propitiation as revealed in all the scriptures of God, though presumably the last error [W. S.'s] flowed from the first [C. E. S.'s]. For if propitiation be only in heaven after death, there can be in it no abandonment of God, no suffering of Christ. Both errors make shipwreck of the faith; but the former is the parent of the latter, and necessarily involves it.

Regarding C. E. Stuart's teaching, W. Kelly spoke of it as "The fundamental

1. "I have glorified *thee* on the earth, I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it . . ." (John 17:4). Not only was it on the earth, but the rending of the veil signified that the work of propitiation was finished (on earth). What W. Scott says really means that propitiation was accomplished after the veil was rent, by Christ taking the blood to heaven and making propitiation there.

2. I suggest that the reader consult W. Kelly's comments on Heb. 9:11,12 in his book on Hebrews for the true meaning of this Scripture.

3. This is another distortion of Scripture. As W. Kelly remarked, "The propitiation of Christ is the basis of His priestly action on high." (*Exposition of . . . Hebrews, in loco*). Christ was not a priest on earth (He was of the tribe of Judah). His Melchizedec priesthood was not for offering blood, but was founded upon the work having been finished.

4. This evil teaching necessitates that Christ entered heaven two times; once in the disembodied state to sprinkle the blood, and the second time as resurrected man. Heb. 9:12, pressed into this unholy use, says, ". . . has entered in once for all into the [holy of] holies." Scripture teaches but one entry. www.presenttruthpublishers.com

error which Mr. S. has embraced,"⁵ "his evil view,"⁶ "Mr. S.'s heterodoxy,"⁷ and spoke of "... readers who are not leavened will see" ⁸ In his "The Strange Doctrine of Propitiation," he pointed out that several in fellowship with him were put away when they were discovered to hold the doctrine. He wrote:

No person known to hold it has been, or would be, tolerated in fellowship.

The increasing pace of indifference to, and association with, evil is indeed sad to contemplate. As J. N. Darby wrote, "Separation from Evil is God's Principle of Unity."
Ed.

THE SLAYING OF THE KING'S SONS



5. *The Bible Treasury* 16:190.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

This is one of the saddest pictures, I think, you have ever seen; and the story it is to illustrate is, if anything, sadder still, even. It is told us in the Bible, Jeremiah chapter 52, the very last. The king was named Zedekiah, and he was the last of the kings of Judah; and he was very wicked, too. "He did that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord," the painful record reads. We are not told about any particular sins he committed, only that it was evil in the sight of God and that is enough; God is called "the Judge of all," and He knows, sees and hears all; there is nothing hid from His eyes, and to Him all must some day give account.

To chastise or punish His people for their wickedness, God sent the great and powerful King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, against Jerusalem and for almost two years the city was besieged, until there was nothing left for any one to eat so they had to surrender. The soldiers tried to escape in the darkness of night, between the double walls of the city, and the king went with them. "But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king," we read, "and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. And the king of Babylon slew all the princes of Judah in Riblah." Nebuchadnezzar did this because Zedekiah "had rebelled against him." He had made him king in the room of his uncle whom he carried away captive to far-off Babylon; and instead of being submissive and true to his oath to the king, he treacherously rebelled and compelled the Chaldean army to besiege the city for nearly two years. And because of this perfidy Nebuchadnezzar was very angry which is the reason why he killed all the princes, including the sons of Zedekiah; and to make the punishment the more severe they were slain before their agonized father's eyes, as you see in the picture. The poor king tried not to look upon the terrible sight but the soldiers are trying to force him near, dragging him by the arms.

Yes, what a sight it was for the father's eyes! See, two of the boys are already killed with one of them being finished off by the great spear in the hand of an officer. The third is stretched across the block and the executioner over him with a murderous looking knife in his hand, ready to plunge it into the poor boy's breast. Oh, what a fearful thing sin is, that it must be punished in this terrible way. But the prophet Jeremiah had faithfully warned them, even with tears; but they only persecuted him and would have killed him had not his God given him special protection.

But I have not told you all about the father yet. "My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare," God says of him in Ezekiel 12:13; "and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there." Now you may wonder, as many others have done, how Zedekiah could be brought to Babylon and yet "not see it." Enemies of God and the Bible have made fun of this and said the Bible could not be God's word, or inspired, because it contradicted itself, saying a

man should be brought to the land of the Chaldeans without seeing it.

Well, turn back now to Jeremiah, chapter fifty-two where we started at. Read the eleventh verse: "Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death." Now you understand why it was that though he was brought to Babylon he did not see it -- how could he with both eyes gouged or burned out? So the Bible stands and it is written, "The word of our God shall stand for ever!" Yes, for ever.

Believe, love it and learn well the lessons it contains for all. And above all trust that blessed Saviour of whom the "Book divine" tells!

