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ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

6: The Pretribulation Rapture

Chapter 6.4 ***John 14:1-3: The Heavenly Hope***

How the Heavenly Hope is Set Aside.

There are two things that always go together:

1. The destruction of the heavenly hope.
2. The Judaizing of the church.

This happened historically with the passing of the apostles.¹ It happens now when one abandons the truth of the pre-tribulation rapture. Of course, there are also many who reject the ecclesiastical side of dispensational truth while holding the pre-tribulation rapture and continue on with Judaistic elements proportionately.

IS THE LORD'S COMING DEATH?

J. B. Payne told us that the coming of the Lord in John 14:1-3 is death, though that is not his general view of the Lord's coming.² It *does* seem like an expedient to so apply John 14:1-3. What it amounts to is that Christ's coming for His own is really their soul going to Him. The passage would then tell us this: 'Let not your heart be troubled. You are going to die and go to heaven. If it were not so I would have told you.' I would think that any saint who had

1. See my *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 1, to be had from Present Truth Publishers.

2. *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, pp. 49, 74.
www.presenttruthpublishers.com

any bridal affections (Rev. 21) towards Christ and His soon return would immediately sense, by the Spirit, the falsity and lowering of the heavenly hope. "I am coming *again*" refers to *another* **bodily** coming. See also John 16:16,19. What a blessed truth! Coming *personally*, *bodily*, to take them to that place He entered as glorified Man consequent upon accomplishing redemption. Of course, the order of events given in 1 Cor. 15, was not revealed at this point, but the fact that He would personally come for them in order that they might be where He is was stated.

W. Trotter wrote:

1. There is no instance in the New Testament in which death is spoken of as "the coming of Christ," or "the coming of the Lord." If there be such passages, let them be produced.

2. Instead of identifying these two subjects, Scripture pointedly distinguishes between them. True, that as death is the limit of an individual's continuance here, the Lord's coming will be the terminus to all those who are alive and remain to His coming; but, with this single exception, the two events have nothing in common. At death the believer *departs* to be with Christ. . . By death, the believer is *separated* from his fellow Christians on earth; at the coming of Christ, all believers are *gathered together* to Him above. However the sting of death may be withdrawn, and however complete may be the saint's triumph over death, it is, nevertheless, that to which our bodies have become subject *by reason of sin*; the coming of Christ, on the contrary, is that in which His *perfect triumph over sin* will be displayed *in the resurrection of the body*.

3. So entirely contrasted are "death" and "the Lord's coming" in Scripture, that when our Lord said of the beloved disciple, "If I will that he tarry till I come," &c., the disciples, losing sight of the "if," and understanding their Master to say absolutely that this was His will, immediately concluded that *"that disciple should not die."* They knew quite well that for a disciple to tarry till Christ comes is to be exempted from death.

4. The Apostle Paul, in a passage in which he treats of both subjects, declares that, however blessed it may be to be "absent from the body, and present with the Lord," what he and his fellow Christians desired and groaned for, was, "not to be unclothed" or disembodied, "but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4). This will surely not be till the Savior, for whom we look, shall appear, and change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. Thus evidently are death and the coming of Christ not only *distinguished*, but *contrasted*, in the word of God.

Nor is it to be regarded as a matter of indifference, whether the actual future of our hopes be the same as that which God holds out to us in His word. People may say, "If we are only ready for death, we shall be ready for Christ's coming also"; but in what sense do those who use this language speak of being *ready* for either? Are not their thoughts limited to the single point of their own personal safety? No doubt that which constitutes our readiness to stand before God, whether now, or at death, or at Christ's coming, is the one accomplished work of Christ, the whole efficacy of which is God's gift to every poor sinner who through grace believes in Jesus. But is our individual safety the *only* or even the chief end of God's wondrous grace, and of the precious sacrifice of Christ?

Have we no thought beyond that of personal security? Has the grace manifested towards us in the gift and in the sacrifice of Christ established no relations between that blessed One and ourselves? Are there no affections flowing from such relations? When the hope is set before us of beholding Him who became man, and died on the cross, to accomplish our redemption; when He who is not ashamed to call us "brethren" -- nay, more, who owns us as His bride, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" -- when He says, "Surely, I come quickly," is no response elicited but such as expressed in the remark, "that if we are ready for death, we are also ready for Christ's coming"? The readiness for which He looks is the readiness of true and single-hearted affection, and of diligent, devoted service: readiness to which the hope of His appearing directly ministers: a readiness, moreover, which is greatly hindered by such low apprehensions of His love as would make us satisfied with merely knowing that we are safe. The true readiness is that of the wise virgins, who, with oil in their vessels, with lighted and well-trimmed lamps, and with girded loins, went forth to meet the Bridegroom.³

IS THE LORD'S COMING A SPIRITUAL POSITION IN HIMSELF?

The idea that death is meant is not the only means used to avoid having the saints enter heaven when the rapture occurs. R. Gundry solves the problem for the post-tribulation system by claiming that our Lord meant that He was going to prepare a spiritual position in Himself, a relationship to the Father through union with Christ, citing the spiritual use of "abiding" and "house". "Place" leads to this also, as does "abode" in John 14:23, he claims. "Where I am" then means wherever He may be,⁴ but not heaven, of course, at the rapture.

What is surprising is that he didn't spiritualize the coming to mean what is written in John 14:23; and "receive you" to mean putting us into the spiritual position in Himself; and "where I am" to be the abiding in that position. You see, it is not difficult to handle scripture in this way. He has not gone this far, but it has been done.⁵ It is amazing to observe the lengths to which Christians will go in order to escape the pre-tribulation rapture! The reason is that the heart hangs on to Judaistic elements which attend the rejection of the heavenly hope, though those very Judaistic elements are not recognized as Judaistic.

The Father's house is not a domestic, spiritual sphere on earth. Nor does it refer to the house of God. The house of God is the church (1 Tim. 3:15) viewed as a dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:22) where His order should be followed (1 Tim. 3:15).

3. *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects*, pp. 529-531.

4. *The Church and the Tribulation*, pp. 154, 155.

5. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series, vol. 4.
www.presenttruthpublishers.com

As is appropriate to John's writings, who speaks of *children*, not sons (see *Englishman's Greek Concordance*), the Father's house and the abode therein denotes dwelling in nearness to the *Father*, above.

John's gospel does not unfold the truth of the church as God's house. Such an unfolding of truth awaited further revelation through Paul.

DOES THE WORD "MEET" MEAN CHRIST IS COMING TO EARTH?

There is a specious argument against Christ taking us to the Father's house at the rapture founded on the word "*meet*" Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). With John 14:1-3 freshly before us, it will be better to consider the matter here than when we consider 1 Thess. 4.

A. D. Katterjohn wrote:

1. "Meet" -- same Greek word as was used in Matt. 25:6, and in 1 Thess. 4:17.
2. The brethren come to Rome to meet Paul as he is traveling to Rome.
3. After the meeting, Paul continues on his way, with the brethren at his side, to his original destination -- Rome.
4. They all arrive in Rome. (16)
5. This is an identical picture of Christ, our meeting Him, and continuing on with Him to His destination (1 Thess. 4:17).
6. Paul did not turn around and return to Melita from whence he came.
7. Likewise, Christ will not turn around and return to heaven.⁶

There is a presupposition involved here. Having assumed that the rapture takes place at the appearing, it is alleged that at the rapture He is on His way to earth.

The truth is that at the time of the rapture, Christ Himself is on His way to receive His own unto Himself; that where He is, there they may be also. Now, this is the explicit teaching of John 14:1-3 and this is why the passage is tortured by posttribulationists.

The connotation alleged by posttribulationists regarding "meet" (*apanteesis*) is thus false. Besides this, the verb *apantao* is used seven times:⁷ Matt. 28:9; Mark 5:2; 14:3; Luke 14:31; 17:12; John 4:51; Acts 16:16. Let the reader examine them all and see if the word necessarily bears the alleged connotation. Neither do the Lexicons bear out the allegation.

6. *The Rapture - When?* p. 9. So also G.E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, p. 91. See also R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 104, who, however, notes that the "connotation is not absolutely necessary" but thinks it favors post-tribulationism.

7. *Englishman's Greek Concordance*, p. 59.

A. D. Katterjohn has another word that he claims helps his view. He says,

The "receive" is the identical word for "taken" of Matt. 24:40, where one is to be taken, and the other left. Therefore this passage is talking about the same subject, and the same coming.⁸

This kind of statement reminds me of a remark made by W. Kelly when he commented on this kind of 'logic'. He said that though Noah was in an ark, and Moses was in an ark, we have not yet learned that they are the same thing!

The word is the same but the aspect of the subject is entirely different. The context of Matt. 24:37-44 is judgment. The flood took some away in judgment and left Noah and his house for blessing. The flood bears an analogy, in its effect, to the coming of the Son of Man as there depicted. "Thus". Do we understand this word? "Thus also shall be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two shall be in the field, one *is taken* and one is left" (vv. 39,40). The emphasized words are what is in question. The one "taken" is taken away in judgment, is put to death. The one who is left is left for the kingdom of the Son of Man. This has nothing to do with John 14:1-3 where He is comforting His own with the thought that He will shortly prepare an abode for them in the Father's presence and come again to *receive* them to Himself in that place.

The conclusion, is then, that John 14:1-3 and post-tribulationism are mutually antagonistic. Post-tribulationism *must* deny that Christ comes at the rapture to take us to His Father's house above. John 14:1-3 asserts that He will come to receive us where He is; and 'where He is' is shown by John 17:11 & 24, etc., etc., to be the Father's presence. Since when Christ appears after the tribulation He will come to earth, John 14:1-3 refers to another phase of His coming -- the rapture, when He meets us in the air to conduct us home.

WHAT ABOUT "THE HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE" AND "THE LAW OF PARSIMONY"?

We will now consider "the hermeneutical principle" and "the law of parsimony in the interpretation of scripture."

R. Gundry wrote:

There is no reason why Jesus cannot come *for* His saints and continue to descend *with* them. The meeting in the air does not preclude a descent to the earth. Even in the first stage of His descent, Jesus will come with the disembodied spirits of deceased saints.⁹

8. *Op. cit.* p. 7.

9. *The Church and The Tribulation*, p. 159. www.presenttruthpublishers.com

There is force in the hermeneutical principle that "in disputed questions of interpretation, the simpler view is to be preferred; the burden of proof rests upon the more elaborate explanation." Pre-tribulationism is the more elaborate view in that without explicit scriptural statements it divides the second coming and the resurrection of the saints into two phases. "Pre-tribulationists do not believe that there are two second comings... but that there is one coming incorporating two separate movements..." We may detect a struggle to maintain unity and separateness at the same time. But two separate movements from heaven to earth cannot by any stretch of fancy be considered one coming. Jesus' first advent involved a somewhat lengthy period of sojourn upon the earth, but there was only one movement from heaven to earth. The two movements posited in pre-tribulationism do indeed violate the law of parsimony in interpretation.

Two of the clearest methods by which Jesus and the writers of the NT might have distinguished separate phases of His return -- differentiation in terminology and contradictoriness in descriptive details -- were not employed. Yet we might have expected Jesus and those writers (especially Paul, the most prominent expositor of ecclesiological truths) to have distinguished carefully in one or the other manner if not in both. On the contrary, the identity of terminology and the harmoniousness of the descriptive details create a presumption in favor of the view which regards the second advent as a single, uninterrupted event.¹⁰

The stated "hermeneutical principle" is patently absurd. No one of sound sense could consistently apply such a notion. What interpretation has not been disputed -- and is the "simpler view" to be always preferred? A Unitarian might use the above "hermeneutical principle" against the doctrine of the Trinity.

The "law of parsimony" is also nonsense. There is no such "law" except in the mind of those enamored of the idea. For only one example, an amillennialist might tell a post-tribulationist that the idea of two resurrections separate in time violates the "law of parsimony"; and worse still, violates the above "hermeneutical principle". An orthodox Jew might argue against the doctrine of the Trinity on the same grounds.

Now, note in the last paragraph quoted above the inability to see the "differentiation in terminology and contradictoriness in descriptive details" regarding the rapture and the appearing. Why cannot post-tribulationists see this? The reason they cannot see it is illustrated by these handlings of John 14:1-3. When the passage gives a sharp distinction, they quickly explain it away. When Christ tells us He will come and conduct us to the Father's house, post-tribulationists say He will conduct us to earth. John 14:1-3 means death, or it means spiritual abodes in Christ, they say. Besides, such an idea as Christ coming to take us above instead of to earth violates "the hermeneutical principle" and the "law of parsimony" in interpretation!

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 161,162.

Nor do we need any "stretch of fancy" to see that there is but one second coming. The two phases are parts of one whole and each part has a moral connection with the other. The same is true concerning the Firstfruits of the first resurrection, risen over 1900 years ago, and the resurrection of believers still to come. It is one resurrection though having several parts and we need no "stretch of fancy" to see that it really is one.

CAN JOHN 14:1-3 BE IGNORED AWAY?

Another method is to ignore John 13:1-3. A. Reese said:

Now concerning the Rapture there are only three undisputed texts in the Bible that deal with it, namely: 1 Thess 4:17, 2 Thess 2:1, and John 14:3; but there are many passages both in the O. and N. Testaments that speak of the resurrection of the holy dead, which, Darbyists assure us, takes place in immediate connection with the Rapture. For the present, therefore, we may dismiss the Rapture from our minds and confine our attention to the first resurrection, for wheresoever the resurrection is, there will the Rapture be also. ¹¹

Thereafter we find no comments on John 14:1-3. This phenomenon seems incredible in a 328 page polemical book on the subject of the second coming. Concerning the statement, "wheresoever the resurrection is, there will the Rapture be also": it was not so in the case of the Firstfruits of the resurrection. Indeed, He was "caught up" (Rev. 12:5) 40 days *after* His resurrection. At any rate, the first resurrection is not a point in time, as post-tribulationists assume, but rather, a class of persons. The first resurrection occurs in stages, of which Christ's resurrection was the Firstfruits.

IS THE PLACE TO BE USED ONLY SEVEN YEARS?

G. R. Crow said:

It appears from the Scriptures that the Church when raptured will be taken to heaven and not straightway into the millennium on earth (John 14:1-3). Someone has even gone so far as to suggest that if the Rapture takes place after the Tribulation, the place Jesus is preparing for Christians will never be used; for then the Church would straightway with Christ enter the millennium on earth.

Comment: Is the prepared place, then, only intended for a brief seven-years occupancy by the Church? Will the Church at the end of that period vacate those heavenly mansions never to return? If this strange thing were true then that fleeting visit might just as well be seven weeks as seven years. Neither time is of any consequence compared with eternity. ¹²

11. *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 34.

12. G.R. Crow, *The Lamb and the Book*, pp. 257, 258.
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This is no answer, but rather obvious evasion of the issue. W. Kelly remarked:

Now, the Chiliasts [some writers among the post apostolic fathers] were quite wrong in thinking that heaven would be merely this earth in a renewed condition. Perfectly true that the earth is to be renewed -- perfectly false that *we* are not to be in heaven. Thus to be with Christ in heaven is true, and is the truth which is taught here; and there is where our hope should be resting. Only it is wrong to disconnect heaven then from the earth. This will be the peculiarity of the kingdom, that it will not be as now -- the heavens separated from the earth by the sin of man, but heaven and earth both put under the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorified Son of God, the Head of both heaven and earth. Those who now believe in Him, those who have believed in Him from the beginning -- we shall all be with Him. "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again -- (not you will come to me, but) -- I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."¹³

He also remarked,

The risen saints will reign along with Him over the earth, but *from their own proper heavenly sphere*: He is Head *to the Church over all things*.¹⁴

ARE THE ABODES ROOMS IN THE MILLENNIAL TEMPLE?

'Ultradispensationalists' believe that the church did not begin at Pentecost (Acts 2).¹⁵ Involved in this is the idea that the church, which is Christ's body, was preceded by a "kingdom church"¹⁶ to which the four gospels apply. It thus follows that John 14:1-3 cannot refer to the rapture. An Acts 9 position writer says:

John 14:2,3. This is *the* favorite verse of Acts 2 believers. They say that the 'many mansions' of verse 2 refers to dwelling places in heaven. The 'mansions' are supposed to be on streets of gold.¹⁷ The truth of the matter is that the 'many

13. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 12:44.

14. *The Bible Treasury* 9:359.

15. Some of them say that the church began with Paul's conversion, others say later, and some say Acts 28 gives us the time.

16. See my "The Opening of the Heavenly Parenthesis, an Answer to so-called Ultradispensationalism," in *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, obtainable from Present Truth Publishers. This paper discusses the effect of the system on Christian doctrine.

17. ["Streets of gold" in heaven springs from imagination. Scripture says, "and the street of the city pure gold" (Rev. 21:21). Moreover, there is no *literal* street of gold. The idea that the city of Rev. 21 is a literal city is imagination:

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in [the] Spirit, [and set me] on a great and high

(continued...)

mansions' in the Father's house refer to the Temple that is going to be built for the Millennium according to the plans laid down for it by Ezekiel, chapters 40-48. 'My Father's house' is a phrase that had previously been used of the temple in John 2:16, when the Lord Jesus cleansed the Temple at the beginning of His earthly ministry. That meaning never changed during our Lord's earthly ministry. 'My Father's house' does not refer to heaven.¹⁸

Taking verses 2 and 3 together, as we certainly should, it would follow from the quotation that where the Lord Jesus was going was to the millennial temple; and was going to come again for them and take them to the millennial temple. For what purpose, the writer quoted does not say. What matters is that his system concerning John's gospel being for the pre-Pauline "kingdom church" be maintained; because if John 14:1-3 refers to the rapture, the system is false. Thus we are treated to this desperate, alternate view in order to escape this result.

"The truth of the matter" is that, as was shown in the previous article, the Lord was going to the Father. There was an earthly "Father's house" connected with the earthly people, Israel. And there is a heavenly "Father's house" connected with a heavenly people. The fact that in John we read of the earthly one (John 2:16) does not prove that John 14:2 cannot refer to a house above. Observe how Paul, by way of contrast, spoke of the "Jerusalem which [is] now," and "the Jerusalem above" (Gal. 4:25); and how John spoke of a wicked, earthly system as a woman (Rev. 17) and a city (Rev. 18), and of the church as a bride and a city (Rev. 21).

The place is above and was prepared when our triumphant Beloved, in Whom we are accepted (Eph. 1:1-3), "entered as forerunner for us" (Heb. 6:20).

The Effect of the Denial of the Heavenly Hope

Regarding the objections to the heavenly hope, J. N. Darby has wisely remarked:

It is true that if the statements of scripture be adequately weighed, and the truths which have been drawn from it received into the heart, the answer to all these difficulties is already possessed; or if we be unable to explain these objections, they have no force against the direct proofs scripture gives of the truth, save to

17(...continued)

mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God . . . (Rev. 21:9, 10).

The city is the bride, symbolically portrayed. Moreover, the "mansions" are spiritual abodes of nearness to the Father.]

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18. R. Brock, *Journal of Pauline Dispensationalism* 1:95.

prove our own incapacity to solve them. . . .

But we learn more as to the teaching of those who would persuade us of it. The aim of that teaching, its direct and necessary tendency, is to destroy our distinctive relationship with Christ, and to connect us with the world, reducing us to the lowest possible level of hope which can be true for one who is not actually lost. Our proper heavenly connection with Christ is lost.¹⁹

The scriptures to which appeal is made in order to show that the church will be on earth during Daniel's 70th week do not speak of the church which is Christ's body. The elect of whom these scriptures speak do not form part of the body of Christ. But to allege that they are part of the body of Christ has the result described above.

Scripture speaks of who will and will not be present on earth during the great tribulation:

1. Four scriptures speak of Jews being in it (Jer. 30:1-7; Dan 12:1-3; Matt 24; Mark 13).
2. One scripture speaks of Gentiles coming out of it (Rev. 7:9,14).
3. One scripture states that we shall be *kept out of the time* of it; out of *the hour* of trial (Rev. 3:10); not, kept in, or through, it.

It is asserted by post-tribulationists that the church will be in it. J. N. Darby remarked that this is accompanied by a loss in spiritual intelligence. Let me quote proof of this from W. Trotter, for it is important to see how this system confuses what God distinguishes; and also it Judaizes.

We are all aware of the continual exhortations we have in the New Testament to a spirit of forgiveness, and to manifest towards others the grace in which our heavenly Father has dealt with us. And perhaps there is hardly a Christian anywhere who has not been perplexed with passages in the Psalms and elsewhere in the Old Testament, where the heaviest curses and judgments are invoked by the worshippers on the heads of their enemies. And many of these psalms are evidently prophetic of the time immediately preceding the coming of the Lord to execute judgment. Can it be for us, my brethren, for the Church, that these prophetic utterances, full of imprecations, are prepared? And yet it is clear that they can have no place after the Lord has come in judgment, destroyed his adversaries, and delivered the remnant of his Jewish, earthly people. Whose language then can that of these Psalms be? and when can it be uttered? I believe it to be the language of the Jewish remnant, amid the deep darkness of their final tribulation, after the Church is removed. And you can neither suppose the Church to utter such language, nor to be still on earth while the Spirit of God leads the Jewish remnant to utter it, without confounding those things which the Holy Spirit in Scripture has been most careful to distinguish from each other.

The present dispensation is one of unmingled grace. God is not now imputing

19. *Collected Writings* 11:269, 270.

to men their trespasses, but freely forgiving all, the vilest and the worst, who believe in Jesus. And to us the exhortation is, "Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not." "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." Our Lord himself said, while his enemies were nailing him to the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The first martyr for the name of Jesus cried, in like manner, while they were stoning him to death, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." But there is a time coming when prayers like the following (inspired prayers, be it remembered) will ascend up to heaven. "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this Mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt." Pause here a moment to remark that this must apply to the condition of Israel at some period subsequent to their going into captivity; yea, to a period *long after* they have gone into captivity. "Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary . . . We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? Pluck it out of thy bosom . . . Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name . . . Arise, O God, plead thine own cause; remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually" (Psalm 74). This shows plainly enough to what period this class of psalms applies. It is to the period of the last Jewish tribulation. Look at another. "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem: and there was none to bury them . . . How long, Lord? Wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed . . . And render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord" (Psalm 79). Once more: "Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us put them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance . . . O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire, so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm . . . Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame and perish: that men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth" (Psa. 83). I need not further multiply quotations. There are such prayers and anticipations as these: "Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 59:13). "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" (Psa. 58:10). Need I ask again, Can it be the Church that uses such language, presents such prayers, and rejoices in such anticipations? Impossible. But may not the Church be still on earth, while the Jewish remnant thus pour out their souls?

What! the one Spirit of God put a prayer for forgiveness of enemies into the heart of one, and inspire another to ask for their destruction! Besides, in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile; and the dispensation must be entirely changed before a body of people can be in existence, led of the Spirit to use as their own the language of such Psalms as have now been quoted. If there be an interval after the Church is removed, during which the Jewish remnant is formed, and passes through its deep and unparalleled tribulations, looking forward to the coming of Messiah to deliver them, by the destruction of their adversaries and oppressors, all is plain, and easy enough to be understood. Without this, all is one inextricable mass of confusion.

Some one may be ready to say, "But these passages are all in the Old Testament. Have we no intimations of like character in the New Testament?" Yes, indeed we have. Turn to Rev. 11:3-6, where we read of God's two witnesses who are to prophesy in sackcloth twelve hundred and sixty days, that "if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." Is this the ministry of the gospel of God's grace with which the Church is entrusted? Is there any resemblance between the two? Once, when our Lord was here below, a village of the Samaritans refused to receive him. "And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" What was his answer? Did he give them the permission they asked? Nay, "But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:54-56). How entirely must the dispensation have changed, and how evident that the Church must have been removed from the scene, ere a testimony such as that of the sackcloth witnesses in Rev. 11 can be raised up!²⁰

The direct result, then, is to put this imprecatory language in the mouth of Christians, and when the opposers of dispensational truth are taxed with the N. T. scriptures and shown how opposed true Christianity is to the words of the souls (of Jewish martyrs) under the altar (Rev. 6:9), they rationalize the matter to try to make that prayer consonant with the instructions of our Lord and the apostle Paul. Of necessity this lowers Christianity. Of necessity, all systems that oppose dispensational truth Judaize. The very nature and calling of the Church as one body requires its absence when God works again with His earthly people and the Jewish remnant becomes the vessel of testimony at that time.

(to be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

20. W. Trotter and T. Smith, "Appendix: The Church Removed Before the Judgments," *Eight Lectures on the Second Coming of Christ*.
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The Holiness of Christian Fellowship

5

Chapter 5: Recognizing Doctrinal Evil

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light (Matt. 6:22).

The Exposure of Evil Doctrine

The following was written by W. Trotter, born in 1818, and written in 1849 (thus at 31 years of age).

Men may subvert the faith without denying *in terms* the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. The Judaizing teachers in Galatia had not laid aside the name of Christ, or ceased to acknowledge Him in word as the Savior. But they taught doctrines which, if true, made His death unnecessary and vain. And both Peter and Barnabas were for a little season drawn into the snare. But what said Paul of those subverters of the faith? "I would they were cut off that trouble you." "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The assertion that "the resurrection is passed already" was not the denial *in terms* of what our faith rests upon; but it was the assertion of that which, if believed, took away from the soul the only resting place for faith. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Paul knew nothing of the false charity of the present day. He delivered Hymenaeus to Satan that he might learn not to blaspheme. And though there may be no one in the present day to exercise discipline in that form, the obligation of saints to be separate from such blasphemy, and from all those who practice and allow it, is as solemn now as then.

Thus the Corinthians were held responsible for the correct deduction made from

1. *The Origin of (so-called) Oppression in the Church*, 1850. Formerly called, "The Whole Case of Plymouth and Bethesda".

the denial of the resurrection of the dead. It was not that the Corinthians denied the resurrection of Christ. But the believers are the harvest, and to deny the resurrection of the harvest means that the resurrection of the firstfruits of that harvest is thus denied by implication.

Evil doctrine often spreads because leaders refuse to judge the true character of the evil. They palliate it in various ways and the consequence of this is that they sanction the evil, whether or not they intended to do so; and such often get ensnared in some aspects of the evil doctrine, if not wholly embracing it. A. C. Ord remarked:

It is alarming to see evil doctrine spreading in this way; and men of weight and character in the Church of God becoming involved in it, and lending their authority to unsound statements such as these, on the fundamental truth of the Person of Christ; instead of repudiating such assertions, and lifting up a warning voice to all they can reach against them. What hope can there be for the mass, who are sure to follow where their leaders are not afraid to tread, and who are equally sure to go beyond them. Our brother -- at the first refused to allow of any defining or separating Eternal Life in its existence and manifestation in the Person of our blessed Lord. (See Appendix B in *The Manifestation of the Divine Nature*, p. 45.) But there is no safeguard against the power of evil for the saint, but total repudiation of and separation from it. "Evil communications corrupt good manners ." Those who practically lend it their sanction, cannot expect to escape its taint. ²

How does God expose evil teaching? W. Kelly remarked:

But God works by means, and if there is a false teacher who brings in what is evil, there are true teachers who are able to discern it; and though he may try to wrap it up in pleasing forms, yet the Holy Spirit who dwells in the Church works against Satan, and by different members He unveils and brings out the true character of the evil thing before the assembly of God, and all are able, who are walking with God, to pronounce a divine judgment upon it when once it is exposed. If we had to make a railway we should not know how to begin the work; but when the railway is made, we can tell perfectly well the use and value of it, and can judge well enough for practice whether it is a good one or not. So with the Church of God. Though all may not equally discern and expose what is evil, God gives some who can, and afterwards all readily form a judgment upon it. These gifts are indispensable to the Church as a whole, though I do not say that wherever there is an assembly of God, it is absolutely necessary for their walking together that there should be such or such persons raised up in their midst. But we can bless God for this provision for the wants of His Church, as long as He has a Church here below. ³

The Lord may use any believer to call attention to evil.

2. *The Person of Christ*, p. 28.

3. *Lectures on Ephesians*, p. 188.

If a person called a brother willfully persists in the denial of the personality of Satan and yet affirms the perfection of the manhood of Christ, he is still verily guilty of fundamental evil because this means that Christ's temptations arose within Himself, thus implying sin in His nature.

Another example would be to hold that the Son is Son in the Godhead and yet willfully deny that He is the Creator. By implication, the willful denial of His creatorship attacks Him as the Word. As the Word, He is the Expressor, or Revealer, of God (John 1).

It is necessary then, God being what He is, that the Word be the Creator. The creation exists for the purpose of providing a sphere where God can give expression to what He is in Himself. The universe exists for the purpose of revealing God! The Word, the Revealer of God, must of necessity be the Creator of this platform that serves as the sphere where God is displayed in what He is before created intelligences. And this creation having sprung forth from the hand of the Word, He enters it as the Firstborn (Col. 1). The three great passages (John 1, Colossians 1 and Hebrews 1) which so wondrously set forth His deity, and call forth the worship of our redeemed souls, also affirm that He is the Creator. See also Rev. 4:10, 11. The Word and the creatorship are linked in the same way as the Firstfruits and the harvest. The willful persistence in refusing the truth is leaven.

There are many evil doctrines abroad. The woman of Matt. 13 is very busy. One such teaching is that our Lord Jesus, "that holy thing" -- referring to Him as man -- "Who is God over all, blessed forever," could have sinned. This is one of the most loathsome, foul and blasphemous affronts -- not to speak of its stupidity (as if One Who is God and man in *one person* could sin) -- ever made against Christ. May every thought be brought into the captivity of the Christ! "Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I trust." "Unite my heart to fear thy holy name." The Christian, then, is responsible for where doctrine leads. May God graciously keep our discernment clear in all that affects His honor.

Ways in Which Doctrinal Evil is Palliated

And truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey (Isa. 59:15).

HOW CAN HE BE A CHRISTIAN IF HE HOLDS EVIL DOCTRINE?

There is a specious, *unholy* argument that to charge a Christian with evil

doctrine is to deny that he is a Christian. This false idea is equivalent to saying that charging the man in 1 Cor. 5 with evil conduct is to deny that he is a Christian. But 2 Cor. 2 proves this view false because the leavened man turned out to be a brother.

A man's heart might be better than his head. But if his head is leavened, the leaven must be purged out from, and by, the assembly. There is only One Whose head is fine gold (S. of S. 5:11), whose every thought brought only profound delight to the heart of the Father. John looked upon Him as He *walked* and said, "Behold the Lamb of God." His bearing was excellent as the cedars of Lebanon, elevated and ever in communion with heaven. His legs are like pillars of marble (S. of S. 5:15)--the blessed Sustainer of all that was due to God. Oh, may God preserve His feeble ones from the least thought that would affect His glory! How good it will be to be with Him and like Him, without spot or wrinkle, all our thoughts in tune with heaven, all the mind of heaven one!

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT IS RIGHT

Where a person holds leavenous doctrine and must be put away, there is usually a palliation of evil by various means. This has been the history of doctrinal controversy. There is a respect of persons; and justification is sought for not treating the doctrine as leaven. This reminds me of the words of H. H. Snell:

When a sentence is brought before Mr. F. E. Raven's supporters which they cannot defend, they bring one of his true sentences to meet it. But this is a corrupting principle; and it is clear that no amount of truth added to it can neutralize or justify one unscriptural sentence about our adorable Lord. On the same corrupting principle Mr. J. S. Oliphant speaks of some taking a sentence out of Mr. Raven's letters, and speaking of it as bad doctrine; as if a thousand additions of the truth could correct one false statement. If this mode of proceeding be admitted, then there will be no end to the propagation of false doctrine.

J. N. Darby wrote:

The more the question treated in the following tract is weighed, the more important it will be found; and the doctrine taught in Mr. Newton's "Remarks" to be the destruction of the gospel of truth, and to subvert the foundations of Christianity. The denial that it is meant so to do is nothing to the purpose. Mr. Irving denied it just as stoutly; *but a man's teaching is to be judged by what he teaches, not by his own opinion about it.* What Mr. Newton teaches subverts the truth as to Christ. If he says it does not, it only proves that he does not know the

truth which it clearly does subvert. *The largest expressions of piety and holiness prove nothing.* They were found in Mr. Irving's writings, and much most blessed and precious truth too: few writings could be named where there is so much. It is well known how widely Mr. Prince's books were circulated, how highly they were appreciated, and how many were supposed to be converted by him. Now all acquainted with the circumstances know the horrible blasphemies in which it all has ended. *And now persons who examine the books judge that they find all through them the germ of the present horrors.*⁵

EXPLAINING WORDS AWAY

In a letter dated Nov. 19, 1891, H. H. Snell wrote to one who was defending a person charged with holding evil doctrine, as follows:

But to my mind you spoil all: for what you declare to be "most objectionable," you excuse by saying, "I am sure you do not hold what it implies."

How could you pen such a sentence? The point is, what does *Scripture* say? There we find a teacher is held accountable for what he says. Paul as an apostle delivered two persons to Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme." They had been uttering what was blasphemy. He also refers to some in another epistle, who were "*Saying* (observe *saying*) that the resurrection is past already," and he adds that "their word will eat as doth a canker." Another apostle wrote, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this *doctrine* (the doctrine of Christ), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (see 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17, 18; 2 John 10, 11). Our Lord's words also were, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

How could anyone then who was walking uprightly before the Lord, either request, or receive "explanations" of words which dishonor Him?

On Jan. 13, 1892, he wrote:

Few things are more distressing to a servant of the Lord, than being brought into collision with his brethren; especially with any he has long known and respected. But when "the momentous subject of the Person of Christ," and the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are in question, it is impossible to keep a good conscience by silence. Our Lord's words were, "He that is not with Me, is against Me" (Luke 11:23).

In November 1890, J. Dunlop wrote:

The question has been asked, "How is it that whenever any one goes to England and visits R. that they always come away convinced that he is all right?" The answer is, because they act in self-confidence and in disobedience to the Word of God, which says, in Romans 16:17, "*Mark them,*" and "*avoid them,*" not "*visit them.*" We do not need to go to England and see anybody, in order to judge F. E. R.'s written statements, put out by himself, as we have them here, and the Word of God, which we are responsible to judge them by.

Another wrote:

Mr. J. G. Deck says: "in a work of Satan NEUTRALITY is impossible: if there is an attempt to shun the responsibilities and sorrows of a path of entire decision for Christ, the spiritual senses become *deadened*, the heart hardened, the conscience *torpid*, the judgment *perverted*, and soon *hostility* to the witnesses against the evil succeeds indifference to the truth." ⁶

W. J. Lowe wrote, in 1891:

There is no dependence to be placed on any statement where false doctrine is held--its working is stamped by the character of Satan, from whom it really proceeds. When the doctrine is exposed, the first effort is always to deny that it is held, and the excuse of misrepresentation is eagerly clutched at. When shown to have been stated and maintained, it is explained away and covered up with statements of truth; then it is gradually adopted, and finally gloried in; and at length this is accompanied with contempt for those who do not hold it With spiritual delusion, the person under the power of evil is unconscious of it, and becomes unable to detect the difference between truth and falsehood⁷

LET HIM "WITHDRAW" IT

Another sad feature of dealing with evil doctrine is the way in which "withdrawal" is used as a cover-up and substitute for repudiation. Repudiation and repentance will manifest themselves by the soul having a sense of Psalm 51 and 2 Cor. 2:7, and expressly judging the leaven. God looks for "repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth" (2 Tim. 2: 25). The true course would be to make a clean judgment of, and break with, the evil doctrine as was made by J. E. Batten respecting the doctrine of B. W. Newton (see *The Origin of (so-called) Open Brethrenism*, pp. 22, 23, by W. Trotter). But instead, so often the same teaching is put forth in better sounding words. Apropos to this is the following remark by J. N. Darby:

Mr. Newton having addressed "A Statement and Acknowledgment" respecting certain doctrinal errors to very many brethren (so, indeed, as to have reached, directly or indirectly, almost all), I desire to make some remarks upon it. I do not doubt many are quite able to judge of its value. Still, as there are very many ignorant of the real point and bearing of the error, and on whom the idea of an acknowledgment would act so as to set their mind at ease, and that from a disposition (which everyone would hail) to receive in grace the confession of error or fault, I feel it right for the sake of the beloved church of God, to weigh its value. I am aware that I shall be considered relentless⁸

He well knew he would be regarded as relentless for exposing the leaven and

6. Quoted in *The History of the Brethren* 2:567. Emphasis was added by N. Noel.

7. Quoted in *Brief History of Ravenism*, p. 14.

8. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 15:181.
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insisting that the heaven be judged. Thus instead of all bowing to the purging of the heaven, those used of God in exposing it are denounced and calumniated, perhaps accused of sowing discord among brethren or of a heretical course. They are labeled unloving, rigid, hard and relentless. We need not doubt that persons can do these things and behave like that: it happens. But let us beware of using these labels as a tool. Let us be aware too that emotional, loving people are quite able to palliate serious matters when they are not involved, thus caring little for what is due to Christ, and yet can with difficulty throw off a grudge when personally offended. This often goes together. Sparing self causes us to spare it in others as Saul spared Agag.

MANY GODLY BRETHREN DO NOT REGARD IT AS EVIL

Another form of palliation of evil is the objection raised to its exposure because many godly brethren do not regard it as evil. Let the following statement by J. N. Darby serve as a warning against the snare of this notion:

If the Spirit of God be really working in his [B. W. Newton's] mind, the pointing out the deficiency of this will not hinder his going farther; and as the evil is confessedly very great, and specially as it is sought to be excused by the fact that many brethren did not find it out, it is worth while, for the sake of simple and unsuspecting minds, to enquire seriously if it is really abandoned, and to what extent.⁹

Evil teachers are known to modify and alter their language and cover up the evil by connecting true statements with their doctrine. Again, JND said:

The author, as is his known custom, after making statements which subvert the faith, seeks by modifying, by making statements which are entirely different appear to be the same, or substituting one for the other, smothering up what was said by expatiating on recognized truths, to confound the minds of the simple, and escape the discrediting detection of the doctrines he has taught. Happier would it be to let it all alone; but it is due to souls that it should be known.

THERE HAVE BEEN PROCEDURAL ERRORS

Here is reference to a case and mode of palliation:

Nothing shows more the deplorably low moral state of saints, or the spiritual incapacity to discern the true bearings of that by which God is testing us, than the arguments which are used, and listened to, to justify continuing in association with evil. Greenwich, it is said, is not to be separated from, because every ecclesiastical form has not been gone through with reference to it. What are ecclesiastical forms when Christ is in question, or the saints of God themselves in danger, from the enemy's power? "Have ye never read," says the Lord, "what

David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him?" When the heir, the object of God's counsels, was rejected, or his title and need was in question, did God hold to the forms or order of His house being maintained? No, the Lord puts His sanction on David's act, when he took of the shewbread, which "was *not* lawful" for him to eat, and gave it to them that were with him. And He adds, "in this place is One greater than the temple." Are these forms to be weighed in the same scale with the Son of God, the Lord of all? Is the superstructure of more consequence than the foundation itself -- the One on whom the Church of God is built, and on whom all its safety, stability, and integrity depends? Under ordinary circumstances it is right enough to enter a man's house with all the deference and respect due to him. But if the house is on fire, and it is a question of rescuing the inmates, nobody thinks of knocking at the door and asking permission to enter. To force a way in and drag them out anyhow, is, at such a time *the only right thing*. "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 23).

We add here some thoughts expressed by Mr. Darby on these points when passing through a similar crisis:

Never let the question of ecclesiastical subtleties swamp a broad principle of right and wrong. But I shall never be brought to such wickedness as to treat acceptance of blasphemers as an ecclesiastical question. If people like to walk with them or help and support the bearing with them at the Lord's Table they will not have me . . . I do not accept the setting aside my spiritual liberty; we are a flock, not an enclosure. (*Ecclesiastical Independency*, J.N.D.).¹⁰

LET US ONLY CONDEMN IT

Another form of palliation of evil is indifference; or at best a condemnation without active resistance. Regarding Eli, another said:

"What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me." "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth him good. Yes, in many respects this seems to have been an amiable, aged priest. Was it not even human kindness, or parental kindness? He might call it love, as many have done in this day. They have called it love to allow and pander to the false doctrine and evil they condemn. Have they not even slandered those who have sought to exclude the evil and give it no shelter? Oh, let us all take this solemn lesson of Eli's house to heart! Remember, brethren in Christ, judgment will begin at the house of God, as it swept away the house of Eli at the close of the history of Shiloh."¹¹

Eli's remark, "it is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth him good," is not pious. It is an unholy substitute for failure to rise in devotion to Jehovah and use his authority to put away the evil. Surely we see in his falling back when he heard that the ark was taken a sign that at bottom he loved Jehovah. He remonstrated

10. A. C. Ord, *The Glory of the Person of Christ*, p. 61.

11. Charles Stanley *From Egypt to Shiloh*, p. 29.

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with his wicked sons (1 Sam. 2:23) but he restrained them not (1 Sam. 3:13). No wonder the godly Hannah cried to Jehovah for a man-child. She became a Nazarite (Numbers 6; 1 Sam. 1:15), and wanted a Nazarite son from Jehovah (1 Sam. 1:11) to purge the evil at Shiloh perpetrated by the house of Eli. May God grant that the numbers of Hannahs be increased!

IT IS SERIOUS ERROR TO BE REJECTED. BESIDES, HE IS SENILE.

I wish to give a personal testimony here concerning a case that took place among Christians where I was before I was gathered to the Lord's Name. It happened in 1953. I was at a meeting of brethren from two divided companies of Christians. The meeting was for the purpose of dealing with matters so that these two groups could unite. The subject of the doctrine of C. E. Stuart, namely, the evil teaching that Christ took the blood to heaven and made propitiation there, was raised. Some thought it was evil. (Certainly W. Kelly did.)¹² Bro. W. said, "It is serious error to be rejected." This carried the day. The union was finally consummated and they are really met together on the basis that C. E. Stuart's doctrine is not evil. At any rate, it was pointed out in 1953 that Mr. H. of New Zealand, then about 88, held CES's doctrine. It was said that he was senile, and besides, he should not teach it.

In 1973 I received a July-Sept. 1973 issue of a magazine which contained an article by Mr. H. and under his name it said, "This article was written several years ago by . . . H., now in his 108th year and keeping generally good health." I doubt that his alleged senility disappeared; he never was senile. "No lie is of the truth."

It is certainly possible that a Christian may become senile. It is also certainly possible that Christians unholily palliate evil doctrine by saying that the holder or teacher of it is senile when it is not so. We must also remember another sad fact. It appears that weaknesses of character come out more in old age when these weaknesses are not so well held in check. May the Lord help us to judge ourselves, our ways and our thoughts, when younger, and put away that which displeases Him. May He preserve His dear people in their advancing years from falling into evil doctrine; and may He preserve them from it too when in their youth and prime years.

12. He said, ". . . the fundamental error which Mr. S. has embraced and teaches now . . .," *The Bible Treasury* 16:190. ". . . doctrine of propitiation . . . fundamentally unsound . . .," *The Bible Treasury* 18:60. ". . . ruinously wrong . . .," *The Bible Treasury* 18:84. "To palliate it by a show of argument in order to justify fellowship with those in such error one can leave the Lord to judge." *The Bible Treasury* 18:83.

DON'T BE OCCUPIED WITH EVIL

Often when doctrinal evil is exposed, Christians slight the exposure, if not actually opposing. This lays the ground for the further development of trouble among the people of God. If we do not judge ourselves, He will judge us (1 Cor. 11). The following quotation contains a wholesome warning.

OCCUPATION WITH EVIL. It is an evil thing to simply know evil without having to act in respect of it; it always tends to defile and lower the sentiment or habit of mind. Under the law he who was occupied with the cleansing of him who had touched a dead body was unclean until the evening; because he had had to say to it, though himself otherwise clean. We have to remember that we are judged by the law of liberty; we are always free to do right and avoid wrong, because God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation give a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. We all fail in one way or another, but there is power to avoid it where there is watchfulness and prayer. It is not always at the moment one caught the strength. Habitual and diligent seeking God takes out of the power, or out of the way, of evil. Do not suffer a light appreciation of evil. There are many things we know are wrong and judge ourselves for; yet we are not sufficiently in the presence of God to judge in their true light. And hence the root and power are not destroyed -- I mean practically.¹³

THEY ARE SO FEW THAT TOOK ACTION

It happens sometimes that discipline is carried out where relatively few are gathered together unto the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the numbers involved may be made an occasion of objection. The extreme of this is to suppose a man and wife composing an assembly and that, say, the man becomes guilty of leaven. How can the wife put him away? Well, why raise the point? To palliate evil. There is no difficulty for which the Word of God is unequal. "Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19). This will dissolve the assembly in this case. Let her continue with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22). God always opens the way for His people to be separated from evil. Separation from evil unto the Lord is the foundation principle of holiness. Arguments and reasonings that lead to connection with evil NEVER proceed from the Spirit and Word of God.

HE IS DESTROYING HIS USEFULNESS

A very sad thing to observe is that when evil is exposed by someone, servants of the Lord sometimes say of him, "he is destroying his usefulness." Sometimes his "usefulness" is being destroyed by those who say such things, so far as the tendency of their words goes. Those who say such a thing when evil is being

exposed show that they have "service" before them as an object, and not Christ. "Usefulness" is the prime consideration. And suppose separation from evil does "destroy" someone's "usefulness." "Many first shall be last, and many last first." God is going to reverse human judgment in *many* cases and those who have been "useful" at the expense of a foundation principle of conduct of the children of God will be surprised that God will honor those who honored Him (1 Sam. 2:30), and will find out that He really meant it when He said, "Obedience is better than sacrifice."

HIDING EVIL

Suppose a man is getting a divorce. Scripture knows but one right ground -- fornication. He is asked what his ground of divorce is: he refuses to say. What? -- concerning a question of possible leaven he refuses to satisfy the consciences of his brethren in Christ? He must be refused as a wicked person. Another refuses to answer his brethren's questions about his belief concerning a fundamental doctrine. What is he hiding from his brethren? He brings not the doctrine of Christ (2 John 10). He must be put away as a wicked person.

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

*Is the Christian Heavenly?
and
Is the Church Heavenly?*

*On the Heavenly Calling,
and the Mystery*

(December 1848)

Introduction

I. What is meant by "THE HEAVENLY CALLING," and what is its practical bearing upon the WALK and WORSHIP of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

II. What is meant by "THE MYSTERY," and what connection is there between it and "THE HEAVENLY CALLING"?

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

The knowledge of that infinite grace which has brought us, as redeemed sinners, nigh to God, through the precious blood of Christ, is the strongest appeal to our souls to render obedience unto Him who has shewn such wonderful love to us. And in proportion as our hearts are touched with a sense of this love, shall we love in return; "We love Him because He first loved us."

Love will ever produce a fervent desire to please and meet the mind of the object of its affections.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments" said our blessed Lord. But however true and sincere the heart may be, yet if there be ignorance as to the commands of the Lord, there must be failure in obedience. Love is not sufficient to enable us to walk so as to glorify God. A true heart and right desires are not enough. A true heart is of vital importance; but an instructed mind as to what the will of God is, is needed to regulate and guide the warmest heart: the want of this often leaves the Lord's people open to much sorrow, when really seeking to serve Him.

Mary's heart was true and warm enough -- but she passed through much sorrow, because she "knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John

20:9).

We are not only called into fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost, but also to "be filled with the knowledge of His will, in *all wisdom and spiritual understanding*"; that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Col. 1:9); and that "love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in *all judgment*" (Phil. 1:9).

Knowledge without charity, we are taught, "puffeth up"; but knowledge and love must be combined and work together, or we shall fail in rendering real service unto God.

It maybe said, that God often leads His children far beyond their spiritual intelligence. This is true (and happy for us that He does so) but are we to make this an excuse for our foolishness and ignorance, because His grace and goodness abound? It is not what we have any right to expect or reckon upon; for this reason, that He has given a full revelation of His mind and will, and His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, that we might know His will. The word is the instrument by which He accomplishes His gracious purposes in us.

We are begotten by the word of truth (James 1:18).

We are born of the word (1 Peter 1:23).

By the word we grow (1 Peter 2:2).

By the word we are cleansed (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26).

By the word we are kept undefiled in the way, and from the paths of the destroyer (Psa. 17:4; 119:9).

By the word -- "the sword of the Spirit" -- we are able to stand against the wiles of Satan (Eph. 6:17).

It is by the word, known in the power of the Spirit, that our practical sanctification is carried on. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth," was the prayer of Jesus for His disciples (John 17:17).

The written word, then, contains full and ample instruction whereby we may, in all things, have a sure guide, and learn from it how to glorify God -- how greatly we need rightly to divide it, and understand what the will of the Lord is; not merely with reference to our personal walk, as individuals, but according to the design of God concerning the Church, and the character of its testimony, as well as position in the world.

There are certain characteristics of God's people, common to them in all ages, and under all dispensations; such as Faith, Hope, Love, and Obedience.

But the form and manner in which obedience is to be manifested vary, according to the character of the calling, at different periods.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy," is a word of universal application, addressed alike

to the Jew and to the Christian; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But a Christian would walk very far below his vocation, if he were to walk like a Jew, however great his attainments in holiness and godliness.

What would be obedience in one, would be ignorance, and oft disobedience in the other, and for this reason :God has been displaying his own character and ways at different times, and in different manners. His dealings with His people have varied according to his design and purpose respecting them. The Israelites were called to serve God in the enjoyment and abundance of all *earthy blessings*; Christians are called to be content with food and raiment, to be poor and despised, but blessed with all *spiritual blessings* [in the heavenlies]: -- the one was set in a dispensation of righteous government, the other in a dispensation of grace.

UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF GOD

Hence, it is evident, that the saints need the clearest understanding as to the purpose of God concerning them (the grace in which they are set!) and as to the character of their blessings and promises, or they will be unable to walk so as to meet the mind of God. Ignorance of those principles which correspond to the character of their calling will lead them to confound God's arrangements; and, mistaking His mind, they will be found acting upon principles, which at one time and under different circumstances were lawful, but are now condemned: a simple illustration of this is presented in Matt. 5:21, etc. How often this is the case with dear children of God! Many who have great peace, zeal, and devotedness and who are indeed a sweet savor of Jesus, are yet so ignorant of the character of their calling, that they are systematically found in fellowship with an evil world, drawn into its course, acting upon its principles, seeking its patronage, and helping on its delusions and false expectations: thus marring their testimony, while they bring weakness, sorrow, perplexity, and disappointment upon their own souls.

The Lord has of late years taught many of His saints to see this, and has opened from His own blessed word much truth concerning "*the Heavenly Calling*" of the Church; and while there is doubtless much more to be learned, the practical power and blessing from that which has been seen have been extensively felt.

In considering the subject of the Heavenly Calling, ¹ I have felt the need there is to keep before the mind, not only its prominent truths and grand features in detail, but also its scope and character as a whole.

1. At a meeting of brethren in the Lord, at Liverpool, in November, 1843, much light appears to me to have been given upon this subject, which I have ever since found to be most profitable, and a cause for much thankfulness. The distinguishing features between "*the Heavenly Calling*" treated of in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and "*the Mystery*" unfolded in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, were very definitely brought out.

A partial view of "*the Heavenly Calling*" will lead only to partial results, and, it may be, to an opposite line of conduct in two saints.

For instance, one person sees that the Church is called to a heavenly hope, and consequently that earthly rest and establishment are not now to be desired, but strangership and separation from the course of this world.

Another sees how all the types and shadows of the law, ordinances of divine service, priestly services, and formal Ceremonies, have been fulfilled and taken up in Christ; and this delivers him from confounding law and gospel, and from all formal worship.

But while the walk of one and the worship of the other have been set right, the limited view each has of "*the Heavenly Calling*," may leave both to pursue a line of conduct altogether at variance with it, and yet each suppose that his ways are regulated by its principles. Hence the importance of understanding what the scope of the truth is, and what it really embraces.

I will endeavor to point out the form which this truth assumes in my own mind. Further I cannot go.

What is Meant by "The Heavenly Calling"; and What is its Practical Bearing upon the Walk and Worship of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

"The Heavenly Calling" of the Church will be better understood as it is compared with the earthly calling of Israel; -- the contrast between the two, and the distinguishing character of the blessings, promises, and worship, each serves to mark more definitely what is involved in this truth.

Converts from among the Hebrews were the most suitable persons to address upon the subject. Their history, and all the appointments under the old Covenant, furnish so many materials for explaining their new position. The scriptures, at once, could be referred to; which could not be the case when addressing Gentiles, who might not though converted, be so familiar with the scriptures as to make that mode of conveying instruction the most expressive to them.

The expression, "the Heavenly Calling," occurs only once in scripture (in Heb. 3:1); but the whole argument of that Epistle refers to it.

The subject appears to me to bear practically upon two positions of believers.

1. That which refers to their **Walk** in the world.

2. That which refers to their **Worship** before God.

Our Walk

A brief consideration of Israel's history, keeping before the mind the *calling, hopes, habits, and associations* of that people, from whom the parties addressed were converted, will enable us to perceive the force of the arguments of this Epistle, and the light which the Heavenly Calling casts upon our *walk*.

Passing over the call of Abraham, and their bondage in Egypt, it will suffice to take them up at Mount Sinai. They were there acknowledged by God, as His peculiar people -- a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5, 6).

He promised to bring them into it place which he had prepared for them, and to bless them there with everything that gives delight and happiness to the natural desires and affections of the heart of man (Exodus 23:20-26, etc.; Deut. 28:1-13).

He sought for rest and refreshment in them, of which the Sabbath was the sign (Exodus 31:17). His rest in Creation had been broken by the sin of man; it was proved a second time, by Noah's failure, that there was no rest yet for God in the earth; but, again seeking it in Israel, the renewal of the Sabbath was appropriate and expressive of the earthly character of their dispensation.

They were then [outwardly] *a redeemed people* journeying through *the wilderness*, but with every provision made by God for them by the way -- the visible token of His presence, and the most complete directions relative to His will and worship given to them. They had, too, *the promise* of a rich inheritance and rest, to animate and cheer their hearts amidst the weariness, conflicts, and perils of the wilderness.

The faithful, full of confidence and rejoicing in hope, spurned the thought of rest in the desert, and were content to be pilgrims and strangers till they possessed the land. The unbelieving and distrustful became fearful of heart, and were ready to return to Egypt, despising the glorious prospects God had set before them.

Israel's position in the wilderness then answers to the position of Christianity in the world. Redeemed to God, called to count the world in which they are as a wilderness, and to be strangers and pilgrims in it, but with a blessed and glorious *hope* before them.

The difference is this -- that Israel was called to *earthly* blessings and an earthly hope; Christians are called to spiritual blessings and a *heavenly* hope. But the Hope separated their hearts from all around -- gave the character to their walk and position in the wilderness; and thus, where faith was in exercise, they serve as a pattern and example to the saints now; or their unbelief serves as a warning lest any

should fall, and so come short of God's rest.

