

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

***Showing God's Purpose to  
Glorify Himself in Christ  
in Two Spheres:***

***The Heavenly  
and  
The Earthly***

by R. A. Huebner

***Volume 1:***

**Adam Transgressed  
His Covenant with God**



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## Preface

If the Lord will, this is the first of several volumes about the mystery and the covenants. We begin with the silence that had been kept in OT times regarding the mystery of Christ and the church, then the objections of covenant theology, claiming that the silence was only partial, and why this objection is made. After that, we will consider some aspects, or features, of the mystery, and follow that with an examination of the subject of the OT covenants. The “covenants of promise” (Abrahamic, Davidic, and the new covenant) are said in Scripture to belong to Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:43-5). Of course, in the ways of God, these will be made good to the new Israel under the new covenant. We will also consider the bearing of the Mosaic covenant, which is not a covenant of promise as the other three are.

The place to begin is to have *God point to* how to understand; and He has done so in several Scriptures that tell us that silence was kept in the OT regarding the hidden mystery of Christ and the church. This tells us that the spiritualization of the OT prophets by those who hold to covenant theology flies in the face of what God has expressly stated. Thus, being so guided, and *submitting* thereto, we are on the ground of *faith* -- which comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. This is “*the obedience of faith*” (Rom. 16:25, 26), regarding the mystery (not the obedience of faith regarding the gospel -- cp. Rom. 1:1-5), which mystery we will consider below. We have the Scriptures that are written to Christians, as such, and turn to them **first** for guidance. The *first* thing to be settled is not ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

Scripture quotations are from the translation by J. N. Darby, unless otherwise indicated, but the KJV may be found in many of the quotations from other authors.

[The manuscript for this book was found among the papers of the late R. A. Huebner and has been prepared for publication without his guidance. Except where noted in the text, the changes made to his manuscript were confined to editorial changes for grammar, spelling, reference checking, rearrangements of some of the topics as seemed needed, and mostly minor adjustments of wording for clarity’s sake. Chapter 11 of volume 4 was not found with the rest of this manuscript. So the editor inserted extracts from the working notebooks of R. A.

Huebner to fill in that missing material. In several places, conclusions of chapters or sections of the text were missing and the editor has attempted to insert appropriate words, but in each case has indicated that the words are his and not the author’s. The reader is invited to replace these additions with his own conclusions, if he should prefer them to what the editor has added.

The editor is very conscious that the author would not have wanted this book to appear in public without its being accompanied by prayer for the blessing of the Lord Jesus upon it to the good of the souls that read it.

D. Ryan, editor]

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1. This is not to say that discussion of that matter is unimportant. I am speaking of priority from having the Christian Scriptures before us. The subject of interpretation is discussed in my *Daniel’s 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*. The reader will also be helped in reading *The Mystery* and *The Mystery and the Covenants*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

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

### *Chapter 1*

## *The Mystery of Christ and the Church Was Not Spoken of in the OT*

### *Introduction*

Listen to what the Apostle to the Gentiles wrote:

Now, I rejoice in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the assembly; of which I became minister, according to the dispensation of God which [is] given me towards you to complete the word of God, the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints . . . (Col. 1:24-26).

The great secret that had been “hidden throughout the ages in God” (Eph. 3:9), which completes the Word of God, ought surely to be before our hearts, providing light and guidance in our understanding of the purpose of God for His own glory in Christ, and how to rightly understand what He formerly did. How this bears on the subject of the coming kingdom predicted in the OT is this: since the prophets did not speak of the mystery of Christ and the Church, the mystery of Christ and the church is not the fulfilment of those prophecies. This precludes the spiritual alchemy that transmutes those prophecies into prophecies concerning Christ and the church. Thus, the OT prophecies which speak of Israel’s future glory are to be understood just as a Jew at that time could only have understood them -- literally (with due allowance for figures of speech and symbols), and there is no fulfillment of the prophesied kingdom during the present period. In order to have these prophecies fulfilled now, it is necessary to ‘spiritualize’ the statements of the prophets so that no literal kingdom is meant. Among other things, appeal is made to the fact that the prophets do use obvious figures of speech and symbols and so it is claimed that when they prophesied about Jerusalem, Israel, and Judah, the new covenant, etc., the church was meant. This involves two things:

- the mystery of Christ and the church is defined to be something that it really is not, so as to have the OT prophets speak of it; and,
- the Word is contradicted when it says silence was kept concerning the mystery.

Any sensible literalist allows, of course, for the use of figures of speech and symbols. <sup>2</sup> But, he rightly says, Judah, Jerusalem and Israel mean just that and not the church. Accordingly, the new covenant (Jer. 31; Heb. 8) is for the future nation of Israel during the millennium.

Let us now look at those Scriptures which show that the O. T. prophets did not speak about the church. It is claimed by spiritualizers of the OT prophets that the OT quotations found in Acts and the Epistles show that the prophets spoke of the church. Suffice it to say here that while those texts will be fulfilled in the coming 1000 year reign of Christ, they are cited by the NT writers as having some bearing or application *in principle* meanwhile, and designate neither a complete nor partial fulfillment

### *The Three Scriptures Concerning The Hiddenness of This Mystery*

We are going to look at three Scriptures concerning the mystery of Christ and the church. Received into the soul, via the conscience, which is the inlet of truth, we will see that the OT prophets did not speak about the church. These three Scriptures are:

| Rom. 16:25          | Col. 1:26         | Eph. 3:9          |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| silence             | hidden            | hidden            |
| kept <u>in</u>      | <u>from</u>       | <u>throughout</u> |
| <i>the times of</i> | <i>ages &amp;</i> | <i>the ages</i>   |
| <i>the ages</i>     | generations       | in God            |

Something can be learned by weighing the various emphases in the above Scriptures.

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

## Listening to What Scripture Says

Once I was asked to visit an Arminian and we came to Heb. 6:1-6, where it is said that if a person falls away it is “*impossible*” to renew him again unto repentance. That is not good for the lost-again saved-again notion. But he had a triumphant reply. He said that “impossible” meant “almost impossible.” Well, that brought the discussion to an end. That was the sign of a determined agenda, not of subjection to the Word of God. It is like when pointing out that “silence has been kept,” retorting that “silence has been almost kept.”

On another occasion I wrote to someone who had written statements subversive of the holiness due God’s house. I asked him what a “*partaker*” of his wicked works (2 John 11) meant. He replied that it meant a “partial partaker.” He could not embolden himself to flatly deny it to entirely get rid of what was distasteful to his unholy view so he did his best to water it down by qualifying it as “partial.” He too had an agenda. It is like when pointing out that “silence has been kept,” retorting that “silence has been partially kept.”

The same is true with the fact that God’s Word expressly declares that silence was kept about the mystery. The opposition amounts to this: that the mystery was *almost* secret, that it was *partially* hidden. We see here the same phenomenon as in the above two cases. There is an agenda -- and that agenda is to find the church in the OT; to find that the prophets did speak of the mystery; to make the church be the spiritual Israel.<sup>3</sup> It is a fact that different opposers of this silence use different explanations, but the agenda is that the mystery was not unknown in the OT.

If we will receive into our souls, through our consciences, that in Heb. 6 “impossible” means just that, and in 2 John 11 “partaker” means just that, and that “silence” in Rom. 16:25 means just that, we will have light from God instead of the mist of a human agenda. The mystery is “made known for obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26). When God says that silence was kept, the obedience of faith believes.

## The Mystery is Not the Gospel

To repeat, from our vantage point of having the completed Scriptures, the *first* thing to be settled is not ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation. What needs to

3. During the millennial reign of Christ, the new Israel under the new covenant, will have the law written in their hearts (Heb. 8). They shall all be saved (Rom. 11:26). They shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). Thus, the new Israel under the new covenant will be the spiritual Israel, as well as the head of the nations.

be done first is to bow within one’s soul to the force of Rom. 16:25, 26 and several other Scriptures.

Now to him that is able to establish you, according to my glad tidings and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery, as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages, but [which] has now been made manifest, and by prophetic scriptures, according to commandment of the eternal God, made known for obedience of faith to all the nations . . . (Rom. 16:25, 26).

W. Kelly’s translation of the passage is this:

Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery kept in silence in times of the ages but now manifested and by prophetic scriptures according to commandment of the everlasting God made known for obedience of faith unto all the Gentiles, to God only wise, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages (or, for ever), Amen. (Rom. 16:25-27).<sup>4</sup>

We are going to discover that opposers of dispensational truth undermine the word “silence,” as they must necessarily do, since their object is to find references in the OT to the mystery of Christ and the church, concerning which silence was kept in the times of the ages. We take note here that Arndt and Gingrich’s Lexicon says:

μυστήριον χρόνους αἰώνιους σεσχημένον a secret that was concealed for long ages Ro 16:25.<sup>5</sup>

Notice from this quotation that not only was it a secret and concealed, but concealed for long ages. Some say that “The most natural reference, however, is to ‘eternity past’ . . .”<sup>6</sup> Well, that is an attempt to allow for *no-silence* in the OT concerning this mystery. Many objectors to dispensational truth regard the time-reference -- “silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages” -- to the OT times as is evidenced by their claim that there was not a total silence in OT times, and that it was only partially hidden, as we shall see below.

Of course, the OT spoke of future salvation for the Gentiles.<sup>7</sup> That is not the mystery. The OT had witnessed to the manifestation of the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21) and many other things concerning Christ (Luke 24:44-46). These

4. See his *Notes on Romans, in loco*.

5. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, sec. ed., p. 749,

The interested reader may consult the NT use of *sigao* in *The Englishman’s Greek Concordance*, p. 685 (#4601 in the cross reference to *Strong’s Concordance*).

6. Everett F. Harrison on Romans in F. E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, vol. 10, p. 170, 1976.

7. There will be saved Gentiles in the millennium.

things are not the mystery. When anti-dispensationalists say that these things are the mystery, I ask: are they doing even the slightest justice to the statement, “as to which silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages”?

Why not forthrightly state, “No, silence was not kept. I can find the mystery in many places in the OT -- it is easy to find predictions of salvation for the Gentiles”? Is not this what the erroneous notion that the mystery is salvation for the Gentiles, equally with the Jews, really amounts to? You will say that I am caricaturizing the opponents. We shall see below.<sup>8</sup>

Now, not only does the fact that silence was kept concerning the mystery tell us that the predicted salvation for Gentiles is not the mystery,<sup>9</sup> but Rom. 16:25 makes an instructive distinction. “Now to him that is able to establish you, according to”:

- “my glad tidings  
and
- the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery.”

Clearly, there are two things here, not one. We do not read, ‘according to my glad tidings, the revelation of the mystery.’ But I suggest that this is the way, in effect, that anti-dispensationalists take the passage.

The loss in not seeing that being established rests on two things, not just one,

8. As an example of what we shall see is the general approach of “Reformed interpreters,” note that Robert L. Reymond claims that “The meaning of the word {secret} is not in dispute between dispensational and Reformed interpreters; it is the content of the “‘mysteries’ that is the matter of dispute” (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Nelson, p. 536, sec. Ed., 1998). Is that to be believed for even one second? Yes, the content *is* in dispute; and so is the word -- for to the Reformed, silence means that something was said. Why pretend otherwise? On p. 540 he tells us that Paul did not say in Ephesians “that the mystery had been hidden to previous generations in an absolute sense.” He then refers to some fifteen OT texts concerning future blessings that Gentiles would share with the Jews. Of course they point to Gentile blessing; but that blessing pointed to is millennial.

9. Charles Hodge wrote:

The mystery or secret, is not the simple purpose to call the Gentiles into the church, but the mystery of redemption . . . In all these places the mystery spoken of is God’s purpose of redemption, formed in the counsels of eternity, impenetrably hidden from the view of men until revealed in his own time. It was this plan of redemption thus formed, thus long concealed, but now made known through the Gospel, that Paul was sent to bear as a guiding and saving light to all men (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 170, 1856, 1980 reprint).

The reader needs to bear in mind that the idea of covenant is the concept in covenant theology that is the unifying idea in Scripture, i.e., covenant structures Scripture. As part of this, understanding the unfolding of the progress of redemption is what unifies all Scripture for covenant theology. The result is that covenantism hinders understanding the mystery of Christ and the church.

is great. Look at the words, “*Now to him that is able to **establish** you.*” This verse tells us that **two** things are necessary for establishment. The glad tidings only does part of this. A right apprehension of the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery (and, of course, a corresponding Christian walk in this truth -- not mere profession about it), is necessary for establishment. “Oh,” someone will object, “Just because I do not accept ‘dispensationalism’ with its distinction between Israel and the church, etc., I am not established?” Well, I did not say it, the text says it.

It is the same concerning the gospel. What is needed is a right apprehension of the glad tidings concerning “that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures,” etc. (1 Cor. 15:34) (and of course, a corresponding Christian walk in this truth -- not mere profession about it -- is necessary for establishment). “Oh,” someone will object, “Just because I do not accept your dispensational distinction between the way of approach to God in Israel, and what you say about approach to God *now*, I am not established? I think we still need priests today who can offer a sacrifice -- the mass.”

## *The Mystery*

At this point it would be well to have a few introductory remarks concerning what a New Testament mystery is and what this particular mystery entails. W. Kelly wrote:

We must, however, guard against the notion that “the mystery” or secret means the gospel. The gospel in itself does not and never can mean a mystery. It was that which in its foundations always was before the mind of God’s people in the form of promise, or of a revelation of grace not yet accomplished. But nowhere in Scripture is the gospel called a mystery. It may be connected with the mystery, but it is not itself a mystery. It was no mystery that a Savior was to be given; it was the very first revelation of grace after man became a sinner. The Seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent’s head. A mystery is something that was not revealed of old, and which could not be known otherwise. Again, you have in the prophets a full declaration that the righteousness of God was near to come; the plainest possible statement that God was going to show Himself a Savior-God. So again you have His making an end of sins and bringing in reconciliation and everlasting righteousness. All these things were in no sense the mystery. The mystery means that which was kept secret, not that which could not be understood, which is a human notion of mystery; but an unrevealed secret, -- a secret not yet divulged in the OT but brought out fully in the New. What, then, is this mystery? It is, first, that Christ, instead of taking the kingdom, predicted by the prophets, should completely disappear from the scene of this world, and that God should set Him up in heaven at His own right hand as the Head of all glory, heavenly and earthly, and that He should give the whole universe into the

hands of Christ to administer the kingdom and maintain the glory of God the Father in it. This is the first and most essential part of the mystery, the second, or Church's part, being but the consequence of it. Christ's universal headship is not the theme spoken of in the OT. You have Him as Son of David, Son of man, Son of God, the King; but nowhere is the whole universe of God (but rather the kingdom under the whole heavens) put under Him. In this headship over all things, Christ will share all with His bride. Christ will have His Church the partner of His own unlimited dominion, when that day of glory dawns upon the world.

Hence, then, as we know, the mystery consists of two great parts, which we have summed up in Eph. 5:32: "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Thus the mystery means neither Christ nor the Church alone, but Christ and the Church united in heavenly blessedness and dominion over everything that God has made. Hence, as we saw from chapter 1, when He was raised from the dead, God set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, "and put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." It is not said, "over the church," which would overthrow, not teach, the mystery. He will be over Israel and over the Gentiles, but nowhere is He said to reign over the Church. The Church is His body. I admit it is a figure, but a figure that conveys an intense degree of intimacy, full of the richest comfort and the most exalted hope. The saints who are now being called are to share all things along with Christ in that day of glory. Hence it becomes of the greatest interest to know what the nature of the Church is. When did its calling begin, and what is the character of that calling, what the responsibilities that flow from it? <sup>10</sup>

The following from J. N. Darby might provoke further thought:

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

The bringing in of the Gentiles was not an unrevealed mystery. It is referred to in many scriptures; but Romans 16:25 speaks of a mystery kept secret since the world began, and to say that this is what is plainly taught in the Old Testament scriptures referred to is a bold defiance of scripture, and that is all. To say that "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people," and "I will set thee for a light to the Gentiles," is a matter kept secret since the world began, is to trifle with the word of God. The only thing it proves is that the writer is ignorant of the mystery, now it is revealed, and knows nothing beyond the passages quoted. The Lord, it is said, expounded after His resurrection the things concerning Himself. It is scarcely conceivable that He should have left out the calling of the Gentiles in His exposition. Concerning Himself is not concerning the Church, but as to His own person. The Spirit was to come to guide them into all the truth. It is

10. *Lectures on . . . the Ephesians*, ch. 3.

expressly stated, that He was showing them "that Christ must suffer and enter into his glory" (Luke 24:26, 44-46). A person must be singularly hard driven up to quote such scripture as this, and in the face of positive scriptures that it is *now* revealed by the Spirit, and had been kept secret since the world began -- hid in God. The calling of the Gentiles is not in itself the formation of the Church. "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people" is a different thought. It justifies blessing to the Gentiles which the Jews would not hear of, "forbidding to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved." But it treats the Jews as God's people, whereas in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile at all

... No one denies that Christ spoke prophetically of the Church, though the Church itself was not yet revealed; but John 10:16 does not even do this. Gathering individuals into a flock does show the calling of the Gentiles, which had always been revealed, and approaches the outward state of things here. But the doctrine of the Church is not in it at all (that is, of the body of Christ). All this still only proves (what indeed makes all plain, as to the whole of these teachers), that they have not the scriptural doctrine of the Church at all. John *never* speaks of the Church -- once of a local church -- but never of *the* Church, but of Christ and individuals. None of the apostles speaks of the Church, nor uses the word of Christians as a whole, but Paul. It was a dispensation committed to him, as he tells us. Christ prophesies of it; the Acts relate historically its being founded; but no one speaks of it as a teacher, or doctrinally, but Paul. The nearest approach is an allusion in 1 Peter 2 to the temple: "We are built up a spiritual house." T. M. {Mansell?} is forced to admit that this purpose of God in gathering the saints into one was revealed in a manifested form and visible unity, never known or seen before. It is easy to say, never known or seen. When did it *exist* before? Where was the head to which the body was to be united? or did it subsist without any head at all? <sup>11</sup>

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

## *The Obedience of Faith Regarding the Mystery*

11. *Collected Writings*, 10:248, 249.

And what are we to do? Obey. “. . . made known for obedience of faith to all the nations.” What was made known? The mystery. Rom. 1:5 speaks of “obedience of faith among all the nations.” I believe all Christians, sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13), have participated in what Rom. 1:1-5 refers to concerning “obedience of faith.” But at the end of Romans we find something further made known for the “obedience of faith.” Here, the mystery is mentioned.<sup>12</sup> In Rom. 1 it is a matter of our calling: in Rom. 16:25, 26 it is a matter of the mystery. There are many who have “obedience of faith” regarding their calling, but not “obedience of faith” regarding the mystery. I hardly think there is “obedience of faith” regarding the mystery when Scripture says *silence* was kept concerning it and a Christian labors to prove that silence was not kept in the OT concerning it. The force of Rom. 16:25, 26 is resisted because to receive what it expressly states means that some highly developed theological systems will collapse.

In direct opposition to the express statements of Scripture, covenant theology (now joined by retrograde dispensationalists) says that the mystery can be found in the OT prophets but not to the degree “as it has now been revealed” (Eph. 3:5). That is the use made of the word *as*. So instead of understanding *as* in the light of Rom. 16:25, 26, theology attempts to force Rom. 16:25, 26 into conformity with this false construction put upon *as*, and in effect turning the word “silence was kept” (Rom. 16:25, 26) into “talk was made.” Eph. 3:5 indicates, not a comparison, but a fact, a contrast.

### *When, and From Whom, Was the Mystery Hidden?*

The fact that Scripture declares when, and from whom, the mystery was hidden is consistent with Rom. 16:25, 26, in affirming silence in OT ages. Col. 1:26 speaks of it also:

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

This means that the mystery was hidden both from past time-periods (ages) and from persons (generations). I suggest, therefore, that “obedience of faith” in respect of the mystery will acknowledge that these Scriptures declare that the OT was silent about it. Thus the issue of ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation of the OT prophets to see if they spoke about the church or not is settled by the *express* statements of Scripture itself. (Of course, the use of figures of speech and

12. The subject of the mystery of Christ and the church is not developed in Romans, though something to do with it is touched on in Rom. 16. It is developed in Col. but fully so in Eph.

symbols is a subject of inquiry, but in no way affects the issue.) What this means is that the OT prophets really meant Judah, Israel and Jerusalem (not the Church), and thus they have to be understood that there will be a future for national Israel. Also, the Church is not the continuator of Israel, nor the spiritual Israel. And in that day of Israel’s glory, when she is purged of every rebel (Ezek. 20) and all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26), Israel will not be part of the church.

### *Where Was the Mystery Hidden?*

We have seen that silence was kept in the times of the ages, that it was hidden from those ages and the peoples. *Where*, then, was it hidden? We should have thought that it was not hidden in the OT without even God telling us so. But He *has* told us where it was hidden.

To me, less than the least of all saints, has this grace been given, to announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ, and to enlighten all [with the knowledge of] what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things . . . (Eph. 3:8, 9).