C. Knapp

PUT THOU MY TEARS INTO THY BOTTLE

There are many lessons which we may learn from the life of Joseph; but for the present let us see what we can learn by the Holy Spirit's leading from the tears of that one, whose life stands out so especially as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says that he was "mindful" of Timothy's tears; and there were many tears in the eyes of Joseph which we might well be mindful of. David and Jonathan were weepers, as well as Paul and Timothy. But were I careful to do so, I might claim it for Joseph, that he exceeded them all. The occasions of his tears were more various. And indeed it is an earnest, real, and hearty flow of affections that we have to covet in the midst of the more cultivated and orderly attainments of this day. Tears are oftentimes precious things, and sometimes sacred too.

At the beginning, when Joseph saw conviction awakening in the conscience of his brethren, he wept. There were tears both of sorrow and of joy. He felt for them passing through the agony: but he must have rejoiced to see the needed arrow reaching its mark, and the bleeding of the wounds that followed.

He wept again, when he saw Benjamin. The son of his own mother, her only child besides himself, whose birth too had been her death, and the only one in the midst of his father's children (who were all then before him) who had not been guilty of his blood, such an one as this was at that moment seen by him in Benjamin. These tears, therefore, nature could account for.

He wept again, as he saw the work of repentance going on in his brethren. In his way, he greatly longed after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ; till at the last, Judah's words were too much for him; conviction of conscience had then ended in restoration of heart. "The old man" and "the lad" again and again on

the lips of Judah had eloquence which prevailed, and Joseph could no longer refrain himself. He sobbed aloud, and the whole house of Pharaoh heard him. But these were more than the tears of nature. This was the bowels of Christ, or the tears of the Father upon the neck of the prodigal.

Each of these weepings was beautiful in its season -- but we have more still.

He fell on his father's face and wept as his father had just yielded up the ghost. This was as the grave of Lazarus to Joseph; and there he and his Lord can weep together.

And again he wept, when, after his father's death, his brethren began to suspect his love. He was disappointed. An unworthy return to the ways of a constant, patient, serving love, made him weep -- in the spirit of Him, I may say, who wept over Jerusalem. For years had he been doing all he could, to win their confidence. He had nourished them and their little ones. Years had now passed, and not one rebuke of them do we find either in his life or in his ways. Grief over their departed father had just freshly given them to know what common affections they had to bind them together. He had supplied them with every reason to trust him. And yet, after all, they were fearing him. This is a terrible shock to such a heart as Joseph's. But he did not resent it, save with his tears, and renewed assurances of his diligent, faithful love. And have not such tears as these, I ask, as fine a character as tears can have? They were as the pulses of the aggrieved Spirit of the Lord. "How long shall I be with you?" "Why are ye fearful?" "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" These were kindred pulses of an aggrieved heart in Jesus. Jesus has *sanctified* tears, and made them, like everything else that went up from Him to God, a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor; Joseph and David and Paul, yea, Jonathan and Timothy too, have made them *precious*, and put them among the treasures of the Spirit in the bosom of the church.

To Every Man His Work

THE EFFECT OF WORLDLY SOCIETY

Have you ever considered the effect of association? I believe we are affected or altered in some way by association with any of the human family. The Nazarite forfeited the hair of his separation by touching a dead body, even suddenly; and I doubt if he forfeited it in any other way. I am convinced that we never come in contact with humanity without being either injured or served by it.

Now, that which cannot serve us must injure, if we blend with it. I know it

is possible to maintain an elevated region towards another; but then it is plain I am not blending. I am, on the contrary, in a sensibly distinct position, trying to myself, and I only submitting to it for the sake of testimony or the good of my inferior company. The moment I blend, the moment we are on equal terms in any line -- my distinctness is gone, and my influence too. Could I ever help a person out of a slough by going into it myself? Is not my strength all the more applicable by my using every appliance in my power from the *terra firma* of a solid footing? By refusing intimacy I do not refuse help; for, in fact, I lose my power to afford moral help the moment I sink into intimacy; the very testimony to my own moral power being, that I keep myself from the slough or its *neighborhood*. If I meet on equal terms I fail to show that I am endued with power to help, or that it is a case that needs help. If I touch the dead body, if I lose my hair, my moral power, of what use am I?

A soul in true moral vigor and spiritual perception must feel the company of an unbeliever, or of the world in any sense, most irksome; for it must be braced up to testimony all the time, and guarding itself against any relaxation which would rob it of its high standing. If I am right with such an one, I must not mingle with him; if I fail to raise him to higher contemplation, I must not sink to his level; for if I do, I have lost my place of testimony towards him, and consequently forfeited my moral power. He has injured me; he has fed my *old* man, which I have suffered to rise up and act in denial of the *new*; and even though my intent to serve him may be honest, I defeat it.

Nothing so convinces another of power as seeing its action in oneself. When Isaac (in Gen. 26) *completely* retired from the land of the Philistines, THEN the king owned his superiority. So it is always. If I see that you can surrender the world and its refinements, I must be conscience-stricken that there is something mighty there.