Seeing then, as believers in the Lord Jesus, as "*partakers of the heavenly calling*," what kind of hope is given to us, we are taught that our place is "without the camp bearing His reproach" (Exodus 13). The principles of our calling will surely lead to separation from this evil world, not merely from its ungodliness, excess, and folly, but from its whole course and current, its schemes, politics, and glory, knowing that all is soon to be dissolved, and that our kingdom is one that cannot be moved.

We learn from this Epistle what power this heavenly hope had over the lives and conversation of these early Christians; they "endured a great fight of afflictions. . . were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions. . . took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing" that they had "in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:32-34).²

Our Worship

The second division of the subject leads to the consideration of the bearing which the truth of "*the Heavenly Calling*" has upon our *worship*.

2. The statements made concerning "*the rest*" in [Hebrews] chapters 3 and 4 and in chapter 11 are well worthy of notice.

The Lord brought Israel into the Promised Land, and blessed them in it, notwithstanding their forfeiture of every blessing by making the calf, and their subsequent rebellions; but for all that, it was not "His rest," nor could it be upon the terms and covenant they agreed to take it, conditional upon their obedience; for He can find rest alone in the provisions of His own grace. This rest of God in them and the Land is yet future, and cannot be till Israel is restored, and all the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled, through the blood of the Mediator of the New Covenant.

This is yet future, as well as the heavenly inheritance of Christians, so that it can be said to us, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

But of Israel it might be asked, Had they not rest when brought into Canaan? They had in measure; but it was not *God's rest*; "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he [David] not have spoken of another day" (Heb. 4:8); and this was spoken by David at least four hundred years after Joshua had brought them into the Land, proving that God looked upon the rest as yet future. So David himself felt at the close of his career: -- "For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding" (1 Chron. 29:15). And the faith of many of the saints from Abraham onwards seemed to have looked beyond the *dispensational* and *national promises* to Israel to a heavenly hope, "a better country, that is, a heavenly" -- "a city which hath foundations" -- "a better resurrection," and so walked individually as pilgrims and strangers, suffering from the world, despising its pleasures and glory, and thus become a more direct example to us; but if these are not enough, let us "consider Him," even Jesus, the Prince of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We have then to bear in mind, "that this is not our rest, it is polluted," and walk accordingly, not in self-enjoyment and establishment, but hastening through the world, thankful for the rest our souls have now by faith in Christ, but still waiting for the rest of God.

Here again we must remember the prominent features of Israel's worship, and the very strong hold which all the offices and ordinances connected with it had over their minds and affections. We can well understand this: --

1. Because they were of Divine appointment, and sacred in their eyes.
2. They were the tokens of God's special favor to them as His nation and people.
3. Thirdly. They were associated with every domestic and social thought and feeling from infancy.
4. From the strong hold which outward ordinances have over the natural mind -- the tendency of the human heart, when at all exercised in conscience, to seek satisfaction and relief in that which is obvious to sense. And this is often the case, even after the soul has been long exercised, and found, through bitter experience, that it is not by works of righteousness that man can be made meet for the presence of a Just and Holy God; yet the poor heart, clinging to everything but simple faith, will turn and seek to find its rest and meetness for God in ordinances. Such was the case in the early Church. Circumcision was maintained by some to be necessary to salvation; and in our day Baptism and the Lord's Supper are declared to be as necessary -- the mind of the Lord in these institutions being mistaken altogether.

Remembering, then, this tendency of the flesh, and the former habits and associations of these Hebrews, at once we see the danger they were in, if *faith* declined, to turn again to those shadows and beggarly elements as they are called, and to forget how they were fulfilled and taken up by Christ in His Person, Sacrifice, and Offices.

That there were symptoms of this declension is very evident from the whole character of the Epistle, and from the solemn warnings and searching exhortations given unto them; but the Apostle does more; he takes the greatest pains to enlighten their understanding, and to give a right direction to their deep-rooted associations in all those points connected with their consciences and service.

Conducting the Worship

THE POINTS INVOLVED

It will be well to notice what these points were, which were so essential and absolutely necessary for conducting the worship according to the order of the tabernacle established by God.

They were as follows, though the first and indeed the last were not immediately requisite in the routine of the worship, part of the Priest's service being to inquire of the Lord.

1. A **Prophet** who communicated the word of the Lord to them.
2. A **High Priest** who appeared before the Lord for them -- the priests who ministered subordinately.
3. A **Tabernacle** wherein the priests ministered and wherein the Lord appeared.
4. The **Sacrifice and Blood**, the ground of the priest's appearing before God for them.
5. The **Altar** which sanctified every sacrifice and gift.
6. A **Mediator**, the Securer of all their hopes and blessings.

Now the Apostle does not weaken one of these associations in connection with the worship and service of God -- all would be lifeless and powerless without them; but he explains and points out to them how the *sacrifice* had been met by Christ, that He had become their Great *High Priest*, and that the place of his ministration for them was not in the *earthly* tabernacle, but *in heaven* where they must now by faith draw nigh and worship God through Him.

This will be more clearly seen by following the argument of the Apostle upon each of these points.

1. PROPHET OR APOSTLE

God had in times past spoken by the Prophets: in these last days He had spoken by His Son.

He, who was the brightness of God's glory, the Creator, Sustainer and Heir of all things, came from Heaven to declare the "great salvation." He was God's Apostle: hence the increased responsibility believers are under to give heed to what is spoken, and the force of the exhortation, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the *Heavenly Calling*, consider the Apostle . . . of our profession Christ Jesus."

God *had* communicated His will from the *Earth*, but now from *Heaven*; so much sorer the punishment shall those be thought worthy of who turn away from such grace and condescension.

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from *Heaven*" (Heb. 12:25). God speaking from Heaven by His Son as Apostle, is the first truth of "*the Heavenly Calling*."

He may still be considered as speaking from Heaven; for that which He first spoke by the Lord was confirmed by those who heard Him, "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. 2:3, 4).

2. HIGH PRIEST

A clear understanding of what Priesthood really is, is deeply necessary for our souls' daily experience.

The communication of the word of the Lord by a *Prophet* or *Apostle* is one thing; but the worship and intercourse between the people and the Lord is another: this was effected through the *Priest*.

The Prophet speaks to man from God -- the Priest speaks to God for man -- the Prophet had oft to plead for God with man; but the Priesthood to plead for man with God.

But the most simple definition of Priesthood is given in Heb. 5:1, 2. A Priest is one "taken from among men and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity."

A few more passages cast additional light upon this office:

"Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to me in the Priest's office . . . And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons" (Exod. 28:1, 4). "Aaron shall bear their [the children of Israel's] names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial" (v. 12) also he "shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in to the Holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (v. 29). The plate of gold upon the mitre "shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the Holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord" (v. 38).

And the Lord said unto Aaron, "Thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of Witness" (Num. 18:2).

"Thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve: . . . and the stranger that *cometh nigh* shall be put to death" (ver. 7).

Those only "whom he hath chosen will he cause to *come near* unto him" (Num. 16:5). "No stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron [shall] *come near* to offer incense before the Lord" (v. 40). "*Neither must the children of Israel henceforth*

come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation" (Num. 18:22).

While all the priests had constant access into the Tabernacle, the High Priest alone entered within the veil where the Lord appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat; and that only once every year, when reconciliation was made, "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel" (Lev. 16).

These will suffice to shew us that the priests were a favored class of the people; they had nearer access to God than the people; they made reconciliation for them, presented their gifts. The High Priest bore their burdens, carried them on his heart before the Lord, hallowed, their holy gifts; that they might be accepted -- decided who were clean (Lev. 13 and 14); pronounced the blessing upon them (Lev. 9:22, and Num. 6:22-27); in fact, was the one through whom their worship and service were presented to God, and who stood as their representative before God. No wonder, then, that an Israelite should so look for and lean upon the service of the Priest. The Apostle would not weaken this dependance, but leads their minds to Christ their High Priest in the Heavens, and shows them how it is no earthly priesthood now they have to do with, "For if he were on earth he should not be a Priest." The believer, delivered now from the law, knows of no priest or order of men between him and God, or that he stands in need of any one service being performed for him.

How forcible then the exhortation, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of *the Heavenly Calling*, consider the . . . *High Priest* of our profession, *Christ Jesus*."

A few words as to his qualifications for this office: they are well calculated to meet the feelings, and to give confidence and comfort to the souls of believers, especially to Hebrew converts.

The Son laid aside his Glory and became a man to be an Apostle. This was also needful to fit him to be a Priest; for a priest is one "taken from among *men*." He has gone back into Glory, still a man, to be a Priest.

Having passed through all the circumstances of suffering which sin had entailed upon man, "made flesh and blood," "encompassed with infirmity" and weakness; "tempted though without sin," "tasted death," "having learnt obedience by the things which he suffered," known what it was to "offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears"; he is in every respect personally qualified for his office, for "he *can have* compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way"; and thus in all things made like unto his brethren, can be reckoned on as a merciful and faithful High Priest.

An Israelite could have had no confidence in a priest not "called of God." "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest." . . . but was "called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 5:10). There was much in this high order of Priesthood to give more confidence and security to the believer

than in Aaron's.

In the first place, it was of higher order; for Melchisedec was greater than Abraham. He was both King and Priest -- it was an unchangeable Priesthood -- therefore able to save to the end, "*ever living* to make intercession" -- made "after the power of an endless life" by the oath of God (7) -- the surety also of a better covenant than that of the Law.

The poor weak failing or defiled Israelite had often to turn to the Priest, to be cleansed and fitted to resume his place in the camp, or his service before the Tabernacle; and oft indeed has the believer in Jesus to turn to him, his High Priest in the heavens, for sympathy and grace to help, for healing and restoration of soul, and renewed communion with God.

The heavenly Priesthood of Christ is the second prominent truth of "*the Heavenly Calling*."

3. TABERNACLE

But *where* does Jesus exercise this service of Priesthood? Not upon earth: "for if he were on earth he should not be a Priest" (Heb. 8:4); but "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of *the true tabernacle*, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:1, 2); "he is passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4:14). The Lord no longer appears in the cloud in the earthly tabernacle (Exod. 25:22; 39:43-45; 40: 34-38; Lev. 16:2). His Glory has been withdrawn from thence, where he was wont to meet his people (Ezek. 1 and 10); and now the only meeting-place is in *heaven*, where in faith the worshipper through Jesus must draw nigh.

4. THE SACRIFICE AND BLOOD

But there is now an essential point to be considered in connection with this office. What was his *title* to stand in the presence of God for others? The proof that their sin was put away. Lev. 16 explains all this in type, and Hebrews 9 is the application of that chapter to Christ and his work.

The High Priest under the Law had every year to make atonement for the sins of the people, and he could only appear within the vail before the Lord with blood, which he sprinkled upon the Mercy-seat: but Christ entered in *once* by His own blood, having obtained redemption, not for a year, but *eternal redemption* for us. "Once in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Jesus the Son of God, in virtue of his own righteousness, had ever free access into Heaven and the throne of God; but if he is to appear there as the representative of others, he must produce the proof of their sins being put away, that the sacred

Holiness of God may be maintained while he thus deals in mercy with the sinner. Hence the need of atonement and the accomplished redemption of the people, before the priest could appear in the presence of God for them.

Jesus' own blood is his full and perfect title to exercise this position and service for his people before God, and by it He will also reconcile the heavens and the earth (Heb. 9:23; Col. 1:20).

There is still another point that the soul of the worshipper needs to be set at rest about. He maybe satisfied as to the perfect qualifications of Christ for the office -- that he was duly "called of God" to it -- of its high order, dignity, and peculiar power -- of his full title to execute it; but what is all this to one who is in any uncertainty about his own personal condition before God. This was felt under the law: the conscience had not rest, neither of priest nor people, "it could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to *the conscience*" (Heb. 9:9). They never made "the comers thereunto *perfect*, because, if *once purged*, [they] should have had no more conscience of sins" (Heb. 10:1, 2).

Now, how is this met? We learn from Acts 26 who the sanctified are, "sanctified by faith that is in me." Whenever there is faith in Jesus, that person is sanctified. By the will of God "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all," and for *ever*. "For by one offering he hath perfected for *ever* them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:10, 14).

Here we learn who are sanctified -- those who believe in Jesus; through what means they are sanctified -- the offering of His body; and then, lest a fear might arise as to the loss of this blessing, it is written, "*perfected forever*." The conscience purged, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Then these two things are provided for the worshipper. The blood of Jesus as his personal confidence to enter; and Jesus Himself, with all the proof that He has put away sin, standing there ready to receive him. Oh then the force of the word, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in *full assurance of faith*, having our beam sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed in pure water." Let us as duly consecrated priests, enter even within the veil, and, through our great High Priest, worship our God with reverence and godly fear.

5. THE ALTAR

Every sacrifice and gift, under the law, was brought to the altar. It was there the blood was shed, and from thence the sweet savor ascended. It sanctified every gift -- Whatsoever toucheth it shall be holy (Exod. 29:37; Matt. 23).

Now the Apostle shows that those who serve the Tabernacle have no right to the Altar, which the believer in Jesus has communion with. That He might sanctify the

people by His own blood, He suffered without the gate. Jesus Himself is the altar now; and He it is that sanctifies us, and every gift that is presented to God. No worship or service of any amount is accepted but through Him and His work. His is the true altar: "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name; but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:10-16).

6. MEDIATOR

A few brief remarks before closing upon the Mediatorship of Christ.

We read that a change in the order of the priesthood necessarily made a change of the law; that there was a disannulling of it, because it made nothing perfect; but then there was the bringing in of a better hope (Heb. 7:12, 18, 19). This is secured in Jesus -- a Priest after the order of Melchisedec -- who has entered within the veil, and is made the surety of a better covenant.

The Jews ought to have been expecting this new covenant: for, if a *new* was spoken of, they should have been prepared for the passing away of *the old* (Heb. 8:6). This covenant was strictly made with the *house of Israel*, and with the *house of Judah*³ (Heb. 8:8); and in whatever measure Christians may share some of its blessings, it applies to Israel, and will be confirmed to them upon their restoration, "when the Redeemer shall come to Zion." The Apostle appears to refer to it here to draw the minds of the Jewish converts away from the old covenant and its ordinances, and to lead them to see that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant; "and that, by means of death [His death] for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they who are called might receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*."

I have now gone through what appears to me to be the prominent characteristics of "*the heavenly calling*," and have endeavored to show its practical bearing both upon the walk and worship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How entirely this truth grounds our souls in grace. We are exhorted to hold fast grace, and encouraged to put confidence in God as the God of grace, under all afflictions, contradiction of sinners, and chastenings of His loving hand; and to remember that we are not come unto the mount where He was displaying Himself as a consuming fire, and in all the tokens of terrible majesty; but that we are come "unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God the *heavenly Jerusalem*" etc.

3. [Those Christians who practice spiritual alchemy transmute the house of Judah and of Israel, in this passage, to mean the church of God. With such a type of "interpretation," a totally different meaning than intended can be foisted on this passage.]

It gives, then, the character to our supports and consolations under affliction and suffering -- furnishes us with clear principles to regulate our walk; and while it forbids us to think of rest or settlement in the world, and points out our path as pilgrims and strangers in it, without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach, it presents to us, as our hope, a kingdom which cannot be moved -- a heavenly inheritance.

SOME PRACTICAL POINTS

We are called, then, to walk by faith, and to worship God in faith. When this is understood, there will be no attempt to frame the worship after the pattern of Jewish observances.

Those who minister the word will neither wish to take, or be forced into, the position of the priests of old, and form a distinct class, or order of men between the congregation and God; but all worship together in the privilege of that universal priesthood and liberty, alike common to all believers.

The feeling of veneration towards the building which affords convenience to the assembly, will vanish along with its usual appellation, "the house of God;" and the thoughts will be carried upward, within the veil, to the building not made with hands -- even heaven itself, the throne of the Majesty on high. No visible altar will be needed. Christ within the veil hallows the worship; and by Him we offer praise and thanksgiving and good works, the only sacrifices which we know are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Many of the Lord's people do not see the injurious tendency of these external things; but I am satisfied they tend to weaken faith in invisible objects. They may assist the imagination, and produce feelings of veneration, but will not quicken the conscience in the presence of God. Without them, the worship will doubtless be less imposing and attractive to the natural mind, but will be more "in spirit and in truth."

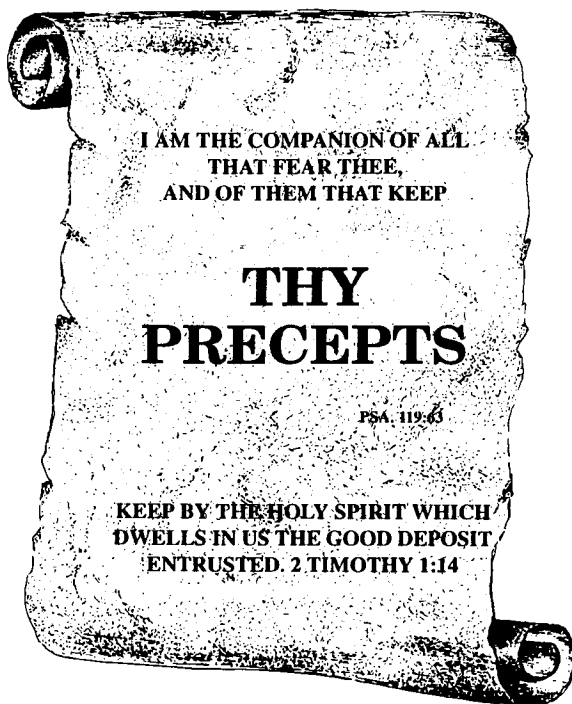
The Heavenly Calling overturns them all, by presenting to our faith the Object to which they point.

If this blessed truth is clearly understood, the perfect acceptance and everlasting security of the believer are known, for the priesthood of Christ involves them; also, full deliverance from the law, whether as to justification, or as a rule of life -- Christ being, not only our Savior, but perfect pattern and example. May we know more of Him, and what it is to be "partakers of *the Heavenly Calling*"!

The Present Testimony 1:1-17 (1849).

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Tapes and Books Available

Some sets of cassettes of recorded addresses by the editor (8 tapes in an 8 pocket case) on the subject of dispensational truth (re the Old Testament) are available for \$23.00 per set.

Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby. vol. one, 1826-1845, 238 pp., with copious subject index, is available for only \$12.00. This book, besides showing the history of recovered truth, also addresses in detail the charges that J. N. Darby received the idea of the pretribulation rapture from a demonic or occultic or Jesuitical source. Reviews are saying that this book has settled that issue. Highly documented.

J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses, with Scripture index and several charts, includes several lengthy appendices: A Reply to Ultradispensationalism; A Reply to the Charge that Dispensationalism is inherently Arminian; and A Reply to the Charge that the Kingdom Offer Makes God Immoral. The reader will discover great differences between JND's teaching and that of C. I. Scofield, concerning dispensational truth. Indeed, CIS's definition of a dispensation is basically wrong. Moreover his scheme violates the truth of the end of the first man at the cross and omits the very basic matter of the development of God's ways in government in the earth, which is of fundamental importance to the subject. \$10.00

If you want 'newspaper exegesis' of prophetic matters, then the following books will not interest you. If you prefer sober exposition (and why would you not prefer that?) then you may find help in the following foundational books, the first of which contains a five color chart detailing epochs of Scripture from the opening of the times of the Gentiles until the eternal state.

Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire, 100 pp., with Scripture index; \$5.00.

Future Events: ■ Jacob's Trouble ■ The Hour of Trial ■ The Great Tribulation ■ The Day of the Lord ■ The War of that Great Day of God the Almighty; 104 pp., with Scripture index; \$7.00

Add \$1.75 for postage for orders under \$15.00; 10% for orders over \$15.00. NJ residents add 6% sales tax.

It would be appreciated if you would recommend these books to Christian acquaintances.

Announcement of a New Book

Vol. 2 of *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby* should be received from the printer, if the Lord will, about the time you read this.

Vol. 2 covers the Plymouth and Bethesda divisions. It documents the true beginnings of Open Brethrenism and the related evil doctrines of B. W. Newton concerning his teaching of Christ's circumstantial distance from God. A brief table of contents appears below. This work demonstrates the integrity of J. N. Darby's account as well as that of W. Trotter (and others), while exposing the dishonesty involved in attacks on JND by supporters of Bethesda. Of special interest is chapter 8.5 which is a printing of a manuscript for the first time.

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The book is 332 pages and contains a subject index as well as a complete bibliography.

The price of the book is \$14.00.

Those receiving *Thy Precepts* may purchase copies at **\$11.00** until ^{april} ~~March~~ 30, 1994. Add \$1.75 postage for the first vol. and \$0.50 for each additional volume.

Volume 1 in this series is still available: \$12.00 each plus postage as above.

Also related is *J. N. Darby's Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations and the Two Parentheses*, \$10.00 each plus postage as above.

THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

The "Strange Doctrine" of Propitiation

by W. Kelly

C. E. Stuart states his peculiar teaching in these words (*Recent Utterances*, p. 49):

Where and when has propitiation by blood been made by Him? The answer is simple -- in heaven and after death. Mr. Pinkerton [who labored till his death in the East, and only expresses in substance what saints hitherto have believed and confessed] affirms all was done in this world, not in heaven. If so, propitiation by blood the Lord has not made, nor can He make it. The doctrine we are asked to accept sweeps away all hope of salvation, for atonement is not complete without propitiation by blood, and this Mr. Pinkerton really denies that the Lord did and could effect. His doctrine is in flat opposition to the Word of God.

That a view of fundamental truth, unknown to scripture and opposed to the faith of God's elect, was asserted plainly and emphatically, is a mercy: no upright Christian can doubt its meaning. Hence, from its first coming to our knowledge in 1886, it was condemned in our midst, ¹ not with party spirit certainly, but pain and sorrow; for many had sympathized with Mr. S. as a previously ill-used man. An open and full discussion took place at the Birmingham Conference of 1887; where one, seeming to lean toward the delusion, yet denying that he accepted it, excited censure and fears. When he avowed it soon afterwards, he was refused a place at the Lord's Supper in Kenilworth, but, profanely snatching the bread and wine, was forthwith put away. Afterwards two at Bournemouth were discovered to hold the same false doctrine, and withdrew as it was opposed. Only a few years ago one of inquisitive turn, in or near Swansea, came under the same sentence for the same offence against the Lord and His atoning work. All concurred in every quarter, as far as we know. No person known to hold it has been, or would be, tolerated in fellowship.

1. [The Kelly company was formed in 1881. Here, W. Kelly referred to what transpired among them regarding C. E. Stuart's doctrine.]
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For this "strange doctrine" robs Christ's work on the cross of the efficacy scripture assigns to it, and attributes propitiation wholly to what Christ did "in heaven and after death," on which scripture is silent. The fable is owing, in part to misconstruing of the type in Lev. 16, and in part to human reasoning on Heb. 2:17, 8:4 and 9:12, which in no way bear out the notion, the last even refuting it. For there it is said that Christ entered by His own blood once for all into the holies, having found (not, to find) an eternal redemption. No doubt, Aaron necessarily had to go into the holiest, in order to put the blood there; as he had also to come out for the substitution, when he laid the sins and iniquities on the scape-goat. For propitiation and substitution were essential to atonement. The error lies in denying that both were fulfilled in Christ's work on the cross, and inventing a chimerical propitiation "in heaven and after death," which supplants the real one.

God set forth Christ Jesus, not exactly a propitiation (which of course is pre-supposed), but a propitiatory or mercy-seat through faith in His blood (Rom. 3:25): not a word about fresh action for it "in heaven and after death." All hung on the redemption that is in Christ; and "death" took place for this redemption, as Heb. 9:15 lays down: absolute silence as to a subsequent act of propitiation. For propitiation He had suffered, bled, and died. Hence 1 John 2:1 declares that Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins, yet not for our sins only, but also for the whole world." 1 John 4:10 adds that God sent His Son into the world (not took Him to heaven after death) as "propitiation for our sins." So on the cross He said, "It is finished," and delivered up His spirit. Then was the veil of the temple rent from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened. Can any soul fail to recognize that all was in witness and honor of His atoning death, not of something done "after death and in heaven?" No believer doubts that its infinite value instantly reached heaven and lasts through eternity. But how false, evil, and blind to deny propitiation to Christ's sufferings and blood on the cross, of which scripture speaks continually! and to supplant that truth by that of which scripture says nothing, "in heaven and after death!"

"His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). This was both propitiation and substitution: was it "in heaven and after death?" Or wait we for His future work in this respect when He comes out of heaven? How perilous, when Levitical type governs apostolic teaching! "Christ also once for all suffered for sins, just for unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). Not a hint of a further act for this: was it not a full atonement? Did He suffer in heaven, or (as others say) in hades, after death? Away with every dream that dishonors Him crucified!

On the cross Him Who knew no sin God made sin for us. Did not this include propitiation and more? Was it "in heaven and after death?" To the Romans Paul wrote (5:10), that "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son": were we "reconciled" without propitiation? To the Colossians he wrote (1:20-22), that "Christ made peace through the blood of His cross," to reconcile all things on the earth and in the heavens, as He will soon, but meanwhile "you . . . He reconciled in the body of His flesh," not when out of it [in the disembodied state], "through death," not "after it and in heaven, to present you holy," &c. Was their reconciliation for so glorious a result without propitiation, or before it? Or is not the new doctrine evil and preposterous? Some, to help it, plead the distinction between the English words, "expiate" and "propitiate." It is baseless; for there is but one word in the Hebrew, as in the Greek. The verbal form is so used in Heb. 2:17 (for such as we find in Matt. 16:22, and Luke 18:13 have no place here). It was for man before God in heaven; but no sign ever appears of a fresh work in Christ's case done there after death.

Nevertheless Mr. S. at least was frank and outspoken. He never pretended, like others, that this teaching was unimportant if true, or innocuous if unfounded. He boldly said that Mr. Pinkerton's view, which is beyond doubt that of saints hitherto everywhere, "sweeps away all hope of salvation." Far be it from us to retort in like extravagance. But he is quite right in claiming the utmost moment for his view if true; and he is not the man to evade the consequences if false; as brethren also have given the strongest proof in united judgment of it. Long ago too we had learnt that, when fatal evil works, the enemy's most seductive and effective instrument in spreading it is the neutral. For the unspiritual fancy that, if one professes not to hold the error, there can be no harm; whereas the precise way to dishonor God and damage man most is to disclaim its acceptance, hoping thereby to escape, while doing all one can to persuade others that it is only a difference of judgment as to certain passages of scripture. So an Arian or an Irvingite, and especially one neutral to either, might say with as little soundness or fear of God. Evidently all depends on the gravity of the case. Here it is a question of the true propitiation of Christ or of a fancied and false one.

W. K.

December, 1899

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

6: The Pretribulation Rapture

Chapter 6.5

1 Corinthians 15:52

The Last Trump

INTRODUCTION

Some at Corinth denied the resurrection of the body of the believer (1 Cor. 15:12). Yet the apostle held them responsible for the implications of their doctrine, which, if true, would mean that Christ was not raised (v. 13). And the implication of that is that their faith was vain if their allegation was true (v. 15).

If held in the face of correction, it would be fundamental evil -- leaven (Gal. 5:9); and leaven must be purged out (1 Cor. 5). Doctrinal evil is worse than moral evil because it purports to come from God and makes Him the author of it.

Where correction is received and self is judged, God does not have to intervene in judgment (1 Cor. 11:31, 32). The apostle corrected the Corinthians on the subject in 1 Cor. 15. He did not affirm that he taught only what the other apostles taught, but stated that so far as the foundations of our holy faith are concerned (1 Cor. 15:3, 4), whether it was the other apostles or himself, they all preached this and the Corinthians had received it (1 Cor. 15:11).

What concerns us now is that the Spirit was pleased to write about a mystery as connected with the subject (1 Cor. 15:51-58). The mystery is not that Christ would come and receive His own unto Himself. We get that truth in John 14. The secret is that the bodies of the living are going to be changed at "the last trump." The One for Whom we wait is going to "transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory. . ." (Phil. 3:21). "We shall be

changed" (1 Cor. 15:52). Of course, the dead also shall be raised incorruptible and the effect is that all of the righteous shall be like Christ.

THE ARGUMENT CONCERNING THE LAST TRUMP

"The last trump" 1 Corinthians 15:52 is the source of a favorite argument of posttribulationists.² Those who believe that the rapture of the saints will occur before the seventieth week of Dan. 9 say that the last trump of 1 Cor. 15:54 will sound before the events of Rev. 4; and, that the seven trumpets of Revelation sound after the events of Rev. 4. Posttribulationists say that the "last trump" and the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-18 are the same; and since the saints are caught up at the sounding of the last trump, they must be caught up after the tribulation since the seventh trump is posttribulational. The certainty of this equation is evinced in the following quotations from some posttribulationists.

A. D. Katterjohn invited us to fill in the blank with a specific scripture reference.

There are two Last Trumpets _____.³

W. E. Dalling wrote:

Scripture states that our Lord's coming for His people is at the last trump (cf. Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 11:15-18); but failure to equate the trumpet of 1 Cor. 15 with that of Rev. 11:15 leaves us with but one alternative -- to teach that there are seven trumpets after the last!⁴

R. Gundry was more flexible in view, and after stating that it is reasonable to equate all the trumpets, remarked:

Besides, the last trumpet may *follow* the seventh trumpet or be included among events within the seventh trumpet. Pretribulationists need not only prove a distinction, but also to explain the incongruity of the adjective "last" for a pretribulationist trumpet.⁵

THE REPLY

Last Does not Always Mean Last in Time. First, we will observe a case

2. Posttribulationists allege that the true church will go through the great tribulation and then at His appearing in glory the rapture will occur and Christ will set up the millennial kingdom.

3. *The Rapture -- When?*, p. 22.

4. "The Church and Tribulation," *Watching and Waiting*, May-June, 1954, p. 35. See A. Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, Grand Rapids: International Publications, p. 74, 1975.

5. *The Church and the Tribulation*, pp. 148, 149

where scripture uses "last" in a non-chronological sense and show also such use of "last" regarding the sounding of "the last trump." In the second place, we will find that a trump sounds sometime after the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11 is sounded, and therefore the seventh trumpet is not the last in time anyway.

First, then, a non-chronological use of "last" is found in John 5:25 which refers to an hour that now is. John 5:28, 29 refer to *an hour that is coming* when the dead shall rise. For a posttribulationist, that coming hour cannot arrive until the appearing of Christ in glory. In 1 John 2:18 we read "it is [the] *last hour*" (*hora*). If we were to reason upon this the way posttribulationists reason upon the *last trump*, asking for blanks to be filled, we would disbelievably ask how there can be a coming hour (of resurrection) when it is the last hour now, as 1 John 2:18 states; and then reason that we must be in the hour of resurrection now.

The coming hour (John 5:28, 29), in which the dead will be raised, is an extended period of time, **an epoch**, not a literal hour of 60 minutes. Another error regarding time that posttribulationists make is that they think that "the last day" refers to the day of the appearing of Christ in glory, but they overlook a scripture which shows quite otherwise. "The last day" includes the raising of believers (John 5:28, 29) before the millennium (Rev. 20:4) and the raising of the unjust dead (John 12:48) which takes place after the millennium (Rev. 20:5). Why they ignore John 12:48 is not clear. However, these scriptures show that the phrase, "the last day," as used by our Lord, is also **an epoch** of time, embracing within it the 1000 year reign of Christ, before which believers are raised, and after which, unbelievers are raised.⁶ At any rate, there is an hour coming which will follow the present "last hour."

H. T. Hudson objected thus:

... a last trumpet before the last. Such verbal tricks make a mockery of scripture.⁷

Why not object thus:

... a coming hour after the last hour. Such verbal tricks make a mockery of scripture.

We have found, then, that scripture does use "last" in a non-chronological sense. This does not prove such usage in the case of "last trump" but it does suggest

6. My *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire* contains a colored chart showing such epochs. This book is obtainable from the publisher.

7. *When? Before or After?* p. 16.

that H. T. Hudson's charge might not be so sound as it appears at first glance.

The Character of the Seventh Trumpet. In the second place, we are erroneously told two things in connection with the seventh trumpet:

- a) the "last trump" and "the seventh trumpet" are the same, because a trumpet cannot sound after the last trump.
- b) Christ appears when the seventh trumpet sounds, the dead rise, and the living saints are raptured. This happens on one day, although it may cover up to 24 hours.

Each one of these ideas, part and parcel, is false.

The seventh trumpet of Rev. 11 has reference to an extended period of time, not to the events of one short day of 24 hours. The sounding of the seventh trumpet occurs at a point in time (not necessarily a literal trumpet sound, but this does not affect the matter because the thing symbolized is initiated at a point in time symbolized by the sounding of the trumpet), but there is a scope to the seventh trumpet that far exceeds that of the previous trumpets. The seventh trumpet includes within its scope "the time of the dead to be judged."⁸ This is the judgment of the rest of the dead (Rev. 20:5,6) after the thousand-year reign of Christ, and after the "little season." It refers to the great white throne judgment of Rev. 20. The seventh trumpet includes rewards, and the kingdom,

8. The posttribulationist, A. Reese, claimed this refers to the righteous dead. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 75,76. So he therefore means believers are to be judged, whereas John 5:24 tells us otherwise. 2 Cor. 5:10 shows our *works* will be manifested. It is clear that "the time of the dead to be judged" refers to Rev. 20:1-15. He seems incapable of understanding W. Kelly who states that the rewards of the saints fall within the scope of the seventh trumpet, while of course, W. Kelly rightly believed that the 24 elders (Rev. 4) represent raptured and enthroned saints. A. Reese's misguided zeal for his notions and his self-satisfaction as to his own arguments are the roots of his incapacity to understand what to many is so plain and no contradiction at all.

1. The elders representing all of the redeemed (Heb. 11:40), raised and raptured, are *all* equally glorified and enthroned. It *does* seem rather elementary that there is no *distinguishing* manifestation of reward in this, for in rewards in connection with service to Christ there will be distinctions, whereas the elders have no distinctions.

2. Rewards are manifested in the kingdom, consequent upon Christ's manifestation (Col. 3:4).

Is this so difficult to understand? The trouble is that he read W. Kelly's words through his own notions, and then thought that he saw contradictions where there really were none. His book seems characterized by this defect.

Luke 14:14 will be fulfilled when the first resurrection is completed. Even Christ, the Firstfruits of the resurrection, has waited over 1900 years for the kingdom. If we wait about seven years, I don't suppose we are in opposition to our Lord's words (A. Reese, *Op. Cit.*, p. 77). I repeat again, the notion that *the first resurrection* is a point in time, is wrong. It describes a *class of persons*, the just, regardless of at what points in time they may be raised from among the dead.

too. It also includes the seven vials.

The Seven Vials and the Seventh Trumpet. We read that the seven vials (bowls, JND) are the seven **last** plagues (Rev. 15:1; 21:9). Therefore, the pouring out of the vials follows upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Christ will come after, or, I suggest, in connection with, the pouring out of the seventh vial (Rev. 16:17-21). That is, He will be manifested in glory *after* the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and *after* the pouring out of the first six vials. From this discussion we can already see that the last trumpet of 1 Cor. 15 cannot be the seventh trumpet of Revelation. But we must now consider another trumpet.

The Trumpet for the Regathering of Israel. Christ will come in glory, then, after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. And some time after He comes in glory, another trumpet will sound for the regathering of the elect of Israel.

This sounding of a trumpet after the seventh trumpet of Rev. 11 (claimed to be "the last trump") is found in Isaiah 27:13. This trumpet sounds for the regathering of Israel -- which takes place *after* Christ has appeared, and *after* He has destroyed the aggressors against those who had been in the land of Israel during the 70th week of Daniel 9. (The Jews presently returned, and returning, to Palestine do not do so in fulfillment of the regathering of which the Word of God speaks as His action.) The regathering of the ten tribes, i. e., Ephraim, will occur some weeks to a month after the appearing, along with the regathering of the dispersed of Judah.⁹

Many scriptures speak of the restoration: Isa. 60:1-15; Hosea 2:14-23; 3:4-5; Micah 4:68; Jer. 32:37-44, etc., etc.

For Ephraim see: Isa. 11:13; Jer. 31:7-9; Ezek. 20:33-38; 34:11-16; etc.

For Ephraim and Judah see: Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:18; 30:3; 31:27,31; 33:7; Ezek. 37; etc.

The agencies of the regathering are these:

Jehovah:	Jer. 16:15
Christ:	Isa. 49:6
The peoples:	Isa. 14:2; 49:22

9. The timing of these events is enlarged upon in my "The War of [that] Great Day of God the Almighty being the Time of the Nations (Ezek. 30:3)," in *Future Events*, which may be obtained from the publisher.

Vehicles: Isa. 66:22

Fishers and hunters: Jer. 16:16

Ships of Tarshish: Isa. 60:9

The great trumpet: Isa. 27:13

His angels, with great sound of trumpet: Matt. 24:31

All this, it appears to me, occurs between, approximately, the 1290th and the 1335th day of Daniel 12.¹⁰

A major argument used by A. Reese, against the *figurative* use of resurrection in Isa. 26:19 and Daniel 12:2, for the regathering of Israel, is that these passages are posttribulational, but since he argues that the regathering of Israel must occur before the apocalyptic week of Daniel 9, he says that the passages, being posttribulational in application, cannot refer to the regathering of Israel.¹¹ This is merely shuffling troublesome texts, for him, that block his scheme. The fact is that Israel's regathering, prophesied by the O. T. Prophets, will occur after Christ appears in glory.¹²

When we come to his only indexed reference to Isaiah 27:13, he tells us that this trumpet, the last trump, and the seventh trumpet all occur on the Day of the Lord,¹³ which to him is essentially one day¹⁴ (though it may widen out¹⁵),

10. The full blessedness for Israel will arrive on the 1335th day from the middle of Daniel's 70th week. This will be the 15th day of the month, the day of the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:34). On the first of the month (the 1320th day) there will be "a memorial of blowing of trumpets" (Lev. 23:24; cp. Num. 10:3. See Ezra 3:1; Neh. 8:1; Joel 22:15), signifying the regathering of Israel; while on the tenth day of the month (the 1330th day) will be the fulfillment of the day of atonement (Lev. 23:27; Zech. 12:10-13:1). I suggest that the trumpet of Isa. 27:13 and Matt 24:31 -- which sounds *after* the appearing of Christ in glory (Mark 13:26, 27) -- sounds in connection with "the memorial of blowing of trumpets."

It appears that the seventh bowl includes within its scope the appearing of Christ in glory and the consequent *war of the great day of God the Almighty* (Rev. 16:14), a short period of time which commences with Christ coming in glory, when He puts down His enemies in a Davidic character preparatory to His reign in a Solomonic character.

11. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 37 where it is insisted on.

12. There will be Jews in the land of Israel to build a temple before the middle of Daniel's 70th week, but it does not follow that they are there by God's regathering according to the texts cited above. Also, it is well to keep in mind the possibility of a time interval between the rapture of the saints and the opening of Daniel's 70th week. Scripture does not say yea or nay to that possibility.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

the appearing, which is also the last day, ¹⁶ if not also the day of God ¹⁷. It is a simplistic, indiscriminating, lumping and confused system. The truth is that we are now in "man's day" (1 Cor. 4:3), **an epoch**. "Man's day" will end when the stone of Dan. 2 smashes the image. This action ends the times of the Gentiles and inaugurates the "day of the Lord." The day of the Lord is another epoch, beginning with Christ's appearing in glory, including the millennium, and embracing the dissolution of the present creation:

But the day of [the] Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and [the] elements, burning with heat, shall be dissolved, and [the] earth and the works in it shall be burnt up.

All these things then being to be dissolved, what ought ye to be in holy conversation and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, by reason of which [the] heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and [the] elements, burning with heat, shall melt. But, according to his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

This makes it clear that the postmillennial end of "the day of the Lord" ushers in "the day of God," wherein will be the new heavens and earth.

In addition to the above confusion of all this, A. Reese did not expressly state so, but his teaching implies that Isa. 27:13 describes the rapture of the church. Now, such a notion involves spiritual alchemy (an amillennial/ post-millennial interpretive scheme of transmuting Israel into the church) and making the O. T. prophets prophesy about the church to some degree; i. e., to see the church where the passage clearly is about Israel. J. B. Payne, however, did actually state that Isa. 27:13 applies to the rapture. He says of it:

But this verse, which in itself probably describes the rapture of the church, is located after the posttribulational appearing of the Lord, returning to earth, and at the conversion of Israel. ¹⁸

Is not the context of Isa. 27:13 about Jews? And does not Rom. 16:25, Col. 1:26 and Eph. 3:9 conclusively show that Isa. 27:13 cannot refer to the rapture of the church? The allegation that Matt. 24:31 and Isa. 27:13 refer to the same gathering of the elect is true. But the reference is to elect Jews in both cases, as the respective contexts show.

The time of the sounding of the trumpet of Isa. 27:13 (and Matt. 24:31) is after the appearing. Mark 13:27 also indicates that. But the trump of God at the

16. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

17. The reference has escaped me.

18. *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 58, 1962.
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rapture sounds *when* Christ descends into the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18). These are not all the same trumpets therefore. The trumpet of Isa. 27 and Matt. 24 sounds after the rapture. And not only so, it sounds after the appearing of Christ in glory, which will occur a little after the seventh trumpet, and after the pouring out of the six vials before Christ appears.

We rightly conclude that the sounding of the trumpet of Isa. 27:13 is after the last trump of 1 Cor. 15; and, that "the last trump" does not refer to a chronological scheme of the sounding of trumpets. The last trump, then, does not have its application in connection with earthly events, but with something for heaven.

WHAT IS THE LAST TRUMPET OF 1 COR. 15:54?

It remains to explain the true significance of the "last" trump of 1 Cor. 15:52 (and thus of 1 Thess. 4:16).

In the Roman army, when it was about to move, the trumpet sounded three times: at the first trumpet they pulled down their tents; at the second trumpet they put themselves in order; and when the last sounded they started.¹⁹

How simple it all is. The "last trump" is used figuratively for *moving time* for the saints.

THREE GROUPINGS OF TRUMPETS

There are three groupings of people in the world:

Give no occasion to stumbling, whether to Jews, or Greeks,²⁰ or the assembly of God (1 Cor. 10:32).

There are three groupings of trumpets:

1. Isa. 27:13 and Matt 24:31 have to do with the post-appearing gathering of Jews to their earthly place.
2. 1 Thess 4:16 and 1 Cor. 15:52 have to do with the pretribulational gathering of saints to the heavenly sphere.
3. The seven trumpets of Revelation have to do especially with judgments on the Gentiles.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

19. See *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:417 and *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 13:365.

20. The Greeks here represent Gentiles.
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The Holiness of Christian Fellowship

6

Chapter 6: Miscellaneous Scriptures Bearing on the Holiness of Christian Fellowship

In this section we shall consider Scriptures that have to do with various forms of discipline which do not involve putting one away as a wicked person. It may be that pastoral and priestly care might prevent some cases from developing to the point where such discipline is needed. Furthermore, when a course is observed calling for some discipline, it may be that if it is carried out faithfully the guilty one might be preserved from something more serious which should be regarded as leaven.

On the other hand, when the guilty one is, let us say, publicly rebuked, there may be such a reaction of self-will that the assembly may find it is a case of idolatry.

Matthew 18:15-18

It is not my purpose to detail the course outlined for the case of one against whom another sins. It is plain. Only we should note that the object is to gain one's brother. If the offender does not listen to the assembly (this assumes the guilt is established, and now stubbornness and rebellion have been added), he will be put away, as may be seen from the fact that no Jew would eat with a Gentile. The principle of this separation applies.

If he refused to hear the assembly, he was to be counted as a heathen man. The Christian assembly took the place of the synagogue, and, where the assembly had acted, the judgment (till repentance) was final; the offender was held to be outside as a heathen. . . .

Galatians 6:1,2: Overtaken in a Fault

Gal. 6:1 does not refer to church discipline. It refers to individual action. The law required love but could not produce it, while grace does. The Galatians had been listening to law-teachers. Paul pressed the claims of holiness and love. In Gal. 6:1 he speaks of the spirit in which the spiritual (not law-keepers) should restore one overtaken in a fault:

1. In the spirit of meekness. Meekness means an attitude and behavior that involves not insisting on one's own rights (supposed or real), but never yielding the rights of God. The Lord Jesus was meek.
2. Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. This attitude would show itself in self-judgment and dependence on God.

The admonition supposes a case where a Christian in an unguarded moment is overtaken in a temptation and trespasses. I do not suppose it is a case of leaven as in 1 Cor. 5. Many trespasses are not leaven. A Christian may be "put on the spot" and suddenly find he has lied. Furthermore as a result, difficulty may arise. Communion with the Lord is broken and with the one(s) to whom he lied. The spiritual seek to bring him into the good of Prov. 28:13 and to make the matter right with the one(s) to whom he lied. He does so and judges it and himself before the Lord. He is restored. Matt. 18:15-20 may be related. We would expect that the "one or two besides" would be spiritual. But there may be a case where all seeking after the errant's restoration fails. Then Matt. 18:17, 18 applies.

1. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 14:108. In vol. I, pp. 339, 340, "On Discipline," JND took this as personal action only, as many do, based on the "let him be unto THEE" which is singular. However, I believe that the thought quoted is correct. Verse 18 makes this clear. The binding and loosing is assembly action. The offender was to be regarded as a heathen; i. e., outside. See *Collected Writings* 24:37; *Notes and Comments* 5:207.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-16: Withdraw from the Disorderly

Where a case of disorderly walk is discerned in a fellow-believer, each individual Christian is responsible to obey, and apply, 2 Thess. 3:6 and 14. No one is excused. It does not change anything if the fellow-believer is at the Lord's table or not. We are all to "mark that man, and do not keep company with him." This means that each of us no longer will have free intercourse with such. We will not visit back and forth with such. How can you have such an one visit for a meal and not "keep company with him"?

A disorderly walk must be distinguished from leaven. If it is leaven, 1 Cor. 5 applies. A disorderly walk, while serious, is not leaven, though it may develop into leaven.

An example of a disorderly walk is given in 2 Thess. 3. The Christian involved did not like to work and it appears he expected others to feed him. It is not a case of one who cannot work or is hindered in some understandable way; no, he did not want to work.

Love to his soul will be shown in obedience to the command in 2 Thess. 3:6 and 14. "Withdraw" in v. 6 means "'shrink from,' 'avoid'" (footnote in JND's translation). What is the object of this? "That he may be ashamed of himself" (v. 14). And while avoiding him, he is not, of course, put away as a wicked person. Thus in this case we read, "and do not esteem him as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother" (v. 15). Therefore, while we show no free intercourse with him, we ought to admonish him. This behavior towards him by all the saints should make him ashamed and cause him to repent and get right with the Lord.

A disorderly walk might manifest itself in one pursuing a course to marry an unbeliever. Pastoral work and footwashing are needed. These failing, 2 Thess. 3 should be applied. It may be that 1 Tim. 5:20 should be applied. A public rebuke might be necessary.

It is possible that in some cases where 1 Tim. 5:20 and/or 2 Thess. 3 is applied, the will of the disorderly person might manifest itself in such a way that the assembly must judge it to be idolatry (1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Sam. 15:23).

When cases such as the one noted in 2 Thess. 3 arise, it is well at least to be able to say that it is "not according to the instruction he received from us" (v. 6), i. e., from Paul and his fellow-laborers. Good it is for those assemblies where truth concerning the will of the Lord as to Christian conduct is taught. It is ever

a shame when such cases arise, and ought to bow us in the dust, but how much greater the shame where we have failed to teach what conduct is due to Christ!

There might be a case of, say, a lame priest (Lev. 21:18). This does not necessarily involve a disorderly walk. It is an uneven walk, an unsteady walk. It is of such a nature, though, that such a one should not take audible part, i. e., not minister at the holy things, though he eats of the holy things (cp. Lev. 21:21,22).

The Lord give His dear people discernment in all these things and spiritual energy to act for His glory and the good of His saints! Where pastoral care, sound teaching on behavior, as well as the great doctrines, feet-washing, 2 Thess. 3 and 1 Tim. 5:20 are carried out, some cases will not reach the stage of leaven.

Schism -- Heresy -- Division

First, we will be instructed by 1 Cor. 11:18,19 concerning the difference between schism and heresy.

But let us weigh the apostle's words. "Now in enjoining this I praise [you] not, because ye come together not for the better but for the worse. For first, when ye come together in an assembly, I hear that divisions [schism] exist among you, and in some measure I believe [it]; for there must be even sects [heresies] among you that the approved may become manifest among you" (vv. 18,19). We have here important help toward deciding the difference between these terms as well as the precise nature of each. Schism is a division within the assembly, while they all still abide in the same association as before, even if severed in thought or feeling through fleshly partiality or aversion. Heresy, in its ordinary scriptural application as here (not its ecclesiastical usage), means a party among the saints, separating from the rest in consequence of a still stronger following of their own will. A schism within if unjudged tends to a sect or party without, when on the one hand the approved become manifest, who reject these narrow and selfish ways, and on the other the party-man is self-condemned, as preferring his own particular views to the fellowship of all saints in the truth. (Compare Titus 3:10, 11).²

Schism is a crack or rent, not the formation of two separate pieces. Compare Matt. 9:16; Mark 2:21; John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; 1 Cor. 1:10; 11:18; 12:25.

Heresy is sect, a break into a path of self-will in separation from others. Compare Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Cor. 11:19; Gal.5:20; 2 Pet. 2:1; and the heretical man of Titus 3:10, 11.

2. Wm. Kelly, *1 Corinthians*, p. 178.

It is not true that a heresy is inside of that which expresses the truth of the one body. This cannot be deduced from "among you" (1 Cor. 11:19). Suppose some at Corinth went down the street and broke bread in separation: they would still be part of the church of God at Corinth, just as much as there was but one assembly in Thyatira, though Rev. 2:24 indicates that all were not in fellowship together.

The heretical man of Titus 3:10, 11 is one gone out to form a party. After a first and second admonition, have done with such!

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

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

A heresy does not necessarily involve fundamental evil as 2 Pet. 2:1 shows. This in 2 Pet. 2:1 refers to destructive heresies, i. e., heresies which attack the foundation of our most holy faith. There are heresies that have to do with truth which is not part of the foundation, i. e., not part of what might be called fundamental truth.

As to divisions (*dikostasia* -- Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20 -- "seditions"), one has well said:

3. *The Bible Treasury* 20:256.

Q. -- Rom. 16:17. What sort of offenders is meant by "those causing the divisions and the stumblingblocks," whom the apostle called the saints to avoid?
Y. T.

A. -- They were as yet different from the separatists of Tit. 3:10, 11. "Heretic" as in the Auth. V. gives a misleading sense; for in modern usage it means "heterodox". This is not intended, but one forming a party or sect outside, to which schism ever drifts. Therefore in 1 Cor. 11:18, 19 the apostle says, "I hear there exist schisms among you, and I in some part believe it. For there must even be sects (heresies) among you, that the approved may become manifest among you." It is not that schisms must lead to heterodoxy, but that, if not judged, parties within (or schisms) naturally land in an outside party or sect. When this happens, disciplinary action is foreclosed. They have gone without. Such are perverted, and sin, being self-condemned to all who know what is due to the Lord, and what the assembly of God is.

But the case in Rom. 16 is an earlier stage. It supposes self-confident and restless zeal inside, inconsistent with the teaching already learnt by the saints, and reckless of the pain, shame, evil, and danger created by striving after innovations without scriptural warrant. In accordance with the word is the amplest scope for every kind and measure of true gift; and gift ordinarily is apt to be over-estimated, as we see it was in Corinth and is today. But the self-seeking and self-important are never satisfied with the place of subjection which scripture claims from us in deference to our Lord. Hence the desire for popularity and excitement. "From among your own selves," warned the apostle, "shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them." For such men chafe under the protests and reproofs, urged by spiritual experience and insight into scripture, to save them from a course as dishonoring to the Lord as ruinous to themselves and any swayed by them.⁴

It is a sad thing to see that these words (Rom. 16:17,18) are said of professed Christians -- **whose god is their belly**. This is a phrase used to describe earth dwellers (Phil. 3:19) in contrast to citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20,21). It is a phrase that denotes serving self-pleasure rather than God. This may take any of a number of forms. For example, the assembly of God is not bound to put up with "hippy-ism." "Good words and fair speeches" about "life styles" to "deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" are not to set this Scripture aside. **"TURN AWAY FROM THEM"**! Such a course may recover them, or it may proceed to a case of leaven. Perhaps public rebuke might be in order, coupled with Rom. 16:17 until repentance is secured, consequent upon which this discipline would be unbound. Or, on the other hand, the application of this discipline may expose something that is subject to 1 Cor. 5.

4. Wm. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series, 2:63. www.presenttruthpublishers.com

1 Tim. 5:20: Rebuke Before All

W. Kelly remarked:

Those that sin rebuke [or rather, convict] before all that the rest also may have fear. I testify [or charge thee] before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels that thou keep these things apart from prejudice, doing nothing according to partiality" (vv. 20, 21). The first of these has nothing specially to do with the elders, but breaks into the larger field of the saints in general. And as the apostle, while sustaining the elders in a work which must provoke the injurious tongues of the unruly, was far from sheltering an elder when impeached on adequate testimony, so here he insists that there should be no sparing those that are guilty of persistent wrong-doing. To limit the range of τοὺς ἀμαρτανόντας (v. 20) as if it meant only "the sinning" presbyters [elders] naturally leads to think of "the rest" of that class to the loss of a solemn injunction in no way restricted, as "before all" ought to demonstrate.⁵

Note that he speaks of "the sinning." This refers to a *course* of things, those that go on sinning, such as the "hippy-ism" (a style of life indicating a rebellious spirit) mentioned above. It may be that one is intending to marry an unbeliever: such ought to be warned, and that failing, rebuked publicly, that the rest may fear. And it may develop into a case of leaven. We must not think that when a rebuke is given that is necessarily the end of the matter. There is an end to be gained and that is a change in the person. There might be cases where a rebuke is administered and the matter is ended. It may well be that a person remains under a rebuke until it be lifted. A person may so react that it develops into a case of leaven.

It is sometimes a question, How long is the assembly to go on treating as a brother one whom they have admonished? Samuel mourned for Saul until the day of his death. Some have been under rebuke, or outside, for years.⁶

Rom. 16:17,18 or 2 Thess. 3:6,14 may have to be coupled with the rebuke. The godly will obey these Scriptures.

1 Tim. 5:20 appears in an epistle written to an individual-but an individual with moral power. Perhaps this is so because it is not so much an assembly act as in a case of excommunication, but introduces the question of moral power to do it.