Here we learn that the mystery was “hidden throughout the ages *in God*.” It was not hidden in the OT. During the OT ages it was hidden in God. *Types* have nothing to do, really, with the issue. Moreover, there are no types of a Head in heaven united to a body on earth. Types are history, incidents, or persons, not prophecy or revelation. The issue is that the OT prophets did not speak of the mystery of Christ and the church. There was “*silence*” about it; it was hidden from ages and from generations; it was *hidden in God*, not in the OT, not in the prophetic utterances. How is God to say it, if this does not mean what these texts are stating? Moreover, it is written in such a manner as to call for “*the obedience of faith*.”

## *Chapter 2*

### *Objections Regarding The Hiddenness of This Mystery*



## Introduction

### *The OT Prophets Can be Understood Literally*

Charles Hodge wrote:

It seems never to have entered into any human mind until the day of Pentecost, that the theocracy itself was to be abolished, and a new form of religion was to be introduced, designed and adapted for all mankind, under which the distinction of Jew and Gentile was to be done away.<sup>13</sup>

In *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, it is shown that the expectation of the remnant in our Lord's day, and of the Lord Himself, included the expectation of a future, literal kingdom for Israel; and, that in Acts 1 the Lord indicated to the disciples that the time for the kingdom was not yet.

Moreover, there was no reason for the Jews generally, as well as the remnant in our Lord's time here on earth, to expect anything other than a kingdom under Messiah, with Israel as the head of the nations. That the OT prophecies concerned the church is a figment of covenantism imposed upon Scripture. If it is true that God couched OT prophecies under the terms of a literal kingdom, what grounds did any Jew have for regarding the prophecies in any other way than speaking of a literal kingdom? And that is just what John the Baptist preached, and the Jews and the remnant believed (as did our Lord Himself, of course). All this has been gone into in detail in the book named above. It needs to be said that it follows from covenant theology that Jehovah deceived His people into a false expectation by couching what points to the church in words that speak of a literal kingdom.

The fact is that the kingdom was offered to the nation in the person of the King. He, the second man (1 Cor. 15:46, 47), was unacceptable to the first man, whose testing to see if he was recoverable had not yet been completed. The first man was being tested through the instrumentality of the persons of those composing Israel, and the conclusion of this last test was:

. . . they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

So He was put to the cross, rejected, and meanwhile before the kingdom is brought in by sovereign power and judgments, the great mystery of Christ and the church has meanwhile been manifested. There was a great void in revealed truth and it was given to the apostle Paul to make known truth spoken of in Col. 1:26 as completing, or filling full, the Word of God. The great secret as to which silence had been kept is now made known.

It is admitted by opponents of a future kingdom for Israel that if the OT

13. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand rapids: Baker, p. 165, 1980 [1856].

prophets are to be understood literally, they do indeed prophesy a kingdom for Israel. O. T. Allis wrote:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age.<sup>14</sup>

What here concerns us is the phrase "thy people." From the Old Testament standpoint this passage like Jeremiah's [Jer. 30:7] might be regarded as referring exclusively to Israel. But we have seen that the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel . . .<sup>15</sup>

If so, we would rightly conclude that Jehovah deceived the Jews to whom the prophecies were given. We reject what leads to this conclusion. Not only can the OT prophets be understood literally, their prophecies are couched in terms of a literal kingdom. The Jews could not understand them otherwise, and Jehovah did *not* deceive them. The time for the fulfilment of those prophecies has not yet arrived, and meanwhile God is forming a distinct heavenly people. Therefore, we change the words "can be understood literally" to "must be understood literally" -- allowing of course for figures of speech and symbolic language.<sup>16</sup>

### *Part of the Objection Is Error Concerning Both the Meanings of "Silence" and "Hidden" and the Content of the Mystery*

#### ERROR CONCERNING THE MEANINGS OF "SILENCE" AND "HIDDEN"

As an example of the general approach of "Reformed interpreters," note that Robert L. Reymond claims that:

The meaning of the word {secret} is not in dispute between dispensational and Reformed interpreters; it is the content of the 'mysteries' that is the matter of dispute.<sup>17</sup>

Is it to be believed for even one moment that the meaning is not in dispute? True, the content *is* in dispute; but so are the words "silence" and "hidden." To the covenantists, "silence" means *partial* silence, and "hidden" means *partially* hidden. On p. 540 he tells us that Paul did not say in Ephesians "that the mystery

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

15. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

16. This language is considered in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*.

17. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Nelson, p. 536, sec. ed., 1998.

had been hidden to previous generations in an absolute sense.” Since he refers to “dispensationalists” as claiming that nothing of the mystery was known in OT times, how is it that he says that the meaning of “secret” is not in dispute? He refers to some fifteen OT texts concerning future blessings that Gentiles would share with the Jews to show that something of the mystery was known in OT times. However, while those texts point to Gentile blessing, the blessing pointed to is millennial.

### ERROR CONCERNING THE CONTENT OF THE MYSTERY

Let us consider the content of the mystery. On page 541, Dr. Reymond has quoted from Charles Hodge:

That the Gentiles were to partake of the blessings of the Messiah’s reign, and to be united as one body with the Jews in his kingdom, is not only frequently predicted by the ancient prophets . . .

On the other hand, there are covenantists who say that the prophecies are couched in terms of a literal kingdom. Now, covenantists cannot have the matter both ways. If couched in terms of a literal kingdom, there are no OT prophecies of Jew and Gentile united in one body. Charles Hodge has read into the prophecies what is not there. But having done so, having found the one body predicted in the prophecies, what did he say concerning the mystery, or secret?

The mystery or secret, is not the simple purpose to call the Gentiles into the church, but the mystery of redemption . . . In all these places the mystery spoken of is God’s purpose of redemption, formed in the counsels of eternity, impenetrably hidden from the view of men until revealed in his own time. It was this plan of redemption thus formed, thus long concealed, but now made known through the Gospel, that Paul was sent to bear as a guiding and saving light to all men<sup>18</sup>

I suppose that by the mystery of redemption he means the manner by which God would accomplish what He has done regarding forming the union of Gentile and Jew as one body. In other words, the mystery of Christ and the church is defined by him to be “the mystery of redemption,” not the Gentiles being united as one body with the Jews. And this he says in the face of:

. . . by revelation the mystery has been made known to me . . . which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in [the power of the] Spirit, that [they who are of] the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body . . . (Eph. 3:3-6).

The Scripture expressly states that the mystery includes the joint-body, but Dr. Hodge says, in effect, no -- that was predicted by the prophets, and the mystery is “the mystery of redemption.” Because he was faithful to the secrecy and hiddenness of the mystery, being a covenantist, he was forced to find the joint-

18. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 170, 1856, 1980 reprint.

body in the OT prophecies. Without the joint-body being prophesied, he would have been forced by his covenantism to be unfaithful to the secrecy and hiddenness of the mystery. This well illustrates the dilemma of covenantism, as well as the issue of God couching the OT prophecies in terms of a literal kingdom, thus making of Jehovah a deceiver of His people.

### *The Understanding of the OT Saints*

The understanding of the OT saints is a separate matter from what we have just considered. Nonetheless, since Christians put themselves into the OT, their understanding is hindered. Reading back into the OT the light we have since the finished work of Christ and the coming of the Spirit to form the church results in attributing too much to them and actually obscuring light that the NT brings. This is implicit when Christianity is regarded as the accomplishment of OT promises. That, of course, violates the secrecy of the mystery. Let us consider, a little, the understanding of the OT saints.

Referring to Col. 1:27, Dr. Reymond wrote:

. . . Paul’s statements do not teach the radical conclusion which dispensationalists wish to draw from them, namely, that the Old Testament saints did not know that Messiah would be rejected and suffer . . .<sup>19</sup>

He also said:

They {i.e., dispensationalists} maintain that the rejection of the King and his sufferings and death were biblical “mysteries,” that is, facts the knowledge of which God had kept “locked up in the secret councils {sic} of God” until he revealed them to men through Jesus and his holy apostles and prophets.<sup>20</sup>

Possibly some “dispensationalists” said such nonsense. At any rate, J. N. Darby wrote:

As regards the estimate which the Old Testament saints formed of the sacrifices and types of the Old Testament, no one can speak definitely. That estimate was as various as we now see the estimate of renewed souls as to the value of Christ’s work is, if by value is meant the intelligent estimate of it. All that any one could speak of now is what the Old Testament afforded them, so that the Holy Ghost could act by the word upon those who had spiritual intelligence according to the measure of that day. Now I know of no fact in Christ’s history which is not testified of in the prophets -- His birth, His sufferings (even the details), His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of God, His coming again, and all the glories {except those in connection with the mystery} that should follow His

19. *Ibid.*, p. 541. He adds to this objection also “that a distinction must be drawn between Old Testament Israel ‘under law’ and the New Testament church ‘under grace’ . . .” (p. 541). There is a sharp distinction, for Israel was not of the church which is His body, spite of covenantism.

20. *Op. cit.*, p. 537.

sufferings. The only truths, that I am aware of, which were not revealed were the church, and His present intercession at the right hand of God -- truths, it is remarkable, equally omitted in John 1, in the catalogue of the glories of Christ there given, as well as (but for another reason) the fact that He was the Christ. Hence, the only question is, when they had the prophets, how far they were spiritual enough to connect these revelations with the types in order to understand them?

This depended on individual spirituality and divine teaching; only we must remember it could not be said, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things." They had not the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to guide into all truth. This makes all the difference as to intelligence. Further, it was not the intention of God, while the veil was unrent, to put the consciences of saints in the position in which the rending of it was to set them -- so that "the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." Alas! many Christians are in a Jewish state in this respect. Had this been the case, the free admission of the Gentiles by faith on the same footing would have been the consequence, as this was not intended. On the other hand, there was the thought, that the time was coming when the nation's sins and iniquities would be remembered no more, and this faith could look forward to, as to the then rejoicing of the Gentiles with His people, and a heavenly portion for the departed saints. This leads back to the original promise of the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head; and it, again, held out to faith a full restoration of man from the ruin, which though vague might have been complete in expectation. The clothing with skins, and Abel's sacrifice, and Noah's, point to covering and acceptance through a sacrifice; Isaac's, to the faith of resurrection. But when sacrifices were legally instituted and the law given, hopes of forgiveness and restoration in peace in a coming age, but no purged conscience, save occasional at the present time, marked the condition of the worshiper. Before that time it was a larger expectation of restoration and goodness, and founded on sacrifices and covering iniquity and nakedness before God; but, though larger and more complete, more vague, of course, by the seed of the woman, resurrection and heavenly things coming in. For this both Enoch and Abraham, and even Job, furnished evidence. Under the prescription of the law the conscience was more brought under the yoke, present occasional forgiveness by a sin-offering more definite, but it was narrowed into present occasional clearing, and the hope of deliverance put into the age to come and connected with Messiah, as we know also it will be.

With all this was connected a feeble estimate of sin and of the need consequently of divine righteousness, though this was prophetically intimated, but also in the age to come. There was sense of sin, of being shapen in iniquity (but no intelligence of a conflict between flesh and Spirit) and thus as a present thing righteousness looked for in the Lord; but, before the law, divine favor and the averting a curse by sacrifice; under the law, a definite sin-offering meeting the actual sins of the individual or of all, and a general sense of maintenance of heart in divine favor by the day of atonement -- the state as I have said in which

most Christians are. <sup>21</sup> ❖

As to the Old Testament saints, eternal life formed no part of the Old Testament revelation, even supposing that the Old Testament saints had it. Light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel. Not that they have been brought to existence, but they have been "brought to light." And when He in whom life is, came down and died and rose again, then a totally new thing was brought out. Eternal life is twice found in the Old Testament, but in both the passages it is prophetic of the millennium. And therefore, in the Old Testament, we never get conflict between flesh and Spirit. We find, 'conceived in sin,' in Psa. 51, but there is no thought of flesh lusting against the Spirit. "I am crucified with Christ," says the apostle, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and there we find a contradiction twice over, and somebody else put in instead of "I." So again in Rom. 7, "What I hate, that do I," and, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," though in the previous verse he had just said that he did do it! All that the Psalmist can say is, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He takes the ground that if God wash him, he will be whiter than snow. In that passage, it is not a question of washing with the blood of Christ, and what I insist upon is, do not put into a passage what you cannot get out of it. The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, i.e., those who are dead in sins are quickened, it is not the simple fact of receiving a new life; it is not the way Scripture speaks, to say, 'here is a living man, and I quicken him.' <sup>22</sup> ❖

There cannot for a moment be a doubt that the Spirit wrought in the Old Testament saints. The question is, whether He was present in the same manner, and dwelling in them, in virtue of Christ's work and glory, uniting them to a risen Head in heaven. This, of course, could not be. The work was not yet wrought, the glory not yet entered into by the man Jesus. The New Testament is clear on this point. He was not; but He *must* have wrought in and with the saints. He acts in everything good; the agent in all divine action in the creature, as in the creation He moved on the face of the waters, but specially in the hearts of men for any good that is there, and to be the source of joy and strength to the saints. So in the prophets and others. <sup>23</sup> ❖

I do not doubt that, according to the measure of their faith, though they did look for the exercise of God's government for deliverance here, yet in the delay of this they looked out of it all to a better place, though obscurely enough. But this changes nothing. They looked to it as a resource out of a scene they belonged to. The Christian dwells in it if in his right place, and has to cultivate the affections which belong to his Father's house as his own home. You will remark that I do not merely mean that in result Old Testament feelings are imperfect, for that may well be said of ours; but that the basis of them, the moral sphere in which they moved, necessarily made them imperfect; they were not in place, if they were

21. *Letters of J. N. Darby*, 3:347, 348.

22. *Notes and Jottings*, p. 351.

23. *Synopsis*, 2:117, 118

not. God might inspire feelings right for those without hope, desire, confidence; but He could not truly inspire to those without the feelings which expressed being within, for those feelings would not have been true. My feelings, if right, are the feelings of one within in my Father's house as a known home, reconciled to God. Theirs, if right, were those of persons without, looking for the present government of this world, and confiding in God in spite of subsisting evil in a world to which they belonged. He that is of the earth is earthy, says the greatest born of woman, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard that He testifieth. <sup>24</sup> ❖

## *No One Body, and No Union with Christ in the OT*

If I may pick among J. N. Darby's writings rejecting the notion that OT saints were part of the church and suggest only one paper to you to read concerning this matter, I suggest. "Is the Comforter Come? And Is He Gone?" <sup>25</sup> The immense difference between the position of a Christian and an OT saint must be emphasized. Here is a brief extract from J. N. Darby:

Another and lower ground of reasoning, though perhaps more palpable to some, alike shows the impossibility of the church's existing before the cross. Jew and Gentile could not be united in one. The Jew was bound strictly to keep up the middle wall of partition. The church is formed by its being thrown down, Christ thereupon forming in Himself one new man (Eph. 2:14-16). The church was formed through the throwing down of that which Judaism was bound to keep up. It could not exist until Judaism was ended. Hence, too, in Heb. 12 we have "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven," and "the spirits of just men made perfect," {these are OT saints} as a distinct class (v. 23). The truth is that the bringing in the Old Testament saints into the church is only dropping the whole proper blessing of the church itself. The teaching of Scripture as to it is wholly lost. <sup>26</sup> ❖

Here are a few extracts from W. Kelly's writings:

. . . Old Testament saints could not be described as not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The Spirit is the seal of our new position in Christ, promised in the prophets and by the Lord, and received by Him for us after His ascension (Acts 2: 33), and given as the Spirit of adoption, and uniting us to Him ascended. The distinction of flesh and Spirit is founded on the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the possession of the Spirit promised by Christ, and the present fruit of His redemption work. In His time on earth, John could say, The

24. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 9:11-12.

25. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 10:232-256.

26. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 31:350.

Holy Ghost was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified. And lust was working in the Old Testament saints, but now the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and freedom by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death is known only to those who have the Spirit given consequent on an accomplished redemption. It is clear they could not be in the Spirit if the Spirit was not given, and scripture is as clear on this as words can make it. The gift of the Spirit was such and so dependent on Christ's going away, that it was expedient for them He should do so. I have said above "if apprehended," because it cannot be but by experience. Forgiveness I can understand in a certain way, if I have it not, for men are forgiven their faults by parents, etc., and the burden of debt being removed is also intelligible. But being dead and reckoning myself dead when I feel myself alive is not so easy even to understand, till divine grace, teaching me to submit to God's righteousness, has set me free in the consciousness of a new position in which alive in Christ I treat the flesh as dead. It is called "the Spirit of Christ," because it is that which forms us in living likeness to Him. It is Christ in us in the power of life. This was perfectly displayed in His life in itself. In us it is realized in the measure in which we walk in the Spirit as we live in the Spirit.

Some further remarks will clear this point. The enquirer may remark that it is called "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," and "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus." I need not say that it is the same Spirit. But in the first, it is in contrast with the flesh (see Gal. 5:17). In the second it is that form of life in which its own qualities are displayed as in Christ Himself. In the third, it is the pledge of final deliverance and glorifying of the body itself into the likeness of Christ glorified, here spoken of however not farther than the quickening of the body by reason of it; but it goes on to the quickening of the mortal body itself. <sup>27</sup>

❖

The Holy Ghost, in the Old Testament, brings before us either individual saints or a nation as the objects of God's favor and counsels. It is of that nation (Israel) that the Spirit uses the term "congregation" in the Old Testament, which our translators have given as the "church in the wilderness," in Acts 7: 38 . . . this is a quite distinct thing from what is called "the Church of God," etc. in the New Testament. For the Epistle to the Ephesians, with great fulness, shows that the body of Christ, God's Church, is founded on the abolition of the distinction between Jew and Gentile, and therefore could not be till the cross broke down the middle wall of partition. Nor could believing Jew and Gentile be builded together for an habitation of God, till the Spirit came down in a fuller way than before, as the fruit of Christ's victory and ascension on high, where He took the new place of Head of the Church (not merely of King in Zion). Does not F. L. W. understand that this was an entirely novel work of God, and that Scripture gives to this new assembly of believing Jews and Gentiles (bonded together by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven in the name of Jesus) the name of "the Church of God?" It is not merely that the term "Church of God" is never, in the sense now spoken of, applied to the Old Testament saints; but the state of things

27. *The Bible Treasury*, 6:367.

could not be before Christ's death and resurrection as the basis, and the Holy Spirit's personal presence (not influence, gifts, etc. merely) as the power of this unity. It is founded on Christ exalted in heaven, after having accomplished redemption; and it is formed by that operation of the Spirit which not only quickens but unites Jewish and Gentile saints now to Christ in heaven and to each other on earth as one body.

Now, indubitably such was not the case in the wilderness, nor in the promised land: Jew and Gentile, whether believing or not, were rigorously severed by Divine command, and the saints were sustained by a promised Messiah, instead of resting on the accomplished work of the Savior. Life of course, Divine life, they had through faith, else they would not have been saints. But there was no such thing as union with a glorified head in heaven. Nay, it did not exist even when our Lord was upon earth. The disciples had faith and life, but they were forbidden to go to the Gentiles, instead of being united to them, till Christ rose from the dead. But the moment the Spirit came down, consequent on Christ's exaltation above, the various tongues proclaimed God's grace to the Gentiles as well as Jews; and for the first time we read of "the Church," in the full and proper sense, as now subsisting on earth. (See Acts 2) Christ had now begun to fulfil His promise, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." How could this mean the old assembly which fell in the wilderness? It was a new and future building, as I hope F. L. W. will feel . . . the truth on this subject is to me clear and certain, though I do not expect to convince every one . . . Acts 7:38, which has been fully explained (1 Cor. 10), and proves that Israel was typical of us. How does that show that they and we form "one body?"<sup>28</sup> ❖

It is of no small moment to bear in mind that, while the "heavenly calling," as a developed system, depends on the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, the faith of Old Testament believers was far in advance of their calling and circumstances. Thus, the Lord called Abram from his country and kindred and father's house to a land that He would show him; and it was certainly by faith that he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went. But Heb. 11:9, shows us the further action of faith; for when he got to the land he sojourned in it as in a strange country, because a ray of the distant heavenly glory had dawned on his soul. "He looked for a city which hath foundations," etc. Thus he and the other patriarchs died, as they lived, in faith, not in actual possession. Nevertheless, such strangership as this neither amounts to nor implies the "heavenly calling." Doubtless, the "heavenly calling" now produces and enjoins strangership also; but this in no way proves that itself was published and enjoyed of old.

For the "heavenly calling," brought before us in Hebrews, grew out of the position of the Lord as having appeared, and when He had by himself purged our sins, as having sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. Hence the earthly tabernacle and the rest in the land, and the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices entirely disappear, for the partakers of the heavenly calling who are addressed in the epistle. This state of things was not true either of the fathers or

the children of Israel. Their hope was intimately bound up with the land (no doubt, under the Messiah and a glorified condition, but still their land and people as the medium of blessing for all others); but the "heavenly calling" was not revealed, nor could be till He came whose rejection led to it and whose redemption and consequent glorification in heaven became its basis. Hence Abram had his earthly altar. Hence he sacrificed, as did his descendants, in due season, of the flock, or the herd, or the appointed clean birds. Then comes the worldly sanctuary and its most instructive furniture and rites, that spoke of better things looming in the future. Nobody that I know disputes that individual saints saw beyond these shadows, dimly perhaps but really, to a coming Savior and a heavenly country. Still the land to which the patriarchs were called was an earthly land, and the entire polity of Israel was that of a nation governed under the eye of a God who displayed himself on earth in their midst—in contrast with "the heavenly calling," of which not the less it furnished striking types, *mutatis mutandis*. Accordingly, in Heb. 11, after having traced the precious individual traits of the Spirit in the Old Testament saints, not only from Abraham but from Abel downwards, we are guarded against the error that would merge all in one lump, by the incidental statement of the last verse (See also Heb. 12: 23). The elders have not received the promise; they are waiting till the resurrection for that. Meanwhile God has provided unforeseen some better thing for us. He has given us not promise only but accomplishment in Christ. He has made us worshipers once purged, having no more conscience of sins. He calls us boldly to enter into the holiest by a new and living way consecrated for us. None of these things could be so predicated of them, and yet these things are but a part of the heavenly calling. Truly, then, has God provided some better thing, for us, even if we only look at what is now made known through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is also true that they without us shall not be made perfect. They and we shall enter on our respective portion in resurrection glory at the coming of Christ. Meanwhile we have no earthly calling, nothing but an heavenly one.