Oh let us ponder this in the Lord's name! Let us preserve inviolably our love and allegiance to Him; and as our souls enjoy the holiness of His way, we shall see more clearly how such associations injure us, and how we neutralize our best intentions by gratifying *self*.

The Christian Friend, 1876, pp.104-105

HANNAH'S PRAYER

(1 Samuel 2)

In the things of God we ought never to hesitate to correct our expressions by Scripture. We have spoken of Hannah's *song*; we read, "And Hannah prayed." It will be for our profit to enquire why her thanksgiving is called a prayer. It is very significant that, whatever were her personal trials, it was at Shiloh, at the tabernacle, and at the yearly gathering for worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts, that Hannah's grief was inconsolable. When her husband pressed her to partake of the sacrifices of his peace-offerings she could only weep, she could not eat. And why? By the ordinance of the Lord the peace-offering had a special and precious significance too clearly set forth to be misunderstood (Lev. 3). In it He condescended to bring the worshippers into communion with Himself. A selected portion was called "the food of the offering"; and this was to be consumed on the burnt-offering and with the meat-offering, before they or the priests partook of what was reserved for them. All pointed on to Christ, and to the infinite delight that God found in Him -- in His life and death -- and believers, redeemed by His blood, were to participate in this divine delight. Could there be food for Hannah in this offering if there were none for the Lord?

What then was the state of things at Shiloh? The priests openly set aside the revealed will of God and instituted a custom of their own (2:13-17). Woeful indeed was the time when the conscientious worshipper pleaded only that in his sacrifices God should be honored by obedience to His word, yet pleaded in vain. And not only this. The priests with unprincipled rapacity and insolent violence took of the offerings whatever they pleased; -- "Thou shalt give it me now, and if not I will take it by force" was their threat. Even Eli, the high priest, although he remonstrated, suffered these things to go on and became a partaker of the sin. "Thou honourest thy sons before Me," the Lord said to him, "to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel, My people."

How could those who feared God have communion with all this? What could it be but distress of soul to Hannah? Men abhorred the offering of the Lord, and those who went on with the outward form did so with heartless indifference to the holiness of God and the authority of His word. This was the case with Peninnah who, with proud contempt and scorn for Hannah's tenderness of conscience, took this public opportunity of provoking her; and the more confidently as she could point to her many children as a proof of the Lord's blessing, while Hannah's barrenness must be a sure indication of His displeasure. This intensified, not only her grief, but her isolation. In the midst of a crowd of outward worshippers and in the presence of Eli she was alone, but alone with God.

Still, it must be remembered that she was under the law, and the Levitical priesthood had a place of great importance in connection with the law (Heb. 7:11). By worshipping the calf at Sinai the people had broken at once their covenant with the Lord and righteously forfeited everything. The priesthood and their services were then ordained of God in compassion for a redeemed but an erring people (Heb. 5). The high priest interceded for them, obtained counsel from the Lord for them, and on the day of atonement represented them. Even Joshua was dependent on Eleazar, and the people no less so on the faithful Phinehas (Num. 27:18-21; Judg. 20:27,28). But Hannah had to correct Eli, though with meekness, as became her; and he accepted the rebuke, for personally he was pious and gracious, though his criminal weakness as high priest, judge, and a father, brought judgment on himself and his house.

Alone then, and her voice not heard, Hannah pleaded with the Lord; and we may gather from her vow much of what was exercising her soul. There was the absence of self, a most blessed thing in prayer (Jas. 4:3). Her whole concern was for the glory of the Lord and the service of His people. She longed for a son, that she might give him to the Lord to be a means of blessing to Israel when those who had been given for that end were serving themselves. Her husband being of the tribe of Levi, this desire was in full accord with the spirit of the law (Num. 3); yet there is something exceedingly touching in her prayer, that she pleaded for only one son -- "O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but will give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

Had then the leaven in the priesthood spread to the Levites? Was the service of God corrupted like His worship? Were *all seeking* their own, and not the things of the Lord? Though so early in Israel's history, it would appear to be so. Surely the Spirit of God in Hannah's prayers and tears was giving expression to the wants of the godly remnant in that people, and, may we not say? affording encouragement for all in like sorrow in the church of God.

We now enter on a scene of great interest. In the midst of the crying evils and the dark forecast of impending judgments of that sad time, she and Samuel appear to be the only hope for the nation; yet what was there in either to fit them for this? Samson had failed with his great strength, and Eli with his exalted position. What hope can there be in a weak woman and a still weaker child? The answer surely is, prayer; and in this they are as one, Samuel, if we may say so, the continuation of Hannah. (See 1 Sam. 1, 2, 7, 8, 12).

We lose something by the division of the chapters. It is better to take no notice of it. Then we read, "And he [or "they", R.V.] worshipped the Lord there; and Hannah prayed." Before leaving the young child at Shiloh we see them worshipping together. It was a painful moment for such a mother, but her will was broken and her heart was full. We are permitted to hear her prayer,

and to learn that thanksgiving for mercies received is accepted of God as a petition for the continuance of them. She, in effect, begins the prayers and service of her child with her praises, for thanksgiving is inseparable from such prayers.