If one such as Timothy rebuked, according to the apostle's order, he would carry the conscience of all the sound part of the assembly with him. But rebuke before

5. *An Exposition of Timothy*, p. 113.

6. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 26:332.

all is different from rebuking one who is not there, nor has it the effect in the same degree of making others fear. But if the assembly, or those who watch over it and carry the mind of the assembly with them, are agreed that it is not wickedness calling for excision, but cannot be passed over, I see nothing to hinder a person's being rebuked publicly. It was done at -- in a case where a man was overtaken in a fault which none would have known had he not voluntarily told of himself, and there was no question of his godliness or state of mind; but the world had more or less known it. And that is now forty years ago, I suppose, and I believe it has been done in several instances. But it requires the existence of moral authority to do it, and must now flow with the conscience of the assembly.⁷

Revelation 18:4, 24

Come out of her, my people, that ye have not fellowship in her sins, and that ye do not receive of her plagues."

And in her was found [the] blood of prophets and saints, and of all the slain upon the earth" (Rev. 18:4, 24).

We might well wonder how she is held guilty for all that blood. Guilt by association is the answer. Rome claims to be the spiritual and temporal ruler of the earth. In accordance with her spiritual pretension, God renders to her account the blood of prophets and saints. In accordance with her temporal pretension, God renders to her account the blood of all the slain upon the earth.

Ed. Dennett wrote:

It must be remembered then, in the first place, that Babylon represents a spiritual system, and that this system, in its main moral features, has been in existence ever since the days of John. Thyatira and Laodicea, in fact, contained the root of all the evils which are afterwards seen fully developed in Babylon. The instruction therefore is for all ages, calling upon God's people to come out, and to be separate from that which can be spiritually discerned as Babylon, in which, as in Ezra's and Nehemiah's days, so many saints are enslaved. (Comp. Jer. 50:8; 51:6-9.) And they are also reminded that, if they continue to be mixed up with such a system, they will become partakers of her sins, and be governmentally subject to her plagues. Was there ever a day since these words were written when this solemn, urgent call needed to be more persistently sounded out through the length and breadth of Christendom than now? For what do we behold? Babylon plainly manifesting herself, and boldly rearing her head with her arrogant claims, as well as insinuating herself into popular favor and acceptance by her subtleties and flatteries. Let God's people therefore everywhere be obedient to this heavenly voice, and come out of her; for her sins are fast reaching up unto heaven, and the cup of her iniquities is already nearly full.

7. Letters of J. N. Darby 3:61 www.presenttruthpublishers.com

The question still returns, Is there no application to the eve of Babylon's destruction? That there can be no Christians in Babylon, at this period, is seen from the fact that the church is already in heaven. There will be Jewish saints on the earth, and, as chapter 7 teaches, also Gentile believers, who will have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; but we have no information as to whether any of these, wearied out with their persecutions, may be tempted to seek shelter within the precincts of Babylon. If so, the call would be also addressed to such; yet the main significance of the cry is to all who may have become at any time mixed up with the principles that will finally concentrate and express themselves in Babylon.⁸

Luke 11:47-51

We learn from Luke 11:50-51 that there was a generation at whose hands God would require the blood of Abel down to Zacharias. How could they be held accountable for Abel's blood? Guilt by association supplies the answer. "Ye bear witness then, and consent to the works of your fathers; for they killed them, and ye build [their sepulchers]. The "blood of all the prophets" will be required of that generation as well as from Babylon.

It would seem that Luke 11:50, 51 speaks of God's governmental vengeance upon them, which happened in A. D. 70 as a foreshadow of the final dealings of God with the nation (Psa. 83, 79; Zech. 12:1-3, etc.) Both Luke 11:47-51 and Rev. 18 speak of those professedly in the place of testimony and relationship to God. They must account for their own sins as well as those of others who occupied the place that they profess to occupy.

But how were these in Luke 11:47-51 associated with previous evil? W. Kelly noted:

Although it seemed the opposite of what their fathers had done, it was the same love of the world which slew the martyrs in that day, and now led man to build their sepulchers in order to make religious capital out of this pious honor.⁹

So God sent them a test shortly thereafter. He sent prophets and apostles (v. 49) whom they killed and thereby confirmed their association with the others. Hence the need of such a warning as is found in Rev. 18:4.

Those to whom the Lord Jesus addressed Himself had identified themselves with their fathers who had killed the prophets. They had not done it themselves. Their fathers had done the deeds (v. 48) but their action showed fellowship and

8. *The Visions of John in Patmos* pp. 231, 232.

9. *An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, p. 200.

identification with what had been done (v. 48). God brings upon them even the blood of Abel (v. 51). It would do no good to say, "Oh, why quibble over the past? That happened long ago." **The passage of time does not alter the moral character of an action.** Have we ever learned this divine principle? Does it have any practical meaning in our lives? What should they have done when the Lord said this? They should have acknowledged that the Lord was righteous and true, that their fathers were unjust and false. Confession of, and judgment of, the past, as well as their present condition, was their proper course. They were associated with the history of the evil course of their forebears. It was God the Son who said so, and so it must be true. They should have judged the past, confessed it, taken sides with God against what had been done, i. e., dissociated from that which made them guilty. Plainly, the Lord considered them as in fellowship with what their fathers had done and therefore they must bear the guilt even if they didn't do the deed personally. They were morally guilty of the same thing.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

This passage shows that a believer must not be yoked with an unbeliever. This seems to be quite plain and that point will, therefore, not be labored. Neither is it purposed to discuss the various ways in which a diverse yoke may be contracted.

Many see clearly enough that we must not break bread with unbelievers. But why not? It is because fellowship is expressed with the unbeliever (vs. 14). The breaking of bread together identifies us practically as one. I fellowship with those with whom I break bread (cf. 1 Cor. 10). I identify myself with them. (Of course, this is true as to those who teach evil doctrine also. If I break bread with them, I identify myself with them, I make myself one with them, whether I think so or not, and whether I believe it or not.) Now consider the import of the words "and touch not [what is] unclean." Where have we heard such words before? They are to be found in Leviticus, as we shall see later on. There, of course, the touch was physical. And it will be demonstrated that the physical touch made the Israelite unclean, ceremonially, of course. He became defiled by association. In 2 Cor. 6 the touch is moral. It is a link of fellowship with what is unclean. It is forbidden because evil associations defile.

"Touch not [what is] unclean, and I will receive you . . ." Were they not saved? Yes, they were! Hadn't God already received them? Yes, He had. What then was this condition of receiving them consequent upon their not touching (i. e., fellowshiping with) what is unclean? God has received all of the saved.

They are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). This is position and this is standing. But what of our state? What about practical fellowship? I want to have fellowship with you, says God, but you therefore must not have fellowship with the unclean, with Belial, with unrighteousness, or with darkness. My receiving you, My practical fellowship with you, depends on your association.

A Christian should not marry an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:40) as surely the principle of 2 Cor. 6:14-18 should show. However, the application of 2 Cor. 6:14-15 is as follows, in the words of another:

2 Cor. 6:14 -- Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. But this is an error, though it is true that marriage ought to be "only in the Lord", as is exhorted in 1 Cor. 7. The subject is the service or ministry of Christ. In service and worship, fellowship is forbidden with unbelievers, or unfaithful men. If I, a servant of Christ, am among such, I am to come out. What confirms it is -- 1st, That a yoke is a scriptural badge of service, not of marriage. 2nd, That the believing wife is not to be separate from her unbelieving husband (1 Cor. 7:10-16). On the other hand, the true inference from 2 Cor. 6 is that all communion between the Christian and the world in the service and worship of God is interdicted in every form and measure.¹⁰

If 2 Cor. 6:14 applies to marriage, then the Christian should get a divorce from the unbeliever. That is not the intent of this passage.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

The Song Leader

For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified [are] all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in [the] midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises (Heb. 2:12).

This will be fulfilled in the millennium but has an application now. Christ is the leader of song. He is minister of the holy places (Heb. 8:2). When he leads the song in the assembly, are we there to join in the singing that He leads?

It is a mere mockery to repeat "Come Lord Jesus," and use glowing expressions of desire to be with him in glory, if, by our absence from His assembly, we betray our indifference to His presence there. . . .

Closely connected with the foregoing is the question of *time*. Where is our reverence for the Lord, or our sense of His grace, where our responsive love, if we come with lagging steps, five, ten, or fifteen minutes after He has taken His place in the midst of His own? (*The Remembrancer* 18:9).

10. *Bible Witness and Review* 1:312.

Is the Christian Heavenly? and Is the Church Heavenly?

(Continued)

What is Meant by "The Mystery" and What Connection is There Between it and "The Heavenly Calling"?

From the remarks which have already been made, it has been shown that the calling of God's people derives its character from the nature of their blessings, and from the nature of the hope set before them.

The earthly blessings and promises given to the Israelites, made theirs an *earthly calling*.

The spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places, and the *heavenly* hope of believers in the Lord Jesus make theirs a *heavenly calling*.

But there is a truth relating to the Church, and its relationship with Christ, and standing before God *in Him*, of a very special character opening out privileges and of even *a higher order* than are spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews. These also necessarily make the calling of the Church heavenly, though that precise term not found in those scriptures which refer to it.

It is called "**the Mystery**"; and I am perfectly satisfied that the true character of the Church cannot be known if there be not a clear perception of the distinctive truths involved in this term.

I will endeavor briefly to point out, under different heads, what appears to me of deep practical importance to observe relative to "*The Mystery*."

1. The character and high standing of the Church are involved in it.
2. The *highest* motives to a holy and spiritual *walk* are drawn from it.
3. *Worship* and *Ministry* are set in their true light by it.

4. The interpretation, and right application of scripture, depends upon attention to its distinct features.

The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians contain the fullest and most direct statements concerning the mystery, though it is also referred to in other scriptures.

The truths embraced by it I would now consider.

In Eph. 1:8, etc., we read that God "hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us **the mystery of his will.**" What this is, is explained in the tenth verse, viz.: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in *heaven*, and which are in *earth*; even in him." Thus, "*the mystery of his will*" embraces God's complete purpose of blessing in both of these spheres.

But the apostle speaks, after this, of Christ and the Church, and saying, "this is a great mystery" (Eph. 5:32); and throughout these Epistles, and other scriptures, where he uses this term, it is with reference to those truths immediately connected with the Church. Let us examine this:

1. THE CHARACTER AND HIGH STANDING OF THE CHURCH ARE INVOLVED IN THE MYSTERY

These Epistles declare, in common with other scriptures, the redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness of sins through the blood of the cross, and heavenly hope of believers in Christ, but upon peculiar and distinct ground -- not merely that Christ died for us, but that we died with him, and are risen with him.

"*Buried with him* in baptism, wherein ye are also *risen with him* (Col. 2:12).

"If ye then be *risen* with Christ . . . For ye are *dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is *our life*, shall appear" (Col. 3:1, 3, 4).

God "*hath quickened us together* with Christ; . . . and hath *raised us up together*, and made us *sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5, 6; see also Col. 2:13, 20).

We learn from these scriptures, that the Church is spoken of as having died with Christ, risen with him, and made to sit in heavenly places in him -- made alive with him, yea, that he is our life. This is the essential and prominent feature of the mystery. *Life* in Christ -- *one* with our risen Lord.

"We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones . . . They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:30-32).

"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17).

The blessings of the Church are *spiritual*, her portion in *heavenly* places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

She is a witness of the manifold wisdom of God, to principalities and powers in *heavenly* places" (Eph. 3:10).

Her spiritual conflicts are with wicked spirits in *heavenly* places (see margin Eph. 6:12). These mark her heavenly character; but there are other privileges to notice : --

The church was chosen in Christ *before the foundation of the world* -- before *time* commenced its course (Eph. 1:4; see also 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2): not merely an elect body, but her election traced to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:11).

"Predestinated unto the adoption of children" (Eph. 1:5). Before God in all the perfectness and love of Christ. "Complete in him" (Col. 2:10). "Accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, unto the day redemption" (Eph. 1:13, and 4:30).

"Builded together for *an habitation of God* through *the Spirit*" (Eph. 2:22).

These are the wonderful privileges of the Church, opened to us by the revelation of the mystery. Christ is presented to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in all our circumstances of weakness and sorrow down here; or ministering for us in heaven above, while we are passing through the wilderness; but, by the revelation of the mystery, we learn we are one with Christ in life and blessing, and set in him in heaven above; this, while a fact, is known to us by faith.

Paul was the chosen instrument to make known this "Mystery" to the Church. To him was committed this dispensation of the grace of God, as the following passages declare : --

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given *to me* for you, to fulfil the word of God; even *the mystery* which **hath been hid** from *ages and from generations*, but *now* is made manifest to his saints" (Col. 1:25, 26).

Again, (Eph. 3:2-5) "If ye have heard of the *dispensation of the grace of God* which is given me to youward: how that by revelation he made known unto me *the mystery* . . . which in other ages was **not made known** unto the sons of men, as it is *now revealed* unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

He was to make all men see what was the "*fellowship of the mystery*, which from

the beginning of the world **hath been hid in God.**" But there is another feature of the mystery, which the apostle takes special pains to make clear, and which, if overlooked, would leave us with a defective apprehension of the character of the Church, and of the scope of the mystery.

It is this: Who are the parties which constitute this body, brought into union with the Lord Jesus Christ? And to answer this satisfactorily, we must consider past and future purposes of God with reference to Israel; it is by the strong *contrast* between Israel's order of blessing and the Church's, that the distinct character of the latter stands out in its preeminence before the mind.

It was clearly revealed, that Israel was to be the centre of all God's dealings and arrangements with the *Earth*, (Deut. 32:8). We have seen how they were acknowledged by God as His peculiar people (Exodus 19:5, 6); of the dominion promised them over other nations, and the earthly character of their blessings (Deut. 28:1-13).

And though now they are "Lo Ammi," and scattered over the world, it is distinctly revealed they shall be restored, forgiven, and every promise made to them fulfilled. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Isa. 59:20, 21). Israel shall then stand in pre-eminence of glory as a nation, Gentiles shall bow down before them, and serve them, and the nation that will not serve them shall perish" (Isa. 9:12). Jerusalem shall also be the centre of true worship. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3). "My tabernacle also shall be with them, yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezek. 37:27, 28). Pre-eminent in national greatness and glory, pre-eminent in religious privileges, they will still remain a *distinct people*, while the truth and blessing flows from Jerusalem, and "the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" -- "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isa. 11:10).

I need not multiply passages, as this is a truth extensively acknowledged. Christ is the source of all this blessing both to Israel and the Gentiles. "He is the Redeemer of Israel," the Mediator of the New Covenant to them; but He is also given to be "a light to the Gentiles," and God's salvation to the ends of the Earth (Isa. 49:6, 7).

The Prophets of old speak expressly upon these two points. *This is the order of the future blessing* -- the distinction still existing amidst the universal blessing,

and ever maintained between Jew and Gentile.

Now the peculiar character of "*The Mystery*" sets all this aside during the dispensation of the Mystery.

Israel, having rejected Christ, is cast down from her high privilege for a season, and stands upon the common level of all sinners.

"The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" addresses all, Jew and Gentile, as lost sinners; and gathers from both parties a body of believers, who are brought into the same privileges, partakers of the same Life, of the same promises in Christ, of the same body, and are all alike fellow-heirs. Those who were afar off [Gentiles], and those who were near [Jews], have now equal access through Christ "by one spirit unto the Father": He "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition . . . for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace: and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them which were nigh," etc. (Eph. 2:14-17). Now therefore ye [Gentiles] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Not brought into Jewish privileges, but both now fellow-citizens in those new blessings just before described. All this was strange to the ears of the Jewish believers, ah, even at first to the Apostles; it was so contrary to the order of blessing they looked for.

They were slow to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles at all. Peter was led to do it by the vision of the sheet and his interview with Cornelius, and was afterwards called to an account for it by the Church at Jerusalem, though subsequently they rejoiced "that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

This makes it additionally clear that *The Mystery* was not known to the early pentecostal Church. The Gospel declaring the death and resurrection of Jesus, and His exaltation as Lord and Christ, salvation through His name, forgiveness of sins, and the promise of the Holy Ghost to all who believed, was preached; but it was reserved for Paul, after Jerusalem had rejected the testimony presented to her, to unfold the high and peculiar privileges into which believers were now brought.

The prominent features of The Mystery, then, which constitute the real character of the Church are: partakers of the Resurrection-life of Christ, risen with Him, *seated in heavenly places* in Him, blessed with all *spiritual* blessings in *heavenly places* in Him, witness to those in *heavenly places*; conflict with wicked spirits in *heavenly places*; the Hope of *heavenly* Glory; the distinction

between Jew and Gentile gone, both of one body, and that body the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost.

These are points which cannot be neglected without impairing the integrity of "*The Mystery*."

Most blessed is the truth taught us in the Epistle to the Hebrews; in many respects more necessary for our daily experience than any other part of Scripture, yet the full privileges and peculiar character of the church are not taught there: for instance, while it treats so largely of the "Heavenly Calling," not one principle or truth connected with it would be affected or weakened, had no Gentile been brought into its blessings.

But the Gentiles form one of the constituent parts of "The Mystery," and the place they occupy in it must be marked, to enter into its character.

2. THE HIGHER MOTIVES TO A HOLY AND SPIRITUAL WALK ARE DRAWN FROM IT.

Because we learn by it, that we are *dead* and *risen men* -- that we are one with Christ -- "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; that we possess a life, a new nature, which can find fellowship alone with him "who is our life." We are called then to walk as heavenly men, yet upon earth. How forcible is the Scripture upon this point.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above*, . . . *set your affections upon things above*, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:1-5; see also Rom. 6).

If the apostle exhorts us not to lie one to another, it is upon the ground of the nature of the new life and of the oneness of the body -- "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9, 10) . . . "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore put away lying . . . for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:24, 25).

Again, Christ's love to the church and his oneness with it as his body, is the blessed motive urged upon the husband to love and cherish his wife as his own flesh. The submission of the church to Christ is the pattern presented to the wife of subjection to her husband (Eph. 5:22, etc.).

The Church being the habitation of God through the Spirit and our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost, what a motive to glorify God in our body and spirit, and with what care and godly fear should we walk lest we grieve the

Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption (1 Cor. 6:18, 19; Eph. 4:30).

We learn specially by "The Mystery" the sovereign grace of our God. We are brought into its blessings "to the praise of the glory of his grace . . . according to the riches of his grace . . . By grace ye are saved." Consequently the principles of grace are to regulate our walk here -- praying for our enemies, doing good to them who hate us, resisting not evil, forgiving injuries, "even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven" us.

From what has been advanced, it will be seen how this truth bears upon our walk in every respect. What a separative power there is in it, if we have learnt by the principles of "The Heavenly Calling," that our path in the world is that of pilgrims and strangers, that we can take no part in its politics and schemes, how much more when we learn we are dead to the world and are heavenly men, though in it.

It does not take us out of the relationship in which God has set us, or teach us to be recluses and not perform the duties assigned us, but to act upon God's principles in doing them. It is true that we shall not be able to carry his principles into fellowship with the world; the men of this world will not care for us if we were to attempt it: we could not unite with them without lowering the holy standard given to us; but, standing apart from its course and energy and baseless expectations, our minds will be kept free from its confusion and distractions, and be better able to express Christ in all our ways, Christ being ours in "*the High Calling of God*," therefore condemns earthly-mindedness, sensual enjoyments, and teaches us to have our conversation in heaven; from whence we look for the Savoir, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:14).

It is "*a Holy Calling*" (2 Tim. 1:9): "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

It is a *calling to glory*: "whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14) -- "Walk worthy of God who hath called you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12).

3. WORSHIP AND MINISTRY ARE SET IN THEIR TRUE LIGHT BY THE MYSTERY

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the worshippers are called to draw nigh to the Living God, as purged from sin, having boldness through the blood of Jesus, the One who has made reconciliation for them, and is not ashamed to call them brethren, standing in the presence of God for them as their High Priest.

Wonderful and blessed is this, the creature brought nigh to the Living God, his Maker. But we draw nigh in a still more blessed character and relationship as taught by "The Mystery"; as children we have access to God as our Father. "Accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph 3:12). "What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons [children] of God" (1 John 3:1). Thus, while we should draw nigh in the spirit of adoption in childlike confidence, our hearts alive to all the happy affections and thoughts associated in that relationship, yet with reverence and awe, never forgetting that while sons we are still creatures in the presence of Him who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises -- the Eternal God!

The Holy Ghost is the power of our worship. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 4:18).

Praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 19). We can discern now, by the light of the Mystery, the drift of the Lord's conversation to the woman of Samaria, when he was speaking of the true character of worship and the gift of the Spirit.

But the basis of all worship is reconciliation and peace with God. How fully this is established by "the Mystery." If one with Christ, quickened and risen with him, then the question about acceptance is for ever settled. When faith has not apprehended this, and the finished work of Christ is not seen, the flesh will work and seek to find something else to rest in.

It would appear the Colossians needed to be warned against any who might beguile them with enticing words; and he shows how the truth of "the Mystery" overthrows all their reasoning.

He had great conflict for them, "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of *the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*"¹¹

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:2, 8).

We may consider this warning under four distinct heads.

1. Philosophy, or human wisdom and reasoning.

11. [J. N. Darby's translation of this reads: ". . . unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to [the] full knowledge of the mystery of God: in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge."]

2. Vain deceit -- Superstition.
3. Tradition, or the commandments of men.
4. Rudiments of the world -- Ordinances.

1. **Philosophy** would determine what is or is not pleasing to God by human reasoning, instead of receiving in humble faith what God has revealed. It seeks to exalt the powers of man's mind, and in pride of heart would hide from itself the corruption of human nature and the miserable ruined condition into which sin has plunged him.

2. **Vain deceit.** Superstition admits perhaps the ruin; but devises a way of its own to remedy the evil. Philosophy tends to infidelity, though it may end in superstition, if conscience becomes alarmed.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

This is the way superstition works -- great apparent humility -- veneration for angels. God says, He is the only One to be worshipped. Christ is the only Mediator; and of Him it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him;" but superstition, vainly puffed up by its fleshly mind, turns to worship and seek the aid of those who are said to be "ministering spirits"; and in worshipping them would fain persuade itself it is exhibiting humility -- but Christ is slighted in it all. Another form superstition assumes is neglecting or punishing the body; but enough has been said to mark its character and workings; it is altogether intruding into things not seen -- it has a show of wisdom in will-worship, but springs from the depraved heart "to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. 2:18-23). The advocates of such a system may appear to be of deep sanctity, and the severity of their discipline and self denial, and their solemn and imposing worship, calculated to produce an effect and excite the veneration of the natural mind; but the spiritual man discerns its true character "the flesh," and knows that it is all in the place of Christ and His work, and the absence of simple faith in Him and His precious blood.

3. **Tradition**, or the "commandments of men," may either enforce what God once appointed, the ordinances of the Law; or seek to make that binding for which there is no authority in Scripture. The Lord gives its character and results in Mark 7.

Let anything of man become authority, and binding upon the conscience; however simple and harmless it may appear, that moment it takes the place God and His Word should have in the soul, and becomes vain worship, weakens the

authority of God's Word, and prepares the mind for laying it aside, and for formality (Mark 7:1-8). But mark the next stage that tradition leads to. Having put the commands of men upon a level with the commands of God, it soon lays aside the latter, and ends in establishing something which is in direct contradiction to God's Word, making it of none effect, and rejecting the commandment of God, that the commandments of men may be observed. The two come into collision. God commands children to honor their father and mother: tradition says, "No, we are free to help them or not" (Mark 7:1-13).

4. Rudiments of the world, ordinances. Enough has been said before to show the strong tendency of the heart, and the reason it so cleaves to ordinances.

The Apostle appears to have before his mind a statement very prevalent in those days: "Unless ye be circumcised and keep the Law ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Mark how the truth of the Mystery at once delivers the soul from such teaching. Why, "*Ye are circumcised . . . by the circumcision of Christ . . . buried with Him . . . risen with Him . . . quickened together with Him*, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances . . . and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:11-14). What a triumphant answer to such teachers! Meats, drinks, holydays, new moon, or sabbaths, all disposed of by the same truth; they are the shadows of things to come; but the body is of Christ. "Ye are complete in Him," He is the great ordinance, and "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Col. 2:20)?

In considering the light which the Mystery casts upon *Ministry*, there are two things to be borne in mind.

1. The fullness of Christ, the *Head* of the body the Church.
2. And that the Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit.

1. Christ is not only Head of the Church, but Head over all things to the Church. Having triumphed over all powers, He is the Head of all principality and power, and "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Eph. 1:21, 22; Col. 2:9, 10).

"When He ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." He "ascended up far above all heavens, that *He might fill all things*, and He gave . . . Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," etc., for their preservation from seducers, and for their growth up to Him in all things, who is the Head. "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 to the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:8-16).

The same in Col. 2:19, we see how every thing for the nourishment and unity of the body and for its increase with the increase of God, flows from Christ the Head. When this is not known, or as soon as faith becomes weak, human power, wisdom, and qualifications are exalted; and instead of faith in the fullness of the Head, men lean upon them.

2. *There is one body and one Spirit.* -- The Holy Ghost dwells in the body; and it is from His energy and operations, "dividing to every man severally as he will," by His immediate and direct action, that all ministries flow.

The operations of the Spirit are more fully taught in 1 Cor. 12; while in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians we are led to see more of the fullness of the Head.

The basis of all ministry then, is: *the fullness of the Head*, and the *development of the operations of the Holy Ghost* dwelling in the body.

There is such an intimate connection between the real character of the Church and Ministry, that defective views of the one would be very likely to lead to imperfect views of the other.

4. THE INTERPRETATION AND RIGHT APPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE DEPEND UPON ATTENTION TO ITS DISTINCT FEATURES

It cannot be denied that the Scriptures give us the history of a holy faithful people, suffering for righteousness' sake, who cannot be standing in the privileges of the Church. If it were said, These Scriptures refer to the exercise of some of God's people previous to Christ; well, mark their distinct character: They feel God's hand is heavy upon them, that they are suffering for their iniquities (though now most true in heart to God); they call upon Him not to cast them off for ever, no longer to hide his face, but to purge them from their sins; clearly they are not standing in the position or knowledge of reconciliation and acceptance. At once, then, we see how unsuitable such language would be in the lips of those who stand in union with Christ, and in all the favor and acceptance which The Mystery teaches us we are set in. While we may derive much instruction and profit, and learn much of God and his ways in them, if our experience answered to theirs, we should have got off the ground of grace altogether. Hence the necessity of holding fast the principles of our calling, that we do not misapply such scriptures to the injury of souls.

Further, they pray for vengeance upon their enemies -- call down God's

righteous judgment upon them. All this is the very opposite to the state of heart of those who know God's grace, and are commanded even to act in grace to all, and to pray for their enemies.

Their hopes are **earthly** -- the fulfillment of God's promises made to the Fathers. These are not what sustain our souls in affliction, but the **Heavenly** Hope set before us. We see what the expectations of a godly Jew were in Zechariah's praise, and what he looked for by the truth of Christ (Luke 1:68-79). We look for his coming again to receive us unto himself, to enter the Father's mansions. While he tarries, 'tis the time of tribulation: it may vary as to intensity; but the characteristic portion of the Church as to earth is tribulation. "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

Now if what I have said concerning certain Scriptures in their application to saints of old, if they describe the experience of saints who are yet to use them previous to the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who find deliverance and acceptance at his coming -- how careful we must be not to confound them with the Church, nor conclude because of their faith and devotedness that they are one with the Church. I allude specially to the Prophets and Psalms, though there are other scriptures that these remarks apply to, which will be readily discerned by those exercised upon these. I have now gone through what appears to me to be necessary to note and keep before our minds in relation to the Heavenly Calling and the Mystery. By the light of the latter, we see what was in the Lord's mind in his conversation with his disciples, as recorded by John, and the additional instruction, specially chapters 14-16 concerning the presence and office of the Holy Ghost in the Church, which we need well to consider in connection with worship and ministry.

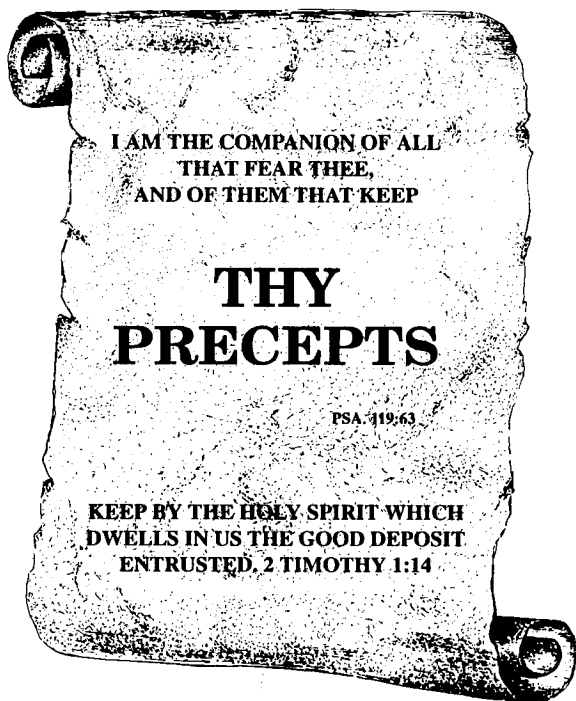
The first epistle of John is all in harmony with this subject, leading us to the spring of all our blessings, God's Love, and the knowledge of it, and our oneness in Christ, the power and spring of the new commandment in us.

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Another Book Announcement

The following recommendation of this book appeared in *The Bible Treasury* April 1, 1865:

Justification and Acceptance with God; or an Inquiry into the relative value of the Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ, and of the Law. By a Student of Scripture. London: G. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row.

The reader will do well to procure and circulate this treatise, which discusses with calmness the subject of divine righteousness, in its various bearings, within eight chapters and less than 170 pages. Extracts are given in the Introduction, which indicate clearly the *Puritanical* source of that modern divinity which attributes pardon to the blood, and justification and heaven to the law-fulfilling of Christ; and this in contrast with the larger and truer thoughts of the Reformers. It is plain, however, that God has been graciously pleased to clear away yet more of error and to bring out the truth of Scripture on this grave theme with increasing light in our own day. Puritanism, as to God's testimony, was no movement in advance.

This book has been freshly typeset and a Scripture Index has been added for this new edition of 112 pages. Price is \$7.00 each + 1.75 postage. Until July 30, 1994, readers of *Thy Precepts* may order copies at \$7.00 each, postage paid.

Below is the Table of Contents. The Introduction is a lengthy and documented examination of the erroneous doctrinal atmosphere in which the truth of these matters was recovered. All who value the true standing of the Christian, and dispensational truth, would surely find this book helpful.

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The Truth of Christ's Person

Elements of the Raven Apostasy

There has come to hand a paper, *Elements of the Taylor Apostasy* (New Impression), by V. W. J. H. Lawrence. He referred to James Taylor, Sr., (of the Raven/Taylor sect). Concerning J. Taylor, Sr.'s denial of the eternal Sonship, he wrote (p. 4):

The claim is therefore a dogmatic one, viz., that Mr. T. denies the Divine and Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God. That claim we hold to be wickedness, and we believe that the whole thing is the work of a seducing spirit.

Indeed this is the work of a seducing spirit. J. Taylor, Sr. received this blasphemy from none other than F. E. Raven. J. Taylor, Sr. thought that it was time to expand this doctrine among the Ravenites at the infamous Barnet, 1929 conference. On July 18, 1929 he wrote:

What I expressed has been in my mind for at least twenty-five years; it came to me through F. E. R. when he was in America in 1902. It came out in a reading [meeting] but was not included in the *printed* notes. It is also extant in correspondence.¹

... in his later ministry he [F. E. R.] refused it [i. e., the eternal Sonship].²

Besides myself, there are many witnesses to his refusal of it, say from 1898 to the end of his service.³

It is over thirty years since the scriptural untenableness of the term "Eternal Sonship" became fixed in my mind.⁴

An extract of a letter from "Mr. Broomhead, of Greenwich, who accompanied Mr. Raven on his 1898 visit to the U. S. A.," was inserted in *Letters of F. E. Raven*:

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 a special reference to the Father and the name 'Son of God' in

1. *Letters of James Taylor* 1:263 (Kingston: Stow Hill, 1956). (See also N. Noel, *History of the Brethren* 2:607.)

2. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 394. See also vol. 2, p. 14.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 394 (March 25, 1933). www.presenttruthpublishers.com

reference to man, but that none of these titles are applied to Him in Scripture until incarnation, and therefore we are not authorized to carry these *titles* back into eternity. The reading was exceedingly free and greatly enjoyed.⁵

And the **seducing spirit** was having his way in "the reading [which] was exceedingly free and greatly enjoyed," duping the hearers and using FER to blaspheme the Son in His blessed Person! The seducing spirit had overcome FER previously to this for he had, in reality, denied that the Christ of God had a human spirit -- for he taught that the divine being filled that function:

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 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 the spirit and body in 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 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.⁶

FER taught that a divine being formed Christ's Person. W. Kelly remarked also upon the fact that FER., in 1890 (note the date well), had denied the eternity of the Word; i. e., he denied that the Son was the *eternal* Word (Logos):

A warning did I 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* the Logos."⁷

Speaking of various aspects of F. E. Raven's system, W. Kelly wrote of them:

fundamental error (pp. 69, 91, 99, 103)	smoke from the pit (p. 85)
idea inbreathed by Satan (p. 91)	blasphemy (p. 99)
mission . . . from an evil spirit (p. 43)	from Satan (p. 112)
evil spirit at work (p. 85)	devilish (p. 28)
would have caused his expulsion with horror in former days (p. 123)	

F. E. Raven had worked out a complete system and his torch of "the light of death"⁸ was passed on to J. Taylor, Sr. who, enveloped in the same "smoke from the pit," inhaled the same ideas "inbreathed by Satan." The words of V. W. J. H. Lawrence, "we believe that the whole thing is the work of a seducing spirit," are applicable also to J. Taylor Sr.'s mentor, F. E. Raven.

Query: why did not W. J. H. Lawrence bring out these facts re FER? Ed.

5. *Letters of F. E. Raven*, pp. 146, 147 (Kingston: Stow Hill, 1963).

6. W. Kelly, *F. E. R. Heterodox*, p. 124, (London: Weston, 1902).

7. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

The Holiness of Christian Fellowship

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Chapter 7: Lessons from the Old Testament

Chapter 7.1: Leviticus 13 & 14

In Leviticus 13 and 14 God insisted that the leper had to be put outside the camp of Israel. Was the reason that if the leper had been left in the camp, then after some time all would finally become lepers? No, that is not the reason given. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell" (Num. 5:1-3). God is teaching the lesson, by type, that one becomes defiled by evil association and defiles the place where God dwells!

There are some whose judgment we highly regard who do not believe that the typical teaching in Lev. 13 is that of the working of evil in a person called a brother (cp. 1 Cor. 5:11) but rather that it depicts sin working in an unbeliever. I am convinced, however, that the passage it has to do with the professed people of God, though a gospel illustration might be drawn from it. The reasons for believing this are:

1. The persons involved stood in covenant relationship to God under the law. They were (externally) the people of God.
2. The leper had to be put outside the camp or the place where God dwelt would be defiled (Num. 5:1-4).

3. All allow that the house of Lev. 14 typifies an assembly. The cleansing of the house and the cleansing of the individual have in common the use of seven specific items which typify the person and work of Christ (cp. 14:4, 5 with 14:49, 50).
4. Another common thing is that both the house and the leper can be "shut up." In the case of the leper, he is not excluded from the camp while "shut up." This investigation was not for the purpose of determining if he were a believer or not. The examination of the person determined whether he had leprosy or whether he had another form of the working of the flesh.
5. Miriam, who was one of God's saints (cp. Micah 6:4; Ex. 15:20), was one smitten with leprosy (Num. 12:10). This did not typify a sinner needing salvation, but that there was such a working of the flesh that she became leprous.

I trust that as we proceed to examine Lev. 13 and 14 in some detail the reader will be satisfied that these passages deal with the question of defilement of the camp by a certain working of the flesh.

Leprosy in Lev. 13 and 14 typifies the working of evil in several forms and spheres. When this working of evil is found in the body, it typifies moral evil as in 1 Cor. 5. As found in the head or beard, it typifies doctrinal evil as in Galatians or 2 John 9, 10. The working of evil may also manifest itself in personal associations or activities (the garment) or in the principles of assembly (the house), i. e., the principles which give the house of God its local expression. We shall consider these in detail later.

Not everything that is wrong has the character of leprosy. We notice that a careful distinction was made between leprosy, which typifies an energy of evil manifesting itself in wickedness of such a character that requires exclusion, and what was not leprous in character. This requires priestly discernment. It was not left to the leper's notion about himself whether he should see the priest or not. Lev. 13:2, 9 tells us that "he shall be brought to the priest."

The priesthood typifies communion with God, and approach to God, besides other things. As a result of the priest's position, "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and at his mouth they seek the law; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts" (Mal. 2:7). Let us never forget that the tribe of Levi became the priestly tribe because of faithfulness to Jehovah in dealing with evil (Deut. 33:8, 9), and thus they were selected to teach Jacob Jehovah's ordinances (v. 10) and draw near (v. 11). Let us duly weigh the grand significance of Deut. 33:8, 9. Thus, there is a warrior aspect to priesthood also, as is especially apparent in the life of Phinehas.

The priest therefore typifies one who, having acted for the holiness of God dwelling in the midst of His people, and having the privilege of standing before God, has the understanding of what is due His glory and presence, along with the discernment necessary to detect what would corrupt the dwelling place of God (1 Cor.3:17).

It is true that all Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:9) and have the privilege to function as priests if not disqualified (1 Cor. 5; Gal. 5:9; 2 John 9, 10; Lev. 21:16-24; etc.). But not all are spiritual. Some, as many of the Corinthians, are carnal, i. e., fleshly (1 Cor. 3:1). True priestly action in the Old Testament, then, typifies spiritual action, and thus we say that in its right spiritual sense **THE PRIEST TYPIFIES THE SPIRITUAL MAN** (cp. 1 Cor. 2:15; Gal.6:1).

Lev. 13 and 14 show that discernment is needed. How is it that we so often fail to discern what is due to God? We naturally tend to palliate evil and its workings, both in ourselves and in others! "... 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 the spiritual discerns all things ..." (1 Cor. 2:15). See James 1:5. We prefer ease, popularity, a false peace, and pabulum! The priest determined if it was indeed leprosy or some other working of the flesh. The difference between such evil as typified by leprosy and some of these other workings of the flesh is found by comparing 1 Cor. 5 with Gal. 6:1, 2 Thess. 3 and 1 Tim. 5:20, for example. If leprosy was suspected but not yet conclusively determined, the man was shut up, *but not yet shut out*.

LEPROSY IN THE BODY

Leprosy in the body (Lev.13:1-28) typifies moral evil. As we see in 1 Cor. 5, it can assume various characters. (Note that 1 Cor. 5 does not contain a complete list. Murder, for example, is not included.)

First, something appears in the skin, i. e., something is observed as having come to the surface. This is not a mere suspicion, but something observed.

There may issue from a rising (pride), the sore of leprosy. The hair too is turned white (suggesting a decline in spiritual energy). But if the hair is not turned white and the sore does not appear deeper than the skin, then it does not appear to be a deep-seated thing, and his liberty is curtailed for a complete period (v. 4), a period sufficient to allow for a *manifestation* of the true character of what is at work. It is repeated if there is no change (v. 5). Further investigation may happily show that it is becoming pale, i. e., it is diminishing in intensity (suggesting that grace is working in the person) and it has not issued into leprosy; it is a scab, i. e., an old wound not properly healed. Let us beware

of nourishing wounds we have received. Let grace speedily heal them.

On the other hand, when the rising (pride; an energy of flesh) and white hair (suggesting spiritual decline) are accompanied by raw flesh in the rising (v. 9-11), it is an old leprosy; i. e., there is a history to this thing and it has issued into leprosy. It is raw flesh!

How blessed indeed when the leprosy completely covers the man wherever the priest looks (v. 12, 13). This signifies that all has come out, all is confessed (Psa. 32:5; Psa. 51; Prov. 28:13). He is clean. But a new outbreak may occur and, typically speaking, he again goes on in the sin. It is "raw flesh" and he is unclean (v. 14, 15).

A boil (v. 19) suggests anger in which there is sin. "Be angry and sin not" (Eph. 4:26). The Lord Jesus was angry, but there was no sin. A burning inflammation (v. 24) suggests bitterness (Heb. 12:15).

LEPROSY IN THE HEAD OR BEARD

Leprosy in the head or beard (Lev. 13:29-44) typifies doctrinal evil as we find it in Gal. 1; Gal. 5:6; 2 John; etc. The beard reminds us of what is prominent and public. It moves when the mouth speaks. Leprosy in a beard suggests leprosy in what a man teaches. In scripture, a woman is not looked upon as having a public place; she does not have a beard. Leprosy in the head suggests doctrinal evil held, but not necessarily taught. It does not make any difference whether the leprosy is in the head ("held privately," as some say), or in the beard (put forward, as in teaching, for example). It is leprosy in either case and the leper must be put outside the camp or it would become defiled (Num. 5:1-4). We also know from Rev. 2:14, 15 that persons are not to be permitted to hold evil doctrine and remain in fellowship with the people of God. How subtle the suggestion that one may *hold* evil doctrine if one doesn't teach it! Can a spiritual mind condone such a thought as "leprosy in private"? Can a spiritual mind condone such a thought as "leaven in private"? Is private fornication or covetousness not leaven (1 Cor. 5)? Why then do some Christians think that a man may hold an evil doctrine, concerning the foundations of our most holy faith, as long as he "holds it privately"? Is blasphemy less than covetousness or fornication? Sad to say, in the eyes of some who say that they love our Lord Jesus it is less offensive. The truth is that **DOCTRINAL EVIL IS WORSE** than the sins of 1 Cor. 5. The reason that Christians sometimes think otherwise is because they have self and reputation before them. They think of the offense with regard to the opinions of "respectable" people. These "respectable" people are usually not too concerned, however, about attacks on Christ and His work on the cross. This sets the stan-

dard for many Christians.

Consider the instructive difference between Paul's opening address to the Corinthians (where he pressed the issue of moral evil) and that to the Galatians where he pressed the issue of doctrinal evil. In both cases leaven was in question (1 Cor. 5; Gal. 5:6). Concerning the Corinthians, Paul commended what the grace of God had wrought for them (1 Cor. 1); but he commended nothing in their walk. In Galatians 1 he proceeds to denounce the other gospel, which is not another gospel. He didn't commend anything. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11:3).

Let us learn the correct attitude toward leaven, especially doctrinal leaven, from this. Christians sometimes expect that when a matter of doctrinal evil is taken up in a letter, it will open with sweet expressions. They did not get such an expectation from God nor from the example of the apostle Paul. It is a false expectation which is the fruit of not regarding doctrinal evil with the horror that it deserves from every lover of Christ. The reason that doctrinal evil is worse than moral evil is because it directly attacks God, attacks Christ, and attacks the foundation of our faith, doing so under the cover of having come from God. Those who hold, or teach, such doctrinal evil believe that they obtained it from scripture. Thus they make God the author of the evil! The awfulness of this is typified in the fact that a person with leprosy in the head or beard is said to be "UTTERLY unclean" (Lev. 13:44).

Leprosy in the head is a most serious thing. It poses a special snare for the saints. It does not matter how good a man sounds or how personable he may be, when it is a question of leprosy in the head or beard. It is not a question of long service in Christian work, or mere age, or any of the host of palliating excuses, but of what is due to God. Remember that the names of Hymenaeus and Philetus (whose word will eat as doth a canker, 2 Tim. 2:17) mean "a wedding song" and "beloved" respectively!

Uzziah, the king, went into the temple and burned incense upon the altar of incense. He was rightly withstood by "fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men." He was angry with them and while angry the leprosy rose in his forehead, for his thoughts were evil and resulted in this action of his (2 Chron. 26:16-21). "His heart was lifted up to his destruction." He intruded into what was not his and his position and power did not excuse him from being treated as a leper.

The loss of hair (Lev. 13:39-41) would suggest to us some loss in intelligence of divine things. While it is an unhappy thing, it is not *necessarily* leprous. But a leprosy may break out (Lev. 13:42).

Where are they today? Where are the valiant men around the couch of Solomon, armed because of alarms in the night (S. of S. 3:7-8)? Of those that prefer a false peace to Christ's honor there are plenty.

A professed Christian might do one, or both, of two things (see 2 John):

1. He may **go forward** and not abide in the doctrine of Christ. He thinks he has something more, and better, than what is actually revealed, perhaps thinking that he has scripture for it. His doctrine attacks, either directly or inferentially (cp. 1 Cor. 15), the foundations of the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints. On being examined he maintains it. He is "UTTERLY unclean." An example of such a case is any man who goes forward to hold that Christ could have sinned.
2. Or, he **brings not** the doctrine of Christ. An example of such a case is any man who holds that Christ's Sonship was not eternal, in the Godhead. Being remonstrated with, he maintains it. He is "UTTERLY unclean."

In both cases such an one must be put outside the company of the people of God (Num. 5:1-4,14; 1 Cor. 5; 2 John 9,10). He is to dwell alone!

Another has said,

It is said at times, how evil a thing it is, to refuse anyone who is a saint of God, a place in the assembly of God. But, I ask, are the saints of God to be received in defiance of the command of God? If the Lord of Israel say, that a leprous Israelite is to be put outside the camp, is the congregation of Israel to say, "we will bring him inside, because he is an Israelite and one of us"?¹

LEPROSY IN A GARMENT

Leprosy in a garment (Lev. 13:47-59) typically speaks of the working of evil in our outward reputation. For example, we may think of our occupation in the eyes of the world around us. Perhaps one falsifies records to avoid paying taxes, or deliberately omits recording income. Another may cheat his customers, or steal from his employer, etc. It might be that funds committed to us for some purpose are stolen. Perhaps the application of the Word of God to what has the appearance of leprosy (Lev. 13:54, 55) does not help: then fire, i. e., judgment, is applied to it and the cause of the situation is judged and abandoned. Or, the Word of God may show that a part can be torn from it (Lev. 13:56). But if the application of the Word of God produces good results, it shall be applied again (Lev. 13:58). There must be thorough exercise.

1. *The Present Testimony* 12:72.

"Thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4).

". . . hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23).

LEPROSY IN THE HOUSE

The case of leprosy in a house is found in Lev. 14; verse 34 notes that this may happen amidst the blessings of Canaan. The priest is made aware of the fact that something seems improper within the house. He is someone in the place of nearness to God and so, as we have seen, is one who is able to discern what is suitable to God. The owner of the house (God, according to the New Testament antitype) suggests this to the priest (the spiritual man, as we have seen). It should not be necessary to say that the priest need not be an occupant of the house. If the plague shows itself to be leprous in nature, the affected stones are to be removed (v. 40) and the house scraped. Let us consider these things in more detail.

What is the house? The house typifies the place of fellowship and it typifies, too, the order becoming to Him whose house it is. What are the stones and plaster? Lev. 14:40 notes the removal of the leprous stones and v. 42 notes the replacement of these stones with other stones. If a stone represented a person, this would indicate the replacement of one person by another person. This is not how assembly discipline is carried out. The stones suggest that which gives form and substance to the house. In Lev. 14:33-48 we have a picture of evil insinuating itself amongst God's people, into the assembly, the local expression of the House of God (1 Tim. 3:15). There are principles given in the scriptures which give form to this House. Our gathering together ought to display locally what the House of God is. But if we want to express what the House of God is when we come together, we must abide by those principles which give that House its true character. Thus, the stones suggest the principles that we hold. The principles give character and form to the practical expression of the House of God. The plaster speaks of the manner in which these principles are held in their proper place.

It may be, and indeed has happened, that the plague of leprosy has broken forth upon the principles of association and fellowship of the people of God. There is but one remedy. The leavenous principles (leprous stones) must be removed and the right principles (clean stones) be set in their place, and they must be freshly plastered (v. 42), (that is, they must be held properly in place by the saints). There would be, or should be, much exercise in the House and on the part of the priest as evidenced by scraping the house "within round about." This scraping denotes deep, heartfelt self-judgment concerning the con-

dition, and concerning the way that principles and truths were held so as to have allowed leprosy to occur. It denotes a humbling and soul-searching that leprosy had infected the principles of Christian fellowship, that the holiness of Christian fellowship was being undermined. The whole house was scraped and this indicates a corporate self-judgment. No one is excused by God from this humbling and self-judgment. Where leprosy is concerned, God wants all to take sides with Christ against themselves and see themselves with His judgment. If the plague breaks out again after all this effort to remove the leprosy, the house must be demolished. It is not fit for occupancy. Such an assembly no longer has its house character. It is disowned as an expression of the House of God.

Is it not a leprous principle to maintain that a man is not defiled by evil associations? This idea says that I may associate with one who holds "destructive heresies" and not be defiled, i. e., made dirty, unclean. In fact, 2 John 9, 10 says that if one gives such a person greetings he is **A PARTAKER OF HIS WICKED WORKS!** Someone remarked that to be a partaker of the works of a thief is to partake of his thieving. Is that so difficult to understand? And does not the denial that evil associations leaven a person partake of the nature of what it allows? ² The idea that fellowship with evil does not leaven a person, and make a man a partaker of the wicked works, not only opens the door to contract evil fellowship, it is an evil teaching in itself. I will give several examples from scripture concerning evil associations, without implying that these are all the cases.

1. The person who gives greeting, and/or invites into the house, one who goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, or who brings not the doctrine of Christ, is a partaker of his wicked works (2 John 9, 10).
2. An assembly that refuses to purge leaven, i. e., put away a **WICKED PERSON**, is a leavened lump (1 Cor. 5).
3. The Spirit directs all Christians *not to eat with* such a **WICKED PERSON** (1 Cor. 5). This means at *your* table, or at others' houses, etc.

Violation of these scripture directions results in an evil fellowship in God's sight. Yet, violation of these scripture directions is committed by some as an avowed principle of association among Christians. There is an idea abroad that one may associate himself with that which is really leprous in character, such

2. 1 Cor. 8:10, 11 warns against causing a brother to perish. Now, no Christian can perish, but the **TENDENCY** of the act of the careless was in this direction and scripture "**CHARACTERIZES AN ACT ACCORDING TO ITS TENDENCY.**"

as what is found in 1 Cor. 5 and 2 John 10, and not be defiled, leavened, and a partaker of the WICKED WORKS. We are not speaking of working along side of such an one in the shop or in school as duty requires. This is a question of false sympathy and fellowship with such, whether in a social way in Christian fellowship or service or in the breaking of bread. The persistence in maintaining such a wicked principle, after efforts to replace it with what we have received from the beginning, renders such a house unfit for occupancy. It must be torn down, that is, disowned. A leprous house is a source of defilement (Lev. 14:46,47). Connection with leprosy defiles. There was one law for leprosy (Lev. 14:54-57). How solemn these considerations are! May God grant us to see things as He does. If our eye is single, our whole body is full of light.

THE CLEANSING OF LEPROSY

The striking similarity, in the seven items used, between the cleansing of the leper and the cleansing of the leprous house shows the oneness of the law for leprosy (Lev. 14:54-57). Before the leper could be restored to the privileges and enjoyment of the fellowship in the camp of Israel it was necessary that both healing and cleansing take place. Healing could be accomplished only by God. After the leper was healed by God, it was necessary that there be an outward cleansing in order to be fit for the fellowship of God's people and to come in and out in the camp of Israel. We learn about the details of this cleansing in Lev. 14. Cleansing has in view the restoration to communion. The apostle puts this principle to use in 2 Cor. 2:10 and it is the principle of John 20:23. There are **four stages** in the cleansing which follows the healing. These are:

1. The application of the two birds, the cedar wood, scarlet, hyssop, an earthen vessel, and running water.
2. Seven days outside his tent.
3. Removal of all hair on the seventh day.
4. Restoration to his tent and communion; sacrifices and application of blood and oil.

Because leprosy typifies the most wicked workings of the flesh, healing is required. This was not the case with defilement from running issues and defilement by the dead. Only God could heal leprosy (Num. 12:13-15; 2 Kings 5:7; Matt. 8:3). The leper could not come into the camp as soon as he was healed; there needed to be the cleansing as well. Let us remember this principle when it comes to the public restoration of one who has dishonored God either in doctrine or conduct. Though true repentance may have been wrought

in the soul through a work of God (healing of the leprosy by God), there must be the outward cleansing answering to the four stages mentioned above.

The first stage in cleansing is recorded in Lev. 14:4-8. We note here that the leper was brought to the priest (Lev. 14:2). Note that there was action in seeking restoration as well as the action of the priest to go outside the camp to where the leper was in order to examine him. The priest, the spiritual man, went to the leper to see if he was healed. Typically, the man had judged himself. In spirit he had passed through Psalm 51, but he was not yet purified. In this step there are seven things noted, all of which speak of Christ's person and work: two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, hyssop, an earthen vessel, and running water. The first step in cleansing is a fresh sense of what these things mean; and without this, the leper is not ready to take his place in the camp again. The two birds, which belong to the heavens, so to speak, denote Christ having come down to die and Christ ascending again, with the mark of death upon Him. How will we be bowed before Him when for the first time we see those nailprints and the mark of the spear in His side! The one bird was killed over an earthen vessel, which denotes that He became a man (cp. 2 Cor. 4:7) in order to die. The running water typifies the Holy Spirit. Christ offered Himself without spot to God, by the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14). The living bird represents Christ in resurrection and this bird, with the cedar, the scarlet and the hyssop, was dipped in the first bird's blood. When we think of the cedar, we think of the excellent bearing, the moral elevation, and the incorruptibility of our Beloved (S. of S. 5:15). This is the one Who went down into death for God's glory and His people's blessing. This is my Beloved and this is my Friend!

And there is the scarlet, a color prominent in the tabernacle. It is the color of the robe put upon Him as recorded in Matthew, which gospel especially emphasizes His kingship. This is the King, the seed of David (Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8), the fulfiller of promise, the Lord's anointed. As to the hyssop, He is the lowly One also (Matt. 11:28-30; cp. Ps. 51:7; Ex. 12:22). All of this He was, for God's glory. All was dipped in the blood over running water.

There is a perfect measure of the application of the blood of Christ as seen in the sprinkling seven times, applied to the healed man (14:7). He has a fresh sense of the preciousness and value of this.

Following this, **the second stage** involves that which is even more outward. "And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and wash himself in water that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days" (Lev. 14:8). The washing of his clothes and the shaving of his hair typifies the judgment of all that to which his defilement as a leper was attached. All of this has in view

his being morally suitable for the camp. The body here (which is referred to in v. 8, as compared to the beard and hair of the head in v. 9) would suggest that which is private and not apparent to the eyes of those around us. The garment on the other hand would suggest that which is seen by those who observe us. Both our secret ways and our public ways are to be judged and the Word of God applied. When our ways (either secret or public) have dishonored God so as to render us unsuitable for fellowship among God's people (as was the leper), then whatever inward work of restoration is accomplished in the soul by God has its counterpart in a judging and changing of our ways (either secret or public). Is this too much to be looked for when one seeks to be restored to the fellowship of God's people? It is what God looks for, and we dare not lower the standard.