So far is it from being true that the early ecclesiastical writers erred by distinguishing too sharply between the dispensations, that their main characteristic is Judaizing the Church by denying the real differences. Jerome did this no less than others, even to the confounding of Christ's ministry with Jewish priesthood.<sup>29</sup> ❖

## *How Does the Case of the Disciples Bear on this Matter?*

The OT Scriptures have many prophecies concerning Christ's first coming and its result in His death and resurrection. We all know that. What dispensationalists said that "his sufferings and death were biblical 'mysteries'"? The charge sounds

28. *Christian Annotator*, 4:15.

29. *Christian Annotator*, 4:87.

concocted. At any rate, if it was said, it is ludicrous. But what is this charge about? I suggest that what fathered this (undocumented) charge is that Dr. Reymond believes that Christ's sufferings and death are part of the mystery (which they are not), and thus the OT was not really silent concerning the mystery. Including such prophecies in the mystery helps in defining "silence" as partial silence.

I do not know what "dispensationalists" Dr. Reymond means when he charges dispensationalists with holding "that OT saints did not know that Messiah would be rejected and suffer", but be that as it may, he has not enlightened us from statements in the OT what OT saints actually understood. Quoting the prophecies hardly evidences what the Jews understood; quoting the prophecies merely would show what the prophets said. We know what they said. That is not the real issue. 1 Pet. 1:10-12 speaks of the prophets testifying thus:

. . . searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which [was] in them pointed out, testifying before of the sufferings which [belonged] to Christ, and the glories after these.

It is unquestionable that the prophets prophesied Messiah's rejection and sufferings. But in the light of what our Lord said to the two on the way to Emmaus, it would be well to proceed with caution:

And *he* said to them, O senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).

They understood the prophets to speak of the coming kingdom for Israel but had not laid hold of the other matter about the Messiah. Their case is clear, but we cannot say that this is true of all OT saints. But the OT saints looked for a coming deliverer and the Lord's disciples did also. The Lord admonished them that they should have believed in *all* that the prophets have spoken. For some reason, the rejection, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah had not been laid hold of by them. Is it not a fact that in the gospels His disciples are repeatedly seen as expecting the kingdom and yet not understanding what He was saying when He spoke of Himself as suffering, dying, and rising? The two disciples going to Emmaus were not part of the church, but Dr. Reymond's covenantism requires him to believe that the church is composed of the aggregate of all saints. However, he might claim that these two were not saints. But that would leave him with the problem of all the disciples, who had the same view as the two going to Emmaus. Were the Lord's disciples not saints? Or, would it be troublesome for the covenantist church-notion to find such persons are part of the church they envision? The church began at Pentecost. The disciples were saints, and the two going to Emmaus show us their lack of apprehension of things that the prophets of Israel had testified concerning that the Messiah must be rejected,

suffer, die, and rise again. That is quite evident, though it may be troublesome for the covenantist church-notion.

So, this shows that though the OT spoke of Messiah's suffering, dying, and rising again, the disciples had not apprehended it, even when, before the cross, *the Lord Himself spoke of it*. They were on OT ground, but they had had teaching from Him in advance of what most in the OT had heard. Yet, though with all that lack of understanding, they were born of God and numbered among the just. They were saints. Now, how does this look in view of Dr. Reymond's over-reaching complaint?

Perhaps those who believe that all saints in all ages are part of the church have difficulty in believing that any OT saint could be part of the church and not have grasped the truth of a suffering, dying, rising again Messiah. Well, they would have to include the disciples just referred to. But the fact is, we do not know the understanding that all OT saints had. Moreover, we have no church notion that would deny that the two on the way to Emmaus, and the other disciples, were not saints.

The church never began until Christ was in glory as man, and sent the Spirit down (Acts 2:32, 33) to baptize those who already believed on Him into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). There never was a headless "one body" in the OT. Before the cross there never was union with Christ, for Christ is God and man in one Person -- and there could be no union with Him before He took manhood into His Person. But even more than incarnation was needed, though essential in itself, because there is no such thing as union in incarnation; He must die accomplishing atonement, rise, and be glorified as man to become head of the body consequently formed by the coming of the Spirit, sent from Himself on high, in the special capacity to unite the believers together and to the head above in one body, thus forming a heavenly company. No one could be seated in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies until He Himself, as man, was seated there. We are in Him there, and He is in us here. Of no OT saint could it be said, "Christ in you the hope of glory," etc. etc.

John 12:24 is quite clear that Christ abode alone until risen from among the dead.

The notion that all saints in all ages form part of the church results in, among other harmful things, two spiritually harmful things we call attention to here: too much is read into the position and understanding of the OT saints; and, too little, much, much too little, is understood of the true, heavenly position and privileges of the Christian. These two go together. So, we use the same words of Scripture but understand them differently.

***Romans 16:25, 26***

The importance of Rom. 16:25, 26 to this matter is too great for us to fail to take notice of how those opposers who are spiritualizers of the prophets attempt to nullify the force of the statement that “silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages.” They view the word silence as meaning partial silence and say that the OT was not silent concerning the mystery.

## *The Mystery Made Manifest by Prophetic Scriptures*

Now, either silence was kept or it was not. Spiritualizers of the prophets are compelled by their theological systems to say that silence was *not* kept. Consider how the amillennialist John Murray, commenting on Rom. 16:25, thought he was doing justice to the OT revelation (meaning that he finds the mystery in the OT):

The clause “now is manifested,” when taken in conjunction with the emphases on “silence” and “revelation” in verse 25, might create the impression that there had been no revelation whatsoever of this mystery in the OT Scriptures. This impression, however, is decisively excluded or corrected by the words “by the scriptures of the prophets.” These are the Scriptures to which Paul appeals repeatedly in this epistle for confirmation of the gospel he preached (cf. especially in this connection 1:2; 3:21; 11:25,26). Hence the OT was not silent on this mystery; it was the medium of revelation concerned with this subject.<sup>30</sup>

John Murray virtually (erroneously) equates Paul's gospel and the mystery. That appears, at first sight, to help the system because there are OT Scriptures that speak of Gentile salvation (it is millennial) and they say that was a prediction concerning Gentile salvation now. Thus by virtually equating Paul's gospel and the mystery, they think that they can find the mystery in the OT predictions of Gentile salvation.<sup>31</sup>

Note well that John Murray attempts to circumvent the force of “silence” by stating that “by the scriptures of the prophets” is meant the OT prophets. And having done *that*, he boldly contradicts the text and says,

Hence the OT was not silent on this mystery; it was the medium of revelation concerned with this subject.

Such is theology; it can make black white and white black; it can make “silence”

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

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

be talk.<sup>32</sup> If commentators so handle Scripture, of what use is it to begin by discussing ‘literal’ versus ‘spiritual’ interpretation? But there it stands: “as to which silence was kept.” John Murray, in effect, says that silence was not kept about the mystery in the times of the ages.

W. Kelly expressly addressed the matter of the prophets:

... Carefully remark that the true word and thought is “prophetic scriptures,” that is, not “the scriptures of the prophets” or OT, but those of the NT, for we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Paul’s writings, for instance, are prophetic scriptures, and in some of these the mystery of Christ and the church is fully made known, not merely touched on as in Romans 12:5.<sup>33</sup>

Another said:

Accordingly there is no article with “prophetic scriptures,” as would be correct if “the prophets” had been meant; whereas the anarthrous form was requisite, if new scriptures were intended, written by those who had prophetic gift, whether by apostles who had that gift also or by such as Mark and Luke, who were prophets inspired to write though not apostles.<sup>34</sup>

A. Marshall's *Interlinear* has "through writings prophetic." J. N. Darby and W. Kelly read "by prophetic scriptures."

What J. Murray's comments lead to is the idea that *now* the OT prophetic Scriptures are making manifest the mystery about which the OT spoke. What is at the base of such notions is that the mystery is the gospel that Christ died for our sins, and Jew and Gentile may now believe. *That is not the mystery of Christ and the church!*

## *Is the Mystery Now Made Known*

32. Something analogous to treating “silence” this way is *necessary* also in the case of Eph. 3:5. Commenting on this, E. K. Simpson, (*Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott (1957), p. 72), boldly says: “Hebrew prophecy had not been silent respecting this divine secret (cf. Isa. 56:5).” This shows that he does not understand the mystery. So J. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*. Baker: Grand Rapids (1979 reprint of 1883 ed.), p. 219:

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

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

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

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

## by the Fulfillment of the OT Prophecies?

Another amillennialist, W. Hendriksen, wrote:

It was this mystery that had been hidden for long ages past, for though the decision had been made in God's eternal plan and though even during the old dispensation there had been foreshadowings of the realization of God's promise of salvation for both Gentile and Jew, the period of fulfillment on any large scale had not been reached until now. But *now*, the new dispensation having arrived, and the gospel being proclaimed far and wide, this mystery was being made manifest, was becoming abundantly clear. It was being manifested in *the fulfillment of prophecy*. Think of Gen. 12:3; 22:18.<sup>35</sup>

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

Note that this quotation shows that his thought concerning the mystery is that there would be salvation for both Jew and Gentile. Well, of course the OT prophesied that fact. But instead of learning from the three texts we are considering, and concluding that salvation prophesied for Jew and Gentile is not the mystery, he rather *defined* the mystery to be salvation for Jew and Gentile, and then has to work on the three texts to force them to conform. And this method of dealing with God's word is at the heart of covenant theology. Salvation for Jew and Gentile is not the same thing as the union of Jew and Gentile in one body formed by the Spirit sent from the glorified Head in heaven (Acts 2:32, 33; 1 Cor. 12:13) and they being seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2, 3).

Note also that his assertion that the mystery "was being manifested in the fulfilment of prophecy" (1) assumes that the salvation of Jew and Gentile is the mystery, and (2) that the mystery was couched in the language of a coming kingdom for Israel, a kingdom for which Israel would be regathered and have Messiah as king over them. In reality, then, God used descriptions which, literally understood, meant exactly that.

The Jews who heard the OT prophecies had no basis whatsoever other than to understand that there was to be a future blessing and kingdom under Messiah's reign. What were they to understand other than that? And that understanding of the prophets is exactly consistent with the fact that silence had been kept regarding the mystery of Christ and the church, which leaves room for the future accomplishment of the OT prophecies. The problem with this appears to be that that means covenant theology is false.

What Scripture in the OT directed the hearers to understand the prophecies

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

in another way than as speaking of a literal kingdom, wherein the covenants of promise would be made good to them? There is no such Scripture. And certainly his "Think of Gen. 12:3; 22:18" is neither proof that the mystery of Christ and the church are found in the OT, nor that the prophecies of the kingdom for Israel (i.e., the new Israel under the new covenant) do not refer to a kingdom for Israel.<sup>36</sup> That is evident in the quotation from W. Hendriksen in which quotation it is implicit that the Jewish hearers of those prophecies could not know the explanation of covenant theology. The meaning of the prophecies, he says, is being manifested *now*, not then. So God couched the meaning that covenant theology has discerned by the present manifestation in fulfillment of the prophecies, in terms the meaning of which those Jewish hearers could not possibly know. What this amounts to is God telling them words that justified them in a literal understanding (how else could they possibly understand those words?) but He meant something altogether different.

Finally the day came when John came preaching that the kingdom of the heavens had drawn near, but it is absurd to think that he thought he was announcing a different form of the kingdom than the Jews understood from the prophets -- namely a literal kingdom. And that is how the people (including the godly remnant) understood that preaching, else they would not have regarded John as a prophet. And our Lord at first preached the same kingdom as drawn near, until the rejection of Himself became clear (as marked in Matt. 12), upon which the mystery form of the kingdom was taught by our Lord (Matt. 13). And He never told the disciples that there was not going to be a literal kingdom for Israel in which the covenants of promise would not be made good to them. The disciples still expected it, and rightly so, as recorded in Acts 1, only their time was wrong; for God was going to do a new work involving the mystery of Christ and the church before fulfilling the prophecies and the covenants of promise.

Of course, W. Hendriksen is not alone in making "manifest" mean manifesting something that was in the OT. C. E. B. Cranfield wrote:

. . . a manifestation which is properly understood in its true spiritual significance only in light of its OT foreshadowing and attestation.<sup>37</sup>

This assumes that the word "manifestation" refers to the manifestation of something in the OT. But it was not *there*. Where was it? Scripture explicitly tells us: it was *hid in God* (Eph. 3:9) and now it is manifested. Is that too difficult for theologians, exegetes, and expositors to understand? I doubt it. Then an agenda is at work.

36. The reader should note that these errors are part of the system wherein the church is made to be the spiritual Israel.

37. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 2:812 (1979).



Thomas R. Schreiner wrote:

The mystery fundamentally relates to Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1, 7; Eph. 1:9; 6:19; Col. 2:2; 4:3) and the gospel in which he is proclaimed . . . the mystery relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ that was previously hidden . . . The “prophetic Scriptures” . . . refers to the OT.<sup>38</sup>

He had stated that mystery

often relates to the inclusion of the Gentiles into the community of the redeemed, for that the Gentiles would be fellow members with the Jews in the people of God was not clearly revealed in the OT (cf. Eph. 3:3-6; Col. 1:26-27).<sup>39</sup>

Much covenant theology is packed into these few sentences. We see the confusion of the mystery of Christ and the church lowered to the gospel (precious as that is in itself). We see that the OT had not been silent about the mystery. The phrase “the community of the redeemed” is a phrase that fits with the notion of a church in all ages (not a distinctive thing now). That phrase, along with the word “covenant,” are what expresses the Scripture-unifying idea in covenant theology. And then there is the statement that “the Gentiles would be fellow members with the Jews in the people of God” -- for covenantism rejects the distinction between the heavenly people of God and the earthly people of God, merging all into one people of God.<sup>40</sup> This is implicit in the covenantist idea of

38. *Romans* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 813, 1998.

Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 939, 1996, said:

This hiddenness, as Paul will make clear in v. 26, does not mean that one could have no knowledge of the contents of the mystery. What it means, rather, is that one could not fully understand it nor -- and this is the special emphasis -- experience it.

So there was, after all, no silence kept. Rather, there was knowledge of the contents of the mystery in OT times, and it could be partially understood, but the special emphasis of this passage in Romans is that it could not be experienced in OT times! Covenant theology depends on such treatment of the words of God.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 812.

40. Thus, the Covenantist, Vern S. Pythress wrote:

Union with Christ is an organic relationship that includes in a tightly interwoven way both salvation (including justification, adoption, and sanctification) and corporate unity. One cannot be saved except in union with Christ, and union with Christ means being part of one people of God.

Concerning the salvation of OT saints, he wrote:

They were saved by the anticipation of these things and by a kind of preliminary “working backward” of their effects -- else there is no just salvation at all in the Old Testament.

Concerning a Millennium, he wrote:

That salvation, whether now or in the Millennium, constitutes Jews and Gentiles as “members” of Christ. They are corporately one as a new humanity. Hence one cannot now  
(continued...)

the progress of the unfolding of redemption, of which the present is the final unfolding. Thus is the distinctive truth of the mystery of Christ and the church merged into this scheme imposed upon the Scripture. And finally note the words, “was not clearly revealed in the OT.” in direct contradiction of the three Scriptures we are considering. So, “not clearly revealed” means it was revealed, but not clearly.

It is clear that covenantists do not understand the mystery of Christ and the church though they use the same phrases from Scripture. Different meanings are attached to those phrases that makes them conform to covenant theology.

### ***“Dispensationalists Falling Into Covenantism”***

Daniel P. Fuller, a professor, and former dean of the faculty at Fuller Theological seminary, in effect disbelieves this Scripture, choosing this way to make it sound as if it was the gospel:

[The] gospel [is] . . . according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him.<sup>41</sup>

Then, of course, he is able to find some OT hints -- and silence had not been kept. Notice the covenantist confusion of the gospel with the mystery of Christ and the church which we have been noting is found in this quotation.

The covenantizing pretribulationist, Darrell Bock, having quoted C. E. B. Cranfield, claims:

What is crucial in this passage is the explicit declaration that the gospel preaching about Jesus Christ and the nations’ obedience of faith is tied to what the OT revealed.<sup>42</sup>

40. (...continued)

contemplate splitting apart the new humanity that is under one head, under Christ. One cannot contemplate a Millennium in which salvation is in union with one man, the last Adam, Jesus Christ, but in which that union is undermined by the distinctiveness of two peoples of God with two inheritances and two destinies, on earth and in heaven *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 129, 1987).

These quotations appeared under a heading, “Reasoning from Salvation to Corporate Unity in Christ.” What is distinctive of both the Church and of Israel are thus swamped and everything is equated with salvation. As we shall see, the Covenant of Grace, spanning from Adam’s fall to the consummation, and redemption, are what gives the OT and NT unity for Covenantists. Chapter 3 will touch on this more.

41. *The Unity of the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 421, 1991.

42. “Current Messianic Activity and OT Davidic Promise: Dispensationalism, Hermeneutics, and NT Fulfillment,” *Trinity Journal* 15NS (1994), p. 84.

“Tied.” Was he at a loss for another word? That sounds like obfuscation. Here, as in C. E. B. Cranfield’s case, all is lowered to the gospel. The distinction between the mystery and the gospel, made in this very text itself, is obliterated. Why should covenantizing dispensationalists be regarded as dispensationalists? Merely because they have not yet jettisoned the truth of the pretribulation rapture? As V. Poythress said somewhere, it is an unstable position.

## Colossians 1:24-27

Scripture says:

Now, I rejoice in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the assembly; of which I became minister, according to the dispensation of God which [is] given me towards you to complete the word of God, the mystery which [has been] hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:24-27).

There is something spoken of as “the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you the hope of glory.” Where is even one OT Scripture that speaks of Christ being in you, the hope of glory? “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” may be “somewhat cryptic” to covenantists:

With reference to Paul’s somewhat cryptic description of the “mystery” in Colossians 1:27 as “Christ in you, the hope of glory . . .”<sup>43</sup>

Yes, it would be cryptic to you if you look for it in the OT because it is not there -- any aspect of the mystery of Christ and the church is not found in the OT. The predictions of Gentile blessing have the millennium in view, when the new Israel under the new covenant is the head of the nations. That Gentiles are blessed now is not contradictory of the OT, though not prophesied; Gentile blessing is *compatible* with what the OT says. Thus, NT quotations from the OT concerning Gentile blessing are used, not as stating a present fulfilment, but of confirming the consistency of God in blessing Gentiles now -- for God had indeed spoken of blessing Gentiles. The Jew cannot complain about the matter of Gentiles being blessed, for their prophets had predicted Gentile blessing. However, *the present order of Gentile blessing* is not found in the prophets. What is proper to, and distinctive of, the church is a mystery revealed since the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. It was never said in the OT that Christ would be in Jew and/or Gentile. Indeed, the grain of wheat must die and rise from among the dead for Christ to be in anyone (John 12:24). We are in Christ; and Christ is in us. This is not “somewhat cryptic.” Elsewhere we read that Christ dwells in our hearts by

faith. In Col. 1:27 it is rather that Christ in us is the hope of glory. The Jewish prophets, when their words are not spiritually alchemized into church blessings, present as a hope to the Jews that Christ would reign over them here on earth, as Israel’s glory. He would bring in earthly glory for the nation. Simeon said of the child Jesus that he held in his arms (think of that privilege!):

. . . a light for revelation of [the] Gentiles and [the] glory of thy people Israel (Luke 2:32).

This will be so in the millennium when the distinction between Jew and Gentile is maintained. And the One in Simeon’s arms will be the glory of Israel. It is here on earth and it is an earthly order of glory. But Christ in us is the hope of glory above with Him in all that He has acquired as man. We will have heavenly glory with Him, being with Him, like Him, and reigning with Him, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ.

Note that “God would make known the glory of this mystery among the nations” (Col. 1:27). The work that God is doing now is chiefly a work among the Gentiles. The election of grace among Jews now do participate in the mystery, but it is chiefly and characteristically a work among the Gentiles. In the millennium the chief and characteristic work of God will be with the new Israel under the new covenant, when they are all saved (Rom. 11:26). Regarding the millennium, Christ is not said to be the glory of the Gentiles, but “a light.” At that time He will be the glory of Israel here on earth. Immense as that as is, it does not reach to the height, fulness, and wealth of the heavenly glory concerning which Christ in us is the hope of glory.

This fact that Christ in us is the hope of glory is an immense fact, and living reality, having a great moral bearing on our walk while we await His coming to receive us unto Himself (John 14:1-3). It should be formative of our practical life here. It separates us in practice from the world. It causes us to think of the immensity of His greatness and glory. It occupies us with Himself and His interests. It causes us to think of God’s glory in Christ. Not only will this glory be displayed when all things are headed up in Christ in the millennium (Eph. 1:10), but God and Christ will have glory in the church eternally (Eph. 3:21). This special and eternal glory will be central in the new heavens and the new earth.