The foundation of all is the known and enjoyed salvation of the Lord. Because of this her heart exulteth in Him, yea, like the heavenly hosts, in His holiness. Without His salvation, what avails the natural prosperity of Peninnah, or even the exalted position of the priests? Not these outward things but actions will be weighed, for the Lord is a God of knowledge. What then are external advantages so coveted by man? The bows of the mighty will be broken, the full become empty, the fruitful languish. Grace, on the other hand, raises the fallen and girds them with strength, the hungry are satisfied, the barren made joyful with children. Thus the way of the Lord is to humble those He will exalt, to bring low those He will lift up. Where man's purpose and pride wither, faith can grow, and "the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning." Hannah had proved it, and it gave her joy to think that *all* believers are in the hands of Him Who had so tenderly dealt with her. She sees them, however lowly here -- the beggar on a dunghill -- made to sit with princes and to inherit the throne of glory; while by their own strength not one of them would prevail. This is salvation as Hannah knew it; and nothing less is the *salvation of the Lord*, present, future, eternal.

What then of those who reject or neglect it? How will they escape? If alive when the Lord comes to claim the earth they will be broken to pieces (Psalm 2), while the dead will be judged before the great white throne. She seems to distinguish thus between "the adversaries of the Lord" -- those who will be arrayed against Him for battle -- and "the wicked", that is all such; as surely we ought to do who have such definite teaching by the last of the prophets. (Rev. 19:11-21, 20:11,15.)

But judgment is not a fitting close to such utterances as these. The Anointed (Messiah) alone can be that. Before she prayed, the bullock which she had brought with her child had been sacrificed, the testimony to the sufferings of Christ and His atoning work had been given: and she cannot close her prayer without telling of the glories that shall follow -- "Jehovah shall give strength to His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed."

It is a marvelous portion of God's word, when we consider the times and think of the woman, so feminine (1:22,23; 2:19), so weak, and, in the eyes of the prosperous, so despicable, yet made of God the first of blessings, in their low estate, to His beloved people. Till she found all her strength in the Lord, she was overwhelmed with the difficulties. When she did, so great was her joy *in Him*, that in all this prayer she never once named her child. With our greater light and privileges how few are like her in this, and in the bright assurance of salvation, through redemption, right on to glory!

". . . WITH SUCH A ONE NOT EVEN TO EAT."

I have written to you in the epistle not to mix with . . . But now I have written to you, if any one called brother be fornicator, or avaricious, or idolater, or abusive, or a drunkard, or rapacious, not to mix with [him]: with such a one not even to eat. . . . Remove the wicked person from amongst yourselves (1 Cor. 5:9,11,13).

THE NECESSITY FOR DISCIPLINE

It is a deeply grievous thing -- at least it ought to be -- when a case arises to which these scriptures apply. It ought to cause much heart searching and self-judgment by those compelled to act on them. It must also be remembered that the One in our midst (Matt. 18:20) looks for the love proved by obedience, from us. "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:15,23).

In putting away a wicked person from amongst the people of God, three important considerations need to be remembered. Not only are the considerations themselves important, but the *order* of their importance is also to be observed carefully.

1. THE LORD'S HONOR MUST BE MAINTAINED! His presence, as noted in Matt. 18:20, and tolerated leaven cannot go on together since His holy presence is incompatible with tolerated evil. If a company of Christians is indifferent¹ to leaven, they actually meet together on the ground of indifference to evil. Christ cannot endorse this by His presence (according to Matt. 18:20) because such indifferent Christians are gathered on the principle of indifference to evil. By this they deny "His Name" which is "Holy and True" (no matter what they profess).

2. THE PURITY OF THE ASSEMBLY MUST BE MAINTAINED! Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a new lump . . ." (1 Cor. 5:7). The leaven

1. *Indifference* is displayed by refusal to ACT regardless of how great the claim of being "concerned" about the matter. Indeed, indifference is regarded by God as complicity in the thing. Indifference is neutrality, a thing never accepted by God. In cases of evil, "he that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30).
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must be purged out in order for the assembly to continue in the practical character of the "new lump." Had the saints at Corinth refused the apostle's word, thereby showing that they tolerated leaven, they would have been a leavened lump and regarded as no longer gathered together unto the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. THE GOOD OF THE WICKED PERSON IS IN VIEW! Being put away from among the saints has in view the wicked person's unreserved breakdown and restoration of soul as evidenced by genuine repentance (2 Cor. 2:6,7; Psalm 51). Then in due time the "loosing" of the discipline by the assembly clears up the whole matter (Matt. 18:18-20), unless govermental consequences remain.