Having entered the camp following the shaving of his body hair and the washing of his garment and person (v. 8), a deeper sense of where he had been (compare Phil. 3:3) results in further self-judgment. The seven days have, more or less, to do with what man can see, though not exclusively so. It takes time also for the results of this self-judgment to have their intended effect.

This brings us to **the third stage**. On the seventh day (v. 9) the hair of his head is shaved; that is, his thoughts are judged. The hair of his beard is shaved; i. e., his speech is judged. The hair of his eyebrows is shaved; i. e., his discernment is judged. Can any credence be given to a claim of inward restoration by one who has been "put away" when there is no change of thought about himself and there is no change in his speech? If he continues to try to justify himself and excuse himself, etc. there is little reason to feel that a true work of repentance has been wrought inwardly by God. Thus his discernment, his thoughts and his speech manifest the character of the inward work.

Finally, we come to **the fourth stage**, which is described in v. 10. The eighth day speaks of the resurrection sphere and our place in Christ. The offerings denote the grand foundation laid to bring us into this sphere. On the eighth day we have the offerings presented to God.

There are the lambs -- the Lamb of God; the three tenth-deals of fine flour -- Christ manifested as having been here perfectly for God; one log of oil, the twelfth part of an hin -- a reference to the Holy Spirit carrying out the governmental/disciplinary work with the soul.

The trespass offering is in view of the violation of relationship with God. Psa. 32:1 and Rom. 4:6, 7 are enjoyed. But the trespass offering was waved as a wave offering before being killed, with the oil, denoting the devotion of Christ, in the power of the Spirit, which shows His suitability to be that offering. There is a measure of appreciation of Christ according to this thought

of His suitability. The priest enjoys it also (14:13).

The blood of the trespass offering is put on the ear (obedience), the thumb (service) and the great toe (walk). The rite denotes renewed energy in these things as set apart by the blood.

The priest puts some of the oil in his *left* hand, for this work is done with love and in felt weakness. The oil sprinkled before God shows that the work of cleansing is completed before Him in the power of the Spirit. The rest of the oil is put on the same three parts of the body as the blood was put on, signifying the energizing of the Spirit in obedience, service and walk.

There results too, by the action of the Spirit, enlargement of thought, suggested by the oil poured on the head.

The atonement of v. 18 refers to the trespass offering. Sin, too, is judged, v. 19; and acceptance is seen in the burnt offering. The meal offering is connected with this burnt offering. And he shall be clean (v. 20). He thus also enjoys his tent (cp. v. 9). He returns to his pilgrim character among his brethren.

How sad if our flesh interferes with such a blessed work of God by bringing in sentimentality and fleshly sympathy! Unjudged flesh, spared flesh in ourselves, would interfere with the work of discipline concerning the flesh in others.

THE HOUSE CLEANSED

In the cleansing of the house (Lev. 14:48-53), only the first seven items that were used in the cleansing of the leper are mentioned (Lev. 14:51,4-5). An additional statement is added, however. It is said that the house is *cleansed* by the running water, the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet, as well as by the blood (v. 52). This indicates that these items speak of the person and work of Christ, the running water being the action of the Holy Spirit, of course. Since leprosy in a person is not in view here, we do not have the stages for cleansing which were noted above as applicable to a person. Leprosy in the house, as we have already noted, is evil in the principles of fellowship, such as toleration of known evil, or denial that evil associations defile and leaven one. It is necessary to see that positive removal of the false principle(s), scraping, i. e., corporate self-judgment, and the application of the seven things noted above, is God's way of restoration. Nothing less will do.

Ed.

Is the Christian Heavenly? and Is the Church Heavenly?

The Calling and Hope of the Christian

Eph. 1:3-14

The right application of the truth of the Church in both its calling and its hopes depends, more than many Christians are aware, upon the spiritual condition of the soul. I doubt not, indeed, that spiritual condition has much to do with all apprehension of divine truth, but of this beyond all others, for the simple reason that the Church's privileges are so boundless and so special that the mind of man and even the heart of the believer find no small difficulty in accepting them simply in their integrity. The very conscience of the believer makes a difficulty unless there be a child-like acceptance of the word and grace of God. We can easily understand this; for it is natural even to the believer to mingle the question of his own feelings of acceptance with the reception of the truth of God. He examines himself, but finds only unworthiness; he feels painfully, humiliatingly, day by day, his own shortcomings and positive faults. Such being the fact, it looks a hard thing to receive the astonishing truth that grace has given even him oneness with Christ.

Yet the great distinctive feature of the Christian's calling is found in these very words, "Together with Christ." Sovereign grace can alone account for it. As God claimed and exercised the title, at all times, to bless according to His good pleasure, so now He puts the members of Christ's body in the place that seems good to Him. He looks for unqualified submission in our hearts. And in proportion as we are simple in bowing to God, His grace and truth open far more largely and more distinctly on our souls. Now the bearing of this will soon be seen as I make a few remarks upon the scripture just read. The subject is the Church's calling and hopes -- the latter, of course, in connection with the coming of the Lord. The Holy Ghost opens the subject with a kind of allusion to Israel's place. They were the chosen people, but it was on earth and for the earth. I do not deny that there were elect men in Israel, upon whose hearts brighter hopes

dawned. No doubt Abraham was but a sample of the faithful. And indeed in the dealings of God, before there was a people called, there were those who looked by faith beyond the earth, who saw what is brighter than earthly hopes. But here we have a different character of blessing: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The heavenly 'places are clearly in contrast with Israel's earthly place. Now Israel looked, and rightly looked, to be thus blessed here below; indeed, it is to disparage the word of God to lose sight of this: God will make it good to them in a future day.

But we ourselves are in the same place as these believers, addressed by the Apostle Paul, -- "Blessed with all spiritual blessings . . . *in Christ*." That little word, "in Christ," is the key to it all. In one sense a Christian is nothing in himself; in Christ he has everything. Let my heart only get hold of this precious truth. Christ now shows what a Christian is in the presence of God. No doubt, besides being the risen man, He is also God, the object of worship, equal with the Father. He has a divine right to all, yet is He pleased to possess all as the glorified man by right of redemption. He came into this world. He had the only claim as man, for He alone had accomplished God's will. He was the perfect manifestation of what man ought to be to God under law, and He was the perfect manifestation of what God is to man in love, He was above law -- it was grace. If the law dealt with evil, it must destroy. Grace takes the supremacy. It shows grace to those who do not deserve it. Christ as under law shewed perfectly what God's will was. Then He manifested what God is to man. It was His place to manifest perfect grace and truth. Christ takes the inheritance neither as man or God only, but as Redeemer. He suffered on the cross that He might have others to share it, others to any, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." It was only in resurrection that the Lord Jesus took all things. When upon earth He did not take the inheritance; He took sorrow, He took shame, He took suffering -- every kind of hatred from man. He took God's judgment about sin. In this He was alone upon the cross, because there the wonderful problem was being solved, how sin could be put away. Christ abolished sin that God might justly justify, that God might manifest all His character.

Here, however, it is a larger measure than merely justifying. God blesses with all spiritual blessings in Christ. He had never uttered such language before. In the Old Testament there is not such a thought as Christ having members. You have a king reigning in righteousness, and nations blest through Christ that blessed One who will take all things from God. What we have here is quite different. It is God not only pardoning, and not merely justifying, but making Christians to be the members of Christ, of His flesh, and of His bones. Here we have language rising above everything that believers had before redemption. There is no disparagement of the privileges of saints before, but what I am anxious to shew is that Christians are not generally alive to their own privileges.

The first thing to point out is this, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark the language. It is God acting in this especial manner of relationship. He means to bless the believer as He blesses Christ. That is, not as Christ is blessed as a divine person -- that would be blasphemy. Here we have what is bestowed upon Him as man in heaven. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them" is a kindred truth. Christ as the risen man is exalted on high, having glory conferred on Him as the risen man that by the grace of God had died. The risen man is also God, but we must never confound His deity with His humanity. As thus risen He said, "I ascend unto my God and your God, unto my Father and your Father." Here we have His and our God and Father, and the apostle shows that we reap infinite blessing from each of these relationships. As God of our Lord Jesus, He gives us to partake in the divine nature, holy and blameless before Him in love. He means to have men in heaven along with Jesus. To have that blessed glorified man there is not enough. He gives Jesus companions. These companions of His must have, of course, the divine nature morally (2 Pet. 1).

Again, angels are servants: they never rise above the nature of servants. The archangel even never rises above the place of a servant. The angels are called the sons of God in a certain sense, as all men are by virtue of creation. Angels are a spiritual class of beings, but they have not the intimacy of those born of God, the place of children, the Spirit of adoption, &c. Now I call your attention to this, because it is but feebly understood by Christians in general. It is not presumption to know that our sins are forgiven. I would ask any person who knows the name of Christ, who loves Him, on what ground is it that you take the place of a believer? On what ground have you received favor from God? Do you believe in Jesus as One that suffered for sins? I ask you, Has He done the work perfectly or has He not? There is no believer who would not at once answer, Yes -- perfectly. Then as surely as you are a believer, you have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. If you have not this forgiveness, *when* can you have it? Christ will not suffer again. Suffering and offering go together. They most go together in the mind of God. Once purged is the word for a Christian -- once, because it has been done perfectly, done for ever. Now, I maintain that it is done for every Christian. Every Christian owes it to Christ to believe unhesitatingly that He has done *perfectly* the work of putting away sin. There may be failures. Far would I be from saying that a believer should not confess failure always. Daily failure calls for daily humbling before God. Still the fact of redemption remains unchanged. Take the case of a child: he may offend and offend grievously, but he remains your child all the same. The more you enforce on him that he is your child, the more is his failure felt, as it is the worse in itself. In the same way, instead of the holding fast our relationship, really weakening the sense of sin, it is the very and only ground of judging it aright. It is that which makes sin to be most exceedingly sinful.

We have here the full roll of christian privilege. How striking it is in all this passage there is not a word said about our original condition as sinners. In the Epistle to the Romans it is quite another method. In Ephesians 2 we have a deeper character of sin than we have even in Romans -- "*dead* in trespasses and sins," etc. But first we find God unfolding His counsels which refer to the Christian. It was a purpose of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, entirely apart from man's condition upon earth. We find here the very blessed truth that redemption is no mere remedy, it was the first choice of God. God counselled and determined in Himself, before there were any creatures at all; He determined to have beings in heaven capable of fellowship with Himself and with His Son. Then He allowed man to be *tried* upon earth. This took place with Israel, &c. When the wickedness of the world rose to its height in the cross of Christ, at that very moment when Jew and Gentile united to kill the Lord of glory, God answered their awful conspiracy by bringing out His richest grace. God shewed through and in His Son a salvation that not only meets man ruined upon earth, but that would give man an everlasting portion with Christ in the presence of God. The Church consists not merely of persons pardoned and saved, of people looking to heaven; it has a deeper character of relationship; it implies union with Christ in heaven. This is what God imparts to believers now.

The next thing taken up here is that God not only brings us into this astonishing place of blessing, but opens His secrets: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will." Thus, first of all, He makes us holy in Christ; next, He gives us the place of sons to Himself; and then He makes known to us what He is going to do. And what is that? To put the entire universe under Christ, to have all in heaven, all on earth, put under the glorified man. This is the first part of the secret of God's will; the next is, that the believers now -- all believers in Christ -- are made joint-heirs with Christ over this inheritance. Not that we are the inheritance: the Jewish people will be a part of the inheritance; but the peculiar character of Christians, that is, they are *heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ*.

As to this, the simple question is, What does scripture say? What is the teaching of God on this head? It is said to be a mystery, which means that which could not be found out by the wit of man, but what can be understood when revealed. "The mystery of Christ" consisted in this -- Christ, the center of all God's dealings, and believers now united to Him. There is nothing wonderful in the Son of God being over all things. God the Father could not be said to confer anything upon God the Son as such: it would deny His supreme deity. But yet it is perfectly certain from scripture that Jesus now receives all from God the Father. A man is at the right hand of God! -- a man is the object of heaven's delight and adoration! But more. By the Holy Ghost the Church is united with this glorified man, the spiritual Eve of the last Adam. The Church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, as it is the body of the glorified Christ who is Head over all things. Thus it is written at the end of this chapter. Christ is said to be "Head over all things to

the church, which is his body." The Church is really associated with Christ over all things, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

The wonderful mystery is here made known -- the Church called into oneness with Christ. Into this one body we are baptized by the Spirit now;³ and now is the time that the believer is responsible to receive it into his soul, and to manifest it in his ways. Of course it is a matter of faith; for, as to his body, he is the same as any other man. He can only triumph through Christ; but he has Christ in glory not only as his righteousness but his life, yea, one with Him. All that God confers upon Christ, Christ shares with the Church. The effect is immediate and immense. Suppose a person were to wake up to the fact that he was the queen's son, would it not have a mighty influence practically on him? So, to be given now to know not merely that a person is saved, but that he shares with Christ all that He possesses, that he is a member of His body, that he is viewed now as perfect by God in Christ: such is the position of a Christian. It is not that one does not take into account a Christian's failure: I do, but the way to feel our failure most is to hold fast our relationship to Christ. Upon christian doctrine is rounded christian practice.

As the believer even now is set in this blessed place of enjoyment, God has sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in him, in such a sort as never was before. There never was a time when the Holy Ghost did not work; He beyond all doubt is the effective agent in all the dealings of God from creation downwards. There could be no power of God at work in man without the Spirit of God. But not the less do I maintain along with this, that the Lord Jesus Christ prepared the disciples for a greater blessing than either they or others had ever known before. He told them "it is expedient for you that I go away," etc. What could make up for such a loss? The answer is, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." It is contrary to Scripture or even sense to suppose that it was merely prolonging something they possessed before. Nay, there was a deeper blessing. It was the same Spirit that had made them born anew, but He was now for the first time sent down from heaven to dwell in the saints.

Who had ever been thus blessed before? Yes, there was One who had enjoyed Him thus. Who was that One person who had been the temple of God upon earth? It was Jesus. Upon Him the Holy Ghost came not as a flame of fire, but as a dove, the witness of the perfect spotlessness of Jesus. The humanity of Jesus being absolutely pure and holy (Luke 1:35), there was not the least hindrance to the

3. [The baptism in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) took place once for all at Pentecost. This formed the body and the believers subsequently were added to the body once for all formed at Pentecost. We are added to it by being sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise with which those baptised in the Holy Spirit were also sealed. See Eph. 1:12,13.]

dwelling of the Holy Ghost in Him. We can understand Jesus being bodily the temple or habitation of the Holy Ghost; but how could it be true of us, evil and defiled as we are by nature? Christ has so perfectly put away the sin and sins of a believer, that it is as though the evil, root, branch, and fruit, had never been. Hence the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and actually now dwells in the believer, as the proof and result of the perfect putting away of sin by Christ's sacrifice.

The saints of old were waiting for what was coming; they knew there were good things to come. "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost; sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12).

Manifestly then there is a special blessing in the gift of the Spirit consequent upon redemption. When we know and weigh what redemption is, there will be less difficulty. It is a poor partial notion of redemption as an accomplished fact that makes people ask, Why should not God always act in the same way? The right understanding of its infinite work teaches us, that God sees such virtue in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ that He reserves a special blessing for that hour. The believer now is blessed with, and will share, His supremacy over all things.

What makes us members of the body of Christ? We are made so by the Spirit, and not by faith only. Of course, no one but a believer has this place; but it is nowhere said to be by faith, but by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:13). The saints of old time were not baptized into this one body. There was nothing of the kind. The Jew preserved his separate place; the Gentile might come in (as a proselyte), but there was no identity: still less was either one or [the] other made one with Christ. In Christianity these distinctions disappear. There was faith among the Old Testament saints, but there was no "one body" yet; not even when our Lord was upon earth. He told the disciples that He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The cross of Christ, on man's side of it, was a joining of all men (Jew and Gentile) in wickedness; on God's side it led to a joining of Jew and Gentile in common blessing by grace. In Matthew 16, Peter answers Christ's demand with the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ says, "Upon this rock I *will* build my Church." What does He mean by this? Peter confesses His glory not only as Messiah or the Christ, but as Son of the living God. He was marked out the Son of God by resurrection from the dead. "He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.

What hope is suited to such a calling? Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself." The portion that Christ has is the portion of a Christian. Even now He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and

redemption. As He took our portion on the cross, so we have His portion in glory. He will bless the Jews on earth. God promised to do so. Whereas, He has in title blessed us with Christ in heaven. Some think the mystery was that the Gentiles were to be called, but this [i. e., that Gentiles would be called -- in for the millennium] is plainly referred to in the Old Testament. The mystery goes much farther, namely, that all who now believe, Jews and Gentiles, should be united together as the one body of Christ, head over all things.

Our hope is for Christ to come and take us to be with Himself in the Father's house John 14:1-3]. This implies the highest scene of enjoyment even in heaven. Can any place there be too high for Christ? Assuredly not. The Father manifests His love for His Son thus. If God gives us such a place in Christ, we ought to believe it; and this is not merely for ourselves, but for every believer, for every Christian. This, and nothing less than this, is the portion of all who believe the gospel. Christ will come Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. We shall be with Himself, in that glory which is entirely above the world. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Rev. 22:17). To say "Come," depends not on great knowledge, but on His great salvation and love.

It cannot be too much insisted on that there is no difference between the standing of one believer and another. When you come to a question of faithfulness, there are degrees; but to suppose a difference in the whiteness of the robe, or the righteousness we are made, is to suppose a various value in the blood of Christ, or uncertainty in the power of His resurrection. There is no difference as to sin in one sense, all being equally dead in trespasses and sins. So there is no such thing as one saint being brought nearer to God by redemption than another; it denies the work of Christ. All believers now are equally, i. e., perfectly made high as to standing, though bad teaching does much to darken the truth, and lack of spirituality hinders holy enjoyment, even where the truth may have entered. Besides, we are made one with Christ, but for this the gift of the Spirit was requisite.

The Bible Treasury 7:89-92 (1868).

Inconsistency

Nobody likes to be inconsistent. You may be dragged into it, but you are never comfortable when you have a sense of inconsistency about you. Hence, after one error gains empire over the mind of man, he is ready to embrace others just to make all consistent (*W. Kelly, Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, p. 87).

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

6: The Pretribulation Rapture

Chapter 6.6:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Waiting Posture of the Thessalonians

In 1 Thess. 1:10 we find the Thessalonians in the waiting posture in which the Word of God through Paul had placed them (2 Thess. 2:13). We know that one may wait for something he knows may not come for a long time, but we are persuaded that what they were waiting for was something that they had been taught to look for at any moment.

They had been taught to wait for God's Son from heaven (cp. Phil. 3:20). They had been taught that He would personally come for them even as He Himself had said just before going to the cross (John 14:1-3). His Person was their expectation. They were not merely waiting to go to heaven; they were waiting to be with Himself.

In 1 Thess. 2:19 he speaks to them of the joy of being associated with them when the Lord comes. Paul and his co-laborers would find the Thessalonians to be their crown of rejoicing at that time. In 1 Thess. 3:13 he shows that the day of manifestation would declare openly the character of that life with which God had invested them.

When Did Paul First Teach the Pretribulation Rapture?

While we may not be able to determine exactly when Paul first began to teach the pretribulation rapture, I believe the following points indicate that he taught

it to the Thessalonians while with them.

1. They were set in an expectant posture (1 Thess. 1:9-10). This is in accord with John 14:1-3.
2. They were so expecting that they were exceedingly upset, and sorrowed like the heathen, when some of their brethren died (1 Thess. 4:13-14).
3. Paul had instructed them concerning prophetic times (denoting duration or time of occurrence) and seasons (denoting characteristics of a period) as noted in 1 Thess. 5:1; 2 Thess 2:2 indicates he had taught them about the day of the Lord; 2 Thess 2:5 shows that he had taught them about the apostasy and the man of sin; they had also learned about the restrainer (2 Thess 2:6). Thus they knew an outline of prophetic events.
4. Note well, then, that since they knew about the events of the tribulation period, their grief over their brethren who had died shows **that they did not expect any of their brethren to be tribulation martyrs**. It shows that they expected the Lord to come for them in their lifetime and before any had died. None of this is changed by 1 Thessalonians. Paul only explained the position of the dead brethren with respect to the rapture. He left intact their expectation of Christ, only they now knew that the Lord might not come in their lifetime. So their proper position was to expect Christ before the times and seasons of prophecy recommenced, and possibly while they were alive.
5. And so undoubtedly they understood the difference between Christ's coming *for* His saints (as our Lord taught -- John 14:3) and His coming *with* His saints (1 Thess. 3:13; 4:14); but not what would happen to those who died.
6. There is not a hint in 1 Thess. (or 2 Thess.) that the great tribulation, or signs, or whatever, must appear before the Lord could come for them. Their posture, their untoward sorrow, their not expecting great tribulation or martyrdom, etc., all show that for them Christ's coming was signless and before the great tribulation. Moreover, after Paul had written to them, some one sent them a forged letter (2 Thess. 2:2) to dupe them into thinking that the day of the Lord had arrived -- thus contradicting their expectation.

We see, then, that Paul had taught them that the Lord would come before the time of the apostasy and the man of sin; i. e., before the great tribulation.

The Thessalonians' Difficulty

Nonetheless, the Thessalonians had difficulties on the subject. Certainly not every detail connected with the hope of the saints had been expounded (nor even revealed as 1 Thess. 4:15-18 shows). Furthermore, there were Judaizing teachers everywhere, to whom the saints sometimes gave ear, and there were even forgers of letters (2 Thess 2:2; 3:17). As J. N. Darby observed, "a measure of Jewish darkness was on their minds"

It may be objected that if Paul had taught them the pretribulation rapture then they later could not have believed they were in the day of the Lord (2 Thess. 2:2). We must remember that he had not been there long and they didn't have a New Testament to consult. Indeed, he had to refresh their memory concerning what he had said (2 Thess. 2:5). We must also bear in mind that a forger had sent a letter to the Thessalonians in Paul's name (2 Thess 2:2). Apparently they did not compare the signature with Paul's signature on the first epistle. He particularly called their attention to this point in 2 Thess. 3:17. They did have his signature, or mark.

The first epistle guarded against an error respecting the dead. But that did not cloud the hope of the living; and so in 1 Thess. 1:3 he speaks of their "work of faith, and labor of love, and enduring constancy of hope . . ." Not so in 2 Thess. 1:3 where he speaks of their faith and love, but hope is conspicuous by its absence. Their hope had become confused and clouded, no doubt because of the forged letter purporting to be from Paul himself, convincing them somehow that the persecutions they were enduring were a sign they were in the day of the Lord. Thus, they had acquired the notion that the day of the Lord preceded the rapture and they were in it. The second epistle then guards against an error respecting the living and sets them right by:

1. showing them they will be at rest when the day arrives (2 Thess 1);
2. reaffirming the rapture (2 Thess 2:1); and,
3. showing them that the apostasy and the manifestation of the man of sin will occur before the day of the Lord (2 Thess 2).

How Paul dealt with their difficulty concerning the dead in Christ was well described by J. N. Darby:

It remains to take notice of one interesting circumstance as to the manner in which the apostle instructs them. He takes, in the first chapter, the truths which were precious to their heart, but were still somewhat vaguely seized by their intelligence, and as to which they were indeed fallen into mistakes, and employs them (in the clearness in which he possessed them himself) in his practical

instructions, and applies them to known and experienced relationships, that their souls might be well established on positive truth, and clear as to its use, before he touched on their error and the mistakes they had made. They waited for His Son from heaven. This they already possessed clearly in their hearts; but they would be in the presence of God when Jesus comes with all His saints. This was clearing up a very important point without directly touching the error. Their heart got straight as to the truth in its practical application to what the heart possessed. They understood what it was to be before God the Father. It was much more intimate and real than a manifestation of terrestrial and finite glory. Further they would be before God when Jesus came with *all His saints*; a simple fact that Jesus could not have *some only* of His assembly. The heart seized this truth without an effort; yet in doing so it was established, as was the understanding also, in what made the whole truth clear, and that in view of the relationship of the Thessalonians to Christ and those that were His. The joy even of the apostle in meeting them all (those who had died consequently, as well as the living) at the coming of Jesus, placed the soul on an entirely different ground from that of being found here, and blessed by the arrival of Jesus when they were here below.

Thus enlightened, confirmed, established, in the real bearing of the truth which they possessed already, by a development of it which connected itself with their best affection and with their most intimate spiritual knowledge, founded on their communion with God, they were ready with certain fixed basis of truth to enter on and set aside without difficulty an error which was not in accord with what they now knew how to appreciate at its just value, as forming part of their moral possessions. Special revelation made all clear as to details. This manner of proceeding is very instructive.¹

There is ever a tendency among Christians to Judaize the hope; i. e., to be overly occupied with the kingdom. It manifests itself in various forms. In posttribulationism it involves, among other things, making Christians out of those who are really the elect of the Jews in the events just preceding the appearing in glory. In amillennialism, we have the kingdom here and now on the earth and this leads to behavior inconsistent with the heavenly calling for Christians. In postmillennialism the great idea is that the gospel will bring in the kingdom. What this scheme really amounts to is that the great blessing for the earth will be brought about by *man's effort*, not by Christ coming in power and glory. Results accomplished by man is the essence of Judaism. When we see the confusion in Christendom, even though we have the complete canon of Scripture available everywhere, it should not surprise us that there should be some confusion in the minds of the Thessalonians.

1. *Synopsis* 5:83.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Reviewed

VERSE 13

The apostle Paul and his companions did not wish the Thessalonians to be ignorant (cp. Rom 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:1, 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8) concerning their brethren who had died. He calls it "fallen asleep," an expression used in Judaism (see Mark 5:39; John 11:11) and Christianity (see 1 Thess. 4:13; 5:10) but most appropriate to Christians, as v. 14 shows. The Thessalonians were not to grieve as others who had no hope (cp. Eph. 2:12), who are deprived of all blessing. It is not improper for a Christian to grieve -- though to grieve as those without hope is wrong.

The origin of their grief was not that they thought their brethren would not rise at all. Such a doctrine would receive censure, as in 1 Cor. 15. Instead, their trouble was that they did not have light concerning the connection of the Lord's coming with **the resurrection of the just**. Hence there is no reproof whatsoever. It is evident that they were so waiting for the Lord to come that they had not expected any of the brethren to die. Faced with their death, they thought that their dead brethren would not share in all the blessedness that the living would experience. Their excessive grief did, however, show the strength of their love for their dead brethren, as 1 Thess. 4:9,10 indicates.

As to the postmillennial/amillennial notion that the Thessalonians thought their dead would never rise, the notion credits them with an ignorance below the Jews. Some in the Thessalonian assembly were Jews from the synagogue who turned to the Lord (Acts 17:3,4). Martha (John 11:24), and also the Pharisees (Acts 23: 8) believed in resurrection. Indeed, the *figurative* use of resurrection in Ezek. 37, Isa. 26, etc., indicates belief in a *literal* resurrection. It is likely that Jewish believers were found among the Thessalonians and these matters would have been discussed. And we shall see that Paul's correction did not involve telling them that their dead would rise someday. He told them that when the Lord would come (for His kingdom), their brethren now sleeping would accompany Him, and He would accomplish this by raising them at the time of the rapture.

VERSE 14

In this verse we see that the resurrection solves the difficulty. The man Jesus "died," yea died an atoning death that His people may live eternally with Himself. And here the death of His own is called *sleep*, and they "have fallen asleep through Jesus," as though they sleep through His gentle hand, the hand of the One who died to secure their eternal blessedness.

His people are bound up with Him and if He died and rose, it follows that those sleeping brethren God will bring with Jesus when Jesus comes for His kingdom. There may be an inference here that somehow the Thessalonians not only thought that their dead brethren would miss the coming of the Lord, but possibly the kingdom also.

Regarding the Thessalonians' anxiety for their dead brethren, W. Kelly wrote,

One can understand their perplexity for want of light on what the Lord would do with them. They did not know whether they would then enter the kingdom, or how, or when. These were questions unsolved.²

J. N. Darby wrote to the same effect:

To them the principle and living object was the Lord Himself, and they were awaiting His return with hearts full of joy and life; but the heavenly side of this expectation had not its place clearly marked in their minds, and they connected the coming too much with the manifestation [in glory], so that the earthly character predominated, and the dead seemed to be shut out from it.³

They believed that Jesus died and rose again. Well, then, God would therefore not leave their sleeping ones in the grave when Jesus comes in glory to reign. But how will this occur? "Sleep" as used here applies to the body, not the soul. We absolutely reject the teaching of soul-sleep. It is those now sleeping that will come with the Lord when He comes for the kingdom. But, then, how can they come with Him since it is not sleeping souls (whatever that may mean) that God brings with Jesus? They must be in glory with Him to come with Him. How did they get there in order to come with Him? Verses 15-18 explain that they will previously have been resurrected and caught up with the living to meet the Lord in the air. John 14:1-3, with 1 Thess. 4:13-18, shows that the Lord will descend into the air, not to go to the earth, to receive His own to Himself and take them to the Father's house above. Subsequently they will come with Him when He is manifested in glory (Col 3:4; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 17:14; 19:14; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Thess. 3:13).

VERSES 15-18

These verses are parenthetical and explain how the event of v. 14 will be brought about. By these verses being parenthetical we mean that 1 Thess. 4:14 connects directly with 1 Thess. 5:1 and that 1 Thess. 4:15-18 forms a parenthesis in between in order to explain something. In another chapter it will be further observed how 1 Thess. 5:1 continues from 1 Thess. 4:14.

2. *Introductory Lectures to the Study of the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, p. 340.

3. *Synopsis* 5:84.

Verse 15. Paul had received a revelation. "In the word of the Lord" does not refer to Matt. 24 or some other text; nor does it refer to an imagined, unrecorded saying of our Lord. It refers to the solution of the difficulty. It is not a revelation that the Lord was going to come for His own. Our Lord had declared that grand fact in John 14:1-3. The phrase, "For this we say to you in [the] word of [the] Lord," indicates that Paul had received something by revelation (at whatever time it may have been). The phrase refers to the specific revelation that linked the rapture to the resurrection. The living saints are not going to anticipate ("prevent" in the KJV meant to *vent previously* -- to go out before) those fallen asleep. It is likely that most of those caught up will be resurrected saints, as we can see now; but they could not know that, or need not expect it in their day. At any rate, light is here given concerning the **resurrection of the just** -- that the rapture and the resurrection are linked and that sleeping saints will be raised first. ⁴ The living shall not anticipate, i. e., enter into, blessedness with the Lord before those fallen asleep.

Verse 16-18. "Himself" is a very sweet word for our hearts. "Himself" will come for us (John 14:3) and we await Him as Savior (Phil 3:20). When He descends into the air to receive us to Himself, that where He is ⁵ there we may be also (John 14:1-3), then shall our body of humiliation be transformed and be like His body of glory (Phil. 3:20, 21; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:40-44). What a mighty change for the resurrected dead and we, the living (1 Cor. 15:52). And then shall we see face to face (1 Cor. 13:12) and we shall be brought to the Father's house. He had said He would prepare a place, "and if I go and shall prepare you a place, I am coming again and shall receive you to Myself, that where I am ye also may be." He was going to the Father (John 16:28). The cross is not meant in John 14:1-3, though He would pass through the throes of Calvary before going to the Father.

And I ask your heart, how and when was the place prepared? Is it ready yet? What does He need to do to ready it? Nothing. When He set His feet, as it were, in that place as glorified MAN, the place was prepared. His entry there as Man readied it for His fellow-heirs, praise God! And now He, too, is waiting

4. **The first resurrection** (Rev. 20) is not a point in time but rather refers to a class of persons, the just, as seen in its being called the **resurrection of the just** (Acts 24:15). Christ, that just One (Acts 7:52), is already raised, as firstfruits (1 Cor. 15). The second wave of resurrection power will occur when Christ descends into the air -- and then all of the just that are in the grave shall rise, including O. T. just ones (Heb. 11:40), although 1 Thess. 4:15-18 speaks only of "the dead in Christ." Each reference is perfect in the place where the Spirit put it. "The first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4, 5) indicates the *priority*; The "resurrection of the just" (Acts 24:15) indicates the *class of persons*; the "resurrection of life" (John 5:29) indicates the *result*.

5. See the notes on John 14:1-3, which show that "where I am" meant His place above with the Father.

(Rev. 3:10; the patience of Christ is *His* patience -- do our hearts understand it?).

When Israel is regathered, the gathering will take place by angels (Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27). For us He will Himself come. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." "Yea, I come quickly. Amen; come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 21:17, 20).

Another says,

None can direct or take the lead in that scene but Himself. "The voice of the archangel" -- mark the order. We should not like the trump, the archangel's sound, before we hear His voice. (The word translated "shout" is used for any loud sound in connection with regulating things.) His voice is the same as agonized in the garden, and which said, "Father, I will," &c.

The voice of the archangel tells that when the Lord Jesus rises up, all heaven is concerned in it. Heaven gives its approval, and then we get the "trump of God." God sets His seal on it. It will be a thrilling sight and sound! We have a specialty of invitation to do with the scene -- none can intrude there. *What* a scene it will be when Christ leaves the throne a second time to take us home to His Father's house! Where do we date from? Before the foundation of the world that love was set upon us; the same love has been waiting for and on us ever since. It has followed us every step of our way in all the entanglements of the domestic circle. Such blessed love! What sort of love was it that could take such a cup of wrath as He did into His hand? What sort of love is it that will leave the throne a second time to receive me to Himself? It is not the glory, but Himself, not the attendant circumstances; but the thing is, the One who thus loves me. When we discover how feebly we know His love, we prefer saying, *He loves me*, rather than saying to another, *I love Him*, though I can tell the world this. I would rather tell *Christ* I love Him than tell *you*. How unspeakably brightly His love burns! It is not merely the One who loves me come, but He comes as the servant of that love -- as "the resurrection." He speaks the word -- the dead in Him rise first. Stephen, Paul, and others will start up: all the sleeping ones. Some we have loved on earth more than anything will come forth. What a majestic display of His love and His power it will be to the poor weak ones whose bodies are gone to dust! Every one will come up out of the grave! How it will tell out -- "I am the resurrection." Almighty power will be put forth. The very graves become the scene of glory when He comes back. He searches out the dust of those who are sleeping. He who was the meek and lowly "Man of sorrows" will speak the word! Let mine arise! (Though we would not put a word in His mouth for that day.) He will speak some word and all will come out from the tomb. He is the Life too. 'Some will be alive and remain. Paul does not look for a long interval; he says, "We which are alive," &c. He gave us eternal life, and He will so fill up the earthen vessel with eternal life that mortality will be entirely excluded. Nothing unfit for the glory will remain in it. "Caught up"; it is a strong word -- snatched up.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Is it not comfort to you, the fact that there is rest at the end of the journey? Or if torn by violence here, is it no comfort that there will be no more such scenes there, but "for ever with the Lord?" He comes in answer to the longing desire of those whose hearts say, "Come, Lord Jesus." Do you find yourselves saying such words as, "I wait,

Lord?" Are you putting your soul into this position? Is your own heart so in the secret of His presence, that He is able to say of you, "That is one who is in the position of waiting for me?" Who is in this practical position of soul? Are you putting yourself in this position, and saying, "I am a weak one, but, Lord, I wait for thee?" This is the comfort of heart, that will keep us through troublous circumstances.⁶

The "dead in Christ" refers to Christians, not Old Testament saints. No doubt Old Testament saints will be raised at this time (Heb. 11:40). But 1 Thess. 4 addresses the difficulty of the Thessalonians concerning their fellow Christians. "In Christ" denotes the position of one sealed with the Spirit. "The dead in Christ" describes a condition. They are the dead *in Christ*; and they shall rise before the catching up -- though we expect this will all be nigh instantaneous. Then they and the living will be caught up TOGETHER in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so the dead over whom they grieved will receive the first wave of power, mighty resurrection power, when He comes for us. The power displayed in the resurrection of Christ is called "the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph. 1:19), thus surpassing the creatorial power; for resurrection has not merely to do with the physical, but with the new creation.

In the phrase, "we, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord," Paul includes himself. 1 Cor. 6:14 and 2 Cor. 4:14 do not teach that all Christians must die, nor do these scriptures mean Paul changed his mind about 1 Thess. 4:17. 1 Cor. 15:51 applies to Christians generally, but it shows, too, that we must regard 1 Thess. 4:17 as in continuous force and that Paul, when writing 1 Corinthians, continued to believe that Christ might come in his lifetime. Paul is now waiting in heaven. At any rate, 1 Thess. 4:17 and 1 Cor. 15:51 were not meant to tell those to whom these letters were addressed that there was going to be a long program for the age -- as well as intervening signs. Moreover, the word "we" did mean that they were supposed to understand that "we" had a bearing on their expectation. Is it not obvious that all four passages, taken together, show that it may be that Christ might not come in their lifetime? This is the present proper attitude of the waiting, expectant Christian.

A Noisy Event?

There are those who seem to be wise and knowing, in their own eyes, who object to the idea of the rapture being secret (generally posttribulationists),⁷ on the basis that it will be the "noisiest event" they can imagine, heard by all, and loud enough to wake the dead. They do not elaborate on the implication of that. But that is no wonder, for the result of this carnal objection of applying the physics of sound would result in widespread death from the shock of the intensity of the sound level necessary in order to be heard over our globe by everyone. Really, it is painful to deal with silly objections, yet necessary because even intelligent persons, in their zeal for what is false, use such nonsensical notions.

It is well to regard the assembling shout as something special. As an illustration, take Acts 9:7 and 22:10, regarded by some opposers of scripture as a contradiction. In a footnote to Acts 9:4 J. N. Darby wrote:

Phone, accusative; in verse 7 genitive; in ch. 22:9, 14 accusative; in ch. 22:7 genitive. The genitive is to listen to, or when the voice of a rumor reaches. It is the fact or physical hearing. The accusative is that the thing heard is before the mind.

The case is this: Paul heard the intelligence of the voice, and the others heard the sound without the intelligence. There is no contradiction. God can do as He will with His communications.

There is no reason, then, why the Lord cannot cause every Christian to hear the same volume, unbelievers to hear nothing, and **the just**, dead saints, to be the only dead ones to hear the shout.

A Visible Event?

2 Thess. 2:8 implies the *invisibility* of Christ at the rapture. 2 Thess. 2:8 speaks of the appearing in glory, not of the rapture, and calls it "the appearing of His coming." We see from this phrase that "coming" does not necessarily mean an appearing is involved. "Coming" is *parousia*, or *presence*, and it may be a visible or invisible presence. The "appearing of His presence" is the second

7. *The Blessed Hope*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 63 (1956). R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 104 (1973), on the other hand, correctly says that the question of secrecy has little bearing on the validity of a pretribulation rapture, though he did not hold the teaching of the pretribulation rapture.

phase, or stage, of the **one coming**, the part of it when He is visibly manifested to the world after the great tribulation. When He is manifested we will be also manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). The rapture is not the time of the appearing⁸. At the rapture the Lord will come for us for the purpose of taking us to the Father's house, as the first part of His coming (*parousia*). Subsequently, the appearing (*epiphania*) of His coming (*parousia*) will take place and we will be brought with Him (1 Thess. 4:14; Col. 3:4; Rev. 19:14; 17:14; 1 Thess. 4:13; 1 John 3:2).

Another has shown that there is nothing novel in the thought of secrecy.

I believe that we have many notices which are enough to prepare us for such an event as the secret unnoticed rapture of the saints.

I do not say that we have a single type of it, but many things which may prepare us for it. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God." The eye of the natural body cannot see, nor the ear of the natural body hear, the visions or voices of the Spirit, if the Spirit please not.

Horses and chariots filled the mountain, but the prophet's servant had no eye for them till the Lord pleased. Neither would that same prophet have witnessed the flight of his master to heaven, had his soul not passed through a testing and fitting process. Daniel was given to see a very glorious sight, and to hear, as it were, the voice of a multitude, but the men who stood with him saw nothing, only a terror fell on them and they hid themselves. The glory on the holy hill shone only in the eye of Peter, James and John, though one object in it alone was as the brightness of the sun itself, so that there was light enough to have lighted up the whole land. Many bodies of saints rose, but it was only those to whom it was given, that ever knew of their resurrection, for no mere human eye or ear conversed with the great occasion. The heaven was open to Stephen, and Jesus and the glory were seen by him there, but the assembly saw nothing of it, and their only object was their victim. If Paul went to Paradise in the body, and whether he did or not he will not say, none saw him. As when Philip was found at Azotus, no one had tracked his flight from Gaza, for the Spirit had borne him away. In the light and the voice of Jesus which arrested Saul in his journey to Damascus, there was no word for the ear of his companions, nor form of man for their eye -- all was mere glare and sound; but Saul, the object of the visitation, knew it all, not in his eye and ear merely, but in the depths and secret places of his conscience.

Have not all the circumstances, shall I not say, of the taking of the saints away, been thus anticipated? We have visions and audiences, resurrections, flights and ascensions, the glory down here, and the heavens themselves opened, and yet neither man's ear nor eye conversing with a ray or an utterance of it all. For all these belonged to the regions and energies of the Spirit, and lay outside the range of the natural man and his faculties. And what will there be in the

8. The words appearing, manifestation and epiphany refer to Christ's coming in glory after the great tribulation. The word *coming* (*parousia*) may designate that posttribulational part of Christ's coming or it may refer to the pretribulational part (rapture). Hence the phrase "appearing of His coming" refers to second stage, or part.

resurrection and glorifying and ascension of the saints, which well go beyond these notices when we take them together?

And beyond all these, Jesus rose -- and rose too, forth from a tomb of hard hewn stone, and from amid a guard of wakeful soldiers, but no eye or ear of man were in that great secret. And this was the firstfruits, the pledge and sample. And after He was risen, though He might have walked the earth as before, He was seen only by them to whom it was given Him to appear (Acts 10:40). And He could vanish out of sight as He pleased, or appear in various guises so as to escape discovery as He pleased.

This is the great instance -- but all these help us to apprehend the manner, and silence, and secrecy of the rapture of the saints.⁹

And to the above I add this from W. Kelly:

But those who are asleep in their graves will be wakened up by the shout (κέλευσμα) of the Lord Jesus; for the word means the call of a commander to his men that follow, or of an admiral to his sailors. It is from one who has a relation to others under his authority; it is not a vague call to those that may not own his command, but to his own people.

It is evident, therefore, that the notion entertained by some, that this shout must be heard by men in general, is refuted by these words, as well as other facts. Men in general have no such relation to the Lord. It is a shout that is heard by those to whom it appertains. Not a word, therefore, includes -- but, rather the contrary, shuts out -- those to whom Christ stands in no such connection. In other words, it is the Lord's call to His own, and accordingly the dead in Christ rise first, as the immediate fruit of it. "Then we, the living that remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This at once dispels the difficulty as to those who were asleep. So far from missing the moment of meeting between the Lord and His own, they rise first; we immediately join them; and thus both together are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with Him.¹⁰

The Lord's authority is noted much in 1 Thess. 4. His name *Jesus* is used in connection with His death and the sleep of the saints through Him. *Dead in Christ* describes their condition. Otherwise *Lord* is used throughout; and we shall own Him thus eternally (v. 17).

We must now dwell a moment on the words "caught up." The Man-child of Rev. 12:1-5 can be none other than our Lord Jesus who will rule the nations with a rod of iron. He was "caught up"! (Rev. 12:5). There was A MAN IN CHRIST (do we understand that?) who was "caught up" to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:3). Ye perverters of scripture who teach soul sleep -- this man did

9. *A Voice to the Faithful* 10:243-246. www.senttruthpublishers.com

10. *Lectures Introductory to the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, p. 342.

not know if he was in the body or out of it.¹¹ At any rate, in that scene of glory he was insensible of the body. It imposed no impediment to full enjoyment of that scene. He HEARD things which it is not possible in our present circumstances and mode of communication to convey to others. "I know (conscious knowledge -- it was Paul himself) a man in Christ . . . such [a one] caught up to [the] third heaven." My reader, are *you* such a one -- a man in Christ? -- a man sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13, 14); one Spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17); "So if any (be) in Christ, (there is) new creation" (2 Cor. 6:17)? Then just as Christ was caught up, you will be caught up, too (1 Thess. 4:17). No wonder that the Spirit and the bride say, Come (Rev. 22:17), "Amen; come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:21)! We are going to meet Himself, face to face!

Caught up! Christ was caught up. A man in Christ was caught up. And we, believer, shall be caught up. Caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Caught up to be in the Father's house, that blessed abode of nearness. Caught up to the third heaven to enjoy that which in the present state of things it is impossible to communicate. Caught up to be insensible of any bodily impediment, yea, to be clothed upon with our house from heaven, to have these bodies of humiliation fashioned like unto His own body of glory. Come Lord Jesus!

Some Objections Considered

Posttribulationists must, of course, do away with all of this, by one means or another. Let the reader note the effect of this system. One says:

The exact rendering of "en logo Kyrion" is "in a discourse of the Lord," the preposition "*in*," with the dative denoting the 'sphere with which' a thing is done (see the Grammars). That the doctrine of the Resurrection and the Rapture are *within the sphere* of the Olivet Discourse is as clear as . . . Every principle of criticism and exegesis throws us back at once on the Olivet Discourse. Paul speaks within the limits of what the Lord had spoken. It is no new or special revelation to Him personally. It was known already to "*Us*," "*We*," the whole apostolic college.¹²

One would have thought the "we" and "us" referred to Paul, Silvanus and Timotheous. But before further comment let us hear another.

11. There is no possibility of him saying that if he taught that when the soul is out of the body it sleeps.

12. N. West, "The Apostle Paul and the 'Any Moment' Teaching," *Watching and Waiting*, Mar/Apr, 1956, p. 221.

The secret specially revealed to Paul in 1 Thess. 4, is that "we shall not all sleep" and that "the dead shall rise first." Everything else in the passage had already been taught in the Olivet discourse.¹³

The first writer says the Rapture is within the sphere of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24). "It was no new or special revelation to him." The second speaks of a "secret specially revealed to Paul in 1 Thess. 4." He is at least a little better than the first, but at all cost to the text, a pretribulation rapture must be expunged. The allegation about the connection with Matt. 24 is baseless. Matt. 24 has nothing about resurrection, or rapture, or the dead in Christ, or the dead in Christ rising first, or resurrected and living caught up together, or Christ Himself doing the gathering. The force of 1 Thess. 4 must be rather sharply felt to call forth such desperate allegations.

Again we ask the reader to observe the effect of the posttribulation system. One writer says:

As a matter of fact, "the dead in Christ" must be in heaven, for when the Lord shall descend from heaven into the air at His return, God will bring them along *with* Christ; "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even also them that sleep through Jesus, will God *bring with Him*." They must indeed be with Christ, in closest nearness, companionship, an association for God to bring them together *with* Jesus when He descends out of heaven into the air."¹⁴

We believe, as has been said, that those who are brought *with* Christ, when He comes in manifested glory (Rev. 19), are raised and raptured saints in their new bodies. While I don't believe this writer believes in soul sleep, that is what his teaching amounts to (unintentionally, I'm sure). Observe that the writer quoted above refers the words "those that sleep in Jesus" to the *souls* in heaven. Thus it is souls, according to him, that God brings with Jesus. If the phrase refers to souls, as alleged, it refers to sleeping souls; because the resurrected dead will not have bodies until the Lord is in the air where we meet Him. At any rate, error compounds error.

The expression "asleep through Jesus" applies to the body (Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Peter 3:4) not the soul. Death applies to the body; the *dead* in Christ rise first (1 Thess. 4:16 &c.). Besides this, since 1 Thess. 4:14 says, "For if we believe that Jesus has died and has risen again . . .", it is clear that Paul is founding his point, about the dead saints coming with Christ, on Christ's resurrection. It will be raised ones as well as raptured ones that will come with Christ.

13. "Which Prophetic Teaching is Scriptural?" *Watching and Waiting*, Jan/Feb, 1960, p. 199.

14. H. L. Lindsay-Young, "The Spread of the Rapture Morning," *Watching and Waiting*, Jan/Feb 1961, p. 301.

There is something else that is very important in this matter. The writer has felt the force of the phrase "bring with him." He has properly understood this to mean that God will bring with Christ **from heaven** those asleep through Jesus. He has sought to get around the rapture necessarily preceding Rev. 19:14 by saying it is souls that are brought with Christ **from heaven** (which necessarily then means sleeping souls). But these are those who will rest when Christ is revealed **from heaven** in flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:7,8). See also 1 Thess. 3:13. Those with Him are called, and chosen and faithful (Rev. 17:14; cp. Rev. 19:14). These scriptures will be considered at length later, if the Lord will.

R. Gundry made the following attempt to have the Lord come to earth in 1 Thess. 4:15-18:

Other things being equal, the word "descend" (katabaino) indicates a complete, uninterrupted descent, like that of the Spirit at Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32,33) and that of Christ in His first advent (John 3:13; 6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). Where a reversal from downward to upward motion comes into view, a specific statement to that effect appears, as in Acts 10:11, 16 ("a certain object coming down, . . . and immediately the object was taken up into the sky"). In the absence of a statement indicating a halt or sudden reversal of direction, we naturally infer a complete descent to the earth, such as will take place only at the posttribulational advent."¹⁵

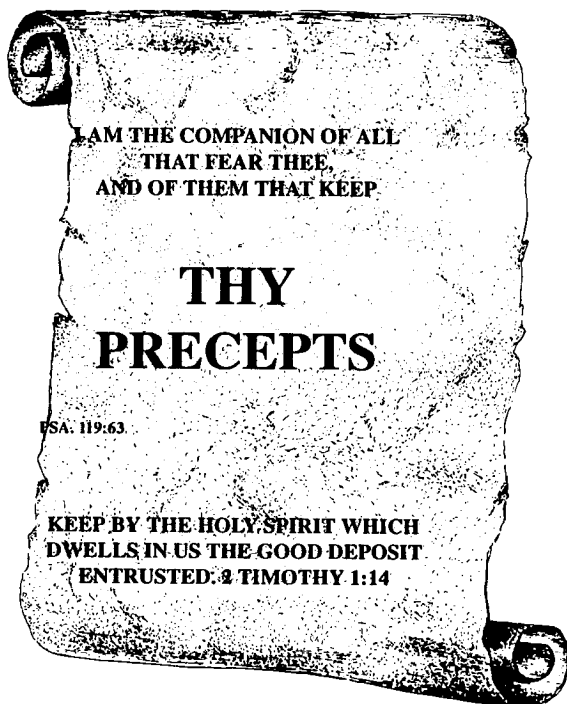
"We naturally infer" is neither natural or valid, though it is, confessedly, an alleged *inference*. The passage does not speak of His descent to the earth. John 14:1-3 expressly tells us where He (and we) will go after His descent into the air and we need no statement indicating a halt or sudden reversal. In the first part of His coming, the Lord will not come out of heaven for the purpose of going to the earth. He will descend into the air, not to the earth, to receive His own to Himself and to personally conduct them to the Father's house. These desperate attempts to get rid of the plain meaning of "the Father's house," as we saw in the notes on John 14:1-3, betrays how keenly its force is really felt, though unadmitted, of course.

Ed.

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THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

The Responsible Man, and The Man of Purpose (John 17)

+I notice first in this chapter that there is responsibility, but of an entirely new order, a responsibility which is connected with Christ and which He has discharged; "I have glorified Thee on the earth," "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world:" a responsibility which in righteousness towards God, and in grace to us, has put us into the same place as Himself. The Word has come down to us; and words have been brought, and we have believed them, and have known surely, as Jesus said, "that I came out from God." If we think of what was previously given by Moses, the law, it was but the measure of man, come down to the earth, and which claimed from man what he ought to be: perfect rule for man as a child of Adam. It was connected necessarily with responsibility, but the responsibility of the creature, and in which he failed: God was hidden behind it -- He not coming to man, nor man to Him. But under it man fails. Then because of this breakdown, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," but came in when this need was thus made plain. Man failed in paradise. He failed upon the question of righteousness by law: and rejected Christ come in grace. If we look at Jew or Gentile, we see Christ taking up *this* responsibility too before God, and putting away sin for us, by the sacrifices of Himself. He dies and closes up the whole scene in which that responsibility was. All is summed up in the words of Jesus, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Another thing is stated in this chapter, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." He came into the world not only as a Man, but as the Heir of promises; and they rejected Him in whom these promises were, as the promised Seed. But, He has secured the *promises* by the cross; and also laid the foundation for the eternal *purposes* of God in His death and resurrection. He who came with all the promises of God in His hand was rejected and killed. Salvation on God's part is the answer to this wickedness on man's. It, was not merely that man was a sinner, but all that God would do for a sinner was refused.

"Last of all he sent unto them the Son, the Son of Truth, My Son, and does the very blood which was the proof of my sin and guilt. The purpose which was

before the world can now be brought out, for righteousness has come in, and Christ *as Man* has got a place in the glory of God, because He deserves it! This is the righteous foundation of the purposes of God; and He is there too in a work done for us.

In this ascended Lord we see the power of life which has triumphed over death, and all the testimony that now comes to us, comes from thence. The Son is there, and there as a Man in righteousness, according to God's nature. But God is not merely glorified in righteousness; but the Father, in love -- "I have glorified *Thee* on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self." The Father's name is the spring of eternal life to us in the Son; and the Son as Man has brought it in, and we have received it. It is not what Jehovah had given to the Messiah, but what the Father had given to the Son. "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." He has given the words to us that the Father gave to Him. These are the privileges that belong to us as believers.

The first three Gospels present Christ to be received by man; but in John's His people are called out by grace: it begins with His rejection [John 1:11]; and they are separated from the world, and brought into this place of possession also. "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them"; this is the full grace of Christ. The Father's words communicated to Christ are to bring us into every place which belongs to Christ. This is the revelation of God's heavenly thoughts through His Son, where there can be nothing of responsibility as to man, as when under law: though man is treated by the gospel as a sinner, and needing grace. Christ is the revelation of what a perfect Man is, and what everything in the world is to God. We are not of it.