The greatness of the Person of the Son was brought before the Colossians in ch. 1. This is the Christ Who is in us. Exhortations are founded on Christ being in us, the hope of glory. In Col. 2:10 we see that not one thing can be added to the believer; and so in Col. 2:16-23, the issue is, why are you trying to add to Christ in you, the hope of glory? We are to seek the things above where the Christ is sitting (Col. 3:1). He is our life:

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

43. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Nelson, p. 541, sec. Ed., 1998.

The truth of the mystery of Christ and the church is truth which is formative of true *Christian* walk. This is beyond being saved, though that be necessary. It is the unfolding of the mystery of Christ and the church that completes the Word of God. The thought is not the writing of the last book in the canon of the NT. It refers to revealing God's glory in Christ in the heavenly sphere. The OT had dealt with the earthly side. This mystery manifests to the saints what completes divine revelation concerning God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ. His purpose is to glorify Himself in the earthly sphere and the heavenly sphere. *Psa.* 8 did not embrace the heavenly sphere of which the mystery speaks. God's glory will thus be displayed in Christ in both spheres in the millennium (*Eph.* 1:10). And that the distinction of these two spheres is maintained in the new heavens and the new earth is clearly seen in the fact that the church will subsist eternally as such (*Eph.* 3:21, with *Rev.* 21:1-3).

It is indeed helpful to understand that there is no such thing as a church age.<sup>44</sup> The church is not an age. The assembly, as to its constitution and position in Christ is already outside of ages, which are for the earth and are earthly. The assembly is not an earthly thing at all. It is above ages, though its testimony is here on earth, in responsibility. As being above ages, as being heavenly, and as being seated in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies, that position in Christ will never change. That is permanent. And when our Beloved comes, His power will bring our very bodies into the good of this (*Phil.* 3:21; note, "body of glory"). Thus, in every respect we shall be in a position that transcends the dissolution of the present heavens and earth. Then ages will have ended, and the assembly which is outside of, and above, ages abides unchanged from its already glorified state and passes into the new heavens and the new earth. God's glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus subsists eternally (*Eph.* 3:21).

A great distinction between how the mystery of Christ and the church is presented in *Colossians* as compared to *Ephesians* is this: in *Colossians* Christ is in us, we viewed as here waiting for Himself and the glory; in *Ephesians* we are in Christ, seated above in the heavenlies, in Him. W. Kelly said:

Hence we learn, it may be seasonable to remark, that the shape given to the mystery here is not that Christ is exalted in heaven, and that the church, by the Holy Ghost sent down thence, is united to Him the Head there. This is the doctrine of the epistle to the *Ephesians*. Here we see the other side — Christ in or among you Gentiles, "the hope of glory." In the epistle to the *Colossians*, glory is always that which we are waiting for. There is no such thing here as our sitting in heavenly places. It is heavenly glory that is waited for, but only in hope. Christ was now in these Gentiles who believed the hope of a heavenly

44. The present age is the Mosaic age. "The end of the age" in Matthew refers to the end of the Mosaic age. The cross ended the Mosaic system and meanwhile the whole world lies in the wicked one (1 John 5:19). These things have been discussed in my *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

glory in prospect for them. It is another aspect of the mystery, but as true in its place as what we find in *Ephesians*; not so high, but in itself precious, and not less differing from the expectation raised by the Old Testament. What we read of there is that, when Christ had come, He forthwith sets up His kingdom, in which the Jews are promised to be His specially favored subjects. They are not indeed to reign with Him: this was by no man and at no time promised to them. But they are to be the people in whose midst the glory of Jehovah will take up its abode. Here the apostle speaks of another system altogether: Christ come, but the glory not yet apparent, but only coming. Meanwhile, instead of the Jews enjoying glory along with Christ in their midst, rejected by the Jews, Christ is in the Gentiles; and they who receive His name are waiting for heavenly glory with Christ. It is a quite different state of things from what could be gathered from the Old Testament. Not a prophet, not even the smallest shred of any prophecy, reveals such a truth. It was an absolutely new truth, in contrast with the ancient and millennial order, yet altogether different from what is found in the *Ephesians*; nevertheless they both constitute substantive parts of the mystery.

Thus the mystery includes, first, Christ as Head above, we though here being united by the Holy Ghost to Him glorified. Secondly, Christ, meanwhile, is in or among the Gentiles here below. Were He among the Jews, it would be the introduction of the promised earthly glory. But it is not so. The Jews are enemies, and unbelieving; the Gentiles are specially the object of God's present ways. Having Christ among them, heavenly glory is their hope, even to share with Him that glory. This, then, shows Christ, in a certain sense, in the Gentiles here below; as, in the *Ephesians*, Christ is seen above and we in Him. There Jew or Gentile is all alike, and those who believe the gospel are by the Spirit united to Him as His body. Here the Gentiles in particular have Him in them, the pledge of their participating in His heavenly glory by and by. And as this was so blessed and novel a truth, the apostle states his own earnestness about it -- "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ."<sup>45</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

L. B. Radford wrote:

The phrase 'from ages and generations' means not 'hidden from the knowledge of men' but 'hidden since the beginning of history'. The emphasis is not on the withholding of truth from mankind, but on its contemplation in the mind of the Creator, e. g., *Eph.* 3:9. Cp. *Rom.* 16:25, 'kept in silence through times eternal'. The silence was not absolute; glimpses of the mystery were given to psalmist and prophet, e.g., in various phases and forms of the Messianic hope, cp. *Heb.* 1:1, where these partial divine intimations are contrasted with the full revelation given in Christ.<sup>46</sup>

*Rom* 16:25 is evacuated of its meaning by claiming that it refers to silence in

45. *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, London: Broom, pp. 302-304, 1869.

46. *The Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to Philemon . . .*, London: Methuen, p. 203 (1931).

eternity, whereas the text really says, “silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages,” as well as “hidden from ages and from generations”. He equates the mystery with the Messianic hope. Moreover, “hidden” really means ‘partially hidden.’ “The silence was not absolute”; why? because he tells us so. And why does he say that? Well, it certainly would be the end of covenantism if it was hidden exactly as Scripture states. Hidden from *ages* means that it was hidden from the time periods between Adam and the formation of the body united to the Head in heaven. Hidden from *generations* means that it was hidden from the people that lived in those time periods. Is that so difficult to understand? -- unless we have a theological system with which the facts and statements of Scripture conflict. Heb. 1:1 has nothing to do with the point at issue, nor does the Messianic hope.

The learned J. B. Lightfoot claimed that:

But the one special ‘mystery’ which absorbs St. Paul’s thoughts in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians is the free admission of the Gentiles on equal terms to the privileges of the covenant.<sup>47</sup>

He has set aside the words of God and has imported his notions about covenant theology into this matter. Now, observe that by doing this, he is then able to acknowledge what is really the force of these Scriptures that the mystery was, *as he erroneously defined it*, completely unknown:

Not only was this mystery unknown in remote periods of antiquity, but even in recent generations. It came upon the world as a surprise. The moment of its revelation was the moment of its fulfillment.<sup>48</sup>

One way or another, covenant theology must be maintained in the face of the Scriptures which plainly contradict it.

C. F. D. Moule’s view is:

. . . the incarnation summed up that divine secret which had long been hidden but was now divulged . . . The μ. {mystery} is ‘that Christ is among you (Gentiles)’<sup>49</sup> or (better still) the μ. is *both* Christ himself *and* the fact that he is among them.

Really, is any comment needed on the notion that the mystery is the incarnation?

Robert W. Wall wrote:

For the believers at Colosse, whose crisis stems from their overly Jewish understanding of Christian faith, the central issues, and therefore the substance of *the glorious riches of this mystery* (1:27), are God’s election of Gentiles for salvation and Christ’s work that makes God’s election effective. Therefore, most

47. *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* . . . , Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 168, reprint of the 1879 ed., n. d.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Cambridge University Press, p. 82, 1962.

commentators agree that Paul uses *mystery* as a metaphor for God’s plan of salvation for the Gentiles, which was unknown apart from divine revelation. Paul’s proclamation of the gospel merely articulates the “mystery” that God has revealed to him, presumably on the Damascus road.<sup>50</sup>

The covenant pretribulationist, R. L. Saucy, joins in with the more general view of those who espouse covenant theology by saying:

A mystery may be hidden in the sense that its truth has not been realized.<sup>51</sup>

He retrogradingly speaks like those who hold covenant theology while pretending to “progressive dispensationalism.” Compare his comment with that of the amillennialist commentator, W. Hendriksen:

The mystery of which the apostle is thinking here in Col. 1:26, 27 had been “hidden”; that is, for ages and generations (lit. “since the ages and the generations”) it had not been historically realized.<sup>52</sup>

The NT mysteries were hidden in the sense that they were *not spoken about*.

## *Ephesians 3:5,9*

Some opposers will point to Eph. 3:5:

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

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

Note the comma separating the words “men” and “as.” W. Kelly translated likewise and with the same comma there. It shows that these Greek scholars understood the word “as” to denote a complete contrast: it was not heretofore made known -- as now is the time when it is made known. It is not a matter of degree but of absolute contrast.

W. Kelly translated Eph. 3:9 thus:

and to enlighten all as to what [is] the administration of the mystery which hath been hidden from the ages in God that created all things.

Concerning the word translated “hidden” in Eph. 3:9, it is the same word in Col.

50. *Colossians and Philemon* (IVP New Testament Commentary Series), Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, p. 91, 1993.

51. In C. A. Blaising and D. L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, p. 144.

52. *New Testament Commentary, Philipians, Colossians and Philemon*, Grand Rapids: Baker, in Coalescence, p. 88, 1990.

1:26, regarding which we saw that the Lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich says:  
hidden, kept secret . . . Col. 1:26.<sup>53</sup>

Paul said of it, “which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men” (Eph. 3:5). Of course, it was not made known before the world began (it is absurd to speak of such a thing), but that is not the point. It is the period that has elapsed until revealed after Christ was in glory to be the Head of a body.

Now, the once professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, O. T. Allis, whose well-known anti-dispensational polemic, *Prophecy and the Church*, which does not even list Eph. 3:9 in the Scripture index, takes the word “as” in Eph 3:5 to be merely a comparison between the way the mystery was spoken of in the OT and the way Paul spoke of it. Stunningly misusing the thrust of Acts 26:22, and referring to it in a way which labels others “lame and arbitrary” for not seeing it his way, only serves as a splendid example of how anti-dispensationalists find references to the mystery in the OT, in spite of Scripture assuring us that they are not there:

Paul . . . declares emphatically that he has been preaching nothing which Moses and the prophets had not foretold. What clearer illustration could be found of the need of giving heed to Paul’s words, “as it has now been revealed” (Eph. 3:5), when he speaks of the mystery? In commenting on this passage in Acts, all Darby has to say is this: “He speaks not of the assembly [the church] -- that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history” {see *Synopsis, in loco*}. That a man of Darby’s mentality should have offered so lame and arbitrary an explanation is convincing proof that Paul’s words on this memorable occasion cannot be made to square with the doctrine of the Pauline mystery Church as it is held by dispensationalists.<sup>54</sup>

We must conclude that his view of the matter is that the mystery is found all over the OT (Moses and the prophets, he believes). Thus he empties the Scriptures we are examining of any real meaning. They may as well not have been in Scripture at all. This springs from the want of “*the obedience of faith*” regarding what God has said in the three (or more) Scriptures that we are considering. Now note that Acts 26:23 explains what Paul meant in v. 22:

[namely,] whether Christ should suffer; whether he first, through resurrection of [the] dead, should announce light both to the people and to the nations (Acts 26:23).

That, of course, is not the mystery; but OT Allis thinks it is. Once again we see the erroneous equating of salvation with the mystery; and then, lo, there it is in the OT – and in spite of J. N. Darby’s extraordinary mentality, the poor man did not see what to O. T. Allis is so plain in Acts 26:22, 23! At any rate, J. N. Darby

53. *Op. Cit.*, p. 93.

54. O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, p. 151, 1945.

was altogether correct in the above statement. Acts 26:22, 23 does not speak of the church, which is Christ’s body.

As an example of where this false view of making the mystery to be the gospel leads, and how far astray the anti-dispensationalists are, consider the words of V. Poythress, who teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary:

No dispensationalist has shown a way to maneuver around the fundamental dilemma: the one way of salvation is through union with Christ.

He is imagining a necessity to maneuver because of his own false view about *union* with Christ. First of all, we confine the words “union with Christ” to the union of the members of the body to the Head in heaven. The fact is there never was union with Christ as members of His body until He took manhood into glory. We are united to Him in connection with His risen and glorified humanity, a thing impossible until He had died, risen and been glorified above. Secondly, John, who speaks of oneness of life in the Son, directly contradicts the allegation because the Lord abode alone before He died on the cross.

Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit (John 12:24).

Thus, before His resurrection He abode alone; no one was in oneness, or in unity, with Him. He Himself taught this fact. Correctly speaking, we would do well to use the word “oneness” regarding what John teaches, and keep the word “union” for what Paul teaches, in order to describe the differences in what they teach, though the truths are, of course, complementary. It was, then, consequent upon Christ’s resurrection that we form, as it were, grains upon the risen stalk, His resurrection-life being our life, we forming one plant with Him. Before His death, the saints had divine life, but not in the character of forming one plant with the risen stalk of wheat, as *oneness in life in Him* is presented in John. It is “life in abundance” (John 10:10). In resurrection, taking the place of the Last Adam, the risen One breathed on them (John 20:22), bringing them into this new connection with Him, communicating the Spirit, not as the Pentecostal gift for union with Him in heaven as Head of the body, but as the power of *life in the Son*, as it is presented in John. The OT saints had life, but neither *oneness of life in Him* (John), nor **union with the Head in Heaven as members of one body** (Paul).<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, as a consequence of His being there in heavenly glory, the Spirit was sent (John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 33) that those who were waiting might be

55. Even when John is speaking of profession, he uses a plant to represent the point (John 15), not the figure of the body and the Head. C. C. Ryrie’s reference to John 10:16 and John 14:20, while rightly refuting ultradispensationalism, in order to show that the Lord spoke of the mystery and say that “The Body Church relationship was thus revealed by the Lord before His death,” is incorrect; *Dispensationalism Today*, p. 203. Paul alone speaks of it.

baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), uniting them as members to the Head. The two things were separated in time, God graciously helping us thus to discern differences and to understand and appreciate, in our feeble measure, the immense range of blessings that we have.

Moreover, V. Poythress' notion that OT Saints had salvation through union with Christ<sup>56</sup> is vitiated on another basis. Christ is the eternal Son united to holy manhood. Thus, while the eternal Son always was such in the Godhead, *the Christ* did not exist in OT times, for the incarnation had not taken place. The talk about "maneuvering" is altogether inappropriate, to say the least. The "maneuvering" is seen to be entirely on his part; "maneuvering" around the great and distinctive facts of Christianity. Such charge "dispensationalists" with Judaizing but the truth is, it is such as themselves who are Judaistic, as is patently inherent in his very complaint.

All saints in all ages are saved by the grace of God, which does not mean, or imply, union with Christ for all. OT saints believed the testimony of God given to them. They were saved in virtue of the blood of Christ to be shed, which God had before Himself, such that He was righteous in "respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). All saints that ever lived, or will live, are saved through the blood of Christ. Union with Christ is another matter.

The fact is that the anti-dispensationalists, now being assisted by those pretending to be "progressive dispensationalists," lower the Christian position to that of a **millennial saint** at best; and though that is higher than the position of an OT saint, it is not proper Christian position presented in Scripture. But we do not enlarge on this here.

Above, we noted that O. T. Allis can find the secret mystery, which was hidden from ages and generations, and hidden in God, in Moses and the prophets. The amillennialist commentator, W. Hendrickson, illustrates the idea that the mystery can be found wide-spread in the OT. Of course, what he does is equate the mystery with OT predictions of the future blessing in which Gentiles would share; and then, of course, finds this everywhere in the OT. Commenting on Eph. 3:5, he wrote:

The Old Testament writers, in fact, did know about it and referred to it again and again (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps. 72; 87; Isa. 11:10; 49:6; 54:1-3; 60:1-3;

56. We have the blessings we are speaking of (not the new birth) in connection with Christ's risen manhood. The idea of OT saints having union with Christ results, unwittingly, perhaps, in union with deity, since the Son was not incarnate then. So it follows that the union was with the non-incarnate Son, i.e., with deity. This is the real meaning of V. Poythress' criticism.

Hos. 1:10; Amos 9:11ff; Mal. 1:11, to mention only a few references).<sup>57</sup>

"To mention only a few references"! Look how easy it is to find what Scripture says was hidden from ages and generations! This is a mystery as to which silence was kept? or, as the Lexicon of Arndt and Gingrich said: "a secret that was concealed for long ages"? Is this not, in reality, a mockery of God's Word, whether intended or not? -- and I doubt not that no disrespect for God's Word was willfully intended -- rather, it is the exigency of a false theological system clouding the mind.

The fact is that OT prophecies of Gentile salvation will be fulfilled in the millennium, the coming kingdom which so many deny will come to pass; meanwhile there is an *application* of some of those prophecies at the present time. The prophecies concerning the death, resurrection and exaltation to Jehovah's right hand have been fulfilled. The consequences of these things as they affect Christ and His body were not prophesied. The other prophecies will yet be fulfilled when God's present work regarding the church is completed. The other quotations from the OT in the NT are for the use of a principle contained in them, or to illustrate a point, or to show that Gentiles being saved now is not inconsistent with the OT. Moreover, the fact that the OT prophets spoke of Gentile blessing of salvation in the coming (millennial) kingdom helps us understand such a passage as, for example, Eph. 1:12:

that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ.

We have "pre-trusted"; i.e., we have trusted in Christ before the predicted (millennial) time of Gentile salvation. Christ has died and been raised from among the dead. The work on which the prophesied millennial salvation for Gentiles is based is already accomplished and the fulfillment of the OT predicted salvation for the Gentiles awaits that day. Meanwhile, the work being done, God has saved some Gentiles now ("pre-trusted" before the millennium) **and, additionally**, has brought them into the blessed place occupied by those who are seated in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), giving them Christ's place before the Father as their place (Eph. 1:6), by virtue of their union with Him. All of this escapes the anti-dispensationalists.

As another example, let us hear Vern S. Poythress explain it away:

This passage says that the way in which Gentiles were to receive blessing, namely by being incorporated into Christ on an equal basis with Jews (v. 6), was

57. *New Testament Commentary: Galatians and Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, p. 154, 1990. He remarked that there was something not made clear in the OT: "... the old theocracy would be completely abolished and in its place would arise a new organism in which the Gentiles and the Jews would be placed on a footing of perfect equality," *ibid.* "Not made clear"? There is not the slightest hint about it. At any rate, what we see here is that some of the mystery is found all over the OT and some was not made clear.



prophets did indeed prophesy. You should also see that the way of interpreting the prophets has also been essentially settled.

Since the church is part of the mystery concerning which silence was kept in the OT, the prophecies of the coming kingdom are not about the church, and these prophecies are left to Israel's future. The church, then, is distinct from Israel. As distinct from Israel, is the church another earthly people? -- resulting in two earthly peoples. Not so. The church is a heavenly people, as is obvious particularly from Ephesians -- obvious, I say, unless you have a theological system that clouds the truth about it. So, while there are anti-dispensationalists that charge that dispensationalism Judaizes, the truth is that those who make the charge are the ones who Judaize -- by bringing the church down to being an earthly people.



## Chapter 3

### *The Relationship of the Old to the New Testament:*

#### *Introduction*

We now proceed from the fact that the mystery of Christ and the church was not spoken of by the prophets of Israel. That being true, the promises to Israel regarding the Kingdom must be understood literally (with all due allowance for figures of speech and symbolic language). Moreover, Covenant Theology as a system is necessarily false, for it sees the church as the fulfilment of the OT. The secrecy of the mystery is a spiritual pointer, provided by God, in the Scripture of truth, to guide us to understand the relationship of the OT to the NT. Thus, this guidance is not the result of first elaborating a system of “literal interpretation,” but is given in the Word directly from God Himself. This means that we have divine direction regarding what the prophets of Israel said concerning the Kingdom for Israel.

### *The Covenantist View of the Relationship of the Old to the New Testament:*

#### *“Old” and “New” Testaments Are Erroneous Titles*

While the chapter title is meant to refer to the on-going debate (interminable) among Covenantists and Dispensationalists concerning the issue of the degree of “continuity and discontinuity” between the OT and the NT, the chapter title is ambiguous. It is likewise ambiguous to cast the matter according to such an expression as “the continuity or discontinuity” of the OT and NT.

The very expressions, OT and NT, are a misleading description of the Word of God. The description categorizes the entire Word of God under two covenants, for by OT is meant old covenant and by NT is meant new covenant. The fact is that, leaving aside the Noahic covenant, there was no covenant until Abraham; and, the church is under no covenant.

However, the description OT and NT is entrenched in our way of speaking and will, of course, continue to be used. The expressions seem quite compatible with Covenant Theology which asserts that consequent upon the fall of Adam the Covenant of Grace was introduced and that covenant continues to the end of time -- that other covenants were administrations of the Covenant of grace, and that

presently there is a different administration of the Covenant of Grace than there were in the OT times. Moreover, in this view, the OT is *promise* and the NT is *fulfilment*; i.e., all is fulfilled in the church.