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE DISCIPLINE

The sentence of God is: "Remove the wicked person from amongst yourselves." Much of our difficulty concerning our practical conduct in such cases arises from not bowing in heart to the sentence of God. Some lightly would think to be more gracious than God! In this connection Wm. Kelly remarked,

"Put away from" -- not the table of the Lord merely, this he does not say, but -- "put away from among yourselves." This is much stronger than expelling from the table. Of course, it implies exclusion from the Lord's table, but from their table too -- "with such a one, no, not to eat." An ordinary meal, or any such act expressive even in natural things, of fellowship with the person thus dishonoring the Lord, is forbidden.²

To "remove from among yourselves" A WICKED PERSON means among other things that we not outwardly sympathize with him. Socializing with such a one is one form of extending sympathy. It gives expression to sympathy by treating the one put away as if nothing had happened, whereas God's way is that he should be made to feel his guilt by the uniform attitude of the saints not socializing with him. Eating with such a one on any occasion, whether it be in a private home (his house, our house, or another person's house) at a wedding, at a funeral, at gatherings of the saints when refreshments are served, etc. is expressly forbidden in 1 Cor. 5:11 -- "With such a one not even to eat."

There is no scriptural warrant -- no excuse -- no reason -- for one who professes to be a child of God to merely visit with, to socialize with, A WICKED PERSON called a brother. It is really disobedience and unfaithfulness to our Lord and His word. It is personally defiling and brings that defilement among God's people. It is unloving and unkind to the guilty one

2. *Lectures Introductory to . . . the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, Broom: Paternoster Row, 1869, p. 61. www.presenttruthpublishers.com

under discipline to think that "graciousness" and "kindness" in the form of such socializing is necessary to win back the one put away. Such actions only defeat God's perfect way of finally restoring in accordance with His mind. If we really believed God about this, bowing to it in our hearts as the very judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:4), our eye would be single, and "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6:22). All so enlightened will have the same judgment and can thus unitedly beseech the Lord to work repentance in the heart of the wicked person so that he might be restored. There is no basis to ask this of the Lord if we disobey Him by socializing and/or eating with the wicked person, thereby identifying ourselves with him.

ARE FAMILY TIES AN EXCEPTION TO 1 COR. 5:11?

Let us consider the case of the near of kin, such as the husband, wife, or *dependent* children. Mr. Darby wrote about the case of the wife whose husband had been put away as follows:

Here it says, "no, not to eat." I would not dine with such an one; I would give him to eat if he were hungry, but not eat with him. Take a wife whose husband is put out. It may be awkward, but her action is not keeping company with him as a case of will; it is one of subjection to authority.³

It is clear that Mr. Darby recognized that the wife had a scriptural duty to perform as being in subjection; and, as being obedient to Christ because she loves Him, she does His will. The subjection of a wife to her husband is based on divinely instituted authority, and does not cease⁴ if the husband is "put away" from amongst the saints by discipline of the assembly. By doing the will of Christ in fulfilling those duties of a wife, she does not willfully "keep company" with her husband who has been put away, though she eats at the same table as he does.

Mr. Darby has also written about the case of a dependent son who was under assembly discipline. The entire letter is reproduced here for its valuable comments on the subject:

My dear Brother, -- I hold it of all importance to maintain intact the discipline of God's house, as to not eating with those under discipline. I got a dreadful scolding from one for acting on it. Nor do I in the least blame --. . . It is very well that the son should feel that the father did not feel lightly his son's getting put out. I should not eat with him, and if he ate at the same table, I should not enter into conversation with him, and if -- did, I should not like to be at the table. If the lad's spirit be at all subdued, and there was fear of alienating him by

3. *Collected Writings* 26:330 (Morrish ed.).

4. This subject is more fully treated in "The Deportment of a Christian Woman", obtainable from the publisher, and now in a second edition, enlarged.
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harshness, I might have him eat at the table, telling him that I could not have free intercourse with him. But as he was necessarily in the house I should not refuse letting him eat at the same table. But I could not keep company with him till he was humbled. This would not hinder anxious love as regards him, and the assurance of it; but familiarity and company at table, as if nothing happened, I should not accept. I give my son his dinner if needed, I shew him my heart yearns over him, but I could not be familiar and at ease with him. I should not eat with him, if even I ate at the same time. Something would depend on the age of the son, and how far he was under the father's authority. If young and under it, I must let him eat, and treat him as I would treat one under rebuke. If grown up and independent, I should be less disposed to do so.⁵

DO ANY OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES ESTABLISH A BASIS FOR RELATIVES TO ACT OTHERWISE

Some, in an attempt to justify a course contrary to 1 Cor. 5:11, enlist the support of certain Old Testament scriptures. The tendency of doing so is to make God the author of their course (by claiming that they are following God's Word in doing so), while in fact it is fleshly activity and lack of courage to be faithful. An Old Testament scripture enlisted in support of such a course is Lev. 21:1-4. In this portion of scripture the priest was allowed to defile himself by the dead in the case of a near relation, and therefore it is claimed by analogy that one may visit with, eat with, and socialize with, a relative put away as a wicked person. There are two considerations concerning this to which I would call attention:

1. As to typical teaching, I believe that it is leprosy in the Old Testament (as typifying the worst energy of active evil) that corresponds to leaven. Leprosy in the head or beard suggests doctrinal evil held (Rev. 2:14) or taught (Gal. 5:9) respectively, while leprosy in the body suggests moral evil (1 Cor. 5).⁶
2. "Defilement by the dead" suggests moral contact with that in man which has no life toward God. The energy of active evil is not the prominent thought as is the case with leaven (or leprosy) working, but of moral contact with moral death.