When we look at Christ's Person, what do we see? The Father in His Son! For it was the revelation of the Father in Christ. Philip said, "show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father (John 14). The expression of the Father was the living Christ. It was a revelation in the way suited to man as he was down here: for it was seen in the Man, who tabernacled among us, that He might associate our hearts with the Father as His was. "The glory Thou gavest Me I have given them": again, "that the love wherewith Thou lovest Me may be in them." Everything which He is and has Himself He brings us into: except, of course, what is essential to His eternal Sonship: the Father's words, the life, the glory, the love, with all the blessedness He has, and (what is not so pleasant to us) His separation from the world. But it is a portion with Himself and hereafter. Moreover, He puts us in His place of testimony to the world. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." He was of God in the midst of the world, always the revelation of God. And this is what a Christian is likewise.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth." The word of God comes down (not like the law) and brings to my heart the measure and character of what Christ is. The truth, His word, which tells what God is, tells me what I ought to be as a child of the Father. Till God is revealed, how can I tell what I ought to be [as His child]? But grace and truth tell me what the Father is, and what the world is: it is Cain's city. What are the inventions of it . . . to a man who is going out of the world by death? But there is something more -- "For their sakes I sanctify Myself:" Not simply a word come down, but a *Man* gone up. ¹ Now I get where righteousness takes us, entirely separated from sinners, and gone into the place where my affections are fixed on Him. He is the model Man in glory, and I must purify myself by the hope of being with Him, as He pure. The work is perfectly accomplished which makes me meet [fit] for the same place. The Holy Ghost takes these things and shows them to us. God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit, according to the purpose of God up there. The truth comes down through the rent veil to us, but I get the glory of the Man gone up, and who for our sakes has sanctified Himself that we also may be sanctified through the truth.

Another thing is, we should think of His glory and happiness. He expects us to be interested in Him; "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father." So entirely are we one with Him, and He one with us, He brings the love of God, wherewith He is loved, into the heart. The Christian is made up from this Christ. The eye that is upon Him sees God's path even through this world. The responsible man has failed, but the Man of purpose was in love and grace below, and is now in righteousness and glory above.

The difficulty is to get a path through the world where all is wrong, and I have got it, got it in Christ. He has met and cleared away the sins that were ours, and we have put off the old man, and got into the place of the second Man, in perfect acceptance with God. Our responsibility now is to manifest Him in our mortal body. "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, was His character, and this is ours. We shall find out our shortcomings, no doubt: but perfect grace has given us a place with Christ everywhere, and this must be held in spite of failure. In truth, it is the recovering power of grace. The Lord give us to believe in His love: that He has sanctified Himself for our sakes: and He expects our hearts meet and answer to His own. Blessed place and portion! He sees in us morally, even now, the fruit of the travail of His soul.

Collected Writings of J. N. darby 34:389.

1. [The Lord Jesus ever was the Holy One (Luke 1:35) and had no need of sanctification as we do. The words in John 17:19, "I sanctify myself for them," means that He *set Himself apart in the glory*. Ed.]

The Holiness of Christian Fellowship

Chapter 7: ***(continued)***

Phinehas: or, the Execution of Priestly Judgment

Then stood up Phinehas and executed judgment (Psa. 106:30).

And took a javelin in his hand . . . and thrust them both through (Num. 25:8).

Introduction

It is a striking fact that not much has been written about Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, by those who write about Bible characters. He does not seem appreciated. Yet, there is so much profit to be gleaned concerning the mind of God in the several scripture notices of this extraordinary man of God.

In general we find his name connected with what was due to God, whether in direct judgment, or giving character to judgment, or asking guidance if judgment should be executed, or inquiring into whether the appearance of evil was really evil, or being in charge of those who watched the threshold of the tent of meeting.

Phinehas was the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and so he was of the priestly line of the Levites. Why did the Levites become the priestly class? There must be a moral reason and we need to learn that there are causes for all things. Read Deut. 33:8-11 and then let us very briefly consider the meaning of this remarkable passage.

Verse 8 says, Thy 'perfections' and thy 'lights' are for thy godly ones. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him" (Psa. 25:14). The knowledge of the mind of God is for thy godly ones. Why? Because they were proved. They stood amidst the evil. Verse 9 shows that they were not biased to relations

(Ex. 32:26) and were free from natural influences.

Verse 10 shows that the teaching priesthood (cp. 2 Chron. 15:3) was theirs. The prophet's ministry recalls to faithful walk and warns when ruin comes in. The teaching priest instructs in the mind of God to lead on to the knowledge and worship of the Holy One. Such a position properly follows the proving amidst evil and the acquiring of the secret of the Lord. And this instruction precedes, and causes, the placing of the incense (Christ in all the glories and perfections of His own person), and the whole burnt offering (Christ in all His God-glorifying work), upon the altar.

Verse 11 follows worship. Service must properly follow from, and be formed by, worship. "Bless, Lord, what he has and the work of his hands. Let him have victory over the enemy."

Phinehas was of the tribe of Levi and a priest besides.

The name Phinehas means "mouth of brass." Copper in scripture (brass) is a well recognized symbol of judgment. Normally we think of intercession and worship in connection with priesthood, but in Phinehas, especially, we learn what the execution of judgment is and God's requirement for it. Phinehas was a **warrior priest**. This aspect of priesthood is often ill understood or shunned.

Then Stood Up Phinehas and Executed Judgment (Psa. 106:30).

ISRAEL'S CONDITION

Balaam had failed to curse Israel and then the crafty enemy used seduction and corruption (Num. 31:16; Psa. 106:28; 1 Cor. 10:22; Rev. 2:12). The anger of Jehovah was kindled and He demanded the hanging of the chiefs of the people *immediately* (Num. 25:3), and then all those who had engaged in the evil were to be slain (v. 5).

ENTER ZIMRI AND COZBI

Zimri, a prince of Simeon (v. 14), brought a Midianite woman, Cozbi, daughter of a tribal head (v. 15), into the very camp of Israel when Israel was weeping before the entrance of the tent of meeting, and he did so in the sight of Moses and the people (v. 6). Besides this almost unbelievably insensitive act, he had the audacity to go into the tent with the woman (v. 7). He was an important man, and when an important man is engaged in evil, our bias comes out. If it were some lesser person, many more would judge the evil. We are inclined to be

respecters of persons. God is not.

PHINEHAS ROSE UP FROM AMONG HIS BRETHREN

Zimri came into the camp and went to the tent. Phinehas rose up from among his brethren and followed Zimri and Cozbi and thrust them through with the javelin. Notice that there was no long exercise about this case on the part of Phinehas. There was no long waiting on Jehovah. We need to adjust our ideas about how to deal with evil to incorporate this remarkable case, especially as God has so explicitly sanctioned the action and stated its great value in His eyes, along with noting that Phinehas received a covenant of the priesthood as a result.

Let us test our thoughts by scripture. Would we dare to say that Phinehas acted in an independent manner, meaning a criticism by this statement? No, we would not do so. But are we guilty of using just such a criticism as a tool against someone because we, for some reason, don't like what he did in a stand against evil, or we have some theories about how things should be done? The special danger of our day is the pressing of a false 'love' at the expense of truth and holiness. Not legality, but easy-going looseness and indifference is the general characteristic of the professed people of God.

Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, rose up from among his brethren. He did not consult with them! Whatever gave anyone the idea that one **MUST ALWAYS** consult with his brethren with regard to a **PUBLIC** stand against evil? ¹ Certainly the action of Phinehas was public. We have a constant tendency to toleration of evil in practice and **IN MIND** and so we must always be on guard concerning our thoughts. The case of Phinehas, fully sanctioned by God, must be one of those passages that form our thoughts. It ought to have a large place in view of the special sanction by God and the consequences of the action that will be felt in the millennium, as we shall see later.

HOW OLD WAS PHINEHAS WHEN HE EXECUTED JUDGMENT?

All of the Israelites who were over 20 years of age when Israel was brought out of Egypt died before entering the land of Canaan (Num. 14:29; 32:11), including Moses. Eleazar, the father of Phinehas, helped Joshua divide the land (Josh. 14:1; 19:51; cp. Num. 27:21), so that we know that he was under 20 years of age when he came out of Egypt. In the second month of the second year after coming out of Egypt (i. e., the 14th month after coming out of Egypt) he was consecrated to the priesthood (compare Num. 1:1 and Num. 3:4). The age

1. The reader who desires to maintain separation from evil to the Lord may notice that whenever trouble arises, if a person acts as Phinehas he is accused of independency, and if he acts with some of his brethren he is accused of party-making!

for entering the priesthood is not expressly mentioned, but we see from these scriptures that Eleazar could not have been more than just 21, but likely 20, when he was consecrated, and 19 when he left Egypt. Levites had to be 25 years old (Num. 8:24) or 30 (Num. 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 47) depending on the nature of their work. This illustrates that we ought to know something of priesthood before we take up a line of service to the Lord.

These facts let us fix upon the upper age limit of Phinehas when he executed judgment (Num. 25; Psa. 106:30). Since his father was under 20 when he came out of Egypt and Phinehas killed Zimri and Cozbi just before the end of the 40 years in the wilderness, he would have been under 45 and probably was a fair amount younger than that.

Of course, we want to think of the spiritual equivalency of these ages. And we ought not to think that because a man reaches 80 that he is qualified for anything spiritually merely on that account, though qualified by age for respect. A man might be a Christian for 50 years and be a babe in God's family. It reminds me of the story of a man at a job interview, who stated that he had 25 years experience. The interviewer pointed out to him that he had one year of experience repeated 25 times!

1 CHRONICLES. 9:20: RULER OVER THE DOORKEEPERS

Perhaps in tracing the history of Phinehas it will be well to call attention to the fact that Phinehas was the ruler over the keepers of the threshold of the tent of meeting; and "Jehovah was with him" (1 Chron. 9:20). This was a trust involving solemn responsibility and discernment. He was a vigilant man regarding evil and thus well qualified to see that defilement was kept out.

NUMBERS 31

The "mouth of brass," Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, is set at the head, it would appear, of a thousand of every tribe, to execute judgment on Midian (meaning "strife"). Every tribe must contribute its contingent. There can be neither indifference nor neutrality.

The priestly office and moral qualification of Phinehas were meant to give character to this judgment. The sin in Num. 25:1, 2 was no light thing in the eyes of God. He had ordered judgment against the guilty (Num. 25:3-5), and Phinehas' act saved Israel from the consumption by Jehovah (Num. 25:11). Now there was going to be judgment on the instrument of the evil, Midian, and this judgment was "Jehovah's vengeance" (Num. 31:3). The man who was (and was characterized by) "jealous with my jealousy" and "jealous for his God" (Num. 25:11-13) is called upon to give character to the execution of judgment upon the

instruments of evil. He was a warrior priest and the execution of vengeance against the instruments of evil was characterized as priestly work. Do we understand this? It was to be done with discernment; it was to be done according to the sanctuary where the God of Israel dwelt!

The instruments of the sanctuary and the alarm trumpets were in the hand of the priest, Phinehas. It was a question of what was due to God. The fact that Midian was related to Israel no more sets aside the judgment than the idea that Levi must not act when relatives were involved. Levi DID rightly act. And certainly if it is pleasing to God to execute judgment on relations when they attack God's glory, it is certainly right to admonish relations to act for God's glory when such an attack is before them!

All must be done in a priestly way, and we have now seen these things in connection with a priestly way of judging evil:

1. Levi did not let relations and natural influence cloud his judgment.
2. Phinehas discerned what was needed and acted with the jealousy of God, acceptably, without first consulting his brethren.
3. The instruments of the sanctuary and the *alarm trumpet* attend the execution of "Jehovah's vengeance."

In the execution of "Jehovah's vengeance" the flesh is ever ready to soften the blow and mitigate the seriousness of the evil. This is seen in Num. 31:15-16. We do not suppose Phinehas was a party to this. It is inconsistent with all that we know of him. We feel fully persuaded that he vigorously sounded the alarm-trumpet and carried the instruments of the sanctuary, but his brethren did not rise to this. Often consciences cannot be aroused to fully meet evil with priestly judgment. This will call forth the rebuke of Moses (Num. 13: 14). It is an affront to Christ when we do not rise to priestly judgment! We so often have persons in admiration. We are partial and indifferent and plead a false "grace" and "love."

The killing of the males of Midian represents the judgment executed on what is active and objective. The sparing of the females represents that Israel had not rightly judged what is subjective -- their own state. Moses (Christ) demands that this be done, but in any case the active evil must be judged.

This whole matter of Midian had to do with Israel's state. It was not a war in Canaan, a war to possess the inheritance. It does not typify proper Christian experience, but the experience of Christians in a low state because they are in a low state. Thank God if He raises up priestly judgment in the midst of His people in such a state. It is of His mercy that we are not consumed. But when that low state is judged (Num. 31:17) together with the active evil (Num. 31:8),

and when the fire of judgment and the water of separation (Num. 31:23) are applied to all, God will grant a blessing to both those who carried out the judgment and those who, though not so active, yet were in fellowship with it (Num. 31:27).

Joshua 22

(The following extract is entirely by H. Rossier)

Joshua's exhortation (22:5) again points clearly to the danger of a lowered Christianity. The real backbone of all the conduct of the Christian was lacking. Obedience to known commands, and brotherly love, are not sufficient to keep us for any length of time. Conduct, obedience, devotedness and service should flow from love, and unless it be in exercise our activity soon comes to an end. A child can make a hoop bowl with the first stroke of its stick, but it soon stops if the impetus be removed.

But this is not all. When, instead of living by faith, the Christian allows in any measure the principles of the world to govern his conduct, his position necessarily becomes a very *complicated* one, whereas nothing is more simple than the path of faith. Compare Abraham and Lot; how simple and even the life of the first; how full of inextricable complications that of the second. What a succession too of adventures the tormented existence of Jacob presents to us, in contrast with the simple life with God of Isaac his father. In like manner the two and a half tribes found themselves obliged to build sheepfolds for their cattle, and fenced cities for the protection of their families, to abandon their wives and children during many a long year, depriving them too of the blessing of witnessing the marvels displayed by Jehovah in favor of His people. And now, when the warrant goes forth for them to return to their homes, a fresh complication presents itself. The Jordan separates them from the rest of the tribes, and they are uneasy, fearing lest the link of communion between them and their brethren should not be firm enough to resist the force of the river. Their position exposes them to a division, and they see with disquietude that a moment may come when they will be treated as strangers by their brethren. The danger of their situation obliges them, so to speak, to set up a testimony by which they publicly proclaim that they serve Jehovah, just as on a previous occasion (chap. 1:16-18) their doubtful position had compelled them to make a loud profession. So they build a great altar to see to in the borders of Jordan within the limits of their territory. *Their own wisdom* leads them to set up this *testimony*. I might venture to call it a *confession of faith*, a thing in itself perhaps perfectly correct, as was the altar of Ed, and against which for the moment nothing could be said, but which had the appearance, nevertheless, of another gathering-point. This

altar, intended as it was in their minds to unite the separated parts of Israel, might be created in opposition to that of the tabernacle of Shiloh. Their confession of faith might become a new center, and thus by discrediting it, replace the only true center of unity, Christ. This act, the result of a good intention, savored of MAN. Their contrivance for maintaining the unity gave them the appearance of denying it, and hence arose a new complication. They expose themselves to being misunderstood, to raising the other tribes against them, and to being exterminated.

Dear readers, this is but the history of Christendom from the first, only it has sunk much lower than the two and a half tribes. It has collected for itself a vast number of confessions of faith more or less correct, but which are not Christ; and then awaking to the fact that the unity is well nigh disappearing, these confessions are made more and more elastic, until in place of the sought-for unity, open infidelity itself is introduced into the midst of the profession of Christianity.

But behind this altar of Ed, which a spirit of worldliness had necessitated, might lie a still graver source of evil. The very fact of its erection might open the door to *independence*. This was what the children of Israel dreaded, and we see them taking it exceedingly to heart. Independence is on the verge of creeping in, their oneness is threatened, and Phinehas, a pattern of zeal for Christ, is chosen to go with the princes and take note of what is transpiring by Jordan and deal with the two and a half tribes.

He brings before them three cases, closely connected, in which all Israel are responsible.

The first (v. 20) after the crossing of Jordan is the sin of *Achan*. He lusted after the things of the world, took of that which God had cursed, introduced it into the midst of the congregation of Israel, totally ignoring the *holiness* of God -- and what was the result? Divine judgment fell on all the people. Achan's sin was the lust of the world, the introduction of the accursed thing into the congregation. In the iniquity of *Peor* (v. 17) we find a still worse thing, although, alas! in spiritual matters the hearts of the Lord's people are so little concerned at it. It was characterized by corrupt alliance with the religious world, that is to say, the idolatrous world of those days, and the introduction of this worldly religion into the very midst of the congregation of Israel, again to the utter disregard of divine *holiness*.

Dear reader, is it otherwise with the church? Are not Achan and Peor the two principles of its existence today? Moreover, the Satanic artifice at Peor is still more terrible than the accursed thing at Achan. For Balaam, seeing that his efforts to separate Jehovah from His people failed, set another scheme on foot and attempted, this time successfully, to alienate the people and separate them from Jehovah. When it was a question of God's affection for His people, Balaam

was forced to declare that Jehovah had not seen perverseness in Israel; when the faithfulness of the latter was tested Satan succeeds only too well in separating them from God: and thus "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel."

The believer's second snare lies then in the thought that the worship of God can be associated with the religion of the world. It was on this occasion that the zeal of Phinehas first shewed itself; he took to heart the dishonor done to Jehovah and purified the congregation from this defilement.

And now, in the matter of the altar of Ed, this same zeal incited him to stand in the breach. The "senses exercised by reason of use to discern both good and evil" cause him to discern the danger. He feels that this second principle, *independence*, would be the ruin of the testimony; that the setting up of another altar is nothing less than the sin of rebellion against Jehovah and against the congregation of Israel (v.19). The holy zeal of Phinehas meets the danger, which in principle indeed existed, but the intentions of heart were right, and the evil was stayed.

In Christianity, however, the remedy has not been so successful. Evil has made steady progress, and what do we see today? Independence, the very principle of sin, the natural tendency of our hearts, publicly placarded as a virtue, nay, a duty. Forgetful of the fact that there is but one altar, one table, new ones are established every day on this principle, in rebellion against the Lord, as Phinehas said (v.16), and in blind contempt, not merely of the unity of the people of God, but of the only center of unity, the Lord Jesus Himself.

May God keep us, dear readers, from these three principles which bring down His judgment on His house: worldliness, alliance with the religious world, and independence, the most subtle and dangerous of all, because being the principle of sin it lies at the root of all else.

Let us remember the character of Christ as brought out in the epistle to Philadelphia. He is the "Holy and the true," and this church is commended for the maintenance of this holy name, and for dependence on the word. Let us cherish nothing, individually or collectively, in our hearts, our thoughts, our conduct or our walk, which is not in harmony with these characters of Christ; and may we be found walking in holiness and dependence, without which there is no communion with Him.

Meditations on the Book of Joshua, pp. 132-137.
Ed.

"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.¹

It is a sorry spectacle when men of the world point out what Christians often 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 unholiness.

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).

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; Psa. 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?

1. We are not judging whether or not he did wrong. That is not the point here.

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. But 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 comes from a bad state of soul and can only contribute to lowering the state of God's people. Where is love and obedience to the Lord, 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 Him 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 one goes to the one he has wronged and confesses the wrong.

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 or 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!

Is a Christian to forgive another Christian when he asks for forgiveness *if* he did anything wrong (i. e., without confession)? W. Kelly remarked:

How can a man who does not forgive another pretend to enjoying the forgiveness of his own sins before God? There is a righteous government on our Father's part, and the particular sin which grieves the Lord is not forgiven till we confess it to Him. "If ye do not forgive," says our Lord in Mark 11:26, "neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your offences." It is the cherishing a spirit entirely antagonistic to the Spirit of the Lord. If there is a child in a family going on in a

course of self-will, there would be a bar for the time to mutual good feeling. So with God our Father; if there were a persistently bad spirit towards another, so long the Father does not forgive as a question of communion and of daily intercourse with Himself. It ruins the intelligence of Scripture to make it all a question of eternity. In the Epistles of the New Testament the remedy or duty in such circumstances takes the form, not so much of asking forgiveness as of confession, which goes far deeper. To ask for forgiveness is easy enough, and quickly done (as you may learn from your child); to confess one's fault in all its gravity is a very humiliating process, and if not with a view to forgiveness and the restoration to communion, it is a mockery of God. To confess, to judge oneself, is therefore far beyond asking forgiveness.²

These wrong thoughts about forgiving prior to repentance and confession (seemingly) make our path easier. We desire "peace." We "don't want to make trouble." Whereas, the truth is that we do not want to both judge ourselves and 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 wish to 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 and it was said, "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. 8:7; 13:14). 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, an attack on the nature of God Himself.

As to the misuse of 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.

2. *An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, from ch. 11.

Is the Christian Heavenly? and Is the Church Heavenly?

What is it to be Seated in the Heavenlies in Christ Jesus?

It may not be too much to say that the whole of the epistle to the Ephesians is but the development of chap. 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." In this ascription of praise there are three things. First, that all the blessings into which we are brought flow to us from God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; to us as brought now into the same relationship to God, on the ground of redemption, as Christ Himself enjoys; that is to say, God is now our God and Father, because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 20:17). Secondly, that all these spiritual blessings are made ours as being in Christ. And lastly, that the place in which they are possessed and enjoyed is in the heavenlies. Let the reader prayerfully seek to understand these several points, if he would intelligently read this portion of the word of God.

To answer the specific question at the head of this paper, we must first enquire what is meant by Christ being in the heavenlies. This is fully explained to us at the end of Eph. 1. The apostle prays "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding (heart) being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, *and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies,*" &c. (Eph. 1:17-20). We are here taught that the mighty power of God was displayed in the resurrection of Christ, that God came in and took Him out of the grave wherein He lay, raised Him up, and set Him down at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named; and then, more wonderful still -- more wonderful because of those who were the

objects of this perfection of His grace -- that His power to us-ward was "according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ." And if Eph. 1 gives us the effect of this mighty power in relation to Christ, Eph. 2 shows us the effect on His people. The chapter thus commences": And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And the apostle then points out that the exceeding greatness of God's power met us in the place where we lay dead in sins (for Christ indeed in grace had come down to us -- down to the very depths of or condition of death); and that God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us . . . quickened us together with Christ, and raised us (both Jew and Gentile) up together, and made us (Jew and Gentile) sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Christ, for the glory of God, in the accomplishment of His purposes, having identified Himself with His people, God, in response to the One who thus endured all for His glory, came in and wrought, and the effect is seen in a twofold way -- in the place Christ occupies, and in the place we occupy in Him -- seated in Him in the heavenlies.

But it is objected that we are only in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies in the sense of being seen in Him as the head of the new race. In the first place, Christ is never spoken of as the Head of a race in this epistle: as the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, He is; and we are also told that all things, whether in heaven or in earth, will be "headed up" in the Christ; but this is a very different thing. Secondly, this would imply that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings *through*, rather than *in*, Christ. Of course He is the only medium through which blessings flow to us, as indeed He is God's only vessel of blessing for us; but, as united to Him, members of His body -- and this is the teaching of Ephesians -- we are blessed as in Him. This statement, however, is met by the allegation that the members of the body of Christ are on earth, not in heaven. This is not true in the teaching of Eph. 2. There everything, being on God's side, or, as we often say, on the side of purpose, is complete. The counsels of God are accomplished, and He has before Him, in Christ, His whole Church, Jew and Gentile alike, all distinctions abolished, seated in Christ. He reveals this to us to show us our true place, the character of our blessings, and the scene in which in spirit He would have us live and move. It may be furthermore objected that Christ is seated at God's right hand, and that, as this place belongs only to Him, we could not be said to be seated in Him where He is. True, most blessedly true, is it that the right hand of God is the pre-eminent place of our blessed Lord, the place which God delighted to give Him, and the place which the saints rejoice to recognize as His alone. But this in nowise militates against the fact that believers are in Christ where He is. His place at the right of God is positional -- the token of His supreme exaltation; and it would indeed be unholy presumption to intrude a claim to this. But while asserting this, is not Christ before God? And is He not there as the head of His

body? And are not saints actually united to Him? And is it not true, therefore, that God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, has quickened us together with Christ, raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus? There is the whole Church now before the eye of God, and He has it there, "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through (in) Christ Jesus."

The effect of this new doctrine is to confound the distinctive teachings of the several epistles, to obscure the heavenly character and calling of the Church, as well as to undermine the truth of the believer's position.

E. Dennett, *The Christian Friend* 1884, pp. 204-207.

"Heavenly Places"

[Ephesians 2:6]

We have . . . reached Canaan already, as being in Christ; it is then, and only then, that we have found the world a wilderness to us. I do not think we ever really find it so, until we are conscious of our place and possessions on high "in Christ" -- united to Him by the Spirit of God. I do not say that with all it is so known; many think the wilderness of life has to be traversed before the soul is conscious of its place on high -- but this is not God's way. "Not as the world gives" gives He unto us. He brings us into all that Christ possesses as a Man before Him -- and this is a present thing. There is no experience at all in learning this. Much experience had brought the soul to the consciousness of powerless fear, and such exercises of the heart and conscience that it might learn God as a Savior -- delighting to save!

But God has brought a *Man* into glory, and seated Him on the throne of God. Faith tells us that there is a Man in heaven -- faith which is based upon the testimony of the Scriptures. *They* tell us that this is the new place for man by redemption. If I look upon Him as the forerunner, He has entered in for me. If I look upon my union with Him in that new place, then I am united to Him who is there. If I was alive in sins, He shed his blood and put them away. If I was dead in sins, He died for my sins. If He was raised, God has raised us together with Him. If He is gone up on high, we are raised up together and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There never was such a thing as a man being united to Christ in heaven before the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to dwell in our bodies. There never was such a thing as the Holy Ghost dwelling in a man whose conscience was not purged, and this could never have

been until after the work which purges the conscience was done. Hence no saint before the cross ever knew all his sins put away, and his conscience purged. He knew of certain sins being forgiven. Nathan is sent to tell David of his horrible sin in the case of Uriah being put away. But no one ever knew God in the light of His presence within the rent vail, and that the very blow which rent the vail had put him in God's presence without one single sin! As a consequence, the Holy Ghost never was given till Jesus was glorified. (See John 7:36-39).

The Holy Ghost inspired the prophets; came on them for a time, and then left them. He did this even on men who were not converted to God at all, as Saul and Balaam. He guided and taught the saints, and quickened the souls of sinners; but He must have the conscience purged of every sin before he could dwell in our bodies.

The Spirit of God wrought in souls, and they were born again of the Word and Spirit of God. They had a new nature, which longed for complete deliverance before the cross made it possible that God could make known to any that all their sins were there put away. The children of God were then in bondage, hoping for a Savior, and a salvation which they needed. Still none of them had the Spirit of adoption -- the Spirit of His Son, whereby they could cry "Abba, Father," given them. Now, it is true (since the cross) that "Because ye are sons (already, by faith in Jesus Christ; Gal. 3:26), God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). We stand thus consciously in relationship to God as our Father, which no saint of God ever did; although they were born of God, this relationship as sons never was known. *Confidence* in God characterizes the Old Testament and before the cross; *relationship* characterizes the New.

The people of God before the cross were under the "*forbearance*" of God. When the cross came and discharged all God's claims, and purged their sins, they are on another footing altogether. They now stand as those who have been righteously forgiven and justified. Romans 3:25, 26, brings this truth out very plainly; "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation (or mercy seat) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the *passing over (margin)*, of sins that are *past*, through the *forbearance* of God; to declare *at this time*, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Suppose a man owed a debt which he could not discharge. Well, some kind person says he will be security for that debt. Then his creditor *forbears* with him; he does not press his claim. Still the creditor's claim has not been settled, nor is the debtor relieved, the debt hangs over him still.

But suppose the rich man has kindly discharged the debt himself, unknown

to the other. How very kind! you exclaim. But still the debtor's mind is not relieved; he thinks he is still under the forbearance of his creditor. Then someone comes with the news that all has been discharged, and that the creditor wishes to assure the person that he wishes him to know it, and not be afraid to meet him any more.

Now this forbearance was the state of the saints before the cross -- they confided in God -- trusted His promises. They knew that some day or other these promises would be fulfilled. They thus lived and died in confidence in God. God was looking on towards the cross, and the Son was in the heavens; the One who had presented Himself to come some day and do all God's will (Ps. 40:6-8). Thus God *waited*, and His people were under "the *forbearance* of God;" and the Son was security, so to speak, for their sins; one day or other He would take up the claim and discharge it. At last came the Son of God; in holy love He took up the work -- "bore our sins" on the tree, discharging every claim. He died and rose, and went on high. From the heavens which He entered by His own blood (Heb. 9:12), He sent down the Holy Ghost with the message that the sins were borne and put away, and thus our consciences are purged in receiving His testimony *to us* (Heb. 10:15-17); then having believed this testimony to us, He then comes to dwell *in us*, uniting us to Him who has purged our sins, and then making us members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones!

But more. Then comes out all God's delight, and the purposes of His love. He gives us the same place, and joys, and blessings, and inheritance with His own Son! He had become a Man, and as a Man -- the firstborn amongst many brethren -- He took His place in glory, and God set us in Him there on high. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). He has quickened us together with Christ; raised us up together, and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

Thus His people have, by sovereign grace, this new and wondrous place, and they should be the exponents of a heavenly Christ, on earth, by the Spirit of God. The Church of God, looked upon in the truth of it, is the reflex on earth, produced by the power of the Spirit of God, to the glory of Christ in heaven.

We will now examine this a little more in detail. Forty years' endurance brought Israel up to the plains of Moab, and Jordan lay before them. The wilderness is a subject of deep interest to our hearts. In no place do we so hear the sympathies and tenderness of Christ as there, where faith and patience are tried and tested -- where God leads and feeds, and trains His people in obedience and brokenness of will, for the heavenly warfare of the land. This is not properly the subject of these papers . . . They had been safe from judgment forty years before in Egypt, on the night of terror. They had *come out* of it by redemption, never to return by that way again. Still they were not *come in* to the Canaan

which God had purposed to bring them; and there rolled the barrier to the land. The Jordan is commonly taken as a type of death, and very justly. But it is not death physically -- or in other words the death of the body. It is the fact of Christ's death and resurrection being counted to us in grace, and so used that it is death and resurrection morally to us, leading us "in Christ," into a new scene altogether; a place where we know no man after the flesh, yea, if we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him thus no more (2 Cor. 5:16).

We read in Joshua 3, that the Ark of God -- borne by the Levites -- was first to pass down into the waters of death, the last token of the enemy's power. There was to be a space between it and the [Lord's] Host which followed after. Then the feet of the priests touched the brim of the waters, they stood upright on an heap, and all the Host of the Lord passed over into the land in which the Lord delighted, at the other side of Jordan. *God* had passed over them when He was judging Egypt. *They* passed over here, when it was a question of sovereign grace bringing them into the land in which He chose to dwell.

None could pass that way till Christ first was there. He must dry up that mighty stream of death in which God's judgment was expressed. He must thus end human life, which the enemy could touch, before He introduced us into the life beyond it all. The water compassed Him about, and flowed over His head. Deep called to deep as they reached His soul. But all was borne, and the bed of the river of death proved, as His people traversed it with dry-shod feet, that all had borne down upon Him; "All thy waves and billows passed over me."

The priests "stood firm," bearing the Ark; and "the people passed over right against Jericho." There was the organized strength of the Enemy in unbroken power -- the seven nations of Canaan were also there. Thus has the Lord died and risen; ascended on high He has entered, as Man, into a new sphere for man, and has introduced us into life on the other side of death, and given us all that He possesses as Man.

In Eph.1 this new place is unfolded according to the counsels of God. It is remarkable that there you have an allusion, not only to the Passover and Red Sea; that is the judgment of sin, and redemption of the people of God; but we have also in it the Ark in and out of the Jordan, and our Canaan -- the heavenlies. Thus, the whole wilderness is dropped; fulfilling most fully in the antitype the statement of God's purposes to Moses in Ex. 3:8, and the full result of those counsels in introducing man into His presence on high. Thus we read (Eph. 1:7), "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." The blood of Christ, on the ground of which we have this forgiveness and the redemption which is in Christ, is the way into those counsels of His grace, and purposes in Christ before the world began.

Then we read (Eph. 1:19) of "The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places." Thus the true Ark of the Covenant has been in the waters, and in the next chapter (Eph. 2:3-6), the people of God have passed through. "Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together in [with] Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

We have thus been introduced into this new land. We might say in the language of Psa. 114:3, "The sea saw it and fled: Jordan was driven back." As the Psalmist links together the deliverance out of Egypt of the Red Sea, and the entrance into the land through the Jordan; so does the breadth of the purposes of that God, "who is rich in mercy," take in, in Eph. 1, 2 our present introduction into "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," as the people whom He has cleansed and redeemed.

F. G. Patterson, *Words of Truth*, New Series 3:95-98, 118-120.

The Church

People say (and that there is moral ground for such a word, and reasonableness in it to all our first impressions, I deny not), that others have been more devoted to Christ, and suffered more for him, than many whom we put specially into the Church or Body of Christ; and that therefore we ought not to speak of a special place being reserved for the Church, or for the saints gathering in this age.

But, though reasonable, there is a mistake in this. If we ourselves were connected with two persons, one of whom had greatly served our interests in life -- even at his own loss; and the other never had had an opportunity or power to do so, but was more the companion of our thoughts and tastes and pursuits, more kindred in mind and character with us, I ask, which will lie the nearer to us? The services of the other could not be forgotten, but had in constant thankful remembrance; but it is not true that this latter would be nearer to us. And so it is with Christ and the Church. It is her *endowment by His Spirit* that makes her the special thing she is. She knows *His* rejection in the world, taking part with it, having His Spirit in her, and is not merely like Abraham or David, faithful and true to Him.

This is illustrated, and that, too, very strikingly and convincingly, in Martha and Mary in Luke 10. Martha was *serving* the Lord, carefully, diligently serving

Him with her best, laying out her care and provisions upon Him. He valued this, as He still does, though she did not fully know this. But Mary was nearer to His mind, Mary was nearer to Him, as when the due occasion came, He lets us know. But Mary was not serving Him, as Martha was doing. Mary was listening to Him. Mary was in company with His mind -- she was the rather kindred in spirit, in taste and pursuits with Him. She had an opened ear and an instructed mind and an heart in unison. And this was more important to Him than all the services of the diligent and careful Martha.

What a moment this was! What an occasion for hearing the mind of Christ! To think that Jesus has to set aside the one that was *serving* Him! He would not have done so, had not she led Him to it. He cannot but let us know, that this devotedness of soul, sympathy, and the fellowship of mind and spirit, is more to Him, as to us, than all mere services. . . .

And the peculiar exaltation of the Church is fully implied in Eph. 1:21 -- her exaltation *above other heavenly powers and dignities* in the age of the millennial glory. . . .

Words of Truth, New Series 3:98, 99.

THE CHURCH DOES NOT TEACH

It is plain, then, that the church does not teach; the teacher teaches. The church abides in and professes the truth she has learned. She is, or ought to be, the pillar and ground of the truth; but she does not teach it. The mystery of iniquity began in the apostles' days: the last days were already come. The Truth was there; but men, like Satan, abode not in it. But abiding in it, walking in it, in the truth perfectly revealed in Christ, this was the duty of the saint, even if the professing church would not, and the time should come when they would turn away from the truth, as Paul declared they would.

(Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 33:84)

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

6: The Pretribulation Rapture

Chapter 6.7:

1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2 and Acts 1:6-11: The Times and Seasons

and,

2 Thessalonians 1:7: Rest When?

When considering 1 Thess. 4:13-18, we saw that v. 14 refers to the appearing of Christ in glory and that those Christians who had died while waiting for Him to come and take them to the Father's house would not miss coming with Him in glory. The Christians who had died are looked at as asleep in Jesus, *sleep* referring to their bodies, not their souls. But how would those now sleeping in Jesus come with Him in glory? He will accomplish this by a rapture prior to the appearing in glory. 1 Thess. 4:15-18 speaks of this rapture of the dead in Christ, along with the living believers. These verses form an explanatory parenthesis. 1 Thess. 5:1 continues directly from 1Thess. 4:14.

Times refers to the prophetic periods while *seasons* refers to the characteristics of those times. The Christian will not be living on earth during those times and seasons. They will begin after the rapture.

2 Thess. 2:5 shows that Paul had ministered on the subject of times and seasons. However, he did not connect them with the rapture but rather with the day of the Lord. They knew about the times and seasons that were preliminary to the occurrence of the day of the Lord (which commences with the appearing

of Christ in glory) for Paul had explained it when with them (2 Thess 2:5). That day would come upon the sons of darkness as a thief, a thing *impossible* for a Christian, whether he is spiritually asleep or watching (1 Thess. 5:6) because he is a son of light. The analogy to a thief's coming has nothing to do with watching for signs and so being ready. 1 Thess 5:4 is express that the day of the Lord will not overtake us as a thief. Indeed, we will be caught up previously. But how incongruous for a son of day to be like those upon whom the day of the Lord shall come as a thief (1 Thess. 4:5-9). Thus he should "watch," i. e., be awake at all times. Watch does not mean looking for signs of the day of the Lord so as not to be surprised by its coming.

I have commented in some detail on the day of the Lord in another paper.¹ and here will just touch on a few points before taking up the connection of 1 Thess. 5:1 with Acts 1:6-11. It is now **man's day** (1 Cor. 4:3). Man's day ends when the Lord Jesus Christ comes from heaven in flaming fire (1 Thess 1). This introduces **the day of the Lord**, which day includes the war of the great day of God the Almighty, the millennium, the little season, the great white throne judgment, and the dissolution of the heavens and the earth (cp. 2 Peter 3). Then begins the **day of God** (2 Peter 3:12), i.e., the eternal state. But the commencement of the day of the Lord requires the epiphany of the Lord. Man's day will terminate when the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21) ends and this will end when the Gentile power, as depicted in the image of Dan. 2, is crushed on the feet by the smiting stone (the Lord's appearing in glory). Various theories have the day of the Lord starting earlier than the appearing. Of course, it cannot follow directly upon the rapture because the apostasy and revelation of the man of sin *must* occur first (2 Thess 3). Both of these events occur in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. Judgments occur in the seals before the middle of the week and it is erroneous to conclude that judgments indicate the day of the Lord has arrived; nor does the erroneous statement (due, no doubt, to bad conscience) of those experiencing judgment prove its arrival (Rev. 7:17).

At any rate, we see that it is not quite correct to say that the subject of the day of the Lord is introduced right after the subject of the rapture. Such an idea ignores the parenthetical character of 1 Thess. 4:15-18 in an effort to reach certain conclusions which we need not discuss here. Connect 1 Thess. 5:1-3 with 1 Thess. 4:14 for the proper connection. The verses in between are parenthetical.

In 1 Thess. 5:1, then, the Spirit mentions times and seasons. These are mentioned in Acts 1 also. In order to help us understand the bearing of this, we

1. *Future Events*, available from the publisher,
www.presenttruthpublishers.com

may look at part of the footnote to 1 Cor. 8:1 in J. N. Darby's translation:

Two Greek words are used for 'to know' in the New Testament -- *ginosko* and *oida*. The former signifies objective knowledge, what a man has learned or acquired. The English expression 'being acquainted with' perhaps conveys the meaning. *Oida* conveys the thought of what is inward, the inward consciousness of the mind. . . .

Acts 1:7 reads, "It is not yours to know times or seasons." Now, this cannot contradict 1 Thess 5:1, 2. In Acts 1:7, the word "know" is *ginosko*. I suggest that the meaning of the passage is that times and seasons were not to be their portion to know by experiencing them. The times and seasons are not connected with the rapture. Thus we do not know them in the sense of becoming objectively acquainted with them by entering into them. The disciples, in accordance with the expectation of the remnant, had asked, "Is it at this time that thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" The expectation was right, the time was wrong; and, furthermore, the experiencing of times and seasons were not to be any Christian's lot, these referring to post-rapture events.

All of this does not imply necessary ignorance about the subject of times and seasons on the part of Christians. "Ye know (*oida*) perfectly well yourselves, that the day of [the] Lord so comes as a thief by night" (1 Thess. 5:2). "This great and solemn truth was part of their inward conscious assurance" (W. Kelly).

A posttribulationist, R. Gundry, wrote:

If we did not have 1 Thessalonians 5:1, we still could not take the import of the passage in Acts to be that the disciples must be kept uninformed concerning what the *contents* of the times and epochs will be. This they already knew from the Olivet Discourse, where Jesus Himself had delineated tribulational events in some detail with prominence given to the abomination of desolation. Rather, in Acts 1:7 the disciples are not to know the *time* when that final series of events will begin its swift succession toward the Messianic kingdom. Jesus had just repeated the promise of the Spirit's baptism. "And so" - i.e., because in the OT the prophets connect the outpouring of the Spirit with the events which will usher in the millennial kingdom (Isa. 32; 44:1-5; Joel 2:28-3:1) - the disciples ask whether the Spirit's outpouring will set in motion the restoration of Israel. Jesus answers that they are to be kept uninformed of *that*.²

The above is false for the following reasons. The disciples asked, "Is it at this time. . .," and in effect the Lord answered that it was not at that time, but He did not say, 'it is not yours to know the time.' Nor did He say, 'It is not yours to know the time of the times and seasons.' The above writer takes it that way but that is *not* what the text says. "It is not yours to know times or seasons." The fact is, the prophets speak of the times and seasons and the Thessalonians knew

2. *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 108.

something of them, and Paul had spoken to them about it as well (2 Thess 2:5). Therefore the Lord's answer concerns neither the content, nor the time, of the beginning of the times or seasons; rather, the Lord tells them that they will not know them by experiencing them. Implicit in the answer is the affirmation that, when the Spirit would come in "not many days hence," the kingdom in glory would not be inaugurated immediately. The Lord's answer involves the new position to be occupied by the disciples.

While it is true that the disciples, as seen in Acts 1, were still occupied with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and also Matthias was chosen as the twelfth apostle by the O. T. method of lots, the fact remains that in Acts 1:6-8, the Lord tells them that times and seasons are not their portion to experience. We would not expect, then, that Acts 1:11 refers to the appearing of Christ in power. Many esteemed brethren do believe that this verse denotes the appearing. The following extract from E. J. Thomas explains why it should be understood as referring to Christ's coming for his saints, which is consonant with John 14:1-3, spoken some 40 days previous.

Upon this a question has been raised as to whether the 'like manner' of the Ascension does not refer to "the appearing" of the Lord Jesus rather than to His descent into the air to receive the Saints. The following is the query:

'Is not this in the sense of as He was "seen" going up, so in like manner should they "see" His personal return "in a cloud" to the Mount of Olives where His feet are yet to stand (Zech. 14:4)? If this view be correct, the verse would refer not to Christ's descent into the air where we are called to meet Him, but to His subsequent return with all His saints to the earth.

The point here raised is interesting and important. Probably many when reading the verse in question (Acts 1:11) do not quite know which way to take it, so that its comfort and edification are lost. First as to the 'seeing': at the Ascension the disciples did not *see the Lord glorified*, but *while they beheld*, He was taken up, and a cloud *received Him out of their sight*. In this the Ascension can hardly be said to be representative of the Appearing -- for it is a principal point of the latter that they shall *see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory*. Nothing like, or corresponding to this, is recorded of the Ascension. At the Appearing He is displayed in the clouds, with great glory: at the Ascension, a cloud concealed from sight, both Him and the glory. Then as to the cloud: this is an accompaniment of the Rapture just as much as of the Appearing (1 Thess. 4:17 and Matt. 24:30), so that the cloud at the Ascension is no more an indication of the one than the other. Hence we are reduced, as evidence of analogy with the Appearing, to the sole circumstance that the Ascension was from the Mount of Olives, and that Zechariah says 'His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives.' This, however, is not conclusive. True, it has often been assumed that His feet standing in that day on the Mount of Olives referred to the moment the Lord's descent from Heaven, that is, the Appearing. But the laborious and discriminating collation of the prophecies in late years, has shown that this is not so. 'The day of the Lord' commences with His appearing; and (Zech. 14) gives various events which take place *after* the appearing but within the compass of the day of the Lord. The nations will be gathered for the punishment of Jerusalem, which will have

accepted and worshipped the Man of Sin; and when this has been accomplished, the Lord will in Isaiah (chaps. 8, 10 and 14) deal with those nations: they were the rod of His anger against the people of His wrath, as is set out in Isaiah (chaps. 8, 10 and 14), and at the head of them is the Assyrian. But when the Lord has performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks (Isa. 10:12). This is the event which is given in Zech. 14:3. The punishment of Jerusalem is given in verse 2; and, that accomplished -- *'Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle'* (v. 3). The Lrd *going forth* hardly conveys His coming in the clouds of Heaven: on the contrary, He will have come before this; and now, as already here, He 'goes forth' to fight against the nations. But Who it is that fights, is seen in Zech. 14:4. His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives, and the mountain cleaves in the midst; a valley being made for the safe escape of the remnant. But all this is not at the Appearing: it is afterwards, and gradual, and progressive. At the Appearing, the warrior-judgment of the 19th of Revelation takes place, when the Beast and the False Prophet are taken (Rev. 19); but the events of Zech. 14:1-4 are subsequent. Zechariah does not say that it is *at the Appearing* that His feet stand on the Mount of Olives; only that it is 'in that day'; that is, within the currency of the day of the Lord. (It should be mentioned that the last clause of Zech. 14:5 is disjunctive. The section consisting of verses 1 to 5, and ending with the word 'Uzziah King of Judah' is complete in itself: what follows commences another section, an entirely new division).

Now as the standing upon Mount Olivet is not at the Appearing, but some considerable time after, the Ascension cannot, by the fact of its being made from Mount Olivet, be constituted a type of the Appearing. There may be a moral harmony in choosing for the Ascension the mountain which will subsequently, in the day of the Lord, be the scene of His miraculous intervention on behalf of Israel. But Olivet had other associations. Anciently, it was David's refuge at the rebellion of Absalom, and now of a Greater than David, when He too had no home in Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives was His constant resort (Luke 22:39), and when 'every man went to his own house, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.' There, had been Gethsemane; and, sweeter to think, there too was Bethany; His substitute home, if any might be called such -- the rallying point of the Remnant that received Him in His rejection, and understood Him as none else did. Luke relates that He led the disciples 'out as far as to Bethany,' and thence ascended (Luke 24:50). Yes: it was that place of sacred memories that was honored to see Him for the last time! If the purpose had only been to form a link with Zechariah's prophecy, any part of the mountain would have done; but the Spirit of God pointedly designates Bethany. Zion the decreed site of royalty (Psa. 2) would seem more appropriate to the glories of the Appearing -- but Olivet is vocal of the Remnant in the past, and of the coming Rapture! Also of the marvelous deliverance of the Remnant of the future, when, His feet standing there, He shall divide not the Red Sea, as of old, but the mountain, for the safe escape of His people.

To my thought, the Ascension is sweetly suggestive of the Lord's descent into the air to receive His own. The broad outstanding feature is its privacy. The World was not admitted to the view, and knew nothing of it; and so will it be with the Lord's coming for the Church. Might we not miss some precious effect of the word upon our hearts, if the Ascension be not seen as conveying blessed intimations of the Rapture? Enoch's and Elijah's translations have been accepted as types of the translation of the Church: have we not the crowning type in the ascension of the

Lord Himself? ³

Note also that the male-child of Rev. 12, Who can be none other than our Lord, was "caught up" and this refers to His ascension to glory recorded in Acts 1. His being caught up is the earnest of our being caught up, as the "man in Christ" being caught up is a sweet foreshadow of the privilege and blessedness of our being caught up (2 Cor. 12).

Observe, too, that the presence of trump and cloud does not mean that whenever trump and cloud are mentioned in connection with the Lord's coming that therefore the appearing is indicated. The cloud bespeaks His glory and the trumpet denotes His authority. These have their application to both parts of the coming.

2 Thess. 1:6, 7: Rest When?

An amillennialist said:

Might we not ask how it is possible to take vengeance upon them or to punish them with everlasting destruction, in the day when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, if they are to sleep in the dust for yet one thousand years after that event? If we agree with Paul, that when the Lord is revealed from heaven with His mighty angles, the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction, how can they be judged again at the end of the millennium one thousand years later, or how are they to be ruled with a rod of iron during the millennium? ⁴

Obviously the text does not say that the everlasting destruction *commences* the moment the Lord comes. It merely states the fact that this shall be their portion. The "when" applies to "rest with us." Paul does not state the amillennialist's conclusion -- read into the text.

J. B. Payne, a posttribulationist wrote:

The point of this passage is that Christ comes for His saints and they enter into their rest on the same day (v. 10) that He *appears* to punish and to destroy (v. 9) their persecutors." ⁵

The passage says nothing about Christ coming *for* His saints, nor does it state when the saints begin to rest. Apparently someone sought to foist a deception

5. *The Time of the End but the End Not Yet*, London: Weston, pp. 44-46, note (1910).

4. G. L. Murray, *Millennial Studies*, p. 156.

5. *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, p. 59. See also G. E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, p. 66.

on these saints that "the day of the Lord is present" (2 Thess. 2:2, as it should read). Before telling them of specific happenings before the arrival of that day, thus showing that it could not be present, he introduces the subject in chapter 1, stating that they would be resting when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven. They would not be in difficult circumstances then, as they were at the time of Paul's writing, but rather reposed. The passage, I repeat, does not state when the rest begins, but rather meets the difficulty of the Thessalonian saints by telling them that they will be resting when their persecutors are being troubled. It refers to His coming *with*, not *for*, His saints.

This objection brings up a very interesting point. As a point of fact, the persecutors of the Thessalonians are no longer on earth. If we were to view this passage the way many posttribulationists handle Rev. 3:10, we might plead that it has lost applicability because the Lord did not come yet and, besides, this applied to the Thessalonians -- an absurd evasion of its lesson for the church, of course; an evasion as absurd as that concerning Rev. 3:10, but which evasion is a necessity on the part of posttribulationism. But the passage is so written as to present itself consistent with the any-moment rapture; that is, supposing Christ had come *for* His saints the day after they read the letter. That would be perfectly consistent with their having been led to believe that their persecutors would still be there when Christ appeared *with* His saints to execute judgment. (Some persecutors might have then died in tribulation plagues -- which is beside the point.) Therefore the *appearing* is presented as a possibility within the earthly life of their persecutors, not at any-moment (i.e., the appearing) as chapter 2 demonstrates, but nevertheless, within the persecutors' life-time. The pretribulation rapture is perfectly consistent with this.

J. N. Darby noted:

It has been supposed that "rest . . . when" means the moment of relief. Nothing is more unfounded. The reasoning of the apostle is that, Christ introducing the day, it was not when He had the upper hand that His people would be troubled and ill-treated. Was He going to treat them so? In the day [of the Lord] exactly the contrary would be the case: they would enjoy rest and blessing; the persecutors would be troubled. The Greek used for *rest* by no means conveys always the same meaning of a moment of relaxation arriving; it is never so used in scripture. The other passages are Acts 24:23; 2 Corinthians 2:12; chap. 7:5; chap. 8:13. In 2 Cor. 8:13, the Greek words for 'burden,' 'tribulation,' and 'rest,' are in similar opposition as here in 2 Thess. 1:6, 7.⁶

Most of the objections to the truth of the pretribulation rapture, and indeed to

6. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 11, p. 243.

dispensational truth, were answered last century. Objectors today seem oblivious to the fact and so repeat the same objections in much the same way, as if their errors were obvious truth.

Ed.

IMPRECATIONS

He says, "Surely, I come quickly"; to which the church responds, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Thus it is very evident that the coming of the Lord to take the church unto Himself, must be something entirely between Himself and the church alone. But it will not be so with the remnant of Israel, for them the execution of the judgment will be needed in order to their taking their place in the earth. In fact, the Lord's coming to the earth itself must be attended with the execution of judgment, gathering out of His "kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." And it is evident that the deliverance of the remnant of Israel connects the coming of the Lord with the execution of judgment upon what despises Him before Israel can possibly get their blessing. And this accounts for the strong cry of vengeance we find throughout the Psalms; take Psalm 94 for instance, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself." Now we do not want vengeance in order to be with Christ in blessing. God has given us grace as our portion in every way, and we have to deal entirely with grace. I am not looking for the Lord to come and avenge me on my enemies, for I am expecting to be caught up to meet Him in the air. And, that it may be clearly understood, I would again remark, that throughout the whole Scriptures this cry, in connection with the Lord's coming to the earth, is the language of the remnant of Israel, and not the language of the church of God.

Take Psalm 68:23, "that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same." These are not the thoughts that occupy my soul in the contemplation of meeting Jesus in the air. If, through grace, I have bowed to the grace of the Lamb, then I have no connection whatever with that which will come under the wrath of the Lamb. It is Himself that I am expecting for the sake of what is in Himself apart from anything else. So also in the description of the future Jewish times of blessing in Isaiah 60:12, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish"; while of the New Jerusalem it is said, "The leaves of the tree shall be for the healing of the nations." Israel is the scene of God's righteous judgments; the church is the scene of God's sovereign grace; and it never gets out of this. For the church, as such, never calls for vengeance; it will see the righteousness of the vengeance when God shall avenge the blood of those who have suffered, and rejoice that corruption is destroyed; but its own portion is to be with Christ. The earth will be delivered

through judgment; but our portion is to meet the Lord in the air, and to be forever with Him.

(Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 5:366)

LOVE FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE

It is one of the great questions of the day -- Is the unity of Christians to be founded on what Scripture speaks of -- *Love for the truth's sake*, or indifference to it? . . .

If I contend for the truth, because Christ is the truth, I had rather one did not profess it than deny it in works. We are in serious, most serious, times; and there must be reality. Only the Lord keep us from pretended love of the truth, which destroys the truth we love; which has nothing to keep, and hence has nothing to lose, and can be always seeking. When conventional systems are crumbling around, and evil raises up its head, may men be seen who can walk peacefully because they possess what can never crumble, till God makes all things new according to the truth He has revealed.

(Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 9:353, 358)

MIRACLES AND INFIDELITY

Mill then takes the ground that we must believe in the existence of a being with supernatural powers before we can believe miracles. Now this proceeds on the supposition of our large ignorance of natural causes; a pretty plea for men of science who profess so to know nature, that the course of it is so fixed, that we cannot believe anything which contradicts that course; nay, which is not part of it. Now, when there is the consciousness that they cannot be denied, there must be previously the belief of supernatural power. But supposing we did so believe, which it is clear to me that we may and must without any miracles at all, this would not help us on a bit, because on their own showing it may be from some unknown cause. Nay, they say that He who formed the course could not interrupt it. But this previous belief is not necessary. I may now assume miracles, for the question is their cause. Events happen which no known cause ever yet produced. They happen not of themselves. There is no antecedent natural cause discoverable; they happen only by the intervention of particular persons, and do not exist when these are not there. A man walks on the sea,

stops the earth going round, raises a dead man who was buried and passing into corruption. All outward evil disappears before a given individual, a word suffices even when He is not there. No sorrow or evil withstands His word. The facts happen before hundreds of thousands, and to thousands, and nobody is able to call them in question: they cannot deny it.