### *Covenant Theology Is Based on a Denial of the Secrecy of the Mystery*

And so, Covenantists do not believe that, concerning the mystery of Christ and the church, “silence has been kept in [the] times of the ages” (Rom. 16:25). At most, there was partial silence, i.e., there was not the full revelation of the mystery (whatever that means to them) in the OT. But silence? Definitely not! They do not believe that the “mystery” has been “hidden from ages and from generations” (Col. 1:26), i.e., from the time-periods and from the peoples. They tell us that the mystery *is* in the OT (we have seen this in Ch. 2). In chapter headings in Isaiah in the King James Version (KJV), for example, note the references to the church. Such are Covenantist notes that have been placed in chapter headings to describe what the chapter is about. That is certainly an exposition of the Covenantist view of “silence” concerning the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Covenant Theology is a denial of the true, *heavenly work* that God is now doing.

### *Covenant Theology Is Based on a Hermeneutic of Spiritual Alchemy*

Denying the secrecy of the mystery of Christ and the Church forces one to have a process of interpretation of the OT that has often been called “spiritualization,” generally used to describe the Covenantist way of handling the OT, while the “Dispensational” way has been called “literalism.” “Spiritualization” is hardly an adequate description of what Covenantists do with the OT. The unleashing of the imagination regarding “silence,” and “hid,” and “Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh” shows the character of how a Covenantist looks at Scripture. He looks at the word “silence” and sees ‘partial silence’; he looks at the word ‘hid’ and sees ‘partially hidden’; he looks at the phrase “Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh” and sees ‘Paul’s spiritual kinsmen.’ That is *spiritual alchemy*. It is the *transmutation* of things into something other than they actually are. It is like the alchemists of the past who wanted to transmute lead into gold. However, this *spiritual alchemy* is not working on lead, but rather on the gold of God’s Word. Under the transmutational force of this spiritual alchemy some gold changes into

lead and dross and other gold simply disappears from sight, though, thankfully, some gold does remain. Other examples of spiritual alchemy are given below.

## *Covenantists View the Scripture as Structured by Covenant and by Redemption*<sup>63</sup>

In his book, *The Christ of the Covenants*, the Covenantist, Dr. O. Palmer Robertson has a chapter titled, “Which Structures Scripture - Covenants or Dispensations?”<sup>64</sup> Whatever nuances that he personally gives to covenant names in Covenant Theology, he is of the school that believes that a “covenant of works” was made with Adam. After Adam fell, another covenant was introduced, the “covenant of grace.”<sup>65</sup> This covenant is said to be in force until the end of earth’s history. Thus, the covenants named in Scripture are the unfolding of, or administrations of, this “covenant of grace”; even the Mosaic covenant. Covenantists regard this as structuring and unifying the Scriptures. And so they regard Scofieldian Dispensationalism as disjointing and fracturing Scripture.<sup>66</sup>

Covenant Theology and Reformed Theology are closely intertwined and in many respects stand or fall together. This is not surprising, for many very able minds have worked on the covenant idea since John Calvin’s day in order to produce what is viewed as a coherent whole that does justice to what Scripture teaches. It is well to desire to understand the over-all structure of Scripture (see 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:15); i.e., to know the purpose of God and how He implements it -- in order that we may know how to be here for His glory while we wait for the

63. We have already seen this quite clearly in Chapter Two in a quotation from Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, p. 129, in his affirmation that salvation of any saint means union with Christ, and that under one head there cannot be two peoples of God.

64. Peter Golding views the key to understanding Scripture is the covenant idea and cites C. H. Spurgeon as saying that “the doctrine of the covenants is the key to theology” (*Covenant Theology The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition*, Christian Focus Publications, p. 9, 2004). In this book there is an advertisement for a book, *The Bond of Love, God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church*, and commenting on this book, Derek W. H. Thomas, of the Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, wrote:

Covenant Theology is a way of understanding the entire biblical message from Genesis to Revelation as essentially one theme. It covers everything . . . (ibid. p. 239).

65. He departs from these classical Covenant Theology descriptions and prefers ‘covenant of creation’ and ‘covenant of redemption’ respectively. However, in classical Covenant Theology, many expositors spoke of a “covenant of redemption” made between the Father and the Son, in eternity, before the creation.

66. For example, Robert L. Reymond said:

The covenantal perspective stresses the unity and continuity of redemptive history; the dispensational perspective stresses the discontinuity of redemptive history (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Nashville: Nelson, p. 509, sec. Ed. 1998).

Lord to come and take us to the Father’s house (John 14:1-3).

Typically of Covenant Theology, Dr. Robertson says:

Beginning with the first promise to Adam-in-sin and continuing throughout history to the consummation of the ages, God orders all things in view of his singular purpose of redeeming a people to himself. Indeed, significant sub-structures within this great expanse of time must be noted. The distinction between old covenant and new covenant marks a major structural division within the history of redemption. Yet even these two great epochs relate integrally to one another as promise and fulfilment.<sup>67</sup>

The reader may observe that implicit in this quotation is the idea that there is but one people of God, and therefore OT saints are part of the church. And any protests notwithstanding, *redemption* is the unifying thought for the structure of Scripture, for God has the “singular purpose of redeeming a people to Himself.” And, in Ch. 2 we saw how Covenantists centered the mystery of Christ and the church in *redemption*.

*Of course*, it will be affirmed that God glorifies Himself in redeeming sinners; but that is only a part of God glorifying Himself in Christ, in two spheres. Moreover, implicit in viewing Scripture as structured by covenants and redemption is the idea that the church is the spiritual Israel. Thus, for an example, by spiritual alchemy, “Israel” and “Judah” in Heb. 8 are *transmuted* into the church, as the prophecies of the coming kingdom for Israel, given by the OT prophets, are transmuted into church-blessings.

## *Covenantists Construct Covenants Where There Are None*

The expressions, “covenant of redemption” (between the Father and the Son), “covenant of works” (with Adam),<sup>68</sup> and “covenant of grace” (the covenant covering the time from the ‘promise’ in Gen. 3:15 until the consummation) are not named in Scripture -- but it is claimed that just as the word “trinity” is a teaching of Scripture, so these covenants refer to what is taught in Scripture.

Let us briefly test the idea of the Covenant of Grace based on Gen. 3:15. The idea that this ‘promise’ inaugurates the Covenant of Grace is part of the Covenantists idea that the OT is promise and the NT is fulfilment. This notion of fulfilment finds the fulfilment in the church, concerning which, therefore,

67. *The Christ of the Covenants*, Baker: Grand Rapids, p. 206, 1980.

68. Concerning the Covenant of Works, *The New Geneva Study Bible* (1995) says, “. . . this precise phrase does not appear in Scripture” (p. 30).

silence was not kept in the OT. Moreover, this alleged inauguration of the Covenant of Grace has God making a covenant with man, He being one party to the covenant and Adam the other party. Let us hear what *The New Geneva Study Bible* (1995) says about it:

Covenants in Scripture are solemn agreements, negotiated or unilaterally imposed, that bind the parties to each other in permanent defined relationships, with specific promises, claims and obligations on both sides (e.g., the marriage covenant, Mal. 2:4).

... When Adam and Eve failed to obey the terms of the covenant of works ... God did not destroy them, but revealed His covenant of grace by promising a Savior (Gen. 3:15). God's covenant rests on His promise, as is clear from His covenant with Abraham ... (p. 30).

This is a concise statement of what undergirds Covenant Theology. The fact is that there was no covenant of grace established with Adam -- **there is no promise made to Adam** in Gen. 3:15. What was said in Gen. 3:15 was said to the serpent. Adam heard it and could rest on what God said, but the notion that there was a covenant (a 'solemn agreement, negotiated or unilaterally imposed, that bound Adam and God to each other in a permanent defined relationship' is spiritual alchemy, transmuting what God said to the serpent into a covenant established with Adam.

## *Covenant Theology is a System of Interpretation Imposed Upon Scripture*

Covenant Theology is an interpretive grid that has been imposed upon Scripture. All of Scripture is organized around the idea of "covenant." The Covenantist, J. I. Packer wrote:

What is covenant theology? The straightforward, if provocative answer to that question is that it is what is nowadays called a hermeneutic -- that is, a way of reading the whole Bible that is itself part of the overall interpretation of the Bible that it undergirds. A successful hermeneutic is a consistent interpretative procedure yielding a consistent understanding of Scripture that in turn confirms the propriety of the procedure itself. Covenant theology is a case in point. It is a hermeneutic that forces itself upon every thoughtful Bible-reader who gets to the place, *first*, of reading, hearing, and digesting Holy Scripture as didactic instruction given through human agents by God himself, in person; *second*, of recognizing that what the God who speaks the Scriptures tells us about in their pages is his own sustained sovereign action in creation, providence, and grace; *third*, of discerning that in our salvation by grace God stands revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, executing in tripersonal unity a single cooperative enterprise of raising sinners from the gutter of spiritual destitution to share Christ's glory for ever; and, *fourth*, of seeing that God-centered thought and life, springing responsively from a God-wrought change of heart that expresses itself

spontaneously in grateful praise, is the essence of true knowledge of God. Once Christians have got this far, the covenant theology of the Scriptures is something that they can hardly miss.<sup>69</sup>

We may certainly agree that Covenant Theology is "a hermeneutic,"<sup>70</sup> but it is to be rejected. It is false, and it is unneeded for recognizing in Scripture that it is God Who speaks; unneeded for recognizing God's sustained, sovereign action in creation, providence, and grace; unneeded for recognizing the revelation of the Father by the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the three Persons acting in tripersonal unity in the salvation of sinners and in the sharing of Christ's glory by the saints; unneeded for seeing that there flows from the God-wrought change of heart, a God-centered life, thought, and worship. And Christians who "have got this far" may well have done so without Covenant Theology, and 'got much further' without it.

Covenant Theology, then, is a hermeneutic, an interpretive grid, imposed upon the Scripture, claiming that it alone unifies the OT and the NT as it places both under the Covenant of Grace begun consequent upon Adam's fall. It boasts of its view of "continuity" in God's redemptive work, claiming that Scofieldian Dispensationalism fragments that work. What stands in the way of the system of Covenantism, in Scripture, is spiritually alchemized to transmute it into compliance with Covenant Theology.

There are Covenantists who believe in a Covenant of Redemption, an

69. "Introduction: On Covenant Theology," in the reprint of Herman Witsius' (1636-1708) *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man* ... (2 vols.) distributed by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, 1990.

70. Willem Van Gemeren tells us that Covenantists approach the prophets of Israel from the standpoint of the unity of the Covenant of Grace. He wrote:

The Reformed exegete approaches the prophets from the perspective of the unity of the covenant ("Israel as the Hermeneutical Crux in the Interpretation of Prophecy (II)," *Westminster Theological Journal* 46, p. 269 (1984).

Let me remind the reader of Vern S. Poythress' remark regarding Ezek. 44-46:

Was the Old Testament hearer obliged to say that the passage must be interpreted in the most obvious way? (p. 105).

Note well that this **admits** that *the most obvious way* to understand Ezek. 44-46 is literally. Of course; and there was no basis for an Israelite to understand it, or the other prophecies otherwise. The spiritual alchemization of Israel's prophets does raise the question if God was deceiving the hearers of His Word -- because Covenantism means that though the hearers understood these prophecies as speaking of Israel's future and glory under Messiah, the prophecies actually meant the church. And let me remind the reader what O. T. Allis said:

The Old Testament prophecies if literally interpreted cannot be regarded as having been fulfilled or as being capable of fulfillment in this present age (*Prophecy and the Church*, p. 238).

The Covenantist hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy is fathered by the mythical Covenant of Grace and its alleged giving unity to the OT and NT.

agreement made by the Father and the Son, in eternity. We have noted that “Covenant of Redemption,” “Covenant of Works” (or “Covenant of Creation,” if you prefer), and “Covenant of Grace” (or “Covenant of Redemption,” if you prefer), are expressions not found in Scripture. Moreover, neither is it the case that what is meant to be described by these expressions are found in Scripture. However, it might be added here that what Scripture calls “the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12) are gracious in character, i.e., they are *unconditional promises* that God will undertake to implement: in particular, the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the new covenant with Israel, and perhaps the covenant with Phinehas is to be included. The expression, “covenant of works,” describes the character of the Mosaic Covenant; but in Covenant Theology the Mosaic Covenant is an administration of its “Covenant of Grace”. (The transmutational power of the Covenantist spiritual alchemy is amazing.) The Mosaic Covenant came into being 430 years after the promise to Abraham and cannot disannul the promise to Abraham because the promise was sovereignly given -- unconditionally. But the Mosaic covenant is not unconditional. The two covenants stand in stark contrast:

Now I say this, A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance [be] on the principle of law, [it is] no longer on the principle of promise; but God gave it in grace to Abraham by promise. Why then the law? It was added for the sake of transgressions, until the seed came to whom the promise was made . . . (Gal. 3:17-19).

In Covenant Theology both the radically opposed Abrahamic Covenant (“on the principle of promise”) and Mosaic Covenant “no longer on the principle of promise”) are part of, administrations of, the “Covenant of Grace”. We will examine these covenants latter, if the Lord will, but here just notice the mutually opposed principles of these two covenants. The inheritance is either on the principle of law, or on the principle of promise. We are clearly told that the inheritance is obtained on the principle of promise. And why would that be so? It is because “promise” indicates that God sovereignly undertakes to secure the inheritance. Why then the law? The law came in meanwhile to see if the (fallen) first man, in the persons of favored Israel, could obtain the promise by keeping the law. That would be by human effort instead of promise. That would be doing so from the position man took in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil -- seeking to gain the promise on that basis: human responsibility acting on the basis of having the knowledge of good and evil. But in the fall, man had acquired what Rom. 8:3 calls “sin in the flesh.” The function of the law was to expose the working of sin in the flesh by that working taking the form of transgression of positive commandments. Sin (“sin in the flesh”) had been in the world ever since the fall of Adam (Rom. 5:13-14). It had been working in all men. The prohibitions pronounced in the law exposed the working of *sin in the*

*flesh* in the form of transgression. The law brought sin into relief in the form of transgression. Here is what God brought out:

The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).

Since the cross, God is working with the Second Man, the Man of purpose, and is forming a people who are not of the world (John 17:14) and are heavenly as He is (1 Cor. 15:48) while the whole world lies in the wicked one (1 John 5:19). When this work, involving the mystery of Christ and the church, is completed, then God will begin to work preparatory to the universal sway of the Second Man, the Son of man, over all (Eph. 1:9, 10), the church reigning with Him. So, the OT is the history of the first man. The cross involves the first man casting out the Second Man. The cross also involves God’s setting aside the first man, displacing him with the Second Man. The NT is the unfolding of what God is doing for His glory, in the Second Man, in the heavenlies and in the earthlies, so to speak. When that is finished, the new heavens and the new earth will be brought into existence, all dispensational display of God’s glory in Christ will have been concluded. There will be eternal glory.

### ***Covenant Theology is Based on Denying that the Covenants Are for Paul’s Kinsmen According to the Flesh, Who Are Israelites:***

#### ***The Covenants Are for Ethnic Jews***

Before proceeding we should note that Rom. 9-11 forms a section within the book of Romans. The presentation of the gospel, with the “no difference” teaching regarding the lostness of all men, the leveling of Jew and Gentile both as to judgment and grace, raises the question concerning the ancient promises to, and special privileges for, Israel. This is considered in Rom. 9-11. What has been promised to Israel, and the call of Israel, is affirmed as fixed. Thus, Rom. 11:25-29 says:

. . . blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are ] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance.

“Not subject to repentance” means irrevocable. The covenant in v. 27 refers to the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8). Jehovah will bring them into the bond

of that covenant (Ezek. 20:37). It is one of the “covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12) that will be sovereignly instated. The covenants belong to Paul’s kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Rom. 9:4, 5). “Israel” used some 70 times in the NT always means exactly what the word says: Israel -- not the Church.

We shall now observe that Covenant theology is a denial of the distinctive, *earthly work* that God is going to do for His glory in Christ, in the earthly sphere -- which necessarily goes hand-in-hand with the denial of the distinctive *heavenly work* God is presently doing. Covenantists do this in the face of the second great pointer that we have directly from God, which pointer is quite in keeping with the secrecy of the mystery, namely, the apostle Paul’s statement in Rom. 9:3-5 that the covenants belong to:

... my brethren, my kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the services, and the promises; whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen (Rom. 9:3-5).<sup>71</sup>

He did not use the expression ‘my brethren, Israel.’ Since Covenant Theology teaches that the church is ‘the spiritual Israel,’ had the Scripture stated that the covenants belong to ‘my brethren, Israel,’ Covenantists would have seized on that to say that the NT church, Paul’s spiritual brethren -- as “the spiritual Israel” -- have claim to the covenants.<sup>72</sup> But Scripture has precluded that claim by

71. It should be observed that there are seven things stated in Rom. 9:4, 5 that belong to Paul’s kinsmen, according to the flesh; but there is an eighth matter distinguished from the seven:

... and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Christ does not belong to Israel as the seven things named do, though, as to flesh, He came from Paul’s kinsmen, according to flesh. He is “of whom,” not, “whose [is].” This distinction made in the text is illustrative of the wonderful accuracies, the precision, that characterizes the Scripture of truth. May the Spirit teach us to discern!

72. W. Hendriksen wrote:

... the word seems to point to the various affirmations and re-affirmations of God’s covenant with his people and/or with their leaders. Even though there was only one covenant of grace, in essence identical in both dispensations, it was revealed more and more fully in the course of time. See, for example ...

Godfearing people in Israel rejoiced in this covenant. David did (2 Sam. 23:5); so did Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:54, 55); and so did Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:72, 73) (*New Testament Commentary, Romans*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2:312, 1981).

These three persons knew nothing of a “Covenant of Grace” established consequent upon the fall of Adam. 2 Sam. 23:5 refers to what we call the Davidic Covenant; Luke 1:55 to the Abrahamic covenant; and Luke 1:72, 73 also to the Abrahamic covenant. It is the hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy that sees the “Covenant of Grace” in these statements, because Covenantists say that these

(continued...)

stating that the covenants belong to *Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh*. The covenants belong to ethnic Jews.

Note that we are told “whose is,” not ‘whose was.’ The things specified continue to belong to Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh at the time he wrote this, and thus continue to belong to them. They have not been cancelled because of the formation of the church; nor are they absorbed by, or applied to, the church.

At present there are ethnic Jews who are true Jews. In Rom. 2:28, 29 we learn what a true Jew is:

For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in flesh; but he [is] a Jew [who is so] inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.

Such presently are also “the Israel of God” in Gal. 6:16). In keeping with this we read:

for not all [are] Israel which [are] of Israel; nor because they are seed of Abraham [are] all children (Rom. 9:6, 7).

Such are presently part of the company of those seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). All Jews under Messiah’s future reign will be in the condition described in Rom. 2:28, 29. This is consonant with our Lord’s description of Nathaniel:

Behold [one] truly an Israelite, in whom there is no guile (John 1:47).

Under messiah’s future reign all ethnic Jews will be under the new covenant, and all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26). They shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). At that time Israel will be ethnic Jews and all will be spiritual Jews at the same time, “truly an Israelite.”

At the present time all true Christians, whether ethnically Jews or Gentiles answer to the spiritual meaning of circumcision:

See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:2, 3).

“Dogs” points to apostates, “evil workmen” points to professed Christians doing evil work, and “the concision” is a disparaging reference to circumcision as a mutilation, referring to Jews, because:

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and

72. (...continued)

covenants are administrations of the “Covenant of Grace”. Godfearing people in Israel rejoiced in the covenants of promise, not on the Covenantists’ mythical “Covenant of Grace”, concerning which they knew nothing.

mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15, 16).

Circumcision in the flesh is presently not anything! It is a mutilation in the flesh when done for some supposed spiritual reason. Note also that there are two groupings in this verse, spite of Covenantist efforts to make one group by equating the church with the Israel of God.

### *Seven Things Belong to Paul's Kinsmen According to Flesh, Who Are Israelites*

There are writers who say that the words “who are Israelites” is the first of the privileges Paul speaks of. That is a mistake, for there are seven things (a number signifying something complete) summing up the sovereignly bestowed blessings for Israel, and the eighth one (signifying a new beginning -- as resurrection, for example) is Christ, Who is *of* Israel -- thus not a distinctive and peculiar blessing for Israel alone. In Christ, God acts sovereignly beyond Israel and her distinctive blessings. And this is shown to be so in this chapter; yet, Israel's distinctive blessings are certain to be established in God's good time. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29). Thus the apostle does not set aside Israel's privileges, but shows that God can sovereignly bless as He will, consistently with the setting aside of disobedient Israel now, and with the establishment of Israel in their privileges in due time.

#### THE ADOPTION

Adoption in rom. 9:3 does not refer to the adoption, or placement as sons, as now, which is of individuals. And this adoption (sonship) of Christians, their position of sonship, is sealed by the Spirit of adoption, i.e., of sonship (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14-16). Our place before the Father is the same measure as Christ's is, because we are one with Him, taken into favor in the Beloved (Eph. 2:6). Thus we are placed into such intimacy with the Father that, having “the Spirit of his Son” in our hearts, we cry “Abba Father.” Thus did the Lord Jesus, as recorded in Mark 14:36. This is an unspeakable blessing we have in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. Such intimacy is not the portion of Israel.

