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## THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

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### SOME QUESTIONS TOUCHING OUR LORD'S HUMANITY

A correspondent has sent us some questions upon this subject, the importance of which seems to claim a more distinct notice than could be given under the usual heading. The letter containing them is too long for insertion here, but all the questions will be found taken up in the order in which they are proposed.

With regard to the first quotation, that "the second Adam was, *as to his manhood*, the Lord from Heaven," it was a hasty expression put forth by one who was as far as could be from holding the error implied in it, and who, when it was pointed out to him, publicly withdrew the statement. It was laid hold of to prove that the writer had the views of certain Gnostic heretics who denied the Lord's real humanity, -- a charge so much the more unjust because in the same book, only a little further on than this quotation, there was a direct denial of this error by name.

But the inaccuracy of this expression no doubt for many might bring in question the real and valuable truth with which it was connected. I cannot find the quotation as to the Lord's body being called a "heavenly vessel," but I do find it stated that it was "free from every seed and principle, not merely of sin, but of *mortality*." Surely that is true, and most important. If the Lord had had in His body a "seed or principle of mortality," He would have been a poor, dying man, like any of us. Such an expression does not imply simply "a body that *could* die," but a body that *must* die, at least according to the law of its nature. But "the wages of *sin* is death." "Dying thou shalt die" was the penalty of the transgression of the first Adam, and the last Adam was not under it. He *could* die, and so could Adam innocent; but inherent tendency to die he had not, any more than Adam. Even when "found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." It was a further *humbling* to Him, even after becoming man, to die; and a voluntary obedience for which the Father has highly exalted him. So He presents it as a thing the "title" to which was His. "Therefore doth my Father love me because

I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power (title) to lay it down, and I have title to take it again" (John 10:17,18). Was it, I ask, a thing the sentence of which was already working on Him, of which He thus spoke? I have read in a so-reputed orthodox book, that perchance the blessed Lord suffered in mid-life because it would not have done to see the Saviour with grey hairs! It is the natural fruit, I own, of the doctrine of His life being vicarious from His birth, but it is as baseless as that doctrine. Scripture disowns it altogether. Even on the Cross it is not His suffering there from which He dies. Crying with a loud voice, in witness of His unexhausted strength, He gives up His own spirit to the Father.<sup>1</sup> In Matthew it is expressly said, "He *dismissed* His spirit." The centurion, when he "saw that He *so cried out*, and gave up the ghost," said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." When Pilate heard He was already dead, he marvelled. Every circumstance shows and is designed to show, that to the last He had authority (according to His own saying) over death, and *not death over Him*. I repeat it, that death is the wages of sin, -- passed upon all men for that all have sinned. If the blessed Lord was not of this class, as He was not, He could have no seed of mortality in Him. He could stoop to death, and did, but then only when He "bare our sins in His own body"; and that was "on the tree," and nowhere else (I Pet. 2:24). And there we have the most distinct evidence what a voluntary surrender of His life it was. The question of vicarious life suffering I must reserve for another paper.

The next quotation, if it be one, is made ambiguous (I should suppose,) by the want of its context. To say simply and alone, that "the incarnation was not Christ taking our nature into union with Himself," would naturally perplex, if it did not mislead, though what follows (if in connection) would suggest the explanation "that between humanity as seen in our Lord, and humanity *as seen in us*, there could be no union." Our correspondent asks, "How does that agree with Heb. 2:14-17?"

I have said that the first sentence (or part of a sentence) *standing by itself*, is ambiguous, and therefore objectionable. The expression "our nature" might be understood simply as humanity, or as the text in Hebrews puts it, "flesh and blood." Then, I need not say, it would be downright heresy to speak so. But on the other hand "our nature" is commonly used for "fallen nature," and this is what is evidently intended. It is not the Lord's taking humanity that is denied, but "humanity *as seen in us*." Certainly, the Lord did not, and could not, take

*fallen* human nature into union with Himself. He took flesh and blood, -- was true man; *truer* man, if I may so speak, than any of us, just because humanity in Him was without fracture.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death," &c. He took flesh and blood, the nature of man as God made it, not as sin made it. But He took it that He might suffer and die. Of suffering and death He was capable, and in grace suffered and died. But there was nothing in His nature, even as man, that necessitated this. The translation of Heb. 2:16 is wrong, and might mislead. Any one may see by the italic letters that there is nothing about "nature" there. It reads really as in the margin, "He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold." So when it is added, "wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren," it is not that He was "made like" them in all things *by incarnation*. We were shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. He was "that holy thing" conceived through the supervention of the Holy Ghost, and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High. Certainly *that* is not being "in all things made like." But these words apply, not (as the mistranslation of the 16th verse would seem to make them) to His taking flesh, but to what, *when* made flesh, He needed to pass through. This Holy One was taking up not an angel's cause, but that of believers, the seed of Abraham. They were not holy ones He laid hold of, but sinners under the consequences and exposed to the dread penalty of sin. Therefore taking up these He must be made like them, must put Himself into all their circumstances, make Himself at home in all their condition, that He might know how to meet it and minister to those in it.

But I apprehend there is more than this involved in the statement, that "between humanity as seen in our Lord and humanity as seen in us, there could be no union." I apprehend that it refers to a very common misstatement, that in incarnation Christ became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Many have taken this up without weighing it, and find it too cheering and comforting a thought, perhaps, to be willing to give up. Many, I fancy, even believe it to be Scripture. Not only is it not that, but involves a serious error. The Scripture statement is that as united to the risen and glorified man, "*we* are members of *His* body, of *His* flesh, and of *His* bones." Or take it as in the type in Genesis, from whence people no doubt take their expressions. It was Eve of whom Adam said (and he was "the figure of Him that was to come," Rom. 5:14), "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." It was the woman "taken out of the man," during the mysterious "deep sleep" which fell upon him. And plainly if there be figure there, it is not that of the Lord coming into union with mankind on the ground of a common humanity, but that of the Church (whom

1. The expressions differ in the different gospels. In Mark and Luke it is simply "He expired." In John "He gave up His spirit." In Matthew, "dismissed."

Eve, according to Eph. 5, represents), taken out of the second Adam, fruit of Divine power working by His mysterious death-sleep, and united to Himself raised from the dead.

The difference is most important. He Himself speaking of His death and its result, assures us, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," (Jno. 12:24). He could not unite Himself with man as man, but only, upon the basis of His work, with those who believe in it, and take the ground of it before God, who are partakers of eternal life, of the Divine nature. And *their* union is not with One down here in the flesh and in the world, but with One dead out of it, and risen, and in another sphere. As the apostle says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more; therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," or as the words mean, "a creature new in kind," (2 Cor. 5:17). People refer this to simple moral transformation; it is more: "Christ after the flesh" was perfect morally, -- *as* perfect as now: but it is a risen and ascended Christ we have to do with, and in whom we are.

All that the soul finds precious, His nearness, sympathy, oneness with us, is here maintained, but set upon true, and therefore immeasurably higher ground. His sympathy is manifested as with the new man, not the old. All that suits not with the new condition is judged, not sympathized with; but weakness amid the trials and difficulties of the path below, sufferings and trial as the result of being in the midst of things contrary to us and to God, met perfectly in the grace of Him who came to know and minister to our condition, but ever as the One come from God, and going back to God, heavenly in character all through.

But to return now to the quotations. The next we think our correspondent has misunderstood. It is an error "to suppose that the reality of the incarnation involves the condition of either Adam fallen or Adam unfallen." This is not a question of "nature" but of "condition," as the quotation itself shows. The condition of Adam fallen was that of a dying sinner in a world spoilt and suffering from the sin introduced into it. The *condition* of Adam unfallen was that of an innocent, unsuffering man in Paradise. Was either of these conditions the Lord's? Clearly not. His was that of the Holy One in the midst of a sin-laden and groaning world. Surely that is widely different. The quotation says that the *reality* of the Incarnation does not *involve* either of the former conditions: that is, that while the Lord became true man, was *really*, not seemingly incarnate, that does not imply His being in either. It is a very needful caution not to make the suffering He in grace passed through an argument for His being One in whom all through His life the curse and wrath upon sin were working. *On the Cross* He was "made a curse," but only there He met

"indignation and wrath." The Cross stands out in unmistakable contrast thus with His life as man up to it: just as the "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," with the outspoken witness of God elsewhere, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Yet even on the Cross, as we have seen, we find distinctly One over whom personally death had no title, but One who had title (as no creature could have) to "dismiss His spirit" and to die.

I turn now to the question of His resurrection-life. Our correspondent quotes, "In His resurrection-life He had not assumed into His sacred person the blood shed on the Cross. The 'life of the flesh is in the blood shed,'" and asks, "What other sense can one make of that, than that Christ did not live again as man?" But that is not at all its sense. A risen man is a man, surely; yet is it expressly said, that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. 15:50), and that with regard to resurrection. Therefore, for the living, when the Lord comes, the necessity of being "changed"; "we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed": (ver. 51). We shall be still men, but not "flesh and blood." He, whom we look for, "will change the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory," <sup>2</sup> (Phil. 3:21). Now, if our "spiritual body" is to be thus like His, not "flesh and blood," and yet we find Him claiming for Himself "flesh and bones," (Luke 24:39), what can we gather but that the "blood," -- vehicle of change as we know it to be, "the life of all flesh," as Lev. 17:14 declares it, -- is that which He as risen did not take up again, and which the spiritual body will not possess?

As to John 10:17,18 being against this, it could only be made to do so by a narrowness of interpretation which Scripture itself rejects. Certainly He laid down His life, "dismissed His spirit," and as certainly took it again in resurrection, but not in its old conditions. Life is a many-sided, complex thing, and according to the aspect in which we regard it we might say, He took it again, or that He never took it again, or even that He never laid it down, for "all live unto God," even the dead.

Other questions raised will more naturally come up in connection with the enquiry, which we must reserve for another paper, Was our Lord's life vicarious, according to the common doctrine of the day?

*Helps By the Way* 2:284-292.

2. So the revised translations, as Alford's and the Bible Union, change the "vile body" and "glorious body" of our common version.



## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

### CHAPTER 3.4

#### ACTS 3: 19-26:

#### THE TIMES OF REFRESHING

Repent therefore and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins, so that times of refreshing may come from [the] presence of the Lord, and he may send Jesus Christ, who was foreordained for you, whom heaven indeed must receive till [the] times of [the] restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began. Moses indeed said, A prophet shall [the] Lord your God raise up to you out of your brethren like me: him shall ye hear in everything whatsoever he shall say to you. And it shall be that whatsoever soul shall not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. And indeed all the prophets from Samuel and those in succession after [him], as many as have spoken, have announced also these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant of God appointed to our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. To you first God, having raised up his servant, has sent him, blessing you in turning each one [of you] from your wickedness (Acts 3:9-26).

The questions to be answered are these:

1. What are the times of refreshing and the times of the restoration of all things and "these days"?
2. When do they begin?

#### WHAT ARE THESE TIMES?

The answer is: the millennium and the reign of Christ. Now, there is a very important, related question; and that is, does the repentance in v. 19 refer only to the repentance of some of the Jews, or does it require the repentance of all of them to realize all these blessing? It is true that an individual Jew who repented would have his sins blotted out, but that would hardly be the cause of God sending Jesus Christ. This fact indicates that a national repentance is

connected with God's sending Jesus Christ.

The prophets spoke of "these days" (Acts 3:24). They spoke of the reign of Messiah on earth. "These days" are the "times of refreshing" and "[the] times of [the] restoring of all things." These expressions refer to characteristics of the days of Messiah's millennial reign.

#### WHEN DO THESE TIMES BEGIN?

O. T. Allis, an amillennialist, says: "This is a difficult passage."<sup>3</sup> I believe it is a very simple passage if we jettison the notion that this is an O.T. prophecy about the church. When do the times of refreshing and of restoring of all things occur? It is simple to see that they will occur in the future from when Peter spoke. The Jews had to repent so that:

1. "times of refreshing may come";
2. "and he may send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must receive till
3. [the] times of [the] restoring of all things."

Observe, then, that

1. Jesus Christ still has not come;
2. And the times of the restoring of all things is bound up with His coming.

These times, therefore, are still future and will occur when Christ appears in glory. Theology must have at least some of this apply presently, hence O. T. Allis reasons:

Consequently, it seems proper to conclude that the apostle is speaking of two matters which are closely related: the immediate blessings resulting from the acceptance of the Saviour who has died for sinners and the future blessings which will follow upon His return to the earth from which He had so recently ascended. It does not seem necessary to insist either that the seasons of refreshing must wait for a coming which may be remote, or that the coming must itself be very near at hand despite the plain intimation which is given to the contrary. The seasons of refreshing may begin at once and include as an important feature in their refreshing the assured hope of the coming of the One who has made them possible. So understood Peter's words refer to the entire inter-advental period which is to end with the advent, in other words to the entire Church age.<sup>4</sup>

The fact is that Scripture says:

3. *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 137, (1945).

4. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 138.

Repent . . . so that times of refreshing may come from [the] presence of the Lord, and he may send Jesus Christ.

The times of refreshing are not a refreshing for an individual anymore than the times of the restoring of all things are times for the restoration of individuals, although then individuals will be blessed with restoration and refreshing. This refers to the earth brought into blessing under the reign of Christ, with restored Israel at the head of the nations. His assertion is the exigency of a false system. Besides, the repentance refers to the nation of Israel, as such, though, of course, each individual in Israel will have his sins blotted out.

In Acts 3:21 we read, "whom heaven must receive till [the] times of [the] restoring of all things." Christ will sit at God's right hand "until I put thine enemies [as] footstool of thy feet" (Psa. 110:1). "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of [the] nations until [the] times of [the] nations be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Also, "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26).

All of these Scriptures point to the same terminating era. All is bound up with Christ's appearing in glory to take the throne of David.

## THE NATIONAL REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL

While, of course, an individual repentant person has his sins blotted out, the passage has in view the national repentance of Israel. Peter preached: repent . . . so that this and that will come. Individual Jews repented, but the nation has not, and Christ has not yet come. His appearing in glory is bound up with the future of the nation as such.

For I say that Jesus Christ became 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. 15:8,9)

. . . Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. (John 11:51,52).

. . . my brethren, my kinsmen, according to flesh; 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. 9:3-5).

When turning over our Lord to the civil power for execution, the leadership said, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

Rom. 11:26 teaches that all Israel shall be saved; as Isa. 60:21 declares that

they shall all be righteous. What was a Jew supposed to understand by Isa. 60:21; that the church would be all righteous?

God will destroy the wicked out of the land (Zech. 13:8) and the wicked of Israel outside the land will not enter therein (Ezek. 20). What remains will compose the righteous nation. The national restoration is dependent upon national repentance. What is meant by national repentance is that the entire body of persons composing the nation will repent of their own sins and the sin of Israel in rejecting their Messiah (cp. Zech. 12:10-14).

There is a great fulfillment of the day of atonement (Lev. 16 & 23) ahead for the people thus born in a day (Isa. 66:8). There is coming for Israel what answers to the last three feasts of Jehovah (Lev. 23). The blowing of trumpets signifies the regathering of the people (on the first of the seventh month). The feast of booths (the fifteenth day of the month) signifies the inauguration of the kingdom. In between will be the 10th of the month -- the day of atonement. Israel's entry into its significance as never felt before will result from God's outpouring of "the spirit of grace and of supplications," when the restored nation, composed of all the righteous, shall be bowed before Jehovah (Zech. 12:10 - 13:1). This is a national owning of sin.

There is also such a thing as a national adoption and it belongs to Paul's "kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises" (Rom. 9:3,4). Christ had died "for the nation" (John 11:51) and our Lord "become 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. 15:8,9).

Perhaps Psalm 51, occasioned by David's great sin, looks on to Israel's repentance for the blood guiltiness of killing their Messiah. Then will they all run into the city of refuge, though not before.

Some think our Lord's prayer, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" was answered in early Acts. It seems to me that it will be answered in connection with the national repentance of Israel. Our Lord said "them." That is the nation.

## THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

While speaking (erroneously) much about how "the time of refreshing" applies now to a believer, it is interesting to note the cavalier fashion in which O.T. Allis dismisses the times of the restitution of all things:

The only warrant for finding in his reference to the "restoration of all things" the offer of the re-establishment of the earthly Davidic kingdom is to be found in the argument which has been already discussed that the kingdom promised to the Jews was such an earthly kingdom. But whatever this expression may mean it refers to a future event.<sup>5</sup>

What is so difficult for these alchemists of the O. T. prophecies?

... whom heaven indeed must receive till [the] times of [the] restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began (Acts 3:21).

This Scripture indicates that the prophets spoke about the times of restoring all things. Those who say the prophecies are about the church ought to look into this -- for O.T. Allis tells us the times of the restoring of all things is future. We agree. So what the prophecies spoke of is not the church, but the future.

Our Lord spoke of Elijah as having some part in restoring in a future day (Matt. 17:11; Mark 9:12).

There is no teaching of ultimate salvation for all persons (universalism) in this passage. What will be restored is *all things that the prophets said would be restored*, not all the lost.

The "regeneration" of Matt. 19:28 speaks of the same period, as does Rom. 8:20,21, the administration of the fullness of times (Eph. 1:10).

These scriptures, as well as the prophecies of the O.T. that spoke of "these days," look forward to a restoration both physical and spiritual.

Last century, Charles Stanley (of Rotherham) mentioned that this passage awoke many to the truth of the premillennial advent of Christ. And well it might, for we have the inspired declaration that the times of the restoration of all things was spoken of by the prophets. And Acts 3 shows it is future and bound up with the second advent. Thus the prophets spoke of the millennial kingdom, not the church.

## THE OFFER OF THE KINGDOM

In Acts 3:19-21 there is an offer of the kingdom. O. T. Allis objected:

For if the offer of this kingdom had already been postponed for the entire Church age, what right had Peter to offer it practically at once to Jews whose hands were red with the blood of their Messiah, and on exactly the same terms as those on which it had been offered to them some three years previously? If this is the

meaning of Peter's exhortation, there was really no postponement of the kingdom offer. The kingdom was just as much "at hand" when he preached this sermon as it had ever been.<sup>6</sup>

The answer is simple. The offer of the kingdom did not come to an end before the cross. The offer took two forms, however:

1. Before the cross the kingdom was preached as "at hand." Messiah had not died then.
2. But by the time we reach Acts 3, He had died and gone to heaven. Consequently the form of the offer takes this change into account. The kingdom was not preached by Peter as at hand. And now a national repentance was needed concerning their guilt in killing Messiah. Certainly there was a change in the form of the offer.

Consider the parable of Luke 13:6-9. For three years the Lord came seeking fruit from the fig-tree, i.e., Israel as a nation. Note that for the following year the servant (i.e., the Holy Spirit) applied what was necessary in order to produce fruitfulness. It produced no fruit. But note that the Lord's work in respect to seeking fruit from Israel for 3 years was carried on by Another. And this corresponds to the two forms of the offer. We find the Spirit's testimony to Israel carried out as recorded in the beginning of Acts. He digs the ground and dungs it. Now, this parable teaches something or it does not. It teaches that this continuation of seeking fruit from Israel continued for a year after the Lord's ministry of three years.

We should ask when this added year of the Holy Spirit's effort concerning the nation ended. The parable of Luke 19:11-27 gives us the indication. The embassy that these citizens (Jews) sent after the man WHO WAS GONE was Stephen. They sent him up with the message of rejection to the Man now gone to the far country. They listened to Stephen until he said that he saw the Son of Man in the glory. (Blessed thought: the Shekinah is linked with the Lord Jesus.)

Thus ended the year of grace during which God still sought fruit from Israel as a nation. Rapid changes now take place. The Ethiopians and Samaritans find Christ (ch. 8). The great apostle of the nations is saved (ch. 9). Peter preaches to Gentiles (ch. 10), etc. etc.

We are offered another objection: if this is so, then the "Church age" might

6. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 140.

have terminated at its beginning <sup>7</sup> but this termination could not be so early according to Rom. 11:25.

We have already considered the synchronization of four "until's." The point is that God knew they would reject the offer. We have considered the morality of this elsewhere, and have observed that God may justly do this since He knows the end from the beginning. Man cannot make an offer based on complete knowledge of everything. God can. So God cannot be taxed with such a matter as man must be. Moreover, the antidispensationalist Calvinists ought to keep the sovereignty of God more firmly in mind.

(to be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

## KING SAUL

### 1 SAM. 8-10

There is not in Scripture a character that furnishes more solemn warning than that of King Saul. As we pass on from stage to stage through his history, it fills the soul with very awful thoughts of the treachery and corruption of the heart of man; and as we are sure that it has been written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), we may well be thankful to our God for the counsel that it gives us, and seek His grace that we may read the holy lesson to profit.

But this we should know, that, though the Spirit of God may have thus graciously recorded these acts of the wicked for our learning, they were all executed by the hand and according to the heart of the man himself. God is to be known here, and in similar histories, only in that holy sovereignty which draws good out of evil, and in that care for His saints which records that evil or their admonition.

The first book of Samuel has a very distinct character. It strikingly exhibits the removal of man and the bringing in of God. It accordingly opens with the

barren woman receiving a child from the Lord; this being, in scripture, the constant symbol of grace, and the pledge of divine power acting on the incompetency of the creature. It then shows us the priesthood (which itself had been set in formal order and succession) corrupting itself and removed by judgment, and upon that God's Priest (who was to do according to his heart, and for whom he was to build a sure house) brought in (2:35) And then, in like manner, it shows us the kingdom (at first set according to man's desire) corrupting itself, and removed by judgment, and upon that God's King (who was also after His heart, and for whom He would also build a sure house) brought in. Thus, this Book exhibits everything, whether in the sanctuary or on the throne, while in man's hand coming to ruin, and the final committal of everything to the hand of God's anointed. And this anointed of God, we know, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, is to be none less than the Son of God Himself, God's King to hold the immoveable kingdom, and God's Priest to hold the untransferable priesthood.

The history of King Saul properly begins with the eighth chapter of this book. There we find the revolted heart of Israel, which had been departing from the Lord, as He there tells Samuel, ever since He had brought them out of Egypt, seeking still greater distance from him, and desiring a king in the stead of Him. The ill government of Samuel's sons at this time was their pretence, but it was only a pretence. There is no doubt that they did act corruptly, and Samuel may have been at fault in making them judges, consulting perhaps too much with flesh and blood, and too little with Israel's welfare and the Lord's honor. But the Lord discloses the real source of this desire for a king, saying to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Like Moses in such a case (Ex. 16:7), Samuel was nothing that the people should murmur against him or his sons; their murmurings were not against him, but against the Lord.

"Israel would none of me," says the Lord, "so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels" (Ps. 81:12). They shall have what their soul was now lusting after, but they shall find it to be their plague. Their own king shall be their sorrow and ruin, as all our own things are, if we will follow them and have them. "He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart turned him aside." What but ashes (sorrow after death) does the labor of our own hands gather for us? So is it always, try it in what way we may, and so was Israel now to find it in their own king (8:11-17).

But in wonted grace, the Lord here gives His people space to repent of this their evil choice before they reaped the bitter fruit of it. And this was just what He had done before at Mount Sinai. When they were there bent on accepting

7. *Ibid.*

the fiery law as though they could keep it and live by it, Moses is made to pass and repass between them and the Lord, in order, as it seems to give them space to turn and still trust in the grace which had redeemed them from Egypt, and not cast themselves on the terms of Mount Sinai (see Ex. 19). And so here, I believe, with the same intent Samuel passes again and again between the Lord and the people. But as they there listened to their own heart in its confidence and self-sufficiency, so here they will have a king in spite of all God's gracious warnings. They take their own way again.

And I ask, dear brethren, is not this His way, and alas! too often our way still? Is He not often checking us by His Spirit, that we go not in the way of our own heart, and yet are we not like Israel, too often heedless of His Spirit? And what do we ever find the end of our own way to be, but grief and confusion? For the Lord has only to leave us to ourselves, if He would fain leave us for destruction. Legion is the fearful witness of this (Mark 5). He presents man in his proper native condition, choosing the captivity of Satan, and, as such, being one whom nothing could relieve but that sovereign grace which does not stop to take counsel with man's own desire (for then it would never act), but which goes right onward with its own purpose to rescue and to bless.

But such was Israel now, knowing only their own will in this matter of the king. And this at once prepares us for the manner of person that we are to find in their forthcoming king. For the wilful people must have a wilful king. Of none other could it be said that all the desire of Israel was on him. Of none other could Samuel have said, "Behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired." None other could have been the king of this people.

But all this forebodes fearful things in the king, and fearful days for Israel. And so shall we find it. In the divine order such a time as the reign of King Saul has its appointed uses. Showing us the kingdom in man's hand, it serves to set off the kingdom in God's hand -- mischief and corruption and disaster marking the one, honor and blessing and rest the other. The kingdom brought in by their own desire would let them see how unequal they were to provide for their own happiness; just as "this present evil world," which our own lusts have formed and fashioned, is found unequal to satisfy, leaving us subject to vanity still. But with all this, God's workmanship will stand in blessed contrast. The kingdom under Saul in all its wretchedness and shame might set off the glorious and peaceful days of David and Solomon, as this world of ours will set off "the world to come" in the days of the Son of man.

But however the Lord may thus serve His own glory and His people's comfort by this, it is Israel that now bring this season of shame and sorrow on themselves. They sow the wind to reap the whirlwind. Saul comes forth, the

chosen one of a sinful and revolted nation, to do his evil work. And thus he stands in one rank with another more wicked than himself. He stands as the type and brother of that king in the latter day who is to do "according to his will" -- the one who is to come "in his own name," and say in his heart "no God." Saul was now coming forth the first of that line of shepherds or rulers who were "to feed themselves and not the flock," to eat the fat, and clothe them with the wool (Ezek. 34), and do all that evil work that is here prophesied of Israel's own king, and fill out that character that is here drawn of Saul.<sup>1</sup>

Into the hand of such shepherds Israel is now cast, seeing they had rejected the Lord their good Shepherd, and desired one after their own heart. The first of them, as we here find, was of that tribe of which it had been said of old, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf, in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil" (Gen. 49:27). And he was of that city, in that tribe, which had already wrought such mischief in Israel, and been the occasion of nearly blotting out the memorial of one of the tribes from among the people of the Lord (Judges 19-21).

But we further learn of him, that though belonging to the least of all the families of his tribe, and that, too, the smallest tribe in Israel, his father Cis was "a mighty man of substance." And from this description, I gather that Saul and his father had prospered in this world, being men who were wise in their generation, people of that class who "will be rich," though nature and family and circumstances are all against them. And Saul is first shown to us searching for his father's asses. Something of the family property was missing, and it must be searched for -- their own ass had fallen into the ditch and it must be taken out. But though thus careful of his own things, he seems, as yet at least, to have had no great care for the things of God, for he does not at this time know even the person of Samuel, who was now the great witness of God in the land; and soon after this, his neighbors, "who had known him aforetime," wonder with great wonder that he should be found among the prophets, so that to this day he is a proverb. All these are notices of what generation he was, telling us that though as yet in an humble sphere, he and his father's house had been formed rather by the low principles of the world, than by worthy thoughts of the Lord of Israel. And such an one was just fit to be directed to Samuel at the time when the worldly heart of the people was desiring a king. His mind

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1. Saul is expressly treated of as "the violent man" or last enemy of Israel in 2 Sam. 22, and Ps. 18. This last enemy, or the last of these kings of the people, will give place to the true David, who shall feed God's heritage with integrity of heart and skillfulness of hand, as this first of them is succeeded by David the son of Jesse, the man after God's own heart. This last of them is called "the foolish shepherd" in Zech. 11: 15.

was upon the asses, as Samuel seems to hint. The world was set in his heart, though from circumstances it had not as yet been developed in many of its proper fruits. And this is awful warning, beloved. Circumstances, as here, may indeed be needed in order to prove the ground of the heart; but it is the heart itself that determines the man before God (chap. 16:7), and sooner or later will determine the life before men (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 15:19).

In accordance with all this, on being introduced to the intended king, we have no mention whatever of any moral qualifications that he had. All that we learn of him is this, "that he was a choice young man, and a goodly, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." Thus and thus only is he spoken of. He is judged of simply after the flesh, looked at only in the outward man, and thus was suited to man who had desired him, for "man looketh on the outward appearance." Therefore when the people saw his stature and nothing more, they cry, "God save the king." This was the king after their heart. He was of the world, and the world loved its own.<sup>2</sup>

And here let me say, that if Saul be thus the man after man's heart, and David, as we read afterwards, the man after God's heart, we learn in the one what we are, and in the other what God is. And the distinctive characters of the two kings is this: Saul would have everything his own and be everything himself; David was willing to be nothing and to have nothing, but still in whatever state he was, to be the diligent unselfish servant of others. And thus man, to our shame, is presented in the narrow-heartedness of Saul, but God to our comfort in the generous self-devotement of David.

All this character of Saul will be awfully disclosed in all the passages of his future history, but the same principles are even now early at work. It may be that the less practiced eye cannot discern this, and it is indeed well and happy to be "simple concerning evil." But heart will sometimes answer to heart, and make some of us, beloved, quicker to detect its treachery than others. Thus in Saul keeping back Samuel's words touching the kingdom, in hiding himself among the stuff when the lot had fallen upon him, and again in holding his peace when some would not give him their voices, there is in all this, I judge,

2. Absalom, another of the same generation with Saul, is described only in this way also. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him." And surely both of them are types of the beast or the wilful king of the latter day. And will not he be decked out with the same beauty in the flesh? Will he not have his parts and comely proportions all to admiration? Will he not be perfect in all subtle attractions and forms of beauty as the serpent in the garden?

only the show of virtue.<sup>3</sup> For the love of the world and of its praise can afford to be humble and generous at times. It can even send forth those or any other virtues, taking care, however, to send them forth in such a direction as to make them bring home, after a short journey, some rich revenues to the ruling lusts.

In the hand of such an one is the kingdom of Israel now vested, but such an one was not "God's king." To give them a king, however, appears to have been God's purpose from the beginning. The prophetic words of both Jacob and Moses upon Judah, as also the words by Balaam (Numb. 24:17), intimate this; as also Moses' title, "king in Jeshurun." And more than these, the ordinance touching the king in Deuteronomy xvii, and the fact that the Lord Jesus Himself sought the kingdom when He was here (Matt. 21:1), and in the end, at His second coming will take it (Ps. 2:6), prove that God's first purpose was to give Israel a king.

But things were not ready for the king all at once; various previous courses must be accomplished, ere that top stone in the divine building could be brought forth. Israel at first had to be redeemed from bondage -- then to be carried through the wilderness to learn the ways and secrets of God's love -- then to get their promised inheritance delivered out of the hand of the usurper. Till these things were done, all was not in readiness for the king. Had these things been simply accomplished, the king without delay would have appeared to crown the whole work with the full beauty of the Lord. But each stage in this way of the Lord Israel had sadly interrupted and delayed. After redemption from Egypt they had given themselves, through disobedience, forty years' travel in the wilderness; after taking the inheritance, they had again, through disobedience, brought pricks into their sides and thorns in their eyes; and now they forestall God's king, and through disobedience and wilfulness again bring their own king, as another plague upon them. But this is the way of man, beloved, the way of us all by nature. Through unbelief and wilfulness we refuse to wait God's time, and we procure a Saul for ourselves. It was thus that Sarah brought Ishmael into her house, and Jacob his twenty-one years of exile and servitude upon himself. Our own crooked policy and unbelief must answer for these sorrows. God, if waited for, would bring the blessing that maketh rich and which addeth no sorrow with it; but our own way only teaches us that he that soweth to the flesh must of the flesh reap corruption. To this day Israel is learning this, and reaping the fruit of the tree they planted, learning the service

3. Another indeed hid Himself when they would have come to make Him a king (John 6), but He was acting according to God's glory and will in that; Saul in this was resisting it, however his modesty, as it might be thought, may attract the judgment of the mere human mind from while.

of the nations whom, like Saul, they have set over themselves; and their only joy lies in this, that God's counsel of grace, in spite of all, is to stand, and His own king shall still sit on His holy hill of Zion.

But in spite of all this, and though Israel is now transferred into other hands, God will prove that nothing should be wanting on His part. He had not only signified Saul to Samuel, and Samuel had then signified Saul at the sacrificial feast, and anointed and kissed him, (9,10), but in the mouth of several witnesses the divine purpose had been established, and the Spirit, as faculty for office, had been imparted, and an "occasion," as Samuel speaks (10:7) for proving that God was thus with the king, now arrives.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

*The Bible Treasury* 14:97-99.

## PSALM 119

Q. 23 -- "What difference is there between these expressions in Ps. 119., 'commandments,' 'precepts,' 'testimonies,' 'statutes,' 'judgments'?"

Ans. -- "Commandments" speak of the authority of the Law-giver; "precepts," of a charge or deposit committed to man; "testimonies," of God's witness in them concerning Himself; "statutes," of their definiteness and stability; "judgments," of their moral nature. "Ordinances," in ver. 91, should be "judgments," and is elsewhere in general a translation of one of the other words, generally that for "statutes" or for "judgments."

*Help & Food* 6:168.

## COMMENTS BY W. KELLY

[The following comments by W. Kelly are found in the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* 22:95 (1870) where they were quoted from the *London Record*.]

"Brethren hold --

- "1. That the righteousness or moral requirement of the law is fulfilled in Christians, but that they are bound by the authority of all the Word of God, being not under the law but grace, as expressly taught in Rom. vi. 14, 15; I Cor. ix. 20, 21; Gal. v. 18.
- "2. That no assemblies of Christians are according to Divine prescription, save those open to the direct and free action of the Holy Ghost (as in I Cor. xiv.). This does not touch the exercise of individual ministerial gift in preaching and lecturing, &c., which rest on another principle, and are no less scriptural.
- "3. That no Christian has the right of ministry, but that those, and those only, who have received a gift from the Lord are responsible to exercise it, to Him, subject to His Word.
- "4. That the Lord's-Day is of Divine authority.
- "5. That what the New Testament calls 'the Church of God' (meaning thereby believing Jews and Gentiles baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body) did not exist before Pentecost, though, of course, there had always been a people of God since the call of Israel, and individual saints from Abel downwards.
- "6. That the Church was a known visible society, into which unconverted persons, supposed to be saints at first, might and did creep.
- "7. That the Holy Ghost was not yet (meaning thereby himself given, his baptism) till Jesus was glorified. Compare John vii. 39; Acts i., ii.; I Cor. xii. 13.
- "8. That all are bound to pray to God, though none truly pray but the converted.
- "9. That believers ought to confess their sins, and that this is a mockery if it be not done for pardon, in order to restored communion.
- "10. That repentance, not in the sense of a mere change of mind, but of a hatred of sin, and a moral judgment by the Holy Spirit of ourselves as well as of what we have done, has a real place in the preaching of all

intelligent brethren.

- "11. That the believer is justified by faith, and hence, neither from eternity, nor from the time of Christ's death, which is a Calvinistic idea.
- "12. That by the obedience of Christ believers are constituted righteous, their faith being reckoned as righteousness. 'Brethren' do not hold the tenet that Christ's obedience to the law is imputed to believers; but the denial of it is in no way peculiar to 'Brethren.'
- "13. That we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; but that there is and ought to be also progressive and practical sanctification.
- "14. That faith does mean believing in Christ -- the soul's reception of God's testimony to His Son -- but not (as the Sandemanians and Walkerites say) a mere credence of testimony. So far is this human faith from being sanctioned by 'Brethren,' that no person with such views would be knowingly received. They are more opposed to it than most Christians.

"This, to which I pledge myself, with incomparably better knowledge of 'Brethren' than Mr. Croskery or Mr. Ashe, will show the worth of their representations. Why not give fair citations from accredited teachers?"

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## MISAPPLIED/MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS

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**"THE LAST DAYS" 2 Tim. 3:1**

or

**WHAT TIME IS IT?**

The prophet Haggai was one of the two prophets at Jerusalem in connection with the restoration of the House of God. Moreover, he, Zechariah and Malachi bring us down to the end of the Old Testament times, *morally* at any rate. Of

course, some 400 to 500 years remained before the coming of the Lord Jesus, but with these three prophets the prophetic voice ceased until the raising up of John the Baptist. Now according to Haggai, the people of Jerusalem said,

"The time is not come" (Haggai 1:2).

What time was that? To Israel, the time then present was the last days of an era. And in a similar sense we may ask today, "What time is it?"

"Well," says one, "it is the last days."

"Indeed it is; obviously" replies another.

"There are many disturbing things going on among Christians and they bother me. But I do want to be patient, you know. I don't want to be critical."

"Yes, I understand, brother."

"There are very upsetting things; but I don't want to make a fuss. It is the last days. So what can you expect?"

"Yes, it is," the other brother agrees. "In fact, the last days began prior to when 2 Timothy was written (2 Tim. 3:1), so we are indeed in the last days and *we have been in them from that time until now*, and Christians will be in them until the Lord comes."

"Well, now wait. You know what I mean. You see these things happening in Europe and so forth, the Common Market, Israel, and the other nations. So we are down there really towards the END. I mean THE REAL LAST DAYS."

So in Jerusalem of old, the character of the time was well and rightly known. They were just like us in that they too were living in the LAST DAYS. The last days in the Old Testament for Israel began when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem but if you had asked them to describe Haggai's days they would have said, "No, no, we are down a ways from Nebuchadnezzar's time; we are really down there towards the END, THE REAL LAST DAYS." And in fact, there were great abominations in Jerusalem and but few that sighed and cried for the dishonor done to Jehovah. And so they had an excuse to make; because they lived in THE REAL LAST DAYS, they could say,

"The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built."

This was an excuse. Why not at least sigh and cry for the abominations, assuming they were discerned and felt? Why the excuse? "Well, it is the last days. And now it is THE REAL LAST DAYS, so that the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."



There was truth in this. In fact, they could have read the last eight chapters of Ezekiel and learned that there was going to be a wonderful Temple in Jerusalem in the future. And surely we all agree with them that the glorious Temple of Ezekiel was not for the days of Haggai. So the time had, in truth, not yet come. Messiah had not then come to build the House.

What they said was true. But it was not the whole truth.

In spite of what they said, and in spite of the truth of a greater future glory for that house, they had a present responsibility to obey. The same is true for us today.

What time is it? It is time to go on obediently with the Lord. It is not time to be pleading that "It is the last days," as an excuse. *It is the last days. We do see the Day approaching. Let us not wring our hands: "It is the last days -- what can a man do?" Let us rather face up to what gave rise to this state and to what our true responsibility is with respect to this state in which we are found.*

So there are two common responses to the prophetic word. First, some say, "Let us just hang on a little longer till the Lord comes. We will then all be together in the glory. So let us not make any waves just now." The other response does not shirk responsibility but heeds the prophetic voice, which says, "Consider your ways" (Haggai 1:5). And the wonderful thing is that the Lord Himself is thus glorified and also takes pleasure in those who obey in a day of small things.

*What time is it?* According to 2 Timothy, written particularly in view of the last days, we must separate from iniquity. It is always time to do what God's Word says, for the pleasure and glory of God, until our Lord comes (see Haggai 1:8 and 2 Tim.).

Ed.

## PARTIALITY

We do not need to be in this world very long to become aware of the fact that there is much favoritism displayed. Some of it is very obvious while some is cleverly masked. Favoritism, partiality, takes place among Christians also. It is called "respect of persons" in Scripture.

James 2:9 says:

But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin . . . .

Rom. 2:11, Eph. 6:9, James 2:1, 1 Peter 1:17, and other passages clearly show that partiality, bias, favoritism, respect of persons, is a violation of the character of God. Therefore partiality is not of the new nature. It is fleshly; and it is sin as James declares expressly.

Scripture denounces partiality under the word *prosopolempsia* which means "respect of persons" or partiality. W. E. Vines *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* agrees with the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*<sup>1</sup> in defining this word as "partiality." Its usage in the passages cited makes its intrinsic meaning clear. Scripture labels partiality as sin.

We may wonder if it is ever right to identify such a sin with a person, thus labeling the person with the sin in which he is found. Nathan did so in David's case: "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. 12:7). The Apostle Paul connected a person at Corinth with his sin when he wrote: "Remove the wicked person from among yourselves" (1 Cor. 5). Also, 1 Tim 5:20 warrants the public rebuke of those that are on a course of sinning. Sometimes, however, prayer for such a one at the beginning of a course of partiality may turn him from this sin.

I have seen a letter with an unscriptural definition of partiality. It said that partiality must include the thought of "being prejudiced, having made a choice (*in and by the one so choosing*), in favor of someone, or something, that choice being motivated by an irrational, personal preference of mind, . . . ." Was the preference for the rich over the poor that James denounced an irrational preference? At any rate, to attempt to hide one's sin behind the screen that no one can know my motives, or cannot supply proof of *irrational* preference, in effect defines the sin out of existence.

May we seek grace to judge partiality in our hearts.

Ed.

## "A FULL CHRIST FOR EMPTY SINNERS"

### Thoughts on John 6

Well does the writer remember the effect on his own mind of the perusal, upwards of twenty years ago, of a paper in the first volume of the *Christian Witness*, on "The Distinct Characters of the several Writings of the New Testament." If not the first, it was among the first means of leading him to read Scripture in the light of the characteristic subject and aim of each distinct portion of it. But, while leaning on God's grace as the only efficient cause of true instruction, every attempt to impart to others what has been so precious to his own soul has served more deeply to convince him of the truth of one remark in the paper above referred to; viz., that "the expression of one's own thoughts, and the acting so as to awake similar thoughts in others, are two very different things; and the latter is a rarer and more self-denying attainment than the other." It is not as attempting much more than the former that the following thoughts are submitted to such as bring all they read and hear to the test of the word of God itself.

Much that twenty or thirty years ago had to some of us all the vividness and freshness of truth newly discovered to the soul has long, as to the letter of it at least, been familiar to all who are likely to read these remarks. The way in which the same blessed person is presented in Matthew as the Messiah of Israel; by Mark, in active service as the Minister of the Word; by Luke, in the fullness of that grace in which He, the Son of man, came to men as such, to seek and to save that which was lost; and by John as the Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, and was God, but which was made flesh, and dwelt among us; all this the reader has doubtless read and heard again and again, until the words remain in the memory, whether they be understood and enjoyed through divine teaching or not. The peculiar character of John's Gospel has been dwelt upon by many. Many have pointed out how the glory which passes before us in that gospel is the glory of Christ in His highest divine titles and relations; "the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Sweetly has it been shown, moreover, that while no other gospel so freely unfolds this highest Godhead-glory of Christ, no other shows the sinner in such immediate contact with Him, receiving of His fullness. These and other leading features of the book, though never losing their interest, have yet to numbers become familiar truth. What the writer would now suggest may bear no comparison in importance with these chief characteristics of this gospel; but nothing is lost which contributes in ever so small a degree to acquaintance with

the precious record of the glory of Him of whom it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

In perusing any book, inspired or uninspired, if we find certain words occurring often enough to awaken attention to the fact, and then, on examination, discover that they are thus used throughout the book, we immediately conclude that they either express its great theme and object, or at least that which is very closely related thereto. Reading thus the Gospel of John, certain words can scarcely fail to impress the mind with the frequency of their use; while a comparison with the other evangelists confirms the conviction that the words in question do really bring out what is in closest connection with the great leading subject. For instance, the word *life* meets the eye almost at the beginning of the book, re-appears most prominently in chap. 3, and afterwards, indeed with such frequency as to awaken the enquiry, Can this be one of the leading words in this gospel? Can it have any characteristic force? Let us see. But, before comparing this gospel with the others in this respect, we do well to remember that there are more words than one in the New Testament rendered *life*. One, ζωή, means life, in the strict, absolute sense. I speak only of the use of this, and other words in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Another, ψυχή, soul, is frequently represented by the word *life*; but it is not the natural, ordinary use of the word; and if it were, it is as often so given in John as in any other of the gospels. The word βίος, used for life, in the secondary sense of *living*, or way of *living*, does not occur in our gospel at all. It is to the first word, ζωή, life in its absolute sense, that our inquiry relates. It occurs in Matthew seven times; in Mark, four times; in Luke, six times; and in John, thirty-six times. Its force and bearing, as thus characterizing John, may be estimated by such passages as, "In Him was *life*;" "Not perish, but have everlasting *life*;" "I am the bread of *life*;" "I am come that they might have *life*;" "That he should give eternal *life*;" "That, believing, ye might have *life* through His name." Is it nothing that in the midst of this world of death, the One who has life in Himself has been here to manifest it in His own person, and to impart it to us who were dead in sins? Nor has His rejection by the world, and His ascension on high, interrupted for a moment this outflow of *life* from Him to dead sinners. He is glorified of the Father, who has given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal *life* to as many as the Father "has given" Him.

But let us turn to another word: *love*. Here, also, we have two words,

<sup>1</sup> www.presenttruthpublishers.com. The word πνεῦμα, spirit, is once rendered *life*, in Rev. 13:15, which has no bearing on our present inquiry.

αγαπω and φιλεω, each with its shade of meaning, rendered to *love* in the English New Testament. Taking both these words, with those immediately related to them, such as the noun *love*, we find one or other of them in Matthew twelve times; in Mark, five times; in Luke, fifteen times; and in John, fifty-six times. Nor can we doubt the force of such words as characterizing this gospel, in view of such passages as the following: "God so *loved* the world;" "Now, Jesus *loved* Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" "Having *loved* His own which were in the world;" "One of His disciples, whom Jesus *loved*;" "As I have *loved* you, that ye also *love* one another;" "If a man *love* me, he will keep my words, and my Father will *love* him;" "That the world may know that I *love* the Father;" "Thou hast *loved* them as thou hast *loved* me." Life and love! Precious words! Life the gift of love. Divine love, in the person of the Son, bestowing a life, not only eternal in its duration, but of such a nature that the love wherewith the Father loved the Son can now rest on those of whom He said, addressing the Father, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the *love* wherewith thou hast *loved* me may be in them, and I in them."