You say, But I do not believe what really would be miracles, as Joshua's stopping the sun's course, or Lazarus's resurrection, etc. I quite understand you, but you do not, because they would prove the supernatural power if admitted. Now that is our present question, and you contradict your own statement; and I say, that a man who could deny that miracles cannot prove miraculous or supernatural powers, as they might be attributed to causes unknown to boasting science, ought not to write on logic, or pretend to analyze the true character of induction. "Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought." The truth of alleged miracles may, of course, be disputed, their character be investigated; but to say that miracles, if true, cannot prove supernatural power, but that this must be first assumed, is in every sense absurd, and worthy only of infidelity and men of science, who cannot get beyond phenomena and the petty investigations of the general laws which govern them; very entertaining, I admit, but which in no possible case lead to a right affection or to the sense of moral obligation.

And this is the proposition of the Humes and Mills, and of the anonymous author of *Supernatural Religion*.

(*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 32:177, 178)

The following articles are by the editor.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

Dear brother ____

Regarding bro. ____: really, dear brother, I feel sorry for such brothers. I once wrote to him asking him to explain why he is with _____. We have an expression in America about "reading between the lines." This means discerning what was not said, or what can be discerned concerning what was really transpiring. I felt very sad when I read his letter. Well, every man stands or falls before his Master -- He is the Judge. To me, it was not of the Lord, not for my path with God. One of the **greatest snares** is that brothers get occupied with their service and what they think is their usefulness to God (instead of being concerned about being in a *useable* condition (2 Tim. 2). I read of a solemn warning in 1 Cor. 9:24-27 about conduct in service. What is the use of service concerning which the Lord will have to point to that passage and say to us, 'I warned you that you must run the race lawfully. This and that service, though I blessed it to some souls, was not carried out lawfully,

and therefore I cannot reward you for that, or I would be denying My own order and holiness.' I fear that there will be much of that, though every man will have praise of God (1 Cor. 4:5). In his grace He will find something that was of Himself. But this is one of the snares that keep persons from separating from known, admitted evil. And let us call that by its name: it is self, the flesh. We must remember the warning of the great Servant of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, that many first shall be last, and last first. This is solemn indeed -- especially when we weigh the word *many*. We must serve in the consciousness that His eye is ever on us. So, dear brother, in view of the Lord's warning, do you not think that it might be well to be one of those *last*? May He preserve you in holiness in your service to Himself.

Thank you for your explanation about the Hindu death anniversaries and how some Christians mimic such days, but with praying and preaching. I found that very helpful for my better understanding. You indicated that you had more to say on that subject, and I would be happy to receive anything more that you have to say. There is no excuse for Christians on those anniversaries. We have something similar here about Christmas, a Roman, heathen day, 'changed' into a Christian day by attaching the name of Christ to it. If I recall correctly, it was formally sanctioned by 'Pope' Damasus in the late 4th century. I wonder if there were any 5th century Christians who refused complicity with it. Now we live many centuries later and Christians seem to think that the passage of time changes the character of mixing Christ and Belial. But it is one of Scripture's holy principles that the passage of time does not change the character of a moral action; and another is that a moral stream does not rise above its source. I desire that the Lord's people everywhere would recognize it as a moral mixture of Christ and Belial. The fact that persons may get saved on such days sanctions the practice in the eyes of those who want it that way. We shall see what the Lord will have to say about these things. Dear brother, my wife and I were reared, as children, in the observance of Christmas, and it was in our mature years that the Lord enabled us to throw it off. And then followed an almost incredible sense of deliverance that the Lord gave us in our souls, so that these many years later, when that time of year arrives, we still thank the Lord for His mercy to us. The fact is that there is a letter by F. C. Jennings, testifying that when he was gathered together to the Lord's name in 1877, the brethren were 'practically a unit' in opposition to the observance of it. You may have noticed in the *Collected Writings* comments by J. N. Darby regarding the true character of Christmas. *Our judgments about these things are an indicator of our state of soul.* I know that our haughty and naughty hearts naturally tend to resent such a statement; but we owe all to Him Who, when He was here, "pleased not Himself." And He has left us a model that we should follow in His steps. May we ever seek grace to do so. Without Him we can do nothing (John 15).

* * * * *

When in 1877 I first came into fellowship with those called Brethren, they were practically a unit in abstaining from all complicity with the observance of Christmas and similar abominations . . . tracts were written against it . . . But now with all those witnesses to divine truth gone, other generations have come upon the scene, and there are now few who regard with the same abhorrence these heathen, aye Satanic, for who but Satan, the one great foe of the Lord, would dare to commit

this climax of heinous wickedness of attaching his Name to a lie? But beloved brethren, have you not been "keeping Christmas"? Have you been wishing each other to be "merry," even whilst thus bringing Christ into full accord with Belial? That seems to me unspeakably terrible, am I wrong my Brethren?

(F. C. J., *An Open Letter*)

A paper, *Christmas, or Linking Christ with Belial*, is available from the publisher. This is an 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 paper of 24 pages, available from the publisher for \$1.00 each, plus \$1.75 postage for orders under \$15.00 -- 10% for order over \$15.00.

LEGALITY?

No doubt there are many who are aware that J. N. Darby had something to do with the way they assemble, but at the same time regard those who abhor the celebration of Christmas as being "legal." In view of the above, evidently the brethren gathered together to the Lord's name during the 1800s were all "legal." The word "legal" does have a proper use, but most of the time I have heard it used was in a *self-serving manner* by the "loose," by those who show indifference to the claims of separation unto the Lord. Not only are such indifferent to mixing Christ and Belial, they are ready to heap scorn on believers who do not indulge their fleshly ways -- and if that also means those separated brethren during the 1800s, so be it, as far as their attitude shows.

ZEDEKIAH AND MICAH

Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and smote Micah upon the cheek, and said, Where went now the Spirit of Jehovah from me to speak to thee? (1 Kings 22:24).

Zedekiah had his cute show for Ahab: "And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron, and he said, Thus saith Jehovah: With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have exterminated them" (1 Kings 22:11). Moreover, there were about 400 prophets that agreed with him (v. 6). With 400 to 1, how could they be wrong? Besides, Micah was a despised person by the king (v. 8), and Zedekiah could afford to boldly slap Micah when Micah contradicted him. Often the smiting is done with the tongue, as was done to Jeremiah:

Come let us smite him with the tongue, and let us give heed to none of his words (Jer. 18:18).

Zedekiah was a cocky fellow, a show-man, a person of position, and a pretender that he had the mind of the Lord concerning what he was saying. Think of the audacity of Micah to contradict such a person. And so, after slapping Micah, he haughtily and sneeringly says:

Where went now the Spirit of Jehovah from me to speak to thee?

I suggest that this rhetorical question, meant to denigrate, humiliate, and contradict Micah has often been asked, but not necessarily in those words. The false charge of "legalism" is one such way of seeking to accomplish what Zedekiah was doing, namely to put down the prophetic voice that sought to reach the conscience. Where went now the Spirit of the Lord from me to you, that *you* should warn *me* about mixing Christ and Belial?

Moreover, Ahab wanted to retake *Ramoth in Gilead*, one of the appointed cities of refuge into which the man-slayer could run for protection. The thing had 'religious' overtones, a good sound, a thing for which a good-sounding case could be made; a thing possibly calculated to ensnare King Jehoshaphat into a joint venture, linking good Jehoshaphat with the evil Ahab -- Christ and Belial, so to speak.

EVERYMAN MINISTRY?

Every Christian has one or more gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-7); thus he is in the Christian ministry, for Christian ministry is the exercise of gift. However, some gifts are for use in a public sphere among the people of God, e. g., teaching and prophesying. In that respect, is there an everyman ministry?

Quite in keeping with the teaching among saints gathered together to the Lord's name during the 1800s concerning this, regarding clerisy or, on the other extreme, an every man ministry, C. J. Davis, remarked:

Saints forget this -- if ever they knew it -- who sanction *men* when the *Holy Ghost* should be free to *call* and *appoint* to the ministry.

Let us see how he acted in the case before us. At Antioch there was an assembly of *saints*. All, however, were not *ministers*; for it is distinctly said "There were in the church (or assembly) certain prophets and teachers." Two extremes of error are to be avoided in this day of confusion: (1) it is not true that there should be only *a* minister to an assembly of Christians; (2) it is equally false that all saints in an assembly are necessarily ministers. ¹

1. "Christian Ministry: its Source, Object, Relationship, and Directorship," in *Aids to Believers*, p. 30 (1880) -- p. 110 in some later editions.

DIOTREPHE'S LIEUTENANTS

So you never even thought about Diotrephe's lieutenants? How else could he maintain his position if he had none? No doubt his lieutenants derived a position from their support of Diotrephe. If Diotrephe lost his place they might lose theirs also.

THE WORD

It is not, "In the beginning God *created*"; but, "In the beginning *was* the Word." All is founded upon the uncreated existence of Him who created everything: at the beginning of all things He was there, without any beginning. "In the beginning *was* the Word," is the formal expression that the Word had no beginning. But there is more in this remarkable passage: the Word was personally distinct, "the Word was with God "; but He was not distinct in nature, "the Word was God." Thus we have the eternal existence, the distinct personality, the identity of nature, of the Word; and all this existed in eternity. The distinct personality of the Word was not, as people have wished to make it, a thing which had a beginning. "In the beginning the Word was with God," v.2. His personality is eternal as His nature. This is the great and glorious basis of the doctrine of the gospel and of our eternal joy, what the Saviour is in Himself, His nature, and His Person.

Now comes what He is in His attributes, being such. First of all, He has created all things, and here we come to the beginning of Genesis. We have to do with Him in that which He is; the world is but that which He has made. All things were made by Him, and there is nothing created of which He was not the Creator. All that subsists, subsists by Him. He was (*een*); all that began to exist (*egeneto*) began "by him." He was the Creator of all beings. (Compare Heb. 1:2, 10.)

Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 33:130

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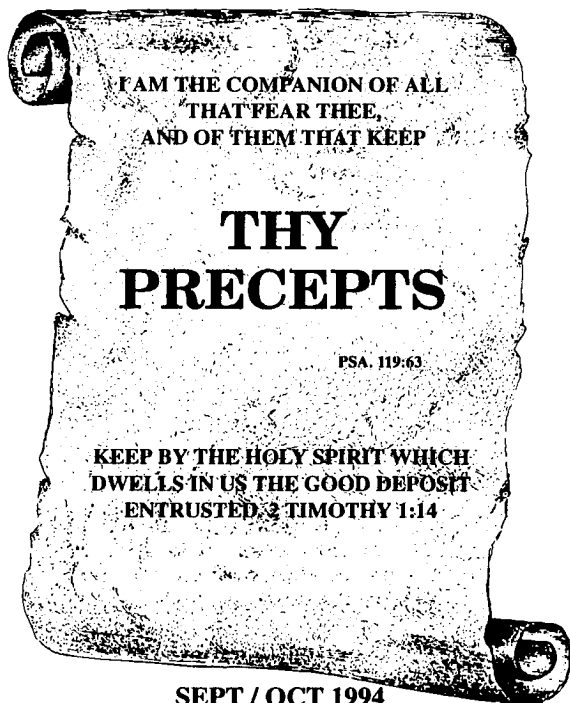
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Editor's note: *Christianity Today*, June 20, 1994, reported on an interview with H. Camping. The article said:

But what if he is wrong and September 1994 comes and goes? Will Camping apologize and submit to discipline? "Oh, no," he told CT. "There are all kinds of books that have been written [forecasting end-times]. Are they disciplined?"

The sad answer to that last question seems to be "no." And not only that, but Christians go on buying the books of such false prophets, who speak presumptuously in the name of the Lord:

But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word that Jehovah hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, and the thing followeth not, nor cometh to pass, that is the word which Jehovah hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: be not afraid of him (Deut. 18:20-22).

In a footnote to "presume" (v. 18), J. N. Darby wrote, "Elsewhere 'act proudly.'" Do not let a humble appearing demeanor and words of a false prophet fool you, however sincerely he may believe what he is saying. It is presumption and pride. Believe God's Word. The fact that false prophet date-setters are not disciplined is a sad indicator of the state of the Christians with whom they are associated.

THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON

TEMPTATION AND INFIRMITIES

There is only one more point which I feel called upon to notice -- temptation, so called, not being sin. I have heard those under the influence of this system talk of suggestions, and slur over what has passed in their hearts. Mr. Smith says, "Let us beware of one special snare of Satan -- that of trying to persuade us that temptation, or mere infirmity, is sin. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. His temptations were actual and real pressures to evil. He yielded not, and was without sin. Neither is the unwelcomed, unindulged, rejected temptation sin to us." This is very bad. Mr. Smith must forgive me for speaking plainly. He has fallen into the snare of Satan. Mr. S. is so exceedingly loose in his statements, that one has to make all sorts of necessary distinctions before there can be any answer.

Temptations and infirmities are not the same thing. Paul gloried in his infirmities [2 Cor. 12:5], certainly not in sins, and if we do put them together, the sense of temptation is at once defined. Infirmities in this sense are the persecutions, and difficulties, and reproaches a Christian has to go through, if he will be faithful and devoted, and which would tend to hinder him in holding fast his faithful course (see 2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

Mr. Smith might see that the "yet" in the passage he quotes (from Heb. 9) is in the Authorized Version in italics; that is, it is not in the original. Hence we can say that any such application to Christ as is involved in Mr. Smith's statement, is carefully guarded against. He was tempted according to (the) likeness (He took), that is, as a man, as we are in this world, sin excepted. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He was, and is still, for us, sensible to all that human nature can feel from outrage, reproach, desertion, unrighteousness, isolation, and the want of sympathy. The word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts, judging their true character in us according to His holy presence. In all our trials and difficulties we have Christ's full and tender sympathy. What does Mr. Smith mean by actual and real pressures to evil? From within or from without?

Were they (the Lord forgive the word!) lusts in that blessed One, suggestions of His own sin in the flesh! Was there anything in Him which was not to be

indulged because it was evil? Let Mr. Smith explain himself. What did He not yield to? When Satan succeeds in "touching" us, he awakens the thought of evil, even if we do not yield to it. Did he succeed in doing this with Christ? "The thought of foolishness is sin," says the word. Was this in Christ? In His temptation He was hungry. This was no sin; it was a human need, and He felt it, and Satan sought to lead Him to do His own will as to it. But He lived by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. All the glory of the world from without was offered, but it awakened indignation, not any question. God's word was His motive for acting, as well as His rule. He was led of the Spirit to be tempted. We are tempted when we are led away of our own lusts.

All this flows from the damnable doctrine that lust is not sin. What is it? Is it holiness or righteousness? Where does it come from? It is the fruit of the sinful nature; "sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of lust." Those who rest on fruits in James -- and I do not call it a strawy epistle -- find no sin till it has conceived and brought forth. Those who go to the root with the word of God know that there is sin in the flesh. If Satan were to suggest to eat a handful of mud and dirt, would any one be inclined to do it? If he succeeds in touching us, it is because there is a desire in the sinful nature to which he adapts himself. If we are full of Christ, he will not succeed; but of the suggestion is awakened in our hearts, sin is awakened into the activity of desire, though we may rightly resist it; and if we look to Christ, we shall be victorious. Was any such suggestion awakened in the blessed One? All this loose insinuation as to Christ, to excuse and cover sin in ourselves, is very bad indeed. Was anything within in Christ which He had to resist? It must not be covered over with loose words, as "temptation or infirmity," which words have professedly in scripture a double meaning (see James 1).

Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 23:291, 292.

The Holiness of Christian Fellowship

Chapter 7: (continued)

Neutrality, Defilement and Undermining

Judges 17-21: God Hates Neutrality

Curse Meroz . . . For they came not to the help of Jehovah (Judg. 5:23).

Who is there . . . that came not up with the congregation to Jehovah?
. . . He shall certainly be put to death (Judg. 21:5).

THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE

Judges 17-21 does not follow chapter 16 in chronological order. These chapters are a moral appendix to the book of Judges that show us the reason for the condition of things found in Israel during the time of the Judges. Idolatry is at the root (17:1-5), coupled with leaving Bethlehem-Judah (meaning "house of bread and praise") to go to mount Ephraim (meaning "fruitfulness"). Typically, this is putting service before worship. Ephraim typifies service carried out in the energy of the flesh. He became "a cake not turned" -- half baked and onesided! The Levite (a servant -- a gift, typically) becomes the priest (one who draws near to God). When a gift does this it results in clerisy because he gets between persons and God. This Levite received "a call" to a larger sphere of service also (18:19-20)! Interesting as the many lessons in these chapters are, we must confine ourselves to the matter of unholiness.

WAS THERE FAULT ON BOTH SIDES?

The infamy of chapter 19 roused Israel as one man (chap. 20). The judgment

of evil was a correct thought, is always correct, and is required by God. But something else is needed and it is most important. We must deeply realize what WE are in ourselves. Israel was twice beaten before this was learned. Israel was on the correct side of this matter. It will come to no good to be always talking of fault on both sides with the (perhaps unrealized) wicked object of undermining the judgment of evil. That is usually what is at the root even if we don't realize it. There was *fault* on Israel's part and God took care of it. There was **wickedness** on the part of Benjamin that had to be purged!

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.¹

Israel was twice defeated. It resulted in weeping and fasting. More than this, burnt offerings and peace-offerings were offered (20:26). This signifies, in type, that we must abhor self and thoroughly learn that we are nothing. We are accepted in Christ and He is our peace. It is thorough self-judgment. Self-judgment is ever the way of blessing and practical sanctification. Let us take thorough cognizance of this mode of God's dealing with us. *God works blessing through repentance and self-judgment.* Coupled with this, there is a fresh sense of all the value of Christ to God and the seeing Him as our acceptance and peace.

PHINEHAS AND THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

And then Phinehas, that man of blessed memory, comes before the ark (20:21). As our minds turn to think of him and his stand for Jehovah's glory, we must digress to point out the grand millennial results of Phinehas' faithfulness. Remember the brazenness of Zimri, prince of Simeon (Num. 25:6-15), who brought Cozbi, daughter of a tribal head of Midian into the camp? And when Israel's face belonged in the dust (Num. 25:1-5) is when Phinehas judged it, in the sight of Moses and the people. Here was a man, Zimri, with brazenness, if there ever was one. But was nothing to be done because Israel was in a low state? Nothing of the kind! There was a man of God, a true priest of God, a warrior priest, who knew what to do. He pursued them and smote them with his javelin (25:7-8). Dare you say he was hard and relentless? Num. 25:10-14 reads:

And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I consumed not the

1. *The Present Testimony* 2:31.

children of Israel in my jealousy. Therefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace! And he shall have it, and his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel. And the name of the man of Israel that was slain, who was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, the prince of a father's house of the Simeonites.

Many years later Abiathar, progeny of Eli, progeny of Ithamar the uncle of Phinehas and brother of Eleazar, was thrust from the priesthood under Solomon. Zadok, progeny of Phinehas, was the priest under Solomon, who typifies the millennial reign of Christ as Prince of peace. Then in Ezek. 40-48, which describes the millennial temple and order of service, we learn that the sons of Zadok will have the priesthood. This answers to Num. 25:13. All is made good by, and in, Christ, and thus the covenant of the priesthood will be made good to Phinehas. Phinehas will be among those who live and reign with Christ 1000 years (Rev. 20:4,5). On earth his offspring will serve in the temple in Jerusalem.

Well, Phinehas' action prevented the consumption of Israel by a holy God (Num. 25:11). The presence of Cozbi with Zimri affected Israel in the eyes of God. It is a fact, and we cannot change it. It is best, and the only right way, to acknowledge the truth with a happy heart of obedience.

The position of those judged did not blunt the judgment of the javelin. Persons do not like such talk; they get frightened. They have names for it. But God has recorded these things for our learning (1 Cor. 10:11, 12) and our place is to bow to the truth instead of resisting it under false pleas of (perverted) love and grace. The station of Zimri, prince of Simeon, only made the act more heinous. The act of Phinehas saved Israel from judgment. Oh that we would learn the means to blessing! Self-judgment, confession, repentance and judgment of evil are those things through which God blesses us. And instead of criticizing what spiritually answers to Phinehas, let us recognize that it avoids even more chastening!

SELF-JUDGMENT

In Judges 20, to return; how blessed that such a man comes before the Lord at this point! What point? The time of self-judgment; the time of learning our own depravity and the mighty worth of Christ before God. Would it have been better to have a man who is full of the peace-at-any-price spirit take up the matter? No, just such an one as Phinehas is needed (James 3:17). Has he no heart? God knows, even if we do not. He says, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin *my brother*?" One has noticed how often those who speak much of love when judgment is needed, when they are

crossed or offended, have great difficulty forgiving. This is not strange -- because self is really at the bottom of that false kind of "love." Do we not understand? Sparing self in oneself easily leads to sparing self in others when not personally offended. It is a subtle form of making provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof (Rom. 13:14). It is merely acting from self. No wonder such are easily offended and find it difficult to forgive or put away a grudge. At any rate, Phinehas does not so speak to Benjamin, but to Jehovah. And now Jehovah acts through Israel's self-judgment and they purge out the defiling evil. And, finally, blessing results for Benjamin (Judg. 21).

NEUTRALITY JUDGED

Let us notice one more matter before closing. In Judg. 21:4 we find Israel still in a state of self-judgment. And now the **neutrals** must be judged. Is Israel hard and relentless? Oh, our wretched, deceiving, incurable hearts to think such a thought! **GOD HATES NEUTRALITY; and in Judges 21 it is judged as in Judges 5:23 it is cursed!** Let us beware of that false "love and grace" which is a subtle form of palliation of evil and neutrality!

Another has said,

Will you then allow me yet to ask you another question? Why do I find you habitually assembling with that certain company of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, and not with certain others in your locality, who are (as you believe) equally the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, as you are? And this is the kind of answer I have received from some: "Oh, I believe from my little knowledge of scripture that those with whom I meet are more correct and according to its teaching than those others you name, and you know that if we have not all the spirituality and energy of the church in her early days, nor all her divinely taught doctrines and practice, at least we have a measure of them, and we must get the nearest we can to the perfection of scripture; that is why I meet with them, and hold what I do." I detect in this reply the refusal of neutrality as a principle -- a refusal actuated by divine instinct. And none will deny that there is also in it the confession of the church's departure from the truth.

Will you not be frightened if I deny (as some) your right of conscience thus to judge? Will you not shrink with horror if I assert (as some do) that though you are a Christian, with an open Bible in your hand, and the Holy Ghost as your teacher, neither you nor any other individual has ability to judge, and withdraw from what it condemns, but that you must go on with certain evils which its light has discovered to you, as existing and sanctioned in the professing church today, rather than take God's ground and God's distance from the evil? which place they as good as tell you it is impossible for you ever to reach! And though I have no intention to make such unholy assertions, yet I would humbly suggest that the word "neutrality," however attractive at first sight it may appear, means this, when traced to its legitimate end. For neutrality does not assert that everything in the professing church is right and scriptural; to say this would be to destroy itself, for then, wherefore neutrality? Nor therefore does it totally deny your right to separate yourself from evil, but it sets up a stopping place for

you in your path of separation, a place short of what God has set up. If it does not do this, it also destroys itself, and we are brought to ask again, "Wherefore neutrality?" We see then that it has a measure of the negative, but it has not reached the positive. It says, you may separate from evil, but only up to a certain point, at which point you must stop. It tells you that you may go a certain way outside the camp, provided you will be content without reaching Him -- with whom can be no neutrality -- who is to be found there (Heb. 13:13).

Now neutrality is not complete ignorance, there is a measure of light in it; but while it is certain that God bears with ignorance, and instructs it -- "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way" (Psa. 25:9), so surely will that which has a measure of light, yet light not acted upon, be presently judged by Him.

Neutrality is the Zoar, the little city, to which many a righteous Lot has fled for refuge since the days of Genesis 19. It is not Sodom, it is far removed from that wicked city, but it is not the "mountain" (see Gen. 19:17), God's place of safety. It is a place reached without much difficulty, for it is in the plain, and no toilsome mountain ascent lies before those who would reach it. It is a principle getting widely spread in our day, which unmasked speaks but plainly when it says, "Let us make the best of both worlds." It is nevertheless (and so is every step from evil) a step in the right direction, but being a resting-place short of the goal, it becomes a snare, and will presently be the most subtle snare of the enemy, for it will be received far and wide. Neutrality is short of a living centre, the person of Christ, awaits His judgment, and receives it in Laodicea [Rev. 3:14-16]. "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 13). And it is Christendom that has taken the place of the servant.

The responsibility is individual and is ours. It is a solemn thing and brings no true rest, to stop short of God's place for the soul, but there is a yet more solemn consideration than this, for it is the verge of Laodiceanism which is repulsive to the Lord. Where are you, as one in testimony for the Lord amidst all the present confusion? Neutrality will be the reigning characteristic of the professing church on earth in its last stage (Rev.3:15) when the Lord will reject it as no longer a witness for Him. We are rapidly advancing to it. Principles of neutrality will increase with frightful rapidity, and become more clearly adopted later, and they will be received by the mass as right principles to glory in (Rev. 3:17).²

Haggai 2:10-15: Defilement

Haggai was a prophet in remnant times. He was found among those who had gone back to the city where God had placed His name (see Ezra). Though the national polity of Israel was gone, and though the people were declared "not my people" and were thus not publicly owned as God's people, the truth concerning

defilement had not changed. How could it change? We learn from this that though ruin comes in, we are to act on principles which cannot be ruined. Besides which, the principle of separation from evil to the Lord is the first principle of holiness and walk with God; and thus transcends all dispensations.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Ask now the priests [concerning] the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skin do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food -- shall it become holy? And the priests answered and said, No. And Haggai said, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, is it become unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith Jehovah, and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean" (Hag. 2:11-14).

Jehovah says, what does the law say? The law says that holiness is **not** transmitted by association with holiness (v. 12). The law also says that uncleanness is transmitted by an unclean connection (v. 13).

The law discusses defilement by leprosy, running issues, death, etc. (Lev. 13; 22:4-9; 15:1-12; Num. 5:1; 9:6, 71; 19:11-16; etc.). Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy over and over again teach defilement by association, concerning the tabernacle, the camp and the individual. The summary is given in Haggai 2:10-13. The application to remnant times is made in Haggai 2:14.

The Old Testament teaching about ceremonial uncleanness by touching something unclean has a spiritual application. 2 Cor. 6:14-18 says "touch not what is unclean." What is unclean? Well, what does the passage say? Unbelievers, lawlessness, darkness (see Eph. 5:11; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 5; 2 John 9,10), Belial, idols. We **MUST** bow to this altogether, because it is written! Legality will limit it as much as possible, for palliation of evil can go with legality. The truth is that what we have in 1 Cor. 5 is uncleanness. So is what we have in 2 John 9,10; Rev. 2:14-16; Gal. 5:9; Lev.13.

2 Cor. 6:17 says, "touch not [what is] unclean." What? A professed Christian who holds leavened doctrine is not unclean? You say "touch" denotes believing it yourself? But that would be like an Israelite defiled by touching a dead body having to become dead in order to be defiled. The truth is that 2 Cor. 6:14-18 teaches defilement by association with those kinds of things mentioned -- and the list is no more exhaustive than is 1 Cor. 5, which omits murder and stealing, for example.

Eliashib: Undermining

The book of Ezra tells us of the recovery of the altar (i.e., worship) at the one divinely appointed center where the national unity of Israel was expressed. The book of Nehemiah is concerned with the building of the wall (i.e., the protection of the purity of the recovered worship).

In the following remarks I shall speak of Eliashib in a typical way. Eliashib was among those who were back at the divine center, a man of influence and position amongst the people of God. He was high priest (Neh. 3:1). He was a builder among the builders. We note that many worked on the wall and many worked on the gates. These gates had locks and bars (Neh. 3:3, 7, 13, 14, 15; 7:3). It is noteworthy that Eliashib was a gospel man: he worked on the sheep-gate. But the scripture does not say that he put locks and bars on the gate. I think it quite improper to suppose that this gate was not to have locks and bars! The principle of separation from evil to the Lord must be applied to gospel work as to all else that engages us. He did not care for separation from evil to the Lord. That is the meaning of the absence of mention of the locks and bars on the sheep-gate. There were other priests associated with him in this.

That this is the meaning of the absence of mention of the locks and bars is consonant with the course of Eliashib. He didn't care for separation from evil to the Lord for his home either. Someone else repaired the wall (of separation) in front of the house of Eliashib (Neh. 3:20) and then another continued from his door (Neh. 3:21). Gospel work is commendable, but sad it is indeed when separation from evil to the Lord is not practiced. There is a moral link between the home and the work. When one does not practice separation from evil to the Lord, it affects all spheres in which one moves.

This is not the end of the story. Refusal to practice separation from evil to the Lord in his service and home had its results and we are permitted to see one of these in the life of Eliashib. Eliashib was a kinsman of Tobijah (Neh. 13:4,28), the enemy of the Lord. This means that a wrong marriage had been contracted in the family of Eliashib. Did this bow him in self-judgment before God? No, he rather went and made a place for Tobijah in divine matters (Neh. 13:4-9). I believe that this is morally linked with the refusal to practice separation from evil to the Lord as noted in his work and his home. It is sad indeed that a man engaged in the work of the gospel, or any other work, has no concern, or little concern, for the holiness that becomes God's house. The lesson we learn from the notices of Eliashib is that the end result of such a course is the introduction of unholy things amongst God's people. It must necessarily be so.

Evil will enter when given the opportunity. We must understand that in accordance with the way things are, that the TENDENCY is ALWAYS toward the destruction of divine things. Separation from evil to the Lord must be practiced personally, in our families, in our service, and among the people of God.

Is the Christian Heavenly? and Is the Church Heavenly?

Conflict in the Heavens

Canaan and the Armor of God.

Eph. 6:10-20

It might seem strange at first sight that in this epistle, where there is the fullest unfolding of the privileges of the children of God, *conflict* should be brought out; but we are often not aware of the character of the conflict from not knowing our privileges. Here it is found we are specially in conflict, and in a conflict that is neither known nor got into until we realize the privileges which *this* epistle specially unfolds.

In Galatians there is conflict, but it is a conflict between flesh and Spirit -- the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; but in Ephesians it is *not* flesh, but spiritual wickedness in high places (or "wicked spirits in the heavenly places" margin). We *have* to overcome flesh, and there is a very close connection between these two conflicts; still they are distinct.

In Ephesians it [the context] is a new creation [Eph. 2]. Christ has ascended up on high -- "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." So completely has He taken us out of the power of Satan that He can make us the vessels of His service. He has taken us out of the world [Eph. 2:6], and then sent us into it; and if we thus stand associated with Christ (which is the privilege of every Christian, though all do not *realize* it), we must expect all the conflict associated with the place into which we are brought. In *proportion* as we *realize* that we are the vessels of heavenly service, we get this *special* character of conflict.

You cannot cross Jordan ³ without finding the Canaanite and the Perizzite in the land. There are the trials and perils of the wilderness, which test our hearts -- all know more or less of the weary way testing our hearts and discovering what is in them; but wilderness experience is not the same as conflict in the land. When Joshua got into the place of the privileges of the people of God, he was *in* the place of conflict. God has set Christ as a Man in the glory, because He (as a Man) has perfectly glorified God as to sin. Christ has not only died for our sins, but we have died with Him (dead with Christ is what Jordan is), ³ and we are raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: thus associated, *dead and risen* with Him, we are brought into the place where all the conflict is. It is most valuable and precious to get *distinctly* hold of this. Many a Christian has not realized it. There is many a one still in Egypt, holding the value of the blood on the door-posts, but knowing nothing of the deliverance accomplished at the Red Sea. Israel had to stand still and see the salvation of *God*; this answers to the death and resurrection of Christ. I am out of Egypt; the *judgment* which fell on the Egyptians has *saved me*. God has raised up Christ and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Just as every poor sinner has been driven out of the earthly paradise because *sin* is complete in the first Adam, so am I taken out of this world into the heavenly paradise [places] in the last Adam because righteousness is complete. God raising up Christ and giving Him glory proves that the question of sin has been all settled in Christ on the cross, and in virtue of this He is sitting where He is, at the right hand of God. The passage through the wilderness is to humble and prove us. Our perseverance is tested by God leading us through the path in which Christ was found implicitly faithful. Israel went through that great and terrible wilderness where were the fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water. God brought them water out of the rock of flint, fed them with the manna to humble them and prove them, to do them good at their latter end. They come to Jordan, they pass it, they get into the land, they eat the old corn, and the land is theirs.

In the wilderness and Canaan we get two characters of Christian experience -- one, the life down here; the other, the position in the heavenlies. We are not only a testimony to the world, but also to principalities and powers in the heavenlies -- "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places;" but though that is all true as to *title*, as to *fact*, the Canaanite and the Perizzite are still in the land to dispute the possession. We have our place in the power of the Spirit of God, Christ having gone before, our place is sure to faith; but the Canaanite is not yet destroyed -- Christ's enemies are not yet put under His feet, so conflict characterizes the place of the Lord's redeemed people. When Joshua got into the land, he met a man with a drawn sword. Fighting was to characterize their possession of the land, and when Joshua asks, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" the answer was, "Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." They were the redeemed of the

3. [The significance of crossing Jordan is not the death of a Christian physically.]
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Lord -- the Lord's host -- so completely the Lord's, that He uses them as His servants in conflict to subdue His enemies.

They must "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and they cannot fight the Lord's battles if the flesh is at work. With an Achan in the camp there can be no victory, and therefore we must be *practically* dead to fight successfully; not merely reckoning ourselves dead, but be always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.

Paul, as a servant, always carried with him the sense of this, not as a title merely, but "Paul" was kept completely down, *always* bearing about in His body the dying of Jesus; nothing of Paul [Paul's flesh] appeared, it was Jesus only [Gal. 2:20]. As soon as they crossed the Jordan (Jordan is death and resurrection with Christ), they were circumcised -- death is practically applied; and in like manner after they had crossed the Red Sea they had to drink of the bitter water -- really the salt water; they had been *saved* by it, they must not drink it. "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit" (Isa. 38:16).

As soon as we get into heavenly places we get the "old corn" [Josh. 5:11] -- we find Christ there, we feed on Him; but we have to be circumcised, *practically* ⁴ putting off the body of the flesh. Israel got into the land, and had to be circumcised; their *title* ⁵ they knew, but they had not taken the ground of being practically dead and risen (from Egypt). ⁶ If a man is practically dead and risen, what has he to do with this world? A man dead, and thus taken out of the world, has to go through the world and live in it again if God so will it. We have to run across the wilderness to glory. As one associated with the Lord, I am the witness and testimony to the world of what a *heavenly* Christ is. I am to be an imitator of God. I shall be seeking other souls to enjoy it with me. If we are endeavoring to serve the Lord, shall we not find hindrances? If seeking to maintain the Lord's people in the place of fidelity to all this, do you think Satan will let you alone? There will be the wiles of Satan to get saints into his power, and we have to withstand his stratagems even more than his power.

Infidelity, superstition in its various forms, are opposed to us, consequently we need the whole armour of God the *moment* we come in. We shall not get through in our own strength; we need the strength of the Lord, and the power of His might; we need the whole armour, not one piece must be wanting. The armour must be of God, human armour will not ward off the attacks of Satan; confidence in that armour will engage us in the combat to make us fall before an enemy stronger and

4. [The writer means that we have to apply the meaning of circumcision to our life, in practice, in our walk.]

5. [They had the land in title, but had not conquered it.]

6. [Israel's journey through the wilderness is a type, as is their entry into the Land. Physically, they must do this sequentially. However, the Christian is viewed as in the wilderness (cp. Peter's epistles) at the same time that he is viewed as in the heavenlies (cp. Ephesians).]

more crafty than we. Let us see what this complete armour is.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with **truth**." This is the first thing, looking at what we call the *subjective* part. Our *state* comes first, and there is no divine activity until the heart is perfectly in order. The loins are the seat of strength when duly girt, but represent the intimate affections and movements of the heart. The figure is taken from the habits of the country where these instructions were given; they wore long garments, which hindered their working unless girded up. We get the expression in Job 38:3, "Gird up now thy loins like a man;" that is, to see what he had to say to God. It is the power of truth applied to everything that takes place in the heart; it is not doctrine [abstractly], but truth *practically applied*. The Lord said, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." God has sent into the midst of the world all that can judge man according to what God is. Christ is the centre of the word; He was the light of the world, He revealed the thoughts of many hearts. He was here as a man, and revealed what God was, and the world was judged by it. He comes, and brings all that is divine and heavenly in a man (Christ) in direct contact with all that is contrary to God in this world. Satan, as the God of this world, led man against Christ. Some fancy that he has ceased to be the god and prince of this world; but though the cross broke his title, it was not until the cross (where man openly ranged himself under Satan against God) that he became its *prince*.⁷ Truth came into the world -- Christ Himself, *the* truth. The truth of God brought right to men's hearts discovers their thoughts and intents. Now, when I get this word *effectually* applied to me, I get the **girdle of truth**.

When all that God has said in His word, and the unseen realities He reveals, have their true force and application to my heart, my loins are *girt*, my garments are not dragging in the mire of this world, my thoughts are not wandering, and the condition of my heart is, so to speak, tucked up ready for service, whatever that may be. We do not get into this conflict until we get into this place. We get the conflict of the old man, but that is Egypt. In order to get the victory over Satan and carry on the Lord's battles, I must realize my position according to the truth, just as Israel overcame by realizing the promises of God.

First thing of all, my heart must be completely tested and subjected to a *heavenly* word. The Lord said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." Christ brings this heavenly truth before us, and says, Does what is in your heart correspond with this? When this word becomes a positive delight to us, we get the taste and appreciation of heavenly things -- the things that are lovely, and of good report -- which He has brought to us. I get on the one hand judgment of all flesh in me, and on the other the blessedness of what Christ is. Wherever the loins are girt about with truth, there will be confidence of heart, and the soul will be steadfast, there will be no turning back in the conflict to judge ourselves; our souls, so to speak, will be naturally with God, there will be occupation of heart with Christ, and there will be the Holy Ghost

7. [The Lord Jesus called Satan "the prince of the world" before the cross. Satan was not called, in the Word, "the God of this age," until after the rejection of the Lord Jesus.]
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taking of the things which are Christ's, and showing them to us.

The result of this girding of the loins is, that a man's *condition* is the effect of truth. It was Christ's condition. He *was* the truth, and my condition will be like Christ's in proportion as the truth is in effect on my heart; the affections and heart right, I pass through the world in spirit with Him. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the **breastplate** of righteousness." All this, mark, is practical righteousness; we do not want armour with God, we want it against Satan.

If I am an inconsistent man, going to serve God without the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left -- without practical godliness -- Satan will be sure to bring it up. In preaching, for instance, if your walk is not consistent, the world will say you are no better than they, and Satan will then have power against you. If you are walking according to Christ because your heart is according to Christ, you have on the breastplate of righteousness; but unless a man has a good conscience, he will be a coward, and afraid of being detected. With a good conscience we can go on boldly; the condition of the soul where Christ is revealed is truth, and the walk of the man is all right -- there is nothing for Satan to lay hold of. The loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, I have then to see that my feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I pass through the world with my feet shod. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." In this path there is no selfishness; selfishness is for maintaining its rights, but that is not having my feet shod with peace. Self is subdued if I am following Christ. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Learning of Christ, he carries peace with Him -- the soul is at peace with God, the conscience at rest, his feet are shod with peace, and he carries through the world the spirit and character of Christ.

He has on the breastplate of righteousness. What was the path of the blessed Lord? There was nothing in question as to His state. He went untouched with all that man could bring against Him; His feet were shod. So with him who follows Christ; he can bring out the spirit and character of Christ wherever he goes. It may raise hatred, as it did with Christ -- His perfect love brought out the hatred of [from] man; but a subdued, godly, upright man will be a peaceful man in passing through the world, and although man may not speak peaceably to him, as much as lieth in him, he is to live peaceably with all men. Thus we get it in both aspects -- the path is characterized by the spirit of grace and peace, and there is righteousness and truth. The state of the heart first right, loins girt with truth, righteousness for a breastplate, and feet shod with peace, the soul subjectively right, I can then take up the **shield of faith**. Subjectively right, I have not to think of myself. A man walking with nothing on his conscience is free; if not walking right, he will be occupied with himself. The mere existence of an evil nature does not suppose a bad conscience, but *yielding* to it does. We are not told to confess sin, but sins. It is easy to confess sin, easy to say, "I am a poor sinful creature," but that generally is to excuse *sins*. I have failed to keep the flesh down. Of course I can never say I have no sin, but if am not bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, practically

dead, the flesh will surely play me false. We want these first three elements of the armour, and then we have not to think about ourselves. Practically in the light,⁸ as He is in the light, the heart right, I then get the *shield of faith*, wherewith I shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. This shield supposes I can look up with entire blessed confidence in God. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty ... He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: *His truth shall be thy shield and buckler*. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the *arrow*, that flieth by day."

God is above Satan. Satan may shoot his arrows, but they cannot break through the shield of faith. In Christ the victory has been won in man and for man. Satan did his worst against Christ -- first to seduce and afterward to deter Him -- but he was completely overcome. All the power of Satan is broken and gone. Christ has gone through death and conquered him who had the power of death. Christ has not only put away our sins, but as a man standing for us, He has completely overcome the devil. We are not told to overcome, but to "resist" the devil, and he will flee from us. If resisted, he meets Christ in us, and runs away. Human nature cannot resist, it will acquiesce. It is not a question of power on our part, but of simple faithfulness and looking to Christ; it is not that we are strong, but strength is made perfect in weakness. What was ever so weak as Christ -- Christ crucified through weakness? but then the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Nothing could be more weak and foolish in man's eyes than the cross, but we know, nevertheless, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Whenever we are content to own ourselves weak, there is the strength that enables us to overcome. Satan is very subtle. If Satan deals with man (apart from God), it is all over with him. How is it possible that wise and learned men of this world give way to such follies as ritualism and the like? Satan, more clever than they, is behind it all, and laughs to see them trusting their own wisdom. The simple soul that has his heart right *cannot* go wrong. Satan has no kind of power while the soul is walking in obedience, that is the secret of it all. If walking inconsistently, the shield of faith will be down, and I shall be open to all the fiery darts. There should be that blessed confidence in God which reckons on Christ having completely overcome the world and the devil, and that all the power of evil now in the world will soon be put down. We are to be exercised in the conflict.

The Lord has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

We have as yet no activities brought out; so far it is defensive. The defensive armour comes first. We are slow to understand this, and we often get into activities when we ought to be quiet. The shield is defensive. Satan is active. The Lord may bless and help us, in His grace, but there are many who get into activities without

8. [All Christians are positionally in the light (1 John 1); the question is, are we there in our practice?]

knowing themselves. The **helmet of salvation** is still defensive; we have the conscious, blessed, and full certainty of being in heavenly places in Christ -- the soul walking in the full confidence that I have Christ there, who has delivered me out of the power of the devil. Christ has fought my battle, and overcome. I can hold my head up, because I have got salvation. The blessed certainty that I am in Christ and Christ is for me is my *helmet*. I can now be active. Having judged the flesh, godly in walk, peaceful in my path through the world, with confidence in God, and salvation assured, I can take up **the sword of the Spirit** -- I can fight, sheltered in the inner man, and shielded from all attacks from without. I take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. We do not always look to see that it is so -- that there is nothing between God and our souls, so that He is *practically* with us in the conflict. Are we walking in the practical sense of God being with us? If there is an Achan in the camp, as there was with Israel, God will not go up. It is of all-importance we should be clear as to this. Paul kept his body under, and brought it into subjection. If we are to be active in the service the Lord, we must go out from the presence the Lord according to what His presence gives. Paul said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have *always* a conscience void of offence toward God and men." Always self-judgment, always keeping close to God, and *then* you can go out in service to others; not always, perhaps, in public ministry, but in the path of everyday life.

You will have the secret of the Lord with you, the consciousness of God with you, clearness of judgment, and not distracted or dismayed by half a dozen thoughts. You have the *secret of the Lord*; going on quietly, it may be, but going on with God. Then comes, no matter how active I may be, the inward preparation -- "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." We have had the inward affection and the sword of the Spirit, but now it is entire dependence -- the word of God and prayer. These two things are found running together through Scripture: *the word of God and prayer*. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His word. The Lord said, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." In the next verses, the Lord teaches His disciples to *pray*. When deacons were chosen, the reason assigned by the apostles was that they might give themselves continually to *prayer* and to the ministry of the *word* (Acts 6). When there is to be service carried on against the wiles of the devil, half the battle is to be fought out in God's presence beforehand in *prayer*. When the prince of this world came to the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, he found Him agonizing in prayer. Peter slept while the Lord prayed: the result was, that Peter denied Him, but the blessed Lord witnessed a good confession.

Nothing can, or ever will, take the place of that earnestness in prayer: if we are to have God with us, we must pray. It is marked by perfect calmness. If we have God with us, we must be with God, who is sovereign in love and goodness, and has associated us with His own interests. Does not my heart yearn after the conversion of poor sinners? do I not pray that hearts may know more of Christ? that saints may walk more faithfully? God desires this, and He has given us a path in the world

associated with His interests. There is to be perseverance and supplication for all saints. If I see a soul in danger of going astray, I go with all perseverance and supplication to God about him: my heart is in it.

The very same word used of the Lord in Gethsemane is used of Epaphras, who labored fervently in prayer (Col. 4). It is conflict of heart. He craves the blessing of God with all his heart -- craving for it earnestly, and entering into it because it is in the interests of God in the world. This has to be carried on in opposition to Satan, who will bring all his craft and power against us. We have consequently to be with God. What a blessed thing to know that I get power and wisdom from God, grace and wisdom in practice! If I use a sword, I must get wisdom for it. What a place of blessing it would be if we were all practically with God!

For our own souls it is so helpful, because prayer is the expression of entire *dependence*, but at the same time of *confidence* in God. A person like Paul in weakness and trembling, fightings without and fears within, going about getting victories! He says to the Corinthians, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." It is always good to be conscious of weakness provided there is faith in God. Constant dependence is the constant expression of faith in God; the soul goes to God with God's affairs, we realize how much they are our own. The blessed Lord has gone down into the dust of death. Satan's power was exercised to the fullest, but it was all broken. He comes up again and sits at the right hand of God, takes His people, whom He has completely delivered from the hand of Satan, and uses them for conflict against him -- the instruments of His service in the world -- a wondrously blessed place if we only knew how to hold it -- blessed to be made the Lord's host against Satan. The more you are in the forefront of the battle, the more you will be exposed to the fiery darts. The more you bear testimony to God's thoughts, God's mind, the place the saints have in God's mind, the more you will be the object of Satan's attacks. You will necessarily be exposed to more snares and dangers than those who lag behind, and there is no place where dependence is more needed and felt.

There is more strength provided for those in the forefront to bear witness to Christ's title against Satan, and Satan will never let it pass without opposition. When I have all the armour on, and come to wield the sword, I am not to be thinking of the armour, but of God and His purposes, "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Oh, how little we know of this! Supposing we pass through a day, was all that happened turned into prayer? If I am walking maintaining Christ's cause, it all turns to prayer. It is a wondrous test of the state of our souls. Do you think you can intercede much for others? Do you find earnestness in intercession for all saints? Is my heart so in the interests of Christ that I can have a lasting and continual interest for others? If my heart is in a bad state, and the presence of God is revealed to me, I think of myself -- I am not free to intercede for others. "And for me," says the apostle, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly . . . as I ought to speak." How is it with us, beloved friends? It is an amazing blessing to be doing this, but we cannot if our own souls are not right -- if I am not in the presence of God. As far only as I keep

on this armour, I am useful; all is grounded on being in a settled place before God. The blood on the door-post, the Red Sea crossed, Jordan passed, circumcised, and the reproach of Egypt rolled away -- *then* comes conflict in the land; all is founded on redemption.

Be assured we shall meet the wiles of Satan. Our own state and conscience are easily detected if our hearts are simple in the truth. It is not that we are to be learning Satan's wiles, but if our hearts are simple, we shall be more than a match for him. Satan is a good deal cleverer than we are, and wherever redemption is not fully known, there Satan plays his tricks. The moment that redemption is really believed in, all the systems of superstition so prevalent in the world are going. You may have old things lingering, but you will never find a person under the power of superstition who has the consciousness in himself that Christ has died and suffered for *him*. We see wise and learned men going away to ritualism, and the devil behind it all; but the moment redemption is really known, the devil's power is gone. The system of ritualism proceeds on the footing that Christ can have to say to man in the flesh that he is not lost and dead in his sins, and consequently a complete and accomplished redemption is denied. The moment I have my soul established in Christ, this snare of the devil will not prevail. A man may know the truth of the incarnation, and may speak more beautifully of the person of the Lord than even Christians, but all the time be ignorant of redemption. I have the witness of Christ in me; I know Christ. They may try to persuade me that Christ is such and such, but I *know* Him: I have got Him; He dwells in my heart, so that I am not to be turned by such follies as ritualism and the like. The Lord keep us in a constant sense of dependence, in a sense or what He is, dependent on Him every moment, that we may never get out of the presence of God, for when we are out of His presence there is danger.

The Remembrancer 7:181-198.

Notes on Ephesians 6:10-20

... That evil spirits have sway over men, there can be no doubt: the words "The rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:21, 22), and "Ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2), would suffice to prove it; but the truth is proved by passages innumerable besides these.

And the way, too, these enemies act upon man, is shown (Eph. 2:3): "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others." That is, they act *through the lust* of the flesh, leading us to fulfil the desires of the flesh and the mind.

It is a great truth that Satan could get no hold of our blessed Lord, because He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and had a will and purpose to

be obedient in all things. And when led up to be tempted in the wilderness, this was fully evidenced. We, on the contrary, have, besides the new nature, the old one too; and we need to be put on our guard, lest the enemy should act upon it in its deceitful lusts and passions, and so lead us off our high and holy ground of being able to show that we are in the Lord, and have the power of His might.

It may be said: "But in Christendom we have no false Gods, which are deifications of evil human passions." Be it so. Yet this same principle may be present, only a little more artfully covered over. It has been said, that the Papal system is so arranged, that you may be and do anything you please in it, if you will but belong to it. I know not how far this is true; but, certainly, in the variety of its orders and classes, as presented, there does seem a path prepared for all the various conceits and fancies of the fallen human mind. In principle, the thing is dearly done in the Papal system: for the poor, fallen, though blessed, Virgin Mary, is set, by that system, as the person to whose human affections we can appeal -- whose human affections and thoughts sway the Lord Jesus and God. In the patron saints, too, and the position in which a devout Romanist finds himself before them, the same may be seen. And have we not, nearer home, all around us, systems of religion so framed as to shut out the free influence of God's truth, and to hinder and to prevent the Spirit? The national system⁹ is the sanction of this world in every way. Membership with it, and separation from the world, cannot possibly coexist. The most that a member of it can do, is to judge his own heart and mind, and see that inwardly he does not love too much that world which, though it crucified Christ, is an integral part of His church. I know that dissent [from a national church] is upon a narrower, more separative, principle; but, practically, it is based upon the world, and shuts out the truth of God's church, and of the Spirit, and sanctions this present evil world. I do not speak of what these Protestant systems were at the first, when the fresh energy of the Spirit of God was at work; but what they have now practically become in man's hand.

Again: as to the ruling of the darkness of this world; it is said to be under these wicked spirits who are on high [in the heavenlies]. If I look at nations, as contrasted one with another, and at their chief cities, not in the point of Christlessness and Godlessness, in which, as being of this present evil world, they have a common agreement; but, as contrasted one with the other, I seem to learn something which is in accordance with our subject. There are such things as national peculiarities. A mass of Italians, and a mass of French, and a mass of English, would require very different modes of handling to rouse them up, and to work them. And this, not only because of the present differences of their present respective circumstances, but because also of constitutional difference, and difference of tastes.

If there be an evil spirit that watches over martial glory, one can well suppose it to be the one whom the French speak as (the deification of their own pride) "*La gloire*." If there be one evil spirit more than another that watches over and cherishes

9. [The reference is to the Anglican Church.]

commerce, one can well suppose it to be the one of whom the English speak (embodiment of their love of money), as commercial prosperity. Petersburg, Rome, Paris, London, may each have its own distinctive peculiar trait. Each has one most surely; and how are these connected. On the one hand, with the lust of the flesh and mind of the citizens of these places; and, on the other, with distinctive powers of darkness high [in the heavenlies]. The darkness of *the order of the world* in France has been ruled by Glory; and the darkness of the world in England has been ruled by Commercial Prosperity. An idea, or some one that presented an idea, has ruled Russia since the days of Peter the Great, and, perhaps will rule it still onwards [as Communism]; for He that marked, in prophetic history, a sphere for the King of the North, Gog and for Magog, for Tubal and Meshech, is above all the powers of darkness; and the Prince of the kingdom of Persia, who withstood Daniel (Dan. 10:13) has his counterpart in the North; and yet, opposing as may be, he cannot prevent all things subserving God's counsels.

Now, the exhortation to us is to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." To stand upon the defensive, as being in Christ; and, when attacked, to stand fast, to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Now, in order to do this, the first of all things is to have the affections of my heart, and the thoughts of my mind, in the light; so that every thing that rises may be measured and judged ere it be accredited. Observe it: the *issues from the heart* and mind have to be judged. The entire badness of the flesh in itself has been taken for granted; the world has been stamped as the scene the adversary's power; the new man has been created, and all its springs are from above. But as standing down here upon earth [as] the soldiers of the Lord, the issues of our hearts and minds have to be judged.

If I stand fast in the Lord and use the power of his might -- I know where, and what, and who I am as placed, and what manner of life here below it is which becomes such a one. The issues from heart and mind are not to be of the flesh, and according to the world and the spirit of darkness, but of the Holy Spirit and according to the truth. Nothing can guard my heart and mind as a child of God, and a member of Christ, but the indwelling of that truth in my soul, by the Spirit of God, which has made me such.

We see then that we have a conflict -- have to wrestle; that there is methodical order in him against whom we have to wrestle; accusation is his mode of work -- as well as wrestling. Accusation had to be met against Israel in the days of Balaam (Num. 22-24), against Job in his days -- against saints of another class, too (Rev. 12). All that the adversary can find in that which issues from a heavenly member of a risen Christ which is not according to the believer's place in the Lord, and according to the power of His might -- becomes the ground of accusation. The effort on the enemy's part is, to stir up the old man in us, to get us occupied with it, to lead us to act upon it; and to do this, he tries to hide the truth from us, to keep us from it, from living upon it. Our wrestling is to abide in the Lord and in the power of His might. We see, too, that there is a connection between powers of darkness

on high [in the heavenlies] and the order-holders of the darkness of this age. But the darkness of this age is but the sanctioned systematized wickedness of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life -- systematized by certain principalities and powers, and sanctioned by men.