Israel's adoption is a *national* adoption, involving supremacy among the nations. Ex. 4:22, 23 and Deut. 7:6, and 32:6, 18, point to this as Jer. 3:19 and Hos. 11:1 confirm it. See also Jer. 31:9 and Amos 3:2, etc. Israel's national adoption is earthly. The Deliverer will come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). Then will He reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

#### THE GLORY

This refers to the Shekinah, the cloud of glory that first appeared to stand between Israel and the pursuing Egyptians (Ex. 14). Jehovah looked out of the cloud upon the Egyptians, a very ominous thing indeed for the enemy. It settled on the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), even between the cherubim on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:2) upon the Ark of the Covenant. It abode also on Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:1, 2); but later, upon Judah's continued, rebellious way, Ezekiel saw the cloud remove (Ezek. 11:23); but it will again return (Ezek. 43).

It is indicated in Scripture that the millennial temple (Ezek. 40-48) is morally the same house that Solomon built, and morally the same house rebuilt in Haggai's day; i.e., in God's view there is a continuity such that Haggai spoke of these structures as if it is one house:

The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace (Hag. 2:9).

“The latter glory” refers to the millennial glory, glory being greater than that of Solomon's day, for what he built was a foreshadow of the millennial temple to come, when He Who is the antitype of David and Solomon combined, reigns before his ancients in glory:

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be brought together, [as] an assemblage of prisoners for the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall be visited. And the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts shall reign on mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients in glory (Isa. 24:21-23).

This is the time of the fulfilment of Isa. 60:7:

... I will beautify the house of my magnificence.

Haggai had also prophesied: “and in this place will I give peace.” That place is Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen, to dwell there.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, standing as a banner of the peoples; the nations shall seek it; and his resting place shall be glory (Isa. 11:10).

It may be that Isa. 4:5, 6 refers to the Shekinah -- present once again in the city of Jehovah's choice, consequent upon the awful application of “the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning” (Isa. 4:4).

#### THE COVENANTS

The covenants belong to Israel, not to the Gentiles, and not to the Church. As always, many opinions have been expressed concerning what covenants are included in this. While the Mosaic covenant was for the nation, it is not, as a covenant, to be made good to Israel in the future day of her glory. A covenant of promise was given to Abraham. The Mosaic covenant, given 430 years later, was part of the test of the fallen first man to see if he was recoverable. Could he gain what was sovereignly given by *promise* to Abraham by *working* for it (i.e., by

meriting it)? Thus, the Mosaic covenant was provisional, something brought in meanwhile in order to bring the state into relief -- as was Shiloh (where the tabernacle was at first) before Jerusalem, the city of Jehovah's choice was marked out by fire falling upon the burnt-offering in the threshing floor of Arunah (1 Chron. 21:26).

The phrase in Eph. 2:12, "covenants of promise," would be the covenants spoken of here. The Mosaic covenant differed in that it was conditional, while the Abrahamic, the Davidic, the new covenant (Jer. 31:31), and also the covenant of the priesthood for faithful Phinehas (Num. 24), all await fulfilment by God's sovereign action in Christ, for His glory, in the earthly sphere.

### THE LAWGIVING

That is not the equivalent of the Mosaic Covenant, which has been permanently terminated. However, the law is not dead:

Now we know that the law [is] good if anyone use it lawfully . . . (1 Tim. 1:9).

Rather than the law being dead, there is a lawful use of the law.<sup>73</sup> The Christian is, of course, dead to the law (Rom. 7:4) as well as to sin (Rom. 6:8), as he is also dead to the world (Gal. 6:14). See Gal. 2:20. He is not under the law as the rule of life but under the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:15, 16); and we see that both Gentile believers and Jewish believers (i.e., the Israel of God) are to walk by the same rule. The new creation was begun by Christ in resurrection, thus on the other side of death. The Christian has died with Christ and has been raised up together with Christ (Eph. 2:5, 6). This is consonant with having died with Him.

Concerning the New Covenant with Judah and Israel (reunited -- Ezek. 37), we read:

Giving my laws into their mind, I will write them upon their hearts (Heb. 8:10).

In the millennium Israel will observe the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

With the hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy, the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) has been transmuted into the first day of the week, the Lord's day. After all, if, as Covenantists say, the Christian is under the law as the rule of life, he must be under ten commandments, not nine of them. One of them concerns keeping the Sabbath. Therefore the Sabbath must be changed from the seventh day of the week to the first. It is necessary to the system. And, if you say the law is written in the heart of a Christian, Sabbath keeping is written in his heart. And it is clear to Christians (other than to "Messianic Jews") the Lord's day, the first

73. The law was not nailed to the cross and then someday it will come down from the cross in order to be on the hearts of the Israelites under the New Covenant. Col. 2:14 does not mean that the law was nailed to the cross, but rather the obligation to it. Not the law, but the hand-writing. In a footnote to JND's translation of this he has:

Hand-writing, obligation to which a man is subject by his signature.

of the week is the Christian day (see Acts 20:7, etc.). If, then, the law is written on the heart of a Christian, he must keep the Sabbath, and so it must be the first day of the week. All untrue: the law is not the Christian's rule of life. Nor does that make the Christian "lawless." But we cannot develop this here.

### THE SERVICE

This refers to the ritual that God gave to Israel (see Heb. 9:1). It was given through Moses and David added to it, as did Solomon subsequently regarding the temple. The millennial temple will have a service (Ezek. 40-48), of course, since "the service" belongs to Israel. The nations will be required to bring honor to where Israel has the service (Zech. 14:16-21).

The service had its place where the earthly worship is carried on where the tabernacle was. God looked forward to pointing out the place He would choose where the center for Israel's service would be (Deut. 12:5-6). Shiloh was provisional, something to bring out the state of the people before He indicated His choice of Jerusalem as the place. He also gave a king according to the people's wishes (Saul) before He appointed David as ruler of His people, and it was through David that the place of the service was pointed out by fire falling from heaven to consume the burnt-offering (1 Chron. 21:18 - 22:1). The choice of God is celebrated in Psa. 78:67-72). It is a Gentile conceit that God shall not yet choose Jerusalem. The prophesied regathering of Israel was not the return from the Babylonian captivity. First of all, Babylon is not the place from which God will regather them for "the service" which is theirs:

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand a second time to acquire the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall lift up a banner to the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:11-12).

Not only does this not refer to the regathering from Babylon, it speaks of a gathering "a second time." Moreover, after the regathering the first time, from Babylon, the prophet Zechariah prophesied:

Cry further, saying, thus saith Jehovah of hosts: My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity, and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem (Zech. 2:17).

Having returned to the city of God's choice the first time, the returned remnant is told that Jehovah "shall yet choose Jerusalem." Certainly so; for there was to be a "second time" of regathering a remnant. The first was but a faint foreshadow of what yet awaits Israel when the Man Whose name is The Branch (Sprout) builds the temple of Jehovah and will be priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:12, 13). It is then that He shall be King, and exercise the Melchizedec, the millennial, priesthood. Then shall the sons of Zadok minister in the priests' office (Ezek.

44:15) in fulfilment of the covenant to Phinehas (Num. 24), for the Zadokites are the progeny of Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest. The line of Eli, progeny of Ithamar (Eliazar's brother), the son of Aaron, had somehow obtained a chief place instead of Phinehas' line. Abiathar, who was thrust from the priesthood by Solomon, was the progeny of Eli, to whom Jehovah swore that He would cut off His house.<sup>74</sup> And Solomon, type of the great King of the house of David that will yet come, established Zadok in the chief place. This is all typical of what is yet coming, which will transpire in due time to establish Israel in "the service." It has been said that the wheels of God's government grind slowly, but they grind surely! Think of Jehovah above the cherubim with the terrible wheels beside those cherubim, the executioners of God's government, seen in Ezek. 1.

The Melchisedec priesthood is founded on the once-for-all finished work of Christ. It is His Melchizedec priesthood that imparts its character to the sacrifices in the millennium. Offered as based on the once-for-all finished work shows that the sacrifices will be memorial in character of the work done by Christ.

However, this is earthly and Christian worship is in the sanctuary above where Christ, after a heavenly order of priesthood, is minister there (Heb. 8:2) and where He leads the singing (Heb. 2); for that is where we have boldness to enter (Heb. 10:19-22).

### THE PROMISES

The promises in Christ Jesus are not meant. Israel knew nothing about the mystery of Christ and the Church, for silence had been kept about that. This is above and beyond the new covenant too, of course. There are many promises for Israel throughout the prophetic writings of Israel's prophets that are not expressly named in a particular covenant. Jehovah will make all good in Christ, for His glory in the earthly sphere.

### THE FATHERS

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, belong to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh. Concerning Christians being the seed of Abraham because of their oneness with the great Seed of Abraham, that will be considered when we consider the Abrahamic Covenant, if the Lord will.

## *These Seven Things are for the Present Earth and Will End*

74. The priests at Nob, who were killed by Saul through Doeg the Edomite, were also of the house of Eli. The wickedness of man is used to serve the governmental ways of God. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrains (Psa. 76:10).

None of these things will continue in the eternal state though the church, as such, will (Eph. 3:21). Jer. 31:35-37 shows that as long as the ordinance of sun and moon, etc., continue, so long will Israel be a nation. They will not be a distinct nation among men in the eternal state. Israel's promises that are to be in force "forever" means while the present heavens and earth continue. A careful searching into the whole matter leads to this conclusion, though some texts might be taken otherwise, if the entire corpus of relevant material is not brought to bear. W. Kelly rightly takes Isa. 66:22 to speak of the millennium from the Jewish point of view, not in the same way as 2 Pet. 3.

Christ, of course, continues eternally in manhood, indissolubly taken into His Person. We have already noted that it is not said, as in the other seven things, that He belongs to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh. He is "of" them.

## *The Present, Partial Blindness of Israel*

Presently, "blindness in part is happened to Israel" (Rom. 11:25), and some natural branches (Jews) have been broken out of the olive tree (Rom. 11:17). Is this "in part," and "some," permanent? No --

blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in (Rom. 11:25).

"The fulness of the nation" refers to the completion of God's present work among the Gentiles -- and with an "election of grace" (Rom. 11:5) from Israel sprinkled among them (i.e., "the Israel of God" of Gal. 6:16).

The olive tree is figurative of *the line of privilege* starting from Abraham. It is not a figure used for the body of Christ as is clear from the fact that branches can be broken out of it. No member of the body of Christ can be severed from Him. That professors of Christianity may not actually belong to Christ is quite clearly the fact. As Israel acted perversely regarding privilege (and they had such, Rom. 3:1-3), so the Gentile profession has not continued faithfully and is threatened with (likewise) not being spared (Rom. 11:21), "cut away" (Rom. 11:22). And such will happen subsequent to the rapture of the saints. Then God will do a work with a Jewish remnant, preparatory to the fulfilment of the covenants of promise when Christ reigns and all Israel shall be saved, the rebels having all been purged (Ezek. 20:34-38), and Jehovah then having brought them "into the bond of the covenant" (Ezek. 20:37) -- the new covenant, no doubt.

And *they* too, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able again to graft them in (Rom. 11:23).

This sovereign action of God to implement His sovereignly given promises will bring the nation, thus all saved, into what Rom. 11:12 calls "their fulness" and likens this to resurrection:



... what [their] reception but life from among [the] dead (Rom. 11:15).

Thus will Jehovah seal to His earthly people, in fulfilment, the things spoken of in Rom. 9:3-5. At this future time, Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh will be saved.

The saved of the Gentiles during the millennium are not looked at as in the olive tree. If they were in the olive tree, that would swamp the distinctiveness of Israel. But Israel has "the adoption." This refers to a national adoption, a nationally distinct place, a place of supremacy.

## ***The Death of Christ Has Provided for Israel's Future, National Blessings***

Indeed, the death of Christ made provision for these blessings for the nation of Israel, for the Lord Jesus died for the nation; not only for that nation, of course, but He did die for the nation (John 11:51, 52):

... but, {Caiaphas} being high priest that year, prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he should gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Thus, that work accomplished on the cross to glorify God has provided for the nation's blessings.

In Rom. 9:3-5 we also are told that the promises belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh. Another Scripture that speaks of a two-fold purpose of the cross is Rom. 15:8, 9:

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy ...

The apostle then went on to cite some OT texts that show that in connection with His people, Israel, nations would receive blessing. But the promises belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh. Eph. 2:12 declares that Gentiles were strangers to the covenants of promise. The OT covenants of promise are for Israel and do not include Gentiles, whatever blessing God may give Gentiles. Covenant Theology includes Gentiles in the New Covenant. Gentiles are not Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh. Covenant Theology's hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy transmutes believing Gentiles into being spiritual Jews, into being "the Israel of God," and makes of the church a "spiritual Israel."

Such texts as Paul quoted from the OT that speak of Gentile blessing are not fulfilled now. They are brought forward to show that God had blessing for Gentiles in mind, and the blessing going out to Gentiles now, while not the fulfillment of such OT Scriptures, are *not incompatible* with God's intention to

bless Gentiles. The blessing to Gentiles now is a blessing ahead of the time of the millennial blessing for Gentiles. The present Gentile blessing ahead of that time is noted in an instructive expression in Eph. 1:12, 13:

... we ... who have pre-trusted in the Christ ...

The word "pre-trust" refers to trusting before the millennial blessing is brought about.

It is not purposed here to pursue additional Scriptures along these lines, but to indicate that Scripture is consonant with the fact that the mystery of Christ and the church is a secret disclosed subsequent to the cross, and involves a work of God before the promised kingdom for Israel is brought in sovereignly by Christ's power. *That*, meanwhile, awaits while a heavenly people, with a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), is formed.

## ***God's Purpose to Glorify Himself in Christ in Two Spheres, the Heavenly and the Earthly, Is What Gives Scripture Its Unity:***

### ***The Scofieldian Testing System Is Not What Gives Scripture Its Unity***

The Scofieldian Dispensational system erroneously carries testing forward, past the cross, to a "church age" and the following kingdom period. In addition, C. I. Scofield interlocked a "Dispensation of Innocence" into his testing scheme. This appears to me to be an attempt to find "continuity" between the OT and the NT in the concept of testing as a uniting factor -- as Covenant Theology finds "continuity" in the "Covenant of Grace" and redemption. The Scofieldian idea of testing in innocence, as part of the whole system of testing, does Covenant Theology one better in that it places testing in Innocency in a continuum of testing, thus having testing from Eden to the consummation of all; for Covenant Theology has a break in man's history -- in that Adam had a Covenant of Works, and having fallen, God introduced another covenant. Scofieldian Dispensationalism has no such break because of making Innocence to be a dispensation among the dispensations *in all of which* the testing of man takes place. But it is an artificial construct -- confusing ages with dispensations, though it has more truth in it than Covenantism. Note that innocence in Eden had its own distinctive character, preparatory to what was to come in God's dealings with the

first man. Making Innocency a test along with the testings of fallen man to see if he was recoverable is to mix two things of different character entirely. The trial of man that we speak of is the trial of fallen man, standing in Adamic responsibility, standing “in the flesh,” having “sin in the flesh,” to see if he was recoverable. None of this was true of Adam in innocency. Moreover, Adam did not become the head of a race while innocent. Under trial, Adam is viewed as the head of a fallen race. In the fall, his state changed from innocency to fallen, with “sin in the flesh” then in him and in those of his race.

It should be noted that the trial of the first man, as fallen, closed with the cross, the final test being the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:24). The end of the testing of fallen man to see if he was recoverable, does not mean that men are not now responsible to God. The creature is always responsible to obey.

The cross marked the great transition point in the ways of God with man. Consequent upon the termination of the trial of the first man there is this new declaration from God:

God . . . now enjoins men that they shall all everywhere repent, because he has set a day in which he is going to judge the habitable earth in righteousness by [the] man whom he has appointed, giving proof [of it] to all [in] having raised him from among the dead (Acts 17:30, 31).

Place emphasis on the word “now.” This is announced because the first man has been displaced by the Second Man. To say that the trial of man is still proceeding is to give the first man a continued place before God when the fact is that he has been set aside -- his total ruin, his lostness, being preached consequent upon the death and resurrection of the Second Man. Thus there is a **NOW** since the cross, in contrast to before the cross.

*The Second Man Established in His Place*

*. . . then that which is spiritual (1 Cor. 14:46)*

*. . . the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:47)*

### **NOW**

The Second Man has displaced the first man.

In view of the end of the testing  
of the first man, God declares:

Wrath of God revealed from heaven (Rom. 1:18)  
All under sin (Rom. 3:9; Gal. 3:22)  
Every mouth stopped (Rom. 3:20)  
All the world under judgment (Rom. 3:20)  
All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)  
For God has shut up together all in unbelief, in order that he might show mercy to all (Rom. 11:32).  
Man is the slave of sin (Rom. 6:20)  
Thoughts of the unbelieving are blinded (2 Cor. 4:4)  
All are dead (2 Cor. 5:14; Eph. 2:1; John 5:24, 25; 1 John 3:14)  
Now is the judgment of this world (John 12:31)  
In due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6)  
Christ died for all (1 Tim. 2:6)  
Christ gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6)  
Christ is the propitiation for the world (1 John 2:2)  
The whole world lies in the wicked One (1 John 5:19)  
Satan declared to be the God of this age (2 Cor. 4:4)

NOW: Rom. 3:21; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 9:26

God “**NOW** enjoins that they shall  
all everywhere repent” (Acts 17:30)

“

**Upon whom the ends of the ages are come” (1 Cor. 10:11)**

(ages of testing)

## *What Is the True Relationship of the Pre- and the Post-cross Epochs?*

There are two great epochs in the history of the world. They are separated by the cross, resurrection, and glorification of Christ. What these two epochs are really about is the history of *the first man, the man of responsibility*, under trial, to see if he was recoverable; and that being settled (the answer is no, and he is declared “lost”), and the subsequent actings of *the Second Man, the Man of God’s purpose*. The relationship of the Scriptures having to do with these two epochs is not found in redemption, or salvation-history, or covenants, or even a system of dispensations of testing of man, including Innocence, a “Church age,” and Kingdom, so as to have seven of them. God has acted with only one of the two men at a time as having a place before Him. The Second Man has displaced the first man. As to the first man, consequent upon the cross the sentence of “lost” has been passed upon him and Romans makes his state and position before God quite clear. In Romans men are looked at as alive in sins, running from God as fast as they can, and the saved are looked at as having died with Christ, out of that situation, and being alive unto God. In Ephesians the sinner is looked at as spiritually dead towards God and in need of sovereign, spiritual quickening (Eph. 2:1,2).

Interestingly, Eden had two special trees. There was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of which man ate. Subsequently, God took up the first man as under the responsibility of having the knowledge of good and evil (to see if he was recoverable from the fall). We can discern from this that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the tree of responsibility; while the tree of life speaks of Christ. The two trees of Eden foreshadow the relationship of the two epochs we are considering, and the characteristic difference between them.

Concerning the two men, J. N. Darby has written on this matter.

See especially: “The Testimony of God; or The Trial of man, The Grace and the Government of God,” *Collected Writings* 22:335-364.

“The Rejected Man, Genesis 3,” *Collected Writings*, 12:305-315.

“The Accepted Man, 2 Corinthians 3,” *Collected Writings*, 12:328-339.

“The First Man and the Second, Genesis 3,” *Collected Writings*, 19:111-116. Also, 7:270; 9:321; 23:134-151; 32:236-238.

“Man’s Responsibility and God’s Promises, Galatians 3,” *Collected Writings*, 12:227-238. Also 17:307-313.

“The Responsible Man and the Man of Purpose, John 17,” *Collected Writings*, 34:389-392. Also 23:347; 26:15, 113-119; 28:36.

Regarding man in the flesh being irrecoverable, see:

*Collected Writings* 10:275, 290-291, 351; 21:170; 32:234-236.

For the moral history of man, see:

*Collected Writings* 1:205; 4:359; 7:241, 269; 10:273-275; 12:175; 16:262-264; 18:252-254; 21:273; 22:337-345; 23:137-139, 179, 315; 26:22; 32:232-236; 34:6.

For the headships of Adam and Christ, see:

*Collected Writings* 1:211-213; 5:84; 7:290; 8:29, 104; 9:292; 10:79, 108, 286, 358; 13:160, 208-210; 15:259-260; 16:351; 21:222-225; 26:296; 27:187; 31:265.

For the first and last Adams, see:

*Collected Writings* 5:88-89; 10:162; 14:28; 16:3; 26:295-297; 34:2.

For the last Adam substituted for the first Adam, see:

*Collected Writings* 7:242-245, 270, 290; 10:143-145; 26:256.

In addition, the reader may also consult the *Synopsis*, the three volumes of *Letters, Notes and Comments* and also *Notes and Jottings*.

The answer to Dr. Robertson’s chapter title, “What Structures Scripture -- Covenants or Dispensations?”<sup>75</sup> is: **neither**. The dispensational truth espoused herein has overlap with the Scofieldian Dispensationalism that Dr. Robertson comments upon, but what is espoused herein has considerable differences. It is a mistake to equate Scofieldian Dispensationalism with what was brought out through J. N. Darby. Important differences have been noted in my *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1. Here, I would mention this:

1. The OT is the history of the first man, as fallen, (see 1 Cor. 15:45-49) to see if he was recoverable. After the fall, and up to the flood, man was left to himself (an age often erroneously referred to as “the dispensation of conscience.”<sup>76</sup> Subsequent to the flood, government was introduced. God

75. *The Christ of the Covenants*, ch. 11.