But in what sphere does the revelation of this love take place? True it is that none profit by it vitally and everlastingly, but they in whom the native opposition of the heart is overcome by almighty grace in the positive communication of life. But is it only among God's ancient people Israel that such persons are found? Are they the only inheritors of this blessedness, so immeasurably surpassing their fruitful land, the covenanted portion of their tribes? Let us see. The word *world* is quite as characteristic of our gospel as either of those which have been under consideration. We stop not to notice the word *αἶων*, sometimes translated *world*, but intrinsically referring more to duration than to the world itself; absolutely considered. "The times which pass over it," the world morally viewed, is what it signifies. The word *κοσμος* -- the world literally, including both the earth and its human inhabitants, occurs in Matthew nine times, in Mark three times, in Luke three times, and John seventy-nine times. How it is used, the reader may judge from such instances as -- "God so loved the *world*;" "The Savior of the *world*;" "I am the light of the *world*;" "Now is the judgment of this *world*;" "I came not to judge the *world*, but to save the *world*;" "The *world* seeth me no more;" "The prince of this *world*;" "I have overcome the *world*;" "I pray not for the *world*;" "They are not of the *world*, even as I am not of the *world*;" "The *world* hath not known thee." Could it be more evident than it is, that when the Eternal Word, the only-begotten Son, was made flesh and dwelt among men, the question was one which concerned not Israel alone, or Israel more than others, but the whole world. It was towards the world the love of God was shown in the gift of His

only-begotten Son. It was as the Savior of the world that the blessed Lord Jesus appeared, and as the light of the world He shone; and now that He has left the world, and returned to the Father who sent Him, He has left the world under the solemn responsibility of rejecting Him, and of not knowing the Father, of whose love He was both the messenger, the gift, and the expression. If He had tears for Jerusalem, and said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, but ye would not," with what feelings did He bid farewell to the world, towards which such love had been shown, and by which such love had been repulsed and trodden under foot?

But there is one other word in its comparative use illustrative of the difference between this gospel and the others. It is the word πιστευω, *to believe*. We have it in Matthew eleven times, in Mark fifteen times, in Luke eight times, and in John ninety-nine times. Nor does this amazing disparity exhibit the whole amount of the difference. Six out of the eleven occurrences of the word in Matthew give it in connection with miracles, or in reference to false prophets, or in the lips of ungodly scoffers; so of eight passages in Mark, out of the fifteen that it contains; but in John the vast majority of cases in which the word is employed are those in which it expresses the believing in Christ Himself unto life eternal: "That all through Him might *believe*;" "To them that *believe* on His name;" "That whosoever *believeth* on Him should not perish;" "He that *believeth* on me hath everlasting life;" "If ye *believe* not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins;" "Dost thou *believe* on the Son of God? Lord, I *believe*."

It is added by the Holy Ghost to the last quotation, concerning the man that had been blind, "And he worshipped Him." May we all have his simplicity of faith, and more of the deep joy which filled and overcame his heart in gazing with his new-found sight on the One whom he now beholds by faith as the "Son of God." It is to faith alone that the discovery is made of His glory and His grace; and faith counts the one whom it receives as unspeakably more precious than all attendant blessings, privileges, and favors vast and unutterable as these may be. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Thus have we seen the life revealed in Christ, and bestowed by Him as the gift of the Father's love in Him, not to any class or nation privileged by descent, but to all to whom it is given to *believe* on Him throughout the wide *world*. To that world itself, indeed, was the coming down to it of God's well-beloved Son, the expression of a love on God's part, which has no measure but the gift that it bestowed. "God so *loved* the *world*, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Never, till at the moment of now perusing it, had it been noticed by the writer, that in this one verse all our four words are found -- life, love, world, believing! Thus does it gather, as into one focus, the light shed throughout the book from the person, mission, and work, the life, death, and resurrection-victory of the Son of God.

In turning to chap. 6, one point it is important to consider; that is, the contrast between the way in which Christ is presented here, and in the previous chapter. Life, in its communication by Him, and its reception by us, is the theme of both chapters; but in the fifth He is seen in full Godhead-title and glory, as the Source and Dispenser of the life sovereignly imparted by Him to us. The recipient of the life is regarded as entirely passive, and called into life by the Almighty, new-creating voice of the Son of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Here there is nothing in the case of the sinner but the powerlessness of death itself, till the deep silence is broken by the voice of the Son of God, who never thus speaks in vain. His voice makes itself heard in the soul, till then dead, but no longer dead as it hears the voice of the Son of God. It lives. "They that hear shall live." But we read here of no exercises or feelings, no desires or sense of need, of which Christ is the object. It is Christ in divine title and competency, as the Son of God, who speaks, and the soul, till then dead, hears and lives. But in chap. 6 our Lord is seen in the place of humiliation He had assumed as man, "come down from heaven," and the object thus of those desires, and of that sense of need, of which the quickened soul is conscious, but conscious, mark, because of the sin and ruin which it knew not till the voice of the Son of God broke in on its deep sleep of death. It is not always, perhaps not often, that these things can be distinguished in fact. The discovery of Christ in the soul awakens perhaps the first sense of desire after Him, producing thus the hunger and thirst which he only, in further discoveries of Himself and of His work, can appease. But though this may be true in principle, as it surely is, the soul, while going through this passage in its history, is too much occupied with itself to distinguish very accurately the order of its experiences. What is of infinitely greater moment is the truth by which, instrumentally, they are produced; and this, blessed be God! we have in all its fullness and variety in the Scriptures under review, and other portions of God's Holy Word.

In the early part of our chapter, we find our Lord fulfilling, in the midst of Israel, the predictions of Ps. 132, where, in connection with Jehovah's choice of Zion, and placing David's son upon the throne, we read, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." But though Jesus be thus manifested as the heir of all the glories prophetically unfolded in the psalm,

He is not here taking that place. Israel and the earth were as yet unfit for this; and God's time for it had not arrived. Hence Jesus retires before the urgency awakened by His own act in this feeding of the multitude. When they would have taken Him by force to make Him a king "He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." Indicating thus that He would be on high during the postponement of His kingdom, His absence was continued until His disciples were in great trouble through a storm by which they were overtaken in crossing the lake. Jesus rejoins them with words of comfort, "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." This episode does not so much refer to the Church, or to the saints composing it, as to the Jewish remnant in days to come. The return to them of the now absent but exalted Messiah will both hush the storm which will be threatening their total overthrow, and conduct them at once into the haven of rest. The heavenly saints will be taken from amid the whole scene of trial and of conflict, to be with their Lord whom they meet in the air.

All this, however, is but introductory to the great subject of the chapter, which is linked with these details by the enquiry of those who next day followed our Lord to the other side of the lake. They seem to have been swayed by the most sordid motives, with which they are pointedly charged by the Lord. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed." If they would come after Him, and this was all the "labor" they had performed, He would have them come for that which would endure. Not the perishing sustenance of a life which shortens each moment of its existence, but the imperishable food of an imperishable life, which it was the great errand and business of the Son of man to give. Son of man He is, blessed be His name, and not simply Son of God; but in this place of humiliation to which He had stooped, how had the Father singled Him out from the whole race of mankind, setting upon Him alone the seal which marked Him out as the object of the Father's perfect approval and infinite delight. Believers are now, since the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, sealed; but it is *in Christ* that they are thus distinguished. "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Christ was sealed because of His intrinsic perfections; we, through our identification with Him in the place He had taken as having accomplished redemption. But the verse under consideration brings us to the Son of man as giving "meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

They who could follow Christ for loaves only, seek to excuse themselves for the neglect of this better gift. "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" is their next question. In what lovely, patient grace, does the Lord

reply, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He has sent." Is He the One who, of all that ever trod this earth, was counted worthy to be sealed of God the Father? How evident, then, that to believe on Him is that which God must approve, and without which nothing else can be accepted in His sight.

The only answer of the people is an enquiry after signs, with reference to the manna in their fathers' days, which seems intended to depreciate, by comparison, the miracle of the day before. It is as though they would say, "If you would have us believe in you as the sent One of God, you must show us greater works than these. You have fed five thousand once; our fathers, in Moses' day, ate manna for forty years: as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Then did our Lord begin to unfold the great subject of the chapter. The reasonings of Jewish pride and unbelief gave Him the occasion; but, dealing with these in the most unsparing way, how does He, at the same time, present Himself as the Object on which any hungry, thirsty, fainting, perishing one might feed and live for ever. 'A full Christ for empty sinners' indeed. These Jews were not such, and so went empty away. But how many fainting ones, perishing with hunger, have here been regaled, and found in Jesus the bread of life.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

*The Christian Friend*, 1875

## 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?

*The Bible Treasury*, New Series 5:64.

## A PRINCIPLE FOR EVIL DAYS

JER. 15:19

"Therefore, thus saith the Lord. . . . If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth."

It was in the midst of the wreck and ruin of Israel, that these words were uttered. They convey to us most important and needed instruction for days of very similar character. The student of the Word of God should not surely be ignorant that the "last days" of christianity are the "perilous" and not the prosperous "times" (2 Tim. 3:1). And any one who will look at the description which follows in the passage referred to, may easily see that in very deed in such like times we are.

The word to Jeremiah, then, may well be much in our hearts in the present day. "Precious" and "vile" are mingled in strange sort around us. We are in a field where tares and wheat are growing up together unto the harvest, and where on every side manifest confusion prevails. To accept things in the mass as of God is utterly impossible. To reject them in the mass is equally impossible. Hence, where there is the least earnestness and energy of christian life, godly discrimination has of necessity to be used, and the principle seems indeed of the simplest and most self-evident sort, that the "precious" *must* be taken from the "vile."

But what *is* precious, and what *is* vile? Clearly the words imply some certain knowledge. It is not the mere exercise of any so-called right of "private judgment" that is in question. God, speaking by His Word to us, "he that is of God heareth God's words" (John 8:47). This is the only safe and healthful principle. To suppose that God could teach two opposite things as truth would be to dishonour Him. To suppose that He who has given His word would leave a really honest soul in doubt as to what He has spoken would be equally so. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

There is a sad lack among us of proper *Christian* conscience. Conscience, I mean, which holds for right and wrong, not what would be so merely according to the standard of things obtaining among those with whom we have grown up, but what the Word, simply and meekly listened to, declares as such. Without this, however, it is absolutely impossible to know what in God's sight

is precious, and what is vile.

But there another danger besets us. For in this judgment of things around, if we are not very much before God, the search is very apt to become an occupation with and even search for evil instead of a gracious desire and search after good. A hard and critical spirit is engendered. Harsh and perverted judgment is formed in consequence; and not only do we become incapable of real critical discernment, but the whole tone and temper of the soul is deteriorated.

The Lord's words to Jeremiah intimate a very different employment and a very different spirit. *Not* toleration of evil. The "vile" is recognized and judged as vile; but the "precious" is what the heart is set upon. And it is not only frankly owned as there, wherever and in whatever association it may be found, but as that which is dear to God, its rescue is sought from the defilement with what is corrupt and evil.

And do not the words, "if thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile," seem to imply that, with the effort, there will be, at least, some very happy success in this direction? The soul occupied with evil soon fails to discern what is really such, and still more, perhaps, loses power to separate the good and evil. The soul occupied with and delighting in what is good, learns to detect evil readily because it knows what is good; but beside that it has the secret of power to separate as well as to discern.

Oh, for this ability to be as "God's mouth" among men! His who, if He speak, cannot speak in levity, nor yet in harshness; cannot tolerate evil, but aims to win from it and not to judge for it. Where are we, beloved brethren, as to this? Do we know how to be jealous for God's truth, yet manifesters of God's love? Do we know how to walk in a narrow path with a heart that knows no narrowness? Do we know that "love," which, as an apostle puts it, "thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"?

The Lord give us more of a Jeremiah's spirit, and more of what was Jeremiah's blessed privilege in a day of abounding iniquity.

*Helps by the Way*, vol. 1, 1873.

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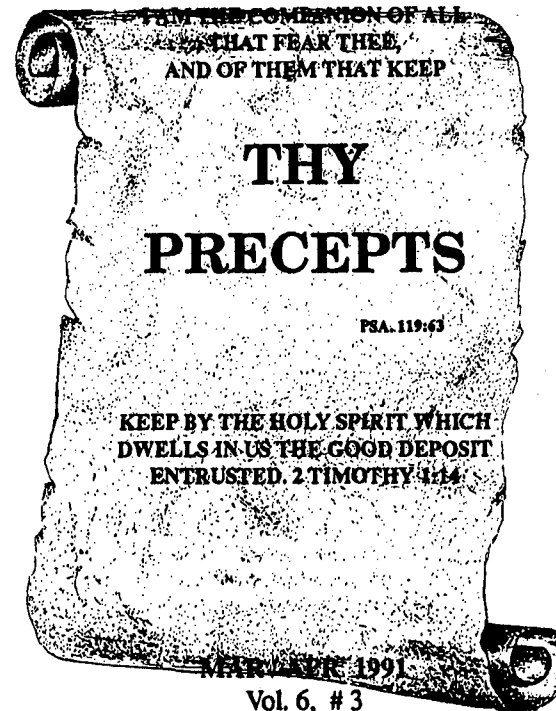
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FROM THE COMEBATION OF ALL  
THAT FEAR THEE,  
AND OF THEM THAT KEEP

# THY PRECEPTS

PSA. 119:63

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

MAY 1991  
Vol. 6, # 3

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## THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

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### TEXTS ON THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

#### 1. The *Person* who came:

"The Word became flesh." John 1:14.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1.

"God has been manifested in flesh." 1 Tim. 3:16.

"God blessed forever." Rom. 9:5.

"God having sent His own Son." Rom. 8:3; see Gal. 4:4.

"God has sent His only begotten Son into the world."  
1 John 4:9, 10.

"The Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world."  
1 John 4:14; see John 3:17.

"Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:58 with Ex. 3:14.

"God with us." Matt. 1:23.

The Creator, "because by Him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all, and all things subsist together by Him." Col. 1:16, 17. See John 1:2, 3; Heb. 1:1-3.

#### 2. From *whence* He came:

"I came down from heaven." John 6:38, 41.

"I came forth from God." John 8:42.

"I came out from God. I came out from the Father, and have come into the world." John 16:27, 28; 18:37.

"The Son of Man ascending up *where He was before*."  
John 6:62.

"He who came down out of heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven." John 3:13.

"I am from above." John 8:23.

"He who comes from above is above all. . . . He who comes out of heaven is above all." John 3:31.

#### 3. The *manner* of His becoming "flesh," "becoming in the likeness of men," so that He was "found in figure as a man." Phil. 2:7, 8.



"Fear not to take to thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this came to pass that that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord, through the prophet, saying, Behold, *the virgin shall be with child*, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, 'God with us.'" Matt. 1:20-23.

"Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God; and behold, thou shalt *conceive* in the womb and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. . . . But Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man? And the angel answering said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come unto thee, and the power of the Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the holy thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God." Luke 1:30-35.

"And it came to pass, while they were there, the days of her giving birth to her child were fulfilled, and she brought forth her first-born son . . . who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:6-12.

"God sent forth His Son, come of woman." Gal. 4:4.

4. What He became: the use of various terms in this connection.

(a) "*Flesh*."

"The Word became flesh." John 1:14.

"God has been manifested in flesh." I Tim. 3:16.

"God, sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin." Rom. 8:3.

"The body of His flesh." Col. 1:22.

"Nor did His flesh see corruption." Acts 2:31.

"Through the Veil, that is, His flesh." Heb. 10:20.

"So that we henceforth know no one according to flesh; but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer." 2 Cor. 5:16.

"For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of enclosure, having annulled the enmity in His flesh." Eph. 2:14, 15.

This word "flesh" denotes our Lord's kinship, or

kindred, as man:

"His (God's) Son comes of David's seed according to flesh." Rom. 1:3.

"My kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites . . . whose are the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, is the Christ; who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Rom. 9:5.

"Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead, of the seed of David." 2 Tim. 2:8. See Acts 2:30, 31.

It refers to the period of His existence among men, and participation in the circumstances connected therewith, in such passages as:

"Who in the days of His flesh." Heb. 5:7.

"Christ, then, having suffered for us in the flesh." 1 Pet. 4:1. 2 Cor. 5:16, quoted above.

What underlies this is the fact that He "came in flesh." 1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16.

What is the force of this word "flesh": does it simply mean a body, or does it include full human nature?

It is applied to all mankind: 1 Pet. 2:24; Gen. 6:12; Isa. 40:5; Luke 3:6; Psa. 145:21.

No mere body corrupts its way, has glory, sees, or praises, apart from soul and spirit, for without them the body is dead.

It is used to denote natural generation and descent, kinship, kindred in regard to men: Gen. 37:27; Jud. 9:2; 2 Sam. 19:12; Rom. 9:3, 8; 11:14; 1 Cor. 10:8; Heb. 12:9; Philemon 16.

This is not simply by having a body, but by reason of full human nature—body, soul, spirit, by which relationship is established. Kindred is conceived as based on the community of these elements of man's being.

If merely body, it could not be used to denote a man's period of existence among men, and participation in the circumstances connected therewith, for such could not be entered upon apart from the joint action of soul and spirit expressed through the body. Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:22, 24; 1 Pet. 4:2.

(b) *"Flesh and blood."*

"Since therefore the children partake of blood and flesh, He also, *in like manner*, took part in the same, that through death He might annul him who has the might of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14.

Does "flesh and blood" include the whole nature of man? Compare the use of this expression in Matt. 16:17; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12; 1 Cor. 15:50. If it referred merely to the body, how speak of *revealing, taking counsel with, or inheriting*? It is evidently used of men in contrast to spirit beings in Eph. The activities here referred to could only proceed from the joint action of soul and spirit expressed through the body. It denotes man's mutable condition. Christ took part in this for the suffering of death. Thus He "was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death." (Heb. 2:9.) In this mutable condition man can not inherit God's kingdom—soul and spirit must be in another condition as having a spiritual body.

*"Blood"*—its special use in Scripture. It appears as the principle of life, and is synonymous with "soul," or "life." In Lev. 17, "soul" and "life" are the same word throughout. Compare the following passages:

"For the soul of the flesh is in the blood." Lev. 17:11.

"For as to the life (or, soul) of all flesh, its blood is the life (or, soul) in it." Lev. 17:14.

"For the life (or soul) of all flesh is its blood." Lev. 17:14.

"Only, the flesh with its life (or, soul), its blood, ye shall not eat." Gen. 9:4.

"Only, be sure that thou eat not the blood, for the blood is the life (or soul), and thou mayest not eat the life (or, soul) with the flesh." Deut. 12:23. . . .

"It is the word for *soul* which the Lord uses in John 10: ver. 11, "The good Shepherd lays

down His life (soul) for the sheep."

ver. 15, "I lay down My life (soul) for the sheep."

ver. 17, "Because I lay down My life (soul)." Compare Isa. 53:10, 11, 12: "Thou shalt make His soul an offering. . . . He shall see of the travail of His soul . . . hath poured out His soul unto death." It is the same word rendered elsewhere "life" as in the passages from Lev. and Deut., and many more.

(c) *"Soul."*

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful." Matt. 26:28.

"Now is My soul troubled." John 12:27.

Isa. 53:10, 11, 12; Acts 2:31; Ps. 40:14; Ps. 22:20; Ps. 69:18.

(d) *"Spirit."*

He "waxed strong in spirit." Luke 2:40.

He "advanced in wisdom." Luke 2:52. (This belongs to the spirit, rather than soul. 1 Cor. 2:11. The word for "spirit" is rendered "mind" in Prov. 29:11, Ezek. 20:32; "understanding" in Isa. 11:3.)

He "rejoiced in spirit." Luke 10:21.

"Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Luke 23:26.

"He groaned in the spirit." John 11:33. ("and was troubled, or shuddered"—a reference to the body as acting with the spirit).

"He was troubled in spirit." John 13:21.

"He sighed deeply in His spirit." Mark 8:12.

(e) *"Heart,"* used to signify the seat of man's collective energies—feelings, will, intellect. For its use relative to the Lord, compare Ps. 16:9; Ps. 22:14; Ps. 40:8, 10, 12; Ps. 69:20.

5. Subjective feelings and experiences which show the reality of full human nature:

Grew from "a babe" to manhood. Luke 2:12, 40, 42; 3:23.

"Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature." Luke 2:52.

"He hungered." Luke 4:2; Mark 11:12.

"The Son of Man has come eating and drinking." Matt. 11:19.

"Is not this the carpenter?" Mark 6:3.

He looked upon them with anger, distressed. Mark. 3:5.

He had compassion. Luke 7:13; Mark 8:2; 1:41.

He wondered because of their unbelief. Mark 6:6. (The disciples wondered also, Mark 6:51.)

"He began to be amazed and oppressed in spirit." Mark 14:33.

"My soul is full of grief even unto death." Mark 14:34.

"And being in conflict He prayed more intently." Luke 22:44.

"I thirst." John 19:28.

"Being wearied with the way He had come." John 4:6.

He slept. Luke 8:23; Mark 4:38.

Sought companionship in sorrow. Matt. 26:40.

He wept. Luke 19:41; John 11:35.

He loved. Mark 10:21; John 11:5.

He groaned. Mark 7:34; 8:12.

"Jesus . . . was indignant." Mark 10:14.

He rejoiced, and was troubled. Luke 10:21; John 12:27; 13:21.

He was "tempted in all things in like manner ('according to the likeness of the way in which we are tempted'), sin apart." Heb. 4:15.

He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. Heb. 5:8.

6. The sum of these things is:

"It behooveth Him\* *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren." Heb. 2:17.

Compare Deut. 18:15-18 with Acts 3:20-22 and Heb. 7:13, 14; Ps. 69:8.

7. "*Man*" or "*men*" used in relation to the Lord.

"Becoming in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:7.

"Having been found in figure as a man." Phil. 2:8.

"A man comes after me who takes a place before me, because He was before me." John 1:30.

\* "It behooved Him when He became man. It is what He became as man, not what He took on Him." (New Trans.)

(Continued on p. 62)

## KING SAUL

### 1 SAM. 11-15

(continued from vol. 6, # 1)

The insult of Nahash the Ammonite towards Jabesh-Gilead was this "occasion," and the Lord gives Israel a complete victory over him by the hand of their king. For this battle was the Lord's, inasmuch as the Lord would fulfill His part in this matter. We need not inquire where Israel got their instruments of war, if now there was "no smith found throughout all the land," for this day was won not by might nor by power, but "by My Spirit, saith the Lord." This victory might therefore have been gained as well with lamps and pitchers, or with the jawbones of asses, or with slings and stones from the brook, as with the battle-axe and bow.

Thus again, as in ancient days, the Lord approves Himself not wanting, however willful and stiff-necked His people may be found. And after this, the king is accepted again of the people (12); and this chapter reminds us of Exodus 20 as the eighth chapter reminded us of Exodus 19. For in Exodus 20 Moses transfers them into their new position but convicts them of the terribleness of it; and here Samuel formally plants them under their king, but convicts them again as with the thunder and tempest of Mount Sinai. The thunder and rain came upon them here, as the fearful pledge and prelude of the end of their own kingdom as the shaking of the earth at Sinai pledged the end of their own covenant. And under it they cry out in terror here, as they had done there. There they had said to Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die," -- and here they say to Samuel, "Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not, for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." And in mercy Samuel here, as Moses there, encourages them still to hold fast by the Lord, who, in spite of all, was still graciously owning them as His people.<sup>1</sup>

These two occasions are thus in strict moral analogy, and show us that king Saul was introduced into the Jewish system now, as the law had been at Mount

1. This thunder in harvest is noticed here as something remarkable; and so it was. Jehovah was the husbandman of the land of Israel (Deut. 11), and had Israel been in simple allegiance to Him, everything would have witnessed the care and skill of the divine husbandman, and the blessing of that people that had the Lord for their God. There would have been nothing out of season: the early and the latter rain would have fallen only in their appointed months. Thunder in harvest would not have been known, or known only in judgment, as it is here.

Sinai, through the willfulness and unbelief of the people, Saul being no more God's king than the law was God's covenant. Israel has again lost their peace by all this, and cast themselves into sorrows and difficulties that they little counted on; but the Lord pardons and accepts them, as He had done at Sinai, and now sets them in the way again in their new character.

And now comes the trial again. "Fear not," says Samuel to them, "ye have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart." But, ere the first scene in the kingdom closes, all is broken and forfeited, just as the covenant from Sinai was broken ere Aaron and the people had left the foot of the Mount. There the people grew impatient at the delay of Moses, and, in violation of the very first article of the covenant, made a golden calf. So here Samuel had left Saul for awhile, telling him to go down to Gilgal, and wait for him there till he should come and offer the sacrifices, but now Saul offers the sacrifices himself (13). He forsakes the word of the Lord. The first act of the king was thus again a violation of the first command he had received. And thus was it all again, as at Sinai so at Gilgal, the immediate breach of the covenant on the part of man. The Lord, it is true, had grace in store for Israel while they were thus destroying themselves; as at Sinai He showed the witnesses of mercy on the top of the Mount, while Israel was sinning away all their present blessing at the foot of it. But still, in the king's hand now, as in the people's then, all was disaster and loss.

Speedy and yet fully ripe fruit was this of their own way. But, beside this one great act of forfeiture, there are traits of character now displaying themselves in the people's king that strongly mark his generation. We see him acting now after the manner forewarned of Samuel. He chooses three thousand men of Israel to wait upon him, sending the rest to their tents, thus dealing with them as his property, having right to do what he would with his own. "When Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him" -- taking thus their sons and appointing them unto himself, as Samuel had said. And all his ways are in the same tone of self-will, fully opposed to the manner of God's king as prescribed by Moses (Deut. 17). In the sovereignty of his own good pleasure, the people's king now does his own will, exalting himself above his brethren, blowing the trumpet throughout the land, and saying, "let the Hebrews hear;" thus bringing, as it were, the people to his own door-posts, and there boring their ears, that they might be his servants for ever.

And he would be priest as well as king. He would fain sit in the sanctuary as well as on the throne; in disobedience, he will himself offer the sacrifice; in all these things giving us awful pledges of the ways of him who is still to be more daring, magnifying himself above all, planting his tabernacles on the

glorious holy mountain, and sitting in the temple of God.<sup>2</sup>

Such was Saul, and such will be his elder brother or antitype in the latter day. But as, in spite of all the trespass and breach of Covenant at Mount Sinai, the Lord did not allow the enemy to triumph over Israel, but brought them into the good land that He had promised them; so here, in spite of all this, He works deliverance for them from the Philistines as He had promised, and that, too, in a way that more marvelously displays His hand than the day of Gideon or of Samson (14). This victory at Michmash, like the victories of Joshua, verified the faithfulness of the God of Israel. Not one good thing could fail. He had promised the land of the Canaanites then, and this day of Michmash and that which follows fulfills the word of the Lord (9:16; 14:47,48).

But all this, as everything else, serves only to develop the people's king more and more. The ways of a willful one are strongly marked in all that he does. His course is uncertain and wayward, because it is just what his own will makes it. But in the midst of all the present gathering darkness there is one object of relief to the eye -- the person and actions of Jonathan. He is the one in the apostate kingdom who owns God and is owned of Him, the remnant in the midst of the thousands of Israel, the one who stood in the secret of God, and knew where the strength of Israel lay. And thus he is in full readiness for all the openings of the divine purpose. We see him in immediate sympathy with David, as soon as David appears (18:1). His deeds in Israel, before David is heard of, savour of the very spirit that animates David afterwards; for the victory of Michmash which his hand won was in full character with that in the valley of Elah, which David afterwards achieved. God was trusted in both of them, as the only giver of victory. The spirit with which Jonathan entered the passages between Bozez and Senah carried David into the front of the battle against the giant. And this, I may say, is the character of every remnant -- they walk in the spirit of the hope set before them, so that when it is manifested they are ready for it. As here Jonathan was ready for David, Anna and Simeon waited for "the consolation of Israel," and embraced the Child the moment they saw Him. In the latter day, in like manner, the remnant will be looking for the Lord as an afflicted and poor people; and so, in the meanwhile, we should watch for the heavenly glory in the spirit of holy retirement from the world and the things of the world. In spirit and conversation we should be as "children of light and children of the day," thus signaling our remnant character, though the night is still around us; so that when the light of the morning breaks, and

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2. To mark the wilful infidel character of Saul still further, I may observe that the ark of God was not once consulted all through his reign (1 Chron. 10:13,14).

the day of the kingdom comes, we may find our native place in it. The oil in the vessels of the wise virgins tells us this. It tells us that they had counted the cost of being wakeful to the end -- that they knew themselves only as "prisoners of hope" in this world, and that it was still but night-time, which would need the lamp, till grace should be brought to them at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

And the character of the apostate is marked in the very opposite way. It is this remnant that they hate, and their hope that they are not preparing for. It is this righteous Jonathan who now moves Saul's envy. Saul, it appears, would now have sacrificed him to his lust, as we know he afterwards sought to slay him. For envy, or the love of the world, cares not though it have even a child of our own bowels for its prey, as we know, in the case of Joseph, it craved a brother for a sacrifice. In Saul it also hunted David like a partridge in the mountains, and even would have killed Samuel, to whom under God Saul owed everything (16:2). As says the divine proverb, "wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy?"

And with all this, he had no courage in the Lord's cause when the trial came. He makes a stir and bustles a good deal with his six hundred men behind him at Gilgal; but as we follow him to Gibeah, where the battle was at hand, he tarries in the uttermost part under a pomegranate tree, nor do we see him in the field 'til the day is won. He rages after the fight, but strikes no blow in it; and all that he does is to sacrifice the honor of Israel to his own will, for in the mere exercise of his own good pleasure, he adjures the people not to touch any food 'til the evening, and that curse hinders the full overthrow of the Philistines.

Thus all that he really is, on this memorable day, is the Achan in the camp. Jonathan is the strength, and he but the troubler of Israel. But with all this, he can be very religious, when religion does not turn him out of his own way, or when, like Jehu, he can serve himself by it. After the offence of the people eating the blood with the flesh, he orders the table of the camp himself in due religious form. But this, instead of crossing his own desire, only serves it, for by this he seems to take the honor of the priesthood to him, and thus to exalt himself. He bustles again as though he were the one object of importance in the whole scene, thus gathering the thoughts of man to himself, and walking in the full light of the world's countenance, which was everything to him, the thing that he lived for.

All this is indeed darkness, but we have gloomier shades to penetrate still. When Israel entered the land, they received a commission to destroy the nations, for the day of their visitation had come. But here I would observe that it was not the whole earth that was thus to be destroyed, but only those nations which had been guilty of doing despite to God, and had filled up the measure

of their sins.

The Canaanites had had God's witnesses among them in old time, for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been there, but they remained Canaanites still. The Egyptians had known Joseph and the grace and power of the God of Joseph, but they had ceased to remember Him. And Amalek had seen the God of glory leading His hosts out of Egypt, with His cloud over them, and the water from the rock following them, but the hand of Amalek was at that moment raised against the throne of God. Of these three, Egypt, the Canaanites, and Amalek, Egypt and the Canaanites had been already judged, and the day of Amalek had now come; for surely when the Lord's cup was passing, they could not be forgotten.<sup>3</sup>

But Israel had not been fully faithful to the commission which they had received against the Canaanites, as the 1st chapter of the Book of Judges shows us; and now our 15th chapter is just that chapter again under the hand of king Saul. The kingdom was now received, as the land had then been, and the king gets his commission now, as the nation then did. "Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that he hath," says the Lord to Saul by Samuel. But Saul makes terms with Amalek, as the tribes before had done with the Canaanites. He spares Agag, as Benjamin had spared the Jebusites, Manasseh the people of Dor, Ephraim the people of Gezer, Zebulun the people of Kitron, Asher the people of Accho, and Naphthali the people of Bethshemesh. (Judges i.) And thus we have here with the king, as there with the tribes, the disobedience of man, and the consequent forfeiture of all blessing and honor. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord," says Samuel to Saul, "He hath also rejected thee from being king" (15:23).

And this was as the loss of Eden to the Lord. The land of Israel should have been the earthly rest, where God would have kept His sabbath. But now it was defiled, as paradise of old; and as of old God repented that He had made man on the earth (Gen. 6:6), so now does He repent that He had made Saul king over Israel (15:35). Thorns and briars and sorrow of heart the kingdom was now to yield, as the cursed earth did then. Samuel goes away to weep, and the Lord takes no pleasure in the kingdom.

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3. And I would further observe, that in the same way will be the judgment of the nations in the latter day. It is not all the earth that is then to be destroyed, but only those nations among whom God's witnesses have previously been, those who will then make up the confederacy against the Lord's anointed. The kingdoms of the world shall then become the Lord's, and not be destroyed; the isles afar off shall form the train of the earthly glory of Messiah, as the distant cities and people of old were to be left in order to become tributaries to Israel (Deut. 20:10-18), and those only to be cut off, as I have noticed above, who had filled up the measure of their sin, and done despite to God (Gen. 15:16).

## A FAMILIAR CONVERSATION WITH A PARDONED MAN ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE

The sentence of death had been pronounced upon him. He was in prison, in a cell on death-row, when the full impact really hit. His hopes of life were gone. His aspirations for a promotion at his work evaporated. His interest in his investments vanished. He canceled his automobile insurance policy and withdrew from all his clubs. He wrote a brief farewell note, ran off multiple copies, and sent one to each of his friends and relatives. Every hopeful relationship and connection with life and living was broken off. Having been truly guilty of the crime for which he had been sentenced, his mind was filled with constant thoughts of guilt, remorse, and the fear of death.

At the last moment, an official unlocked his cell and gave him a full pardon from the governor. The wording of the pardon referenced explicitly the number and date of a certain statute which granted to the governor the power to issue pardons, and the governor's signature was on the bottom of the document. Trembling with joy and holding the pardon in his hands, he stepped out of the prison a freed man!

To the first person he met, he cried, "I have a pardon!"

"Oh," said the man, "how do you explain that?"

And the poor pardoned man was stopped in his tracks with nothing to say. Words failed him. He could give no account of his pardon.

"A pardon," said the man as they began to walk along the road together, "is not the kind of thing that a man can *have* as if it were a possession. The essence of a pardon lies in the restoration of all the connections and relationships of life. Don't you feel a difference in your aspirations now?"

"Why, of course!" replied the pardoned man. "I must renew my car insurance, pay my mortgage, see my stockbroker, rejoin all my clubs, and I don't know what all else."

"Exactly so," agreed the man. "This set of restored relationships and hopes constitutes your pardoned condition. In fact, your pardon *is* just the condition in which you find yourself now. Your pardon is, in its essence, the condition defined by your present relationships, hopes and attitudes. It is not some thing as though it were a mere tangible object. A pardon *is* a condition which

Thus all is ruin under the hand of the people's king, and the lust of his heart is seen again to work in this scene with fearful power. For he seeks at once to turn this conquest of Amalek to his own profit and glory, careless as he was of the word and glory of the Lord. He first flies upon the spoil, and then sets him up a place (15:12), that is, erects some monument to his own name, thus seeking to make this victory serve both his pride and his covetousness.<sup>4</sup> It is true, he says, "I have sinned;" but so said Balaam before him, and Judas after him. And even in that confession, the desire of his heart was not towards God's forgiveness and peace, but towards his own honor before men. For these are his words to Samuel, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel." This was his lust -- he loved the praise of men. He would at all cost have the honor that cometh from man, and Samuel now delivers him over to a reprobate mind. He turns for a moment with him towards the people, but then leaves him for ever.

(Concluded)

*The Bible Treasury*, vol. 14.

4. We read also of "Absalom's place" (2 Sam. 18). But Saul and Absalom, as I have already noticed, were children of the same generation, both types of the Great Pretender of the latter day.

characterizes a man."

"Well, I'm sure I enjoy all my renewed relationships," said the pardoned man, "but besides all that, I did think that I *had* a pardon. After all, I *do* have *this*." And he showed him the document that the prison official had given him.

"Oh, *that*," said the man. "*That* is just a piece of paper. Paper is a material object, and I agree that you have the paper and the ink on it too. The word 'pardon', however, implies something completely different from a crass material object."

"I see your point," said the pardoned man. "What I have is not merely a physical piece of paper. Oh, yes, how I do rejoice in the possession of the pardon for my crime and from its penalty that the governor gave me!"

"Well, that's not what I meant," said the man. "The act of the governor is now a past historical fact. No one can *possess* a past historical action. The past is gone forever. I am afraid that your insistence on *possessing* a pardon is based on a false idea that you got from somewhere."

For the second time, the pardoned man was struck dumb. His mind reeled in confusion. "But, but," he cried, "they acted at the prison as if I had a pardon!"

"Oh," replied the man, "men often act on strange and illogical grounds. You yourself, for example, don't look too good to me. You claim to have a pardon but you have not shaved and look as if you need a bath. Clearly, something is wrong, and I am sure that the root of your problem is that you insist that you *have* a thing that cannot be possessed. If you had right thoughts, you would be occupied with your renewed relationships and the new sphere of life in which you are found."

Just at that moment, a third man stepped up and introduced himself. "I am," said he, "the governor of this state, and I have been listening to your conversation. This man's pardon *abides* in the enduring authority of the office of the governor of this state. As long as the position of governor continues, his pardon remains and will be upheld by me and by my successors. Moreover, the written constitution of this state so speaks of a pardon as of the possession of a pardoned man. Thus, every state official who has sworn to uphold the constitution of this state will oppose your opinions, sir, to say nothing about how your allegations reflect upon *my* good name which is found on that document! Tell me, are you a loyal citizen of this state?"

"Well," replied the other, "there is no need for you to get so huffy about the matter. I see my turning is here. Good-bye."

With brief warnings against materialism and semantic arguments, and an exhortation to make good use of all the relationships of life that had been restored to him *with* his pardon, the governor also departed. Walking briskly onwards, the pardoned man murmured softly, "Ah, I had not realized how deeply the honor and good name of the governor were bound up with my pardon! Nor will I ever again listen to anyone who denies that I *HAVE* a pardon!"

"Excuse me," said a man who was just coming out of his house with his wife, "you look very happy today."

"Yes," said the pardoned man, "I AM happy today because . . . (Do I dare to tell them? Remember how upset I got the last time I said it. OK, here goes.) . . . I HAVE A PARDON!"

"How wonderful!" they said. "So do we. God Himself has pardoned us and given us eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who said, 'He that hath the Son hath life' (1 John 5:12). Do you have eternal life from God as well as a pardon from the governor?"

"Oh," said the pardoned man, "eternal life is not the kind of thing you can possess. Life must be *lived*, and so eternal life is a kind of technical expression indicating an order and state of blessing as FER used to say. It is a condition."

"Where on earth did you learn that?" asked the woman.

"When I was in prison," said the pardoned man, "I did a lot of reading. I must have read twenty volumes of ministry and a volume of letters. They said that eternal life was essentially a wholly new sphere of affections and relationships, in which a Christian stands. Moreover, I myself experienced the entrance into a wholly new sphere of affections and relationships when I got my pardon so I can understand exactly what that all means."

"But," exclaimed the husband, "your pardon was not the new sphere of affections and relationships. Your pardon was YOUR PARDON. Similarly, eternal life is not a sphere of relationships (though relationships are involved in the possession of it) BUT ETERNAL LIFE IS ETERNAL LIFE. There is an analogy to be made between the pardon that you *have* and the possession of eternal life. The analogy is imperfect, in part because eternal life is so much more valuable and important."

"But," objected the pardoned man, "the volumes I read teach that the term 'eternal life,' in the literal meaning of the words, would convey little definite idea, since we are conscious that every living soul has an eternal existence with God or without God."

"Well," replied the woman, "you probably had little understanding of your pardon in the literal meaning of the words when you first received it. Probably the first person who spoke to you would have had little difficulty in confusing you on that issue."

"That's true. In fact it took the personal intervention of the governor to get me on the right track again about my pardon. And I must confess even now that my confidence in *having* a pardon rests more on his assurances and my respect for his person than on a profound grasp of the law of pardons."

"Just so. Don't worry about not understanding all about your pardon at once. Your appreciation for it is supposed to increase with time. And the same is true of eternal life."

"But," said the pardoned man, "my pardon is not like eternal life because I have it in written form." And he showed her the document with the governor's signature.

In reply, the husband opened his pocket Bible and read, "I give unto them eternal life (John 10:28)."

"Ahh!" said the pardoned man. "I see that neither my pardon nor eternal life are material objects, but does not that Bible verse identify the essence of eternal life with a historical act, something that is passed and gone forever?"

"Oh, no," replied the woman, "because the Bible also says that 'our life is hid with Christ in God.' As your pardon abides in the continuance of the office of the governor, so eternal life resides with Christ in God. 'Because I live, ye shall live also' (John 14:19)."

"Well, it seems as if you think that there is a stronger analogy between my pardon and eternal life than I think," mused the pardoned man. "My contention is that eternal life is a condition which characterizes a man. Tell me, is anyone's name linked to eternal life as the governor's name is attached to my pardon?"

"Oh, yes!" said the woman. "Here, read this passage for yourself." She took her Bible from her purse and handed it to him opened to Romans 6:23, and he read the following:

**"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."**

"So, you see," said the husband, "it is a very serious thing to doubt the possession of eternal life because the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is linked to that life as the gift of God, a gift received and possessed

forever by those who know the Lord. Moreover, the Bible *often* uses words that show that eternal life is the present possession of each believer. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). This is far more than a condition or sphere of relationships."

"But are not the relationships so bound up with the new life from God that you must have *them* in order to have eternal life?" asked the pardoned man.

"Well," said the husband, "what the Bible says you have to have is Christ. 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life' (John 6:47). 'He that hath the Son hath life' (1 John 5:12). It is important to understand that eternal life never had a beginning. 'And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know him that [is] true; and we are in him that [is] true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life, (1 John 5: 20). ' . . . concerning the word of life; (and the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us)' (1 John 1:1,2). When we have Christ, the Son of God, we have eternal life. Notice how these verses speak of Christ and eternal life as the present possession of the believer. Now, in view of this blessedness, what do you think of the verse that says, 'The Father hath life in Himself' (John 5:26)? Is that a mere condition of being? Is that just a set of relationships, attitudes, etc.?"

At this, the pardoned man was silent. After a moment the husband, commenting on the distinction between life and mere existence, continued by saying, "Though the tree of life (Gen. 2) was not the tree of *eternal* life, still it was the tree of *LIFE*, not of existence. After all, even stones exist without having life; but *LIVING* forever, not merely existing forever, is the consequence of eating of that tree. What I insist on is that there is something that scripture calls eternal life, that never had a beginning, that is *GIVEN* to, and *POSSESSED* by, the believer now. It is not an operation on what was there before, or a restoration of lost relationships, or a modified life-style, but a *GIFT* of something that was not there before. It is the positive implantation into the soul of a life not possessed before. 'He that hath the Son hath life.'"

"Aha!" cried the pardoned man. "I perceive your problem: you deny the new relationships into which a man enters when he is born again."

"Oh, not at all," replied the husband. "The gift of eternal life as a known possession involves the granting by God of a relationship with Himself. 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). Eternal life involves oneness in life



with Christ and identifies the believer with His life as characterized by His resurrection from among the dead. 'And this is the witness that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son' (1 John 5:11). And John 20:22 shows the gift of the Holy Spirit as the Power of This resurrection-life. The believer also has a relationship with all other believers as having eternal life. Observe that all of the grains on the stalk have the same life as the stalk and form together one plant. To receive eternal life as the possession of the believer is to receive from God, and know, that blessed relationship spoken of in John 17:3. *God has said in His word that He has given eternal life.* This giving it as the present possession of the believer does not diminish or hinder in any way the apprehension of all the spiritual relationships of the believer but rather by the power of the indwelling Spirit is the very basis for his apprehension of all his blessings in Christ."

"But," answered the pardoned man, "those ideas of yours leave too little room for what I know. It is not so much what I have gathered from Scriptures as what I know. You should 'study Scripture less and pray more,' as Mr. F. E. Raven said he would do if he had his life to live over again. Then, perhaps, you would see things as he and I do. Good-bye."

"Come, dear," said the husband to his wife, "we can pray for this man who understands his pardon well enough, but does not bow to what the Bible teaches about eternal life. As it took the personal intervention of the governor to clear up his confusion about his pardon, so only the power of the personal intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ can deliver him from his understanding about eternal life."

D. Ryan

## WAS OUR LORD'S LIFE VICARIOUS?

We are now to look at the concluding topic in the letter referred to . . . <sup>1</sup> Our correspondent asks, "How is it proved that our Lord's life-sufferings and obedience were not vicarious? Presbyterians teach that 'His life-sufferings from Bethlehem to Calvary were the true ground of our justification,' and that, 'He obeyed the law in our stead.'" Again, "What is meant by His being 'made under the law,' or by His being 'obedient unto death?' How did He 'learn obedience by the things which He suffered?' (Heb. 5:8), or in what sense was He 'made perfect through suffering?'" (Heb. 2:10).

Let us first look briefly at the question of justification. In Scripture usage, justification is always *from* sins and guilt -- acquittal -- clearance from charge and accusation. It has no idea in itself of giving merit or title to reward. Thus "by Him all that believe are justified *from* all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39); "he that is dead is justified from sin" (Rom. 6:7, *marg*). Again "Who shall *lay anything to the charge* of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8:33). Or again, "I know nothing by (i.e. against) myself; yet I am not thereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:4). Once more, "The free gift is of many offenses unto justification" (Rom. 5:16).