These two considerations should be sufficient to show that the use of Lev. 21:1-4 to justify the practice of relatives eating with, or socializing with, one who has been "put away" as a wicked person, is a misapplication of Scripture. (See also Lev. 13:46).

5. [Date uncertain.] *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:63 (Stow Hill ed.).

6. This subject is treated in greater detail in "Leprosy and God's Presence Among His People", to be had from the publisher.

In addition to the above considerations we must ask, "Does the New Testament allow the Christian to have deliberate moral contact with that which is spiritually dead?" No, our Lord said, "Suffer the dead to bury their own dead" (Luke 9:60). Of course, a Christian may bury his relatives, or anyone else, but let nothing interfere with the call or rights of God. The law allowed divorce for many reasons; our Lord allowed but one. The law *allowed* many things; it made nothing perfect. Bow to the word of the Lord in 1 Cor. 5 and do not force Lev. 21 against the clear instruction of the Lord. This is the obedient, and therefore the holy, loving, happy path.

There is still another matter which those who would force Lev. 21 against 1 Cor. 5 have failed to consider, or have ignored. Num. 19:11-14 provides instruction concerning a person that touched a dead body. It specifies *cleansing*! Read the entire chapter. Num. 9 shows the effect of such defilement concerning the eating of the passover. Ezek. 44:25,26 (a millennial passage) shows that the priest had to be cleansed from the defilement contracted. And Num. 5:2 states that whoever is defiled by a dead person was put out of the camp. The cleansing could, of course, soon take place following the instructions of Num. 19, a case altogether different from leprosy. If one pleads Lev. 21:1-4 to set aside 1 Cor. 5:11, at least the meaning of Num. 5:2-9 and Num. 19, and Ezek. 44:25 should be consistently practiced therewith! The obvious truth is that it is a false use of Lev. 21:1-4, and such a misuse of the Word of God tends to make Him the author of unholiness!

IT IS A SERIOUS MATTER

To treat with indifference the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ⁷ concerning a wicked person, a judgment expressed in the assembly action of putting away a wicked person, is a very serious thing. Mr. Darby regarded this so serious a matter that he wrote:

Thus, supposing evident sin, as at Corinth, and one supported him in it and refused the clear common consent of all, so that it was a rejection of the assembly's authority when the case and the word were clear, they might hold him guilty with the offender.⁸

The Lord knows, I have no desire to offend anyone; but we are dealing with a foundation matter of holiness in God's house, and in our walk, and so we must be most plain. We are assured, however, that none who really trembles at God's Word will be offended, but rather will rejoice with the truth, as love does

7. If the assembly did a wicked thing, other considerations would apply to such an act, for Christ does not sanction wickedness.

8. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:46.

(1 Cor. 13:6), glad of help or correction afforded on a subject of profound importance. Is not the *alleged* "love" shown to a wicked person in reality making provision for the flesh and sparing self? If we would judge ourselves, and keep Christ before us, and keep before us the fact that it is *His* sentence that declares the person to be a wicked person (1 Cor. 5:13), -- leavened (1 Cor. 5:7) -- and that LEAVEN LEAVENS THE LUMP -- we would see and judge the seriousness of this false 'love and grace.'

The instruction in 1 Cor. 5:11, "with such a one not even to eat," is so plain; and it is such a fundamental instruction; and it is so consonant with the first principles of holiness; and is so elementary, that if anyone who professes to love Christ is resentful or angered (rather than rejoicing with the truth -- 1 Cor. 13:6) by what has been said, it shows a seriously defective condition of soul. In connection with our attitude towards exposure of unholiness, the people's response to Ezra's identifying himself with the sin of God's people, and his confession, is very instructive. We find four responses:

1. Those that trembled at God's Word (Ezra 9:4).
2. The people who bowed to the Word (Ezra 10:1).
3. Those who opposed (Ezra 10:15).
4. Those who helped the opposers (Ezra 10:15 in J. N. D. transl.)

Let us cry out to God for grace to be found in the first and second groups whenever the Word of God instructs us concerning our path here.

Ed.

... and truth of doctrine has more to say to truthfulness than we are aware, for we are sanctified by the truth. *Collected Writings* 18:244.