And who but God can cause Christ to dwell thus in our hearts by faith, the center of all our thoughts and desires, the one from whom we have the Spirit abiding, and hidden in whom we are the subjects of the action of the Spirit who worketh in us.

According to the measure which the saint has of the preciousness of this epistle to the Ephesians, will be measure of the importance attached to this walk. The glory and honor of God in the Lord Jesus Christ are deeply concerned in our walk down here. It was, if I may so say, the practical obedience of the Ephesians, which was the open window that let all the flood light about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, shine in. God and the Father, in all the bright counsels and plans about His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and the heavenly bride, never so revealed Himself to a disobedient and gainsaying people. For, while the obedience in us Christians is *the occasion* of receiving fuller light, the goodness of God himself is the alone cause of the revelation of Himself. What a contrast, in this respect, between this epistle, in which the full unhindered play of God's truth and light and love is found, and the epistle to the Corinthians, where fleshly disorder had to be corrected, or the epistle to the Galatians, in writing which Paul's spirit seems to have been straitened in him through the darkness among them, which had led them to grope after another foundation than Christ, and another energy than the Holy Ghost. The testimonies for God of the two masses, that at Ephesus and that among the Galatians, how contrasted! And how contrasted, too, (while each was perfect and gracious in its place), the two letters of Paul to the Ephesians, and Paul to the churches which are in Galatia!

Warfare may, as man speaks, be of two kinds; -- it may be offensive, or it may be defensive merely. In the case of Israel it was offensive; for they had to be aggressive on the flesh and blood that were in the land, to drive them out of the Lord's inheritance. For us the warfare, as here presented at least (in other places, where the question is of carrying the testimony forward and planting the truth in parts where it was not before, it may be looked at in another aspect, but here the warfare), is defensive; we are *to stand fast, to withstand*, and having done all, *to stand*. For it is not for us to take possession by violence of the heavenly places, much less is it for us to think of ejecting thence the wicked spirits: they will be ejected hereafter, as we are told in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation. The Lord, when He has risen up from the right hand of God, where He now sits, when they have overtly shown out their nature and works more fully and more openly than they have as yet, -- the Lord will drive them out and their places [Rev. 12] shall be found no more in the heavens. But now we are the objects of assaults from them, and we must be prepared to resist and to wrestle. The call to us here is not to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. That would suit very well other epistles and places, in which man as a sinner is being treated of; but in this epistle it is the Christian as partaker of the new nature, enjoying it and acting in it, which

is the subject; and, consistently herewith, [it is] not the danger of the flesh of itself breaking loose [that] is treated of, but the danger of assaults upon it, efforts to stir it up, so as to hinder the right and true display of Christ in us, -- efforts by spiritual wickedness on high [in the heavenlies]. That there is that which is common between fallen flesh and blood and these wicked powers has been shown, and may be seen in another way, too, viz., in the different ways in which the evil is met in various epistles. If the evil power of the flesh in itself has to be met, then the cross is thrust before us -- *we* are reckoned to be crucified, dead, and buried, together with Him. But if, on the other hand, as here, the question is of that which ever is on the watch to take occasion of the old nature in us, then the evil principalities, the order-rulers of the darkness of this world; whom Christ has overcome (Col. 2:15), though they are now still found antagonistically agonizing against His glory in us, is referred to. The immense importance of seeing this, may be easily realized by the effects of the revelation to us (in Gen. 3) of a master-mind as the one that ruined man: and by such revelations as are found elsewhere (as in Zech. 3:1, 2; and in Job 1 and 2; Matt. 4 &c.) The discovery that it is not merely man, set loose from God through sin, that is *wandering*, he knows not where, but that there are master-spirits who can play with him, and mislead him by his own lusts and passions -- this discovery puts man's position in quite another light to him. And to us it is known, that these regulators for the present, of wickedness, are all conquered -- and are under the power of Him that conquered. Such a thought helps one to cease from oneself, and to look on high, where they, that deal contemptuously enough down here, are seen in their true light; ¹⁰ seen too, as not so much our enemies as His; and already, though still allowed to show their active opposition to Him and His glory, they are shown there to be already condemned. Oh, that the glory of and the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ lay a little nearer to our hearts, were a little more visible in our minds, how would it simplify ten thousand difficulties, how would it set our hearts free and happy, yet in carefulness and watchfulness too, -- lest His name, whom we love, should be blasphemed through us!

From *The Present Testimony* 1:408-414.

10. As in any failure, such as that of Lot's whole life, of Jacob's wandering, or of the fall of a David, a Solomon, a Job, a Peter, no sound judgment is had until the motive-causes and the occasions are discerned in light: so it is with us now, and the springs of a heavenly saint's danger are therefore set before us. More than this; for we are apprized and made aware of the danger beforehand, that the danger foreseen may be danger avoided.

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

6: The Pretribulation Rapture

Chapter 6.8: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Introduction

It might be well to point out here that in spite of the length of this chapter, the reader should not suppose that it constitutes a full treatment of the subject of the final Antichrist who will be manifested after the pretribulation rapture.

2 Thess. 2:1 speaks of the Lord's coming for His saints: what we call the rapture -- before the opening of Daniel's 70th week. However, it is most important to observe that the subject of 2 Thess. 2:1-12 is not that rapture. That v. 1 speaks of the rapture does not mean that the rapture is the subject of the passage. Paul brought in the rapture at this point to comfort them with contemplation of it, in view of his meeting error which had been brought to them, by which some had tried to convince them that they were in the time of God's judgments. So Paul indicated to them that they could not be in the time of God's judgments because the rapture must precede that time. Thus, he appeals to the truth of that coming, and of our gathering together unto Himself, that they not be shaken in mind because of the falsehood brought to them by the deceivers. It is as if he said, 'In the light of the fact that our Lord is coming to receive you unto Himself, do not allow yourselves to be deceived into thinking that you will be on earth when He is executing judgments on unbelief.'

The rest of the passage takes up the subject of the Antichrist, his appearance, and the order of events connected with the arrival of the day of *the Lord*, as v. 2 should read. The "day of the Lord" refers to that time when the Lord will set up His kingdom (the millennium) and reign, and embraces within its epoch the little time when Satan is loosed (Rev. 20:3). The day of the Lord will begin when Christ comes from heaven as the smiting stone of Dan. 2 to crush the Gentile power depicted by the image, and lasts until the dissolution of the

present heavens and earth, upon which the day of God (the eternal state) begins. See 2 Pet. 3:7-13 in J. N. Darby's translation.

The reason for pointing this out here is because certain translations of v. 1 attempt to word it so that v. 1 appears to state what the subject of the passage is; namely, the rapture. The attempt is to connect the rapture with the posttribulational occurrence of the day of the Lord, thus eliminating the truth of the pretribulation rapture. We will consider v. 1 in detail later. Here, we want to clarify the point before looking at a synopsis of the passage. After that, we will consider each verse in detail.

Synopsis of the Passage

It appears that, due to the persecutions that the Thessalonians were enduring, they thought that the day of the Lord had commenced. In the last article we saw that the apostle had laid the groundwork for the correction of this mistake in chapter 1:6-10 where he pointed out that they would be resting when the Lord was revealed from heaven. Thus they could not be on the earth when the day of the Lord would be introduced by the epiphany. In 2 Thess. 2:1 the apostle appealed to them not to be troubled by the notion that the day of the Lord had arrived. His ground of appeal is Christ's coming for His saints and their consequent gathering together ¹ unto Him. 2 Thess 2:1 does not refer to the day of the Lord. **He did not try to comfort them with the very thing that they feared!** -- namely, the day of the Lord. The rapture will occur before that day and he brought the catching up (see 1 Thess. 4:17) before them as a comfort (v. 1). (Jude presents it as a "mercy," for we will be delivered from this Christ-rejecting world). The Thessalonians had been taught by Paul that Christ would come for them before the events he speaks of here (see 1 Thess. 4 & 5) and he here used that fact as an exhortation, as well as reminding them of their forgetfulness of what he had told them (2 Thess. 2:5).

The day of the Lord will begin with the appearing of the Lord in glory and continue until the dissolution of the present heavens and the earth. The day of the Lord is an epoch ² and begins when the smiting stone (Dan. 2) smites the

1. The interested reader might look at Matt. 18:20 and Heb. 10:25 in connection with our gathering together to Christ in the air.

2. Effort is expended by posttribulationists to show that 2 Thess. 2 proves that the day of the Lord cannot begin with the opening of Daniel's 70th week. Well, obviously it cannot; and those dispensationalists who say otherwise are patently mistaken. On the other hand the posttribulationists gain nothing against pretribulationism by showing this. I point out that writers from the 1800s like J. N. Darby, W. Kelly, W. Trotter, T. B. Baines, Ed. Dennett, etc., held that
(continued...)

image representing the times of the Gentiles.³ The second coming of Christ is one coming with two phases to it, and thus there will be two mighty waves of power: the first at the resurrection and the rapture, the second at the ushering in of the day of the Lord (Rev. 19:11-21). One has to do with the heavenly sphere and the other with the earthly sphere, a matter not surprising when we are aware that God's purpose is to glorify Himself in Christ, in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly -- and to head up all things in the Christ, whether heavenly or earthly, during the millennium (Eph. 1:10).

Furthermore, appealing to prophetic events, Paul says that the day of the Lord could not be present since *the* apostasy had not yet occurred, nor had *the* Lawless One been revealed, and the advent of these must occur before the day of the Lord arrives. The false teaching which threw them into confusion was the occasion of the Spirit of God bringing out, in an inspired writing, teaching meant also for us. Numbers of Paul's letters were occasioned by meeting evil and error and thus we have these for our profit today.

The mystery of iniquity (i.e., the self-will, the lawlessness, of man at work in the church) was already working in Paul's day but the open manifestation of the results of this working of iniquity had not yet culminated in the apostasy and the acceptance of the Antichrist, the Lawless One. This manifestation could not occur while a hindrance remained and while the Hinderer was here. Thus the hindrance and the Hinderer would be removed before the apostasy began (removal of the Spirit of God in the same sense in which He came at Pentecost) and before the manifestation of the Lawless One. Summarizing this passage, J. N. Darby wrote:

There is a falling away [*the* apostasy] down here, as there is, on the other hand, a gathering together of the saints to Christ in heaven [v. 1]. The heavenly church takes its own place as gathered up to its Head; and the falling away or apostasy takes place upon earth. The result is the manifestation of the man of sin, the son of perdition. The removal of the church, and the apostasy give room to this. In this chapter it cannot be questioned, that a religious character also is displayed, however wicked and audacious. Secular power is not spoken of, but first its impious [v. 4] and then its seductive [vv. 9, 10] character. He is characterized as the man of sin, and the wicked one, whom a mystery of iniquity has preceded.

2(...continued)

the day of the Lord begins after Daniel's 70th week. A discussion of the day of the Lord occupies chapter 5 in my *Future Events*, available from the publisher.

3. What the image represents is smitten at the appearing of Christ in glory. Presently we live in *man's day* (1 Cor. 4:3), an epoch of time. Man's day will continue until Gentile rule is put down which, obviously, will occur at the appearing of Christ in glory. Then will begin *the day of the Lord*, another epoch, which runs on until the *day of God* (2 Pet. 3:12), the eternal state, begins with the new heavens and earth.

It does not appear to me that verse 4 gives another idea, or that of earthly secular power; it is moral opposition to God and insult to Him. It is true that the beast of Revelation 17 [the same as Rev. 13:1-10] goes into perdition; but this does not alter the character here given: the two [beasts of Rev. 13] (Rev. 19)⁴ perish together. The falling away, it is evident, refers to that which had the name of Christianity, though it goes much farther than its mere rejection. There is an active energizing personage bearing the title of Judas [the son of perdition; John 17:12], who resists, opposes, and exalts himself against all called God or which is an object of veneration. He is an ardent antagonist of divine authority, and sets up as Adam to be God, and, more, he wills our ruin.

I think I see, then, in verses 3, 4, the moral character of this wicked power acting upon others, and showing the energy of his will in hostility, and setting aside of God, rather than the object of deference or honor on the throne. He is what fills the scene morally when the apostasy takes place -- the active energy which works in man. It is the man of sin -- man against God, and pretending to be, or showing himself as though he were God upon earth: the contrast of Christ, who was so, but was the man of obedience, righteousness, and humiliation, submitting to everything when it was not disobedience to God His Father. The man of sin was a thing to be revealed. Meanwhile a certain mystery of iniquity was at work -- the principles of lawlessness -- of the independence of man, and the acting of his will, but in mystery only. There was a restrainer until He should be taken out of the way, and then the lawless one would be revealed. But if he was the lawless self-exaltation of man's will, that was not all. His presence or coming was according to the energy of Satan; and if we have found in the second beast [Rev. 13:11-18] the terrible analogy with the case of Elias, but in deception, here we have perhaps the yet more frightful one with Christ. The terms by which are expressed what he does in falsehood [vv. 9, 10] are the same as those by which, in the Acts, Christ has been shown a man approved of God (Acts 2: 22); and as Christ was in truth of righteousness to such as should be saved, so he [the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the second beast of Rev. 13] in deceit of unrighteousness to those who were given up to be lost, 2 Cor. 2:15. The true Christ will come from heaven, a heavenly Man: this an earthly man, with all the pretensions which could belong to, and the proofs, to those given up to judgment, which would demonstrate his title to glory, but in an entirely earthly way and self-exaltation. God sends an energy of error that they should believe a lie.

It is evident that the point of departure is Christendom, naturally so as writing to Christians, but the manifestation not connected with it; because, though no date is given for that, the saints are viewed as gathered up, the rest as apostate. This (though the character be blasphemous man) would throw it, in its deceptions most especially, among the Jews: though it is here as man, and as to men who have not received the love of the truth when it was there, but have had pleasure in iniquity. Whatever partial moral accomplishment (for there were even early many Antichrists [1 John 2:18]) this may have had in Christendom, taking the apostasy in its full sense, the temple of God acquires a [literal]

4. [The false prophet is the second beast of Rev. 13; he speaks for the first beast as his prophet, or mouth.]

character quite evident.⁵

Such is the general bearing of the passage and we will now consider specific matters. The following examination of 2 Thess. 2:1-12 will be rather long since some have sought to make a strong case against dispensational truth using it. Variant readings, misuse of words, mistranslations, and what not, have been used by opposers to try to get the passage to say what it does not say.⁶

By the Coming of . . . and Our Gathering Together Unto Him (v. 1)

**Now we beg you, brethren, by [huper] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
and our gathering together to him . . . (v. 1).**

2 Thess. 2:1 has been incorrectly translated in the *New International Version* (as in some others also):

Concerning [huper] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him . . .

Some use "touching" instead of "concerning" for the word *huper*. The *New American Standard Bible* uses the words "with regard to." The point here is whether Paul is beseeching the saints "concerning" the rapture, or rather "by" the rapture -- a great difference indeed. These wrong words would indicate that the subject of 2 Thess. 2:1-12 is the Lord's coming for us and our consequent being gathered to Him. That changes the meaning of the passage. Verse 1 does not state what the subject is; rather, it is an appeal based on a rapture that is prior to the day of the Lord, the point being that since they would have been gathered to Him, that day could not have already arrived. John Eadie, who sanctions the wrong translation, remarked:

. . . and it would be strange . . . that the apostle should adjure them by the very thing that he was about to open up to them.⁷

Agreed; it *would* be strange. The fact is that the apostle *did* remind them; and by reminding them of something he had told them in the *first* epistle (1 Thess. 4). And now he was not opening up to them the rapture, but rather

5. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 5:219-221.

6. For information concerning the translation of the passage, and an example of the effect of posttribulationism on the mind of B. W. Newton, who was one of the earliest of the modern posttribulationists, read "Examination of Statements Made in 'Thoughts on the Apocalypse'," *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 8:184-189.

7. (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Thessalonians*, Baker: Grand Rapids, p. 254, (1979) [1877].

tribulation events following the rapture and preceding the day of the Lord. The strangeness J. Eadie mentioned is accepted because so many such commentators hold erroneous eschatological schemes that cloud these truths.⁸

Long ago J. N. Darby wrote quite emphatically on this very point:

It is true that *hyper* in certain cases signifies "as concerning"; that is, it has almost the sense of *peri*. But it is unquestionable that, when it is employed with words of prayer and request, its regular meaning in Greek is "by," "for the sake of." No person who is at all familiar with the Greek tongue, or who is willing to take the trouble of using a good dictionary, would deny it.⁹ Here then is the passage in its true force: "Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as [if it were] by us, as that the day of the Lord is present. Let not any one deceive you in any manner, because [it will not be] unless the apostasy have first come and the man of sin have been revealed," etc. That is, the apostle gives two reasons why they should not believe that the day of the Lord was come: first, the rapture of the saints is not yet; and secondly, the object of the judgment is not revealed.¹⁰

It is important, then, to understand the correct translation of v. 1. W. Kelly dealt with it at length in the *Bible Treasury* from which I have quoted in the note below for interested readers who do not have the *Bible Treasury*.¹¹

8. The amillennialist, O. T. Allis, wrote:

... if they were in terror of the impending tribulation, we might expect that Paul would have reassured them by distinguishing very carefully between the rapture and the day of the Lord, if he really made this distinction, and would have told them that the day of the Lord did not concern them at all, because they might be raptured at any moment and would certainly be raptured before that day and the great tribulation which it would bring with it. But Paul says not a word about the any moment rapture (*Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 197 (1945)).

Why do you suppose he could not recognize the rapture in v. 1 as preceding the day of the Lord?

9. Another amillennialist, Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, p. 214, note 1 (1964) does assert the equivalency here to *peri*. No doubt he wants the subject of the passage to be about the rapture.

10. *Collected Writings* 11:67; see also p. 113, 114, 344; 2:331. See W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury* 12:46, 63; *ibid.*, New Series 1:367; 4:249; 10:232 (this answers A. Reese, *op. cit.*, p. 177); W. Kelly, *The Second coming and Kingdom*. . . , p. 212. The wrong translation is used even by those who accept the truth of the pretribulation rapture: R. L. Thomas, "2 Thessalonians", in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, pp. 317, 319 (1981); C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, Pickering and Ingliss: London, p. 242 (1959); D. Edmund Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles*, Moody Press: Chicago, p. 300 (1971).

11. Here are the two opening verses of the chapter according to the ascertained ancient text, and correctly translated; for in the Text. Rec. and in the A. V. there are faults in both respects: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by (or, for the sake of) the presence (or, coming) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in (or, from) your
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11(...continued)

mind, nor yet troubled, either by Spirit, or by word, or by letter as through (or, from) us, as that the day of the Lord is present." As in v. 1 there is but one article binding together our gathering and the Lord's presence, the second "by" in the A. V. must therefore disappear. Again, in the last clause of v. 2 "Christ" is read only in inferior copies and versions; "Lord" is incontestable diplomatically, and alone expresses the true aim. Lesser points we may dismiss.

But there remain the grave questions of rendering *υπερ* in the first verse, and *ενεσθηκεν* in the second. As to the first, the connection with a verb of entreaty has not been adequately considered, and that connection the peculiar one of a motive from joy and hope to counteract a false alarm. As there is no other instance in the N. T., it is not surprising that the rendering "by" or some equivalent should be unexampled there. So therefore all our older English translations, with the Vulgate and most of the other ancient versions. Wahl in his N.T. Lexicon refers to 2 Cor. 5:20 as another instance of "by"; but the context there favors "for," in the sense of "on behalf of" Christ. Here such a force yields not this sense exactly, but "by" or "for the sake of," as it appears to me for good reason.

As to the true and only legitimate meaning of *ενεσθηκεν*, there ought to be no doubt. It was a word every day in Attic use, as we may gather from the Clouds (779) of Aristophanes, where it is said of a suit going on, and not merely close at hand.

Can anything be more decisive, outside the N. T., than the technical phrase of *ο ενεστως χρονος* among grammarians for the "present tense"? Indeed it is the one and only meaning of the word in the known authors of Greece. Thucydides does not employ this form of the word; but it occurs in Herodotus, Xenophon, Polybius, and, Dion Cassius; and in no sense save as actually existing, or present. It is the same with the orators Isaeus and Isocrates, Aeschines and Demosthenes. So again the philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, employ it, but in this sense only. It would be easy to add more, but is not this enough? Where is a single instance of "imminent"? It does not occur in the Septuagint save in the Apocryphal writings; but there it occurs in 3 Esdras 9:6; 1 Macc. 12:44; Macc. 3:17; 12:3, in all which it can only mean "actually there," nowhere "imminent."

(There is a passage in the Epistle of Barnabas, cap. i § 7, so decisive of the question that it may interest the reader. *εγνωρισεν γαρ ημιν ο δεσποτης δια των προφητων τα παρεληλυθота και τα ενεστωτα και των μελλοντων δους απαρχας ημιν*. Here we have *τα ενεστωτα* between the past and the future definitely appropriated and distinguished by one of the earliest writers after the apostles. But how is this to be if it could by any possibility mean also what was future, however Apostolic Fathers so called, and others later still, we had only the old is thus rendered *Propalavit enim Dominus per Prophetas quae praeterierunt, et futurorum dedit nobis initia scire*. For some reason, or through carelessness, the translator omitted "things present," which the editor explained in a loose bungling way. Tischendorf discovered at the end of the Sinaitic MS. the missing Greek, which enables us to judge the Gebhart, Harnack, and Zahn abroad, and others at home, have availed themselves to give the full text. But a similar phrase, with *ενεστωτα* for present things invariably, occurs in Theoph. ad Autol. I. 14; II. 39 and in Hippol. de Chr. et Antichr. 2 (Lagarde, 1858). Abp. Wake was therefore not justified in rendering "instantia" "those things which are near to come" (Barn. Ep. iv.); it means "present things" (or N.T. truths), as in the Vulgate of Rom. 8:38 1 Cor. 3:22, &c. In short, it is so used classically. The Latin word was more vague).

But say Webster and Wilkinson (G. T.), *ενεσθηκε* everywhere else in N. T. means "present"; here, however, it has doubtless (!) the more ordinary classical meaning, "imminence," to be close at hand." Now not only "the more ordinary" but the invariable classical meaning perfectly agrees with its uniform sense in the N.T. The instances adduced by Liddell and Scott (even in the seventh edition of their Greek Lexicon) for "pending" or "instant" really mean what was actually begun or present. And their vacillation in giving both for the same quotation is just like Bengel's, who here says, "great nearness is signified by this word; for *ενεστως* is present!" Exactly so; and therefore great nearness is *not* meant. They seem all to have been misled by

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Here in the text I cite W. Kelly's conclusion of this matter.

I cannot but think therefore that, while the Authorized Version in substance gives the sense, the Revisers [of the 1881 Revised Version] have missed it completely, and substituted a meaning which tends to obscure and falsify the passage. The adjectival force "by" with a verb of entreaty is known from the earliest extant remains of classical Greek; and none can deny that the force of a motive or a plea ("for the sake of" or "for") abode to the last, and is nowhere more usual than in the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament. So rendered, the phrase runs consistently, and the argument or ground of entreaty yields meaning in perfect accordance with the verse that follows, and the entire paragraph. The blessed hope of being caught up to the Lord at His coming or presence is a most intelligible preservative against the false and disquieting rumor that the day of His judgment of the earth had come. Everyone can understand when it is brought before him, that such a consolatory and transporting prospect, if always in view, is calculated to deliver from the agitation and fear created by the delusive cry that the terrible day of the Lord was there. And so the apostle conjures them, not by "the day of the Lord" concerning *which* he was about to teach them (as he had been laying a ground for it in the previous chapter), but by "His presence" to gather them to Himself above, which was full of joyful associations. The subject-matter he treats of is that "day", and very full of terror, especially when misrepresented by some at Thessalonica as actually set in.

But where is the propriety of the supposition that the apostle beseeches them to *touching* the coming of the Lord and the gathering of the saints unto Him? The error was about "the day of the Lord."

Did not the Revisers, like others who have thus translated the clause, assume that the presence (or coming) of our Lord is identical with His day, and render *υπερ* here "touching," either because they quite identified these events in their thoughts, or because they had no distinct notion of the context? Now if the coming of the Lord be treated as the same as His day, what is the sense of beseeching them touching the same matter as is denied to be then present? If the day of the Lord be a source of disquiet and awful anxiety, nothing can be more appropriate than to beg them, for the sake of their most longed-for blessing in hope, not to be troubled by the false teaching that the dreaded epoch was come. The two objects are contrasted as in 1 Thess. 4, 5.

Thus, it is quite incorrect that "the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto him" *is* the subject-matter either before or after the entreaty in the verses before us. The reader has only to examine the preceding chapter 1 in order to be satisfied that the apostle has been laying bare the character of the day of the Lord, when (not the hope of the saints shall be realized, but) the righteous judgment of God shall be manifested. It is for this last they are here exhorted to wait, in patience and faith enduring all present persecution and affliction; for then are the glorified saints to reign with Christ in the kingdom of God, for which they were yet suffering. Then, and not before, will God recompense affliction to those that afflict the saints, and to the affiliated saints rest with Paul and his fellow-laborers. Neither will be when the saints are caught up to heaven, but when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with the angels of His power, rendering vengeance to those that know not God, and to those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. For then the day will have come for His and their

11(...continued)

taking for granted that here "imminent" must be intended to make any tolerable sense.

W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:246-248. See also the footnote on p. 249.

enemies to suffer as punishment everlasting destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come, not to translate His saints to the Father's house, but, to be glorified in them, and to be marvelled at in all those that believed, *in that day*.

Such is the real matter in hand: not in a single phrase is it the coming of the Lord to have us changed into His glorious likeness and in the Father's presence; but our appearing with Him in glory to the confusion of His adversaries overthrown before the wondering world, the day of righteous award for both to God's glory. Hence, if the apostle had been beseeching the saints "touching" the subject in discussion, and as to which they needed rectification, it ought to have been the day of the Lord and of our reigning in the kingdom with Him. Those who so render appear to have confounded "the coming" with "the day" of the Lord; whereas the one is the comforting hope against the fear of the other.¹²

W. Kelly commented on the meaning of v. 1 thus,

The moment He comes all that are His instantly rise in a changed or glorified state to meet Him on high, and these two events are bound up together in the one phrase. Thus the force of the first verse is this: We beseech you by your blessed hope, by that which is full of comfort and joy -- His presence to gather you to Himself on high -- do not be alarmed by the false rumor that the day of the Lord has already come. It has not come, and it cannot come until certain terrible evils are accomplished, which are future.

Now, you must carefully notice that the Apostle does not say that the Lord cannot come first. That "day" it was on which they were so entirely mistaken. To use a vulgar phrase, the cart was put before the horse. That is to say, they put the day of the Lord before the coming of the Lord, whereas the Apostle implies that the true relation of these events is the Lord's coming first of all, not to be occupied with His enemies, but to assemble His saints in His presence. He has a much nearer object. He has a loved object. The first thing the Lord does when He comes from heaven is instantly to gather to Himself all that are waiting for Him. We must always bear in mind that all children of God are supposed to wait for Him. Don't allow yourselves the thought that persons who may be somewhat unenlightened about it do not wait for the coming of the Lord. The truth of it is, that all saints do so more or less, though some of them have got erroneous notions. Some suppose that there must be intervals and terrible events between the present and the coming of the Lord; others suppose that there will be a long period of blessedness. They are both untrue.¹³

HAROLD CAMPING VERSUS THE WORD OF GOD: A REVIEW OF HIS BOOK 1994?

INTRODUCTION

Harold Camping is the founder and general manager of Family Radio, a group

12. *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, pp. 104-107.

13. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 12:47. See also 10:284.
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of radio stations which broadcasts Christian music and religious programming. He is a prominent teacher on Family Radio. He also hosts a live call-in program and has written a number of books. Doctrinally, he is considered to be Reformed and Calvinistic, holding to the teaching commonly known as "Covenant Theology." Some prominent aspects of his teaching are amillennialism (no future millennium) and antidispenationalism (no radical distinction between Israel and the Church, nor law and grace). In 1992, he published the book *1994?*, in which he outlines his prophetic views.

Briefly stated, he teaches that Christ will probably come between September 6-27, 1994 (p. 531). In accordance with amillennial theology, that would mean the end of the world. This is computed several ways, applying arithmetic to various Biblical dates and numbers. Camping has affected quite a few people with his teaching. At least two other authors have written books echoing his views. They are Bernard Pyron's *Cultural Captivity at the End of the World* and Bruno Kolberg's *The Final Tribulation . . . Days of Vengeance*. B. Kolberg claims to have come to the date 1994 independently of Camping (p. 252 of his book). The purpose of this article is to warn believers about this teaching, and to help awaken any who have imbibed this teaching.

A SYNOPSIS OF CAMPING'S PROPHETIC VIEWS

Camping holds that Satan was bound at the Cross. This ushered in the millennium, starting at Pentecost. The millennium is the gospel age. The gospel age continued until May 21, 1988, the day before Pentecost (p. 515). At this time Satan, the Man of Sin, is loosed. Here the 2300 days (see Dan. 8:14) of the Final Tribulation begins. The chief characteristic of the final tribulation is not physical persecution (p. 191), but rather the true believers being kicked out of apostate churches (to Camping "kicked out" = "killed" -- p. 198)! Camping teaches the Final Tribulation ends September 6, 1994. Christ will **return during September 6-27**. This will usher in the Judgment Day. His system involves no future Antichrist, denies the futurity of Daniel's 70th week, denies the pretribulation rapture, and has no place for the Jewish people in prophecy (except, quite curiously in the budding of the fig tree -- p. 435).

Having described Camping's system, let us demonstrate his utter disregard for the Word of God, his recklessness and inconsistency.

(1) Camping Says Satan is the Man of Sin. On page 52 of *1994?* we read:

. . . Satan will operate as the Man of Sin." But 2 Thess. 2:9 reads "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan . . .

It is plain that Scripture teaches that the Man of Sin is Satanically empowered, not Satan himself as Camping teaches. Will you follow the Word of God, or Harold Camping?

(2) Camping Teaches that Satan was Bound at the Cross. On p. 101 of 1994? he writes:

As a result of the cross, there was a fantastic change in Satan's relationship to the world. God's plan was to save people from every nation, and Satan was bound to the degree that he could do nothing to frustrate the plan.

Look at what Kolberg says on page 73, of *The Final Tribulation*:

Satan . . . cannot prevent God's plan to save the elect. It is in this crucial area Satan is powerless, or "bound."

But consider the following:

- (a) Could Satan ever have stopped God from saving any of his elect now or before the cross?? We expect these reasonings from an Arminian, but from a Calvinist? Even under the Jewish economy, we see evidence of the work of God among those who were not Israel. Consider Rahab. Consider Nineveh. These are examples of God working sovereignly to accomplish his purposes.
- (b) The reason for the spread of the Gospel in this age, versus the lack of "gospel effort" under Israel, has nothing to do with Satan's binding, but rather with the unique purposes for Israel and the Church -- purposes which are rejected by Camping.
- (c) Has Camping considered the incredible spiritual darkness manifested in the period from the post-apostolic era until the Reformation? Was the gospel widespread during those times? Was it not during those times that Christendom adopted pagan superstitions which developed into the Romanist system? True, there were lights during this time (e.g., Wycliffe), but they were a persecuted remnant. Certainly the dark ages were characterized by a lack of widespread gospel witness. Is Camping ignorant of church history -- or ignoring it? Only a Papist (or perhaps Eastern "Orthodox") would speak well of the middle ages.

On p. 102 of 1994? we read:

The binding of Satan was not total.

But God's Word reads in Revelation 20:1-3:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on... Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled . . ."

When Satan is bound, it will be total: he will be shut up and **sealed**. Reader, who do you believe? the Bible, or Harold Camping? Consider how Satan is described presently:

- (a) "... the prince of the power of the air . . ." (Eph 2:2). Not bound, is he?
- (b) "... the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not . . ." (2 Cor 4:4). Again, Satan is active in blinding men. Not bound, is he?
- (c) "... the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8). Again, Satan is active, not bound.
- (d) "And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:26).

Also, consider Ephesians 6:11, 12.

(3) Camping Teaches that Satan was Loosed in May 1988. On p. 515 of *1994?* we read:

Then we came to the year 1987. Pentecost Day reaffirms that God will continue to send forth the gospel into the world. But when the time of Pentecost came in 1988 there was no such plan. We learned that 1988 was the year the final tribulation was to begin. And so in a real sense, the day of Pentecost, which should have taken place on the Jerusalem date of May 22, did not take place because the final tribulation, the falling away, the loosing of Satan, had begun.

There are two observations that need to be made:

- (a) There has been no radical change in the amount, character, fidelity or frequency of gospel preaching since May 22, 1988. Nor has there been a markedly reduced response to the gospel since May of 1988. That there is departure from truth everywhere, I readily admit. Still, the gospel is being preached, and people are being saved. There was far less preaching of the true gospel from 550 AD to 1500 AD than there is now.
- (b) There has been no radically different manifestation of the operations of Satan since May 1988.

I challenge Camping and his supporters to disprove the above assertions.

Observe that the loosing of Satan removes the restraint of the binding of Satan. It follows from the comments of Camping and Kohlberg, concerning what the binding means, that since 1988 Satan can now frustrate "God's plan to save people from every nation," and also he can "prevent God's plan to save the elect."

(4) Covenant = Gospel ??? On p. 74, Camping writes:

The word "covenant" is actually a synonym for the "Gospel."

This is incredibly reckless. They are not synonyms.

(5) Is Camping a Date Setter? I have been told that Camping is not really a "date-setter." Two reasons are given:

- (a) He does not state an actual date when Christ will return. Rather, he specifies a period of time (i.e., 6-27 September 1994). The argument is that you can't know the day or hour, but it is acceptable to determine possible periods.

Objection: This is a logical fallacy. If you reach the boundary date (i.e., 27 September), then you *will* know the day. Therefore, you cannot reach the boundary. Thus, it is impossible to set up boundaries for the second coming.

- (b) Camping isn't saying Christ will come for certain, just probably. On page 525 he writes:

The last day will **probably** not take place later than September 27, which is the eighth day of the Feast of the Tabernacles of 1994.

Objection: Probability may apply to whether a coin will land heads or tails, but it certainly has no place in divine things. Christ will *certainly* come at the prescribed time, the elect will *certainly* be saved. The Christian has no business in writing books, or teaching probable events -- there are none.

Harold Camping is **certainly** wrong.

It should be noted that Camping perverts the sense of Mark 13:32 "of that day and hour knoweth no man" to mean "that no one who is to experience Judgment Day has yet experienced Judgment Day" (p. 318). No comment is necessary.

(6) Ridiculous Notions. I will not rigorously prove that the following teachings are ridiculous. If you have any doubt, "search and see."

- (a) It is ridiculous to consider the 69 1/2 weeks of Daniel to be literal years, but the last 1/2 week to represent from the cross to the Judgment Day, as Camping teaches on p. 403.
- (b) It is ridiculous to assert that the two witnesses are the church because Christ sent out the 70 two by two (p. 444).
- (c) It is ridiculous to assert that "one cannot know who else is saved" as Camping asserts (p. 86).
- (d) It is ridiculous to consider that the 21 days mentioned in Dan. 10

represent 2100 years as Camping teaches (p. 350).

- (e) It is ridiculous to consider the 390 days mentioned in Ezek. 4 represent 3900 years as Camping teaches (page 452).
- (f) It is ridiculous to teach that the 3 1/2 days of Rev. 11:11 are representative of the Final Tribulation (p. 233).
- (g) It is ridiculous to believe that the "hour of temptation" (Rev. 3:10) is "Judgment Day." But this does not stop him (p. 219).
- (h) It is especially ridiculous that Camping teaches that the 42 months of Rev. 11:2 is distinct from the 1260 days of Rev. 11:3, and that neither period is literal. See p. 235.
- (i) It is wrong to teach that every believer's death is the coming of Christ in any sense (p. 318).
- (j) It is serious error to teach "soul sleep" of the lost, as Camping does on p. 319.

Many more items could be selected, but if one cannot discern Camping's errors from the above, only God can deliver them.

(7) Conclusions. Camping is a unique date-setter in that he is amillennial. It seems that in recent times most date setters have been premillennial. There have been significant date setting schemes for 1981, 1984, 1988, 1989 and 1992 -- all elaborate, all wrong. There doubtless will be more to come. But what will the date-setter do, when he is found wrong? There are four possibilities:

- (a) He can come up with a new date. William Miller did this when his date of 1843 failed. He came up with 1844. Failed again!
- (b) He can reinterpret the meaning of the date. The Seventh-day Adventists reinterpreted the failure of 1844 to be Christ going into the "Holy of Holies," and the beginning of Investigative Judgment. The Russellites reinterpreted the failure of their prophecy regarding 1914 as being the invisible presence of Christ.
- (c) He can blame God for the failure. "Let God be true and every man a liar."
- (d) He can repent.

The Lord Jesus could return for his own before September 27, 1994. But if he does, it will be in spite of Harold Camping's teaching!

If the Lord Jesus does not return by September 27, what will Harold Camping do? We will see. And if you, dear reader, follow H. Camping, will it take his failure to bring you to repentance for following a false prophet?

(Continued on inside of front cover)

F. Marotta

The Ruin of the Church, Eldership, and Ministry by Gift

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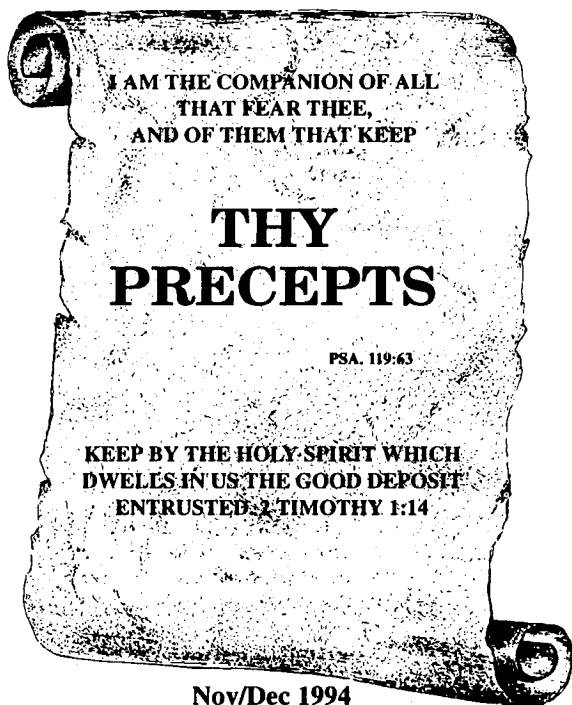
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The Holiness of Christian Fellowship

Appendix 1:

An Open Communion Denies that Association with Evil Leavens

And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, shall be unclean (Num. 19:15).

We have pointed out before that the idea of independency of assemblies is usually interlocked with the denial that evil associations defile (although the reverse is not necessarily true). Hence H. P. Barker wrote:

A plea often urged against the independence of assemblies is that discipline is thereby rendered impossible. We are reminded that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and therefore every act of "binding" by any assembly must be endorsed by every other. It is a sufficient reply to this to point out that no Exclusive meeting recognizes the discipline of every assembly, but only that of certain ones. They pick and choose as it suits them. Nor do they attach the same importance to "loosing" as they do to "binding." Collective forgiveness has no place in their system. Worldwide division is the result.¹

But to speak of being "gathered on the ground of the one Body," and to invoke this great truth in order to secure unity of discipline, is to go outside the bounds of Scripture.²

We may well wonder at such a crass setting aside of Matt. 18:18 and at such a begging of the question (characteristic of his paper). His "sufficient reply" is no reply whatsoever except that it exposes his rejection of Matt. 18:18. To him, one assembly may excommunicate a person with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:4), but although the action is bound in heaven, it is not binding on other assemblies! What this amounts to is that Corinth may excommunicate a wicked person but that action is not binding on Ephesus. If Ephesus received him, knowing he was excommunicated, this would not affect their position as gathered together to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ

1. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 17.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

may, by the assembly, put a wicked person out at Corinth; but the same Lord Jesus Christ may, by the assembly, receive that wicked person at Ephesus. Is not this the true import of this unholy notion? Of course it is! It may be said that to express fellowship Ephesus "ought" not to receive an excommunicated person, but in this system there is not really any effect upon Ephesus. Such a procedure would not leaven the saints at Ephesus; and if persisted in, such a course would not change their status as gathered to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ according to this theory. The power of the false theory of independency of assemblies is seen in how it blinds the mind to this. This is the deplorable and unholy result of these views. Let the reader be aware that this view of the church, and this view of leaven, are connected; and must both be rejected. His alleged alternate of "confederacy" is a myth. Both independency and confederacy are false.

The grand truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ was in the midst of His gathered saints in Corinth, and everywhere else at that time, and caused those gathered together on the basis that **THERE IS ONE BODY** to acknowledge as bound what He Himself caused the assembly at Corinth to bind. The same is true of loosings (of which I have experienced practically the same number as with bindings, concerning collective forgiveness, thank God). To reject such action is to reject the action of Christ in the midst. It denies the assembly as gathered together to Christ and is the willfulness of independent flesh.

H. P. Barker's comment about Num. 19:15 is this:

To spend time alone with Him in prayer and worship, and to gather fresh thoughts of Him and His beloved Son by meditation on the Scriptures, is the way to get a covering for our souls that will protect us from contamination.³

Rather, the way to cover the vessel to prohibit the entry of defilement is to take positive action in resisting defilement in accordance with scripture. The scriptural and prayerful application of the doctrine that evil associations defile is the covering. This the followers of Bethesda do not do. Let no one be duped by extenuations and palliations, and clever use of and definitions of "intercommunion" by the followers of independency and rejectors of the scripture teaching that evil associations defile.

The following quotations set forth the denial that evil associations defile, traced only briefly (from an abundance of evidence) from just before the Bethesda division until the present. A letter signed by 10 brethren from Bethesda says:

3. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 22.
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Even supposing that those who inquired into the matter had come to the same conclusion, touching the amount of positive error therein contained, this would not have guided us in our decision respecting individuals coming from Plymouth. For supposing the author of the tracts were fundamentally heretical, this would not warrant us in rejecting those who came from under his teaching, until we were satisfied that they had understood and imbibed views essentially subversive of foundation truth; especially as those meeting at Ebrington Street, Plymouth, last January, put forth a statement, disclaiming the errors charged against the tracts [July 3, 1848].⁴

G. H. Lang wrote:

Thirty-five years later, in a letter dated from Bristol, Dec. 19th, 1883, Mr. James Wright [successor and son-in-law of G. Muller of Bethesda] reaffirmed this [*Letter of the Ten*, para.6] by saying, "the ground upon which we receive to the Lord's table is soundness in the faith and consistency of life of the individual believer. We should not refuse to receive one who we had reason to believe was perfectly sound in the faith and consistent in life merely because he, or she, was in fellowship with a body of Christians who would allow Mr. Newton to minister among them . . ."⁵

We see it alleged here that a person who is in fellowship with such an one as the blasphemer against Christ, Mr. Newton,⁶ is "consistent in life"! Notice also the palliation of the evil association in the use of the word "merely." W. Hoste was very candid when he wrote:

. . . we totally reject the collateral theory of defilement.⁷

Here is another denial:

In this connection we must be careful to avoid "circles of fellowship" and the old exclusive doctrine of endless defilement." [But see W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury* 12:143; and *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:219, 222, 224.] Thus a man might be a born-again Christian and a member of a modernist church, without really condoning false doctrine.⁸

W. Kelly wrote:

That it does abide is plain from J. R. C.'s [Caldwell, editor of *The Witness*]

4. W. Trotter, *The Origin of (so-called) Open Brethrenism*, p. 59.

5. *The Local Assembly*, p. 10, (1929).

6. I have amply documented B. W. Newton's blasphemous teachings alleging Christ's circumstantial distance from God in my *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2., and showing that he continued to teach this blasphemy for years after the Bethesda division.

7. *Rejudging the Question*, p. 4.

8. R. E. Harlow, in *The Corporate Christian Testimony of Believers in the Assemblies of North America*, p. 15, (1958).

Exclusivism (Glasgow, 1882); who, though wholly unknown to me, is reported to be as sober and conscientious a representative as could be desired. Here we have the error as lively as ever. 1 Cor. 5:6 is perverted (p. 8) just as of old. He mocks the idea that the whole Corinthian church was leavened, and seems to see absurdity, if so, in calling upon it to purge out the leaven. Thus does he convict himself, and his party, (for in this they have always been alike), of guilty opposition to the word of the Lord. It was exactly because they were as a whole leavened by the little leaven allowed in their midst, that the apostle commanded them to purge out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, "even as ye are unleavened." THIS is their standing in and by Christ; and, because they are thus unleavened before God, they must purge the leaven out; for it leavens, not the one offender only, but the whole lump. The reasoning of Mr. C. is wholly false, but it betrays the unholy principle common to them all. It is a question, not of every individual in the Corinthian church becoming incestuous, etc., which is truly absurd, but of the whole assembly being defiled by the evil they knew and did not judge. Hence the restoration was, not merely through discipline nor only self-judgment of the wicked person, but by a deep work in the assembly also: "in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor. 7:11). O. B. are thus fundamentally at fault. Their distinctive difference is corruption in principle now, as nearly fifty years ago.⁹

Another from the Open Brethren (O. B.) said:

It also follows, a fortiori, that meetings of believers cannot be defiled by the allowance of false teaching in them.¹⁰

E. K. Groves (son of A. N. Groves) told us about the discipline he learned at the time he was among exclusives:

The discipline I had learned to hold was, not only to avoid those whose walk was evil, and doctrine unscriptural, but equally to renounce fellowship with those whose walk was blameless and doctrine pure, if these transgressed in holding such fellowship.¹¹

2 John 10 says, "he who greets him partakes in his wicked works." E. K. Groves said, "whose walk was blameless." Which is right? the Apostle John or E. K. Groves? A system is in question here, note well. At any rate, he gave up the truth that evil associations leaven, and became a follower of Bethesda.

F. F. Bruce (O. B.) quoted the statement by A. N. Groves:

I would infinitely rather bear with all their evils than separate from their good. and says that this expresses the "open brethren" ideal.¹²

9. *The Doctrine of Christ and Bethesdaism*, pp. 21-22.

10. *The Church of God According to Scripture*, Yapp, Welbeck Street (1861). Quoted in A. C. Ord, *Is There Not a Cause?* p. 25.

11. *Bethesda Family Matters*, p. 163.

12. *Who Are the Brethren?* p. 6. www.presenttruthpublishers.com

Having set aside a basic truth of holiness in associations, these writers speak of such persons as "consistent in life" and "blameless in walk." It is by downgrading purity that they so speak of persons who are in a defiled connection.

H. P. Barker wrote:

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 Peter 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? ¹³

Passing by his gratuitous equation of contending for holiness in associations with quarreling, let the reader note the effect of giving up the truth that evil associations defile. It always ends up with some form of palliation of evil. And here we have him opposing Peter to James, who wrote that the wisdom from above was first pure, then peaceable (James 3:17). So for him, the wisdom from above is first peaceable, then pure.

Is not the meaning of this quotation that as times became more evil in the professing church, purity became less important and that the prime emphasis now 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." Note well the order in Paul's final epistle. 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. Moreover, "as ye wait for these things" that 2 Peter spoke of, and looking for the eternal state where *righteousness dwells*, we are to be *in peace about this contrary, present scene*, but characterized by that which reflects that coming scene of righteousness: "without spot and blameless."

Concerning spots, which represent defilement (as wrinkles represent care), our brother had something to say only two pages previous to his comment on 2 Pet.3:14:

A school teacher once held up before his class a large sheet of white paper with a little black spot on it. He asked the boys: "What do you see?" Not one said,

13. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 26.

"A large sheet of white paper." One and all replied: "A black spot . . . It is like that with Exclusives. They ignore all the white in those from whom they stand frigidly aloof . . ."

Notice that our brother did not expect them to say, "A large sheet of white paper with a black spot." He is not really concerned, for all practical purpose, with spots. His paper conveys the impression that all division is sin. Separation from evil to the Lord is not discerned. All is lumped together by him, under frigidity. Now, scripture wants us to HATE spots, though indifferentism would, for all practical purpose, counsel otherwise.

There is an interesting story (concerning, probably, J. N. Darby,) in this regard:

Many years ago an honored servant of Christ was engaged with a few brethren in some important translation, which the Lord had laid on his and their hearts, and at which they assisted him in their little measure. One morning, on beginning their work, he noticed a little spot of ink in his book. He took out his penknife and, whilst erasing with the greatest care the little blot, so that hardly a trace of it could be discerned, said, as if speaking to himself, rather than to those with him: "I hate spots." The writer of these lines, who was one of them, never forgot the lesson conveyed, though perhaps never intended, by those three words.¹⁴

"Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). Spots in scripture denote spiritual defilement.

N. Noel wrote:

Not only does Mr. Barker labor to break down the walls, but he condemns Nehemiah for having rebuilt the wall, and publishes it in an O. B. magazine, in October 29 1935, and says:

... in connection with the rebuilding of the wall, the initiative was taken by Nehemiah. (?) It does not appear that he was commanded or sent of God for this purpose (?) . . . Christians need to lay this to heart, for many, Nehemiah-like, have busied themselves in building walls.¹⁵

... the holy city, Jerusalem, having a great and high wall (Rev. 21:12).

Such is the effect upon the mind of refusing the teaching that tolerated leaven constitutes the lump a leavened lump. How dare he speak of Nehemiah in such a fashion? We wonder where a Christian's mind might go in attacking the defenses of practical holiness in associations. One writes it, and others spread it. Jeroboam didn't care for walls either (1 Kings 11:26, 27), nor did Tobijah

14. J. A. Von Poseck, *Light In Our Dwellings*, p. 210.

15. *The History, of the Brethren* 1:227.

(Neh. 4:7).

In concluding this appendix we shall consider comments on the oft abused Third Epistle of John.

H. P. Barker said:

I know of no Exclusive who has disputed the reasonableness of my remarks on 2 John 9, 10.¹⁶

His paper is characterized by huffing and puffing. He wrote:

Now Scripture is silent as to any relation between churches. We find in it no trace of any inter-church organization. The one Body of Christ is not formed of assemblies, but of individual members. A Scripture that helped me in connection with this matter is 2 John 10. Exclusives have built their structure on their interpretation of 2 John 10, 11, but have paid very little attention to the implications of this other passage.¹⁷

First of all, as a former "exclusive," he knew very well that what he calls "exclusivism" is not built on 2 John 9, 10, though that is part of the issue. The long series of papers on *The Holiness of Christian Fellowship* contains very numerous quotations from persons who lived before H. P. Barker, and it could hardly be that he was not acquainted with numbers of them. He has dishonestly misrepresented the truth, and has played upon the ignorance of those for whom he wrote his paper.

One of the errors here is equating "relation between churches" with "inter-church organization." There is another "relation between churches" but it is not one's object to develop this in this paper. His third sentence is the clue, but he abandoned its import, if he ever understood it. As to the last sentence, the reverse is true of himself and the followers of Bethesda. He continued:

There were certain brethren cast out of what the apostle still calls "the church" for no reason but that they would have received some whom Diotrephes did not. They were evidently good men, lovers of truth. They were excluded from "the church" at one place, but does this imply that they would be excluded from every other church? If so, the apostle himself would have to be excluded everywhere. Exclusives would reply, of course, that the reception of these brethren would involve the disowning as an assembly of the company that cast them out. But John still calls it "the church," though undoubtedly he would have received those cast out therefrom. He had not been instructed in the principles of Exclusivism!¹⁸

16. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism* p. 3.

17. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 16.

18. *Why I Abandoned Exclusivism*, p. 16.

J. Rankin said,

Is it not significant that even although the best of the Christians were cast out of that unknown assembly the Apostle John still acknowledged that company as "the church." ¹⁹

It seems strange, in view of these remarks, that Gaius and Demetrius were not "cast out" in the above sense! The subject of 3 John is the free action of ministry and its opposition by clerical tendencies. Thus I believe that the O. B., A. Van Ryn, is correct when he stated that it is not likely that excommunication from Christian fellowship is meant but rather that refusal to recognize or allow the ministry of others is meant. ²⁰ Thus, a follower of Bethesda contradicts the reasonableness of H. P. Barker's remark, not to speak of others, as W. Kelly in his *Lectures on the Epistles of John*.

The summary of the matter is given by another O. B., Ian McDowell:

To sum up -- did association with Newton at Plymouth defile the Woodfalls? "Open Brethren" say, not, for they were personally free of his doctrinal errors. ²¹ "Exclusive Brethren" say, yes, for he was ecclesiastically associated with him (i.e., being "one body" with him at Plymouth). ²² This is "the Bethesda Question" and its divisive result. ²³

Yes, it involves the truths we have been considering in the series on *The Holiness of Christian Fellowship*, and also the nature and unity of the church as one body.

1 Cor. 5 teaches that the local assembly can be leavened by the allowance of a known wicked person and an assembly is leavened by receiving a person from a leavened congregation. The leavened one is part of a leavened lump. In 2 John we see that one may partake in the wicked works of another. We noted that to partake in the wicked works of a thief is to partake in his thieving. The leavened one is partaking in leaven by his indifference to the honor of Christ. He is thus leavened. As coming from a leavened lump he is leavened and to receive such an one to the breaking of bread is to unite in the most solemn act of fellowship with such an one; to declare that we are one bread with him (1 Cor. 10:16). Ed.

19. *The Third Epistle of John*, p. 27.

20. *The Epistles of John*, p. 177.

21. [I have disproved this oft-repeated assertion, that his partisans did not imbibe his evil teachings, in my *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby*, vol. 2.]

22. [Thus there were two charges. Some who held B. W. Newton's doctrine were received, as well as others received were linked by fellowship with him.]

23. *A Brief History of the Brethren*, p. 30.

*Is the Christian Heavenly?
and
Is the Church Heavenly?*

*The Heavenly
and
His Heavenly Ones.*

1 Corinthians 15:46.

Two efforts of the enemy are characteristic of the present day, and go along together with the humanizing Christ, and the giving a worldly character to Christianity, leading in result to multifarious forms of human religiousness and of earthly organization, having little or nothing in common but this, that they exhibit practical departure from heavenly principles and grievous independence of the divine persons.

It is therefore of no little moment that we should recognize that Christianity in its very essence is as heavenly as He who inspired it. Many are they who accept its divine authorship, who have never adequately apprehended it to be an absolutely heavenly thing, though in an earthly locale. But practically we find that the less it is apprehended as heavenly, the less also will its divine aspect be before the soul. And this we may safely predicate, that it is impossible to understand its character and its scope, unless in its origin, in its essence, in its operation and in its end, it is seen to be altogether a heavenly product for a heavenly purpose. Outside a very small circle, how rarely do we meet a Christian who understands his parentage, and occupies according to God, his present portion! How contracted and how erroneous are the commonly-prevailing thoughts of what Christianity is. How little is it accepted as the reflection of a heavenly Christ in a heavenly people redeemed from the earth, who are here only for Himself and looking for translation at His coming!