Now when God becomes "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," what is the *ground* upon which according to Scripture He justifies one who is a sinner, and ungodly? Let the Scripture answer: "Being *justified* freely by His grace through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus" -- "redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1:7) -- "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His *blood*" (Rom. 3:24). "That, being now justified by His BLOOD" -- (Rom. 5:9). Or again, "he that is *dead* is justified from sin; now if *we* be dead *with Christ*" -- (Rom. 6:7,8).

Now this is the language of Scripture, exclusively. Does it speak of "life-sufferings" justifying, or of death, of blood, and that alone? I know, of course, that "life-sufferings from Bethlehem to Calvary" are meant to include the cross. All I ask here is, Does Scripture teach us so to mix up His life and death together, as together justifying?

It is quite true that I have omitted purposely, as yet, the passages which speak, not of justifying, but of *righteousness*. My reason is, that I desire to keep the things distinct from one another which Scripture in its wisdom, which is

1. See the article on the humanity of Christ in *Thy Precepts* vol. 6, # 1.

perfect, distinguishes.

"Righteousness" is in three places, and in three only, in the New Testament, a "righteous *act*" or "sum of righteous *acts*" (Rom. 2:26; v. 18; 8:4). In every other case it is a *quality*.<sup>2</sup> Thus the "righteousness of God" is His being righteous, His character as such. This, declared by the death of Christ (Rom. 3:26), is revealed in the gospel as the hope and confidence of lost and guilty men, (Rom. 1:17), for as surely as Christ died for sinners, the sinner who shelters himself in Him is safe by the very fact that God is righteous.

Righteousness for a man, a sinner, is a character he is credited with: he is accounted righteous; righteousness is reckoned or imputed to him. That is, not a sum of righteousness -- so much doing -- but a certain character, as I have said. In one place (Rom. 4:6-8), righteousness imputed, is just sin *not* imputed. But if "Christ is made unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30), this of course goes very much further; nay, as being *in* Him before God, every believer is necessarily "righteous as *He* is righteous," (1 John 3:7); all the value of Christ, of Him who glorified God on earth, whether by life or death, attaches to him.

Thus "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). I have no intention, as I have no desire, to exclude His blessed life from this "obedience." But this is not *life-suffering*, even though He suffered doubtless in the path of obedience, nay, "*learned* obedience by the things that He suffered." This means, He learned what it was -- a new thing for "the Son" to obey, and to suffer in obeying.

So again, that "He became obedient unto death," that is, that death itself, lying in His path, was not refused by this obedient One, is surely true. Obedient He was in a life tested by suffering which had no equal; and obedient in death, where that was "even the death of the cross." By this obedience, perfect and entire throughout, one whole in life or death, we are made righteous, I again say. And here all that is really precious for the heart in the thought "He lived for us" as well as died for us, finds its expression and its justification.

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2. The first word is "dikaionoma," the second, "dikaiosisune." "The termination -- *ma*, denotes the *result of an action*, and is affixed to verbal stems. Thus, *prasso*, *prag-*, gives *pragma*, a *thing done*, an *action*; and the obsolete *reho*, *the-*, forms *rhema*, a *thing spoken*, a *word*."

"Substantives in *osune*, connected with adjective stems in *on-*, rarely in *o-*, denote a *quality*; as . . . *dikaiosisune*, righteousness." (*Handbook to the Grammar of the New Testament*, published by the Religious Tract Society of England, pp. 154,156).

In Rev. 19:8, the word is really a plural, "dikaionmata," "the righteousnesses of the saints."

But this is *not* the justification of the thought of a "vicarious life." By this term is intended, of course, His being in our place, Sin-bearer therefore, from His birth. The place of sinners -- our place -- would be necessarily for Him that of a sin-bearer. Let me express this in the language of a very popular writer, extreme language, no doubt, but it is well to see where such thoughts carry us. Says Dr. Horatius Bonar thus: "He was Himself the true Sacrifice, the bearer of sin. As such He lived and died. In all that He did, and in all that He abstained from doing; in the places which He visited, and in the places He abstained from visiting, He kept this in view. He was loaded with our sin, our curse, our condemnation, our leprosy; and as such, He must keep at a distance from the holy and the clean."<sup>3</sup>

The last sentence will be disclaimed as expressing the views of many, perhaps. I would fain trust so. Still it is the language of one whose writings have widespread acceptance among Christians, and those so-called "evangelical" at the present day. And the general thought is one which is evidently implied in the statement that the Lord's "*life-sufferings* from Bethlehem to Calvary are the true ground of our justification." Here His "*life-sufferings*" are looked at as the *penalty* endured in our behalf -- are mixed up with the entirely contrasted sufferings on the cross -- and are made the ground of a justification which, if it could have been effected in that way, would have absolutely rendered the *death* of the Lord unnecessary. That is not meant of course, I know; but it is right to show the consequences involved in that which those who hold it do not follow out to its consequences.

But let me ask now, where is the proof from Scripture, that the Lord bore sin for us "from Bethlehem to Calvary?" I read, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body ON THE TREE" (1 Pet. 2:24). People have tried to make even this text speak another language. The marginal reading here gives "or to the tree," and many have tried to elaborate their own doctrine out of this. But it is impossible.<sup>4</sup> And the same thing will be found elsewhere in this very epistle, as 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, *being put to death* in the flesh" &c. So universally: "Without shedding of blood is no remission"; "and having made peace through

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3. "The Banished One bearing our Banishment," in *The Christian Treasury*, 1861, p. 314.

4. The word "bare" is the ordinary word for sacrificial bearing; and the word for "upon" the very word which has that meaning more simply and positively than any other word in the language. Alford and the Bible Union revisions both reject "to" and give "upon."

the blood of His cross"; <sup>5</sup> "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

And thus when He cometh into the world, saying, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me," what takes the place of these many ineffectual sacrifices of the law? Was it a sacrificial *life* or *death* that did so? Of which does Scripture speak when, having produced that saying of His, "Lo! I come to do *Thy will*, O my God," it adds, "By the *which will* we are sanctified, through the *offering* of the body of Jesus Christ once?"

If then, "without shedding of blood is no remission," did His "life suffering from *Bethlehem*" put away sin? If "by the blood of the *cross*" He has made peace, did He bear sin all His life through, unavailingly till then?

Scripture declares in the most decisive way, that it was the suffering outside the gate of Jerusalem -- the suffering of the cross therefore -- which gave sanctifying power even to His bloodshedding. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are *burned without the camp*; wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered *without the gate*" (Heb. 13:11,12). How distinct the place and character which such words give the Cross! The only place where atonement was or could be made, is the only place where He could be the Sin-bearer.

I shall touch the question of the law presently. Let me first ask my reader's attention to the consequences of this doctrine of the Lord's being "loaded with our sin, our curse, our condemnation" all His life. For these consequences are to obscure the glory of His Person, and take away from the preciousness of His having "lived for us."

What was He in the world? The Light of it. What was that light? "The glory of the Only-begotten of the Father," the One "*in the bosom of the Father*."

But I ask, Could there be the *shining forth* of the glory of One in the Father's bosom, in any due and proper way, in One all His life under wrath and curse? Sure I am, that the simple reader of Scripture, following step by step the course of that Son of the Father upon earth, would never dream of His being then in the sinner's place, bearing that sinner's due, when the Father's voice gave its witness of delight in Him; when upon the mount of transfiguration "He received from God the Father *honor and glory*, when there came such a voice

5. It has been actually attempted to make the shedding of His blood in *circumcision*, of the same character and value with the "blood of the Cross." How decisively this is denied here, I need scarcely say.

to Him from the excellent glory," &c., (2 Pet. 1:17). Surely "honor and glory" are not the sinner's due; and one who, as Dr. Bonar tells us, "kept in view" His being in the place of Sin-bearer "in the places which He *visited*, and in the places which He abstained from visiting," and who, "if permitted to resort to Jerusalem," he further tells us, "could only do so as a stranger or way-faring man, who comes in with the crowd during the day, but retires at night -- " <sup>6</sup> surely One in such a position and with such constant remembrance of it, could never even have "visited" the "holy mount!"

But enough of this. 'Til the Cross, the whole gospel history is witness, He was *not* in the sinner's place. No, He was declaring the Father, doing the works of the Father, the Father hearing him always and always with Him. How different when that awful shadow fell upon the Cross, and the sufferer on it took up the language of the 22nd psalm:

"My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God! I cry in the daytime, and Thou HEAREST NOT . . . Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help . . . But be not Thou far from me, O Lord, O my strength, haste Thou to help me."

There were other sorrows, I know. What element of bitterness did not then enter into the cup of the man of sorrows? But above all, this *sorrow* -- a far-off God -- was the crushing, decisive sorrow of the Cross.

To the difference between this and the whole previous part of our Lord's life, no Christian can be altogether blind. But it is a marvel that any should not see that here alone is the sinner's place taken -- the sinner's due received -- that here alone was that fulfilled, He was "made a *curse* for us." When and where was this? Mark further -- "as it is written Cursed is every one that HANGETH ON A TREE" (Gal. 3:13).

But we have not yet done with this doctrine of vicarious life. The law! what about the law? Did He not fulfil it in our stead, and thus work out our robe of righteousness? And if the Cross alone is what meets our sins, is not His law-fulfilling the righteousness which fits us for, and entitles us to heaven?

Scripture answers: --

Christ was "made under the law"; *did* fulfil it therefore, and that perfectly, as He must, being under it and the perfect One. So far all is plain. But there is

a wide gap between this and what follows in men's thoughts. The moment I say, "He fulfilled it *in our stead*," I say it without Scripture. "He magnified the law, and made it honorable" -- true. Not a step further will the Word carry you in this tract. Why is it, it NEVER says, "He fulfilled the law in our stead?" Why is it, that it *never* says, "His law-fulfilling is our righteousness?"

Because it has a very different, -- a contradictory thing to this, to say.

The system which speaks of Christ's law-fulfilling as our righteousness, speaks on this wise. It puts you down as one under the law, to get to heaven by. The law promises heaven or eternal life to obedience. It denounces the curse on disobedience. Now then, it is not only necessary to have our sins borne, our curse taken for us. That would still leave us without a positive title to heaven; it would free us from hell but no more. And *there* comes in the necessity of a positive meritorious *fulfilling of the law for us being needed, as well as curse endured*.

Space fails just now for the consideration of this system. I propose rather to set side by side with it the Scriptural one, for the establishment of this will of course suffice to set aside the other.

Scripture then speaks of man, if under law, as under the condemnation of it merely, a lost sinner. For such, as soon as they believe in Christ, not only is His blood the purging of their *sins*, but they themselves are, in the death of Him who died for them, "dead," and passed away from before God as sinners, part of the old creation. They are in this way, "dead to *sin*" (Rom. 6), "dead to the LAW," (Rom. 7), and no longer "living (alive) in the *world*" (Col. 2:20). As another way of expressing it, they are "not in the flesh" (Rom. 8:5,9). Thus then, there is no fulfilling for men belonging to the old creation, begun and ruined in the first Adam, the responsibilities attaching to *that* condition. No, it is ended and over before God on the Cross of His Son, with all that belongs to it. And those who have their place in Christ before God have a place under the *last* Adam, in *new* creation, new creatures altogether, old things passed away, and all things become new (2 Cor. 5).

Nor did the last Adam take up the first Adam's responsibilities to fulfill them, and so secure the blessing which he failed to obtain. It is a mistake and a serious one. The first Adam and the last are not only type and antitype: they are, on that very account, *contrasts*. "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:45,47). Now as are the two, so are their responsibilities, and so is the work with which each is connected. To the first Adam it was never said, "Do this, and you shall go to

heaven," but on the other hand, "Do this, and you will *die*." His responsibility was to *retain his place*, not acquire a new one. Nor could any law-keeping on his part have entitled him to a higher place than that in which he was created. No creature can do more than *duty*, and none can acquire a title to be raised above his natural condition. Hence the law which was the test of man, never says, "The man that doeth these things shall *go to heaven*," but "shall live in them." Had it found the perfect man for which it looked, he would not have died and gone to heaven; no, he could not have died at all. But *all* died. Yes, because "all have sinned." The law says, "There is none righteous," and leaves man there.

And now comes the work of the last Adam. Not being a mere creature, He *can* merit. But instead of putting Himself under the first Adam's responsibility to restore the condition of the earthy, He closes for those who believe in Him their entire connection with it, giving them in Himself (His work completed, and He in the value of it, as man, gone up to God), a new place of blessing, heavenly, in the Divine favor which rests upon Himself. This place was never attached to law-keeping; no man fulfilling that could ever have hoped for it, be he Adam the first or any of his sons.

And to say that the law, the measure of mere *man's* obedience, was the measure of *His*, by whose obedience many are made righteous, is to confound the lowest with the highest, man's work to keep his first estate, and Christ's to bring men out of the ruin of it to the heights of glory where He Himself is for us now. Was He no more than perfect man? Was His work no more than Adam should have done? and are the results no more than if the first man had walked in his integrity? Alas, where have we got, if it be needful to ask such questions.

Doubtless He fulfilled the law, for the greater includes the less, and His obedience was beyond and above law altogether. Not in our stead did He fulfil the law, but by dying took us out of the condition to which law attaches, to give us a new place in grace which nought but grace could give, and which will be the wonder of eternity that grace could give us.

*Helps by the Way*, vol. 2.

## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

### CHAPTER 3.5: ACTS 4-9

#### IS ACTS 4:23-31

#### A FULFILLMENT OF PSALM 2:1,2?

Concerning this passage, O. T. Allis says:

According to this passage the early Christians saw, in the sufferings of Christ and in the persecutions which they were being called upon to endure because of their loyalty to Him in the preaching of the gospel, a fulfillment of Ps. 2:1-2. Since Dispensationalists admit a partial fulfillment of Joel 2 in the events of the day of Pentecost, they should be ready to recognize at least a partial fulfillment of prophecy here also. Otherwise the citation from the Psalms would be neither applicable nor appropriate.

We need not spend much space on this other than to say:

1. There was no partial fulfillment of Joel 2 at Pentecost.
2. There was no fulfillment, partial or complete, of Psalm 2 on this occasion. After all, the nations did not rage in connection with the death of Christ, nor on this occasion (cf. v. 25). The verse speaks of the nations being "gathered together." Moreover, the kings of the earth were not at the crucifixion nor here on this occasion.
3. Yet the citation from Psalm 2 is both applicable and appropriate. The *spirit* noted in Psalm 2 was there, and in that sense there was an application of it. What was quoted from Psalm 2 will be fulfilled in the future.

1. *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, p. 141, (1945).

### ACTS 7:38

O. T. Allis did not list Acts 7:38 in his chapter appealing to Acts to prove that the church fulfills the O.T. prophecies; nor is it found in his index. In a book by two converts to non-dispensationalism, we read:

In Acts 7:38 Stephen, in good Septuagint usage, refers to the Old Testament people as the "church." Or as F. F. Bruce rightly says, "As Moses was with the old church, Christ is with the new, and it is still a pilgrim church. . . ." Moses and Christ are over the same house (Heb. 3:5,6), and the one house called the "church" in Acts!

(\*F. F. Bruce, *NIC New Testament: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 152.

Because the word *ecclesia* (assembly) translated church is found in Acts 7:38 and Heb. 2:12, the mind that believes the prophets prophesied about the New Testament *ecclesia* believe that the O. T. saints were in the church. All of this sounds like a word-game, a word game from which dispensational truth preserves us. But it does remind me of a remark that W. Kelly made, namely, that 'though Noah was in an ark, and Moses was in an ark, we have not yet learned that they are the same thing.' Of course they are not the same thing. And neither is "the assembly in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) the same as the assembly which Christ said that He would build (Matt. 16:18). Nor did Christ say "I am building my assembly."

Heb. 3:5, 6 says:

And Moses indeed [was] faithful in all his house, as a ministering servant, for a testimony of the things to be spoken after; but Christ, as Son over his house, whose house are we, if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end.

The above cited statement that Moses and Christ are over the same house is a marvelous statement. It is not only a brazen contradiction of the express distinction and contrast<sup>3</sup> of the two houses as noted in Hebrews, it shows (1) the blinding power of the spiritual alchemy and (2) its resultant Judaizing!

Not wishing to give this point any more space, I refer the reader to the pungent and solid remarks of W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury* 6:222 and 218.

2. Curtis I. Crenshaw and Grover E. Grinn III, *Dispensationalism Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow*, Memphis: Footstool Publications, p. 40 (1989). The cover of this book says "Banner of Truth Magazine: '... this is the best discussion of the theology of dispensation so far written.' Well, the reader has here a sample of the caliber of this book.

3. The contrast of the old and the new is characteristic of the book of Hebrews.

## ACTS 7:48

Here again O. T. Allis treats his readers to another of his dicta:

The statement, "howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands," is clearly meant to be axiomatic. It suggests 1 Kgs. 8:27, but is directly supported by appeal to Isa. 66:1f., which as used by Stephen can only mean that an earthly temple has no proper place in the dispensation ushered in by the preaching of the gospel (cf. Acts 6:14). The conclusion is unavoidable that Stephen applies Isaiah's words directly to the Church age.

While it is true that an earthly temple has no place now, that does not follow from his argument, which, observe, proves too much -- for these words of O. T. Allis would show that an earthly temple had no place in the O. T. either. After all, Isa. 66:1f was true at the time Isaiah wrote. Thus what O. T. Allis says proves too much. The conclusion that is unavoidable is that refusal to bow to Rom. 16:25, 26, etc., has caused him to enunciate a false conclusion. W. Kelly has some excellent comments on this passage:

Here then, thought the Jew, must Jehovah restrict Himself to that 'magnificent' palace of His holiness. For unbelieving man must have an idol somewhere. 'But the Highest dwelleth not in [places] made with hands; even as the prophet saith, The heaven [is] My throne, and the earth a footstool of My feet: what sort of house will ye build Me, saith [the] Lord, or what [is] My place of rest? Did not My hand make all these things?' (vers. 48-50). Superstitious exaltation of the temple detracts from His glory Who gives it all its distinctive grandeur. Jehovah did deign to hallow and glorify it, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God. But Solomon himself at that august consecration had owned that heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, much less the house he had just built! And so afterward spoke the prophet Isaiah (66:1), long before Babylon was allowed to burn and destroy the object of Israel's pride. It was no afterthought to console the Jew in his subjection to Gentile masters: so had Israel's king spoken to God; and so had God spoken to Israel long before the Chaldeans had become an adversary commissioned to chastise their idolatry.

It was right and pious to own the condescending grace of Jehovah; it was presumptuous to limit His glory to the temple He was pleased to make His dwelling. The Creator had created all and was immeasurably above the universe. From such a point of view what was Jerusalem or the temple? Who was now in accord with the testimony of Solomon and of Isaiah? The accusers, or Stephen? The answer is beyond controversy, and their enmity without excuse.

4. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 142.

5. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*. . . , London: Hammond, p. 97, (1952).

## ACTS 8:4-25

Strangely, O. T. Allis says:

In fact we are told that "they preached the gospel" in "many villages of the Samaritans" (cf. 5:42, 8:4, 12, 25, 35). This incident reminds us that our Lord preached in Samaria apparently before He preached in Nazareth, and that the Samaritans received Him while the men of Nazareth sought to slay Him. How then could Scofield say that Acts 10:44 is "one of the pivotal points of Scripture" because "Heretofore the Gospel has been offered to Jews only"? Coming after the incidents of chap. 8 the words, "unto the Jews only" (11:19) suggest reproach or surprise. Prophecy is not appealed to. But the trio of Ezek. 16:53-55 strikingly parallels Isa. 19:24f. One is as comprehensive as the other.

I say this is strange because it does not take into account the work on the cross, the resurrection and glorification of Christ and the consequent sending of the Holy Spirit. And why is all this omitted? -- to score a point? He wants to avoid the fact that in the apostolic preaching (consequent upon what happened at the cross after the Lord went through Samaria) this was indeed a pivotal point. The fact is stubborn: the gospel that the Lord Jesus had died, risen, and ascended above, with forgiveness of sins preached as a consequence, had, until this pivotal point, been preached only to Jews.<sup>7</sup> Nothing here shows that the church is the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy.

R. Zorn claims:

In Acts 8:12 the equation of the Kingdom with the Gospel is again made.<sup>8</sup>

The verse reads,

But when they believed Philip announcing the glad tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized. . . .

Wm. Kelly translates,

. . . evangelizing about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

We notice that there is no equation of the kingdom of God and "the gospel," as amillennialists claim there is. It is a mere assertion. Just as others, these Samaritans needed to know the truth concerning the kingdom, its present and future phases, and that Jesus was the Messiah in Whom they must trust. See also the notes on Acts 1:3; 20:24, 25; 28:23, 28.

6. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 142.

7. See the chart outlining the Acts in *Thy Precepts* vol. 5, # 3.

8. R. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 50, (1962).

**ACTS 8:26-40**

Forgive me for referring to this passage -- only because O. T. Allis refers to it:

Philip's preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch must be viewed in the light of the context. It was not merely a case of "individual work for individuals." The vast potentialities of the act, the conversion of a high official of the queen of Ethiopia, are clearly indicated; and this was brought about through the applying of Isa. 53 to those events upon which the Christian Church was founded.

Something must be plain here to him, that is not so to me. Is he implying that because the O.T. prophets prophesied about the birth, life, death, resurrection and glorification of Christ, therefore the church is a subject of O.T. prophecy? If so, that would be as absurd as it would be desperate for proof. And since some brief remarks he makes under the heading "9. Acts 9:15" are even less relevant (if that is possible) we will omit them.

Ed.

(Continued from p. 38)

"Ye seek to kill Me, a man who has spoken the truth to you." John 8:40.

"Jesus the Nazarean, a man borne witness to by God." Acts 2:22.

"Through this man remission of sins is preached." Acts 13:38.

"Judge . . . by the man whom He has appointed." Acts 17:31.

"By man (i.e. Christ) came also the resurrection." 1 Cor. 15:21.

"The man Christ Jesus." I Tim. 2:5.

(Also called "man" by friends, enemies and others in a number of passages.)

Compiled by J. Bloore.

9. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 142.

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## HISTORICAL NOTE

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### DID F. E. RAVEN DENY THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST?

It had been my impression that F. E. Raven held to the eternal Sonship of Christ in spite of his other evil doctrines. The reason for this impression is that papers defending the eternal Sonship against James Taylor Sr.'s denial of it have often appealed to F. E. Raven as having held to the doctrine of the eternal Sonship.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in a letter dated December 29, 1894, he maintained it.<sup>2</sup> However, the extracts below clearly indicate that he changed his position by 1898. This is indicated by J. S. Allen:

In the latter part of the meeting there was a very interesting digression as to the way in which divine Persons have been revealed. F. E. R. thought that 'the Son' is used in special reference to the Father and the name 'Son of God' in reference to man, but that none of these *titles*<sup>3</sup> are applied to Him in Scripture until incarnation, and therefore we are not authorized to carry these *titles* back into eternity.<sup>4</sup> The reading was exceedingly free and greatly enjoyed.<sup>5</sup>

And here is what F. E. Raven wrote:

. . . As to what you refer to, my point was that it was permitted to us to know divine Persons AS and WHEN revealed and only so. In view of that revelation the Son has taken a new place relatively, that is, of inferiority to the Father,

1. See, for example, *Reversal not Adjustment* by E. Middleton, p. 3, where the author counts F. E. Raven with J. N. Darby, J. G. Bellett, G. V. Wigram and J. B. Stoney as holding to the eternal Sonship.

2. See *Letters of F. E. Raven*, p. 101, 1963 ed.

3. [The truth is that these are *essential names*, not "titles." For example, ". . . because he has not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John 3:18) shows that this is not a "title."]

4. [For example, "I came out from the Father and have come into the world" (John 16:28) certainly authorizes us to recognize that the Father had that name before the Son came into the world.]

5. Letter of J. S. Allen of October 14, 1898 regarding a reading held in Rochester, New York, USA, on Oct 11, 1898. See *Letters of F. E. Raven*, pp. 146, 147 (1963 ed.)

coming to do the will of God, though of course there would be no change morally or in affection.<sup>6</sup> The names under which we know divine Persons, that is, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, I judge, connected with this position, and I doubt if we are allowed to enter into the eternal relation of divine Persons apart from this revelation. No one knows the Son but the Father. What I think led me to it was a fear lest in our minds we should almost insensibly give to the Son a place of inferiority (save as regards revelation) in our thoughts of the Godhead, which could not be right. The point is to be within the limits of Scripture and not trading on what is merely orthodox.<sup>7</sup>

Here, F. E. R. defines the position that the Son took in incarnation as "inferiority to the Father." Then he craftily says that if we say that He was Son in the Godhead we would be thus giving the Son a place of inferiority in the Godhead. The truth is that in taking up manhood into union with His Person, the Son voluntarily took a place of subjection and dependence in manhood, not a place of inferiority. The Sonship of Christ implies His deity, not inferiority! Even the unbelieving Jews knew better than unfaithful F. E. R., for the Jews sought to stone Him because He also "said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

Another testimony to F. E. Raven's abandonment of the truth of the eternal Sonship comes from James Taylor, Sr.:

... there are many witnesses to his refusal of it [i.e., the eternal Sonship], say from 1898 to the end of his service.<sup>8</sup>

In light of the above, can anyone rightly maintain that F. E. Raven *continued* in the truth of the eternal Sonship of Christ?

F. Marotta

6. [Since he is about to deny the pre-incarnational relationship of Father and Son, what does He know about "affection" in the Godhead?]

7. *Letters of F. E. Raven*, pp. 147, 148, letter dated November 23, 1898.

8. *Letters of James Taylor*, vol. 1, p. 394. Interestingly, there was a J. T. present at the Tuesday afternoon reading at Rochester on October 11, 1898, though the digression noted in the first quotation above does not appear in the revision (by F. E. Raven) of the notes of that meeting (*Notes of Readings and Addresses at Meetings Held in the United States and Canada*, October 1898. Revised by F. E. Raven. London: Morrish).

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The editor would be grateful if a reader would lend him the following magazines for a week. You will be reimbursed for postage.

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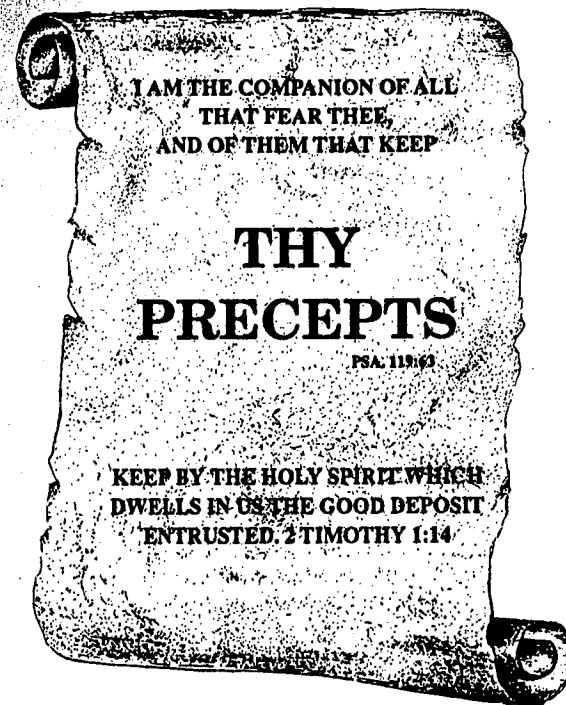
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*Fellowship*, all volumes except 1927 (edited by R. Elliot).

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## THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

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### THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

MATTHEW 4:1-12.

I desire to speak to-night of the practical bearing of these verses, and also of the grace of the Lord in it all: how man in Him is brought into this place with God; and it is the model of our place, as we get in the previous chapter where the heavens are opened, the Holy Ghost descends on Him, and the voice comes, "This is my beloved Son." What is remarkable in it is, that where he brings out the model of the place into which He brings us, there is the first revelation of the Trinity. It is in the blessed Lord becoming a man that we have the full revelation of all truth. Redemption alone could bring *us* into this place. What characterizes Christianity is the revelation of the Godhead -- sovereign grace of course. In virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ becoming a man, comes this revelation, and that gives the place He brings us into by redemption. In the first part I read, the other side of our place comes out; that is, the conflict with Satan down here on the earth; but *the conflict does not begin till He gets the place of Son*. We must distinguish between *slavery to Satan* and *conflict with Satan*. The *saint is never in slavery*, and the *sinner is never in conflict*. Here the Lord is binding the strong man; now he is bound, so that if any man resists him he will flee; but at the same time we have to pass through temptations and difficulties, and here He gives us the model of how we can overcome.

We get first the place to which we are brought by redemption; that is, as regards our relationship to God. We are now servants of God, and obedience is our path. Adam ought to have obeyed; everything was blessing around him; there was one test of his obedience, and he failed. Supposing a man is brought to this place by redemption, there is still the disposition to do his own will; temptation is there, and then comes the exercise of heart about this obedience in the relationship of sons with God. In this place of sons -- Christ's place -- sealed by the Holy Spirit, the place that was His by right and title, I have

everything to learn, but the relationship is settled. I have to learn and to judge what is in me; but I have now God's will as the *source* of *all* my conduct, not the *rule* only, and there is a real difference.

The flesh never has God's will as the source of its conduct; it may be checked and stopped by it, as the rule. A person may have a will of his own, and the Lord may stop it; it is checked; but that was never the way with Christ. His Father's will was the origin and source of all He did. We have to be stopped sometimes, but that is not Christian obedience. Christian obedience is the will of God being the *motive*. The Christian starts in the place of a son, and the question comes, How he, being a man, can be consistent with this relationship? and there exercise of heart comes in.

We have to notice, and it is exceedingly sweet, how completely the Lord takes this place with us, how He takes us into His place with Himself as sons, and then comes to our condition and circumstances -- sinlessly, of course -- and to the conflict. We are often led by the flesh, but He was led of the Spirit, just as He tasted death by the grace of God, and we by sin. But it is a wonderful testimony to the grace of the Lord, how He is *interested* in us and has taken up our cause. On the cross He was alone; in all the rest He takes us into His place, or else comes into ours. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be *touched* with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (rather, sin apart). He can give *intelligent* service, because He has gone through it, and His perfectness came out in it. Mark how thoroughly He came into our circumstances, not sin. When Adam was tempted, he was in the enjoyment of all the blessings God had given him, and he laid it all aside for a bit of self-will. He lost confidence in God; and if I have not confidence in God to make me happy, I must make myself happy. The will comes in, then lust, and then transgression. Men do not trust God's will for their happiness and blessing, and that is the principle of all sin.

Christians fail in it often, and the exercises we get are to lead us into it. Here Christ is where everything is to try a man -- forty days without food, with the wild beasts, in every respect the opposite of paradise. Then mark, as everything hung on Adam's obedience (if he failed everything was gone), so here everything hung on Christ's obedience. He could not fail; but if He did fail in that desert spot -- passing His time with Satan, so to speak -- everything was lost to man. The trial was to be made, and He must overcome. Adam failed in spite of every blessing; Christ comes in grace and overcomes. Then He is hungry; there is no sin in that. God has put hunger into our natures as an intimation when to eat. Then Satan comes (v. 3) and says, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Satan takes the ground of

His being Son, he does not call that in question; nor does he with the Christian: when he raises that question we have not settled our affairs with God. The place revealed to us is that of sons; redemption has taken us out of the old place and put us into that of sons. The question is what God thinks, not what we think. And God has *made* us *sons*. Then it is a question of conduct in the relationship, not of responsibility as to my state. I cannot be a naughty child unless I am a child; and the temptation of Satan here is founded on Christ being a Son.

Note that the snare and temptation and difficulty is how to walk down here in this relationship. See if your souls stand in faith in this place with God. It is the place of every Christian. It is another thing to be in the consciousness of it. Satan assumes it here, and says, "Command that these stones be made bread." It is a subtle thing; he does not show himself out as Satan. There is no sin in being hungry, and the Lord *could* turn the stones to bread. It is a wile of Satan; he comes with that which is "no harm." But *it IS harm if it is my own will*; for I am to eat and drink and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. If I am doing it merely because it is my own will, it is harm; but the Lord keeps the consciousness of His place as a servant. The devil uses the testimony of His being a Son (chap. 3:17) to get Him out of the place of a servant; but He had come to obey, and to do whatsoever His Father commanded, and He says, as it were, "It is not my Father's will to make these stones bread." The perfection of His place makes the will useless. It is not a long chain of reasoning, but if I, with the consciousness of being a son, keep in the place of a servant, Satan can do nothing. The whole thing was to get Him to do His own will, and that is the whole principle of sin. Having left God, we do our own will. What meets Satan completely is, that I am a servant, and servants are not to command, but to obey. I have no word from God, and therefore I don't do it. What is remarkable is, the Lord says at once, "It is written." That word of Scripture, a single text, is enough for the Lord, and for the devil. Satan has nothing to say; he is dumb, and does not attempt to take up the question. The spring and power of life come in: we are begotten by the Word, and we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Satan must either drop his will and show himself Satan, or hold his tongue, and he was not ready to show himself. The Lord is in the place of a son, and does not go out of that of a servant. He does what He is bid, and till the word is there, there is nothing to do; and that is *living by it*. He says, "I have no word from God about it." That is the character of Christian obedience; not a rule that checks the will, but the word of God producing it. Do you not like to do your own will in little tiny things, that are "no harm," as we speak? God has taken up this life we live in the flesh, and *He* has a will for us all the way along. In the wilderness, where there is no way,

there is a way -- a divine way -- that the vulture's eye hath not seen; but the simplest believer that follows God's word has this way, and lives by it. The word of God is that by which we live in active positive life.

Satan drops that and takes up another thing -- "Cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee," &c. (v. 6). It would have been His own will if Christ had done it. Satan takes up scripture, and says, "It is written," to make Him do His own will. But He says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." People abuse this often; they use it as the very opposite of what it is. When people talk of "tempting God," they mean trusting Him too much. Satan says, "Throw yourself down, to see if God will be as good as His word." "I have no need to throw myself down. I know He will do it when the time comes. Of course His word will be fulfilled. Why am I to see if it will be?"

In obedience there is perfect confidence in God; no uncertainty as to whether God will be as good as His word, but perfect obedience and entire and absolute confidence. I don't act to try if God will be as good as His word; but when the time comes, I have entire courage to obey. If I die, I go to heaven. So much the better. But we know little of that -- being martyrs, I mean. If you see some sacrifice before you, this or that to give up, there ought to be such confidence in God that you obey without the smallest question. He makes all things work together for our good. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. Whatever comes, I have entire confidence in the Lord's faithful love, and courage to do His will. What matter if the cities are walled up to heaven, if they fall at the blowing of a ram's horn? No matter what comes, it comes from the Lord for our good. He puts us in the wilderness to exercise us on these points; but I start with His will for the source of my conduct, and I need not hesitate, having absolute obedience and confidence in God.

Satan has no more to say. His wiles are done; and then he shows himself, and asks the Lord to take the world (vv. 8,9). He likewise presents the world to us, and says, "If you will follow me, the prince of it, you will get riches and honor and position." But everything is Christ's, and everything is ours -- "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Satan wants me to take it from *him* in this way, by my lusts, as something the flesh desires here; but "all things are ours: life, death, things present, things to come," &c. Then the Lord (v. 10) addresses him as Satan, and sends him off. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He knows flesh does not resist him; it is Christ, and he is off.

If you find something that has a claw in your heart, and you cannot tear it out, it tears your flesh too much, you cry to the Lord, and it is gone. It is positive deliverance from another, not progress. In cases where some certain

thing has power over the mind, it is not you, you hate it, and you cry to the Lord, and find it gone. Christ has bound the strong man. Could you say in all you have set about and done to-day, it was the will of God set you about it? There is weakness and infirmity in us; but when we get our eye fixed on Christ, all is joy and blessedness in Him.

Satan leaves the Lord, and angels come and minister to Him (v. 11). There was all the host of heaven serving Him, and so they are serving us: "Ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;" ministering to us in every way that it is God's will they should minister. We have to overcome; but there is the blessedness of this host -- He directing -- to help and strengthen us in the path.

It is a great thing to get the consciousness of the place we are in. Being in it, we are set to make our way through the world as befits sons in it. We have to learn not to have a will here and a will there, and we are exercised and tried - - and meant to be. The things that Satan ensnares the world with *offend* the new nature. I would just ask, Are you *prepared* to take the word of God as that by which you are to live every moment? Content in your heart to say, Whatever pleases God is for me? Are you willing? I don't ask if you *do* it. If you are not *willing*, you want deliverance from that which is between your heart and Christ being every thing to you. We are redeemed out of the power of the strong man, and if we resist, we keep him out. The Lord give us to see the grace of His giving us this place, and the way He showed how the heart is to be exercised in passing through this world. The time is coming when we shall find that every thing, where He has not been, has been folly and wretchedness!

J. N. Darby, *The Christian Friend*, 1888.

## THE LOVE RUG

One has said that the saints have swept so many things under "the love rug" that now it is so lumpy that one can hardly walk on it. Yes, how true. And so there is so very much trampling on love that poses as walking in love.

And now I beseech thee, lady, not as writing to thee a new commandment, but that which we have had from [the] beginning, that we should love one another. And this is love, that we should walk according to his commandments (2 John 5,6).

I have no greater joy than these things that I hear of my children walking in the truth (3 John 4).

## "A FULL CHRIST FOR EMPTY SINNERS"

Thoughts on John 6 (continued from v. 6, # 1)

The remainder of our chapter affords us a threefold view of this blessed one. Christ incarnate -- Christ slain -- Christ ascended. May we have grace to listen, to receive, and to worship.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." How simple, and yet how weighty and conclusive His answer to their unexpressed thoughts about Moses, as though Moses were shown, by the miracle of the manna, to be greater than the Lord. "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven." He was but a receiver of it, like the people themselves, who subsisted on it for forty years. It was God's gift, and despised, alas! by those who lived on it, just as "the true bread" was now being despised by their descendants. Our Lord does not pursue the subject of the manna. He does not say, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father did. No; He would not speak of the manna in connection with the Father's name, as though the import of that name were disclosed by the gift from heaven of bread for six hundred thousand men and their families for forty years. Was this more, in reality, than His feeding all His creatures every day and every hour? "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." So vast are the Creator's stores, and so easy their application in Providence to the creature's need. But the Father's name is linked with deeper wonders far. All the riches of grace are told out in the revelation of that name. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." What was that? The answer is at hand. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." The Father's provision for a dying world was to send from heaven His only begotten Son. His appearing here was as the lowly Son of man. The fact was of world-wide interest. All alike needed this bread from heaven, and all alike were welcome. Not to Jew or Gentile, as distinct and privileged, but to the whole race as perishing, was this bounty sent. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9); "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5:19). But the world would not be reconciled. It had no taste, no appetite for this "bread from heaven." There might be the momentary movement of the affections by His gracious words, leading some present to cry, "Lord, evermore give us this bread;" but it was only to make

their rejection of Him more manifest and decisive when they came to understand His meaning. But let us listen to His words.

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Dear reader, do you understand these words? Has *your* soul-hunger been appeased by this "bread from heaven," this "bread of life"? Has *your* soul-thirst been quenched by receiving *in* Him and *of* Him the water of life? Or is it possible that one who reads these lines should fall under the condemnation of the words next uttered by Christ? "But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me, and believed not." No language so cutting as that of rejected mercy, repulsed and slighted love. Here was this blessed One; His errand to this world nothing less than to be the expression of His Father's love, and the Savior of lost men. He bore His credentials in every gracious word that fell from His lips, and every action of His perfect spotless life. One of these, the miracle of the loaves, had attracted after Him the multitude, who from selfish motives had followed Him across the lake. They confessed thus that they had "seen" Him; but, alas! they "believed not." When they understood that He was the bread of life, they show plainly it was not for such food that they had come. They would have had another meal such as on the day before; but for the One who gave it they had no heart. He had come to save them, if they would, from a worse death than that by hunger, but they had no sense of their danger and need in this respect, and therefore had no heart for Jesus as their Savior; and they would not receive Him. Nor would any, with Christ shown to them thus and nothing more. These men were not worse than others. Their unbelief was manifest and declared, and He treats them, therefore, as unbelievers, as rejecters; but this is what would be the result in every case, were we left to our own thought of Christ, when thus seen as "come down from heaven."

Thank God, there is something more. Christ had not only come, as bringing life and love so near to the world, to men as such, that only by refusing the life and repelling the love could they hold on in their sins; He had come to fulfil the counsels of His Father's love in the sovereign gift of life, as shown in chap. v.; and of this He now proceeds to speak, though still as "come down" and here in humiliation, the object for faith to receive and appropriate. Such faith, it was evident, had no place in man's heart; but God could give it, and would sovereignly in His grace. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." How humiliating and heart-breaking for us, that in the presence of incarnate life and love in the Person of the incarnate Son of God, no one would have come to Him, no one have been benefitted by His mission, had there not been those who were given Him of the Father, and on whose coming therefore He could securely reckon. Man's will

would, in each individual, have held out against Christ, had not the Father resolved that He should have some as the trophies of His victory and the reward of His coming down from heaven. Alas that our deadness to such love should have called forth such sighs as seem to breathe in these words of Jesus! Is it not as though He were accounting to Himself for the marvels of human unbelief? As though saying, After all, it is but what I might have counted on. Nothing will affect man's stony heart, save where My Father's grace effectually intervenes, and on that I may securely calculate. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me. And then to see how perfectly He fills the servant-place He had taken. For any now to come to Him is the proof of their being among those given to Him of the Father; so He may well declare of such that He will cast none out. The heart to come to Jesus is the sure sign to Him, had that been needed, of His Father's gracious working; and therefore He is but obedient to His Father's will in receiving, without question as to the past, all who come to Him. "Him that cometh to Me, I will *in no wise* cast out." Precious words! Rich has been the comfort they have yielded to many an otherwise desponding one; but how greatly is their value enhanced when the coming to Christ is seen, not as an act of man's fickle will, but as the effect of the Father's drawing to Jesus of one given to Him in the counsels of that Father's love before the foundation of the world. Then, too, as we have just seen, the reception of such a one by the Savior, irrespective of every consideration beside, is not merely the fruit of His compassion for the sinner, but of His grateful obedient acceptance, as the servant of His Father's will, of the one sent to him, brought to Him, by the unseen drawings of that Father's love. All thus rests, not upon any fancied good in the sinner, but upon the Father's choice and the Son's obedient love. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will; but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." How He thus discloses that a far deeper and more important work had been entrusted to Him than that of satisfying Israel's poor with bread: no less a charge than that of raising up at the last day all given to Him of the Father, without losing one. Blessed Lord! to whom besides could this charge have been entrusted?

But, while disclosing, as above, that His real errand was one not depending for its issues on man's will, known already to be so perverse as in every case to reject the Savior, an errand, too, embracing the safe production by Christ in resurrection-blessedness of all given to Him by the Father, it is touching to find how solicitously He leaves wide open the door to any one anywhere who is disposed to enter. He may not, as yet, be able to account for the change in his own condition, as we have seen it accounted for by the Savior; he is not the less

welcome, or his final safety the less certain and unfailing. "And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

The great stumbling-block to the Jews at that time was His professing to have come down from heaven, just as afterwards, in Paul's day, the doctrine of "Christ crucified" was "to the Jews a stumbling-block;" and for precisely the same reason. Their pride disdained the being indebted to one so lowly; and they were so self-satisfied as to see no need for one to come from heaven, and much less for one to die on the cross, to meet their case, and be their Deliverer and Redeemer. Their case, as they thought, was by no means so desperate as this. They could not have denied their national subjection to the stranger's yoke, and a "great prophet" to have stirred up the people to crowd around the standard of some great commander who would have led them on to victory over their Roman oppressors; this would have been a Messiah to their mind. But for a plain homely man, reputed to be son of a carpenter of Nazareth, to profess to have come down from heaven, and to speak of Himself as the bread of life, engaging to raise up his followers at the last day; in other words, for the lowly Jesus to present Himself as the Savior of their souls, and the Giver of everlasting life, this was a deliverance and a Deliverer of which they felt no need, and for whom they had no relish. They did not hunger for such bread; they did not thirst for such life-giving draughts. "The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?"

In answer to all such cavillings, the Lord only again retires into His own consciousness of how the case really stood: "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." No one hungers for the bread of life so as to come to the Savior except as drawn by a sense of urgent need, which exists in none but those whom the Father draws. The prophets had declared of all who should inherit Israel's promised blessings in the latter day -- "And they shall be all taught of God." This Scripture our Lord quotes, and again consoles Himself with the assurance -- "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." All in Israel who had inwardly heard God's voice not only came to Jesus, but were overjoyed to do so. Take Nathanael for an instance, in John 1:49. It was these dealings of God with the soul under the fig-tree, these humbling discoveries of self and sin leading to guileless confession of total ruin, that accounted for any coming to Christ. But, as recollecting the sense which might have been put on His words, the Lord adds, "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father."