76. Innocence and conscience are not dispensations. God did not dispense innocence or conscience. He created man innocent, meaning ignorant of good and evil, but by self-will Adam fell and acquired the knowledge of good and evil, but was held captive to what Rom. 8:2 describes as “the law of sin” in our members. God, of course, acted sovereignly in implanting a new nature in certain persons, but consequent on the fall of Adam, man was left to himself. In the fall, man had acquired a conscience with respect to good and evil. Until the flood, man was left to himself. It was not a dispensation of conscience, but it was a distinguishable age from the fall to the flood. Dispensations (administrations) and ages are not synonymous, though a particular age may be characterized by a particular administration -- the Kingdom, for example (see the chart below). Following the flood God dispensed government as the rule for man. This is the first dispensation; or, better,

(continued...)

afterwards introduced many more things and man failed in all of them. It should be noted that it is God's purpose that Christ will take up all things wherein the first man has failed and discharge them perfectly to God's glory. This is part of the history of the two Adams (who are noted in 1 Cor. 15:45-48).

None of this trial of the first man was for the purpose of informing Him Who is omniscient of anything, but it demonstrates the condition and loss of the first man under all circumstances and favors of God. The testing of the (fallen) first man *ended with the cross*. The rejection of the presentation of the Father seen in the Son is given thus:

... but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24; see also John 14:9).

This is the worst act of the first man (fallen man) and formed the crowning act of defiance and contempt of God. Think of it: the first Adam cast out the last Adam; the first man cast out the Second Man!<sup>77</sup> Since the end of the trial of the first man to see if he was recoverable, i.e., since the cross, God is acting in Christ, in resurrection; first to gather the heavenly people,<sup>78</sup> and then subsequently the earthly people, Israel.

2. Consequent upon the cross, the whole world is declared to lie in the wicked one (1 John 5:19) and Satan has been pronounced to be the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). The cross did not change the age. The Mosaic age continued on and meanwhile the mystery of Christ and the church has been unfolded. There is no "church age"; and no testing of man, for that was completed with the cross. The church is above, and outside, ages. The saints are seated above, in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), though their testimony is here below while waiting for Christ to come and receive them unto Himself. But that is the *position* in Christ that we have, and we are so bound up with Himself that:

... and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones] (1 Cor. 15:48).

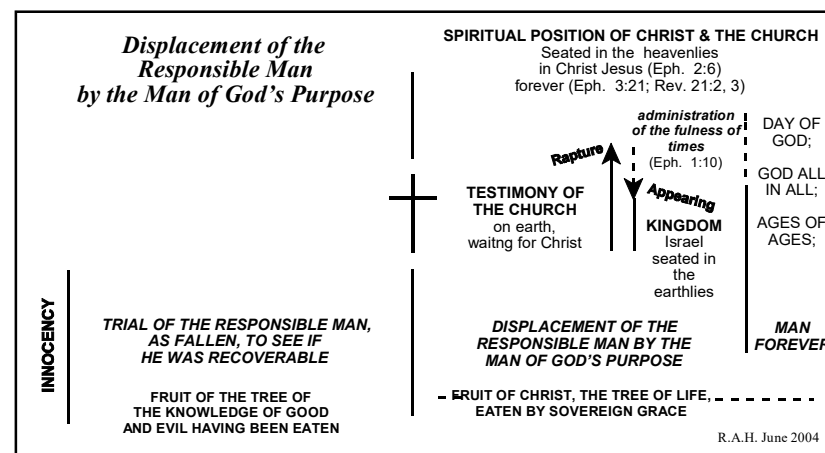
76. (...continued)  
administration.

77. When the Son entered the world as man, He was *in His Person* the Second Man and the last Adam. It is in resurrection that He takes the *place* proper to the Second Man and last Adam. God is not now testing the (fallen) first man. The cross ended his standing before God and he has been displaced by the Second Man.

78. Much discussion has taken place whether there is one people of God (Covenantism) or two peoples of God, i.e., a heavenly and an earthly (Dispensationalism). It is hoped to address this at some point.

We shall be taken above, physically (John 14:1-3), and in "the end of the age" (i.e., the end of the present, Mosaic age) a godly Jewish remnant will be formed preparatory to the introduction of the Kingdom, when the new covenant for Israel will be put into force, and the whole earth subdued under Messiah's reign before His ancients, in glory (Isa. 24:23). Thus, the Mosaic age will give way to "the age to come," the events following the rapture preparatory to the establishment of the kingdom in power taking place in "the end of the age"; i.e., the end of the Mosaic age.

So, we have very briefly touched on two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly. The church is prominent in one sphere and Israel in the other.



God's purpose is to glorify Himself. There is but that one purpose of God. He has purposed to glorify Himself in Christ. There is but that one purpose of God. He has purposed to glorify Himself in Christ, in two spheres; the heavenly and the earthly spheres. There is but that one purpose of God. And thus we read:

... having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for [the] administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth (Eph. 1:9, 10).

The "administration of the fulness of times" is not the eternal state -- it is something in the times on earth. The trial of the fallen, first man, to see if he was recoverable -- ending with the rejection of the Father and the Son -- was used of God for providing a setting for the work of Christ on the cross, to establish the righteous moral basis for all His actings (past, present, and future). Consequent upon the rejection of Christ, God placed His dealings with the earthly side of His purpose in suspension, that a heavenly company might be formed. When that

work is finished, then His work in preparation for the kingdom of Christ will commence and then He will establish His king upon His holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2).

What gives unity to the Scriptures is God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly.

During the millennium there will be a distinct, earthly people, Israel under the new covenant. There will be saved Gentiles in the early kingdom also, yet Israel has a distinctive place and relationship.

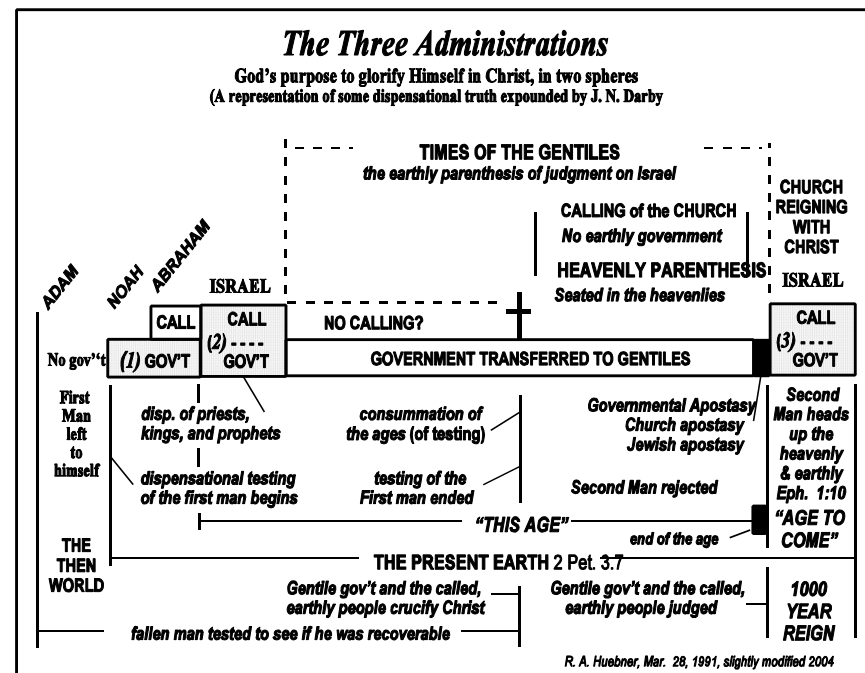
During the millennium there will be a distinct heavenly people, the saints united to Christ as members of His body (as indeed they are right now). There will be others in heaven also, but the church has a distinctive place and relationship. We might note here that the church will have a distinctive place for eternity (Eph. 3:21; cp. Rev. 21:3).<sup>79</sup>

Below is a chart that summarizes the teachings of J. N. Darby on these matters, as I understand him; and that is the understanding undergirding this book. The reader will notice that there is no dispensation of innocence, or of conscience. God did not dispense those things. Man was created upright; and by disobedience to God acquired a conscience. There is also often a confusion of dispensations with ages. But even innocence was not an age. The testing of man that we have been considering did not begin with innocence. It began with the fall, to see if fallen man was recoverable. Moreover, that ended with the cross, and thus, consequently, man was *formally* pronounced *lost* in Romans, etc.

What is on the chart below is the position from which Covenant Theology as a system, as well as errors in the prevalent Dispensational Theology, is viewed.

It should be understood that it was not until the truth of the mystery of Christ and the church was unfolded that God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly, could be made known. Silence had been kept regarding this mystery; it was not made known to ages and generations, previous to the cross.

79. Those in heaven need undergo no change when the dissolution of the present heavens and earth takes place and the new heavens and earth are brought into existence. Such would not be the case with those on earth -- a change would have to take place. Nor will Israel have a distinct place eternally. The use of *everlasting* in promises to Israel in the OT will be seen, on careful inquiry of all the texts, to mean as long as the present sun and moon continue -- not beyond that, into the new heavens and earth.



## Conclusion

The key to understanding the OT is that it is the history of the (fallen) first man to see if he was recoverable. The crowning act of his implacable hostility to, and enmity against, God was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24), nailing the Son to the cross. This terminated the testing of the

(fallen) first man to see if he was recoverable. Of course, during that time God acted in sovereign grace in the case of individuals, making saints of them. Moreover during that time God also brought in certain things (for example such things as government, priesthood, judges, kingship, etc.) wherein man failed, but Christ will take up all wherein man has failed and make those things good, redounding to God's glory. It is not so, as covenantists claim, that "Dispensationalism" holds to two purposes of God -- because of holding that there is a heavenly people and an earthly people. The unity of the Scriptures is seen in God's one purpose, to glorify Himself in Christ in the heavenly and earthly sphere (Eph. 1:9, 10), Christ in resurrection, as the Second Man and last Adam, having displaced the first man, the first Adam. That there is a heavenly people and an earthly people involved in this display of God's glory in Christ is not a valid basis to say that this means God has two separate purposes and that this amounts to undermining the unity of Scripture. Such a conclusion is merely in the eye of the Covenantist beholder. It is his erroneous system which makes it appear that way.

Redemption is the way God changes sinners into saints who participate in the display of His glory in Christ, in the two spheres. But redemption is not what unifies Scripture.

## Chapter 4

### *Adam in Innocency:*

#### *Introduction: Genesis 1 - 3*

Briefly stated, Genesis 1:1 - 2: 24 speaks of the original creation (Gen. 1:1), and a subsequent fall into a chaotic state (Gen. 1:2), and after that a subsequent remaking of the earth and the heavens with a view to placing man on the earth -- for the purpose of the display of God's glory in Christ, to be manifested in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly glory under Christ's universal headship. The Scriptures which unfold these things are the product of one Mind, Elohim of Gen. 1, with this object in view.

Gen. 1:3- 2:3 presents this remaking in a chronological order, taking place in six literal days. In Gen. 2:4-24 we have, not another contradictory account of creation as imagined by critics of Scripture, but a more specific account of certain physical matters along with the moral bearing of man's creation and his place in it. Gen. 2:4-24 is not arranged chronologically, but rather topically and morally.

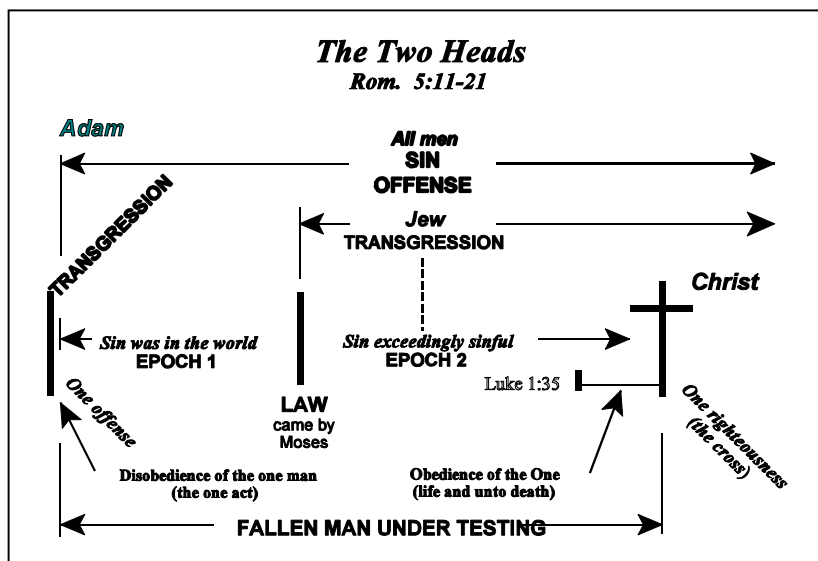
Gen. 3 present us with the fall of man through an act of disobedience and ends with man being driven from paradise, according to God's governmental infliction upon man, though having provided a covering for the moral nakedness that man acquired in the fall. In the fall from the innocent state he acquired this:

1. the knowledge of good and evil -- without having this knowledge as the Holy One does, Who repulses evil and does only good;
2. a bad conscience, evidenced by hiding from the voice of Jehovah Elohim;
3. what Rom. 8:3 calls "sin in the flesh," which we commonly call the old nature -- this old nature exercising dominion over man (Rom. 6);
4. irreversible banishment from the earthly paradise.

Gen. 4, 5, and 6 give us the history of man left to the knowledge of good and evil, and the conscience acquired in the fall. Let us be aware that God did not dispense the knowledge of good and evil, nor did he dispense conscience. These were acquirements of man through disobedience. There was no dispensation of the knowledge of good and evil and there was no dispensation of the accompanying conscience, which was the result of disobedience. Testing of *fallen man* began consequent upon the fall -- to demonstrate that he was not recoverable. The testing of fallen man to show that he was not recoverable ended at the cross with the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son. The testing of fallen man is not part of a testing of man begun in innocency. The test

of unfallen man in innocency is its own distinct thing. The chart below graphically illustrates the distinction.

Neither Adam in innocency, nor the age from Adam fallen until the flood, during which God left man to his conscience, are dispensations, or administrations. God did not dispense innocency. Adam was created innocent, by which is meant ignorance of good and evil. God did not dispense conscience. Adam acquired a conscience when he acquired the knowledge of good and evil through his act of disobedience to God. God dispensed government through Noah, and with Noah the first administration began.



## *The Universe Was Created for the Purpose of the Six Days' Making*

The chart above, explained in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, ch. 3.4, sec. ed., somewhat indicates the place of Adam in the ways of God.

How God deals with His creatures ought to be of great interest to us. Through His ways with man we learn what we are and what He is in spite of what we are. It is an unspeakable blessing to have this in divine, inspired communications from Himself.

In Gen. 2:3 we read:

And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it, because on it he rested from all his work which God had created in making it.

To the words "in making it," J. N. Darby has a footnote:

Lit. 'Created to make.'

The six days work in Gen. 1:3-31 is characteristically a *making*, though creative activity is involved. To equate the words "make" and "create" is an error. The Word of God uses *create*, *make*, and *form* of Adam and they do not mean the same thing as may be seen in Isa. 43:7:

... everyone that is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory; I have formed him, yea, I have made him.

It is in Gen. 1:1 that we have the creation of the heavens and the earth:

It is not said that God formed the heavens and the earth (v. 1) in a chaotic state; but we find here (v. 2) the earth so, "without form and void." It is not said how long elapsed. However, I do not at all believe the dates that are given, though we need not allude to this here.<sup>80</sup>

The universe was created for the work of God in the earth. It was *created* with the *making* in view, namely that work of the six days commencing after an original 'fall,' so to speak, and a subsequent reordering -- similarly as man was originally upright, but fell, upon which God commenced a work with fallen man. This work subsequent to the fall of man is foreshadowed by the six days work, which was subsequent to the chaotic state into which the earth had fallen. God had "created to make."

Whatever difficulty we may have in understanding some of the expressions in Gen. 1 and 2, it is clear that the universe exists for the purpose of having this earth as a platform for the display of God in Christ. It is created for Himself:

80. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:55. See W. Kelly, *In the beginning and the Adamic Earth*, available from Present Truth Publishers. G. V. Wigram, in his "Examination of the Hebrew Bible as to the Structure and Idiom of the Language," wrote:

Again, though it {Gen. 1:1} refers to the commencement of the globe on which we are, it was not the commencement of 'the earth as prepared for man.' That begins in v. 3; and between the paragraphs (vv. 1, 2) and that beginning at v. 3, there is a gap, which is blank and void (*Memorials of the Ministry of G. V. Wigram*, vol. 2:p. 160).

Thou art worthy, O our Lord and [our] God, to receive glory and honor and power; for *thou* hast created all things, and for thy will they were, and have been created (Rev. 4:11).

The instrument of the Godhead in the creating activity was the Son (John 1; Col. 1; Heb. 1). We do not know why God is three persons, distinct in Persons, yet one God, but such is revealed to us in Scripture. In John 1 we are told that He who is the *Word*, the only-begotten Son, created all things. As the *Word*, He is the communicator, the Expressor, of what God is, the expression of God. In accordance with this eternal name of His Person -- the *Word* -- He created this world for the purpose of Himself entering it in holy manhood to express what God is. He could say:

He that has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9).

And as the trial of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable was drawing to a close, He said:

... but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

The trinity was involved in this. All that He did and said was by the Spirit. Indeed,

... in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

## *The Typical Bearing of Genesis 2:4-25*

God has before Him the manifestation of His glory in Christ, and this in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly, and these will be under His universal headship in the millennium (Eph. 1:10). For the revelation of the glory of God, in Christ, in the heavenly sphere, we must await the revelation of the mystery of Christ and the church in the NT. The OT prophets did not speak of it (Rom. 16:25-27; Col. 1:26; Eph 3:5, 9). There were some types related to this concerning some of the OT *brides* (no types of the *body* of Christ, as such). A type is not a prophecy, of course, and only understood as a type when the antitype is known. A shadow is not understood as a shadow when the "body" has not been made known.

Much that is typical in Gen. 2 has been summarized by J. C. Bayley:

Amongst the earliest of these emblematic objects is Adam, who is typical of the "last Adam"; mainly in that He is appointed God's vicegerent in His image and likeness to rule in the earth. And of subordinate points of resemblance, the following seem chief.<sup>81</sup> As Adam was head of the human family, so Christ is head of the whole race of the redeemed; as Adam was

81. Rom. 5:14.

put to the test of temptation, so also Christ; as Adam's one act affected his whole posterity, so Christ's one act affects those of which He is head; as Adam receives a bride, bone of his bone, formed as the result of his having been cast into the deep sleep -- the semblance of death, and presented to him when he awakened -- the semblance of resurrection, so from the death of Christ results the formation of the spiritual bride, presented to Him, without spot or blemish, in His resurrection.<sup>82</sup> As with his bride he is brought into a relationship of unity in love, involving protection and devotion on his part, and submission and fidelity on hers; so the Bride is to be associated with Him in sorrow and dishonor as well as in dignity and happiness; and this unity is so complete that they are both included in one name,

He . . . called their name Adam; (Gen. 5:2)

and in 1 Cor. 12:12 the Head and the body, the church, are included in the one title Christ. That there should be points of divergence too is to be expected: the shadow is

not the very image {Heb. 10:1}.

There is no type nor symbol able to express fully even one aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ. At least they fail somewhere, for the simple reason that He immeasurably surpasses in every particular anything which the universe could afford to illustrate that aspect. So in regard to His second point -- a formal definite testing by temptation -- Adam falls, in a paradise and under the most favorable circumstances; whereas Christ withstands in a wilderness, and under the most unfavorable circumstances.

Immediately that Christ (in type) treads the earth *rest* succeeds; and so the Sabbath directly follows (Gen. 2:2). Just so, when in redemption the Israelites get across to the wilderness, the manna appears (Christ on the earth) and the Sabbath is directly connected therewith.<sup>83</sup> There is this difference however, that Adam represents the Lord on earth ruling and therefore brings rest in the way of authority, something as it will be in the millennium; while the manna represents Christ in humiliation, in the character of the Gospels, yet giving rest; humbled and outcast, yet able to say,

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest {Matt. 11:28}.

In one form or another rest is always characteristic of Him; but probably the most beautiful of all phases is that whereof the type is now before us -- God resting in Him in divine satisfaction and complacency.<sup>84</sup> Of course those who read this paper will know that the antitype of the Sabbath is not the

82. Though the doctrine of the church as bride of Christ be not developed till the New Testament, yet there are several types of it in the Old Testament, showing it to be no after-thought, such as Joseph's and Moses' receiving Gentile brides during rejection by their own people, the Book of Ruth, &c.

83. Ex. 16:15-23.

84. Zeph. 3:17. "He will rest in His love."



“Lord’s day” {Rev. 1:10} of the present dispensation, but that it is still in the future (Heb. 4:9).

There remaineth therefore a keeping of Sabbath -- σαββατισμὸς -- to the people of God.

To keep Sabbath in that sense now would be to dissociate it from Christ, which is to miss its whole connection. Spiritually the same principle is true; it is only as Christ is apprehended that the soul has rest with God.