The church does not teach; the teacher teaches. The church abides in and professes the truth she has learned. She is, or ought to be, the pillar and ground of the truth; but she does not teach it. The mystery of iniquity began in the apostle's days: the last days were already come. *The truth* was there; but men, like Satan, abode not in it. But abiding in it, walking in it, in the truth perfectly revealed in Christ, this was the duty of the saint, even if the professing church would not, and the time should come when they would turn away from the truth: Paul declared they would. *Collected Writings* 18:247.

Dr. Pusey tells us, in defending himself against Romanizers, that it is by faith the church is recognized as holy. What a confession! And note --holiness is one mark by which we are to recognize the true church (a doctrine I do not except to); but when we come to see it as a mark, then we must believe it to be holy by means of faith. What a satire! What are we to believe to be holy? the unholy church. And how is it then a proof? I am to know the true church by its holiness, and when I find it an awfully wicked body, believe it is holy because it is the church! I must say this is a mockery in holy things; a trifling with the claims of God. *Collected Writings* 18:198, note.

GOD'S ORDER

PREFACE

The subject matter of this paper is complementary to the series of articles recently published in this magazine titled, "GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH". In those articles it was attempted to present the relevant truths as to what God recognizes as acceptable to Himself in all His dealings with this scene. In the following paper it is, rather, to present the truths in connection with the responsibility attaching to all men (and believers especially) in those various spheres of God's interest.

God is a God of order and He established order out of chaos in the earthly scene, as recorded in Gen. 1. He also established order in connection with man whom He placed subsequently in that beautiful creation, which God declared to be "very good". With the establishment of Adam in the garden of Eden, blessed with all that God could provide for his enjoyment, God introduced four things in connection with the continuity of His order in creation. They were,

- 1) **Subjection to authority**
- 2) **Headship**
- 3) **Marriage, and**
- 4) **Procreation**

As to **SUBJECTION**, this was the requirement that Adam obeyed God's command "*Of every tree of the garden thou shalt freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it*"; -- in this Adam failed by partaking of the fruit of the forbidden tree, at the invitation of Eve.

As to **HEADSHIP**, God appointed Adam as the Head of His creation -- this involves Control and Direction -- in which Adam failed with respect to Eve.

As to **MARRIAGE**, God gave Eve to Adam as wife, and there was no question at that time of any termination of this relationship for sin had not yet entered into the world. In this Adam also failed for with the entrance of sin, and with it death, then death evidently terminated this marriage. And so death continues to be the only cause of termination of marriage, between mankind, except the one cause of "Fornication", which the Lord specifically authorized according to His own statements recorded in Matt. 5:32 & 19:9 -- which no other word in scripture or by man can supercede.

As to **PROCREATION**, it was God's intention that man, as He made him

without sin, should be reproduced as the result of the marriage which He instituted -- as the consequence of sin Adam and Eve produced children born in sin i.e. having a fallen nature, and so Adam incurred failure in this also.

In all of these responsibilities Adam failed, and so progressively through the ages of time mankind has departed further from God's first intention as to man. However, we find the glorious answer to mankind's failure in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who perfectly responded to all four.

As to SUBJECTION -- He was entirely subject in all things to His God and Father. For He said, "For I am come down from heaven, not that I should do My will, but the will of Him that has sent Me" (John 6:38).

As to HEADSHIP -- our blessed Lord is "Head over all things", and as such has been given by God to the Assembly, which is His Body (See Eph. 1:22,23) and this will be displayed in all His glory in the world to come.

As to MARRIAGE -- He gave Himself, through death, to procure His bride, the Assembly, and will soon receive her to Himself in His glory when she will be 'married' (for eternity) to her adorable Bridegroom.

As to PROCREATION -- this has been infinitely superceded by our blessed Lord in that He has completed the work by which a new generation has been brought into being by new birth, in the power of the Holy Spirit (not natural procreation). All believers have been made "new creation" in Christ Jesus and of them it is true that our blessed Lord is "bringing many sons to glory" (see Hebrews 2:10).

What a marvelous finality to all the failure that came in through Adam, when all will be perfected in Christ Jesus our Lord. More on these matters will be found throughout the following sections of our consideration.

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world that is thoroughly disorderly, in every section of it. Whether we consider the social, political, economic or religious activities of men there is the same chaos and inconsistency in God's view. Because of mans' distance from God there is not only disorder on every hand but the state of mankind is rapidly becoming more disorderly.

The exercise which has initiated this paper is due to the sad and dishonoring fact that the same conditions, that have developed in the world, have penetrated among the saints of God, little or much. One purposes to look at these matters in the light of the Word of God and to get from it more of an understanding of

what God requires of us, as His saints, in relation to these conditions. ⁹

The Spirit of God instructs us through the apostle Paul, "*But let all things be done comelily and with order*" (1 Cor. 14:40). While this is contained in the passage dealing with disorders among the saints at the time when they were together in one place for the various functions of the Assembly, there is no reason to limit the need for order to such occasions -- for it is becoming to God that order is maintained in every sphere of His interests and at all times.