What treasures do these few words unfold. However souls may be taught of God, drawn of the Father, and consequently come to Christ, it is not that the Father is immediately revealed, so as to be seen. There was no incarnation of the Father, as of the Son. He abides in unmanifested Godhead. And only in the Son, who stooped to "come from heaven," and be here a man upon earth, is the Father to be seen. "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father." Infinite distinction between this blessed Son of man and all men on the earth, whither in grace He had humbled Himself to come. He had seen the Father. In the depths of that eternity in which the Word had been "with God," in which the "eternal life" was "with the Father," had He who now humbly speaks of Himself as "He which is of God," "seen" what no creature can -- "seen the Father." What unfathomable secrets of love, and blessedness, and glory are wrapped up in these short, simple words! Tread softly, O my soul, for surely this is holy ground! And here He was -- He who had seen the Father -- He was here to make Him known; He had become incarnate for this very end. He had taken flesh, come down from heaven, or He would still, equally with the Father, have been beyond the ken of mortals, beyond the creature's sight. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Who else could? And how else could we ever have known Him? How else could the light of the Father's love and grace have beamed into our dark hearts, and shed its lustre on our whole upward path to the abodes of which the Savior afterward said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." When there with our adorable Jesus, and privileged to behold His glory, how will there be connected therewith the witness of what He had known and enjoyed there from all eternity! "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

From these depths He returns, and with what perfect ease and grace, to the simplest presentation of Himself as the bread of life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life." How simple the way in which the Savior is received. Just as a hungry man with bread before him asks no questions, makes no demur, but eats and lives, so the Savior, with a hungry soul before Him, needs nothing to commend Him to such a soul's grateful, adoring reception. But where are such? Alas! it was the lack of all taste for Christ, the self-complacency which felt no need of Him that prevented these blinded Jews from receiving Him. And where is there an appetite for Him now? Precious bread of life He doubtless is, perfectly adapted to nourish and sustain divine life in man, even if that life be in its most infantile stage, the very earliest moments of its communication by grace to the soul. But without this, what is there? Death! A corpse has no appetite; it neither hungers,

nor thirsts. No more does the soul that is still dead in sins, dead to God. It is of the woman who seeks her happiness on earth that the word is spoken, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6); but it would surely be as true to say that he who thus lives is also dead. Dear reader, if fashion or pleasure, the world in any of its forms, be all we wish, all we seek, what can the bread of life be to us in that state? Insipid and distasteful indeed in our esteem. Christ will not help us to win the prize in any race of ambition or pursuit of pleasure. He who passed by the nature of angels, and all the gradations of human rank, to be a working man, a carpenter, and to be known on earth as these Jews tauntingly designated Him, "The son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know," He is not one in whom pride can find its food. And as to pleasure, what can they who seek it find in the One who "pleased not Himself," who tells us in this very chapter, "For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"? And yet, solemnly as the fact begins to declare itself, that between this incarnate One and those who surrounded Him there was not one thought, feeling, or motive in common, how graciously He continues to urge every consideration which might be adapted to produce in them an appetite, to awaken desires after Himself, the living Bread. They had referred to the manna, and covertly to Moses as the giver of it, in order to depreciate Christ. He returns to that subject now, to press on their attention the contrast for themselves. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." Wondrous words! The manna, testimony as it was of God's power and grace, and type indeed of Christ Himself, in its actual use did but nourish for a few years that poor, fleeting, feverish, forfeited life, which begins at our birth and ends at our death. A taper wasting from the moment it begins to shine; "a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away;" is it for this, or the support of it, or for the brief pleasure that it affords, that men toil, fret, weary themselves, despise heaven with all its glories, refuse or neglect Christ and His great salvation? Yes. It was so in our Lord's day on earth. It is so still. O that His words (thank God! "they are spirit and they are life") may reach the heart of some one who scans these pages; the words in which He contrasts with everything in this poor, perishable life, that interminable existence in unutterable peace and joy, that "everlasting life," which all receive who receive Him. Hungry soul! can you not feed on Jesus? As you would appease your natural hunger on the suited food, can you not find in Jesus what meets your entire case? what satisfies your every wish? Here is an undying life, an unwasting one; to "live for ever" is the effect of feeding on this bread from heaven. "That a man may eat thereof, and not die;" "if any man eat of this

bread, he shall live for ever." Has the worldling anything to compare with this? Do his most feverish dreams of happiness on earth embrace the element of unending continuance? It is just for him the one element wanting, the lack of which spoils all the rest. How passing wonderful that the One who stood before these Jews as the lowliest and poorest of men had the full consciousness then of having a life to bestow, to communicate, which death cannot touch, and which is, in its own proper nature, everlasting life. He is no longer here in humiliation, speaking such words of grace and truth as these; but He has not ceased to be the Giver of this life, Himself the fullness of the life He gives. "As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him."

To gather up a little what has been under review, we have here the "Son of man," one who is really partaker of flesh and blood, a man, conversing with the men who had followed Him across the lake. We have this Son of Man -- the sealed One of God the Father. He is the sent One, too; and the first thing for any one who would please God, is to "believe on Him whom He hath sent." He has meat, or food, to give, moreover, which endures to everlasting life. In the conversation with the parties just adverted to, the mystery of His presence here is declared, and many of the moral traits of that life of which He is the full expression, and which he was here to communicate, are either stated in words, or come out in practical display. He was from heaven -- the Incarnate One. He was the Father's gift, a character in which He delights in this gospel to speak of Himself. He was the true bread, the real and only nourishment for divine life in man, had it only been there. What perfect adaptation to man's need in this bread from heaven! He who is that bread gives life, moreover, as well as sustains it where it is. But where is it, alas! save as sovereignly bestowed, when all would equally have treated it with disdain? They had seen Him and had not believed. There is the heartiest welcome, an open door -- none refused; he who comes is no more to hunger; he who believes is no more to thirst; but the Savior has to take refuge from universal rejection by mankind, in the certainty that all would come to Him who were given to Him of the Father. The outflow of His own love in receiving all such, and casting none out who come, is thus seen as the perfection of obedience to His Father, whose will, not His own, He had come from heaven to do. How the heart bows in contemplation of such obedience. He who could speak of raising up His people at the last day, as though it were as easy and simple an act of obedience as any that He performed while here, speaks of Himself as having it in charge not to stop short of this. "This is the Father's will . . . that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day." Blessed Jesus! how safe to be confided thus to thee! But more than this, this safety appertains to all who see Him and

believe on Him. "The last Adam is a quickening Spirit." Though it may be of His resurrection-place that this is spoken, such is the fullness of life in His person, that the eye that rests on Him receives, with the beams of His countenance, that life which these beams impart. To believe on Him is to have everlasting life. The drawings of the Father, His secret teachings, secure that they shall come to Him who are the gift to Him of the Father's love. The Father Himself, undisclosed save to the Son (He who is of God), draws to the Son by that sense of need which is met by Him alone. He is the bread of life, not a perishable life like that of which even the manna in the desert was the food, but everlasting life. What unfathomable wonders these few verses disclose. The infinite grace displayed in the fact of the incarnation, how little is it pondered by our careless, frivolous hearts. And then, the perfectness of this blessed One in the place of humiliation to which He had stooped -- the absoluteness of His obedience, and the delicacy of His self-hiding, self-consuming service? To these Jews He had to speak of Himself, for they challenged His claims, and invidiously compared Him with Moses, and His miracle with that of the manna. He answers as feeling the reflection on His Father, not on Himself. "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." Blessed Savior! grant us daily and hourly to feed by faith on Thyself, in all the perfectness in which Thou wast displayed to the eye of God while sojourning in this vale of tears.

But our attention is claimed by deeper wonders still. The incarnation is one marvel and mystery and glory of the gospel; the cross is the other. Any third miracle to compare with these, the records of eternity afford not. There has been none such in eternity past; there can be none such in eternity to come. The Word made flesh! The Holy One made sin! But why was this? Was it not enough that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him? Had this been all, not one sinner of Adam's race would have been found on high to sing the praises of His Savior-God. Christ incarnate, had there been no deeper mystery of love, would have shown more than anything beside, man's hatred to God, and the utter hopelessness of his case. The blessed One well knew this when He came into the world, but now the proof was before His eyes. The more His intrinsic excellence, His moral perfectness displayed, the more manifest it became that between Him and fallen man there was not one moral quality in common. It is not, as others have observed, a question of degree, a race in which one immeasurably out-distances another. No; it is contrariety -- contrast -- of the most absolute kind. All that men value and seek, He declined and shunned. For all on which His heart was set, they had no relish whatever. Men seek their own glory -- He sought His Father's alone. Men do their own will -- His Father's was His only business. Men love those who



resemble themselves, and such as love them -- He loved where there were no qualities He could approve, and where there was hatred to Himself which thirsted for His blood. To think of One, who for the three-and-thirty years of His sojourn on earth never did one thing to serve Himself, spare Himself, exalt Himself; but for every moment of His life *was* and *did*, *spoke*, and *thought*, and *felt*, exactly as God would have Him! Let a man's eyes be opened, as they are, when his ears are unstopped by the voice of God's Son; let his opened eyes rest on this blessed person, as the divine records set Him forth, and what is the result? "Woe is me," he exclaims, "I am utterly hopeless now! Hard and vain have been my struggles to win life by keeping the law; but now, as I look on this moral picture, every trait, every line, convicts me of being exactly the opposite. I admire His ways; I could sit and gaze on Him, and wonder; and if I could be like Him! but, alas! every attempt deepens my conviction that it is all in vain. If Christ be what God delights in -- and He is -- He never can delight in me, for His ways and mine are further than east and west asunder. What is to become of me, wretched man that I am!"

What indeed must have become of any of us, had Christ only glorified His Father in coming down to sojourn here as a living man? But this was not the whole: He Himself assures us it was not. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." As come down, as incarnate, He was the bread of God, His Father's gift, but there was bread which He Himself would give, even His flesh, which He would give for the life of the world. Now this giving of His flesh was the laying down of His life, the yielding Himself up to death, that He might become to sinners -- to fallen, perishing men -- what bread would be to a crowd of persons perishing with hunger. It is in a slain Christ alone that sinners can find what meets their deep and solemn need. Well may our need be met where God has been perfectly glorified about our sin. Convicted by His life of total contrariety to Him in every moral trait, whither shall we turn but to the cross, where this same blessed One gives His flesh that we may live? Did His love go even to such lengths as these? It did. When nothing less than the death under wrath of a sin-atonement victim of infinite value could meet our need as guilty ones, or justify God in justifying us, His love was found equal to the emergency, and He gave His flesh for the life of the world. That such is His meaning comes out more emphatically in His reply to the next cavil of those who stood round about Him. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" was their carnal, foolish enquiry. He stops not to explain, but repeats and amplifies His previous declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53).

(Concluded)

*The Christian Friend*, 1875

## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

### CHAPTER 3.6: ACTS 10-14

#### ACTS 10:34-43

This passage is supposed by some to show that the Lord Jesus had not preached concerning a temporal kingdom; that is, a kingdom on earth over which Messiah will reign. Hence, John Zens wrote:

Acts 10:34-43 -- "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. . . that word was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism that John preached." (vv. 36-37).

In this context Peter is preaching the gospel of "repentance and remission of sins" to Gentiles (Luke 24:47). This word, however, had its beginning when it *first* went to the Jews. This word began in the public ministry of Jesus after John's baptism. Thus this passage clearly reveals a continuity between the message that started with Jesus' preaching and that was now coming to the Gentiles. This one gospel is called "the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

Observe that his conclusion rests upon an *assumption* and therefore has no more validity than that assumption. The assumption is that Acts 10:36, 37 means that there was only one thing that our Lord preached and therefore He did not preach about the temporal kingdom. Not only is that assumed, it is in conflict with the facts -- which we have previously considered.<sup>2</sup>

There is another assumption involved and that is that "preaching peace" means preaching about a spiritual kingdom and reign.

But besides this, the statement regarding "continuity"<sup>3</sup> must be considered. The peace of a Christian sealed with the Spirit, knowing that He is in a forgiven

1. *Dispensationalism*, Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 29,

2. See *Thy Precepts*, vol. 4, #2, pp. 58-64 (1989) and vol. 4, #3, pp. 87-96 (1989).

3. Charles F. Baker, *Understanding the Book of Acts*, Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1981, p. 64 says, "Next, Peter preaches exactly the same word which God had sent to the children of Israel. He was given nothing new or different to preach to the Gentiles." This evaluation is determined by his scheme to find the formation of the body of Christ in Acts 13. So "continuity" is used by him for a totally different purpose than that of J. Zens.

position before God, could not be true of a person before the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ, with the Spirit consequently sent down (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33). The sealed saint is now one Spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6). Such was not true before the cross. Our Lord expressly stated that apart from His death He abode alone.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

This is to be in oneness with Himself as one plant with Him, as grains upon the resurrected stalk. This is oneness in life -- resurrection-life -- which is not at all to say that saints previously did not have divine life. Of course they did, but not in oneness with Himself. This latter is "life in abundance."<sup>4</sup>

Luke 15 causes us to think of peace. It contains one parable in three parts and looks on to the son in communion with the Father, in peace, at His table. But Scripture is clear that it is by the indwelling Spirit, which before the cross the children of God did not have (John 7:39), that we cry "Abba Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Hence our Lord taught His disciples to pray "Our Father Who art in heaven. . .," which was suitable to their then state. Such address does not admit the same nearness that "Abba Father" does. Thus we do not find the Son addressing 'my Father Who is in heaven' (or 'heavenly Father'), nor do we find such a mode of address used, or taught, in the Epistles.

Neither the word "continuity" nor "discontinuity" is appropriate.

Christians individually considered and the Church as a collective body are called by distinctively Jewish names: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29). Hence, it may be dogmatically and, dare we say, *eternally* proclaimed: "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:11; 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17).<sup>5</sup>

With such arguments is the case to be proven? A true Jew is a Jew (an ethnic Jew) in whom the typical meaning of circumcision is true. It is not merely in the flesh, but in the Jew's heart and spirit. The passage does not teach that a Christian is a spiritual Jew.

And what does the fact that God is not a respecter of persons prove? -- that

4. See the articles on new creation in *Thy Precepts*, vol. 2, #2, pp. 47-57 and vol. 2, #3, pp. 79-87 (1987).

5. Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., "House Divided," Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, p. 168, 1989.

God is a respecter of persons if a material temple exists? That is, does this fact prove that there can be no future material temple -- no future kingdom with such a temple -- and therefore the O.T. prophecies concern the church? If that is what is meant, would it not be so that in O.T. times while a temple stood, God was a respecter of persons? But see 2 Chron. 19:7 and Job 37:24. Unless we are to believe that God was once a respecter of persons and then He changed, the last sentence in the above citation is, at best, irrelevant.

And now we come to Acts 10:43:<sup>6</sup>

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone that believes on him will receive through his name remission of sins.

You see how easy it is to find proof that the church is the subject of the O.T. prophecies? Does it not leap out of every page of the N.T.? And must not 'dispensationalists' be singularly dull to not see this abundance of (alleged) proof?

In reality, however, the O.T. prophecies refer to the millennium and its inauguration. The fact stated in Acts 10:43 is also true meanwhile. In this connection, consider Eph. 1:9-12:

. . . having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for [the] administration of the fullness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ: . . .

Eph. 1:10 refers to the time of the millennium when Christ heads up both the heavenly sphere and the earthly. But we now have an inheritance in Him (v. 11); we who have "pre-trusted in the Christ" (v. 12). 'Pre' what? We have trusted ahead of the time of the administration of the fullness of times. *Then*, everyone who believes on Christ will receive through His name remission of sins. However, there are many who have trusted in that name ahead of that time. They have "pre-trusted in the Christ" as Cornelius did. Thus, Acts 10:43 has an application now.

6. See O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 143, which need not be quoted.

## ACTS 13

### ACTS 13:27

... for those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers, not having known him, have fulfilled also the voices of the prophets which are read on every sabbath, [by] judging [him].

J. Zens remarked:

How can an understanding of the Old Testament that is designated as "blind" be taken as a proper hermeneutical [interpretive] method?<sup>7</sup>

The argument here is one dealt with in a previous issue of *Thy Precepts*. The Jews believed in a literal kingdom and killed the Lord Jesus -- therefore literal interpretation is supposed to be a false method of interpretation. However, I could suppose that the objector would say the literal interpretation would be correct regarding the prophecies concerning the birthplace, birth, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of the Messiah. Those who rejected Him expected a literal kingdom. They chose to believe what suited them (as many professed Christians do now). The Lord even rebuked the two on the way to Emmaus: "O senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26). Those who had accepted the Lord Jesus did so because God granted them that faith (John 6:44), yet here we see a defective understanding even so. The "hermeneutical method" was correct, but the application of it (by those who rejected Christ) to suit their desires was their undoing. They did not "believe in *all* that the prophets have spoken!"

### ACTS 13:32-41

And *we* declare unto you the glad tidings of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this to us their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second psalm, *Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee*. But that he raised him from among [the] dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke thus: I will give to you the faithful mercies of David. Wherefore also he says in another, *Thou wilt not suffer thy gracious one to see corruption*. For David indeed, having in his own generation ministered to the will of God, fell asleep, and was added to his fathers and saw corruption. But he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Be it known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this man remission of sins is preached to you, and from all things from which ye could not be justified in the law of Moses, in him every one that believes is justified. See therefore that that which is spoken in the prophets do

not come upon [you], Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for *I* work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe if one declare it to you (Acts 13:32-41).

Verses 32 and 33 do not refer to the resurrection of Christ.<sup>8</sup> The raising up of Jesus refers to His first advent, as Zacharias recognized (Luke 1:67-69).

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8. J. Zens, as others, says,

As we have seen, the Dispensationalists teach that Israel's real fulfillment lies in the future, when the alleged unfulfilled promises are confirmed after the rapture of the Church. But verse 32 points out that the "hope of Israel" has already been accomplished in the Resurrection (*Dispensationalism*, p. 30).

Commenting on the fact that Acts 13:32, 33 does not refer to resurrection, W. Kelly remarked:

Indeed it is surprising that any intelligent and careful reader ever understood the passage otherwise. For it is as certain as it is plain that, to God's raising up the Messiah according to promise and the prophecy of the second psalm, verse 34 appends as another and still more momentous truth that God raised Him up 'from the dead'. It is no mere reasoning on the verse before, no expegetical explanation, but a further teaching of the highest value. Hence it is thus introduced, 'And' or 'But that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return unto corruption, He hath spoken thus. . . ' Calvin accordingly is justified in his statement (*Opera* vi. Comm. *in loco*) that the word 'raised up' has a wider significance than where repeated just after. For it is meant that Christ was divinely ordained and as it were by God's hand brought forth into light that He might fulfil the office of Messiah; as scripture here and there also shows us kings and prophets raised up by the Lord. Acts 2:22, 26; 7:37, are clear cases of this usage of 'raised up' in the same Book; so that the Authorized Version in the wake of Tyndale is not safely to be defended in going out of the way to insinuate resurrection into verse 33. 'Raised up' is correct; 'raised again', might have been said, if the text had certainly pointed, as it does not really at all, to the resurrection. But 'raised up again' is unjustifiable. In any case the compound can only yield either 'up' or 'again', not both; and here we have seen on good and cogent grounds that 'up' is right, 'again' inadmissible, because rising from the dead is not intended in verse 33.

It would not have been necessary or advisable to spend argument on the question, if Dean Alford and Canon Cook, following Hammond, Meyer, and others, had not unwittingly played into the hands of enemies who ridicule this very misapprehension of Psalm 2:7, for which not Paul but his expounders are responsible. It has also been noticed that the addition of 'now' in the English Version of verse 34 is not only needless but misleading, as it might imply a previous turn to corruption. Here too Tyndale misled all the public Protestant versions since his day, even to the Revised one.

Psalm 2:7 is quoted then for Christ as Son of God in this world. It is neither His eternal Sonship, as some of the earlier Christian writers conceived, nor His resurrection, as the misapprehension of Acts 13:33 was used to teach. His birth *in time* as Messiah is the point, 'Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee.'

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7. *Dispensationalism*, p. 30.

In v. 23 we see the meaning of v. 33. Moreover, Acts 3:22, 26 and 7:37 say the same thing, namely, that God raised Him up -- not meaning resurrection. What God had fulfilled was not the O.T. prophecies concerning the kingdom, but the bringing forth of the Messiah.

#### ACTS 13:34-41

The claim is made that:

Further, the Resurrection is said to be a fulfillment of the "sure mercies of David." It is on the basis of this *recently accomplished promise* that the Jews are to repent and believe the gospel. God's dealings with Israel have not been "postponed." He has *at this time* fulfilled the promise "to the fathers for us their children."<sup>9</sup>

It is very bold to say that this scripture says that the *fulfillment* of the sure mercies of David was accomplished. It *says* no such thing. It is obvious on the very face of the text that Peter is citing *both* Isa. 55:3 (v. 34) and Psalm 16:10 (v. 35) to show that the Messiah would rise from the dead. It is a myth fathered by the alchemizing of the O.T. prophecies that Peter here, or anywhere else, was citing the O.T. to show the Jews that the O.T. kingdom prophecies were fulfilled or fulfilling. He was, as before, proving from Scripture that Jesus was the Christ and that the Messiah must needs rise from the dead. Of course, in God's purpose, the resurrection is a necessary element in God's eventual fulfilling of the sure mercies of David. Christ's work on the cross and His resurrection is the foundation of all blessing.

In v. 40, 41 Peter warned the listeners to beware lest judgment fall upon them as Habakkuk (1:5) had warned his hearers in his day concerning the execution of God's judgment upon them through His use of the Chaldeans. Our Lord had already warned of judgment upon Jerusalem (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 19:43, 44; 21:20, 24; cf. 1 Thess. 2:14-16). Worse, of course, will be the future judgment to fall in the time of Jacob's trouble when worse shall befall them than what even Adolf Hitler has done (Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1). There is nothing here that shows that the kingdom prophesied in the O.T. began at Pentecost.

Ed.

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## THE HOLINESS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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### *Preface*

May our Lord use the truth contained in the articles under this heading for the blessing of the reader concerning the will of God regarding separation from evil unto the Lord. That is what holiness in the Christian is. Holiness is separation from evil unto the Lord. Holiness not only involves separation from evil in the world, but also from evil in the *professing* church.

The first chapter treats a variety of subjects which form a necessary introduction to what will follow, if the Lord will. These subjects will be covered in this and the next three issues of *Thy Precepts*. These subjects are considered first because Christians who, for one reason or another, wish to promote a non-scriptural, loose standard for Christian fellowship misuse certain Scriptures to support their false notions. Since these notions are given a wide distribution, it was thought best to help the reader to see first their falsity so that any difficulty they might present, or difficulty felt from them, might be removed before coming to the actual subject.

Quotations of Scripture are taken from the translation of J. N. Darby.<sup>1</sup>

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9. J. Zens, *Dispensationalism*, p. 30.

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1. If you do not have this valuable translation, contact the publisher to purchase a copy.

## Chapter 1

# Clearing Away the Rubbish

## What is True Christian Fellowship?

God is faithful by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1:9)

The Christian fellowship denoted here is "of" God's Son, not "with" God's Son (which is taken up in 1 John 1). It denotes association together rather than communion with the Lord. This fellowship was formed when Christ baptized (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5), in the power of one Spirit, those who had believed on Him; they were baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

"He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). Each Christian, i.e., one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 4:30), because he has believed the gospel of his salvation (Eph. 1:13), is thus JOINED to the Lord. Just as a human body has members, so believers, as indwelt by the Spirit, are members of one body. "For even as the body is one, and hath many members . . . so also [is] the Christ" (1 Cor. 2:12); that is, all Christians on earth, viewed as linked with the Head in heaven by the indwelling Spirit, and including the Head, are here called "the Christ." Wondrous thought! Oh that we might really grasp what that means and how it should affect our practical association! Christians sometimes confuse having divine life with having union with Christ. Old Testament saints had divine life: they were children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7, 8). But they were not UNITED to the glorified Head in heaven. It was impossible for Old Testament saints to be united to Christ because Christ had not been here in incarnation to accomplish the sacrifice upon the cross, nor was He exalted to be the Head before He ascended.

The coming of the Spirit depended on the glorification of Christ (John 7:39; Acts 2:33). The baptism in the power of one Spirit UNITED those who already were believers in our Lord Jesus (John 7:30) into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), which is the church (Eph. 1:22, 23).

Union of the believers with the Head in heaven and with one another is divinely constituted by God. That "there is one body" (Eph. 4:3) is as true today as when it was written. This union is not in the local assembly as if there were many bodies of Christ. Neither is this union in any confederacy of assemblies. All persons indwelt by the Spirit, wherever they are throughout the world, are united by that one Spirit into that one body. Union is thus in the body, one body, united to the Head in heaven; and we should put this truth into practice. Because of geography, there are ASSEMBLIES spoken of in Scripture, though there is an important sense in which Scripture speaks of THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD on earth (Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 5:22,29; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 11:22; 15:9, etc.). There is but one divinely constituted church fellowship, the fellowship of Jesus Christ, God's Son. We need to practice this truth. This fellowship has been formed by the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit is a divinely made thing. When Eph. 4:3 exhorts us to use "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace," we are not to *make* a unity but to *keep*, i.e. practice, the unity already made. The wisdom from above is *first pure*, THEN peaceable . . . (James 3:17). The purity of the Christian fellowship must be practiced and thus the unity of the Spirit may be kept in the uniting bond of peace. It has been well said that "Separation from evil is God's principle of unity." If we would all separate from evil unto the Lord and be in constant self-judgment, we would be found gathered together by the one Spirit unto the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus meeting in accordance with the truth that there is one body; and thus keeping the unity of the Spirit (Matt. 18:20).

What has been said is hardly a complete treatment of the large subject touched upon, but it is hoped that it will encourage examination of these things by those not much acquainted with them. Since we are going to consider The Holiness of Christian Fellowship, it is needful to speak a little of what that Christian fellowship is that we should practice it in accordance with holiness.

We have spoken of holiness. Another has said, "Holiness is separation from evil; innocence, ignorance of evil. We do not say that God is innocent, but that God is holy; because He hates all the evil. . . and delights in the good. And God's new creation, perfected after His image, delights in what is good and hates all that is evil. God has produced this by His own power." (*The Present Testimony*, vol. 8, p. 327). We are living in an evil day, a time of declension. Power is desired by many. What constitutes spiritual power in an evil day?

**Power in an evil day is shown in separation from evil to the Lord!**

## *The Holiness of Christian Attitudes and Activities*

### THE HOLINESS OF JUDGING

Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate (Amos 5:15).

'Well,' one remarks, 'I know Rom. 12:9 says, "abhorring evil; cleaving to good;" yet, concerning judgment -- that seems contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Remember that Amos 5:15 appears in the Old Testament, not in the New. Besides, "God is love"; and also "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). I don't think it is right to judge people.'

In this section we shall see from God's Word that Christians are required to judge the acts of people. Rom. 12:9 says "Let love be unfeigned; abhorring evil; cleaving to good." If you confess yourself unable to abhor evil, you cannot prevent showing feigned love. Abhorring evil is absolutely necessary to showing unfeigned love.

Now, the cross is the basis for God's unfeigned love going out, but there all the light that God is (1 John 1:5) was brought to bear in dealing with Christ made sin. The order in the revelation of God's nature as light and love is that He is first declared light (1 John 1:5), then love (1 John 4:8, 16). This order, we shall fully discover, if subject to the Word of God, is not only consistent with the gospel but consistent with the very nature of God. It is consistent also with the revelation of God and is found in the very nature He communicates in the new birth.

As to grace being put first in John 1:17, it is because grace had to come in order for us to receive truth. Once saved, what does grace teach us? What is the *order* of spiritual learning that grace teaches us? Exactly the order of Rom. 12:9; abhorring evil; cleaving to good. Thus Titus 2:11, 12 says, "For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things. . ."

We see that the order is this:

#### 1. Deny:

Impiety -- wrong attitude toward, and relationship with, God.

Worldly lusts -- wrong personal conduct and relationship with others.

#### 2. Live:

Soberly -- refers to our personal conduct

Justly -- righteousness towards others

Piously -- right attitudes toward, and relationship with, God.

This is the educative value of grace. It does not include overlooking evil and refusing to judge. The grace of God never will make anyone think lightly of sin and unrighteousness, whether in ourselves or in others. True love and grace never set aside godly judgment. Let us now consider in detail the New Testament teaching concerning judging.

In connection with the subject of separation from evil in order to maintain the practical holiness of Christian fellowship, an objection is often raised by reference to the following passages: "Judge not that ye be not judged." "Judge nothing before the time."

It will not do to learn some small expression and not understand its true application and context, and then apply it to those who seek to walk in separation from evil to the Lord. Take an example which obviously makes this point. Some of us were asked to find the Scripture which contained the words, "a window in a basket". Of course, we all wondered what peculiar kind of basket that was. It turned out that when Paul escaped from one city, the brethren let Paul down the wall through a window in a basket (2 Cor. 11:23). The window was in the wall and the basket was let down through it. Our thoughts did not embrace the context and thus we did not grasp the true significance of the words. So it often is with the word *judging*. The passages that speak of not judging are not understood in their context; or, sometimes, one may prefer not to know the true meaning in order to have an easy-going path.

We may examine the N. T. use of the word judge (*krino*) by tracing the passages that use it with the aid of *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*, p. 433. This will help us to understand the subject of judging -- when to judge and when not to judge.

And Simon answering said, I suppose he to whom he forgave the most. And he said to him, Thou hast rightly judged (Luke 7:43).

And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? (Luke 12:57).

Judge not according to sight, but judge righteous judgment (John 7:24).

But Peter and John answering said to them, If it be righteous before God to listen to you rather than to God, judge ye; for as for us we cannot refrain from speaking things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19, 20).

Wherefore I judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God; but to write to them to abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood (Acts 15:19, 20).

And when she had been baptized and her house, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there (Acts 16:15).

For I, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as present (1 Cor. 5:3).

For what have I to do with judging those outside also? ye, do not ye judge them that are within? (1 Cor. 5:12).

I speak as to intelligent persons: do ye judge what I say (1 Cor. 10:15).

Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman should pray to God uncovered? (1 Cor. 11:13).

Let us now examine some of the passages used to set aside godly acting of those who desire to carry out the Word of God.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). Does this mean that we are not to judge what is suitable acting for God? No: Acts 4:19 shows this as well as 1 Cor. 11:13. Does it mean that we cannot judge when one acts faithfully? No, Acts 16:15 shows that there is competence to do that.

Perhaps it means we shouldn't judge when a person does something wrong. Not so: 1 Cor. 5:3, 12 shows that we must judge *acts*, and when those acts are of that class, i.e. leaven, those that call on the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 1:1, 2) must put it out or separate from it, as the case may require. We are also to judge that teaching (doctrine) is in agreement with God's mind (1 Cor. 10:15). Well, what does Matt. 7:1 mean then? It cannot contradict these passages. And notice this statement in the same chapter in Matthew: "But beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but within are ravenous wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather a bunch of grapes from thorns, or from thistles figs? So every good tree produces good fruits, but the worthless tree produces bad fruits. A good tree cannot produce bad fruits, nor a worthless tree produce good fruits. Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. By their fruits then surely ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20). If we may know them by their fruits, then we are competent to judge the character of the fruits (because we are taught by the Word of God) and we are able to judge when men are ravenous wolves. We are authorized (not given infallibility, because "man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart") to judge what is suitable to a good tree (the new nature that God gives) and what results from a bad tree (the natural man, whether he professes religion or not). God says so, and that settles it for

the obedient. Of course, our discernment increases when we feed on the Word of God. "But solid food belongs to full-grown men, who, on account of habit, have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

But what, specifically, does "Judge not, that ye be not judged" mean? It means that we are not to judge what we are not authorized to judge. Are we authorized to judge *acts* of persons? Yes, we have seen that this is so. Matt. 7:1, therefore, does not apply to acts. It applies to *motives*. We have no guidance from the Word on how to read the heart, except as it manifests itself. We must guard against imputing motives.

The mote and beam in the eye (Matt. 7:2-5) have to do with blockages of discernment. In Scripture the eye signifies discernment and thus intelligence. A man may have a mote, a small blockage, in his discernment. Someone who has a beam in the eye wants to help the one who has a mote. The beam blocks his vision. The beam blocks his discernment. *The beam is the attitude of judging motives*, and judging motives drastically affects discernment also, but we believe that the subject of Matt. 7:1-5 is confined to judging motives. And the beam, the attitude of judging motives, must be judged and put away, before one can see clearly, discern clearly, to help another with his mote.

But let us not use Matt. 7:1-5 to defend having motes in our eyes. We think, how could anyone be so foolish as to want a mote in his eye? Yet, in the spiritual sense, how often we do not want any "interfering" with what may, after all, block our discernment. Self is at the root of this. Matt. 7:1-5, then, has to do with judging motives, not acts.

1 Cor. 4:5 says, "So that do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord shall come, who shall also both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God." Again we see the same truth. The judging has to do with what is not manifest, i.e. the *hidden* things of darkness and the counsels of the heart. In the very next chapter the Spirit of God, using the same writer, tells us to judge acts.

James 4:11, 12 says, "Speak not against one another, brethren. He that speaks against his brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law. But if thou judgest the law, thou art not doer of the law, but judge. One is the lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and to destroy; but who art thou who judgest thy neighbor?"

We cannot divinely pronounce the end result nor determine it by our will or power. We are not God, Who alone is able to save and destroy. And this last expression helps us understand what this verse is about. It is a warning against

taking the position of God, Who alone is able to *pass sentence* and execute it. He alone reads undisclosed motives.

The passages concerning judging that are used to set aside judgment of evil are, therefore, ignorantly so used or else it is an effort to deliberately tolerate evil that the Word tells us to judge and purge out.

J. N. Darby remarked,

The words, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," are often employed to hinder a sound judgment as to the plain path of right and wrong. If a person is walking in that which I know by the word of God to be *wrong*, I must judge that he is walking wrongly, or give up my judgment of right and wrong. I may trust he may be misled, or that difficulties and temptations may have overcome him, and consider myself lest I also be tempted, think the best I can of him; but I cannot put evil for good, nor good for evil. There can be no right motive to do what is wrong to do -- a thing contrary to God's will. There may be ignorance, want of light in the conscience, and I may and ought to take all this into account, but I cannot say that the person is not doing wrong. Woe be to me if for any personal consideration I enfeeble my own sense that a wrong path is a wrong one. The saint must be very careful not to allow any sophistry to modify his submission of heart and conscience to God's judgment of good and evil. As regards the church of God, the Scriptures plainly declare we are to "judge them that are within, but them that are without God judgeth." This is no imputation of motives, nor habit of forming an opinion on other people's conduct, which is an evil habit; but the duty of not allowing evil in the house of God. It is positively commanded to us not to allow it.

Again, many apply this to judging whether people are Christians; but this is founded on a fundamental mistake. It is assumed that people are supposed to be Christians unless proved to be the contrary. If the faith of the soul be a personal thing, and I value Christ, this cannot be. I am not called upon to be volunteering to pass a judgment on the point whether such or such an one is a Christian; the person who blames me for saying such an one is a Christian, *is judging* that he is so of course, which is quite false. The apostle says, "*The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.*" Believing this, it is a joy to believe that any one has passed from death unto life. That is not a judgment: it is the rejoicing of the heart that faith in that person has brought him into the blessed place of a child of God. It is a most horrible principle that we cannot know who are God's children, Christ's disciples: it *destroys all godly affections*. If the children of a family were told that they could not know and ought not to judge who are their brothers and sisters, what would become of family affections? The Lord has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." How can this be if I do not know who are disciples, and towards whom this love is to be exercised? We must know each other to love each other as children of God, to "love as brethren". He who objects to judging that such and such are God's children objects to the love of the brethren; he is rejecting the spiritual affections on which the Lord and Scripture so much insist.

There is a wrong spirit of judgment: if I occupy myself needlessly in thinking of others, and expressing an opinion of them; if in questionable cases I ascribe, even in my mind, wrong motives; nay, if I do not hope in such cases that the right motive is at bottom, I am in the spirit of judgment, and away from God. If severity of judgment on the person, when I am bound to judge he is faulty, possesses my soul, this is not the Spirit of God. But to weaken the plain, unequivocal and avowed estimate of right and wrong under the pretence of not judging; or to deny the knowledge of one another, and mutual love among the saints, under pretence that we have not a right to judge, is of the enemy, and a mere cover to a man's conscience to avoid the conscious pressure of that judgment on himself. If I am to maintain a divine standard of right and wrong, I must judge those who do wrong to be doing so.

*Letters of J. N. Darby 3:312-314.*

Ed.

**4000 + 2000 + 1000**

The Scriptures do not give a complete chronology from Solomon to Christ.<sup>1</sup> This period is not completely chronologically specified in Scripture. However there are some synchronizations between certain Scripture accounts and the chronologies of other nations which have aided modern chronologers for the era from Solomon to Christ. This (presently) leads to a date for the beginning of Solomon's reign of 971/970 BC.<sup>2</sup> In his fourth year (1 Kings 6:1) he laid the foundation of the temple (say 967 BC) and he finished it seven years later.

The time from Adam to the foundation of Solomon's temple is marked out in Gen. 5; 11; 12:4; 15:13,16; Ex. 12:40 and 1 Kings 6:1,38. If you add all the years from Adam to the foundation of Solomon's temple, you will arrive at the sum of 2993 years. This date is arrived at from Scripture alone and does not involve the chronology of any other nation.

Notice that 2993 years from Adam to the foundation of the temple + 967 BC for the foundation of the temple = 3960 years from Adam to the beginning of the common era (say, 1 BC to 1 AD). If the Lord was born in 5 BC the time from Adam to His birth would be 3960 - 4 = 3956 years from Adam's fall. This will not yield 4000 years from Adam to the birth of Christ. Some have thought

1. Some Christians dispute this. They theorize that God would indeed give a complete chronology in Scripture.

2. This *assumes* the correctness of modern chronology.



of the 4000 years as 40 centuries, connecting it in this way with the number 40, a number associated with testing and trial in Scripture. Let us keep in mind that Scripture does not speak of 4000 years or of 40 centuries.

I would now raise a question. If there is any desire to have a 4000 year period from Adam to Christ, why has attention been focused on His birth instead of His *death*? The first man (1 Cor. 15:47) had his standing, as under trial, not up to Christ's birth, but up to His death. It was at the cross, not at Christ's birth, that the first man was judged. The great change occurred at Calvary, not at Bethlehem, precious as His birth was. "Now is the judgment of the world," said our Lord, in view of the work about to be accomplished.

It is difficult to date the year of our Lord's death exactly, as it is to date the year of His birth. For my purpose let it be, say, 5 BC. And suppose he died in 32 AD. There is another 36 years. Add this to the 3956 and the sum is 3992, a little short of 4000. However, in accordance with the present state of the determination of the BC date for the foundation of Solomon's temple, it is much closer to 4000 years than the time to the Lord's birth. Now let me emphatically state that I am *not* proposing a theory that there ought to be 4000 years from Adam to Christ's death. Scripture does not say so and it is no part of faith. But I do suggest that if there were anything to the theory that the trial of man ought to be 4000 years, the 4000 years should run to Christ's death and not to His birth. Why have a theory about the trial of the first man occupying 4000 years and end that period at Christ's birth, as if that trial did not continue up until the cross? I am merely finding fault with theories, not proposing one. And now we come to speculations about the date of the rapture. Where do these schemes leave those who are committed to the coming of Christ at any moment, and yet are speculating about the significance of 2000 AD? These speculations depend on the notion that there will be 7000 years of earthly history (4000 + 2000 + 1000) and that the Lord will reign for the last 1000 years (which, in any event, He will). Thus, you will see that the 4000 years are a part of this speculation.

Let us consider first the computations that are based on the date of Christ's birth. If you start from the year 2000 AD, and subtract 4 years for the Lord's BC birth and 7 years for the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy you arrive at 1989<sup>3</sup> But some calculators attempt to avoid the charge of *date setting* and will use words that introduce a little vagueness, such as 'approximately 2000' (but why?) and/or perhaps Daniel's 70th week may not be counted (why not?). In 1996 it could be said that the 70th week was not counted and perhaps the

3. This theory arose before 1989 and had the character of putting off the Lord's coming; or, of allowing a little more time here and yet it would be in the calculator's lifetime.

Lord was born in 3 or 2 BC (perhaps He was) and it is 'approximately 2000' anyway.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, the speculation can be kept up for a while since it has some vagueness in it. It is a setting of dates with some flexibility built in.

But if the 2000 years is to be counted from the death of Christ, that brings the rapture to, say,  $2032 - (4 + 7) = 2021$  AD, a result that is not looked for just now. In fact, if such a speculation were made now, it would be justly claimed that the speculator is putting off His coming and puts aside the immediate expectation. Moreover, such a claim would, in fact, be date setting. However, the speculator could claim that perhaps the Lord died in AD 29 or 30 or 31 or 32; and may have been born in BC 4 or 3 or 2; and that he only intends an approximate time. That is not, therefore, date setting? Furthermore, Scripture has not said that earth's history shall last 7000 years (or any other period of time). The whole idea is no part of faith that comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. So if the Lord has not come by 2001 AD, then perhaps such a new speculation based on the idea of 2000 years from the death of Christ might come into vogue. Then the same vagueness may be applied at the approach of that time to give some semblance to the claim that one is not setting dates.

Well, counting 2000 years from the death of Christ would certainly calm the excitement of the present speculation based on 2000 AD. One of the sad things about this is that when dispensational truth was recovered last century, it set saints free from the date setting of the prophetic system called Historicism (with its year/day theory, etc.) It is inconsistent to return to date setting, which thus far has produced some false prophets. May the Lord deliver our minds from all this fruitlessness and give us ardently to await His coming to receive us unto Himself; and to occupy our thoughts with that which is revealed in His Word.

Another wrote:

One is thankful to assure the Professor that there are thousands of Christians, much more intelligent in the scriptures than any he can produce from Oxford, who cherish the same hope in which the apostles lived and died, who wait for the Lord day by day, sure because of express scripture that He is coming quickly, but fixing no date whatever whether of year or day, yet satisfied that the exact time was purposely undisclosed that the believer from first to last might be always expecting.<sup>5</sup>

Ed.

4. Is the 4000 years 'approximate'? Is the 7000 years 'approximate'?

5. *The Bible Treasury* 9:77.

## SUMMER AND WINTER

*"Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" (Psa. 4:4).* What a blessed word! We lose considerably, both in reading and hearing, from not conferring with our own hearts upon the truth we may have received, or at the time felt to be applicable to us.

The ant is set before us as an example of one who prepares for the winter. Now we find that God provides us with provision for some dreary time that is coming; but instead of being like the ant, when the winter comes, want comes on us like an armed man (Prov. 6:11); it is not only winter, but we have no food, and all because we only enjoyed ourselves (which sleep expresses) during the summer. Nothing reveals this to us, if we at all judge ourselves, so much as the great difference between us in summer and in winter; in the former we seem to enjoy everything, we could almost imitate the lark; but when winter, the frost and pitiless blast supervene, all the supposed spiritual joy of the summer's day is gone, and we can talk and think only of the inclemency of the air which surrounds us. This painful discrepancy or exposure of our want would not occur if we really had stored provisions, suited for the exigence to which we are exposed.

The apostle could say that he had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content; he knew how to be abased and how to abound; he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. (See Phil. 4:11-13.)

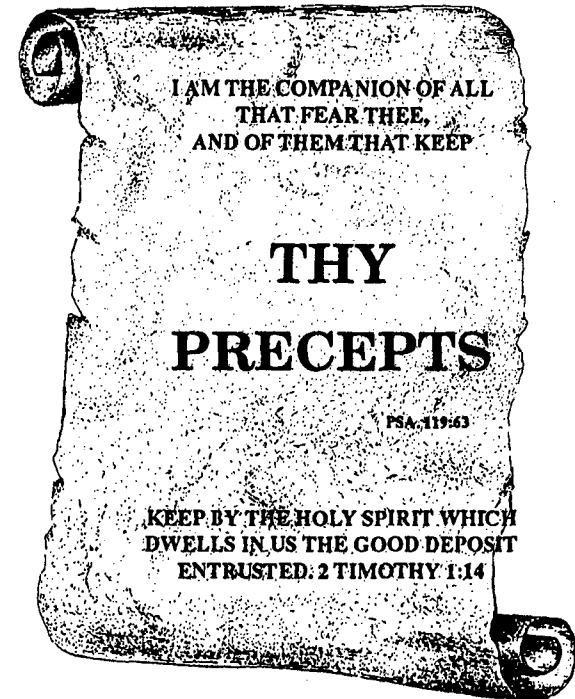
I believe the soul ought to say, when it takes in any truth, "Some day I shall want it, now let me see how it fits me, and whether I have it from God; in a word, that I have made it as much my own as the money in my purse -- as the strength by which I can do anything, or any other acquisition of which I have real possession." Better a soul should feel how unprovided he is in winter, than that he should lie down and try to slumber over it. It is very hopeful when a soul feels how it has neglected to provide for the day of trial; that if ever a summer again occurs he will not, through God's grace, fail to make use of it.

Receiving truth without pondering or self-judgment only leaves the soul, in the end, more barren, simply for this reason, that you weaken your appreciation of anything if you find that it only charmed you, but had no place of abiding use or benefit to you.

How happy one might be, pondering alone the thoughts and ways of our Lord. Stormy days will come; but if we are diligent now we shall only prove, in those dreary times, the truth and excellence of His counsels. A clean animal must ruminate; feeding well will not do, the other must follow.

Meditate and find the true applicability of all you hear and learn to yourself, and what one really learns (certainly in divine things) one never forgets.

*Things New and Old*



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## THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

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### THE PERSON OF CHRIST

The truth concerning the person of Christ lies at the foundation of Christianity. Apart from what He was, even His death on the cross would not have made atonement for sin. It is necessary, therefore, to be clear on this subject, being as it is a component part of the Christian faith. On this account the apostle John wrote, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine" (the doctrine of the Christ; *i.e.* the true teaching concerning Him), "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10,11). Such an one while claiming to be a teacher must not be regarded even as a Christian. The truth involved is both fundamental and vital, so that neutrality concerning it would amount to identification with those who rejected it. Another remark is needful. Our Lord Himself said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matthew 11:27). By this we are to understand that no one can grasp the mystery of His being, of the union in Himself of the divine and human natures. Acquainted with Him we can be, for He has also said, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knows me and I know the Father."<sup>1</sup>

There is thus no limit to the possible intimate knowledge of Christ Himself; but together with this, it must never be forgotten that none but the Father comprehends the Son, the mystery of His being who, when down here, was God manifest in the flesh. It savors therefore both of presumption and profanity to seek to penetrate into that which is absolutely concealed from all human eyes. The attempt has often been made, as church history abundantly testifies; but those who have made it, left to their own imaginings, have always fallen into dangerous errors, and become the blind instruments of Satan to scatter the people of God, while those who listened to or read their unholy speculations were often drawn into the vortex of doubt and infidelity. What is revealed may be pointed out for reception with adoration, but to proceed one step beyond is to forsake the light of revelation for the darkness of unhallowed reasonings.