"The first man of the earth, earthy," had been running his carnal and material course for forty centuries here below, before "the second man" paid a visit of

three and thirty years to the same scene, having been sent into it in grace to "the first." As man, He was, He is, "the heavenly," and by this title is contrasted with "the earthy." In God's reckoning He was "second man," for all before God counts as one; and He was "last Adam," for there could be no more after. But more than this He was "from (or out of) heaven" as the first was, "out of the earth, made of dust." Refused and cut off from the earth, having nothing, He is now the risen Man in the Glory of God, and alike in incarnation and in resurrection is He "the heavenly" -- there, now and eternally!

Further, as is He, "the heavenly, such also the heavenly (ones)." There is, it is admitted, another aspect of Christianity in which birth and profession give status, and wherein are certain privileges and answering responsibilities; but what is now before us is a matter of race, and as to this we are born of God, are partakers of the divine nature, and just as truly as the angels, are we one of the heavenly families. The One "who lived, who died, who lives again," has redeemed unto Himself a chosen race of which, as the risen Man He is the glorified federal head, and this word -- "As the Heavenly, such also the heavenly (ones)" -- so constitutes Christianity in its very essence, that every bit of it which is a genuine thing before God, expresses in word or in deed, the cardinal truth that man is in the glory of God, and God is glorified thereby. One who was once visible upon earth, "in likeness of flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:8), sits now in a glorified, but no less real, positive human body in the Father's throne. From the glory of God; from the throne of the Father; and *in* the risen, exalted Man who fills all heaven with His peerless presence. Christianity has its origin; and in the power of the Holy Ghost alone, witness from thence of His exalted majesty and glory, it has its activities in so far as they are according to God. "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" -- marks its starting-point, both as to sin and place. It is thus "the heavenly" gone back to heaven -- man in the glory of God -- in whom it takes its rise; and it is this fact -- the parent truth of Christianity -- which imparts to it its distinctive character. It is a divine thing as He is divine; it is heavenly as He is heavenly: He is its sure foundation, its tried cornerstone, its immovable keystone, its crowning top-stone. It is all and altogether for His glory, and therefore its operation is progressive assimilation day by day of His heavenly ones to Him, "the heavenly," by the action of the Spirit of God, and this alone constitutes practical Christianity of the highest, the true type. And as He and they look along the vista of earthly trial and testimony to the consummation of blessedness beyond, they contemplate the issue and end in the many sons brought to glory, when that unsullied scene of untold joy, which has ever been the true home and habitat of Christianity, shall be reached for aye.

When He was here in the days of His flesh, "knowing he came from God and went to God," He took a towel and girded Himself, and washed the feet of His heavenly ones elect, and in principle that word applies (in a lower sense, of course) to us, for we too may say we have come from God and are going to God, and when He who is coming returns in the air, we shall be eternally with God, and in the likeness of the bosom-Son of the Father. Meanwhile we blessedly experience His tender solicitude in removing with a practiced hand every defilement that we contract in passing along an earthly scene, nor will He cease this heavenly service of His faithful love and unwearied grace, until we assume "the image of the heavenly" at His return.

If we look at the origin of Christianity, we see that it sprang from the heart of the Father, as it takes its title from Him who adorns His throne, and it is most interesting to trace how in every step of its delineation in the word, the Spirit of God indicates its wonderful and varied relations to the Father. It was the Father sent His Son to be Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). In Him the glory of the only-begotten of the Father was beheld (John 1:14). His ever-enjoyed place in the bosom of the Father made Him competent to declare Him (John 1:18). Here was He about His Father's business (Luke 2:49). What He saw the Father do He did (v. 19). The will of the Father alone was what He sought to fulfil (v. 30). The Father's works were given Him to finish (v. 36). The Father's name it was in which He was come (v. 43). The Father gave to us the true bread from heaven (John 6: 82), and gave us to Him (vv. 37, 39, and also John 18:6, 11, 12, 24). It is learning of the Father brings us to the Son (John 6:46, 65). The life everlasting is the Father's commandment (John 12: 50). The words, also, the Son affirms to be the Father's (John 14:10-24), and when He goes away it is to prepare a place for us in the Father's house (John 14:2). The Father holds the sheep in His hand (John 10:29); is the husbandman who purges the fruit-bearing branches of the vine (John 15:1, 2), that He (the Father) may be glorified in our "much fruit" (John 15:8). The Father is to be asked in the Son's name, and that which we ask, the Father will give, for He Himself loves us (John 16:23, 27). The glorified Son shows us plainly of the Father (John 16:25), and is now glorifying Him (John 17:1). The eternal life is the knowledge of the Father and the Son (John 17:3), and those who have it are kept in the Holy Father's own name (John 17:11), are sanctified through the Father's word which is truth (John 17:17-19); have the Father's name declared unto them, and are loved of the Father's heart, even as He is loved (John 17:26). By the glory of the Father has he been raised up (Rom. 6:4); to the Father's throne has He been taken (Rev. 3:21); and from thence has He sent down "the promise of the Father" -- the Holy Ghost (Acts 1: 4; 2:33).

These are a few only of the scripture marks of the Father's relations to that

of which we speak, all of which are of incalculable value as forming an essentially divine bulwark to Satan's present efforts to terrestrialise Christianity, and to humanize its Author, for clearly the Father is neither earthly nor human. Christianity then is the revelation of the Father, by the person and work of the Lord Jesus, His Eternal Son, in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost as "the promise of the Father." Coming forth from His blessed heart according to eternal purpose and counsels, it is based upon the atoning work and acquired glories of the eternal Son, and has its unfolding by the living energy of the Spirit of God dwelling in us. By Him is its heavenly character wrought out, through and in "the heavenly ones" whom grace has reached for this precious character of blessing, as the associates in eternal glory, and in heaven of Him who is emphatically, "the Heavenly."

Two questions naturally arise here.

1. Have we truly accepted the fact that *generically* we are as heavenly as He who adorns the Father's throne? (Compare John 17:16 with Heb. 2:11).
2. How far does the character and order of our lives make patent that our former earthly standing has been eternally abrogated to make room for the new and indissoluble relations we hold to the Man whom God has gratified His own heart in exalting to highest glory?

Could believers answer these inquiries satisfactorily it would be utterly impossible that they should go on in practical fellowship with the course and current of this world; governed by its principles, giving utterance to its maxima, aiding its objects, adopting its practices, and accepting its patronage, the fruit of which is as the apples of Sodom, and whose reaping shall ever be leanness and poverty and wretchedness of soul.

May He, "THE HEAVENLY," so blessedly connect with Himself the hearts of those who have accepted His heavenly call, and who know that what they have been brought into is as intrinsically of heaven as it is radically of God, that our Christianity may not comport with that of "this poor, faithless world," but may, through grace upon grace, be ever acquiring in an increasing degree a character suited to its divine origin, expressive of its celestial destiny and redolent with the graces and the virtues of a glorified Christ!

R. *The Bible Treasury* 12:154-156.

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

6: The Pretribulation Rapture

Chapter 6.8: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Be Not Soon Shaken in Mind (v. 2)

... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as [if it were] by us, as that the day of the Lord is present (v. 2).

BE NOT TROUBLED

The apostle begged them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him" not to be:

1. "soon shaken in mind." The heavenly hope that had been taught to them should have given them "a steady and soberly judging mind." They had been instructed in the difference between Christ's coming for them and the day of the Lord upon the wicked. This should have stayed their minds.
2. "nor troubled" as if the wicked could have the upper hand in the day of the Lord. This shows, too, that the excitement about the Lord's coming was not the root of the problem. They were shaken in mind and troubled.

WHAT DECEIVED THE THESSALONIANS?

2 Thess. 2:3 plainly indicates that something had deceived the Thessalonians into thinking that the day of the Lord was present. This appears incomprehensible to posttribulationists and so the Thessalonians' disturbance

is attributed to an apprehensive response to the first epistle. ¹

The fact is that something tended to cloud the teaching of the first epistle and also the oral ministry of the Word that Paul had given them when with them. Posttribulationist R. Gundry objected to the thought that the first epistle had taught a pretribulation rapture.

Paul could not have taken for granted their understanding a pretribulation rapture from the former epistle, for then they would not have fallen into error in the first place. Correction of the error would have required a categorical statement to the effect that the rapture will take place before the tribulation. Such a statement nowhere appears. ²

Perhaps the Galatians had never been taught the difference between law and grace, and perhaps that is why they gave ear to the Judaizers?

Perhaps Paul in his 1-1/2 year stay at Corinth never taught the Corinthians the doctrine of the bodily resurrection and perhaps that is why they gave ear to false teaching (1 Cor. 15)?

Perhaps Paul never made it clear that the resurrection was a bodily resurrection and that is why some taught that the resurrection was past already (2 Tim. 2:18)?

Perhaps Paul never told the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord would not overtake them as a thief and that is why they thought they could be in it?

The fact is that in 1 Thess. 5, he *had* taught them that the day of the Lord would not overtake them as a thief (1 Thess 5:4) and this renders them inexcusable for listening to the deceiver (v. 2).

R. Gundry's statement is thus seen to be astoundingly naive; or is it rather the result of his false system? He is unqualified to state what the Spirit should have said through Paul. The Spirit has not given a categorical statement anywhere that says the church will go through the great tribulation; or, the church will not go through the great tribulation. Who are we to dictate to the Spirit a method of dealing with mistake and error, instead of learning God's

1. J. B. Payne wrote:

The Thessalonian Christians, as it appears, had become troubled about eschatology, probably from an overly apprehensive response to Paul's former admonition that they should "wait for God's Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:10). Some had quit work (2 Thess. 3:10), and they thought that "the day of the Lord" must be upon them. *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, p. 59

So E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, p. 74.

2. *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 119.

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way? -- which is ever a test for our state of soul. Surely there is a great significance that no such categorical statement exists and it is not just to provide a subject for the wits of theologians. It provides a test regarding how much truth we will walk in. At any rate, Paul did point out in v. 1 that our gathering together to Christ (at the rapture) was grounds not to think that the day of the Lord had overtaken them. Moreover, they had been deceived about the character of the day of the Lord (v. 2).

We are not told just how the deceiver handled the character of the day of the Lord. W. Kelly suggested this:

What the false teachers taught was that the day of the Lord was now come. You would naturally ask how that could be. It seems such an egregious thing to assert that the day of the Lord was already come. They clearly had a sort of figurative understanding about the day of the Lord. They knew the day of the Lord to be an outburst of trouble and perplexity -- a time of darkness and thick clouds, according to the Old Testament prophets; and they pointed to all the trouble the Thessalonians were suffering and said -- "The day of the Lord is come." The apostle says, "No; it is not arrived. It cannot come yet. There are tremendous evils which must take place before the day of the Lord can deal with them."

The important theme tonight is not the day of the Lord. I merely make these preliminary observations to show you how mistaken it is to conceive of the coming of the Lord as the same thing with the day of the Lord. Beyond controversy, it is evident that the Thessalonians would not have allowed for a moment that the Lord was come. That was contrary to the sense of all -- contrary to every appearance of the truth. They knew that when the Lord comes -- the apostle had shown them that carefully -- the dead in Christ should rise first, "and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." All this was not come -- therefore the Lord could not have come. There was some figurative meaning given to the day of the Lord, and that was exactly where the folly of the false teaching showed itself.

The apostle elaborately enters into this, for the purpose of putting both truths in their right relation the one to the other. "We beseech you, brethren" (not here in regard of, but) "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word the Authorized Version has translated "by" -- and, I think, not improperly -- is the word referred to first, and I believe we do not get so good an equivalent in the Revised Version. Thus what betrays that the revisers did not understand the argument of the apostle is that they say "in regard of" or something equivalent. Now, by this they show that they conceived the coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord to be the same. They thought that the subject which the apostle was discussing was the coming of the Lord. Now, this is not so. The subject under discussion is the day of the Lord. The error was that the day was present. The false teachers did not trouble themselves about the coming of the Lord; but they were very full of the day of the Lord, and they took advantage of the circumstances of the Thessalonians to say that the day had begun -- that that day

had actually arrived.³

There was another case also where false teachers must have made out something to be figurative; namely, those who said the resurrection was past already (2 Tim. 2:18). That, of course, denied the resurrection of the body.

Note that the Apostle did not tell them not to be shaken by his first epistle. Neither did he correct some allegedly wrong view of theirs concerning it. Rather, he mentioned three things:

1. **Spirit** -- as if something came from the Spirit of God stating that the day of the Lord had arrived.
2. **Word** -- as if a revelation from God had come declaring that the day of the Lord had arrived.
3. **Letter** -- a letter as if from Paul stating that the day of the Lord had arrived.

The indications are, then, that a deceiver had forged a letter, containing a revelation (word) as if from the Spirit of God, in the name of Paul, "that the day of the Lord is present." No doubt the Tempter (1 Thess. 3:5) now changed his tactics with the Thessalonians by adding deceit and forgery to persecution. Paul told them that he signed all his letters (2 Thess. 3:17) and significantly this is the only epistle in which he pointed this out. The Thessalonians, then, let slip some of the things they were told in the first epistle because of this forgery, and they evidently did not compare Paul's signature on the first letter with the forgery. Now in this second letter he admonished them to let no one deceive them (v. 3). So, rather than, allegedly, correcting the misapprehension of the first letter, he began in chapter 1 to tell them that their endurance of the persecutions were something he boasted in, that these persecutions were the seal of their being worthy of the kingdom and that they would be resting when the day of the Lord comes. How, then, could their persecutors have the upper hand over them if it was the day of the Lord, which day has for its object the destruction of the wicked? Their hearts and minds were now ready for what we call chapter 2.

The Spirit's first appeal to them, then, was that the rapture precedes the day of the Lord (v. 1). His coming and our gathering together unto him should have stayed their minds. The day of the Lord could not be present because they were not gathered to Him yet and that had to occur before they could come from

3. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 12:15. See also *The Bible Treasury* 17:140. This answers A. Reese, *Op. Cit.*, p. 176. www.presenttruthpublishers.com

heaven with Him. Christians will be in His army that will come out of heaven (Rev. 19:14; cp. v. 8). Those "with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). "When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). At the appearing He will be revealed "from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:10), as Rev. 19 describes, and we with him as 1 Thess. 4:14 states. When He comes for us He will take us to the Father's house (John 14:1-3) and so we see that we shall be taken there first before we are displayed in glory. How good it is when the heart rests in this expectation.

Posttribulationists rely on the erroneous translation of v. 1, ⁴ and so R. Gundry wrote:

Paul mentions the rapture in verse one and has described it in the first epistle. But neither here nor there does he write that it will take place before the tribulation. ⁵

If in 1 Thess. he had taught that the rapture will precede the day of the Lord, here he would merely have needed to remind them of that fact. ⁶

Steadily missing Paul's thrust, R. Gundry wrote:

A pretribulationist Paul should have written that events in the tribulation will follow the rapture. Instead, he writes that the day of the Lord will follow tribulation events. ⁷

Our discussion so far has pointed out that the pretribulationist, Paul, did indicate in both letters that events of the tribulation would follow our Lord's coming and our gathering together unto Him. Indeed, 2 Thess. 2:5 indicates that he had orally ministered on such things.

It is true that the pretribulationist, Paul, also wrote that the day of the Lord will follow tribulation events. And so v. 3ff develops a second reason why the day of the Lord was not then present.

The apostle, then, separated the coming of Christ for His own, and our gathering together unto Him, from the appeal based on prophetic events in v. 3ff. The prophetic events of v. 3ff follow the event of v. 1, differ in character from the event in v. 1, and form a different ground of appeal from the event of v. 1. Thus, in effect, Paul wrote that these prophetic events followed Christ's coming for us. He had shown in 1 Thess. that His coming for the Thessalonians

4. See J. B. Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, p. 76; R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 113; A. Reese, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

5. R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 119.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

would precede the day of the Lord, and in 2 Thess. chs. 1 & 2 he reminded them of this and also showed from prophetic grounds why the day of the Lord could not be present.

Persons may speculate on the exact nature of the deception to which the Thessalonians fell prey. Its "exact" nature is not specified, nor need it be. It was allowed because the Spirit had us in view. Our profit from these Scriptures is sufficient without the exact nature of the false teaching being revealed in Scripture. For example, someone may reason that since the Thessalonians thought they were in the day of the Lord that therefore the day of the Lord will precede the appearing. We must be careful not to build on the deception they were under as if its exact nature is known to us.

R. Gundry continued:

What then is the exact nature of the false teaching which had agitated the Thessalonians? First, they erroneously thought that the day of the Lord will include the tribulation. Paul both implies and answers this error with his statement that two conspicuous events representative of the tribulation must *precede* the day of the Lord. Second, the Thessalonians erroneously thought that they had entered the tribulation. Paul both implies and answers this error with the same statement concerning the two tribulational events which obviously had not taken place. Third, the Thessalonians erroneously concluded that Christ's coming lay in the immediate future, with resultant cessation of work, fanatical excitement, and disorder. Paul both implies and answers this error with his statement that the day of the Lord is neither immediate nor imminent because of the precedence of tribulational events. A similar corrective appears in Paul's exhortation to return to orderly living. Thus, it was not sorrow over a missed rapture which agitated the Thessalonians, but wild anticipations of an immediate return of Christ.⁸

First, and second, we do not know if at this point the Thessalonians erroneously thought that the day of the Lord included the tribulation, though that is possible. We do not know the extent of the deception and what they accepted of it. We do know that the apostle had taught them about this point (2 Thess. 2:5 with vv. 3 & 4). They had been taught to expect Christ (1 Thess. 1:10) and he had taught them concerning the apostasy and Lawless One during his short stay with them (2 Thess. 2:3-5). He solved their difficulty about the possibility of dead saints missing the manifestation in glory by writing to them that the dead in Christ would be resurrected when Christ comes for His saints (1 Thess. 4:14-18). He had told them that the day of the Lord would not overtake them as a thief (1 Thess. 5:4). That day has for its object the children of darkness.

Third, let us remember that Rom. 13:12 tells us that the day is near, or at

8. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

hand. The correct view is that Paul told them that the day of the Lord is not present, not actually come. And, 2 Thess. 3:11 hardly bears out the statement that "the Thessalonians" ceased from work, or that there was fanatical excitement and disorder. There were "some" who walked disorderly, i.e., not working. And what were they doing? They were "busybodies," meddling in the affairs of others. Does that sound like "fanatical excitement" over expecting Christ in the immediate future? Apparently Paul didn't expect his corrective words about the day of the Lord and the tribulation to change these persons, else why specify the withdrawing, i.e., avoiding such (2 Thess. 3:6, 14). It is obvious these were lazy persons who preferred being busybodies to being industrious (2 Thess. 2:10).

R. Gundry also said:

Several advantages attach to this posttribulational interpretation. It preserves the indications of other scriptures that the day of the Lord will begin only after the tribulation. It preserves the relevance of the day of the Lord to the Church, most clearly evident in Paul's exhortation to watchfulness and readiness for that day (1 Thess. 5:4-6), a relevance which we lose if any interval separates the rapture from the day. It assumes nothing not directly stated or implied in the text.⁹

The fact that Paul has already exhorted Christians to readiness for the day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:4-11) establishes the relevance of those tribulational events for Christians: we shall see the apostasy and the man of lawlessness and thereby recognize the approach of the day of the Lord for which we look and prepare.¹⁰

The relevance of the warning in 1 Thess. 5:4-6 does not depend on the rapture occurring in the day of the Lord. The fact is that Paul does not base his admonitions on the idea that Christians will see the Antichrist and other signs as marking the approach of the day of the Lord. He founds his exhortations on the fact that we are children of light and not of darkness. The day of the Lord has for its object the judgment of darkness, not the catching up of the saint. The fact is that Paul did not exhort Christians to readiness for the day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:4-11) in the sense meant by R. Gundry. Paul showed the Thessalonians that they were *not the object* of the day of the Lord -- which is the opposite of the posttribulation contention. The saints will not "know" (be experimentally acquainted with) the times and seasons (Acts 1:7).

We have always believed that the day of the Lord will begin after the great tribulation, as did J. N. Darby and W. Kelly, etc. There is no posttribulational interpretational advantage here. The disadvantage is that posttribulationism is a system of signs (the Greeks seek wisdom and the Jews seek signs 1 Cor. 1:22)

9. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

and is a judaising system, putting the church in the place of the godly Jews in the tribulation -- yes, even putting the imprecatory prayer by the souls under the altar (Rev. 6:10) into the mouth of Christians. Proper Christianity is lowered by this system and it makes Christians earthly-minded.

Members of the body of Christ are going to see the Antichrist, says this system, and this is for us a sign that Christ is coming! And for what have Christians looked and prepared the last 1900 years? **Where were the signs for them that were the means of their expectation of Christ?** What were they expecting? An imminent tribulation? An imminent Antichrist?

The practical effect of this system is to have persons looking for Antichrist, because they say, Christ can't come for you, fellow believer, until Antichrist comes first! What is the practical effect of that doctrine on your soul? J. McKeever works it out practically in his instructions on how to store food, etc., and that if someone comes to steal it, you might be led by God's Spirit to kill such, but others might not be so led.¹¹

As that the Day of the Lord is Present

... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as [if it were] by us, as that the day of the Lord is present.

Some posttribulationists think that the day of the Lord (of Jehovah) and the day of Christ are the same thing. This is not the place to enlarge on the difference but let us note that the day of the Lord is an epoch commencing with the appearing of Christ in glory (Rev. 19) and ending with the establishment of the eternal state; i.e., it includes the millennium (Jer. 25:30, 33; Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:13, 14, 22, 26, 27; Joel 2:1-11, 28-31; 3:13-17; Zeph. 1:14-18; 3:8; Haggai 2:7, 22; Zech. 14:3-9; Mal. 4:1-5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10). The day of Christ (Phil. 1:10; 2:16), the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6), the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14) and the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8) begins at the same point in time as the day of the Lord, but has entirely different associations and aspects. The day of Christ has the thought of the believer of the present period being presented at the appearing in glory (Col. 3:4) in all the beauty and perfection with which He has invested them (2 Thess. 1:10). **The day of the Lord** is the time of the exercise

11. *Christians Will Go Through the Tribulation*, p. 150.

of His power and government and judgment *in the earth*. It will be inaugurated with judgment and terror and tumult among the nations. **The day of Christ** refers to the heavenly aspect and sphere of this period. The two expressions refer to the same period and begin at the same time, but they are different aspects of that time. Before proceeding we must inquire into the translation, "the day of the Lord is present."

Rejecting the above distinction (day of the Lord -- day of Christ), J. B. Payne wrote:

In fact, the interchangeable nature of these two phrases is evidenced by the variant reading "the day of Christ," in place of "the day of the Lord," which has been preserved in the King James Version of this very passage.¹²

This is a startling conclusion! It does not commend a high view of God choosing His words carefully. It is no evidence whatsoever of interchangeability but rather of errors in transmission. J. N. Darby's full note edition of his translation shows ample authority for "Lord." Henry Alford says, "So all our oldest authorities."

The K. J. V. says *at hand*. A. D. Katterjohn, of Wheaton College, said:

4. Don't get shaken in mind by the teaching that . . . The Day of the Lord is IMMINENT (at hand). (2) That verb can mean "at hand" or "now present." That the day of the Lord was not present was obvious, for the Lord had not come. Therefore, that meaning of the verb is to be set aside. It can mean only "to be imminent." To be IMMINENT is the translation used by Lightfoot, Robertson, Way, Wordsworth, Fausset, Thayer, and Souten.¹³

His "therefore" is a false deduction based on the fact that the day was not present. *But the Thessalonians thought it was!* and the Apostle, discerning this, told them not only that it was not present, but also why it could not be present.

A. D. Katterjohn then tells us that this imminency teaching is declared by Paul to be a deception because the apostasy and man of sin must come first.

Henry Alford remarked:

. . . the day of the Lord is present (not, '*is at hand*:') the verb here used occurs six times in the New Testament, and always in the sense of *being present*; in two of those places, Romans 8:38, 1 Cor. 3:22, *the things present* are distinguished

12. *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, p. 60

13. *The Rapture -- When?* pp. 13, 14. "Imminent" is emphatically contradicted by W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series vol. 23, p. 236 and in *The Bible Treasury* 1:60.

expressly from *the things to come*.¹⁴

This is true; and furthermore, the matter is made absolutely certain by the fact that Rom. 13:12 says that the day *is* at hand, in spite of A. D. Katterjohn, but by insisting that "at hand" is correct in 2 Thess. 2, a contradiction is forced. The apostle said that the day is at hand (Rom. 13:12) and he said that it was not present (2 Thess. 2:2). The conclusion is that the passage says "as that the day of the Lord is present."

One more note on this from W. Kelly:

The same force is found, as far as I know, in every occurrence of the word in other books, as the Apocrypha and the profane authors. I have gone into the matter the more because it used to be alleged, and may be still repeated, that in three or four cases in classic Greek the word has the sense of "*at hand*." But I have examined those instances carefully, and am prepared to show that there the word does not require, and I think will not even bear, the meaning "at hand" any more than in the New Testament. But it ought to be clear that the word of God does not demand such search into a few stray passages in Greek orators or comedians, even if doubtful, for the purpose of deciding its own meaning. The uniform sense in every other place of scripture ought to prevail, and must, I think, in an unbiased judgment.¹⁵

FALSEHOOD

Wherefore, having put off falsehood, speak truth every man with his neighbor, because we are members one of another (Eph. 4:25).

To the word "falsehood" JND's note says:

Everything that has the character and nature of falsehood. It is abstract, what has this quality, not merely the act of lying.

I can deceive myself with the notion that since I have not told an outright lie, I have not engaged in falsehood. Falsehood and lying are not only sins against God, but also against my neighbor, whom I am thereby manipulating and putting down; and thus also expressing my contempt for him. In such conduct I would be walking after the flesh.

Ed.

14. *The New Testament for English Readers*, p. 1340. A. Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ* accepts this (p. 173). Discussions concerning the translation "at hand" or "present" may be found in "Examination of the Statements Made in the 'Thoughts on the Apocalypse'," *Collected Writings of J.N. Darby* 8; W. Kelly *Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom* . . . pp. 209-211; and *The Bible Treasury* 17:139; *ibid.*, New Series 12:63; *ibid.*, New Series 1:365; *ibid.*, New Series 4:236, 246; *ibid.*, New Series 10:230.

15. "The Coming and Day of the Lord Viewed Morally," *Pamphlets*, p. 419.

DEBT, OWING, MONEY AND SPECULATION

Sometimes it is thought that "owe no man anything" means never borrow anything. I suggest that this thought results from not fully apprehending the connection between Rom. 13:7 and Rom. 13:8. There is a close connection. **The word *owe* in v. 8 is the verb of the noun *dues* in v. 7.** In English we do not say "dues no man anything." But perhaps putting it that way will help us to see the connection. Let us look at what some others have said about this.

J. N. Darby has only lightly touched on this subject, as far as I know:

In fine he was to render to every man that which was due to him in virtue of his position; to leave nothing owing to any one, be it of whatever character it might -- excepting love -- a debt which can never be liquidated.¹

On the same principle we pay tribute. From this the apostle passes to everyone's due, tribute² custom,³ honor. The Christian pays it; owing no man anything, save one debt that always remains; and this it is which fulfills the law, for love to our neighbor will work him no ill.⁴

W. Kelly said:

The Christian is to pay honor as every other debt, love alone the due that can never be paid off.⁵

The following is from A. Pridham on Romans:

Verses 8 -10 are pregnant with weighty exhortation. The injunctive prohibition with which the passage opens passes presently into an affirmative precept of yet deeper and wider range. We are *not* to remain debtors to any man. We *are* to own still an unpaid debt of love. With respect to the first of these, I only remark here that there is no just argument to be drawn from this passage against a Christian's borrowing money, or anything else, on the free consent of the other party. The question is not about borrowing, but paying. If a thing be due, it is to be at once paid. But a loan, of course, is not due, unless the set time of payment has arrived. A heedless borrowing, therefore, with no present prospect of restitution at the appointed time, is a breach beforehand of this express command. Christians do well to weigh carefully this counsel. No small dishonor has been cast on the precious name of Christ from the neglect of this. Faith never oversteps the bounds of right. But there is a burden of debt from which the Christian has neither the ability nor the desire to be

1. *Synopsis* 4:149 (Stow Hill ed.).

2. These are taxes on persons and property.

3. This means taxes on imported and exported goods.

4. *Collected Writings* 26:190.

5. *A Short Introduction to the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, London: Weston, p. 14 (1902).

free. He is bound in a firm bond to the perpetual love of the brethren, for the Lord's sake. The real creditor in this case is the Lord Himself, while His sheep are the appointed receivers of His due (John 21:15-17). It is the new commandment, addressed to the children of the true and perfect Light (1 John 2:8-10).

The next is from, I believe, Ed. Dennett:

It does not seem, in our judgment, that the apostle had debts in his mind in writing these words. Indeed, this verse flows out of the exhortation in the preceding one -- render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Then, summing up every possible variety of obligation, and generalizing the principle on which the believer should act, he proceeds, "Owe no man anything" (this will necessarily include every form of indebtedness ⁶), but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Love therefore, if the word may be used, is an obligation (see 1 John 3:16) which is never discharged; and, moreover, it is the "fullness" of the law. As another has expressed it in few words, "By the conduct which flows from love, the law is already fulfilled before its requirement is applied." It is, then, in the activity of love (of the divine nature) in the believer that his conduct is to be regulated in every relationship and hence he gives to all their "dues," expecting nothing in return, even if he encounter, like our blessed Lord, little but ingratitude and hatred. We thus read, in the passage already cited, "Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Such is to be the Christian's path amongst his fellow-believers, and through a selfish and loveless world.

Charles Stanley wrote:

"Owe no man anything." These few words are very comprehensive. Not merely debts when due, but to seek to pay all demands as soon as due. To do this, a Christian should always seek to live below his income, and do his business within his means. This may require much diligence and self-denial, but what misery will he avoid. These words, then, are important, when applied as to income and expenditure. And also, whatever kindness may be shown us, let us seek to return it with large interest. "Owe no man anything, unless to love one another." ⁷

C. E. Stuart wrote:

Another question, and one apparently not yet settled for some in our day, presents itself, and is finally dealt with by the apostle. Tribute, custom, fear, honor, each should be cheerfully rendered, where and when due. Taxes, and custom dues are to be paid, and those in authority feared, or revered, and honored. What is *due* is the guiding principle, and the righteous rule. Is not this at times forgotten? How it simplifies matters! What is lawfully due, pay. There the Christian's responsibility ends. Thus the Word could smooth his path, whilst

6. [By the first use of the word "debt," I apprehend that he is speaking of loans, and by "indebtedness" that which is to be paid; which is to be paid as due.]

7. *On the Epistle to the Romans*, Morrish: London, p. 139, n. d.

maintaining the authority of God, stimulating him too to subjection in all things lawful to the civil power for conscience' sake. For in paying what was due he was obeying God. This puts conscience really in the right place . . . The duty of paying what is due having been enforced, we are led on to the reminder of a debt, which can never cease to be owing whilst we continue on earth -- love to others.⁸

I do not think that any of the above can be construed to mean that any of these writers held that a Christian may never borrow. In fact, if not expressly stated, by all, it is certainly implied that a Christian may borrow. The arrangement for payment is to be observed when payment falls *due*. This is true for what is owed to the civil power (v. 7) and what is owed in the wider sphere as noted in v. 8. Verse 8 is not a sudden, complete change of subject, but rather is the enlargement of the obligation of v. 7 to include the general sphere of life.

Difficulty may sometimes be felt regarding v. 8 because of the way the word *debt* and *owe* are used. A. Pridham, above, carefully explained the matter. Consider an example. Concerning what is due the government, I am required to pay taxes quarterly. The tax payments are due at certain times in a year. I *owe* nothing when those taxes are paid when *due*. Again, it is worthwhile to note that the word *owe* in v. 8 is the verb of the noun *dues* in v. 7. So, pay all your dues, to the civil power and all other personal obligations, when due -- thus owing nothing, in the sense that your obligations are met -- except that you can never pay your dues of love, never pay what is owing regarding love, never liquidate your obligation to love one another; that is continuously due and owing at every moment. That stands in contrast to the payment of what is owing when payment is due.

I have not omitted C. H. Mackintosh because I think that he disagrees. I do not believe that he does. However, he has given a number of wholesome warnings and I want to quote the following separately from the above as indicating that it is not my purpose to encourage borrowing:

We are of opinion that you would be happier as a Christian, and safer as a man of business, to work your present trade on sound principles, than to get into a large thing such as you describe which, can only be carried on by a system of credit. We are fully convinced of the possibility of carrying on trade without going in debt, and we strongly urge all our friends to do so. Why cannot a man in trade pay for what he buys as well as a private individual? True, he might not cover so large a surface, but he would have a more solid foundation. His trade might be small, but it would be safe, and his mind would be in peace. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). This is a seasonable word for Christians in this day of busy speculation, and restless ambition. There is urgent need, dear friend, for watchfulness lest we be ensnared

8. *An Outline of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, London: Marlborough, p. 154 (1889).
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by the money-loving spirit of the day. The devil is seeking to blind the eyes of professing Christians, in various ways. He furnishes them with a thousand plausible reasons why they should push, and grasp, and scrape together. He will even misquote and misapply the word of God, in order to furnish a plea for money-making to those whose hearts are secretly set upon that object. But oh! the wretchedness of having before the heart such an object as to "*make money*." Surely, surely as is the *object* so is the *character* [of the person]. Only think of a saint of God, an heir of glory, hoarding up this world's miserable riches! Think of this, too, in the face of hundreds of God's people in want, and in the knowledge of the claims of the Lord's work, at home and abroad! How can we suppose the existence of the life of Christ or the love of God in a soul that can lay by his hundreds [of English pounds, in the 19th century] and see his brother in need? Impossible. Oh! for a large heart!⁹

You ask, "Is it right for Christians who are in debt to give money for benevolent purposes?" Most assuredly not. We must be just before we are generous. If I am in debt, I have no right to give money in charity. Were I to do so, there would at least be, as another has said, a measure of honesty in my writing on the back of whatever I bestow, these words, "Borrowed from my creditors without their consent." But, dear friend, we should go very much further than this. We believe that, as a rule, Christians should not go in debt at all. "Owe no man anything" is a precept so plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. We do not here enter upon the question of how far persons engaged in trade can carry out this holy and happy rule. There are certain terms upon which the manufacturer sells to the warehouseman, and the warehouseman sells to the shopkeeper, such, for instance, as, "Cash in a month," or the like, and so long as these terms are observed, it may be questioned how far one is actually in debt. We believe that it would be far safer and better, in every way, for persons in trade, to pay cash, and take the discount. And, unquestionably, a man is in debt, if his stock in trade and the debts due to him are not amply sufficient to meet all liabilities. It is a poor, hollow, worthless, unprincipled thing for a man to traffic with fictitious capital, to live by a system of "kite-flying," to be making a show at his creditor's expense. We fear there is a deplorable amount of this sort of thing even amongst those who occupy the very highest platform of profession. As to persons living in private life, there is no excuse whatever for their going into debt. What right have I, before God or man, to wear a coat or a hat not paid for? What right have I to order a ton of coals, a pound of tea, or a joint of meat, if I have not the money to pay for it? It may be said, what are we to do? The answer is plain to an upright mind and tender conscience, we are to do without rather than go in debt. It is infinitely better, happier, and holier to sit down to a crust of bread and a cup of water paid for, than to roast meat for which you are in debt. But, alas! dear friend, there is a sad lack of conscience and sound principle as to this important question. People go on, from week to week, taking their places at the Lord's Table, making the highest profession, talking of high and holy principles, and all the while they are over head and ears in debt, living far beyond their income, taking food and raiment on credit from any one who will trust them, and knowing in their hearts that they have no reasonable prospect of being able to pay. Surely this is most grievous and dishonoring. Indeed, we do not hesitate to pronounce it practical

9. *Things New and Old* 10:247.

unrighteousness, and we most solemnly warn the Christian reader against all such loose and unprincipled conduct. We have seen a great deal of it latterly, and we can only regard it as one of the many bitter fruits of the spirit of Antinomianism so rife at the present moment. Oh for a tender conscience and an upright mind!¹⁰

We have read your letter with very deep interest, and we can thoroughly enter into your feelings. We believe assuredly that the Christian is bound to provide for his family, day by day -- bound to educate his children, and put them in the way of earning an honest livelihood. All this is so plainly enjoined in the New Testament as to admit of no question. But these sacred duties leave wholly untouched the question of hoarding up, on the one hand, and of speculation on the other. We do not believe in these latter at all. We believe that hoarding covers the soul with rust, and speculation fills the heart and mind with care and anxiety. We love and honor industry and honest toil; but scripture tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evil"; and we do not believe that God's blessing rests upon His children when they become shareholders in worldly companies. You yourself, dear friend, have proved this. We think you would have done better had you purchased a house, either to live in or let, than to invest your money in such a company as you describe. But all these matters must be arranged between the Lord and one's own conscience. We merely add that there is a vast difference between committing actual sin, and falling short of a high toned discipleship and personal devotedness. For ourselves, we long for the latter -- long earnestly for it. We believe there is a sad lack of it in this our day. The tide of worldliness is rolling rapidly in upon us, and we know of no more effectual barrier with which to resist it than thorough heart-devotedness and consecration to Christ and His cause. Where the real bent of the soul is Christward, one is not troubled with questions as to the right or wrong of this or that; but where it is not, the heart can muster up a thousand and one plausible arguments; and it is labor lost to seek to answer such arguments, inasmuch as there is no spiritual capacity to see the force of the answer. May God bless you, dear friend, and comfort your heart under your heavy loss. May your undivided confidence be in Him, and He will prove Himself better than ten thousand "limited companies."

We see nothing wrong in a Christian's applying, in a becoming manner, for an advance of wages, provided it be not the fruit of covetousness, but simply for the support of his family. But we cannot attempt to lay down a rule. Very much will depend on the circumstances of the case.

We have long been in the habit of explaining Luke 10:9 by 1 Timothy 6:17-19. We consider it a very fine commentary on the passage. Worldly riches are not what properly belongs to us as Christians. Our riches are heavenly -- our blessings spiritual, in the heavenlies, in and with Christ. Worldly riches belong properly to the Jew; but to the Christian they are the mammon of unrighteousness, or the riches which do not rightly appertain to us. But if at our conversion, we happen to possess such riches, we are taught by Luke 16:9 to make friends of them by spending them in the Lord's service, and for the poor, and thus lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. The expression, "that they may receive you" is idiomatic, and may be rendered as

10. C. H. Mackintosh, *Answers to Correspondents*, pp. 69-71.
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follows, "that they may be the means of receiving you," &c. This is the true way to use riches -- the very best mode of investing capital. It will yield a hundred fold, and where is the bank or limited liability that can come up to this? Many of God's people have, of late, been called to taste the bitter fruit of seeking after what they considered profitable investments. It is a question if the tremendous crashing of banks and limited companies has not been the result of God's dealing with His children who were connected with them. The very best thing we can do with our money is to spend it for the Lord; and then, instead of being rust on our souls, it will be treasure in heaven. But we must remember that Luke 16:9 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19 are addressed to disciples, not to the unconverted. If this be lost sight of, we shall only cast dust in the eyes of men by leading them to suppose that the gift of God can be purchased with money. To one who thought this of old, Peter said, "Thy money perish with thee."

We take Romans 13:8 in its plain, broad sense. We believe it teaches us to owe no man anything. Would to God it were more fully carried out. It is painful beyond expression to see the sad lack of conscience among professors, as to the question of debt. We would solemnly call upon all our readers, who are in the habit of going in debt, to judge themselves in this matter, and to get out of a false position at once. It is better far to sit down to a dry crust, and to wear a shabby coat, than live well and dress well at our neighbor's expense. We regard it as positive unrighteousness. Oh! for an upright mind!

The first grand business of a person in debt is to get out of it. We must be just before we are generous. ¹¹

Ed.

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

... remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

How will you be so blessed if you spend, spend, spend all you have (and, worse still, even more than that). Pay attention to what CHM said above. Discipline yourself. Hold self-indulgence in check. Set your heart to be in the blessed position. Look to the One Who pronounced what was "more blessed" for grace to be in conformity with what pleases Him. Live with less in order to please Him. It was "he himself said." Spend yourself instead of spending on yourself -- not as an ascetic, of course, but as Paul gave us an example:

I have coveted [the] silver or gold or clothing of no one. Yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my wants, and to those who were with me. I have showed you all things, that thus laboring [we] ought to come to the aid of the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive . . . (Acts 20:35).

Ed.

¹¹ C. H. Mackintosh, *Short Papers*, Believers Bookshelf: Sunbury, pp. 209-211.

PEACE, PEACE WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE

(Jer. 6:14; 8:11)

The Divine Order: Truth and Peace

The Christian's desire for peace is a scriptural desire; but a lack of peace among those gathered together to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a lack of peace in the family is often experienced. Well may we ask, 'What is the cause?' Surely there must be a reason, or reasons, because God does not arbitrarily withhold peace. It is part of His perfect moral ways with us when there is a needs-be to withhold peace, because He must be consistent with His own nature as Light and Love. Do we know what that means?

The Lord enabling, as we proceed, we will see that the desire for truth and righteousness must not only accompany, but must precede the desire for peace. Why? It is because this order is consistent with the very nature of God as light and love, and it is consistent with the way in which God is revealed in the Scripture of Truth. We shall trace this without enlarging on it, trusting that our God will, by His Spirit, seal this truth to our consciences and hearts by that Word which gives light, giving understanding to the simple (Psalm 119:130).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is "the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (2 John 3). Let us walk after Him in truth and love.

"Truth and love" which characterized the Son of the Father, must necessarily be found in this order because He is the Word, the revealer, of God. He manifested the nature of God. In 1 John we first read that "God is light" (1 John 1:5) and then that "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). As we might expect, our blessed Lord is presented in John 1 as light come into the world and in John 3 as the expression of God's love. Are we not to learn from this order?

Grace is God for us in all that He is as light and love in spite of what we are in ourselves. Thus we are not surprised to find that grace first teaches us denial; denial of impiety and worldly lusts; and then teaches us to live soberly, and justly and piously . . . (Titus 2:11,12). Grace would cause the children of God to manifest His nature as light and love.

If we think of unfeigned love, how shall we show it? "Let love be unfeigned; abhorring evil; cleaving to good" (Rom. 12:9). Put away the evil first. This is ever the divine order, which if not followed, will result in our substituting self for God and human sweetness for divine love. Mr. Bellett remarked that we purge the leaven and fill the lump with honey. Let the lump

be filled rather with light and love, truth and peace.

This order pervades all dispensations because it is a moral order that flows from the very nature of God as light and love, and follows the revelation of that nature in "the Son of the Father, in truth and love." Though the Father is revealed in the Son, the Old Testament is written in keeping with the nature of God also. Thus, Isaiah 1:16 tells us: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well." And what was good for the remnant in Zechariah's day looks on to the millennium, too. "Love ye then truth and peace" (Zech. 8:19). It is the flesh that reverses the order.

We need the wisdom of God in order to be here for His glory, the wisdom that is contrary to the old nature within us; we need the very wisdom from above. "But wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable . . ." (James 3:17). Loss of peace results from reversing that order.

What makes some think that God will act contrary to His own nature and His moral orderings that flow from that nature? "For righteous is Jehovah; he loveth righteousness" (Psalm 11:7). And what is said of the Son of the Father, in truth and love? "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (Heb.1:9). Let us look at a very important matter here. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (Isaiah 32:17). We may come with false or sophistical arguments about "judge not," or John 8:1-11, etc., etc., but the child of God taught by the Spirit bows to this divine order, even if he has difficulty with such passages, which the Lord will make clear to him in due time.

Hezekiah, who began so well, seems to have forgotten this order for his house. Having looked death in the face, and recovered, he then sinned in showing to the Babylonians all that was in his house. (Do you bring Babylonianism into your house?) When he heard of the discipline that would come upon his progeny, he uttered those SELFISH and sad, sad words: "if only there shall be peace and truth in my days" (2 Kings 20:19; cp. Isaiah 39:8). Following this Manasseh was born (3 years later). It would be dishonoring to the Lord and to our loss, to ignore such a lesson given for our benefit.

It was very wrong for Mordecai to condone and approve it that Esther should marry a Gentile (cp. Esther 2:10, 11, 20). Back at Jerusalem such doings were dealt with (Ezra 10). We need not be surprised that in Babylon (religious confusion), Mordecai, having come into power, sent to all the Jews "words of peace and truth" (Esther 9:30). Yes, Mordecai and Hezekiah had some peace and some truth. Is that what the new man wants? Do we want peace and truth collectively (Mordecai) and in our family (Hezekiah)? when God's order is

"truth and peace"? Let us then know that we shall end in corporate, family, and individual disobedience and sorrow if we reverse God's order.

There is a better way, the divine way, consistent with our profession of being children of Him who is light and love, and followers of the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

These are the things that ye shall do: Speak truth every one with his neighbor; execute truth and the judgment of peace in your gates" (Zech. 8:16).

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in (the) Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

But youthful lusts flee, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22).

That is the way to seek peace (1 Peter 3:11), besides yielding one's own "rights" (Phil.4:5). "Be diligent to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). Cp. Malachi 2:6.

In his *Exposition of the Epistles of John*, on third John, W. Kelly wrote:

For I rejoiced exceedingly when brethren came and bore witness to thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth" (ver. 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.

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

Thine, O Lord, is the righteousness, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day (Dan. 9:7).

To this man will I look, to the afflicted and contrite in spirit, and who trembleth at my word (Isaiah 66:2).

The assemblies then throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified and walking in the fear of the Lord, and were increased

through the comfort of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:31).

Grace and Truth

Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). God had to act towards us in sovereign grace in order for us to receive the truth. Once having the truth, we need to walk in truth and love. This grace of God is known in truth (Col. 1:6).

It might be of interest to summarize several orders of words that we find in the Old Testament.

"Peace and truth" is mentioned once in the O. T. (Jer.33:6), other than in Hezekiah's and Mordecai's case. Jer.33:6 also refers to the sovereign grace of God; when He will purge there bels from among Israel and bring them into the bond of the covenant (Ezek.20:33-38), and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26). One more such passage is Isaiah 60:17: "I will make thy officers peace, and thy rulers righteousness." Cp. Isaiah 62:1. Jer. 33:6 and Isaiah 62:1, as John 1:17, refer to the introduction of a new order founded on sovereign grace.

"Loving-kindness and truth" is mentioned numerous times in the O. T. (Proverbs 3:3; 14:22; 16:6; Psalm 25:10; 40:10, 11; 57:3,10; 61:7; 85:10; 86:15; 89:14; 115:1; 117:2; 138:2; 2 Samuel 15:20; Cp. Psalm 101:1). Proverbs 16:6 looks on to Christ and fits with John 1:17 and Jer. 33:6. It appears that where loving-kindness is mentioned, it always precedes the word truth.

Psalm 85:10 is interesting from the standpoint that here again lovingkindness and truth are in that order, but righteousness and peace are mentioned in this order.

It is very interesting to note these things in God's Word. When loving-kindness and truth are spoken of, that seems always to be the order. When peace is coupled with truth or righteousness, the order is truth, or righteousness, then peace, except as noted in Hezekiah's and Mordecai's case.

There is another variation: loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness (Jer.9:24); keep loving-kindness and judgment (Hosea 12:6); execute true judgment, and show loving-kindness and mercies one to another (Zech. 7:9).

Having surveyed these orders of words, and noting that nothing sets aside our conclusion in the last section, let us turn briefly to the importance the New Testament places on doctrine (teaching), i.e., the truth from God for our

instruction; for how shall we walk in truth and love if we neglect doctrine?

The Importance of Sound Doctrine

Early practice was to continue in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Is this our exercise?

The Romans were commended for having "obeyed from the heart the form of teaching into which ye were instructed" (Rom. 6:17). Do we do so from the heart?

It is God's intention that doctrine be presented in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:6, 26) and elsewhere (1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2). Do we desire to hear?

The man of God is instructed to "convict, rebuke, encourage, with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not bear sound teaching; but according to their own lusts will heap up to themselves teachers, having an itching ear; and will turn away their ear from the truth, and will have turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3). Have we imbibed the spirit of this sad state? in any degree?

One of the qualifications for overseership is, "clinging to the faithful word according to the doctrine taught" (Titus 1:9). Do we thus value the faithful word?

We need to be "nourished with the words of faith and of the good teaching which thou hast fully followed up" (1 Tim. 4:6). We are to give heed to, and continue in, the teaching (1 Tim. 4:16). Do we have the circumcised, listening ear?

God says that those who teach should wait on their teaching (Rom. 12:7). There are those who labor in word and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17). God has given teachers (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). Paul exercised himself in teaching (Acts 11:26; 15:35; 18:11; 20:20; 28:31; 1 Cor. 4:17). What we speak should become sound teaching (Titus 2:1); and there is to be uncorruptedness in teaching (Titus 2:7). Paul taught the same doctrine everywhere (1 Cor. 4:17; Col. 1:28). Do we heartily receive what God has given? As to teaching, is it so? And as to hearing, do we receive what God has given?

God wants our behavior to adorn the teaching (Titus 2:10). Are we diligently learning the truth so that we can adorn it with our behavior?

The Word of God is profitable for sound doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16). Are we profiting from sound doctrine?

The Romans were instructed to turn away from "those who create divisions and occasions of falling, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learnt" (Rom. 16:17). Do we practice this?

How do we respond to these scriptures? Do we only want convenient truth? Are we somewhat lazy in finding out the will of the Lord?

Would we rather not "trouble" ourselves? On what basis, then, should we expect peace from God? As for God, His way is perfect (Psalm 18:30).

Ed.

(This article is available in pamphlet form)

WHO ARE "THE MANY" OF 2 COR. 2:6?

Sufficient to such a one [is] this rebuke which [has been inflicted] by the many . . . (2 Cor. 2:6).

I should be sorry that anyone would mistakenly think that "the many" means the body of Christ on earth, or a number of assemblies. It is painful that the name of J. N. Darby should be invoked for such a view. Perhaps a footnote in his translation to 2 Cor. 2:6 has led to a wrong thought:

The body at large -- 'the mass,' as ch. 9:2.

This refers to the many at Corinth, who acted in putting away the wicked person from among themselves (1 Cor. 5). The word is used again in 1 Cor. 9:2, but *there* it refers to saints in many places.

Returning to 2 Cor. 6:2, we should note that while "the many" refers to Corinth (not to the body of Christ on earth), the expression does not indicate unanimity, and neither does it mean that the Corinthian assembly was not unanimous. Moreover it "does not give countenance to a majority acting."¹

Individuals he still feared had not judged *themselves*, but as a body they had acted on his letter, and put the person out, and he was humbled. A majority can never act as such: it is a mere human arrangement to come to a conclusion; the conscience of the assembly is not purified, but the assembly divided; nothing is done of the scriptural purpose . . . The object is the conscience of the assembly being pure: a majority denies this.²

The conscience of the whole church was forced into cleanness in a matter of

1. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 26:313.

2. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:444.

which it was corporately guilty . . . Paul identifies himself with the whole body, first forcing them to clear themselves, and then taking care that they should all restore him, that there should be perfect unity between himself and them. He goes with them, and associates them with himself, in it all; and so, in both excommunication and restoration, he has them with him. If the conscience of the body is not brought up to what it acts, I do not see what good is done: it is merely making hypocrites of them.³

It is quite clear that JND understood "the many" to refer to saints in the Corinthian assembly; and also that the expression cuts off talk of majorities in assembly action -- for majorities in divine matters indicate flesh acting.

Ed.

THE LAW, THE CHRISTIAN, AND LOVE

The law says that one should love his neighbor as himself. There is now a 'Christian' self-esteem industry that uses this to say that you cannot love others without learning to love yourself -- because how can you love your neighbor if you do not love yourself. Observe that the law assumes self-love is there. The law recognizes self as a living thing in God's sight. This is not so in Christianity:

If any one will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me (Luke 9:23).

For I, through law, have died to law, that I may live to God. I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20).

When the Christ is manifested who [is] our life . . . (Col. 3:4).

The law did not contemplate that you should deny **yourself** (not, deny yourself something, but *yourself*). The law was for the first man, man in his Adam standing (in the persons of Israel). The Christian is before God connected with the second man, the Lord out of heaven. Indeed, Christ is his life. And so:

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by [the] Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Rom. 5:5).

Ed.

PROMISE KEEPERS

A book lies before me, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, Focus on the Family: Colorado Springs, 1994, with seven chapters by seven contributors. I will not expand upon how the title reminds me of ancient Israel saying, 'all that the Lord has said will we do.' Bill McCartney, the founder of this movement, wrote ch. 6: "Promise 6, A Man and His Brothers -- A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity."

Thus, Promise Keepers are committed to the ecumenical movement (which will culminate in the formation of the great whore, Rev. 17). The writer expresses the ecumenical commitment thus:

Now, I don't mean to suggest that all cultural differences and denominational distinctives are going to disappear. But what I know is that Almighty God wants to bring Christian men together regardless of their ethnic origin, denominational background, or style of worship. There's only one criterion for this kind of unity: to love Jesus and be born of the Spirit of God. Can we look one another in the eye -- black, white, red, brown, yellow, Baptist, Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, Catholic, and so on -- and get together on this common ground: "We believe in salvation through Christ alone, and have made Him the Lord of our lives"? Is that not the central, unifying reality of our existence? And if it is, can we not focus on that and call each other brother instead of always emphasizing our differences? Men, we have got to get together on this! (pp. 161, 162).

Without commenting on his gratuitous mixing of racial matters with denominational matters, we might observe that the Roman Catholic spider needs but a little more patience as the Protestant fly increasingly entangles itself in the ecumenical web.

The *Psychoheresy Awareness Letter* (4137 Primavera Road, Santa Barbara, CA, 93110) of July/Aug. 1994, says every man attending the 1993 convention of Promise Keepers in Boulder, CO, received a copy of R. Hick's, *The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood*; and that it is a Bible-bending book to fit personal experiences and psychological opinions. The book has much to say about a phallic kind of manhood, and is led into what I regard as seriously compromising speculations about the Lord Jesus. It is the same egregious effrontery that would, as the men of Bethshemesh, look inside the Ark of the Covenant. How could a Christian who is separated from evil unto the Lord have to do with the ecumenical, compromising, Promise Keeper movement?

Ed.

Books

Fundamental Truths of Salvation, Ed. Dennett, (64 pp.) has been reprinted and is available for \$3.00 each. It is very useful for helping persons with doubts and difficulties.

The Ruin of the Church, Eldership and Ministry of the Word by Gift (by the editor) is \$9.00, and is a 159 page book with scripture index. The subtitle is:

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