In our individual lives there are several areas in which we are responsible for our behavior and there is a moral progression in regard to them. As creatures of God we are responsible beings, not like the animals which have no conscience. This would be the first and elementary area in which we should act orderly and not in any wild or instinctive fashion like the animals. Following this we have moral obligations as humans with a structured society in which we are expected to behave ourselves in accord with the interests of all other humans. Finally, there is the highest sphere of responsibility (with mankind) as to behavior before and to a holy God to whom we are answerable.

The sad and dishonoring evidence with mankind in general is that there is grievous failure in all areas. It is without question a fact that many people act in a manner which is worse than animals. Large and increasing numbers of people are considered as either unsocial or antisocial. As regards God, it is almost universal that mankind has no thought or fear of God, and so act totally oblivious of Him.

All areas of our activity form a part of our total responsibility to God to Whom we must all answer sooner or later. It must be understood by us that we cannot be agreeable God in any attempt to worship, praise and serve Him unless we are first acceptable to Him in our conduct as human beings of His creation and also in our inter-relationships with our fellow man.

GOD'S HOLINESS

The governing fact is that God is holy and cannot tolerate evil of any kind in His presence nor accept any man who is unholy in his condition. It is seemingly overlooked by many saints that we are more responsible in this matter than the man in the world, who professes no allegiance to God. The grand declaration of Hannah as recorded in 1 Sam. 2:2-3 is one that is always true. She said, "*There is none holy as Jehovah, for there is none beside Thee, neither is there any rock like our God. Do not multiply your words of pride, let not vain-glory come out of your mouth; for Jehovah is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.*"

9. Throughout this paper the quotations of scripture will be generally from Mr. J. N. Darby's translation of the Holy Scriptures.

GOD'S SUPREMACY

The above quoted words of Hannah are followed by statements as to Jehovah's sovereignty in actions, His power in sustaining what He has made, and His preservation of His saints with His dealings with the wicked. The finale of Hannah's beautiful prayer is, "*Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth and He will give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed.*" What a triumph for God when He has the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne reigning over this scene into which sin came through the first man Adam, and which has subsequently departed far from him in every form of sin and total disorder!!

This world rejected the rightful King of kings and Lord of lords when the Lord Jesus Christ came into it, but this did not frustrate God's purpose but led to the continuation to reach His objective when He will "*head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth*" (Eph. 1:10) - this will be accomplished in the glorious reign of Christ over the whole created scene during the 1000 years which we refer to as the Millennium.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We will look at our responsibilities in bowing to God's order in five spheres in which it is requisite, namely --

- 1) **THE CREATION OF GOD**
- 2) **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**
- 3) **THE HOUSE OF GOD**
- 4) **THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD**
- 5) **THE BODY OF CHRIST**

In dealing with **order** in these spheres it is to be noticed that while **discipline** is a necessity in connection with achieving and maintaining order, it is only given to the saints as a responsibility to apply it in relation to **The House** and **The Assembly**. However, order suitable to the presence of our Holy God is required in each as we shall seek to find from the scriptures.

J. Pascoe

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

CHRISTMAS

Have you ever ordered the pamphlet **CHRISTMAS** from Present Truth Publishers? Have you ever read it? Have you ever inquired into the will of the Lord regarding this matter?

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W. KELLY ON AMERICA

So as to America, I conceive that the young giant power which has grown so fast will sink yet faster, probably through intestine quarrel, but assuredly something before that day comes. They will break up into different fragments.. Their prime object is to maintain political unity. This is their great ambition, and thought it may appear to stand and advance, as everything ambitious is apt to prosper for a time, it will all be blown down before long. For it is a remarkable fact that there is no place in prophecy for a vast influential power, such as the American United States would naturally be, if it so long retained its cohesion. Is it conceivable that there should be such a power existing at that day without any mention of it? Can the omission of it be accounted for save by its dissolution? However, I would particularly wish everyone to understand that this is merely drawn from the general principles of the word of God.¹⁰

The U. S. A. seems to be in the quicksand now. We do not know how far things might develop before the rapture of the saints. On the other hand there may be a period of time between the rapture and the opening of Daniel's 70th week. During such a transitional period the political scene may rapidly develop preparatory to the opening of that week of seven years. The onset of that seven year period will be marked by the *confirmation* (Dan.9:27) of a covenant of protection for Israel against the aggression of the King of the North. The covenant may first be made before the rapture, or it may first be made during such a transition period. In any event, what will open that seven year period is a special confirmation of that covenant for a seven year period. More on this will be found in my *Daniel's Seventieth Week and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, available from the publisher.

Ed.

GRACE WHICH IS NOT HOLINESS

I accept the principle of grace fully, but grace which is not holiness is not God's grace, and holiness is by truth. "Sanctify them by thy truth." Thus saith "he that is holy, he that is true."

Letters of J. N. Darby 2:222.

10. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, London: Broom, p. 109, 1874.
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