There are three scriptures which in a very special way bring before us the glory of the person of our blessed Lord; they are John 1, Col. 1, and Hebrews 1. We may then, first of all, look at these in the order named. The very first verse of John's gospel brings Him in all His divine majesty before our souls -- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And then it is added, "The same was in the beginning with God." Doubtless this precise title -- if title it be -- is used in relation to errors current in the apostle's day. Into these we need not enter, for the term is simple, and means, as has been said, that He is, and is the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God. Let the reader reverently ponder this statement; for what does it imply? Nothing less than that He is divine, for He who was the expression of the *whole* mind of God could not be other than Himself God. No created intelligence, however exalted, could by any possibility be the complete display of the divine mind. Prophets and apostles were often used, though they did not always understand the messages they had received, to communicate parts of God's mind, but none but the eternal Word could be its perfect expression. The saying of the old writer is strictly true -- That only God could comprehend God.

The first verse, as often pointed out, asserts three things of the Word -- that He is eternal in His existence -- He was in the beginning; distinct as to His person -- He was with God; and He is divine as to His nature -- He was God. That the words "In the beginning" reach back into eternity is plain from verse 3, for the Creator of all things ("and without Him was not anything made that was made," whether angels, principalities, or powers, as well as men) necessarily was eternally existent. Creation indeed was the first expression of God, and that, as we here learn, was by Him who was the Word. In Him also was life, and the life was the light of men (compare Psalm 36:9). Of whom could this be said but of one who was Himself absolutely divine?

Passing now to verse 14 we read: "The Word *became*" (not was made) "flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." We may read in connection with this, "No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (v. 18). We have thus brought before us the mystery of the incarnation -- the Word became flesh. He who was with God, and who was God, became man, and tabernacled amongst men in a human body. But though His essential glory was thus shrouded from the natural eye, there were those who, with their eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, beheld His glory -- not simply His moral glory, but His divine glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. Thus down here as Man He was the perfect expression of God -- the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. Creation was *an* unfolding, a display or

revelation of God (see Romans 1:19,20); but the Word become flesh was *the* revelation of the Father, as He said to the Jews, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 8:19), and to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). What then do we learn from these statements, but that He whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal and divine Word, that He was God, that He was the Creator of all things, and that He stepped forth into time and became flesh, a Man amongst men, "very God and very Man"? And this, we repeat, is one of the essential truths of Christianity.

We will now turn to Col. 1. The apostle tells of how the Father "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light . . . delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (literally, the Son of His love); and then, after adding that it is in Him (in Him who is the Son of His love) "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," he proceeds to describe His glories. First, He is the image of the invisible God. If the reader will look at Genesis 1, he will see that man was made in the image and *likeness* of God; and this indicates a twofold distinction. Man was made in the image of God; our blessed Lord *was* that image. Secondly, man was made in God's likeness; but it would be derogatory to the Godhead of the Son to say that He was the *likeness* of God. Being Himself God, He could not be the likeness, but, as manifested in time, He was the image of God. Man was made in the image of God, for he represented God in the first creation. When Christ came, He, as the image of God, not only represented Him, but was in Himself the perfect presentation of God. Truly read, therefore, this one brief statement is the assertion of His divine claims. He was also the Firstborn of every creature, or rather the Firstborn of all creation. Let us borrow the words of another as to this: "He is then the image of the invisible God, and, when He takes His place in it, the Firstborn of all creation. The reason of this is worthy of our attention -- simple, yet marvelous. He created it. It was in the person of the Son that God acted when by His power He created all things, whether in the heaven or in the earth, visible and invisible. All that is great and exalted is but the work of His hand; all has been created by Him (the Son), and for Him. Thus, when He takes possession of it, He takes it as His inheritance by right. Wonderful truth, that He who has redeemed us, who made Himself man . . . is the Creator! But such is the truth." And then, that there might be no misconception as to the glory of His person, we read, "And He is before all things" -- before the existence of a single thing, when the self-existent One, God Himself, dwelt (if we may venture the words) in the solitude of His own blissful being. "And by Him all things consist;" called into existence by His creative word, they are dependent still for

continuance upon His power. And be it remembered that these things are revealed, not to be explained, but to be received, and to be received that our hearts may be filled with adoration as we think of the essential glory and majesty of Him who came into this scene as man, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

In the epistle to the Hebrews we shall also find, if in connection with another line of truth, the glories of the person of Christ unveiled. God, says the writer of this epistle, hath in these last days spoken to us by the Son; and he adds immediately, "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." So that we have in these few lines a very trinity of glories - Son of God, Heir of all things, and Creator. "All the vast system of this universe, those unknown worlds that trace their paths in the vast regions of space in divine order to manifest the glory of a Creator-God, are the work of His hand who has spoken to us, of the divine Christ. In Him has shone forth the glory of God. He is the perfect impress of His being. We see God in Him in all that He said, in all that He did, in His person. Moreover, by the word of His power He upholds all that exists. He is then the Creator; God is revealed in His person." But who, we may ask, is this glorious Being? It is no other than He who was crucified through weakness, Jesus of Nazareth, as He was known amongst men, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as depicted by the prophet; for as soon as we are told that He upholdeth all things by the word of His power, it is added, that it is He who made by Himself purification of sins, and has thereon sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This identifies Him at once with the Christ who died on the cross, and who rose again on the third day, and is now at the right hand of God.

There is, however, still more in the chapter. He is the Son of God as born into this world, spoken of as such in the words, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." As the First-begotten, when introduced into this scene, "all the angels of God" are commanded to worship Him. He is addressed even as God: "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." Once more He is pointed out as the Creator; and finally, His position is given at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. It is glory upon glory which is here unfolded, and all alike centering in and radiating from the Son, in whom, in these last days, God has spoken, and who not only became flesh and tabernacled amongst men, but was also, as we learn from John's gospel, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

But it is not only in such scriptures as these that the character of the person of Christ is revealed. Every page of the gospels tells that He was the God-man.

If, on the one hand, He was a homeless stranger, a weary Man sitting on Samaria's well; if He hungered in the desert, slept in the boat; if He groaned, wept tears of sorrow and sympathy; on the other hand, He wrought miracles, cleansed lepers, opened blind eyes, raised the dead to life, asserted His power over the winds and the waves, controlled the movements of the fish of the sea; in a word, He declared by His mighty acts that if a man He was also God. Hence he said to Philip, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (John 14:11). And again, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man" (rather, no other one) "did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24). And the testimony which He gave by His words and by His works during His sojourn here was confirmed and sealed by His resurrection from among the dead, for He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

There is even yet another line of truth pointing -- unmistakably pointing -- to the same conclusion. He received and approved the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and traced it to a special revelation from His Father in heaven. His disciples and others fell at His feet, and in their measure, and according to their light, rendered to Him what only belonged to God. Nay, He claimed from His own what could only be properly given to God. They were to follow Him, love and serve Him; and on His part He engaged to give them rest, peace, and eternal life; promised to return to receive them unto Himself, that where He should be, after His departure, they should be also. Take the one instance of the thief on the cross. In his penitence and faith he turned to the One who was crucified by his side, and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." The answer was, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42,43). That He was man was proved by the fact of His crucifixion, and these blessed words which He spake to the malefactor demonstrate no less clearly that He was also God.

And such is the professed faith of Christendom, and nothing less can be received as Christian faith. This must be ever insisted upon with uncompromising fidelity, and especially now, when there are not wanting signs of a rising wave of socinianism, which threatens to spread throughout the land, and which, as it is the result of increasing rationalism, is also the sure precursor of wide-spread infidelity, and, it may be, apostasy. The enemy is very subtle. He will even commend Christ as man, if he may but thereby raise doubts as to His Godhead; and for this purpose he chooses rather to use as his instruments professed Christian teachers than open adversaries. We need therefore, as not

ignorant of his devices, to be on our guard, and to cling to the precious truth with ever-increasing tenacity, that the Christ, who as concerning the flesh was born of the seed of David, is over all, God blessed for ever (Romans 1:4; 9:5). And it is also written, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15).

"Thou art the everlasting Word,  
The Father's only Son;  
God manifest, God seen and heard,  
The heaven's beloved One.  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,  
That every knee to Thee should bow."

E. D., *The Christian Friend*, 1886.

## CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE

Christianity substitutes obedience to a *person* for that of obedience to a *law*. In legal obedience a person fulfills a contract which he has undertaken. Christian obedience is like that of a slave to his master whom he loves. He does what he tells him without a will of his own.

If I bid my child do three things, and he only does two of them which he likes to do, and takes his own way in the third, insubjection of will is as much evinced by his disobeying in one point as if he had in all.

Christ's obedience is perfect and is our pattern . . . In the garden of Gethsemane He chose rather to have God's face hidden than fail to obey. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. There is nothing so humble or so unselfish as obedience. It supposes that we have no will of our own.

*Words of Truth* 4:94.

## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

### CHAPTER 3.7

#### ACTS 15:

#### THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

#### INTRODUCTION

We have now come to Acts 15 which has been a battleground. Its importance is evidenced by O. T. Allis, an amillennialist, giving to it over five pages. He remarked:

It is quite understandable that Darby and the Brethren seem to have regarded this passage as more of a liability for their parenthesis theory than an asset. They could admit only an analogy between the calling of the Gentiles in the Church age and the gathering of the Gentiles in the millennial age. But gradually it came to be regarded as of such great importance, that Scofield did not hesitate to say of it, as we have seen: "Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the N. T."<sup>1</sup>

1. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 149. Regarding the "analogy" view, the following comments are interesting.

Though the revised *Scofield Reference Bible* maintains the "plan of the ages" interpretation, it no longer claims that this is the most important passage for dispensationalism. And it has inserted the "analogy" interpretation surreptitiously alongside the other more famous interpretation. In the 1980 revision of his book *Millennialism*, Feinberg seems to vacillate on the passage. While leaving basically unchanged one favorable discussion of the Scofield interpretation, in another place he favors the analogy view of the earlier Brethren, saying it is "correct." Toussaint, writing in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament*, mentions the classic Scofieldian interpretation as a view "commonly held by premillenarians," but then he suggests the analogy view, which is presented by Sunukjian in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament* and by Elliott Johnson in the *Walvoord Festschrift*. While admitting analogy, all these expositors have consistently denied any real fulfillment of Amos 9 in the early church. Some other contemporary dispensationalists, however, have argued for some measure of fulfillment in the church which does not deny a future fulfillment of

(continued...)

Of course this is not the most "dispensationally . . . important passage in the N. T." For example, consider the importance of Rom. 16:25, 26, Col. 1:25, 26 and Eph. 3:9. Obviously, such scriptures settle most of these questions for those who bow to what they expressly state.

On the other hand, many anti-dispensationalists believe Acts 15 establishes the notion that (contrary to what the above three scriptures show) the O. T. prophets prophesied concerning the church. They believe that "the tabernacle of David" refers to the church. It is alleged that David's fallen tabernacle was rebuilt, or began to be rebuilt, at Pentecost.

### WHAT IS THE ISSUE IN ACTS 15?

The reason for which this meeting at Jerusalem took place, the question which was before this meeting, was this:

And certain persons, having come down from Judæa, taught the brethren, If ye shall not have been circumcised according to the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. A commotion therefore having taken place, and no small discussion on the part of Paul and Barnabas against them, they arranged that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others from amongst them, should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question (Acts 15:1-3).

The question, then, concerned whether or not the Gentile converts were to be under the law.

1(...continued)  
Amos 9 in the millennium.

Many other passages could be examined to show that dispensationalism is not a fixed set of confessional interpretations. Hermeneutical development is taking place. Obviously some hermeneutical consistency must exist in order for different expositors and theologians to maintain the name "dispensationalist."

*Bibliotheca Sacra*, July-September 1988, p. 263.

I suggest that the "hermeneutical development" is actually dispensationally retrograde in effect. The return by some to what JND taught on Acts 15 is commendable. What "dispensationalists" need to do is to leap-frog right over C. I. Scofield to dispensational truth as scripturally taught by J. N. Darby. If the Lord will, a long section in a book to be printed in 1991, *The Revival and Defense of Truth through J. N. Darby*, vol. 1, will give an account of his teachings on ages and dispensations. This will place the reader in a position to judge the great differences between J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield and what C. I. Scofield borrowed from JND to form his system.

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### JAMES' QUOTATION FOR THE ISSUE

Let us place Amos' and James' quotation of him side by side.

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith Jehovah who doeth this (Amos 9:11,12).

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, listen to me: Simon has related how God first visited to take out of [the] nations a people for his name. And with this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written: After these things I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and will rebuild its ruins, and will set it up, so that the residue of men may seek out the Lord, and all the nations on whom my name is invoked, saith [the] Lord, who does these things known from eternity (Acts 15:13, 18).

James quoted Amos as bearing on the issue before them; namely, were the Gentile converts to be placed under the law? Amos was quoted as bearing upon the answer to this issue.

Though individual Gentiles had been brought into blessing before, Acts 10 records the first instance of God taking out of the nations a people for His name (Acts 15:13, 14). It should be noticed that *this describes the character of God's work now*.

Note well how God's activity is described. He is taking out of the nations a people for His name, thus leaving the nations where they were. It is not a postmillennial scheme wherein all the nations become a people for His name. Rather, God's people are now taken out of the nations.

The answer to the issue, namely, should the Gentile converts be placed under the law, is this, as James said:

Wherefore I judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God; but to write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses, from generations of old, has in every city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath (Acts 15:19-21)

The answer is *no*, the Gentile converts were not to be placed under law. *This* is the subject, not that the church is the rebuilt tabernacle of David. Neither



Amos nor other prophets who spoke of Gentile blessing, who spoke of God's name being invoked on Gentiles, indicated in any way that those Gentiles should be placed under the law. James quoted the passage for *one point alone*, i.e., "and all the nations upon whom my name is invoked" (Acts 15:17), for the application of it to confirm what Peter said. Amos 9:11, 12 is millennial in fulfillment as are all the prophecies of the kingdom. Having clearly seen what the issue was, we may now turn to examine what has been imported into the passage by antidispensationalism that sees the church everywhere in the O. T. prophecies concerning the kingdom.

After Peter, Barnabas and Paul showed how God had wrought, James notes what Scripture had to say relative to the dispute and did so in a way so as to give a judgment. He did not say that God visited the Gentiles (through Peter) in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. He did say that "with this agree the words of the prophets." Call it an "analogy," if you will. Often enough the prophets prophesied Gentile blessing and he selects one quotation in order to prove it, stating that the prophets agree. What we find in Amos 9:11, 12 is millennial. It is quoted in order to prove that there is such a thing as Gentile blessing without circumcision being imposed. What Peter said, says James, agrees with this. Therefore there can be no ground of objection to Gentile blessing *now*; and they are not to be placed under the law (as the postmillennialist Reconstructionists want to do with all Christians).

Furthermore, James, by the Spirit, came to a judgment (v. 19) regarding the subject of dispute (v. 1). On the basis of the quotation he judged that the nations must not be troubled about circumcision. How so? The prophets who spoke of Gentile blessing did not say that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised. "Wherefore I judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God" (v. 19) he says. So he found that prophecy about the Gentiles in the millennium was relevant to the subject of dispute.

Observe that God's name has never yet been invoked upon the nations.

The four things written to the Gentile believer have to do with matters that pre-date the law. Excellent remarks on them are found in the *Synopsis* by J. N. Darby, vol. 4, pp. 40,41.

## THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

Using language typical of spiritual alchemy, R. Zorn says:

James, therefore, makes the building of the tabernacle of David, not a future kingdom, but a reference to Christ's present rule upon the throne of David as the rule began with His exaltation and now comes to expression in His Church and

its labors for Him. "Edom," too, no longer appears in James' quotation as it does in the original since, in consonance with the manner of James' interpretation, it has symbolic reference to the enemies of God's people, or the Gentiles in general, who were now by conversion becoming a part of new Israel. With this principle of interpretation established, we may also understand the rest of the prophecy as a reference to the Messianic age, which is not a future Millennium, but the present dispensation. Once more we have an example of symbolic language (verse 13) and concepts of religious significance current with the prophet (verses 14-15) by which he clothed the spiritual realities of the messianic salvation with its glorious prospects.<sup>2</sup>

Is that what Amos meant by what he said? Did Amos understand His words to speak of the Church? or of literal Israel? And were his hearers meant by God to understand by this a prophecy of the church? The answer is no (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:5; Col. 1:26). In this alchemizing system one would think that O. T. prophecies had no function for O. T. hearers: What benefit were the hearers to derive from the prophecies? None, if the prophets spoke of the church -- about which they could know nothing.

Wm. Kelly remarked,

On the other hand Jehovah has not yet raised up the tabernacle of David; nor is this at all intimated by James's quotation of the passage. Neither he nor any other apostle ever says that the church of God is the same thing as the booth of David. The whole system which identifies them is foreign and opposed to scripture. It is only the allegorical habit of the fathers which invented the fiction that Zion or Jerusalem, that Judah or Israel, mean the church. But this error lowers our own dignity, and deprives the ancient people of that hope for which God's providence reserves them spite of their actual unbelief. Assuredly God will bless the Jews by and by, and His name will be called upon the Gentiles. Even the most obstinate of Pharisees could not gainsay James's proof of this. If then God were pleased to call His name on Gentiles now by the gospel, who can deny the principle if he believe the prophets? Their own scriptures agree to this, and oppose the narrow-mindedness which would convert them practically into Jews in order to be called by His name. No Israelite could have conceived that God had then raised the fallen hut of David; but he could not gainsay that God spoke of all the nations on which His name should be called when that day comes. It was not inconsistent but in keeping with this, if as Gentiles they were called by His name now. James does not speak of this or any other prophetic citation being fulfilled at present. He simply quotes the broad fact from the Septuagint version, as agreeing with the principle generally laid down by the prophets that all the nations should be called by Jehovah's name. This is indeed the characteristic of the millennial day, when all Israel shall be saved, and shall inherit the remnant even of their bitterest foe as well as of all the Gentiles. Undoubtedly, when it is fulfilled, the subjection of the nations will be for ever,

and the kingdom of Jehovah over all the earth, though it be of course the kingdom of the heavens. The apostle cites this then only for present use in sanctioning the reception of Gentiles without circumcision, which it did unanswerably.<sup>3</sup>

The fallen tabernacle of David will be rebuilt at the times of refreshing and of restoring of all things, the things spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:19-26).

### WHAT ABOUT THE WORDS "AFTER THIS"?

It is a mistake to take the words "after this" as if Amos was speaking of the present calling out of the Gentiles, and that "after this" calling out, then so and so would happen. J. N. Darby is quite correct:

This passage is quoted by the apostle James in Acts 15. Here (in Amos) it is quite clear that it applies to the last days, and it has sometimes been attempted to apply it to the same period in Acts also, laying stress on the words, "After this." But I am persuaded that those who do so have not rightly apprehended the meaning of the apostle's argument. He quotes this passage for one expression *alone*, without dwelling on the remainder; and this is the reason, I doubt not, that he is satisfied with the translation of the Septuagint. This expression is, "All the Gentiles upon whom my name is called." The question was, whether Gentiles could be received without becoming Jews. After having affirmed this principle, he shews that the prophets *agreed* with his declaration. He does not speak at all of the fulfilment of the prophecy; he only shews that the prophets sanction the principle, that *Gentiles* should bear the name of Jehovah -- "All the Gentiles upon whom my name is called." There would then be such. God knew all His works from the beginning of the world, whatever might be the time of their manifestation.<sup>4</sup>

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the O. T.) has replaced the words in the Hebrew of Amos 9, "in that day" with the words "after these things I will return" as a number of commentators point out. For James, as J. N. Darby noted above, the Septuagint was sufficient for his use concerning the point at issue. The phrase "after these things I will return" has no bearing on his point. This passage is not an endorsement by James of the Septuagint in all its deviations from the Hebrew text, but he cited it as sufficient for his point.

Moreover, that phrase has another meaning than that Amos is speaking of the present period.

3. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, pp. 162-164.

4. *Synopsis on Amos 9*. Some before C. I. Scofield made a mistake about "after this". Cf. *The Present Testimony* 9:248 and W. Trotter, *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, p. 199.  
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And it shall come to pass, after I have plucked them [Israel] up, I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them back . . . (Jer. 12:15).

If verses 9 and 10 of Amos 9 are read with Amos 9:11, 12, the parallelism with Jer. 12:15 should be obvious. It is *after* God's governmental ways have done their work on Israel that He will *return* to them in blessing.

Many quotations of the O. T. in the N. T. are used as this one from Hosea 9 is used. It is in the gospels that we principally find a different use of quotations from the O. T.; namely, to show a fulfillment. A few examples are Matt. 1:22; 2:15,17,23; 8:17; etc. Acts 1:16 is one of the latest. However, subsequently O. T. passages are cited for a principle, or for something analogous. Thus, Acts 15:14-18 is not said to be a fulfillment. Such passages show that what has transpired is not inconsistent with the O. T.; or that the O. T. leaves room for what God is now doing, though the O. T. prophets did not foresee this. The passages themselves are millennial in fulfillment. See Rom. 15:8-12, for example, which we will examine in due course, if the Lord will.

Ed.

## COMMUNICATIONS

God would not have us always occupied with the manifestations of His grace to us in salvation -- blessed as that is. He would have us able to receive communications of what *He Himself is*. Many things hinder this. Not perhaps sinful things. It may be even *activity* for Christ: one might be so occupied with their work as to hinder this communion. This activity ought to flow from communion -- being so filled with what Christ is, that we must tell it out to others.

But, besides this, there are our failures, and God has to make them known to us; and to make us see what grace is in respect of such: yet this is not communion.

It is when we have such a communication of what He is poured into our souls, that we are led to exclaim "What a God thou art!"

*Words of Truth* 3:200.

## DO THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS BELONG TO THE CHURCH OF GOD?

The question for consideration is, Do the O. T. Saints belong to the Church of God? For myself, I at once reply in the negative, the O. T. saints do not belong to the Church of God; and further, I believe it is simply impossible that they should do so; for which I now, without further preface, proceed to state my reasons.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is that in which the subject of the Church of God is treated, and the apostle therein presents the saints of this dispensation in three different aspects.

1st. The Church or building of God, supposing the existence of a foundation, a corner and a head stone.

2ndly. The Body of Christ, supposing the existence of a Head, and

3rdly. The Bride of Christ, supposing the existence of a Bridegroom.

1. In the first place, then, the Church of God involves a foundation, a corner and a head stone, to all of which Christ answers. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, solemnly warns them on this subject. He tells them that there is but one foundation-stone, and that is Christ. It therefore behoved them to be careful lest they built thereon wood, hay, and stubble, which would only have to be burnt up in the great day, and the builders would have to suffer loss, though they themselves should be saved, but as by fire. Now, this foundation-stone was laid in the death and resurrection of Jesus; and this is the great point with me. The Lord himself declared, in Matt. 16, that on the confession of Peter -- "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God" -- He would build His Church. He spoke of it as a future thing -- "I will build my church" -- and it was not so declared until Israel, as such, had been in purpose cast off. From the time of this declaration Christ began to show unto His disciples that He must go up to Jerusalem, suffer many things of the Elders, the Chief Priests, and the Scribes; that He must be killed, and that on the third day He would be raised up again. Thus the Lord connects the building of the Church with His death and resurrection.

When this Church was first commenced on the day of Pentecost, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, Peter was preaching, and three thousand souls were added to the church; but what was Peter's subject? It was just a reiteration of his confession in Matthew 16, and upon which the Lord said He would build

His Church. He shows how that God had made His Son who had been crucified both Lord and *Christ*.

Secondly. There is a chief corner-stone, and that too is Christ. This stone runs up the side of the building, so as to support and keep together the whole, and thus Christ, the chief corner-stone, and all the intermediate stones being fitly framed together, groweth up into an holy temple in the Lord.

Then, thirdly. This building of God has its Headstone, and this again is Christ. He who was the despised and rejected of men, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, the one who was disallowed of the builders, has become the Headstone in the corner. But, how? By death and resurrection. God accepted the Lamb of His own providing, who came to do His will by opening heaven to all believers. God raised Him from the dead and seated Him on His own (the Father's) throne, and crowned Him with glory and honor, and thus He became Head of the corner (Heb. 2:9; Rev. 3:21). Who, then, are the intermediate stones completing the building of God? They are the poor sinners who have been saved by God's grace in this *day of grace* (Eph. 3:1,2) -- sinners dead in trespasses and in sins, saved by sovereign grace. They are stones rough and unpolished by nature, hewn out of the quarry of this present evil world -- stones dead, but made alive, and built up into a spiritual house, a holy temple built up on the only true foundation. The object of this building is for the habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). Once God dwelt in a temple made with hands, but now no longer so; for, oh, the wonders of His grace, He inhabits this wonderful building composed of sinners saved by grace.

Now please observe a few particulars about this Church of God, for it is a very remarkable structure, and its purpose is special. These stones, which were once dead, and which had come short of the glory of God, are now living and polished. They are fitly framed together into the corner and foundation stone, the object being that it might reflect the glory of God which has been manifested afresh in the face of Him who is at once the foundation, the corner, and the head stone. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4), and this Church ought, therefore, to be living in such close and intimate communion with Him that it might be changed into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3). Peter tells us that the object of this Church is to show forth the perfections, the excellencies, or the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Again, these stones are not only illuminated by being brought into association with, and into the range and sphere of, the light and the glory of God

as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, but in the Lord they are individually light itself (Eph. 5:8), and thus it is their office to be lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation in this present time (Phil. 2:15); but in the ages to come when this Church of God is completed, when the last stone is in its place, and all fitly framed together, it will be the vessel for the full display of the glory of God. It will be the very illumination of the heavens, in the light of which the nations on earth will walk (Rev. 21:23,24).

Again, these stones are living stones, and are therefore to live -- yea, to reproduce Christ. "For me to live is Christ," says the apostle (Phil. 1:21). Then once more, in this mystery are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but for what? To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10). Now do the O. T. saints belong to this building of God -- His Church? I reply in the negative.

First, because the foundation-stone was not laid. If, therefore, the O. T. saints belonged to this Church of God, it would have been but a castle in the air; and I suppose we have all of us learnt by this time that such buildings will stand but a very slight breeze, much less can they resist the gates of hell.

Secondly, because the Holy Ghost had not descended as now, so as to dwell in the Church. God dwelt in a temple made with hands, and the Holy Ghost's visits were but occasional. He could not have been given as at Pentecost, because Christ had not yet been glorified. "Jesus stood in the last day, that great day of the feast, and cried, saying, 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 given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified*" (John 7:37-39). Hence David's prayer, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," was quite consistent with the times in which he lived; but to pray that prayer now is not in harmony with this dispensation, for the Holy Ghost is now not an *occasional* visitor, but he is an *abiding* comforter, and the promise is, "I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee" (John 14:16; Heb. 13:5). It has been asked, did not God dwell in the O. T. saints? Clearly not. The Jews could not so much as approach God, because sin had not been put away and peace had not been made. There was a veil which kept them out from the presence of God, much less then did God dwell in them individually. But now that redemption has been obtained, sin put away, and peace made by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, the veil of the Temple has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the blessing has come out full and free. The Holy Ghost has descended as an *abiding* comforter, and to those who

believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior God, not merely the operation of the Holy Ghost in conversion, not merely the well of water springing up into everlasting life, but the rivers of living water are their proper portion, and the heart of God is not satisfied until they are all blessed to the full. Thus it seems to me simply impossible for the O. T. saints to belong to the Church of God. They were *individual* and *isolated* souls, saved by grace and the operation of the Spirit of God, but Scripture nowhere teaches that they were built together for the habitation of God, neither does it teach that they were *individually indwelt* by God. But those who contend that they do belong to the Church of God will have the opportunity of declaring the reason for this opinion.

*II.* In the next place, the saints gathered out of the world in this day of grace are formed into one body -- a body supposing the existence of a Head, which is Christ, whom God hath made Head over all things to the Church, which is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:20-23).

Now the Head of this body must exist before its members; for they are added to the Head and not the Head to them. Let us trace the formation of this body. We find in Eph. 1 the Head first of all seated in heaven, and that on the ground of death and resurrection. Christ died and was buried, and God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. In the Epistle to the Colossians, where Christ, as Head of the Church, is especially exhibited, His headship is founded on the fact of His having obtained redemption -- the reconciliation of the world and His having made peace through the blood of His Cross. So, too, the same thing is taught in Heb. 1 & 10.

Christ, then, is seen in Eph. 1 as Head of the Church, and the Church is declared to be the fullness or filling out of Him who filleth all in all. This epistle (chap. 2) also shows how the members are formed. In the first place, they are described as being *dead* in trespasses and sins -- their walk corresponding with their state, and they are the children of wrath. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith he loved them, even when they were dead in sins, hath quickened them *with* Christ the Head in heaven. These dead ones are made alive with Him, who is the life itself; and, more than this, they are raised up with Him; yea, they are made to sit together in the heavenlies *in* this risen and ascended Head. Our Lord Himself taught the same thing in John 12. When the Gentiles came desiring to see Him, He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it

die, it bringeth forth much fruit." So Christ, the true corn of wheat, died, and, in the resurrection, brought forth much fruit. Thus, then, I think it is clear that these members are formed by being added to their risen Head, and not by the Head being added to them.

Again, these members are not isolated, but they are members of one body. These grains of wheat, which are the produce of the one corn, are not in separation, but they are held together in one ear. The apostle's ministry was to make known what is the *fellowship* of this ministry. But the question is, how are they united into one body? They are saved *individually*. How, then, come they to be united together? It is by the baptism of the Holy Ghost; for, by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and have been made to drink into the one Spirit. This body, thus united, is the fullness of Christ the Head; and Christ the Head, and the members together form the one Christ, just as Adam and Eve, in type, formed the one Adam. For, as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. Every member is needful, and the head cannot say to the feet I have no need of you.

Further, the members thus held together are nourished and sustained from the Head in heaven. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:15,16). "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2:19).

The grand end and purpose of God in all this is not so much that we might be delivered from the wrath to come and be happy in heaven, but that in the ages to come He might have an object in which He can show forth the exceeding *riches* of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). And hence in this day of grace God's pattern man is Saul of Tarsus, *the chief of sinners*. This body of Christ is the one pearl of great price, which Jesus, the merchantman, beheld, and so loved that He gave up all He had, yea, He gave Himself in order to purchase it to Himself, and this pearl is to be the one chief and center ornament in heaven. It is to be the object for the display of all the grace and beauty of the person of the Christ of God, and to be the admiration of countless myriads of the heavenly host throughout all ages world without end.

I may remind you that this great mystery was hid in God from all eternity, and only revealed to Paul, whose special ministry was the making it known, and

to do which he prays that utterance may be given him. It was alone made known to him by THE LORD himself, but afterwards by the SPIRIT to the apostles and prophets.

Now the question again arises, Do the O. T. saints belong to this one body of which Christ is the Head? I again reply no, and that it is simply impossible that they should do so.

1st. Because previous to the ascension of Christ there was no head to which the members could be added.

2ndly. The O. T. reveals nothing about a body for Christ. Israel was a nation but not a body; there was a saved remnant in her midst, but they were but individuals and not a body.

3rdly. There was no life in and with a *risen* Christ in the previous dispensations, neither could there have been, for Christ had not died. The grain of wheat had not died, and so there could be no fruit. Concerning the nature of the life of those saints, Scripture, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is silent. That they had life I have no doubt; but what it was I do not know; certainly it was not the same as we have, that is life in a risen Christ. It is for those who say they had to show it.

In the fourth place, there was no Head in heaven to sustain the members, had they existed in the O. T. times.

And in the fifth place, there was no *Baptism* of the Holy Ghost, and therefore there could not have been one body, for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

III. In the third place, the saints gathered out of this world in this day of grace stand in the relationship towards the Lord Jesus of a bride to a bridegroom. Paul says to the Corinthians, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). Also to the Ephesians, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the Church: and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:22-26).

Now the bride supposes the existence of the bridegroom. It was not meet for the first Adam to dwell alone, and therefore God formed the woman for him, and the two were one flesh. So our God has been in the wonders and in the magnificence of His grace in this dispensation, taking out of the world a people

for His Son, which people are to be the bride of the Lord Jesus. He saw this treasure hid in the field and He gave all for her. He loved her, and gave Himself for her. Having loved her in the world He loves her still, and will do so unto the end. His heart is occupied with her, and He is sanctifying and cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, and He is quickly coming again to receive her to Himself, and he will conduct her to His Father's home, and will present her to Himself a glorious Church having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing (Eph. 5:27).

Once more the question arises, Do the saints of the O. T. belong to that which forms the bride of Christ? And once more I reply in the negative, because Christ did not exist as the bridegroom before His ascension.

Israel is indeed betrothed to Jehovah, but Jehovah is not Christ, though Christ is Jehovah. Jehovah will yet show himself to Israel as the bridegroom, as Christ will to the Church His bride for whom He gave Himself.

Abraham knew nothing of this, he was the *friend* of God. And even John the Baptist, speaking of himself said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this, my joy, therefore is *fulfilled*" (John 3:29).

Thus, then, I think it has been shown, that whether we look at the saints of this day in their character as the Church of God -- the body of Christ, or the bride of the Lamb -- they are distinct, peculiar, unique, and that the saints in days gone by, or in dispensations yet to come, do not belong to, or have their spiritual blessings and privileges. The saints of other ages may be, and will, I doubt not, be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and so they will indeed be blessed, and blessing will be full according to their capacity and power of apprehension; but that they will have the same blessing and the same relationship to Christ as the Church -- His bride, I do not at all believe. What, says one, are you a better man than Abraham? Oh no, I reply, I am but a poor sinner saved by grace. Well, then, why are you to have richer and better blessings than Abraham? I reply, I am but debtor to God's sovereign grace, and am thankful for all He gives me. I am sure, says a third, I am quite content to be as Abraham, and many more of those dear O. T. saints. Well, I reply, God is not content that you should be so blessed, and I for one, am therefore not content either. I would rather have fellowship with God in His thoughts and purposes about me, than be occupied with my own thoughts about myself. God will do all that is right, and He doeth all things well.

Edward Crowley,  
www.presenttruthpublishers.com

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## THE HOLINESS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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### Chapter 1

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## *Clearing Away the Rubbish*

(Continued)

### *The Holiness of Love*

And this is love, that we should walk according to his commandments (2 John 6).

The intimate connection between love and holiness is shown in Rom. 12:9, concerning which W. Kelly remarks:

"Let love be unfeigned" (ver. 9). Love is of God. Therefore it is of the deepest moment that it should ever be genuine and incorrupt: for the higher its source, nature and character, the more dangerous where that which is spurious usurps its place and name, misleading others and oneself under a fair but false pretension. It is not the same as the brotherly kindness of verse 10; and the reality of the distinction reappears in 2 Peter 1:7. On the other hand it is far from being that kindness to all men, the perfection of which we know in the Savior God as witnessed in Christ the Lord. Love is the activity of the divine nature in goodness, and hence is inseparable from that nature as reproduced in the children of God. Nevertheless this does not absolve them from the need of self-judgment that it be sincere and undefiled, seeking others' good according to God's will unselfishly. The letting in of hopes, fears, or objects of our own falsifies it.

Hence in the same verse the connected injunction, "abhorring evil; cleaving to good." It is a word the more needful in our own day especially, because we live in Laodicean times of sickly sentiment where latitudinarian charity abounds, the essence of which is a spirit of indifferentism toward evil, in particular evil against Christ. And the danger as well as the sin is the more extreme, because it is and has long been that "last hour" of which John warns so solemnly, the hour not of Christianity prevailing but of many antichrists, though not yet of the Antichrist. But where love is real, there is and must be the detestation of evil, no less decidedly than the close attachment to good. If the latter attracts, the

former offends and is often ill received in the world as it is. But the Christian must cherish the instincts of the new nature and be subject to God's word who has called him out to be a witness of Christ here below where evil meets him at every step and turn. The amiability which would shirk difficulties and apologize for sin is thus proved to lack the salt of the covenant of God, and will soon be seen to be honey and to end in leaven, instead of being the flour and oil which God looks for in such offerings.<sup>5</sup>

J. N. Darby has written about the difference between brotherly love and love, and explains that "there is no true love apart from righteousness."

## LOVE AND BROTHERLY LOVE

### 2 Peter 1:7

The common notion is that brotherly love is charity, and indeed its most perfect form. This is a mistake, as this passage shows. That brotherly love is a most sweet and precious fruit of grace is most true -- precious in the heart that is filled with it, and precious in its mutual development; but it is not charity. We are told to add to "brotherly love" "charity." The reason is simple: if brotherly love, brethren are the object, and though when genuine and pure it surely flows from grace -- it easily in us clothes itself with the character which its object gives it, and tends to limit itself to the objects with which it is occupied and be governed by its feelings towards them. It is apt to end in its objects, and thus avoid all that might be painful to them or mar the mutual feeling and pleasantness of intercourse, and thus make them the measure of the conduct of the Christian. In a word, where brotherly love ends in itself, as the main object, brethren become the motive and governing principle of our conduct; and our conduct as uncertain as the state of our brethren with whom we may be in contact. Hence the apostle says, "Above all these put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness"; and another apostle, "And to brotherly kindness charity."

Now charity is love; but will not this seek to exercise brotherly kindness? Undoubtedly it will, but it brings in God. "God is love." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Hence it brings in a standard of what true love is, which mere brotherly kindness in itself never can. It is the bond of perfectness, for God, and God in active love is its measure. Brotherly kindness by itself has the brother for object: charity is governed by, exists in virtue of the conscious presence of God; hence whatever is not consistent with His presence, with Himself, with His glory, cannot be borne by the heart who is filled with it. It is in the spirit of love that it thinks and works, but in the Spirit of God, by whose presence it is inwardly known and active. Love was active in Christ when He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers"; in Paul when he said, "I would that they were even cut off which trouble you."

Charity, because it is God's presence, and that we feel His presence, and look to Him in it, is intolerant of evil. In mere brotherly kindness, the brother being the object before my mind (and, if God's presence be not felt, we do not realize

it, nature coming in so easily and here in its most unsuspected and kindly shapes), I put man before God, smother up evil, keep kindness going, at any rate so far exclude and shut out God. Charity is His active presence though it will be in love to man; but it gives to God all His rights. He it is that is love, but He is never inconsistent with Himself. His love to us was shown in what was the most solemn proof of His intolerance of evil, the cross. There is no true love apart from righteousness. If God is indifferent to evil, is not righteous, then there is no love in grace to the sinner. If He abhors evil, cannot suffer it in His presence, then His dealings with us as sinners shows the most perfect love. If I have ten children, and they go wrong, and I say, "Well, I am to shew love to them," and I take no account of their evil ways; or if some of them go wrong and I treat them as if there was no difference to my mind in their well doing or evil doing; this is not love, but carelessness as to evil. This is the kind of love looked for by unconverted man, namely, God's being as careless as to evil as they are; but this is not divine charity which abhors the evil, but rises over it, dealing with it either in putting it away or in needed chastenings. Now if God were indifferent to evil there is no holy being to be the object of my love -- nothing sanctifying. God does not own as love what admits of sin.<sup>6</sup>

The reason that some of these thoughts may startle us is because we may have our brethren before us in a fleshly way; i.e., we are not really seeking their ultimate good. True love for one's brethren demands holiness just as much as true love for God demands holiness. Another has said:

We are often taken up with that which is an injury to many, regardless of that which is done against God. Many can contend earnestly for love to the brethren, and warmly resent failure in this respect, yet remain unmoved when the truth of God, on which it is based, is sought to be undermined. We cannot hold the truth, without love to the brethren being a consequence . . . There is positive declension in soul . . . when saints can be grieved for lack of right deportment to themselves from their brethren, yet indifferent as to right thoughts about God in Christ. . . . Let us beware of dishonoring Him, and of that which is as bad, if not worse, assuming a neutral attitude; judging the wrong ways of many who are contending for the right, instead of identifying ourselves with those on the Lord's side.<sup>7</sup>

The fact is that truth, knowledge, obedience, holiness and love go together (see Phil. 1:9). The love to the brethren, noted in the quotation above, coupled with remaining unmoved when God's truth is undermined, seems more like self-love than anything else. It is mere sparing of self; presenting *self* as kind and loving so as to be well thought of as a 'kind', 'gracious', 'loving' brother.

Often "love" is used to set aside holiness in associations. Another has said:

The semblance of love which does not maintain the truth, but accommodates itself to that which is not the truth, is not love ACCORDING TO GOD; it is

6. J. N. Darby, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 8:155,156.

7. *The Present Testimony* 2:30,31 (1850).

taking advantage of the name of love in order to help on the seductions of Satan. In the last days the test of true love is the maintenance of the truth. God would have us love one another; but the Holy Ghost, by Whose power we receive the divine nature, and Who pours the love of God into our hearts, is the Spirit OF TRUTH, and His office is to glorify Christ. Therefore it is impossible that a love which can put up with a doctrine that falsifies Christ, or which is indifferent to anything that concerns His glory, can be of the HOLY Ghost -- still less so, if such indifference be set up as the proof of that love. Compare also 1 John 5:2,3, and 2 John 6.<sup>8</sup>

Sometimes the one that truly desires to act pleasing to His Lord feels some tension between the demands of holiness and the demands of love. Here is a helpful word concerning this:

In this present day, and with the light of God's peculiar principles in our minds, we may be painfully perplexed, when we think, for instance, of the claims of *purity* on the one side, and of *largeness* on the other. The peculiar holiness of the house of God is to be maintained, and yet the greatness and abounding of divine grace is as surely to be exercised and testified.

Does Scripture afford a direct help in this difficulty, and cast a clear and steady light by which we may distinguish things that differ, and know our answer to each of them? I believe so. I read 1 Cor. 8:10; and there I see that the apostle would sacrifice *himself*, but not *God's truth*, to love. He would not eat meat while the world lasted, if it offended a brother; and yet he would not open the door of God's house to one who came from an idol's temple, even though he were a brother. He was ready to sacrifice himself, but not God's house, to love. The grace or largeheartedness that becomes saints called for the sacrifice in the one case, but holiness refused it in the other.<sup>9</sup>

We turn now to some brief comments on 1 Cor. 13.

If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, but have not love,

"The apostle begins with the superiority of love to the gift of tongues in any conceivable degree." (W.K.)

I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Without love, one merely gives forth lifeless sounds even if he speaks much of love -- because love is seen in obedience (2 John 6) and in acts (1 John 3:18).

And if I have prophecy

As Balaam and King Saul

And know all mysteries and all knowledge,

"an inward consciousness and not merely acquired knowledge" (W.K.) 1 Cor. 13:9,10 shows this to be hypothetical, but compare Rom. 15:14 and 1 Cor. 1:5.

And if I have all faith,

The gift of faith (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9)? See also Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3.

So as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Matt. 17:20

And if I should dole out all my goods in food,

This could easily appear to be love. Is it merely human philanthropy or is God the spring?

And if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but have not love, I profit nothing.

As Vietnamese Buddhists did? Fanatical zealots, not Christian martyrs.

Love has long patience, is kind;

Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:14; Col. 3:12,13, Patience in trial due to others, and kindness instead of vindication.

Love is not emulous of others,

cf. 1 Cor. 3:5. Love has not self as its object so as to surpass others. See Ezek. 28:17.

Love is not insolent and rash, or, 'vainglorious'

Love is not self-assertive and does not seek renown.

Is not puffed up,

Love is not filled with self-importance. cf. 1 Cor. 4:16,18,19; 5:2; 8:1.

Does not behave itself in an unseemly manner,

Love is not ostentatious.

Does not seek what is its own,

cf. Phil. 2:21; 2:5. Love does not act so as to need the rebukes found in 1 Cor. 6 and 14.

Is not quickly provoked,

Love is not sensitive in what touches *self*. (I do not mean love is unfeeling as to insult.)

Does not impute evil,

Where there is no evidence (Matt. 7:1-5). See 1 Thess. 5:15; Rom. 12:17. Beware of noting evil for the purpose of retaliation. See Rom. 13:10.

Does not rejoice at iniquity,

Aha! says superior flesh, at someone's fall. This rejoicing is a cover for self. Can a Christian rejoice at the fall of another? Oh, shame, my soul; such a thing is in thy very heart!

But rejoices with the truth;

2 John; 3 John 4; Eph. 4:15. "That false

8. *The Remembrancer* 16:80 (1907).

9. *Things New and Old* 3:190.



charity lets anything become of God's truth, rather than speak out faithfully, and disturb the robber in his prey." (*The Present Testimony*, vol. 3, p. 161.)

Bears or 'covers' all things,

Covers up? *all* things? Compare 1 Cor. 9:12 and Gal. 2:11. Do not yield on what is due to God!

Believes all things,

Love believes *anything*? Compare Acts 5:3. Love is not suspicious -- receives what is true -- whether the truth is convenient or not. See also Rev. 2:2.

Hopes all things,

2 Cor. 10:15

Endures all things,

Patience is the strength of love. cf. Heb. 12:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:10; James 5:11.

Love never fails, . . .

This does not mean love always works (gains its end), but that love continues eternally.

The greater of these is love.

Comparative degree. Greater in the sense that it continues after faith realizes its object and hope is swallowed up by sight.

Often 1 Cor. 13 and Matt. 7:1-5 are used as a mere tool (perhaps unknowingly) against some seeking to walk in holiness and love. If the reader desires to practice separation from evil to the Lord, he will find this to be so over and over. He will sadly learn that those who make such use of these Scriptures are amongst the first to "impute evil" to others when they are personally crossed, and fail to "rejoice with the truth." They become "quickly provoked". Such are lax about what is due to God and easily personally offended. Though pressing love, they often have (strange as it may seem) difficulty with grudges when personally offended. These things must be borne by those who would walk in separation from evil to the Lord. Love "bears all things."

The moral spring of the misuse of these Scriptures is, not love, but unjudged flesh.

Now, although we should allow for different stages of growth in the family of God (1 John 2:12-27), that is not the issue here. But while touching on the subject of stages of growth in God's family, let us ask ourselves this: are fathers allowed to be unholy? are young men allowed to be unholy? are babes allowed to be unholy? Of course not.

The true issue here is the false principle of allowing the flesh and its will to

work unrebuked and unchecked under the plea that it is "judging others" and "lack of love" to object to this false course. And when reaping time comes, we often seek to put the blame elsewhere. The wicked Ahab called Elijah "the troubler of Israel." You say that Ahab was not a child of God? Granted, but Ahab's flesh is in us and it finds comfort in blaming on the godly that just reaping. One of the first manifestations of the flesh in Adam after God called him from his hiding place was to blame someone else: "the woman *Thou* gavest to be with me . . ." (Gen. 3:12). He even dared to blame God! It is idle to think that the flesh in a Christian would not do the same thing. It is a characteristic of the depraved nature ever since Adam's fall.

In connection with misuse of these Scriptures we should notice that if a man's tendency is to looseness and unholiness in collective matters, we may be sure that he also tends to be and/or is loose and unholy in his personal and family affairs. The moral principle is this: "He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10).

May God our Father enable us to bring our children three days' march into *the wilderness* (Ex. 3:18), that they learn that there is no sustenance in this world for their souls. If we desire for them money, place, power or popularity, they will smell of the leeks and garlic of Egypt. How easy it is to allow them the parties, the social events, the proms, etc. and plume ourselves that we are generous and kind. Avoiding "being too strict" becomes our object instead of holiness to the Lord. "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psa. 86:11). "I am the companion of all that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psa. 119:63). A fragmented heart will reap what it sows. "God is not mocked." Think of *mocking* God! We mock Him by setting aside, or ignoring, His moral ways.

Do we not know that there are moral principles of the soul just as there are physical principles that apply to the body? Do you expect to walk off the edge of your house and not get hurt? Do you expect not to put a moral restraint around your household and yet no one get hurt? Restraint! We do not like that. Eli's house was swept away in judgment because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not (1 Sam. 3:13), though he admonished them (1 Sam. 2:23-25). David did not displease Adonijah at any time (1 Kings 1:6). Sad to say, Isaac's mind was on his stomach (Gen. 27).

Allowing the manifestation of the flesh to go unrebuked is a sign of having allowed the workings of the flesh in self. It is made worse by using "love and grace" as a cover because that seeks to make God the author of the indifference to evil. The moral principle of recovery is humbling, confession and self-judgment, certainly not putting the blame on others. The grievous insensitivity

and selfishness of blaming others is certainly not a fruit of the Spirit.

What a sad (but true) picture has been painted of what we are naturally. How could God ever have loved such a wretch as I! There is only one reason. He found resources within Himself and not in us as the objects of His love: He demanded full satisfaction for the outrage against His nature and majesty (and rightly so) and then in grace provided the Lamb of God. And our Beloved was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father and seated above. There is no name too high for Him. And, overwhelming grace, God has accepted us in the Beloved. I am accepted with Christ's acceptance. His acceptance is the very measure of mine. Oh, how we ought to walk for the glory of God the little while remaining!

I desire to add something concerning 1 John before closing this section, referring by several references to the way the truth is presented.

1. We are told that God is light (1 John 1:5) before we are told that God is love (1 John 4:8,16).
2. In 1 John 2:3-11 the order is this:
  - (a) Walking in obedience; verses 3-6.
  - (b) Walking in love; verses 7-11.
3. In 1 John 3:4-24 the order is this:
  - (a) Walking in righteousness; verses 4-9.
  - (b) Walking in love; verses 10-24. Note how v. 10 combines the two things.

In the *Synopsis* on 1 John 5, J. N. Darby wrote,

Love for the brethren proves the reality of our love for God. And this love must be universal, must be in exercise towards all Christians, for whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and he who loves a person will love the one who is born of Him. And if the being born of Him is the motive, we shall love all that are born of Him (chap. 5:1).

But a danger exists on the other side. It may be, that we love the brethren because they are pleasant to us; they furnish us with agreeable society, in which our conscience is not wounded. A counter-proof is therefore given us. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, if we love God and keep his commandments." It is not as children of God that I love the brethren, unless I love God of whom they are born. I may love them individually as companions, or I may love some among them, but not as the children of God, if I do not love God Himself. If God Himself has not His true place in my heart, that which bears the name of love to the brethren shuts out God; and that in so much the more complete and subtle manner, because our link with them bears the sacred

name of brotherly love.

Now there is a touchstone even for this love of God, namely, obedience to His commands. If I walk with the brethren themselves in disobedience to their Father, it is certainly not because they are His children that I love them. If it were because I loved the Father and because they were His children, I should assuredly like them to obey Him. To walk then in disobedience with the children of God, under the pretext of brotherly love, is not to love them as the children of God. If I loved them as such, I should love their Father and my Father, and I could not walk in disobedience to Him and call it a proof that I loved them because they were His.

If I also loved them because they were His children, I should love all who are such, because the same motive engages me to love them all. The universality of this love with regard to all the children of God; its exercise in practical obedience to His will: these are the marks of true brotherly love. That which has not these marks is a mere carnal party spirit, clothing itself with the name and the forms of brotherly love. Most certainly I do not love the Father if I encourage His children in disobedience to Him.

In addition to this, it would be well for us to weigh these statements by W. Kelly:

"For I rejoiced exceedingly when brethren came and bore witness to thy truth, even as *thou* walkest in truth" (3 John 3). Truth delighted the apostle's heart. Gaius was walking in truth. This indicated his soul's prospering. Kindness to the brethren, thoughtfulness about others, prospering in his affairs and in bodily health: what were they all to holding fast the truth -- "thy truth," and his own walking in truth? And such was the witness that brethren bore to him; so that it was exceeding joy to the apostle. Gaius sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all else was added. His heart was not set on his own things. There was no compromise of Christ, no making truth a secondary consideration, but he kept walking truthfully. It was a matter of plain testimony on the part of others. "Brethren came and bore witness to thy truth [or, that is in thee]." Had it been Gaius talking about it, it might have been questionable; for who has ever found men whose love for the truth was unwavering and unstinted - loud about their own fidelity or service? The more a man loves and values truth, the more he judges his own shortcoming in his service and his daily life.<sup>10</sup>

We can see also the Spirit's wisdom in giving both tests, and in the order in which they stand; first obedience, then love. You may generally find as I have done, that when Christians talk about one another, they are apt to give love the first place in their practical scheme of Christianity. Their confidence rests on their opinion that such a one is a most loving brother. It would be wretched indeed not to be a most loving brother; but what about his obedience? Is he, once self-willed, now marked by obeying God?<sup>11</sup>

The Lord give us grace that we, taught of God, may abound in love still more. Thankfulness always accompanies love. Anything else is but "good-nature", as people call it, a kindly benevolent spirit that does not like to trouble or be

10. *The Epistles of John* London: T. Weston, 1905, p. 412.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

troubled, and is willing to let everyone have his own way; and this is accounted love! May the Lord enable us to discern the things of the Spirit of God.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, we should note two other things. First, the believer should have put on the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14). Thus he will not be vulnerable to the false views about love that we have been considering. Second, in Rev. 1:13 the Lord as Judge walking in the midst of the assemblies is seen "girt about the breasts with a golden girdle." The angels who had the seven last plagues were likewise attired (Rev. 15:6). The loins are girded for service (Luke 12:35). The two passages in Revelation are connected with judgment rather than service. The requirement of divine righteousness held love in.

Ed.

## ON SOME HINDRANCES TO THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

The Bible is the only book that is not allowed to tell its own tale. No theories are too absurd, no doctrines too outrageous to plead the authority of its sacred pages. Given a pre-conceived notion, no matter how originated, perhaps through some unhappy warp of the mind, perhaps only the misunderstood tenet of another, and then to the Bible for authority and sanction. We need hardly say that the wrong consists not in regarding God's word as the sole and divine standard, but in perverting its words in order to build up false theories. If this were confined to fanatics and visionaries, it might be a waste of time to call attention to it. But it is peculiar to no ecclesiastical sect, to no class of persons. Some of the most lamentable illustrations of this deplorable evil might be found in people in other respects sober enough and not without reputation for piety. And on the other hand Christians less zealous, at least apparently, may be free from such vagaries in a general way through mistrust of themselves or merely common-sense, which in the absence of spiritual discernment may perhaps exert a salutary negative influence.

Still it would be rash and unfounded in fact to pronounce any position or any one wholly free from this snare, even the most enlightened, as it would certainly be invidious to give instances of such a general danger. We have, in truth, each one's peculiar infirmities, and not the less because we may be able at the same

time to see very clearly the failures of our neighbours. In sacred things, as in secular, men's minds tend to run in grooves, and the deeper their own rut, the less good they are fain to see in the tracks of other people. To use a less homely illustration, their infirm vision can see little else than that on which they are directly gazing. Thus it is that, when occupied with the interpretation of scripture, they leave out of consideration any special circumstances of time and place, people addressed, &c.; though one would think the rashness of such a procedure carried its own refutation. It is obvious that any book may be made to say *anything* when quoted with indifference to context. In natural things we would recommend the advantage of a cautious and reflective mind. But in divine matters, such as the right dividing of scripture, spiritual judgment is essential. It is the Spirit that searches the deep things of God. And the infallible securer of the Spirit's guidance is an eye single to Christ with self-judgement and humble prayer. But are we always sure that prayer precedes our conclusions? Does it not sometimes merely follow (if its aid be sought at all), and is not humility so ethereal that "it is gone if it but look upon itself," as has been well said?

Sound intellectual habits, though (as we have hinted above) they may be salutary as a check, will not do us any *positive* good in the things of God -- it is no question now of communicating to others, of which shortly -- but they may at least lead us to pause, and will be good servants, if only servants. They may enable us to see the untenability, perhaps the grotesque untenability, of other people's opinions, and of our own too sometimes, though these indeed we sometimes cherish with unhappy fondness, just because our own rut *is* so deep. Of course it is natural and in one sense it is right that we should hold our religious convictions firmly, because in fact we do not hold them as mere opinions, but believe that, in very deed, we have the mind of Christ. If they are merely *our* opinions, the sooner we drop them, the better. But let us be very sure that we *have* the right interpretation, or at least *a* right interpretation, as scripture is many-sided. Nor with looking to God is this such a difficult matter. We have, true Christians have, the mind of Christ, and the wayfaring man though a fool may read. He may have no exquisitely keen perceptions, no delicately balanced judgment, and yet he may know God's mind about him if he only be simple enough. So may even a little child. Indeed the confiding nature of a child is the very attitude that becomes us in God's presence, and in searching His word. Thus shall we have the truth positively. We shall not halt in sad despairing skepticism, afraid to hold anything at all, because we see the woeful delusions of others before our eyes, delusions born of rash assumption, and due necessarily to insubjection of heart. For is it not a fact that views are held arrived at by no spiritual discernment, but through some flaw of reasoning,

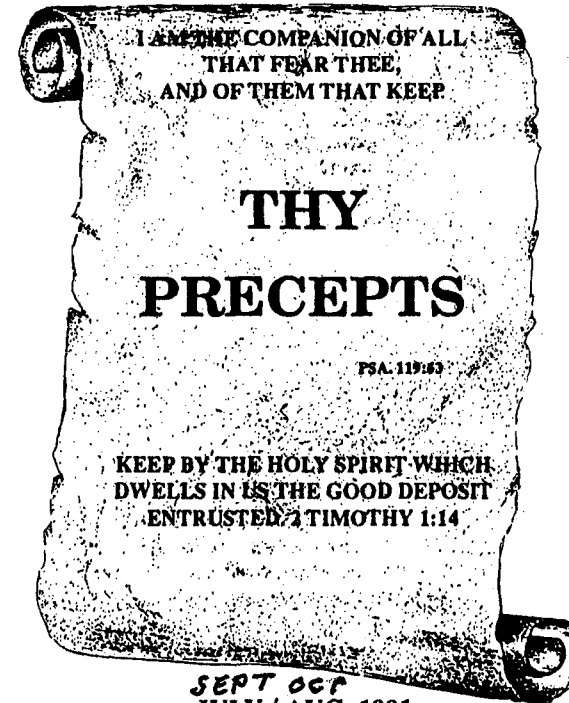
12. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

some mental peculiarity, perhaps because some favourite teacher holds them, or simply because such is our pleasure? Then, of course, when the position is challenged, some text has to do duty.

It must nevertheless be borne in mind, that this handling of the Bible, to which we call attention, and to which, as we all know, no other book is subjected, is due to the fact that it is the Bible, and thus indirectly a homage. It is God's word, that word which He has "magnified above all his name." The infidel who would subject it to his puny criticism, and the well-meaning Christian who tries to bolster up his delusive theories by sheltering them beneath its august sanction, alike pay it tribute, though that of the skeptic be involuntary. But even he feels its power. As one has said, "Men do not fight against straws, but against a sword whose edge is keen and felt." The Christian man, who through insubjection to the Spirit of God theorises on scripture, of course does not mean to fight against it. But he has not done with himself, he has still some confidence in his own powers, and if he be not kept back by natural modesty or natural skepticism, he will propound rare theories. We may acknowledge the paramount authority of God's word, but, we repeat, without humble dependence we may drift into any unknown sea of error. In the extreme case it is "wresting scripture to our own destruction."

We have not been concerned so much with the exposition of the Bible for the edification of others. This is undoubtedly a different matter. The "several ability," which is certainly not necessary to our having the "mind of Christ," and feeding on the word for ourselves, still less in any devotion and meditation, is used by God in the function of ministry. To suppose it otherwise is to run in the teeth of *facts*, and savours of religious fanaticism. As radicalism is never so rampant as among the inexperienced who obey its promptings with characteristic fervour, it is also never so repulsive as in the things of God, on the principle of *optimi corruptio pessima*. Nay, ministry is a distinct gift, and the man who can enjoy the truth for himself is not necessarily able to expound it to others. Such are generally endowed with natural clearness of perception, as well as breadth of mind, and soundness of judgment. But such need, in even greater measure, that humility and prayerfulness, without which the most brilliant natural abilities are worse than useless.

In fine, men are apt to err in two antagonistic ways, the skeptical and the fanatical. For the latter this paper is specially intended. To the former the inadequacy of mere human cleverness needs specially to be presented. But, unless we beware of both evils, pride of intellect and fanatical ignorance, we shall garner but little grain, in the whirl of barren chaff to which only we can liken the thoughts of men on the word of God. X. *The Bible Treasury*, vol. 13.



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## THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

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### THE WORTHINESS OF THE LAMB.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living-ones and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:11,12).

Rich and blessed as are the associations in the mind of every saint of God connected with Christ's title of "*the Lamb*," it may be questioned whether that which stamps it, in the mind of Heaven, with its peculiar significance, has, so fully as it ought, its place and bearing in the soul. The emphatic exclamation of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God!" indicates the grace and beauty and lowly virtues of Him who bears this name, and marks His title to the adoring worship of our hearts. But this title, as borne by the same blessed One, *on high*, unfolded in the book of Revelation, brings us associated with other glories and other scenes than those that, it is likely, met the holy musings of John, when he gazed on the blessed JESUS walking by the banks of Jordan, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

This title, familiar as it is to our hearts, is almost exclusively connected with the book of Revelation; and is unquestionably designed to indicate the special character in which the Bearer of it is there presented. The observance of this may present a useful key to the understanding of that wondrous book, which may be called "*the book of the rights of the Lamb*;" for, certainly, it may be affirmed, that the whole of the details and principles of the prophetic part of it are knit up with this title; while, on its first occurrence in this book, we see *heaven, earth*, and all *redeemed creation*, roused by it in joy to accord to Him who bears it, this seven-fold ascription of praise: "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." He *alone* is declared *worthy* to receive the whole tribute of the universe and to become the Center of its universal praise.

There is, doubtless, a marked difference in the presentation of "the Lamb slain" in this book, and in His presentation by the same title in John 1:29,36, the

only other place in Scripture in which *as a title* it occurs.<sup>1</sup>

In the expressions of John, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" we see the *Person* of the Lord Jesus, as God's Lamb, presented to the eye of faith, as the substantiation of all that had been prefigured in the way of atonement. He is here pointed out as the full and perfect provision of God for man's need as a sinner, and the only basis on which the mercy of a holy God can restore the guilt-stricken and polluted to His presence. This, there can be no doubt, was the immediate bearing of John's pointing to JESUS, as "the Lamb of God." But in the breadth of the terms, "*that taketh away the sin of the world,*" it seems as if the Spirit would lead us on beyond the specialty of individual redemption, to the ultimate purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God -- in the destruction of the works of the devil -- to that point in the counsels of God, in which the blessed stream of redemption reaches its limit; and creation, brought back from "being subject to vanity," is again made capable of receiving and reflecting back the rays of its Creator's goodness and glory, rejoicing in "the glorious liberty [or rather, 'liberty of the glory'] of the children of God" (Rom. 8).

The Lamb *slain* in sacrifice, from Abel downward, had declared on the part of the righteous holiness of God, that "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" and on the part of the love of God, the spotlessness of the victim and its being as a burnt offering "A sweet savor unto the Lord," declared as fully His delight in the perfectness of JESUS -- that "Lamb without blemish and without spot" -- and of His satisfaction in His wondrous, perfect, atoning work. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor." "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But in the Revelation, the "Lamb slain" is not presented so much as God's provision of love to meet a sinner's need, or as the perfect Doer of His *Father's* will, as He is shown, by His rejection and suffering on earth, to have gained a title in heaven to universal homage, and to be the holder of universal power. In the revelations of God to His church, things in reference to JESUS have passed beyond the limit of grace and atonement now; and we are called to contemplate what are the righteous claims of this suffering and rejected Victim, as recognized on high. It is true that the heart of a saint knows Him still as "the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The *cross* abides still in all its wondrous mystery of love, as the attractive point of mercy to meet a sinner's heart. "Pentecost," as the pledge and seal of the resurrection and

ascension-glory of the church's Head, tells, by the presence of the abiding "Comforter," of *present union* as well as of coming glory as the portion of the church. But beyond what the Gospels reveal of incarnation and suffering; and the Epistles of grace untold, flowing down as the church's present portion, from her Head in glory, and presenting the brightness of her hope in being "for ever with the Lord," -- we have, in this book, the lifting up of a curtain, and showing things beyond the Spirit's direct testimony in the church. First, JESUS is shown in the position of rebuke and chastening, through the hour of the church's decadence, as His witness in the world, until rejection comes of that which was wholly unworthy of His care. And then, in the prophetic part, it is not so much the Spirit down here testifying of Christ, as seen on high, in close connection with "the Lamb," who is in the midst of the throne; and as the Spirit of prophecy telling indeed of the progress of things here on earth; but that not so much in regard to the events themselves, as in connection with heavenly counsels, which result in the vindication of the claims of "the Lamb." The progress of evil is noticed; but it is noticed only as giving occasion to the introduction of the hand of power by which "the mystery of God" is finished. The opening of the seals, and the sounding of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials -- whatever may be their effects on the earth -- have for their one central object, either the declaration or the enforcing by the hand of Divine Power, of the claims of the Lamb. It is, in a word, the blessed accomplishment, *in power*, of that word in Philippians, "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name that is above every name; that at the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ* is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Though there is this difference in the aspect in which this result of the Lord's humiliation and death are presented -- here it is the *reward* of Christ's perfect obedience to the Father's will. In the Revelation it is the vindication, on the part of God, of the claims of HIM, who, as to man, had been but a suffering Victim -- "led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before His shearers, so He opened not His mouth." Therefore, necessarily, judgement, in this vindication, falls on the world that had inflicted His injuries, and still resists His claims. The most cursory study of the book of Revelation must teach us that its object is not so much to unfold the character and fruits of redemption in relation to those who are its happy subjects, as to present the rights and claims of Him by whom redemption was, in "the travail of His soul," accomplished -- His right, through redemption, to "inherit all things." And therefore it is, throughout, that Christ, as "the Lamb," in the midst of the throne, and the actings of the throne itself, are in connection with the earth and creation, rather than directly with the church.

1. Nowhere else, indeed, is the *exact* expression; for in John 1:29,26, it is "*ho amnos*;" but in the Revelation throughout, it is "*to arnion*." Acts 8:32, and 1 Pet. 1:19, are comparisons, expressive of a blessed moral truth, but not applied by way of *title*.

The fifth chapter, in which this worthiness of the Lamb is proclaimed, appears to give the entire outline of the prophetic part of the book. Nothing, as it seems, in accomplishment, can go beyond this. Heaven, earth, and all redeemed creation, in this anticipative song, recognize the full claims of Christ's mediatorial glory, as the "Lamb that was slain;" and, in accomplishment, we are brought by it down to the point, "When He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power;" and when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto *the Lamb* for ever and ever."

In the challenge which brings the Lamb upon the scene, however symbolic the action, there seems to be but little difficulty in ascertaining the simple truth conveyed. The question -- "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" is designed to present, in strong relief, and in contrast with the hopelessness that springs from all besides, the worthiness and the power of Christ to enter into, and declare the whole mystery of God concerning the course of evil in this world, and its final redemption from its power. And more than this, to show, on whose behalf it is, and on account of whose worthiness it is, that creation shall be delivered from the thrall of Satan, and the tribute of its praise be restored to Him whose right it is.

"No man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." The redemption of God's inheritance from the power of Satan, is no work for man. Neither is it in the creature's power to declare through what appliances of power and wisdom the whole craft and power of Satan should be set aside. But there is ONE and *One only* found, to accept the challenge; and thus is relieved the oppressive sorrow that hung upon the prophet's heart: "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon; and one of the elders saith unto me, *Weep not*; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living-ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a LAMB as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." Here the mystery is solved. In *redemption* Christ has obtained a title to be the whole creation's LORD, as well as the church's blessed Head. As the suffering, meek, and unresisting Victim, Heaven accords to Him the title to universal power and praise. Already -- though hidden in the throne -- He is manifested to the eye of faith, as being possessed of the perfection of power -- "having

seven horns" -- and also of the controlling, all-pervading energy of God's universal Spirit -- "having seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." Here, therefore, there is ONE equal to solve this problem: unsolvable by all besides; and to accept a challenge that must be declined by all besides. For who can undertake to save the rights of the eternal God, and to bring back a sin-stained universe to His favor? And who can expel the power of evil by which the scattering and dissevering from God of His creation had been achieved? Before this can be, sin must be atoned, and death undone, and Satan bound. But all this power and worthiness is found, *and found alone*, in HIM who was David's Son and David's Lord. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." In death, this title of Redeemer has been sealed as the Lamb's; and in redemption-power will all God's glory, in connection with the creature, eventually stand. The tribute of the universe must be paid alone to Him, Who *to the death* asserted the glory of God in a world of evil; and Who, in the administration of the affluence of His power and glory, will turn every stream of creature-good back to the Creator's praise.

Happy it is for the saint, thus instructed in the mind of heaven, to rest in the love and grace of Him who is in the midst of the throne; and happier still, *in seeking NOW to uphold the honor of His Name, to count on His power and wisdom alone*, who has the "seven horns and the seven eyes." For how surely is His power and grace directed to sustain the heart that counts on His goodness in seeking in a world of evil to do His will. Soon that power, which now secretly sustains, controls, and overrules, amidst the confusion of Satan's power, will be openly displayed. And how the hearts' joy is augmented by the thought, that then the worthiness of the Lamb will not be a secret carried feebly in the bosom of the saint, and contradicted and gainsaid on every hand besides; but evil being removed by the hand of power, every eye shall gaze upon His beauty, and every heart shall own His claims, and every voice re-echo His worthy praise! And O how soon will this bright scene of glory burst upon our dim anticipations! "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "And HE which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

But there is another side of the picture. Heaven's counsels about the Lamb, alas! are fraught alone with sorrow for great Babylon in her luxurious glory, and for the thoughtless dwellers on the earth! When power Divine shall be put forth to vindicate the claims of the *earth-rejected Victim*, what but dismay and displacement can be the result to those who despise His Name, and will at last be found in martial array to resist His claims. "These shall make war with the LAMB, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is King of kings, and Lord



of lords!! But before this hour arrives what a picture of the world's dismay does the *Lamb's* opening of the sixth seal present! "And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the LAMB: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

It would be too wide a field, to comment in succession on each instance in this book in which, in different aspects and varied connections, we are brought into contact with *the Lamb*. In tracing through, from the fifth chapter to the end, "the Lamb is ever in the ascendancy.

The song of Heaven is, "Worthy is *the Lamb* that was slain" (5:6-13). It is from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of *the Lamb*, that the men of this world seek to hide themselves in fear (6:15,16). The palm-bearing multitude, before the throne, have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:9-14). It is *the Lamb* that feeds them and leads them (as a shepherd) "to living fountains of waters" (7:17). It is the blood of *the Lamb* that answers all the accusations of Satan, as the accuser of the brethren day and night, on high (12:10,11). It is in the book of life of *the Lamb slain*, that the names of the faithful are found written amidst the corruptions of the beast (13:8). It is *the Lamb*, also, on Mount Zion with the sealed-ones, whose honor and privilege it is, to "follow *the Lamb* whithersoever He goeth" (14:1-4). Again, whoever worships the beast or his image, and receives his mark in his forehead or in his hand, will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of *the Lamb* (14:9,10). It is the song of Moses and the song of *the Lamb*, that is sung with the "harps of God," by those who, in victory over the beast, stand on "the sea of glass" (15:2-4). It is against *the Lamb*, that the beast and the ten kings make war; and *the Lamb* shall overcome them; for He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (17:12-14). It is the marriage of *the Lamb*, that strikes the note of joy in heaven; and to be called to the marriage supper of *the Lamb*, is the mark of honor and blessing then (19:7-9). And, after the seals are loosed, and the trumpets are blown and the vials poured out, when Satan is bound and the clangor of earth's judgment is hushed, it is "*the bride the Lamb's wife*," that is the wondrously glorious

spectacle on which the apostle is called to gaze (21:9). They are the twelve *apostles of the Lamb*, whose names are in the twelve foundations of the "holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (21:14). Of this city the Lord God Almighty and *the Lamb* are the temple and "*the Lamb* is the light thereof" (21:22,23). There is to be no inhabitant in this glorious city "whose name is not written in *the Lamb's* book of life" (21:27). And "the pure river of water of life proceedeth out of the throne of God and of *the Lamb*" (22:1). And finally, there is to be *no more curse*, because the throne of God and of *the Lamb* is to be there (22:3,4,5).

These are but brief and desultory notices of the wondrous character and claims of Him who in heaven is seen as "THE LAMB." A suffering Victim here on earth, now hid for a season in heaven, but about to be brought forth in full investiture of heaven's glory; and in vindication of His claims, no place to be allowed for any that refuse to bow in homage to His Name. "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living-ones, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." The scattering and confusion, and sorrow, and death, that sin has brought into the universe of God, admit of no remedy but redemption. And accordingly *the Lamb's* title to the glory and praise of restored creation is founded in this. "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art *worthy* to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed* us to God by Thy blood." This estimate of Heaven of the Lamb's worthiness and the preparations on high to enforce His claims, cast a dreadful shadow over the ease, and glory, and power, and security of the world! "*Redemption*" -- alas! the world knows not the meaning of the word! And as to "*the Lamb*," its whole peace hangs only on the abeyance of His claims!

While the main subject of this book is the presentation and enforcement of the claims of Christ to universal homage, and to universal power, as the suffering Lamb, there is that which gleams forth, as it were incidentally in the vindication of His glory. Far away from the scene of conflict, and before the Lamb comes forth sitting on "the white horse, as "King of kings, and Lord of lords, in righteousness to judge and make war," there is seen in the peaceful courts of heaven, "*the marriage of the Lamb*," and, it is added "*His wife* hath made herself ready!" For His glory cannot be asserted, and *another* not be with

Him in the scene. That "we may be glorified *together*," is the strange word of Scripture! The joy must begin on high, before the glory is displayed below. *From heaven* the Lamb comes forth to redeem the inheritance, and to take possession of His glory; and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear *with Him* in glory."

And how this does teach the heart of one who knows the espousal of the church to Christ, how little it has to do with all the busy aims of men; and how little reason it has to covet the world's wisdom, power or glory, which are but the usurped rights of Christ; while another lord and prince is owned. (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4.) It is not the earth in the power of redemption yet, and yielding its willing homage to the Lamb; but it is the world which made the Lamb a suffering Victim, and still retains its opposition to His claims.

### THE BRIDE

John 14:3.

'Midst the darkness, storm, and sorrow,  
One bright gleam I see;  
Well I know the blessed morrow:  
Christ will come for me.

'Midst the light, and peace, and glory  
Of the Father's home,  
Christ for me is watching, waiting,  
Waiting till I come.

Long the blessed Guide has led me  
By the desert road;  
Now I see the golden towers,  
City of my God.

There, amidst the love and glory,  
He is waiting yet;  
On His hands a name is graven  
He can ne'er forget.

There, amidst the songs of heaven,  
Sweeter to His ear  
Is the footfall through the desert,  
Ever drawing near.

*The Remembrancer* vol. 20

## ETERNAL LIFE

Eternal life is said to be in the Son rather than in us; just as we should speak of the water being in the reservoir rather than in the pipes or cisterns which it supplies, and through which the water is conveyed to the houses where it is enjoyed. So we speak of life being in the plant or the tree, not in the branch or leaf, though they are alive also by virtue of their connection with the tree. But life is spoken of as being in us (2 Cor. 4:10-12). Eternal life is looked at as the Word, the Son Himself. "In Him was life," "That eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." It has qualities and characteristics of its own: it was the Light of men shining in the darkness, and was not understood by them because they were darkness. It was seen, heard, gazed upon and handled, because manifested in flesh. All this is objective; for we are too prone to look at life subjectively as communicated to us, and to examine it in its details in us, instead of fixing our eyes on it in its source or origin and display in the Son of God.

Two opposite dangers are before us; that of making eternal life, which all Christians possess, a matter of attainment on the one hand, and on the other ascribing to Old Testament saints,<sup>2</sup> or to souls just quickened and under the conviction of sin, or under the law, this eternal life, which is the proper portion of the Christian as such, the full revelation of the Father and the Son being known and believed.

A merely convicted soul, wrought on by the Spirit of God where there is a true sense of sin and desire after Christ, is really quickened; for pain is evidence of life, and these feelings are according to God, and produced by the effect of the Word of God in the soul. This we see in Acts 2, where the reception of the Word preached made those who received it cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They believed the truth spoken about Christ and about themselves, but did not know the value of His death for themselves, or as applicable to the guilt which they felt, and this is what the apostle Peter next presents to them. We see the same work of the Spirit in the apostle himself, when he falls at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Attraction to Christ on the one hand, and the consciousness of his own unfitness and unworthiness on the other. So in many souls in the present

2. [In earlier issues of *Thy Precepts* the life of the Old Testament saints was discussed. They had divine life from God and were born again. In *essence* they had eternal life, for as to *essence* God did not communicate to saints another kind of life. But life might have associations in connection with it, and for the Christian, sealed with the Spirit, does have blessed associations. For such it is called in the N. T. -- "life in the Son." Ed.]

day (and still more before the forgiveness of sins was as fully preached as it now is) we meet with souls who feel what sin is, and look to Christ as a Mediator between God and themselves, but have no knowledge of His work as clearing them before God. They own Him as Son of man, and even as a divine Savior, but not as the Son revealing the Father; and have still a dread of God, whom they regard at a distance, and do not know as Father. They are as the Israelites in Egypt, before they crossed the Red Sea, and had seen all their enemies dead upon the seashore, being brought through as on dry land by the hand of God Himself. Souls may, like them, know something of the value of the blood, and still look on God as a Judge, and death and Satan's power are still feared. The effect of the resurrection of Christ is not known, nor is God known as Father, nor consequently eternal life; though there exists in the soul faith, repentance, and life, according to the measure in which the truth has been apprehended.

But eternal life is placed in Scripture in the knowledge of the Father through the Son and of the work of Christ in its full, perfect character. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God [the Father] and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Christ is *lifted us* on the cross as Son of man in order "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; and he who eats His flesh and drinks His blood hath everlasting life; both passages showing that the proper knowledge or appreciation of the atoning efficacy of the work of Christ gives eternal life, and thus teaching that the possession of it is the normal state of every believer. So the babes are said to know the Father, and this can only be through the Son who reveals the Father; and "this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Again, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him *that sent Me* [the Father], hath everlasting life." In none of these verses can we make it a matter of attainment. It belongs to the babes, to all who have seen the Son, or known the Father, or have believed in the work of Christ, according to its proper value or efficacy before God. The little children also have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; and holding fast what they have heard from the beginning, they then continue *in the Son and in the Father*.

So in 1 John 4 the testimony is, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, and "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is *the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." This involves the possession of eternal life though in the power of the Holy Ghost. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost shows at the same time that all Christian privilege according to the present dispensation is included. When also the eternal life is manifested and declared, it is that fellowship *with the Father and the Son* may be known, which is

enjoyed by the same life communicated to the soul by the Word; for this fellowship has all the blessed elements of this life both known and participated in, and the full revelation of the Father and the Son. "We beheld His glory," says the apostle, "the glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth"; and he adds, "Out of His fullness have *all we* received, and grace for grace." This last was not apostolic, but the common property of all in the proper blessing of this dispensation.

By Christ, as the risen Corn of Wheat, this life is communicated after His resurrection when He breathed on His disciples. It could not be given before, and this shows markedly the difference between life incipient or in its first stage -- or as possessed by saint when our Lord was on earth, even though quickened by Him -- and the life more abundantly bestowed in resurrection power, and in the new creation, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. Speaking of this He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." In the gospel of John, save in these anticipative passages, and in John 17, which also looks forward, we never have saints spoken of as "in Him"; whereas in the epistle of John it is constant. "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and *eternal life*." "Which thing is true in Him and in you." "In the Son, and in the Father," etc. This life was given us in Christ Jesus, and promised before the world began (2 Tim. 1:1, 8, 9, 10; Titus 1:2); but this shows its proper sphere and range to be heavenly, both as being before time, and as brought to light *in Him* who abolished death; whereas those who enjoy divine life on earth have their names written in the book of life *from the foundation of the world*." (Rev. 13:8, 17:8.) Their kingdom also was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. In the Old Testament this is spoken of as life for evermore. (Ps. 133.) We do not read of the revelation of the Father by the Son in the Old Testament, nor in the book of Revelation; nor are millennial saints ever spoken of as "in Christ," nor as wearing a crown of life, though we have generally the idea of sons and daughters of the living God as in Old Testament times with Israel (Deut. 32:19).

A. C. O., *The Christian Friend* 1888.

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## *The Holiness of Christian Fellowship*

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### *Chapter 1*

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## *Clearing Away the Rubbish*

### *The Holiness of Impartiality*

Keep these things without prejudice, doing nothing by favour (1 Tim. 5:21).

But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin . . . (James 2:9).

In 1 Tim. 5:21 we are instructed to do "nothing by favor." And this is connected with public rebuke. There must not be favoritism! God wants a just weight and a just balance (Lev. 19:36; Prov. 11:1; 20:3; Ezek. 45:10). To have an unjust weight and/or balance marks a man as a cheat and a thief. Can we be upset if the merchant cheats us, but suffer our brother to be cheated, perhaps not monetarily, at our own hands? Can we be upset when we feel by-passed because of favoritism at our place of employment and then turn about and practice the same unjustness against our brother? A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah (Prov. 11:1).

In James 2:1-4 we are warned against partiality in connection with the material position of our brother. It is not a listing of items wherein we might show partiality. What of partiality based on education, intelligence, appearance, employment, social standing, and even gift?

"But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin . . ." (James 2:9). "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment" (Deut. 1:17; 16:19). See Prov. 24:23; 28:21; Lev. 19:15; 2 Chron. 19:7. Rom. 12:16 tells us to "have the same

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respect one for another." This does not mean that we may not find more joy in the godly path of one brother compared to another, but that we are not to show partiality. It does not mean that we must have the same fellowship with every Christian regardless of his walk. The same Scripture says, "not minding high things, but going along with the lowly." It is false to say that all Christians are lowly; for why did the Lord say, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly"? But it does say that no partiality should be shown.

"The God of Israel said,  
The Rock of Israel spoke to me,  
The ruler among men shall be just,  
Ruling in the fear of God;" (2 Sam. 23:3)

There are other things mentioned by David following this and then he said, "although my house be not so before God" (2 Sam. 23:5).

This is a fine confession, an admirable confession, morally right and beautiful. But in the assembly in connection with rule, this condition is not allowed. A man may be gifted in the way of ministry of the Word; and if his house is in disorder it will effect the power of his ministry, but not necessarily bar it. Not so with overseership! "Conducting his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?)" (1 Tim. 3:4,5). "Having believing children not accused of excess or unruly" (Titus 1:6). Such is true of those who serve otherwise also (1 Tim. 3:12). Let us begin being impartial with ourselves, for failure in this is what leads to treating others partially. Ah, brother, you say, if we were to really act on 1 Tim. 3:4,5,12 and Titus 1:6, where would we be at? Well, we can always fall on our faces before God, can't we? We can always mourn and sigh, and cry, can't we? It is ever right to have it out before Him and on this basis implore Him to help us.

A special snare is partiality in connection with those who minister the Word of God. The Lord has those whom He has raised up to labor in the Word and doctrine amongst His saints. It is well to receive their ministry for our profit and blessing, and correction too. We easily err with regard to them concerning partiality. W. Kelly made the following general remarks regarding suspicion and partiality:

We sometimes misconstrue things, and endeavor to give, as we take, a very somber impression, where evil was but in appearance. Let us beware of judging according to the first blush, where the reality may prove to be otherwise; it is not righteous judgment. We should seek to judge things by a higher standard, and in the light of God. In these serious matters we are bound to be sure, and never to yield to suspicion. All judgment, if it be according to God, must proceed upon what is known and certain, not upon what is a surmise -- too often

the effect of an unfounded pretension to superior spirituality. We find the importance of this constantly; and, were our souls more simple about it, fewer mistakes would be made.

Christ has the first place where the heart is true; and next, "all the saints" become the object of our love. If there are two cases of persons in fault, and the one were a prime favorite, and the other but little liked, the latter is in imminent danger, I need hardly say, of going to the wall. My object of aversions would labor under a cloud which obscures the truth, no matter how evident it might be to the dispassionate; whereas, on the contrary, the favorite would derive that which outweighs the proofs of guilt from the unwillingness on the part of his friends to pronounce anything wrong about him. Both these feelings are thoroughly at issue, in such circumstances, with the mind of God. Indeed, both favoritism and prejudices are plainly condemned by His blessed word. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).<sup>1</sup>

In connection with the Lord's servants, the "object of aversion" often is one who corrects us and exhorts us, whereas the "favorite" very infrequently disturbs our conscience.

J. N. Darby wrote the following regarding those servants of the Lord who have no regular employment:

I do not believe that a servant of God, sent by the Lord Himself to work in His field, ought to be the servant of men, but free from all to follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost. But if he works faithfully, being really called by the Lord, and walks humbly and blamelessly in the ways of the Lord, I believe that brethren are under an obligation to support him, an obligation of Christian love, and a real privilege of Christians; thus they are helpers of the gospel itself. Thus the faith of the servant is exercised; he depends immediately on the Lord, and is entirely free to follow out the will of the Holy Ghost and to follow His guidance. *On the other hand, if he walk badly, brethren are also free to keep the Lord's money which has been entrusted to them. As to brotherly love, it is exercised without suggestion, likewise all gifts.* Without doubt, for such a life, faith is needed, and that is the only difficulty. Brethren cannot promise help; it would not be faith; also love or money might fail; but the Lord, who is ever faithful, cannot fail us.

Here is another comment:

Ques. Could you work with every one who is breaking bread?

Oh dear, no; I break bread constantly with some with whom I could not go to preach at all.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Lectures on Ephesians*, pp. 47,48.

2. *Notes and Jottings* (Stow Hill ed.), p. 39.

Here is another helpful comment:

Q. -- Is it true that a servant of the Lord, acting out of his own zeal without God's word, must be left free of remonstrance beyond private?

C. H. R.

A. -- Nothing can be more opposed to both letter and spirit of Scripture. Of all who call on the Lord's name, Christ's true minister is bound to be the most submissive to His word. For with what face could he enjoin the saints to submit to the word, if he himself claimed exemption, instead of being an example in faith, obedience, and humility? All alike are sanctified by the truth, all chosen in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, on the pattern of our Master, in its perfection. "If any one think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandment of the Lord. But if any one is ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. 14:37,38). Condemnation more cutting cannot be of those who pleaded their little gifts for setting up personal independency or some new thing.

No doubt, we are bound not to be hirelings of denominations, and should not seek to please men, as is done by adopting human methods. If the church is one, it does not admit of men's ways (1 Cor. 4:16,17; 7:17; 11:1,2). We have to persevere in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, remembering that ministry means not mastery but service, the service of Christ, and of every one for His sake. But, even the greatest gift and highest office, if it went wrong, was liable not only to private remonstrance but to public rebuke. So we find Peter solemnly blamed before all for what many, and very probably the great majority, must have thought the venial charge of ceasing to eat with the Gentiles. To Paul it was dissembling, and an offence against the truth of the gospel.

Who of us ever heard so egregious and unfounded an assumption since the days of 1845? Then a like piece of ministerial irresponsibility was sought to be based on the metaphor of a shepherd. His place was to judge the sheep, not they him!<sup>3</sup>

To what lengths will partiality go in connection with teachers and preachers? Not only are teachers of evil doctrine condoned, but teachers of the truth are attacked. G. V. Wigram knew something of this and remarked,

All my blunders, whatever they may be, notwithstanding, the honor of being identified with \_\_\_\_\_ in these attacks upon him seems to me too high an honor altogether. The attack upon him is chiefly as to dispensational statements; as to me it is as to what forms the groundwork of my soul's rest.<sup>4</sup>

It IS a privilege, not to speak of duty, to be identified with the truth and those that stand for it at the expense of self. Love rejoices with the truth (1 Cor. 13:7). How shameful, unrighteous, unholy, and unloving it is to refuse to rejoice with the truth because we esteem brother so-and-so!

3. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series, vol. 2, p. 96.

4. *Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram*, vol. 2 and 3, p. 212.

## *The Holiness of Peace and Peace-making*

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful . . . (James 1:17).

Have salt within yourselves and be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50).

If the purity is lacking, it will not be surprising if godly peace is lacking. If the salt is lacking, it should be no surprise that godly peace with one another is lacking. Salt figures the preservative character of separation from evil unto the Lord. Why expect godly peace if we ignore God's way of securing it? There is a divine order in these verses that must needs be followed. We are exhorted to be of one mind (Phil. 2:2,3; 1 Cor. 1:10), and as we need humbleness of mind for godly peace, we need one mind *in the Lord* (Phil. 4:2). If purity and salt are lacking, we might reach one mind on the basis of compromise and accommodation, but not one mind *in the Lord*.

There are many who have views on peace and peace-making that undermine holiness. Usually actions betray the false ideas, but sometimes the false ideas come out in the form of teaching. For example, one who went to an open communion said,

When He for Whom we look comes, will He find us like the servants in Luke 12:37 and 43, or like the quarrelsome one in verse 45? "Be diligent that ye may be FOUND of Him (1) in *peace*, (2) without spot, (3) blameless" (2 Pet. 3:14). At the beginning the prime emphasis was on purity (James 3:17), for James is perhaps the earliest of the Epistles. But 2 Peter, one of the latest, and written for the last times, puts *peace* first. Should not this have weight with us? <sup>5</sup>

With such a shameless and unholy notion it is no surprise that he abandoned what he called "exclusivism," which is the exclusion of evil.

Passing by his gratuitous equation of contending for holiness in associations with quarreling, note the effect of giving up the truth that evil associations defile. It always ends up with some form of palliation of evil. ALWAYS!

Is not the meaning of this quotation that as times become more evil in the professing church, purity becomes less important and that the prime emphasis is on peace instead of purity?

At least it is admitted that *at the beginning* 'the prime emphasis was on purity (James 3:17).' Had 2 Tim. 2:22 (in Paul's last epistle, written so that the

man of God might know how to be a purged vessel) been consulted, Christians might have been spared this unholy, shameful, and wrong conclusion from 2 Pet. 3:14. 2 Tim. 2:22 says, "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." In 2 Pet. 3:14 we learn again how to be found of Him in peace: by walking without spot (without defilement) and in a blameless way.

The quotation above, then, is not the wisdom we find in James 3:17:

But the wisdom from above first is pure, then peaceful, gentle, yielding, full of mercy and good fruits, unquestioning, unfeigned.

Has the wisdom from above changed because the last times have come? W. Kelly well remarked,

Never reverse this order; it is not only that this wisdom is pure and peaceable, but it is *first* pure, *then* peaceable. It first maintains the character and glory of God, and then seeks the fruits of peace among men. . . .

This order is in accordance with our Lord Jesus viewed in His Melchizedek priesthood, the priesthood in which He now functions on our behalf (Heb. 7:11). "For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from smiting the kings, and blessed him; to whom Abraham gave also the tenth portion of all; first being interpreted King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of peace" (Heb. 7:2).

But the fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace (James 3:18).

There is a fruit to be enjoyed in peace and that fruit is righteousness. It is foolishness to think that we may act on the peace-at-any-price idea, or yield God's claims of purity (James 3:17), and yet have peace wherein the fruit of righteousness may be enjoyed. The peace in James 3:17 is godly peace, not man's peace where he has nothing divine for which to contend. How is godly peace, wherein is enjoyed the fruit of righteousness, brought about? James 3:17 is the context and tells us. Ask God for this wisdom (James 1:5). Peace among the saints (holy ones) must have a righteous basis. A true peace-maker (Matt. 5:9) seeks for this. Where there is sin, he seeks that it may be judged and that there may be repentance (Prov. 28:13).

"But no chastening at the time seems to be matter of joy, but of grief; but afterwards yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). The peaceful fruit yielded to those exercised by chastening is righteousness. As we saw that love is not to be separated from righteousness, so neither is peace to be separated from righteousness, (cf. Col. 1:20). To separate these things is so far to deny the true character of the cross and the

ways of God. All others who make 'peace' on another basis are declension-makers.

"Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another" (Mark 9:50). Salt represents here the preservative power of holiness, of separation from evil to the Lord. Of course He had salt in Himself.

Ed.

## FORM OF PRAYER

Q. Why is it that a form of praise, &c. in a hymn should be considered lawful, when a form of prayer is held to be an interference with due dependence upon the Spirit of God?

E.

A. We have the positive direction of Scripture to speak to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; but psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs mean compositions rhythmically and metrically arranged; so that I judge that the use of such compositions is scripturally authorized. I would add that I think the spiritual mind will detect at once what is really given of the Spirit in such compositions and what is not, even when merely added to make up the measure or rhyme. Moreover, also, those who believe in the action of the Holy Ghost as the true and only power of blessing, look for the liberty of the Spirit of God, not bondage -- liberty in everything that is of Him for edification. The binding to a form of prayer is not this, but the exclusion of hymns is not that liberty either. Only it is to be sought that hymns should be really composed under His influence and not mere human poetry.

*The Bible Treasury* 2:144.

## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

### CHAPTER 3.8: ACTS 16-28

#### ACTS 19:8

And entering into the synagogue, he spoke boldly during three months, reasoning and persuading [the things] concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8).

We have observed elsewhere that the faithful remnant who had accepted the Lord Jesus were expecting the establishment of the Kingdom. The death of the Lord Jesus had dashed their hopes as we see in Luke 24. But He spoke to the two on the way to Emmaus regarding the sufferings and the glory to follow (Luke 24:25-27). These Jews to whom Paul preached in the synagogue, I suggest, heard the same truth. Christ must suffer first and the kingdom will yet come. W. Kelly remarked:

This involved his opening to them the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these. It never occurred to his mind to disparage that kingdom, still less to deny it, because of higher possessions and richer grace in the great mystery as to Christ, and as to the assembly (Eph 5:32) meanwhile revealed for the Christian. Even salvation as now opened in the gospel of God's grace has depths beyond the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

#### ACTS 20:24,25; 28:23,31

But I make no account of [my] life [as] dear to myself, so that I finish my course, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the glad tidings of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom [of God], shall see my face no more (Acts 20:24,25).

And having appointed him a day many came to him to the lodging, to whom he expounded, testifying of the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from early morning to evening (Acts 28:23).

... preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all freedom unhinderedly (Acts 28:31).

1. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 281.

## R. Zorn asserts that:

These three references [Acts 20:24;25; 28:23; 28:31], therefore, as do all in Acts without exception, make the Kingdom of God synonymous with the rule of Christ now begun and coming to consummation only at His second advent. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Long ago, W. Kelly wrote:

It will be noticed that the gospel is here designated 'the glad tidings of the grace of God.' This appears to be the most comprehensive title given to it in Scripture. Elsewhere the apostle speaks of it as 'the gospel of the glory of Christ', where its heavenly side is meant to be made prominent. Again, he speaks of it as 'the gospel of God', when its source in divine love is pointed out. Furthermore, we hear of 'the gospel of Christ', where He is in view through Whom alone the glad tidings become possible from God to man. In the Gospels we read of 'the gospel of the kingdom', looking on to Messiah in power and glory: in the Revelation, of the 'everlasting gospel', the revelation of the bruised Seed bruising the serpent's head. Each has its main or distinctive meaning; but as none can be, apart from Christ, so none of them appears to be so full as 'the gospel of the grace of God.' Nor is any other designation of it more than this last in keeping with the Acts of the Apostles, as well as with that apostle's heart who was now addressing the Ephesian elders. The person and the work of the Lord Jesus are fully supposed although not expressed by it; for in whom, or through whom, can God's grace shine out, save in Him or by Him?

'And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom<sup>3</sup> [of God], shall see my face no more' (ver. 25). It is his farewell. His work, as to presence in their midst, was ended.

Here we have another and distinct topic, and one that is apt to be overlooked in modern preaching, viz., 'The kingdom.' He who examines the Acts of the Apostles will find how large a place it occupies in the preaching, not of Peter only but of Paul, and, we may be assured, of all the other servants of the Lord in those early days. It is a grave blank where the kingdom is left out as it is now. Nor is it only that the future according to God is habitually lost to the faith of saints through the unfaithfulness of modern preachers, but thereby the gospel of God's grace also suffers. For in that case there is sure to be confusion, which, mingling both characters, never enjoys the simple and full truth of either<sup>4</sup>: for the kingdom will be the triumph of righteousness by power when Christ appears in His glory. A truth it was, most familiar, to those who were bred in the constant and glorious vision of Old Testament prophecy. Christianity, though

2. *Church and Kingdom*, p. 51.

3. The best and oldest MSS. and Versions, save the Vulg. etc., read simply 'the kingdom.' Others add 'of God', which is meant if not expressed; others 'of Jesus', and 'of the Lord Jesus'.

4. Thus Calvin (*Opera* 6, 186): 'Regnum Dei iterum vocatur evangelii doctrina, quae regnum Dei in hoc mundo inchoat, homines renovando in imaginem Dei, donec tandem in ultima resurrectione compleatur.' (The doctrine of the gospel is again called God's kingdom, which begins God's kingdom in this world by renewing men into God's image, till at length it be complete in the last resurrection.) Calvin was a pious and able man; but the value of his commentary on scripture has been extravagantly overrated. Of course, not a little turns on the spiritual intelligence of him who speaks.

it open to us heavenly things, was never intended to enfeeble this prospect; rather should it enable the believer to taste its blessing more, as well by imparting a deeper intelligence of its principles as by bringing in the heavenly glory. We can enjoy it in an incomparably larger and more distinct way; and we have its principles explained by a deeper and fuller view of its basis in the reconciling work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

. . . Twice at least (vers. 20,27) he disclaims expressly that reserve which some bearing the Christian name have not been ashamed to avow as a merit learnt from Him Whose death rent the veil, and Who puts all true followers of His in the light of life, the light which makes everything manifest. Walking in darkness now that the True Light shines is a walk in the flesh without God. With such doctrine no wonder that 'the hungry sheep look up and are not fed.'

It is a mistake that 'all the counsel of God' means no more than the plan of God for saving men unfolded in the gospel. 'The gospel' is indeed the preaching of salvation in a dead and risen Savior; 'the kingdom', whether morally or in its fully manifested form, has its own distinct force in God's reign, as we have seen; 'all the counsel of God' rises still higher and embraces His purpose in its utmost extent (e.g., Eph. 1:9-12).<sup>5</sup>

## ACTS 24:14,15

But this I avow to thee, that in the way which they call sect, so I serve my fathers' God, believing all things which are written throughout the law, and in the prophets; having hope towards God, which they themselves also receive, that there is to be a resurrection both of just and unjust (Acts 24:14,15).

In this series on dispensational truth, I have pointed out that anti-millennialists Judaize. Regarding the above text, J. Zens asserts:

The Jews were accusing Paul of being an apostate Israelite. But Paul confounds them by asserting a close continuity between his life as a Christian and the Jewish hope. Paul worships the same God, holds to the same canonical books, and cherishes the same hope of resurrection as the Jews. The apostle saw that Christianity was nothing but the genuine fulfillment of all that was promised to the Old Testament fathers.<sup>6</sup>

I hold to dispensational truth, yet I serve the God of Paul's fathers, believe all things written throughout the law, and in the prophets, having hope towards God that there is to be a resurrection both of just and unjust. I see also that it is spiritual alchemy to say that "Christianity was nothing but the genuine fulfillment of all that was promised to the Old Testament fathers." Obviously, the above text offers not an atom of proof for J. Zens conclusion. And this brings us to an objection of O. T. Allis, based on what Paul did not say. This objection, taken together with J. Zens' comments, illustrates the capacity of the

5. W. Kelly, *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 305-307.

6. *Dispensationalism*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978, p. 17.



anti-millennialists to wring blood out of a stone. O. T. Allis wrote

If Paul really believed that the Church was a mystery parenthesis unknown to the prophets, here would have been a fine opportunity to preach Dispensational truth. He might have explained to Felix and the notables who were present just how the Church age was to be fitted in, as such a parenthesis, between the Davidic kingdom of the past and the promised kingdom of the future. It would certainly have made things much easier for him, had he been able to declare that what he was preaching, however offensive to Jewish pride, was simply a temporary interruption of the fulfillment of the kingdom promises to Israel. Why did he not do so, if he really believed this to be the case?

Well, if Paul does not say what O. T. Allis thinks appropriate, why, then, clearly, it is not the truth. With such interpretive principles as we see at work in these two writers, anti-millennialism will clearly be triumphant. But, then, so will many other doctrines and notions fare equally well. At any rate, mystery truth was hardly suitable fare for the governor or for the occasion. Where, in Acts do we have a record at all of the preaching of the mystery? Why demand it *here*, then, unless for a theological figment? Let us simply receive the Word as God has given it.

#### ACTS 26:6-8

And now I stand to be judged because of the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our whole twelve tribes serving incessantly day and night hope to arrive; about which hope, O king, I am accused of [the] Jews. Why should it be judged a thing incredible in your sight if God raises the dead? (Acts 26:6-8).

Reading v. 8 one can understand why some would think that "the hope of the promise" referred to resurrection<sup>7</sup>. But I do not think that is correct. Acts 13:32,33 says:

And we declare unto you the glad tidings of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this to us their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee.

"Having raised up Jesus" refers to His coming into the world, not resurrection. The hope noted in Acts 26:6,7 is the Messiah:

And also the Hope of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent (1 Sam. 15:29)

In Acts 13:34 Paul speaks of the resurrection of Christ and then he quotes an O.T. prophecy that bears on this. And in Acts 26:8 he speaks of the resurrection

also. He then proceeds to tell how he saw Christ in the glory. Neither in Acts 13 nor Acts 26 do we get the subject of the kingdom introduced, whether spiritual or material.

Certainly Israelites were hoping for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but that is not the point here. The Hope of Israel is Jesus, "Jehovah, Savior."

Of course, it was the purpose of God that this Messiah would be the sin-bearer, thus laying the righteous basis for all blessing that comes from Him. This necessitates, too, His resurrection; and so the sure mercies of David will be made good to the house of Israel.

#### ACTS 26:22,23

Having therefore met with [the] help which is from God, I have stood firm unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying nothing else than those things which both the prophets and Moses have said should happen, namely, whether Christ should suffer; whether he first, through resurrection of [the] dead, should announce light both to the people and to the nations (Acts 26:22,23).

Now we have arrived at a text triumphantly put forth as:

... a clear proof that the gospel proclaims nothing that was not foretold by the prophets.<sup>8</sup>

Going for the jugular vein of dispensational truth, O. T. Allis wrote:

Here again was a splendid opportunity to preach the mystery doctrine of the Church. Paul not merely does not do this; but he declares emphatically that he has been *preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not foretold*. What clearer illustration could be found of the need of giving heed to Paul's words, "as it hath now been revealed" (Eph. 3:5), when he speaks of the mystery?<sup>9</sup>

Do you see the construction he put on Eph. 3:5? In other words, the mystery is what the O.T. prophets prophesied. Why then did the mystery need to be revealed? Well, this is the result of refusing the express statements of Scripture. Notice how he picked on Eph. 3:5 which he thought he could make it say that the mystery is the subject of O.T. prophets. He did not pick the following Scriptures:

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

8. P. Mauro, *The Hope of Israel*, p. 29.

9. O.T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 151.

7. Certainly not "primarily to the Abrahamic covenant, with its definite promise of blessing to the nations," O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 150.

made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations (Rom. 16:25,26).

... 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, (Eph. 3:9).

... the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints (Col. 1:26).

These scriptures, received into the soul as God gave them, destroys the anti-millennialist position. How dare he assert, in defiance of the express statements of Scripture that Paul "had been preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not foretold." And listen to what he said concerning J.N. Darby.

In commenting on this passage in Acts, all Darby has to say is this: "He does not speak of the assembly [the Church] -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history." That a man of Darby's mentality should have offered so lame and arbitrary an explanation is convincing proof that Paul's words on this memorable occasion cannot be made to square with the doctrine of the Pauline mystery Church as it is held by Dispensationalists. What was Paul's whole ministry if not a ministry of instruction? What was the doctrine of Gentile salvation and equality with the Jews if it was not instruction? Was not the history of Paul's career the story of the way in which his insistence on this instruction had finally made of him a prisoner on trial before the Roman governor? Here Scofield was wiser than Darby. Instead of adopting Darby's lame defense he attempted none, leaving chap. 26 without footnote and vss. 22-23 almost without comment.<sup>10</sup>

He did not understand JND and also left out JND's next sentence:

He does not speak of the assembly -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history. But everything that related to his personal history, in connection with his ministry, he gives in detail.<sup>11</sup>

The truth is, the meaning is too obvious for JND to spend more words on the matter because of the general brevity of the *Synopsis*. If there is a problem of lameness, in view of excellent mentality, O.T. Allis would have done well to look closer to home. Coming to the context of v. 23, F. G. Patterson wrote:

But the Jews being his accusers, and king Agrippa being one who knew the prophets and was versed in the Jewish Scriptures, the statements of the verses quoted (vv. 22,23) rather show that he was saying nothing contrary to the testimony of God in the Scriptures, which the Jews who accused him professed

10. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 151.

11. *Synopsis* 4:70.

to accept.<sup>12</sup>

Those who have no animosity against JND ought to see the agreement of this with his quoted remark about Paul's history.

## ACTS 28:20,23-25,28

For this cause therefore I have called you to [me] to see and to speak to you; for on account of the hope of Israel I have this chain about me (Acts 28:20).

And having appointed him a day many came to him to the lodging, to whom he expounded, testifying of the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from early morning to evening. And some were persuaded of the things which were said, but some disbelieved. And being disagreed among themselves they left; Paul having spoken one word, Well spoke the Holy Ghost through Esaisas the prophet to our fathers, saying ... (Acts 28:23-25).

Be it known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the nations; they also will hear [it] (Acts 28:28).

This is the last text in Acts to which O.T. Allis devoted a section,<sup>13</sup> but it adds nothing. We already saw, above, that "the hope of Israel" is the Messiah Himself. It was on account of Paul's service to Christ that he was bound. This is useless to prove that the prophesied kingdom is a spiritual kingdom now. But, citing v. 23, P. Mauro claims that:

Inasmuch as those Jews were thoroughly indoctrinated with the then current Jewish teaching, it needed, of course, much exposition and persuasion, and the enlightenment of the Spirit of God besides, to make evident to them that what Moses and the prophets had foretold was a spiritual kingdom, which was to be established through the sufferings and death of the expected Messiah of Israel.<sup>14</sup>

Then after citing vv. 25-27 he concluded:

By this it appears that *the hope of Israel, the kingdom of God and the salvation of God* are three different names for one and the same thing.<sup>15</sup>

And also the Hope of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent (1 Sam. 15:29).

Long before, W. Trotter had correctly written:

He is the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made. He is the Son of

12. F. G. Patterson, *Scripture Notes & Queries*, (Oak Park: Bible Truth Publishers, 1961), p. 117.

13. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 152.

14. *The Hope of Israel*, p. 30.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

David, the hope of Israel and of David's house.<sup>16</sup>

These writers are just as wrong about the hope of Israel as they are in their notion that "Moses and the prophets had foretold" a spiritual kingdom.

Speaking of the apostles, Mauro says,

Accordingly they were given to know, through the subsequent revelations of the Holy Spirit, that the promised kingdom was of spiritual character. . . .<sup>17</sup>

Why did the apostles need revelations to tell them, if Moses and the prophets had already said so? Paul persuaded them from Moses and the prophets, not from subsequent revelations. These subsequent revelations allegedly saying that the kingdom promised in the O.T. was spiritual, are a figment of his imagination.

J. Zens, however, understands that Christ is the hope of Israel. He says:

But Dispensationalists must claim that the essence of Israel's hopes are still *future*. They still await (1) a land, (2) a throne, (3) a king, and (4) a kingdom (Chafer, *Syst. Theo.*, Vol. 4, p. 7). Was Paul accused of the Jews because he preached these future "hopes" for Israel? He preached an exalted Messiah, and the necessity of repentance (26:20).

Further, in light of the Dispensationalist's claims that the Jews have different promises and a divergent destiny than the church (see p. 33), how can this be reconciled with Paul's claim that his hope and Israel's are one and the same? It would be to the Dispensationalist a contradiction *par excellence* for a Christian to be jailed for believing a Jewish hope. Yet this was why Paul was in chains.<sup>18</sup>

Why does he say that Paul was in chains "for believing a Jewish hope"? not in chains because he preached that there would be no such kingdom. In Eph. 3:1 he stated that he was "prisoner of Christ Jesus for you nations." How so? When giving an account to a crowd of Jews, Paul said, "And he said to me, Go, for I will send thee to the nations afar off."

And they heard him until this word, and lifted up their voice, saying, away with such a one as that from the earth, for it was not fit that he should live (Acts 22:22).

The Jews would not bear the thought of such Gentile blessing. It is clear that Paul was in jail on account of his message to Gentiles, not on account of "believing a Jewish hope."

Concerning J. Zens remarks about "Paul's claim that his hope and Israel's

16. *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, p. 160.

17. *The Hope of Israel*, p. 179.

18. *Dispensationalism*, p. 18.

are one and the same," the fact is that the same Person is at the center of Israel's blessings and the Church's blessings. The hope of Israel is Christ. He is also Christ Jesus our hope (1 Tim. 1:1).

Christ will head up both the earthly sphere (in which Israel has a special place) and the heavenly sphere (in which the Church has a special place) (Eph. 1:10).

The fact that all centers in Christ and His glory (manifested in two spheres) and that Christ is Israel's hope and the Church's hope, hardly begins to show that the O.T. prophets predicted a spiritual kingdom now. These anti-millennialist reasons are very superficial.

## CONCLUSION

I judge that it is safe to conclude that O.T. Allis did not make good his thesis that the book of Acts shows that the church is the fulfillment of the O.T. predictions regarding the future of the people of God. Not only have we found no evidence of such a notion, but we also desire to acknowledge Rom. 16:25,26, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9 in their express statements. Such Scriptures, received into the soul, tell us how to view the O.T. prophecies and that we ought not to have expected to find their fulfillment in the Church, even as the book of Acts shows.

We will next take up the subjects of what a true Jew is, what the Israel of God is and what being the seed of Abraham means.

Ed.

## JOHN MACARTHUR DENIES THE ETERNAL SONSHIP

The well-known preacher and writer from the west coast, John MacArthur has denied the eternal sonship in his book, *Hebrews* Chicago: Moody Press. He wrote:

As was noted, Son is an incarnational title of Christ. Though His sonship was anticipated in the Old Testament (Prov. 30:4), He did not become a Son until He was begotten into time. The term Son has only to do with Jesus Christ in His incarnation (p. 27).

Christ was *not* Son until His incarnation. Before that He was eternal God.

It is therefore incorrect to say that Jesus Christ is eternally inferior to God because He goes under the title of Son. He is no "eternal son" always subservient to God, always less than God, always under God (p. 28).

It never has been obvious to me that a son is always subservient to his father, always less than his father and always under his father. Christ's Sonship indicates equality with God, as even the unbelieving Jews recognized (John 5:18). He uses the words "title" and "term" regarding Christ's Sonship. Scripture calls it a *name*.

... because he has not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God (John 3:18).

It is an essential name, a name that is His from eternity. The only-begotten Son ever dwelt in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), including when He was here on earth.

"Evangelical" Christendom appears indifferent to such blasphemous derogations of the Person of the Son, evidenced by the continuation to publish the works and broadcasts of such.

I see in John 16:28, four movements, so to speak:

... I came out from God. I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father (John 16:27,28).

1. Coming out from God is coming out from the Father. This, so to speak, is motion in the Godhead and preceded His coming into the world.
2. He came into the world. This step followed the motion in the Godhead. Step two is the incarnation.
3. He left the world when He ascended.
4. He returned to the Father consequent upon his ascension.

This blessed One has not been busy for 19 centuries getting a place prepared for us above. When He said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:3), He was speaking of His entry into that place above. Of course it was via the cross, could not be without the cross; but it was His entry there as the victorious Son of God in manhood that immediately prepared the place for all His co-heirs. It has been ready since the instant of His entry there. The blessed, eternal Son of the Father said, "I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:28). There, with the Father, are many abodes of nearness to Himself (John 14:2) and it is the Father's good pleasure to have us, who have believed on His Son, in such sweet nearness to Himself, that nearer we cannot be. There in that scene of unspeakable glory shall we ever have communion with the Father regarding His

thoughts concerning His well-beloved Son. His Son will be the "first-born"<sup>19</sup> among many brethren. Indeed, God "has also predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that he should be [the] firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Do you understand the reason that God will conform us to the image of His Son? "So that . . ."

Ed.

## EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

... The general economy of the nation is shaky with recession continuing to create unemployment and costs climbing slowly. But times have been so prosperous materially that as always the people have forgotten God the source of all bounty. He must make Himself heard one way or another even as "His goodness leadeth to repentance" if heeded. One can see the sign posts pointing to the end especially the state of professing Christendom being come "the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The holiness of God's House is maintained if convenient to the flesh; thus practically it isn't except for appearance. It will cost something to be maintained as we well know. But "He that honors Me, I will honor," and likewise in the reverse as Eli found out to his sorrow (1 Sam. 2:29,30). Christendom's state calls for judgment and recovery can only be individual now. "As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline, therefore repent," are His words in a condition about to be spued out as utterly repulsive! May we be found sensitive to His dealings of love and kept fresh or if grown cold or discouraged by the continual trials, restored . . . as keeping us for the "little while" yet remaining of our journey til He come and our cry is -- MARANATHA! Our service in the meantime is to whatever need He sets before us even to the "cup of cold water" costing only the effort to procure it for the need so to speak. Water (the water of Life) is free. We have freely received and therefore freely give. God loves a cheerful giver, as reflecting Himself (2 Cor. 9:7,15 N. T.).

T. J. K.

<sup>19</sup> This is a *title*, an acquired title of pre-eminence. "Only begotten Son" is an essential name of the Son from eternity.

## ONE RIGHT PATH

There is only one right way with everything of God; while the shades of right (which in reality are paths of error) are countless. Now, the errant soul, or *bad* guide, is sure always to engage my soul with an enquiry about some one of the shades of right; asking me, "Where is the wrong there?" "Are there not exemplary men there?" He does not say to me, "Are you seeking the only one narrow path in this evil day (more and more narrow, as the day becomes more evil); are you seeking Christ pre-eminently? Another Mary Magdalene, only with more intelligence, and *not* less *love*. It was a dark hour of true regard for Him on the earth, when He Himself, and He alone, could satisfy her. It was not companions, or good men, or anything but that true, deep, *personal* interest, which love alone understands, and confers; and this is what we want in this day. If we have true personal interest for the Lord, we shall assuredly care for all that are His on the earth; but we must *begin* with Him.

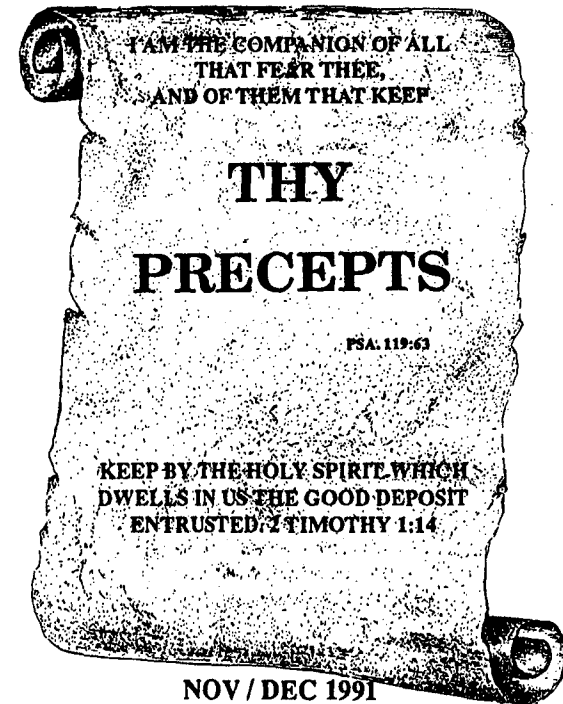
It is about Himself He speaks to the angels of the seven churches. The moment I love Him, He says to me, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:16). All interest for others must spring from this, as well as all instruction for myself. If I am seeking the Lord with a pure heart, I am sure to find myself (because it is the one Spirit which is leading us), in company "with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22). If it be the meeting, or the ministry or the brethren, I am on a poor foundation.

The more evil the time, the more pointed, though less open, is the attempt to set aside the plan and rule of Christ. It has been done openly in Christendom, and now the malice of Satan would have it done among them who profess to stand apart from the growing apostasy in the world.

If I am seeking a place to worship in, I am sure to go wrong; for I am looking for what suits my taste, and I am not guided by principle; but if I am seeking to worship my Lord (then it is a Person, not a place, that is before my soul) I am sure to be led rightly, for the Spirit of light which is in the blind man (John 9), always leads the soul that is morally outside the place of worship (as this man was, on account of his new light,) to worship the Lord of light. One faithful one, like this self-same man, confounds the most learned theologian.

Let us be like Mary Magdalene in true devotion of heart to our Lord; and like the once blind man, maintaining our light, its reality, and its source, against all comers, and *in the way*. We shall surely be rewarded as they were, with the assured presence of our Lord.

*Words of Truth 4:145,146.*



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## THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

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### F. E. R. HETERODOX ON THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST

... Like B. W. N. [Newton] he [F. E. Raven] does not deny the true deity or the perfect humanity of Christ. But the mind of man readily overthrows the truth of His Person otherwise. So Mr. N. did by his teaching that distance in Christ's relation to God was involved in His birth of woman. Still more boldly does F. E. R. assail the common faith of God's elect. This he knows quite well; for he denies that its truth "consists in the union in Him of God and Man." I am content to denounce his own form of denial as a lie against the truth. He has trusted his mind in trying to explain the very point of the Son's inscrutability. The question is not simply of the divine and eternal personality of the Word, but of Him incarnate. The truth no less clearly revealed is that He became flesh, Christ Jesus Man henceforward, as surely as also God from everlasting to everlasting.

It is to the unity of the two natures in His Person that he objects, and in very revolting and contemptuous terms, where reverence and self-distrust were preeminently called for. Yet he knew that he was not only opposing but striving to put shame on the confession of every saint who has written on it, as far as is known through all the church of God, to say nothing of every teacher esteemed among Brethren. Here are his words (7 Dec. 1893): -- "Where the idea of unity of a person is got from I know not. It seems to me perfect nonsense. The idea of person does not bring in the thought of either parts or unity. A person is that person in every variety of relations he may enter. No one would accuse me of dividing the person of the Queen because I said that in her home life she was seen distinct and apart from what she is as Queen. It is two totally distinct ideas coalesced in one person, but which can be separately presented and apprehended."

Now who does not know that a person among men consists of both parts and unity? There are spirit and soul and body; and yet they constitute the person. There may be temporary dissolution of the outer tie by death; there will surely be their unity in one person for eternity. But for the true believer Christ's

Person is distinguished from every other by the infinite fact of God and man united thus. These are in Him for ever indissoluble, though no saint doubts that He is Son of God and Son of man. Whatever His profound emotion in spirit, whatever the conflict when He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became as great drops of blood, that Man was inseparably God; and as from His conception, so fully in His death and resurrection. Thus had His every word, work, thought, and suffering divine value. It is not the Son alone, but "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The man Christ Jesus is not only the one Mediator, but the true God and eternal life; the sent Servant, and the "I AM"; Christ of the fathers as according to flesh, yet He that is over all, God blessed for evermore. Amen.

Deny the unity of His Person, of the Word become flesh; and all the truth of His life and death dissolves. His atoning work is thus utterly subverted; on which depends not only man's salvation, the reconciling of the creature, and the new heavens and earth, but the moral glory of God in view of sin, His counsels of grace as to Christ and the church, and His triumphant rest in men for all eternity. Think of the Queen or any other human being adduced to solve the great mystery of godliness! What have various relations or differing conditions to do with the divine and the human united in one sole Person, the Christ of God, the knot which man's wicked wit and will dare to judge, and essay to untie to his own destruction? Truly "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and adore. To F. E. R. IT SEEMS PERFECT NONSENSE!

Brethren, have you ever heard of a true Christian who did not thus confess Christ? Here is one called a brother, and claiming to teach, who utters his scornful unbelief of Christ's Person in terms which must have insured his expulsion with horror from all fellowship of saints in former days. Who has a doubt that then it would have raised an impassable barrier? Only of the Lord Jesus could such a unity be predicated, for in Him alone were the two natures for ever united. F. E. R. talks of the Queen! and "two totally different *ideas* coalesced in one person!" Yes, it is not truth, but "ideas" for F. E. R. Is this to "abide in the doctrine of the Christ"?

It is to join Apollinarius of Antioch (the son). He too made the Logos simply form Christ's Person, as F. E. R. does, and was therefore justly branded as an antichrist; so Nestorius was for dividing the Person, and Eutyches for confusing it: all of them, strict Trinitarians. For if the Logos had not been united to the soul as to spirit and body in the Christ, Christ was not and is not very Man as well as very God. Without that union there must have been two distinct personalities, the divine and the human. It is the union of both in one Person which alone secures the truth according to scripture. F. E. R. with

shameless self-confidence vaunts his idea, which is plain heterodoxy. He does *not* "bring the doctrine" of Christ. The Son did not change His Person, but took up manhood into unity, and this in soul as in body.

In some such way deadly false doctrine befalls such as venture to pry into what is only known to the Father and immeasurably above man's ken. The Apollinarian heterodoxy prevails largely at present; as the error which led to it is a relic of heathen philosophy, accepted by early Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, and exceedingly common among "thinkers" now as at all times. It pervades Franz Delitzsch's Psychology and its English analogue, The Tripartite Nature of Man. They (and F. E. R. follows them) make the self-conscious "I" or individuality to reside in man's spirit. But scripture abundantly proves its seat to be in the soul. The spirit is inner capacity *as to* which man is responsible to God; but the soul is that *in* which he is so; and the body is the outer vessel which displays the result, whether by grace for God's will or by self-will in Satan's service.

To the soul belongs the working of the will, and now also since the fall the instinctive knowledge of good and evil; so that one is enticed into fleshly lusts which degrade man, as well as into reasonings of the spirit and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God. Hence we read of soul-salvation or "salvation of souls" as in 1 Pet. 1:9. Hence Ezek. 18:4, "Behold, all souls are Mine," and the regular use of "souls" for persons in both O. & N. Testaments. For the self-conscious individual, the responsible person, is in the "I." It is the "I" in self-will without God; the "I" when converted to God, but in bondage of spirit; and the "I" when Christ's deliverance is known in peace and liberty; as for the latter we see in Rom. 7,8. Read also Gal. 2:20.

The error falsifies the truth in human things and yet more in divine. F. E. R. has fallen into Satan's trap in the most solemn of all truths through morbid self-confidence, and the mania of correcting every body by the standard of his fanciful ideas. He has imagined for the Christ a being, Who, if God, is certainly not complete man. For in his theory the soul does not enter Christ's personality which is exclusively the Logos. Thus he bans that unity of the two natures which every saint hitherto confesses to be in Christ's Person. He was already wrong as to man's person; for like most philosophers he follows the error of the heathen, and ignores the teaching of scripture which points to "the soul" by many plain and irrefragable proofs. But the awful weight of the falsehood lies in his audacious rising up against faith's mystery of Him Who was manifested in flesh (the body prepared for God's Son), not taken up as a mere condition but united with Himself indivisibly to all eternity for God's counsels, work, and ways. If we can rightly say condition, it is that of humanity sustained by Deity



in the Person of the Christ.

Beyond doubt the union of God and man in one Person is the wondrous and unfathomable One revealed, not for our comprehension, but for unquestioning faith, love, and honor as we honor the Father. He is thus at once the weary man and the only-begotten Son that *is* (not "was" merely) in the Father's bosom; the Son of man here below that *is* in heaven, and the "I am" on earth threatened by the Jews with stoning because He told them the truth. He must have been the Logos to have been what He was here as man. His soul was united to the Logos: else the Person had been doubled or severed, and He could not be true and complete man. He cried, Let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. There was His holy will; and it was right to lay it before His Father, but in entire submissiveness to His will and glory; of which none but a divine Person was capable. It was not therefore the Logos superseding the spirit (still less the soul), but perfectly associated with the soul in His one Person. He was true man and true God in the same indivisible Person. In Him dwelt and dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Yet it is deep pain to feel compelled to speak out plainly, on such a theme not only before others liable to stumble, but in the sense of one's own danger of offending against God's word in defence of what is dearer than life, and far beyond man's thought. Indeed some may be surprised to learn that it was most distasteful to say anything more. A warning I did give in 1890, and a brief leaflet, when the Weston-super-mare Notes disclosed the impious libel against the Lord, that, "Becoming a man, He *becomes* Logos." Many hoped that it might be but a slip; but if so, why was it not confessed in sackcloth and ashes? Understanding that it has been defended since, what must one fear? At any rate when the volume unasked for was sent to me, not a page was read for years. At length having dipped into it,, I perceived an astounding progress of unabashed evil. Even then I intended no more than a short paper on "Life Eternal," and another on its denial as a present gift. As one read on, it seemed a duty to expose unsparingly the system of error in general. This may account for a lack of due order through enlarging the original design.

W. Kelly.

A broad path means a broad conscience, not a broad heart. We have a narrow path, but it is a known path, and a straight one.

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

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## *The Holiness of Christian Fellowship*

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### *Chapter 1*

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## *Clearing Away the Rubbish*

*Continued*

### *The Holiness of Forgiveness*

If he should repent, forgive him (Luke 17:3).

In 1974 President Ford gave former President R. M. Nixon a pardon and in connection with granting this pardon he invoked the name of God in relation to the idea of forgiveness. An article in a national secular magazine said that since there was reference to God in connection with forgiveness, it should be remembered historically that, Judaism and Christianity have required that repentance precede forgiveness. Of course, R. M. Nixon had admitted no real wrong, but perhaps indiscretion only.<sup>1</sup>

It is a sorry spectacle when men of the world point out what Christians sometimes forget and should know. That brings us to the WHEN of forgiveness. There is a time to forgive and to forgive before this time is unholy.

Forgiveness must be consistent with holiness. We need instruction from God, therefore, concerning when to forgive. There are at least two things necessary for a scripturally based forgiveness: repentance, and confession.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9).

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1. We are not judging whether or not he did wrong. That is not the point here.

If thy brother should sin, rebuke him; and if he should repent, forgive him (Luke 17:3). He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy (Prov. 28:13).

See also Lev. 5:5; Num. 5:7; Psalms 32:5; Josh. 7:19; Neh. 9:2,3; Acts 8:22.

The principle that repentance must precede forgiveness is true even on a national scale, as seen in God's dealing with Israel. God must ever be true to Himself as light and love, and ever acts consistently with what He is. Thus there is coming a grand seventh month for Israel (cf. Lev. 23) when on the first of the month Israel will be regathered. On the 10th will be the day of atonement, and, oh, how they shall be bowed before Jehovah for their sin! See Zech. 12:10-14. Then on the 15th day of the month shall the full millennial blessing be brought to them. Cf. Dan. 12:12,13 for the 1335th day which brings in the blessing.

God's thought about forgiveness applies to His way in salvation. It marks His dealing with His family. He expects the same practice in our dealings with one another. It is also His order in connection with assembly discipline. And certainly He expects this of His ministers of government to whom He has given the sword. What? Pardon may be granted without acknowledgment of guilt? NEVER! This order of forgiveness applies to all relationships.

"Forgiveness" without repentance and confession is unholiness. Such "forgiveness" has easy-going self at the bottom; "nice" flesh is at the bottom. Such "forgiveness" results from a lack of self-judgment. We excuse evil workings of the flesh in others because we do not judge it in ourselves.

When a child sins does the father say, "I will just forgive him"? Or, if the child avoids the father, does he transmute this avoidance into repentance and say, "that is evidence that he has repented, and I will forgive him"? Or, if the child rather acts as if nothing is wrong, does the father say, "he wants to get along well; I will forgive him"? If the child disobeys only once, does the father say, "since he hasn't done it again, all is well"? Surely such a procedure is obviously contrary to the above Scriptures, but analogous to kinds of 'forgiveness' one observes among Christians. It can only contribute to lowering the state of God's people. Where is love to the child, or to our brother, in such a course?

The case of Philemon and Onesimus is relevant also. Could Paul have so written if Onesimus had decided to stay at Rome? Obviously not. "By His actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3) and the return of Onesimus was evidence of the repentant state. He would return to the point of departure. Thus there were grounds for forgiveness by Philemon in the submissive return of Onesimus.

Repentance is in evidence when the guilty goes to the one he has wronged and confesses the wrong. THEN is the WHEN of forgiveness. This is the time of rejoicing and removal of hindrance to practical fellowship.

There are Scriptures that exhort Christians to forgive one another (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Luke 17:3; Matt. 6:12-15; 18:21,35). It is a sign that the grace of God is not very active when a Christian will not forgive. An unforgiving spirit is condemned in the Scripture (Matt. 18:23-35; 6:15). If forgiveness is withheld when the Scriptural time to forgive has come, it is neither love nor holiness to withhold it. These are divinely ordered ways and they surely apply corporately as well as individually.

Let us beware, also, of holding grudges when we are personally offended, but at the same time dealing lightly with offenses against our Lord!

These wrong thoughts about forgiving prior to repentance (seemingly) make our path easier. We desire "peace." We "don't want to make trouble." Whereas, the truth is that we don't want to reprove the wrong. We are not really looking out for our brother's true good. It is an unscriptural thought and an unscriptural love that motivates us! We would be even wiser than God and His precious Word of truth!

It is true that there may be such a local, or general, state that what ought to be reproved cannot be reproved. That is not the point. We are speaking of notions of forgiveness that are contrary to Scripture and subversive of order and holiness in the house of God.

In connection with the pardon of former President R. M. Nixon, a campaign of sending stones to those who objected to the pardon was started. "Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone . . ." (John 8:7). You see how easily the worldling and the Christian abuse the moral ways of God? Christians do it all the time. It is the flesh in us that even subconsciously takes forethought for ITSELF (cf. Rom. 13:14; 8:7). This abuse of John 8:7 would bring an end to all holiness among God's people. Even if John 8:1-11 is not understood by the Christian, the new man in the Christian, as empowered by the Spirit, should instinctively recognize this abuse as an attack on holiness.

In John 8 the scribes and Pharisees approached the Lord on the ground of self-righteousness and sought to pit Moses against Him. Little did they realize that the finger that wrote on the ground was "the finger of God." It was "the finger of God" also that gave the law. Thus He had to deal with their self-righteousness and expose them because that was the *spirit* in which they came. This in no wise sets aside the godly practice of the requirements of God's Word.

## *The Holiness of Correction*

Whoso loveth discipline loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is brutish (Prov. 12:1).

There are those who recognize that God would have us dwell on the things noted in Phil. 4:8. Sadly, this Scripture, along with Rom. 16:19, is sometimes pressed into a service inconsistent with the claims of holiness in God's house.

The assembly at Philippi was in a generally good state. This is why we find Phil. 4:8 in this epistle. Just think how out of place it would have been especially in Galatians or 1 Corinthians. It would have been out of place because God would have the Corinthians and Galatians take serious account of their state.

In Phil. 4:2 we read that those two sisters should be of one mind *in the Lord*. 1 Cor. 1:10 was written in view of schism in the assembly which leads to heresy (sects) without (1 Cor. 11:19), a different line of things. Where the general state was good, as at Philippi, the Spirit would remove even such a defect as described in Phil. 4:2 that nothing might mar that bright testimony. Being, then, free from things that so plagued some assemblies, the Spirit was free to correct along such a line as this. Correction is ever in order and that correction takes various forms in the epistles, from which it is our privilege to learn. There is correction proper to the various states of God's people as both the Old Testament and New Testament show. To use Phil. 4:8 and/or Rom. 16:19 to set aside needed correction is an unholy thing.

We are now in a day of failure and ruin. The apostle John wrote to assemblies in Asia, which Paul's ministry and those associated with him had planted. John's words came from our Lord Jesus Christ walking as Judge, addressed to those assemblies when the last hour (1 John 2:18) had already arrived. There is encouragement and correction. We need encouragement. Let us remember, too, that correction is always in order. The last epistles addressed to assemblies are corrective in nature. There is a voice in this and where this is resisted there will rise a corresponding unholiness. The voice of the Spirit repeatedly said, "Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." What did the Spirit say? Are we listening and do we also profit by learning from His ways? Or do we say, "that is not Christ"?

1 Cor. 10 warrants us to learn from the Old Testament lessons for our instruction. We restrict our comments just to Malachi, a voice for us now. Read it and note the indifference to the correction. How sad! The many went on with the offerings and forms of Judaism, but God saw the true state. A good

state of soul desires God's corrections and a poor state of soul, an unholy state, does not want correction. A situation even worse than that in Malachi's day can arise now to the degree by which grace is greater than law. We plead love and peace and grace, yea even the name Christ, to set aside that corrective ministry which our state so much requires. We want our privileges and blessings preached to the exclusion of correction.

We have forgotten that the very first thing that the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us is to say NO; to deny impiety and worldly lusts (Titus 1:11,12). To overlook this, to indulge in these things, and then to say we want Christ ministered to us . . .! No wonder that we do not learn by grace to live soberly, justly (righteously) and piously in the present course of things, if we have not denied impiety and worldly lusts. Oh, the Lord look upon us in mercy! Oh, may He raise up conscience-searching ministry that will cause us to see ourselves in our true state before Him that He may lift us up through repentance. This is divine order and God's way of restoration. Repentance precedes restoration -- ALWAYS!

What answers to Rom. 16:19 is Matt. 10:16. We ought to be here without mixture of evil. God does not overlook it where it is not so. Where we refuse correction, there will be unpleasant consequences, but we may be too dull of hearing to HEAR THE ROD (Micah 6:9), though feeling it.

## *The Holiness of Qualified Rule*

But if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God (1 Tim. 3:5)?

A form of worldliness is the introduction of democracy into the assembly. On one occasion in a meeting of brothers for the care of affairs of an assembly, one began to solicit opinions about a problem. A brother intervened and pointed out that we do not "count noses" to settle a matter. This is not a democracy. Every man's opinion does not carry the same weight. On the other hand, he said, anyone that has an exercise before God is free to state it for consideration.

When there is worldliness of mind, i.e., partiality, abuse of love, grace and forgiveness, etc., God's Word regarding rule in His house will also be violated. It will manifest itself in men assuming a place of leadership and rule in the guidance of the assembly who do not meet the qualifications laid down in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. In some countries the rich may think their riches override these requirements. In other countries the formally educated may think they have an overriding qualification. Perhaps one in a supervisory position may

feel he is thus qualified. No, none of such things are in the qualifications; but neither do they disqualify anyone.

There is a great difference between "gift" and overseership. A gift is a gift wherever the person is, but overseership is local. An overseer may be gifted or not (1 Tim. 5:17), though all overseers need to be instructed in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). A Christian may be disqualified for overseership but may not be disqualified in the function of his gift -- though the nature of the disqualification *might* take away from the effect of the gift, especially in those that preach.

This bad effect on ministry is likely to be true where a man has not conducted his household well (1 Tim. 3:5). It is said (rightly) that David was a good ruler and a poor father. But this is not allowed in God's assembly. The assembly is not a kingdom to be ruled by *physical* power. What is needed in the assembly of God is *moral* power and this must be first evidenced in the home sphere. If a man wants to preach the gospel in, say Tibet, we may have to say, "But you have not been active in the gospel around here." If a man does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of God's assembly (1 Tim. 3:5)? The apostle asks the rhetorical question. Even sense tells you something so obvious and evident, that the home sphere is a proving ground.

Why is it then that Christians disqualified by these Scriptures seek to lead in the assembly, and involve themselves in interassembly difficulties? When there is a general worldly state among the Lord's people, such doings are accepted; and where the state is right it is rejected, because such will not be "known" as taking the lead (1 Thess. 5:12). When the state is bad, the democratic idea gains a hold, and false ideas of qualification obtain. And then we refuse to judge the flesh in others because we do not judge it in ourselves. Finally, it is all covered with nice phrases about "love." How sad! And thus true leadership is suppressed and our ways become unholy. How it must grieve our Lord who walks in the midst with His eyes as a flame of fire and His breast girt about with a golden girdle. His outflow of love (the breast) is restrained by the requirements of divine righteousness (the golden girdle). See Rev. 1:13.

## *The Holiness of Unity*

Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart (1 Tim. 2:22).

A BROAD PATH IS NOT A BROAD HEART, BUT A BROAD CONSCIENCE.<sup>2</sup>

Is unity more important than righteousness? Is outward unity to be maintained at the expense of righteousness? No. That would not be the practical unity of which Scripture speaks. It would be inconsistent with the very nature of God, and inconsistent with the constitution of the church of God.

J. N. Darby wrote,

My dear Brother, -- My letter to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, though private, concerns us all. There is a principle at work which puts external unity before righteousness -- uses unity to hinder righteousness. Now to me righteousness goes first. I find that in Romans 2, let grace be what it may in sovereign goodness, it never sets aside righteousness . . . The question goes far deeper than local claims: whether christian profession, and so-called unity, to which in its place I hold thoroughly as ever, as plain scriptural truth, is to go before righteousness -- God's claim to fidelity to Him. . . . I do not think that any church theory, however true and blessed when walking in the Spirit, can go before practical righteousness.

Such is the substance of my letter as to principles, what I have gone on all along. . . .

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Apr. 20th, 1881.<sup>3</sup>

The following extract, by J. N. Darby, appeared in *The Bible Treasury* 15:343-344.

### UNION ON MUTUAL CONCESSION.

This principle has a great reputation and a very fair appearance; but it is profoundly evil and presumptuous. It supposes that the truth is at our disposal. Philippians 3 teaches quite a different principle: there is no idea of concession nor of any arrangement in expressing the truth so as to reconcile different views. It is said, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." It is not, Let us lower down the truth to the measure of him who has not come up to it. Nor is it two persons ignoring which of the two has the truth, or content to suppose the possibility of error in giving up more or less what they hold, in order to express themselves so as to be agreed. All this is an infringement upon the authority of the truth on us. "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." There is no question here of concessions, but of the

2. *The Bible Treasury* 6:304.

3. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:146

revelation from God to enlighten him who is not perfect in the truth. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." There is no question here of concessions, but of walking together in the things we possess, with regard to which, because recognized as being the truth of God, there is no giving up anything, all being subject to it. In that case, there is no concession, either on one side or on the other; for all possess the same truth, having already attained to it in a measure, and they walk together minding the same thing. The remedy for the diversity of mind which may remain is not to make concessions (how deal thus with the truth?), but the revelation from God in favor of him who is ignorant, as we are all of us on diverse points.

But I shall be told, On that footing one will never come to an agreement. Where will you find in the word such a thing as coming to an agreement? To come to an agreement is not the unity of the church of God. The truth is not to be modified, and we are not called to force our imperfect views on any one. I must have faith, and one must have the same faith, to walk together; but in the things received as the truth of God by faith, I can make no concessions; I may bear with ignorance, but I cannot arrange the truth to please another. You will tell me, In that case how walk together? But why lay down grounds of unity which require either unity of views, or so evil a thing as concession on such or such a truth? As to the things on which we possess the truth, and with regard to which we have faith, we have the same mind, we walk in them together. If I acquire some knowledge more, I bear with the ignorance of my brother, until God reveals the thing to him. Our unity is in Christ Himself. If unity depends on concessions, it is only a sect founded on human opinions, because the principle of the absolute authority of the truth is lost.

They will tell me, that true Christians will never yield on fundamental points. I was going to say "I understand"; but it is not so. There are many who are agreed in spite of the errors which affect the foundations; I know that others would not; but this does not prevent the fact, that the principle of concessions is in no wise authorized in the word, denies the authority of the truth on us, and pretends to be able to dispose of it for the sake of peace.<sup>4</sup> The word supposes the bearing with ignorance, but never concessions, because it does not suppose that men could make a rule different from itself, in order to come to an

4. Here is the thing better expressed than I could do it myself: --

There is something which is more compromised among us than the truth; it is its value and its claims. We are less far from finding the same dogmas in the scriptures, than from giving them the same authority over us; and we may be allowed to affirm that the questions on which Christians are divided would soon be settled, if they drew near to the Bible with the intention of taking seriously all the truths it proclaims. Alas! while we read, the devil murmurs in our ears, All that is not equally pressing, equally obligatory; we are commanded to bear with the weak; Paul made himself all things to all, even consenting to offer sacrifice and to circumcise Timothy; on the other hand, edification goes before dogma; the principal dogma itself goes before the secondary dogmas, &c. One involuntarily opens the ear to a language which appears plausible and prudent; which appears not to attack a single truth, but which is only the more calculated to render them all powerless. From afar one bows before each truth; but if it comes near to us, if it requires us to act -- to sacrifice anything, at once the present truth is ranked among the truths that are out of season.

Archives, Sept. 22nd, 1849.

agreement.

I receive a man "weak in the faith"; but I do not yield anything to him as the truth, even on such a point as herbs; I might perhaps deny essential truths by so doing. Such a case may happen, where to observe days might lead to doubt of the Christianity of him who does it (see Gal. 4:9-11). There might be another case where I could only say, On this very point, "let every man be fully persuaded" (Rom. 14:5,6, &c.). Sometimes the whole of Christianity depends upon something which can be borne with in other points of view (Gal. 2:14). I repeat, there is no trace in the word of a system which suppresses a part of the truth so as to have a common confession, but the contrary. There was the perfect truth, and God revealed what was wanting, when it was otherwise. They were of one mind and they walked together, and there was no need of concessions. One did not pretend to such things as required them; that is, the Bible does not suppose what one has the pretension to do. It is to mutilate the truth that it may be adopted by many.

The word, therefore, and especially Philippians 3, condemns this arrangement of mutilated truths, with a view to get them to be adopted by everyone; for this is to dishonor God and His truth. These are means for forming a sect, composed of those who are agreed on the points laid down as grounds of union. It is never the unity of the church of God; it will be an orthodox sect, even if it should take in a greater part of a nation, because it is a body formed on the agreement to which men have come on certain truths; but it is not the unity of the church of God. In a confession of faith there is no question of bearing with individuals who are ignorant on certain points, nor of acknowledging together that one is lacking as to the knowledge thereof, nor of enlightening those who are so: they just declare the truth they possess, that others may, by agreeing with that declaration, join themselves to such as have adopted it as a ground of union. That all may adopt it, the profession of the truth must be reduced to the measure of ignorance of all those who come in, if they are sincere in that profession; but this is not bearing with others: it is persons, as I have said, who dispose of the truth of God by a human compromise. Is that the unity of the Spirit?

And, again, pay attention to this. If I know the truth and make a concession so as to unite myself to others in a common profession, my concession is just simply yielding the truth to him who will not have it. If I, with others, make concessions because we only have opinions and are ignorant of the truth, or have no certainty as to it, what a monstrous pretension to lay down, in that state of ignorance, a rule to be imposed on others as a ground of the unity of the church, under penalty of not forming part of it! I may be told, But instead of this you impose your views, as being sure of the truth. Not at all, because I believe in a unity which already exists, the unity of the body of Christ, of which every Christian forms part; whereas you establish union on views on which you have come to an agreement. You will tell me that I am indifferent then as to the truth! no; but you have used improper means to guard it, by imposing the profession of a part of the truth as a basis of unity.

Ed.

## GOD'S CALL OUT OF THE EARTH.

In the midst of the increased and still growing corruption of the whole scene around us, and of the threatened dissolving of all things, it is much laid upon the mind to consider with simplicity and clearness the character of our calling.

The call of God out of the earth, and God's assertion of title to the earth, are things that greatly differ, and should be morally and practically distinguished by the saints.

The call of God proceeds on the principle that God Himself is outside the earth, and that He is not seeking it, but seeking a people to be His in His place outside and above it. The earth, therefore, by this call, is left just as it was. For it is a stranger to the purpose of God.

This call of God out of the earth was exhibited in the family of Seth, before the flood. Cain's house was in possession of the earth, and Seth does not interfere with them. Not at all. All he and his generation have to do with the earth is to call on the name of the Lord while they are on it (not to engrave, like Cain, their own name there -- Gen. 4:17), and then to lay their dead bodies in it.

So was it exhibited afterwards in Abraham. He is called of God. But such call leaves the Canaanites without a rival. He does not contend with the potsherds of the earth. He does not dispute their right as lords of the soil. He desires only to pitch his wandering tent upon the face of it, or to lay his bones in the bowels of it.

And so the Church or heavenly family of this dispensation. Their call leaves the Gentiles in power. The Church has nothing to say to "the powers that be," but either to obey unreluctantly, or to suffer patiently, according as the demand made by the powers be such or not as involves their subjection to Christ.

This determines at once our *duties*. We render to the powers ordained of God their dues, without in any wise seeking to disturb them, knowing also that even if they behave themselves unrighteously, we are not constituted their judges.

But the character of our *service* is likewise determined by this call of God. Service to God is wanting in its true character, if it do not intimate that He is not now re-asserting His title to the earth; or, in other words, our service to Christ must be to Him as the *rejected* Christ. For He is such an One all the time He remains in the "far country." The cry has followed Him there from the earth, "We will not have this man to reign over us." And is that cry to be answered

by the servants who occupy their talents during His absence? (See Luke 19.) Surely not. They serve Him in the patient sense of His rejection all the time, and "they are not ashamed of his chain."

In like manner, moreover, this determines what our *habits* should be. Our habits should tell that the earth is not *our* place, as our *services* should tell that it is not *our Lord's* place.

This affords a holy and serious admonition to our souls.

Our call does not connect us with the earth. Our necessities do so, it is true. We need the fruit of the ground, the toil of the hand, and the skill of the heart, to provide things needful for the body. Our necessities, thus, connect us with the earth, and we may attend to it for the supply of such necessities. But our call does not connect us with it, but rather separates us from it.

To link the Church and the earth is acting at once on apostate principles. To aim at changing the character or condition of Christ in the world, or to serve Him *save as the rejected One*, is not service rendered in spiritual discernment.

These things we may know well and admit easily. But if we refuse to link *the Church* with the world, are we daily watching to refuse to link *the heart* with it, the *hopes* with it, the *calculations of the mind* with it? If it be easy to see the Church now on the eve of losing the world, and to see this without regret, is it alike easy to see our interests losing it, our name and distinction losing it? Such an one was Paul. He would not reign as a king yet; but he had learnt how to have and how to want, how to abound and how to suffer need.

In God's dealing by Israel, there was an assertion of title to the earth. Joshua went into the "possession of the Gentiles" and took with him "the ark of the Lord of all the earth," that his sword might make it the possession of the Lord and His people. But Paul went into the possessions of Jews and Gentiles, not to disturb their tenure of anything there, but to take out of them a people unto God, to link souls with the disallowed Stone, and to teach them that their blessings were spiritual and heavenly.

So, according to the Lord's teaching. See the two parables in Luke 19, 20. In settling Israel, the Lord gave them a vineyard, *a portion of the earth*, and told them to till it for Him, rendering Him dues as the Lord of the soil. In settling the saints of this age, He gave them talents, *such gifts and opportunities of service as were suited to the fact of His absence and rejection by the world*, having no estate or kingdom here till He should return.

Practically to forget such distinctions, or to act on the principle that the Church is God's instrument for asserting His claim to the earth, is apostasy

from her calling of God.

In His ministry the Lord was judging Satan, but refusing to judge the sinner. And, according to this, at the end of His ministry, He tells Peter to put up the sword, and Pilate, that His servants could not fight.

The way of His saints is to be according to all this. They are to judge morally or spiritually (i.e., defilements within themselves), but not contend about the interests of the world. The apostle condemns them for not doing the one and for doing the other (see 1 Cor. 5, 6), with this difference however -- their duty in the *first* matter is peremptory (1 Cor. 5), their way in the second is left more to their measure of grace (1 Cor. 6). And according to this also the apostle tells us that our weapons are not carnal but spiritual, our warfare not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness (2 Cor. 10, Eph. 6). We are really or spiritually defeated, when we fight carnally; for the devil has raised in us that temper which has sent us forth to the carnal fight.<sup>5</sup>

## PROPITIATION: WHAT IS IT, AND WHERE MADE?

The truth of propitiation lies at the very foundation of our faith, and on this very account it is of the first importance that the teaching of the scripture respecting it should be correctly apprehended. The word is not used in the Old Testament, though the thing itself, as we shall hope to see, is clearly distinguished in the rites of the great day of atonement. It is only found some four times in the New Testament -- it is twice employed by the apostle John (1 John 2:2; 4:10); it is once used in its verbal form in the gospel of Luke, where it is translated, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (chapter 18:13); and lastly, it occurs in Hebrews (chapter 2:17), where it is rendered "to make reconciliation," instead of, as it should be, "to make propitiation." That there might be no doubt as to the significance of the word, two other forms of it are also found -- one in Romans 3:25, the other in Hebrews 9:5. In these cases it is *ἱλαστήριον* and not *ἱλασμός*, and is given in Romans as "propitiation," and in Hebrews as "mercy-seat." The latter rendering is correct; and it is important to maintain it, because the Spirit of God thereby reveals to us the connection between the mercy-seat and the propitiation, and in this way affords us the key to its proper meaning.

5. Cited in *The Bible Treasury* 5:229,230. The *Collected Writings* place has escaped me.

It is to be gathered therefore that in the Old Testament propitiation was made on the mercy-seat in the holy of holies, and thus if we turn to the details of what took place on the great day of atonement, as described in Leviticus 16, we shall be able to understand its import. In the rites of that solemn day we find then the manner of Aaron's entrance into the sanctuary prescribed; but we need only concern ourselves for the present purpose with the mode of his dealing with the blood of the sin-offering, whether that of the bullock, which was for himself and his house, or that of the goat, which was the sin-offering for the people. It should be noted, however, that before the blood of these offerings was dealt with Aaron was directed to "take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not" (vv. 12,13). This burning incense, with the sweet and acceptable odours which it emitted when brought into contact with the holy fire, is a figure of the fragrant perfections and graces of Christ Himself to God, and is therefore a precious reminder that the person and the work of Christ can never be separated, and that indeed His perfect and finished work derives all its efficacy from what He was in Himself, that all the value and preciousness of His person to God enter into His work.

This being done, the directions concerning the blood follow -- "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." So also with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering. It was to be brought within the vail, and Aaron was to do with this "as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat" (vv. 14,15). Into the details of the sin-offering we need not here enter further than to remind the reader that the bodies of the animals so offered were consumed with fire without the camp -- the fat having been burnt on the altar (vv. 25-27; compare Hebrews 13:11-13), as our concern is especially with the blood. This was sprinkled then upon -- once upon and seven times before -- the mercy-seat. A few words on each of these actions will explain the subject.

In the first place the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and it was this sprinkling that constituted propitiation; for the mercy-seat was God's throne in the midst of Israel. He dwelt between the cherubim (1 Samuel 4:4; Psalm 80:1, etc.), which represented the attributes of His government, being thus the upholders of His throne, and which consequently possessed a judicial character towards Israel, inasmuch as they were sinners. Jehovah was holy, and as such claimed holiness from His people; and He maintained His government in their midst according to what He was as thus revealed, and the law was given



as the standard of His requirements. But no sooner was the law given than it was transgressed, whereby its righteous penalty of death was incurred; and this penalty must have been exacted had no way been found to satisfy the claims of a holy God upon a nation of sinners. God Himself promulgated the righteous foundation on which atonement could be made for their sins, and on which He could still dwell in their midst and maintain towards them relationships of grace; and this foundation was found in the blood of the sin-offering which was annually sprinkled on the great day of atonement upon the mercy-seat. The fire which consumed the body of the sin-offering without the camp told of holy judgment against sin, the fat burnt upon the altar spoke of the inward perfection and acceptability of the victim, that is, of Christ as typified by it, while the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat, representing as it did the life of the victim which had been laid down under judgment, met on behalf of the people all the holy claims of Jehovah which He had against them because of their sins (see Lev. 17:11). When therefore the eye of God rested on the sprinkled blood He was satisfied, and He could righteously pass over the sins of His people from year to year, and still dwell in their midst, and maintain the relationships which He had established.

But this early ceremony was typical, foreshadowing as it did the one perfect sacrifice of Christ (see Heb. 9, 10; also chap. 13:11-13). The apostle John therefore tells us that Jesus Christ, the righteous, is the propitiation for our sins and also for the whole world (1 John 2:2; also chap. 4:10). And from this we learn that the blood of Christ has done once and for all what the blood of the sin-offering accomplished in type for the year on the day of atonement; that is, it has made propitiation. It is true that John says that Christ Himself is the propitiation; but we also read that God has set Him forth a propitiatory (or mercy-seat) *through faith in His blood* (Rom. 3:25), whence we understand that the blood of Christ, deriving, as we have before seen, all its ineffable value from what He was in Himself, has answered all the claims of God on sinful men, has glorified Him in all that He is concerning the question of sin and sins. Hence it is that God can now righteously justify everyone who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3:26), and that He can send forth the gospel of His grace to the whole world.

Secondly, the blood was sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat. This was the place of the high priest's approach, and which in this way represented his standing before God. The blood was sprinkled there in testimony that propitiation had been made, and seven times that it might be a perfect testimony. Once was enough for the eye of God, in token that the sacrifice had been offered, and all His claims met; but man needed, or, to speak more exactly, God vouchsafed to man, a perfect assurance that propitiation had been

accomplished, and accordingly it was sprinkled before the mercy-seat seven times. Whoever, therefore, receives the testimony of God in the gospel, and thus approaches the mercy-seat (Christ), "through faith in His blood," finds in the very presence of God the perfect witness that propitiation has been made for his sins, as well as that they have been borne by another, and borne away for ever (see Lev. 16:21, 22).

Such, then, is propitiation, and we now proceed with the second branch of our enquiry, viz., *Where was it made?* In the olden economy it was clearly made in the holiest, and it has been contended that the propitiation therefore which Christ made was in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary, or otherwise the thing typified would not correspond with the type. Furthermore, it is urged that Christ entered heaven for its accomplishment after death and before His resurrection, and the epistle to the Hebrews is appealed to in support of these contentions. Let us then examine a scripture or two from the epistle to the Hebrews on the subject.

First, let us turn to chap. 9:24-28. We cite the whole passage, italicizing the words to which we call attention: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: *but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: *so Christ was once offered* to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The allusion in all this scripture is to the rites of the great day of atonement, and it is on this very account that this scripture speaks with authority upon the points raised; and the reader will scarcely fail to note that it is a contrast, rather than a comparison, drawn between Christ and the Jewish high priest. Thus, in the first place, Christ has entered into heaven itself, and not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures (antitypes) of the true; secondly, His one sacrifice is contrasted with the annual sacrifices of the Jews; thirdly, He was once offered to bear the sins of many -- an allusion to the scapegoat bearing every year the sins of Israel confessed over it by the high priest; and, lastly (and this point is comparison), just as the Jewish people waited for the coming of the high priest out of the tabernacle in proof of the accomplishment of the work of atonement, so now God's people look for the appearance of Christ a second time without sin unto salvation.

We have indicated these several points to show beyond all doubt that the



reference is to the day of atonement, so that we may be the better able to judge if Christ entered heaven, as the high priest did into the holiest, to make propitiation. Let us then observe the actual language employed. We are distinctly told that the high priest of old (and we know the fact also from the Old Testament scriptures) entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others; but when giving that which corresponds to this in the work of our Lord -- that is, the propitiatory part of His work -- the Holy Spirit says, "Once in the end of the world [consummation of the ages] hath He APPEARED [has been manifested] to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." That this is propitiation all are agreed, because it is the ground on which sin will be ultimately entirely put away (compare John 1:29); and hence, if the contention is correct, that Christ made propitiation in heaven because the high priest did in the holiest, the word "entered" would certainly have been chosen rather than "appeared." Instead of that, the Holy Ghost turns aside to mark the contrast, and causes the word "appeared" (or "hath been manifested") to be written, and thereby connects the work of propitiation with the presence of Christ in the world. Observe, moreover, that it says, that He "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; and this emphatically links propitiation with the finished work, with the sacrifice, of Christ on the cross. The conclusion therefore is evident, from the very terms of this scripture, that while the high priest of Israel made propitiation in the earthly sanctuary, it was on the cross that Christ made propitiation. And it is not without significance that the very apostle who speaks twice of Christ as the propitiation should be one chosen to bear record that, when the soldier with a spear pierced the side of a dead Christ, there forthwith came out BLOOD and water -- the blood of expiation and the water of purification; another proof that propitiation was completed on the cross. Again, when speaking of the substitutionary part of our Lord's work, the Spirit of God says, "Once offered to bear the sins of many," thereby identifying this part of His work also with the sacrifice of Himself.<sup>1</sup>

There is yet another scripture in this same chapter of Hebrews on which the contention referred to is directly based. This must, therefore, be also passed under review. It is as follows: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (vv. 11-12). According to the punctuation of this passage

1. In support of the above statements the reader may also be referred to the fact that the veil was rent immediately upon the death of our Lord (Matt. 27:50, 51) -- another proof that propitiation was made on the cross.

in the Authorized Version of the Scriptures Christ is made to enter the holy place "by His own blood," and this having been commonly accepted, many different interpretations of these words have been offered. But a closer inspection of this scripture shows that this punctuation is based upon a misconception; viz., upon a supposed correspondence between the entrance of the high priest of old into the holiest with the blood of the sin-offering, and the entrance of Christ with His own blood into heaven. And yet the very words employed might have indicated the mistake; for the phrase διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἱματος (by His own blood) is peculiar, and could be translated by either "with" or "in virtue of His own blood." The question then is whether the words "by His own blood" are necessarily connected at all with the word "entered." We unhesitatingly answer in the negative; and as confidently affirm that they are connected with the commencement of verse 11. To show this we leave out, for the moment, the intervening words, and it will then read thus: "But Christ being come . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption."<sup>2</sup> Before we point out the force of the passage, as so explained, we may cite 1 John 5:6 in confirmation. We read there, "This is He that came by water and blood" (ὁ ἐκ ὕδατος καὶ αἱματος), where the preposition and the case governed by it are the same; and this entirely supports the view given in the note from the New Translation, that the preposition διὰ in Heb. 9:11, 12 is characteristic of Christ's coming, and not of His entering into heaven.

There are then three distinct points to be noted in our scripture. First, "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come"; secondly, His coming being in the power of and characterized by the "greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building," and "by His own blood" (in contrast with the earthly sanctuary, and with the blood of goats and calves); and thirdly, that Christ entered in once into the holy place, on the ground of having obtained eternal redemption.<sup>3</sup>

We find then that this scripture is in entire harmony (as of necessity it must

2. It has been stated that the late J. N. D. was opposed to this rendering. It is quite true that, when touching upon the great day of atonement, or the priesthood of Christ, he often spoke in a general way of Christ entering into the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood; but the following note from the New Translation will show what his exact thought was. He says, "διὰ here is, I doubt not at all, characteristic of His coming. He came in that way, His coming being in the power of, and characterized by, these things; not the place through, nor the means by which" (i.e., we may explain, not the perfect tabernacle through which as a place, nor the blood as the means by which). "See this use of διὰ with the genitive in Rom. 2:27. In Rom. 4:13 we see the transition to this use of it."

3. The reader will therefore perceive that the attempt to render the word εὐρεθεὶς in any other way than "having found," is to contradict the plain teaching of this scripture.

be) with that already considered; that both alike teach, plainly and indubitably, that **THE WORK OF PROPITIATION WAS MADE, COMPLETED, ON THE CROSS**, and that the entrance of Christ once into the holy place was on the ground of having found an eternal redemption. There on Calvary His work of expiation was finished -- finished by the sacrifice of Himself, when He, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself there without spot to God. The contention therefore that His entrance into heaven in this epistle took place after His death and before His resurrection, in order to make propitiation, is nothing but a fiction of the imagination, even as also we believe it to be, however unintentionally, a depreciation of that one perfect and completed work wrought out on the cross, if not derogatory to the Person of Him who glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which was given Him to do. The Lord give us, in view of the serious issues involved, to contend all the more earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

For the instruction and edification of the reader a few words may be added to collect and present the effects of propitiation. In the first place, as already pointed out, God has been glorified by it, according to all that He is as now fully revealed in and through the person and cross of Christ. "The blood was presented to God, whose holy presence had been dishonoured and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His perfect obedience and love to His Father, in His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty, righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself"; *i.e.*, on the great day of atonement. Secondly, Christ was the propitiation for the sins of His people (1 John 2:2). The two goats of Leviticus 16 do but present different aspects of the one work of Christ; for the One who made propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17) was also their substitute; and as such He was wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities, was once offered to bear the sins of many (Isa. 53:5; Heb. 9:28). Whoever, therefore, receives God's testimony concerning the death of Christ as having made propitiation, finds, when he comes into the presence of God, that Christ also, His own self, bare his sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). Moreover, the propitiation is the ground on which God sends out the entreating message of the gospel to the whole world. Having been fully glorified concerning sin and sins, He can satisfy His own heart by causing the mighty streams of His grace to flow out to every creature under heaven, and by issuing the proclamation, "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). He can thus be just, and the justifier of everyone who believes in Jesus. Lastly, on this same ground, the sin of the world (not the sins, but the *sin* of the world) will be entirely taken away (John 1:29; Heb. 9:26); and God has

been pleased to disclose to us the scene in which this has been accomplished -- in the new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Hence it is that then "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

From this outline of the effects of propitiation the reader will perceive that it is the all-efficacious ground on which God will accomplish the whole of His counsels of grace; for thereby He Himself has been infinitely glorified, and He in response to that wondrous and perfect work has glorified His beloved Son at His own right hand, and thereby He has given the pledge that all who are His shall be glorified together with Him, that Israel now scattered shall be gathered in perfect blessing under the sway of their glorious Messiah, that all nations shall share in the blessings of that millennial reign, that creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, and that finally, as we have seen, these heavens and this earth will be displaced by a scene wherein God will be all in all.

Ed. Dennett, *The Christian Friend*, 1888.

## FAITHFULNESS, AND WAITING FOR CHRIST.

(An Extract.)

Let me ask the Christian soul a question. Are the claims of the Lord Jesus on you of deep and paramount importance in your eyes? In proposing such a question, I do so to those who profess to love and own Christ as their *Lord*, and whose consciences have been for ever set at rest, and introduced by faith into the full, cloudless presence of God; in Christ -- to those who see every question that could hinder their perfect peace answered by the atoning blood -- past, present, future -- all secure. Are these claims of sufficient weight that you would seek to know His mind and will, even if it were to break up the most cherished associations of your heart? And, knowing His mind and will, are you seeking for grace to walk therein? I feel this a deeply solemn question in the present day -- a day of the highest sounding profession, without conscience or life toward God. Religion is putting forth her fairest and most seductive forms, seeking the aid of science and poetry and art to deck herself withal. Holding in her hand a cup of abominations which stupifies the senses, lulls to sleep the conscience. And even where she is not putting on the outward adorning she practices other deceits. Those whose senses would not be ensnared by the

outward adorning, are ensnared by the specious arguments of expediency, and a round of evangelical activity -- works perfect, it may be, before men, but not before God (Rev. 3:2). She is suiting herself more and more to natural, unregenerate man; and under the name of Christ, she turns away her eye from Christ, and boasts that she is "rich and increased with goods, and has need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). "The form of godliness, without the power" surely is the condition of things around us. The Lordship of Christ is ignored. The presence of the Holy Ghost is either denied in words, or, what is even worse, professed to be acknowledged in words, and completely denied in practice. This is truly solemn. One of the very vital, central truths of Christianity, and of the Church of God -- that which marks off, in a clear line, this dispensation from all that went before or which follows, denied; and the whole merged into a heap of confusion, out of which souls can hardly find a clue, and are "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." "The foundation of God stands sure," whatever man's unfaithfulness has been, God's principles do not alter. And the responsibility of His people never alters either. While it is their blessing to know that "the Lord knoweth them that are His," still their responsibility is, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"; (2 Tim. 2:19, &c.) The Christian is to purge himself from the vessels to dishonour, that he may be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work. He must not, as we have before touched upon, rest satisfied with the corruption, nor need he try to repair the injury that has been done: that will never be repaired till the professing mass meets its end in judgment. His path is a plain one, -- "Depart from iniquity"; "Purge himself from the vessels to dishonour." And now comes his personal walk of holiness. He is to "flee also youthful lusts"; and then in his walk in the company of others, to "follow righteousness, faith, peace, charity *with them* that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." This is the principle -- a plain one -- separation *from* evil, and *to* God in the midst of it. May he who alone can do so, give subjection to His word to those whose eyes fall upon these pages, and a growing separation and deepening subjection, as they go on their pathway, to those who by grace have learned in their measure to walk therein. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me"; and "if a man love me he will keep my words" ((John 14). This is characteristic of Christianity. It is intelligent obedience rendered to a *person*, not to a *law*. The time was, when the faithful and undefiled in the way were blessed who walked in the law of the Lord. Then God was unrevealed. He was hidden behind the veil, and the dispensational barriers of the age. He was hidden, and sent forth His claims to men in the law; and although it had said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and with all thy strength," still it did not reveal a *person* to attract the heart. That time has passed away. Christ

has come, and "by *him* we believe in God" (1 Pet. 1). and to him we owe the love of our hearts and the obedience of our lives -- One whose love constrains us to live henceforth "not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again" (2 Cor. 5). It is a *person* we are thus called upon to live for and to love; One who has sanctified us unto obedience such as that which characterized His own (1 Pet. 1:2); surrendering self, life, all, for those who hated Him. The law proposed that a man should love his neighbour "*as himself*." The obedience of Christ was the entire *surrendering of self* for his enemies.

The Lord Jesus appealed in His day to the Jews (Luke 12:54-57), to discern "the signs of the times," even by the force of natural conscience, and to judge what was right. His word should find an echo in many a Christian heart now that has sunk down to sleep amongst the dead (Eph. 5:14). Everything around us in the present day -- religion, the state of men, nations, powers, kingdoms -- are each gradually and perceptibly taking their places for the closing scenes of Judgment (which introduces the kingdom).

The Christian, instructed beforehand of these things, can watch them calmly and quietly, awaiting the coming of His Lord. He knows his calling is a heavenly one, where judgments cannot come. The coming of the Lord, the Son of God, for His people, is the one boundary or horizon of his hopes. His actions and service and plans and sojourn here are arranged in view of that event; and if called to serve his Lord and Master here, he does so in the sense that he serves as in the last days. May a deepening sense of this fill the souls of His people; and may this, their proper hope, ere the day dawn, be formed in their hearts, and serve to direct their ways.

*Words of Truth 1:151-153*

## A MAN OF GOD

In the New Testament "the man of God" supposes one faithful in the service of souls; but the term is by no means confined to Christianity, being rather in itself a familiar Old Testament expression. By it we may understand a believer who has the moral courage and the spiritual power to identify himself with the Lord's interests, and to maintain the good fight of faith in the midst of perils and obstacles of every sort. Such a testimony is incompatible with yielding to human principles and the spirit of the age.

We must not suppose however that fidelity in such a day as ours wears an imposing garb. An appearance of strength is out of course when declension has come in and judgment is approaching. God will have a state of ruin *felt*, and His testimony must be in keeping. When He calls to sackcloth and ashes, He does not give such a character of power as has price in the world's eyes. Thus one of the truest signs of practical communion with the Lord is that at such a moment one is heartily content to be little. This is reality; but it is only a little strength. The expression of this, therefore, is according to the mind of God.

But that which attracts the world must please and pander to the self-importance of man. The world itself is a vain show, and likes its own. Consequently there is nothing which so carries the mass of men along with it as that which flatters the vanity of the human mind. It may assume the loveliest air, but sinful man seeks his own honor and present exaltation. But when a servant of God is thus drawn into the spirit of men, he naturally shrinks back from fairly facing the solemn call of God addressed to His own, loses his bright confidence, and gets either hardened, or stands in dread of the judgment of God. When Christians lose the power and reproach of the cross, philanthropy has been taken up, which gives influence among men; and general activity in what men call "doing good" replaces the life of faith with the vain hope of staving off the evil day -- in their time at any rate. One need not deny zeal and earnest pursuit of what is good morally; self-denial too one sees in spending for religious or benevolent purposes; but the man of God, now that ruin has entered the field of Christ's confession, is more urgently than ever called to be true to a crucified Christ. And as surely as He is soon coming to take us on high, He will in due time appear for the judgment of every high thought and the fairest-looking enterprises of men, which will all be swallowed up in the yawning gulf of the apostasy.

W. K.

## POWER

It is only as we know grace, that we can receive and exercise power, and a defective apprehension of the one must stand in the way of my knowing and having the other. Christ came, in His grace, and took everything out of the way that prevented our getting hold of power, and now the one thing we require, for the actually being in the place of possessing it, is to get hold of His grace. If I do not see that because of His grace I get power, there is effort on my part to arrive there, and a spurious power is the result which is either surrendered or gives me a disastrous ending. David assayed Saul's armor, but

gave it up: Saul retained it, and came to his end on Gilboa. It might have appeared to have been only deficiency on man's part as to power, that he could not follow Christ to death, and that He, by His death, made up what was wanting. I see Christ breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," which was the conferring a new power, and not making up a deficiency. The apostle in the twelfth of Corinthians assayed an armor which seemed only deficient, but, as soon as he learned the sufficiency of the grace, he got the power, and then he gloried, not in his deficiencies, but in his weaknesses.

The power we have now received is the Holy Ghost, and nothing could be more grievous to that Spirit than to deny His presence and power. One great result of His presence is that the flesh has become intolerable to me. It is in me, but it has become intolerable to me, because it is so to the Spirit of God who dwells in me. What I maintain now is that I have the Spirit of God with a new life; while until now I have maintained the flesh. I not only had it, but maintained it. I still have it, though, of course, reckoned dead, but I refuse to maintain it. What I maintain now is, that I have a new life with the Spirit of God; it is not merely that I say I have it, but I maintain it.

I cannot maintain both, and the more I maintain the one, the more intolerable the other becomes. I walk in it, I seek to cultivate what is of the Spirit; and, as I do so, I find that I am in an element so entirely new that I cannot tolerate the old; I refuse and deny it in every possible way.

It is a conflict, but one in which the foes are quite unequal; the flesh lusts, but it can get no further. It is not now merely a question of its incompetency, but of the Spirit's power. Having the Spirit, I have done with the flesh; its competency is not trusted in, and its incompetency is no hindrance. I do not say I have not got the flesh, but I say all the odds are against it. It has been put out of court, and I have to keep it out. Its very presence is now suffering to me, and the more so in proportion as I understand how the Spirit is grieved by it.

Is the fact that I have the Spirit to be less real to me than that I have the flesh? If I once had to say I could not act except in the flesh, should I be less able now to act otherwise than in the Spirit? I cannot quietly admit that I am only a double man, and that I am improved only in this way, that before I had only the flesh, but that now I have the Spirit as well.

All truth is on the Spirit's side, and all power. There is not a particle for the flesh; it is gone judicially by Christ's death; the world, where it found everything to suit it, is gone by the same death; the deeds of the body are mortified through the Spirit--there is a thorn to keep it in its place--there is the succor of Christ against it. In fact all is for the good, nothing for the bad. I have to set all this against the one simple fact of its presence, and I have to choose between recognizing it, or bowing to the truth and presence of the Spirit of God.

If it were a question of two powers in the field with even something on both sides; but when I find all the victory is on one side, what can I say as to any chance for the other, but simply that it is a malicious power. That I really am a new creature, Christ having gone into the field and overcome everything, and that I really can breathe an atmosphere, and enjoy a scene where everything only marks a conflict that has taken place, and has never to be repeated; with plenty to watch against, and be helped against, but nothing to maintain but that I am in Christ.

C. E. SH., *Food for the Flock*, vol. 2.

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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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### SECTION 4: THE TRUE JEW, THE ISRAEL OF GOD AND THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

In this section we will consider a number of expressions used by anti-dispensationalists in support of the idea that the church is the continuator of Israel, is the spiritual Israel, and that the church is the subject of O. T. prophecy. These expressions include, "true Jew," "the Israel of God," and "the seed of Abraham." Most space will be given to the subject of the seed of Abraham and so we shall review all of Galatians 3.

If the Lord will, we shall proceed in the following way:

Ch. 4.1. Romans 2:28,29: Is the Christian a True Jew?

Ch. 4.2. Who Are The Israel of God?

Ch. 4.3. Gal. 3:1-9: The Principle of Faith as Seen in Abraham is the Way of Blessing.

Ch. 4.4. Gal. 3:10-14: The Law OR Faith.

(a) Gal. 3:10-12: The Law Curses and Cannot Justify.

(b) Gal. 3:13,14: Christ Made a Curse in Order to the Blessing of the Nations and in Order to the Sealing with the Spirit.

Ch. 4.5. Gal. 3:15-18: The Law Cannot Set Aside Promise.

Ch. 4.6. Gal. 3:19-25: Under the Law.

(a) Gal. 3:19-22: Function of the Law.

(b) Gal. 3:23-25: The Law as a Tutor up to Christ.

Ch. 4.7. Gal. 3:26-29 In Christ and Consequently Abraham's Seed.

## CHAPTER 4.1: ROMANS 2:28,29; IS THE CHRISTIAN A TRUE JEW?

For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in flesh; but he [is] a Jew [who is so] inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God (Romans 2:28,29).

### WHAT IS A TRUE JEW?

It is interesting that those who understand Scripture dispensationally are accused of Judaizing because they say that animal sacrifices will be reinstituted in the millennium, for Israel; but the same objectors might claim that a Christian is a true Jew.<sup>a</sup> The idea that a Christian is a true Jew comes from the idea that the church is the spiritual Israel, the continuator of Israel. Coupled with this is the notion that the church is "the Israel of God." This scheme is Judaistic and so what such designate "the moral law" is said to be the rule of life.<sup>b</sup>

In actuality, those who say that a Christian is a true Jew and part of the Israel of God have assumed what needs to be proved. Romans 2:1-16 is addressed to Gentiles while Rom. 2:17-29 is addressed to Jews. To many Christians it is an unacceptable procedure to find in Rom. 2:17-29, that God is saying that a Gentile Christian is a true Jew.

But if *thou* art named a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast in God ... (Rom. 2:17).

If, in the face of such explicit address, persons may find in vv. 28 & 29 that Gentile believers are true Jews, then there will be no end of what one finds in texts in order to support a theological system. It is obvious that the passage is addressed to, and concerns, Jews. The law cannot make a Jew answer inwardly

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a. "Only those who are Jews inwardly, only believers. . ." R. B. Yerby, *The Once and Future Israel*, Swengel: Reiner, 1978, p. 56 and see p. 61. L. De Caro remarked, "Even if we were to exclude the Christian connotation . . ." *Israel Today: Fulfillment of Prophecy?* Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, p. 120. So if you cannot put the Gentile into vv. 28,29, you can at least have the connotation!

C.E.B. Cranfield wrote: "It is clear that in these verses Paul is in some sense denying the name of Jew to those who are only outwardly Jews and not also secretly and inwardly and at the same time according it to those who are secretly and inwardly Jews but not outwardly Jews at all," *Romans, A Shorter Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, p. 59.

b. In reality, the N. T. does not make the distinction between the moral and ceremonial law.

to the meaning of circumcision. He is only a Jew "outwardly" (v. 28). *He* is a true Jew who is an Israelite that answers spiritually to the meaning God had in view concerning circumcision. However, although a Gentile believer answers spiritually to the meaning of circumcision, it does not follow that he is "a true Jew."

We will consider the meaning of circumcision and then return to the distinction between a true Jew (one of "the Israel of God") and a Gentile believer. A helpful summary of the meaning of circumcision is given in *Morrish's Bible Dictionary*, pp. 170,171:

**Circumcision.** The rite appointed by God to be a token of the covenant that He made with Abraham and his seed, and also the seal of the righteousness of his faith. Every male in Abraham's house was to be circumcised, and afterwards every male of his seed on the eighth day after birth. It signified the separation of a people from the world to God. During the 40 years in the wilderness this rite was not performed, but on entering God's land all were circumcised at Gilgal, when the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Jos. 5:2-9. Circumcision became a synonym for Israel, so that they could be spoken of as 'the circumcised,' and the heathen as 'the uncircumcised.' Jud. 14:3; Eze. 31:18; Acts 11:3. Contrary to the design of God, circumcision became a mere formal act, when the covenant itself was disregarded, and God then speaks of Israel as having 'uncircumcised hearts.' Stephen charged the Jewish council with being 'uncircumcised in heart and ears.' Lev. 26:41; Acts 7:51. In Rom. 4 Abraham is shown to be 'the father of circumcision,' that is, of all that believe as the truly separated people of God.

Hence circumcision is typical of the putting off the body of the flesh by those who accept the cross as the end of all flesh, because Christ was there cut off as to the flesh: see Col. 2:11: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the [sins of the] flesh by the circumcision of Christ"; and again, "We are the circumcision which worship God by the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phi. 3:3. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" Col. 3:5.

A true Jew is an Israelite who answers spiritually to the meaning of circumcision. A Gentile believer also answers spiritually to the meaning of circumcision. Thus all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, answer spiritually to the meaning of circumcision. Hence, Paul, speaking of all Christians in contrast to others who trust in flesh, wrote:

See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. For *we* are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:2,3).

Because Paul wrote of all believers, "we are the circumcision," it does not follow that all believers are true Jews. Some believers are true Jews (Jews) and some believers (Gentiles) are not.

## CHAPTER 4.2:

### WHO ARE THE ISRAEL OF GOD?

Use is made of Gal. 6:16 by those wishing to show that "the church is the new Israel." It is claimed that the phrase "the Israel of God" means the church. There is no necessity to so understand the phrase.

And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:13-16).

A. Marshall translated v. 16 as follows:

And as many as by this rule will walk, peace on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.<sup>a</sup>

Walking by "this rule" means walking by *the rule of the new creation*, Christ Himself, not the law. When you read Gal. 6:16 and look for the rule, go to v. 15, not Exodus.

Christians are not always only viewed as those united to Christ as His body; though, of course, every saint sealed with the Spirit is, in fact, united to Christ as His body. Such are also viewed in other ways. Gal. 6:16 is an example of this:

Q. -- Gal. 6:16. Does this scripture give any sanction to the idea that we, believers from among the Gentiles, are now "the Israel of God"? What is the true force?

A. -- The verse plainly intimates two classes, the general one of the saints who walk as Christians by the rule of the new creation in Christ, and the specified one, not of Israel now no longer for the time God's people, but such of them as were true to the Christ they were baptized unto (where is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Him), who are therefore designated "the Israel of God."<sup>d</sup>

The distinction is also seen elsewhere as in Romans 2:28 where we saw that a Jew was one who was so inwardly. Think of the Lord's commendation of Nathaniel: "Behold [one] truly an Israelite . . ." (John 1:47). Rom. 9:6 also shows that there are true Jews of Jewish blood. Rom. 11:7 clearly distinguishes

c. The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, London: Bagster, 1964, p. 757.

d. *The Bible Treasury* 20:252. See also 12:366.

the believing Jews, ° designated "the election," from "the rest" who have been blinded. Why not understand that such alone are "the Israel of God"?

Moreover, the fact is that in the N. T. Israel means Israel, *always*, never the church. Theology imposes upon the word "Israel" the meaning of church and then says: see, there is proof that the church is Israel and was a subject of the O. T. prophecies.

The way in which the church is transmuted into the Israel of God in this passage is by translating "even (καὶ) upon the Israel of God." John Eadie asked if καὶ can be understood as a word linking a noun to its explanation (instead of being a link of two nouns). He concluded that there is no other example that would be as "peculiarly distinctive" as Gal. 6:16 would be if understood that way. He went on to write:

2. The simple copulative meaning is not to be departed from, save on very strong grounds; and there is no ground for such a departure here, so that the Israel of God are a party included in, and yet distinct from, the οἱ οὖτοι.

3. The apostle is not in the habit of calling the church made up of Jews and Gentiles -- Israel. Israel is used eleven times in Romans, but in all the instances it refers to Israel proper; and so do it and Ἰσραηλιτὴν in every other portion of the New Testament. In the Apocalypse, the 144,000 sealed of Israel stand in contrast to "the great multitude which no man can number," taken out of the Gentile or non-Israelitish races. Rev. 7:9. The "Israelite indeed" is also one by blood. John 1:47; comp. 1 Cor. 10:18. The οἱ οὖτοι may not be Gentile believers as such, and opposed to Jewish believers, but the entire number who walk according to this rule; while Paul finds among them a certain class to whom his heart turns with instinctive fondness -- "the Israel of God." Jatho's distinction is baseless -- the one party being those who, warned by this epistle, should renounce their error and walk according to this rule; and the other, those who had uniformly held the sacred and evangelical doctrine. It may be said indeed, on the one hand, that the apostle has been proving that the Jew, as a Jew, has no privilege above the Gentiles, that both Jew and Gentile are on a level, so that both believing Jews and Gentiles may therefore be called Israel. It may be replied, however, that the apostle never in any place so uses the name, never gives the grand old theocratic name to any but the chosen people.

4. To the apostle there were two Israels -- "they are not all Israel which are of Israel," -- and he says here, not Israel κατὰ σάρκα, but "the Israel of God," or the true believing Israel; his own brethren by a double tie -- by blood, and especially by grace. Was it unnatural for the apostle to do this, especially after rebuking false Israel -- the wretched Judaizers -- who certainly were not the Israel of God?

Ed.

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e. Postmillennial reconstructionists may wax rather wild on this subject, stating that:

James designates Christians as "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). Peter calls the Christians to whom he writes, the "diaspora" (Gk., 1 Peter 1:1). Greg L. Bahnsen and K. L. Gentry, Jr., *House Divided, The Breakup of Dispensational Theology*, Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989, p. 169.]

f. *The John Eadie Greek Text Commentaries*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979 reprint, pp. 416,417.