It is noteworthy too as being the seventh day. As a practical musician detects a distinct character in each note of the scale, from the solemn repose of the “first” to the piercing expectancy of the “seventh,” so the scripture student recognizes a peculiar meaning in the numbers used, which meaning is often the key to unlock the signification of a whole passage. Besides its other well known characteristics, it is well to remark that 7 is composed of the union of the earthly number 4 and the heavenly number 3 (the sevens of scripture are nearly always thus divided); it is the union of heaven with earth. No longer now Elohim, but Jehovah Elohim: relationship is established.

This progress had now reached a final stage. The material creation steadily develops till its “diapason closes full in man.” There is nothing more correct than development: nothing more incorrect than evolution . . . And as there was no physical object to be subsequently created (here) higher than Adam -- and indeed there does not seem to be a single species of plant or animals of any sort since his time -- so there never has been nor can be any spiritual development higher than the last Adam. God rests in Him.

Then we see a bridegroom and bride in a paradise, the subject of celestial benediction, the objects of divine complacency; the center of the organized system, -- “he for God only; she for God in him.” This, and infinitely more, is true concerning the antitype. Concerning the type we may well say *O si sic omnia!* But it was the devil’s province to bring evil into good; as God’s is to bring good out of the evil.<sup>85</sup>

## ***The Special Formation of Man: Genesis 2:4-7 Creation, Fall, and Making***

In Gen. 1 the name of God used is Elohim (plural of Eloah, the supreme). This is keeping with the subject matter. In Gen. 2:4 the name of moral relationship, Jehovah, coupled with Elohim, is used, and this is also in keeping with the subject matter of relationship with his creature, man, who stands in moral relationship to

85. *The Bible Treasury*, 15:78, 79. J. C. Bayley’s articles on “Scripture Imagery” are found in *Types and Symbols of Scripture*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

the Creator.<sup>86</sup>

There are those who, exercising their unbelief in the inspiration of Scripture, think that Gen. 2:4 - 3:24 is another account of creation besides Gen. 1.<sup>87</sup> They believe that a redactor(s) selected parts of accounts and put together what we have in this part of God’s word. This procedure has been known as the JEPD hypothesis regarding the Pentateuch. Gen. 1 is regarded as coming from source P (Priestly) and our present section as coming from source J (Jehovistic, or Yahwistic), and the two sources redacted, i.e., edited and rearranged. These critics of God’s Word regard the two sections as considerably contradictory,<sup>88</sup> which need not detain us.<sup>89</sup> Gen. 2 does include a few matters that are found in Gen. 1, but ch. 2 gives us that which is much broader: Elohim’s relationship with man. Thus in Gen. 1 we read of *Elohim* doing this and that including the creation of man as set over the earthly order as the crown of it. Man’s unique creation and

86. See *The Bible Treasury* 19:1-3 concerning the use of divine names.

87. See “Two Accounts of Creation,” *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 6:114-115.

88. James Montgomery Boice, in his *Genesis, An Expository Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, pp. 91 and 93, vol. 1, wrote:

There is another problem with this critical theory, especially where the early chapters of Genesis are concerned. E. J. Young calls it “a psychological difficulty.” He develops his thoughts in this way.

If it is correct that the Pentateuch does consist of a number of documents which were finally pieced together by a redactor [the person or persons who finally got the book into the shape in which we now find it], then it must be acknowledged that the Pentateuch is a very remarkable work. It is not the kind of writing that very many people could produce. Undoubtedly it is one of the greatest writings in existence, and whoever was responsible for it was an artist and a genius . . . But if [this] is so, then why did he make such a blunder at the very beginning as to put together two contradictory accounts of creation? If he was such a genius, would he not have realized that it was not very sensible to put two conflicting accounts of creation together? (*In the Beginning*, p. 59) . . .

Of course, some critical scholars have pointed to the order of things in Genesis 2 as being evidence that the two creation “accounts” are contradictory: the first gives one order for things, the second gives a different order. But this is surely nonsense. If you take Genesis 2 as teaching a chronological sequence, you have first the creation of man, then the planting of a garden, then God putting the man in the garden, then God causing trees to grow in the garden. After this there is a description of the rivers of the garden. Then man is put in the garden again. Problems like this should tell us that something is wrong with that approach. They tell us that chronology is not in view here at all. What matters in this chapter is man. Everything else is introduced for its relationship to him.

89. See W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury* 19:1-3; also W. Kelly’s, “The Pentateuch and Its Critics,” *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 9:177, etc.; W. J. Hocking, “The Lord’s Testimony to the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch,” *The Bible Treasury* 19:58, etc.; E. E. Whitfield, “The Vatican and the Criticism of the Pentateuch,” *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 6:131; J. N. Darby, “Dr. Colenso and the Pentateuch,” *Collected Writings* 23:82-114; and see *Collected Writings* 6:201-209, 267-269, 9:360-370; 29:65-66, 69-71.

position with his commensurate moral responsibility are before us in ch. 2, not in ch. 1. In keeping with the object of Gen. 2:4 - 3:24 compared to Gen. 1, *Jehovah Elohim* is used in this section<sup>90</sup> as indicating special relationship to, and dealing with, man. Elohim is Jehovah.<sup>91</sup> The two sections differ in their material, arrangement, and object. W. Kelly remarked:

The history is in Gen. 1 - 2:3: from v. 4 to the end of ch. 2 is not so much a history of creation as a statement of the relations of creation, and especially of man, its center and head. Ch. 2 assumes ch. 1, but adds moral elements of the utmost importance and interest.<sup>92</sup>

Clearly, Gen. 2:4 is introductory to the section before us<sup>93</sup> and is not an introduction or conclusion to Gen. 1:1 - 2:3. While Gen. 2:4 makes reference to Gen. 1:1 - 2:3 in a summary fashion, it stands as an introduction to God's unfolding of the relationship with man. Gen. 1:1 - 2:3 gives us the original creation, a fall into a chaotic state, and a reconstruction, with man as the crown of it. Gen. 2:4-24 shows us the relationship of man to the Creator in the place where he was put. Gen. 1:1 - 2:3 follows a chronological order whereas Gen. 2:4-24 is arranged topically.

W. Kelly remarked that "Many Jews make a full stop in the middle of v. 4, and begin, "On the day Jehovah Elohim made." "<sup>94</sup> That might be helpful in understanding Gen. 2:4. Note the reference to the *creation* of "the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 2:4a) and then the *making* of the "earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4b). The *creating* of the heavens and the earth refers to the original creation stated in Gen. 1:1 while *making* refers to the six days work concerning what had fallen into the chaotic state as seen in Gen. 1:2. Keep in mind that the lights in the heavens (day four) were not created on day four but brought into proper relationship to the earth for the purpose God had in view in the reordering. Is it not true that the work of day one producing "morning and evening" points to a rotation of the earth? as in the case of all six days? a rotation with respect to a light source? Is that not true? That light source was already in existence on day one, but the relationship of that light source was not yet properly readjusted with

90. It is used in this section (Gen. 2:4 - 3:24) and in Ex. 9:30 in the five books of Moses.

91. See W. Kelly's address on *The Creation. Gen. 1, 2, in loco*. Also, his book *In the Beginning and the Adamic Earth* is now available from Present Truth Publishers in an inexpensive pamphlet form.

92. *Lectures Introductory to . . . the Pentateuch*, p. 17.

93. As to v. 4, the word "histories," or generations (*toledoth*) appears eleven times in Genesis, referring to what follows: 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 13, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2. Several scholars claim that rather than headings these are like colophons on clay tablets and that these indicate clay tablets on which the parts of Genesis were written and incorporated in the present form of Genesis. There are good reasons to disbelieve this, whatever else might be construed as virtual colophons. At any rate, the word appears 13 times in Genesis, commencing with Gen. 2:4. W. Kelly has commented on the word *toledoth* in *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:96-99.

94. *The Bible Treasury* 19:17, note.

respect to the earth as it was on the fourth day. I refer to this because Gen. 2:4 calls for this observation, as does the changed order of referring to the heavens and the earth, and then to the earth and the heavens, along with, respectively, first the word *created* being used and then *making*, respectively.

While life was created during the six days, the overall work of the six days is a work of making, not the creation of the heavens and the earth:

. . . for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth (Ex. 31:17).

Had the word "create" been used in this text, which the Spirit of God was quite capable of having caused to be written instead of "made," that would be offered as conclusive proof that the six days were the work of the original creation. But the Spirit rather used "made" here; and so, not wanting a gap between Gen. 1:2 and Gen. 1:3, the plea used to circumvent the fact is that "made" here means "create" -- but it is not so.

Were a full stop used for Gen. 2:4a we would have:

**These are the histories of the heavens and the earth, when they were created.**

**In the day<sup>95</sup> that Jehovah Elohim made earth and heavens no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet grown . . .<sup>96</sup>**

The word "histories" here refers not to the creation of the heavens and the earth as if this is another account of Gen. 1. Rather, as Gen. 2:4b shows, it points to that for which the heavens and the earth were created: namely, some special matters connected with the *making*, the reconstruction, centered upon the creation of man, giving in ch. 2:4-24 the special act of man's creation, details of his place, and circumstances in the garden of Eden, in the original order as set up by God. This points, then, to the relationship of the heavens and the earth to the ordering of the relationship to Jehovah Elohim that man has as set over the work He completed in the six days.

95. "Day" here is used in a general way to denote the period of the *making*, not meaning one period of the revolution of the earth ("evening and morning was") as also indicated by the ordinals preceding the designation of the seven days.

96. This combines a footnote in an article by W. Kelly in *The Bible Treasury* 19:17, note, and a footnote to J. N. Darby's translation to Gen. 2:4b.

H. C. Leupold translates Gen. 2:4a as a sentence with a full stop:

This is the story of the heavens and the earth at the time of their creation.

Then he translates Gen. 2:4b, 5 as:

At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven, then no shrub of the field was as yet in the earth and no plant of the field was as yet sprouting forth; for Yahweh God had not caused rain to descend upon the earth, nor did man exist to till the ground (*Exposition of Genesis*, Grand Rapids: Baker, pp. 109, 111, vol. 1, 1942).

In the purpose of God, the original creation of Gen. 1:1 had in view the fall into the chaotic state of Gen. 1:2, to be followed by the work of reconstitution. Gen. 2:4 reflects this as do the words in Gen. 2:3 “created to make.” Moreover, the history of man reflects this order of creation, fall, and a subsequent work of God. Man also fell from an original state, and consequently God began a work with man, the history of which is unfolded in the Scripture in accordance with His purpose to glorify himself in Christ in the heavenly and in the earthly spheres.

## *The Condition Just Preceding the Creation of Man*

W. Kelly has a footnote to the translation of vv. 5-7 that says:

Or, “**And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field was yet grown; for**” &c.

We continue with J. N. Darby’s translation:

. . . **herb of the field before it grew; for Jehovah Elohim had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. But a mist went up from the earth, and moistened the whole surface of the ground. And Jehovah Elohim formed Man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:5-7).**

The change in the use of the divine name, from Elohim in ch.1 to Jehovah Elohim in chs. 2 and 3 signifies the new subject matter. The arrangement of the material is also different according to the purpose in view.

It is clear that vv. 5, 6 have v. 7 in view and are explanatory to Moses’ readers that a different condition of the earth just preceded the creation of man.

Since the rainbow was given as a sign to Noah it seems that there was no rain before the flood. Where would be the propriety of making something that had existed for some 1600 years a sign of God’s covenant not to bring on another flood to destroy all flesh (Gen. 9:12-16)?<sup>97</sup> Moses writing long after the flood states that there was no rain at that time.

Three things required for dew to form are: (1) moist air, (2) a cool surface, and (3) a clear sky.

But, most importantly, there was no man to till the ground.

These things describe a condition early in the six days work. On the sixth day

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97. Regarding the idea that the flood was not worldwide, the rainbow is hardly a sign that God will not bring on a local flood to destroy all flesh. A local flood assumes all men were only in the locality of the local flood; indeed, what is really involved is that every animal in which was the breath of life was confined to the area of the local flood -- after over 1600 years of propagation.

the climax of the *making* the earth and the heavens, the reconstitution, for the unfolding of God’s purpose to glorify Himself in Christ arrived. Details concerning man’s place for this purpose are now given. The crowning work of God’s reconstructing the earth into a place for man, from the chaotic state into which it had fallen (Gen. 1:2), took place on day six. Gen. 1:26-27 did not tell us of the special manner of creating man, as does Gen. 2:7. The breathing into man’s nostrils<sup>98</sup> the breath of life was a unique, creatorial act of God and at once sets man apart from the animal kingdom. Gen. 1:24 speaks of the earth bringing forth “living souls” by the fiat of God. But man’s soul is of a different order, springing from the breath of *Jehovah Elohim* breathed into his nostrils.<sup>99</sup> Man being formed of dust of the ground connects him with the material creation but the inbreathing of the breath of God connects man with God in a unique way.

In Gen. 1:26 we learn that man was set over all: “over the whole earth.” Thus the entire world was placed under the headship of the first Adam.<sup>100</sup> In Gen. 2:8, 9 we see that man was placed in a specific domain, of pleasant aspect, of full provision, where God intended to place man under one restraint, whereby man would acknowledge his true relationship to his Creator by obedience. There is such a thing as “moral government.” The Creator is to be obeyed by His intelligent creature into whom He breathed the breath of life, thus elevating him far above the “animal order.” The Christian ought not to accept the notion that man is part of the “animal kingdom” because he has bodily functions as do animals; any more than man is part of the angelic order because man possesses a spirit, for angels are spirits (Heb. 1:7). Man was made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7); are animals made a little lower than the angels? Man is above them, and is characterized by speech, inductive logic, and deductive logic. God consulted with Himself, so to speak, concerning creating man (Gen. 1:26). Did He do that concerning animals? Do animals pray? Even lost man prays, amiss no doubt, but he does so.

## *The State of Adam in Innocency*

### ADAM’S CREATED STATE

Adam acquired the knowledge of good and evil in the fall, showing that he did

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98. It is a sorry thing that it even needs to be said that there was no such thing as “God’s breathing some of His own breath into him,” as if God breathes. When God says, “Come now, and let us reason together,” are we supposed to think that God reasons? God does not think! He knows all. Thinking implies limitation in knowledge, and liability to mistake. We are to weigh the words of the Scriptures and depend on the Spirit to teach us their intent.

99. There is an article, one of a series, on Gen. 2:5-7, by W. Kelly, in *The Bible Treasury* 19:17. 18.

100. This has in view Christ exercising this headship

not have that knowledge before the fall. The state in which Adam was created is therefore referred to as *innocency*, thus contrasting his created state from his state consequent upon the fall. As J. N. Darby clearly pointed out, Adam was not created in righteousness and holiness. To say so negatively affects much truth.

It is often said that Adam was created in righteousness and holiness. This is all erroneous. He was created in innocence.<sup>101</sup> It is the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness, which we are called to put on: Christ, not Adam (Eph. 4: 24). It is wholly new (*χαλόν*), created. We are therein created again in Christ Jesus: at least so scripture says. So in Col. 3:10, we “put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” The common statements on this subject confound Christ and Adam—the new creation and the old. Adam was innocent -- had not the knowledge of good and evil. As to this the testimony of scripture is positive, it is the essence of the history of the fall. Hence he could not have righteousness or holiness, which imply the knowledge of good and evil. If God declares “the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil,” he did not know good and evil before. Hence what is commonly stated is equally erroneous, namely, that Adam was righteous and holy, made after the image of God in righteousness and holiness. By the fall man acquired a knowledge of good and evil, which gives him, or rather is, a sense of right and wrong, suited to the state in which he is, the duties of various relationships in which he stands. These, in the main, the Mosaic law maintains, though not all in their details, according to God’s original institution. From Adam to Moses men were not placed under law, but they had the knowledge of good and evil -- were a law thus to themselves.

But we must not confound this with a revealed or given law; because in a law revealed or given of God there is the express authority of the Lawgiver; and the disobedient is guilty of express transgression of the Lawgiver’s authority. Yet sin was there from Adam to Moses, but not transgression; for where no law is, there is no transgression. Hence it is said (referring to Hos. {6:7}, where it is said of Israel, “They like men [Adam, in Hebrew] have transgressed the covenant”), “Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” Israel had broken the law as Adam had, and had not only sinned -- done what their conscience condemned -- but violated the authority of God exercised in imposing the law.<sup>102</sup>

The writer did not mean by this last sentence that Adam had the law of

101. {Elsewhere he wrote:

To be righteous or holy requires the knowledge of good and evil. And this Adam had not till he fell; and the difference is immense. We have only to speak of God as innocent, and the believer’s heart at once revolts from it -- is offended by it. Righteous and holy He surely is. *Collected Writings*, 29:249}

See also *The Bible Treasury*, 19:33.

102. *Collected Writings*, 10:18, 19. See also 19:58.

10 commandments; but, that as Israel had disobeyed, so Adam disobeyed.

## IMAGE AND LIKENESS

The creation of Adam is not stated as it was of animals, i.e., by mere divine fiat:

And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living souls . . .

And God said, Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind . . . (Gen. 1:20, 24).

The Scripture account of man’s creation indicates the distinctive position of man as standing in unique relationship to his Creator:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . (Gen. 1:26).

And Jehovah Elohim formed Man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

Concerning “Let us” J. N. Darby remarked:

It is well to notice that God takes counsel: “let us,” etc. If you make the distinction of the persons of the Godhead, I am not aware that creation is personally attributed to any but Christ and the Spirit. Every operation is the direct work of the Spirit, not that He is an independent Spirit, but God. The three are united in scripture. The Son was working, and He says, “the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,” and again, “if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.” But you do not find stated in scripture that the Father created; it says God; and this is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is so far important to see that we have the divine agency. The particular operation of miracles was by the Spirit. “If I by the Spirit cast out”; by “his Spirit garnished the heavens”; and when Christ was raised, He was “quickened by the Spirit.” I can allow nothing, therefore, that attempts to lower our thoughts of the Son and of the Spirit . . .

So God created man in His own image. Verse 27 {Gen. 1} states the fact, though they were created afterwards. The animals were there, and now God says, I am going to have something higher; and man stood there representing God in the earth, made with no evil in him. He still has that character {i.e., representing God}, though it is all in ruin. 1 Cor. 11:7 says he is the image and glory of God. James 3:9 speaks of men having been made after God’s likeness.<sup>103</sup>

The creation of Adam was an act involving *creating*, *making*, and *forming* man; not, however, a sequence of several acts -- but rather at once -- and showing the derivation of man’s soul as unique from that of other forms of life on earth. In common with other life he was made of the dust of the ground but was different, distinct, and distinguished by the manner in which he was given life. That denotes

103. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:58.

special relationship to the Creator. This special relationship is also indicated by the words “image” and “likeness.” Man is tripartite, having a spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Cor. 2:11; Heb. 4:12; Prov. 20:27; etc.). Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, knew this (Luke 1:47). See also Num. 16:22; Acts 17:29.

While the soul is the seat of self-consciousness, it is by the possession of a spirit that man has God-consciousness, something animals do not have, though they have self-consciousness. The human will and the “I,” *ego*, are in the soul, and man is held responsible to God as a living soul.

Neither “image” nor “likeness” refer to corporeality as John 4:24 shows. The words “image” and “likeness” are not anthropomorphisms, as Acts 17:28 shows. Image refers to Adam being the *representative* of God. Obviously, it cannot mean that Adam looked like God. He was set as the head<sup>104</sup> of the earthly creation, as God’s representative as the head. Likeness refers to *resemblance*; and while *sinless* Adam was in God’s likeness. The fall erased that likeness but not the image. Observe that Adam

begot [a son] in his likeness, after his image (Gen. 4:3).

Adam’s offspring were not in God’s likeness; they were in the likeness of Adam as fallen and sinful.<sup>105</sup> All but One bears that likeness. The last Adam is certainly never said to be in Adam’s likeness, but neither is it written that He is in God’s likeness, for He *is* God.<sup>106</sup>

Adam in his unfallen state had free choice and will, while sinless; but he chose to disobey and brought his will into bondage (see Rom. 6) to what was consequently within him -- what Rom. 8:3 calls “the law of sin” in our members. This controls the human will morally. It is what we mean by the “old nature.”

## HUMANITY IN ADAM AND IN CHRIST

Adam had an immortal soul by the special act of God’s creation. See the contrast regarding the animals (Gen. 1:20, 24) and the creation of Adam (Gen. 1:26; 2:7), as well as Adam’s help-mate (Gen. 2:18-25). God alone has underived, intrinsic

104. This includes headship of the woman also (1 Tim. 2:12, 13).

105. James 3:19 may be thought to affirm that man is still *in* the likeness of God. If so, that raises the question, how can men who are spiritually dead toward God (Eph. 2) be in God’s likeness? I suggest that “made *after* [the] likeness of God,” or, *according to* the likeness of God, is meant to remind the readers of James concerning man’s original condition (Adam), not his present condition, and that cursing men is wrong. Recall that Michael the archangel did not dare to bring a railing accusation against the devil, even though fallen and evil, but said “the Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9). There is a remembrance of how this fallen one was once at the head of the angelic hosts.

106. The reader might like to read “Image and Likeness,” *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 13:232-235; and see 19: 58; 26:255, 256 and *Collected Writings of F. G. Patterson*, p. 227, available from Present Truth Publishers.

immortality (1 Tim. 6:16). Man’s is derivative and upheld by God. 1 Cor. 15:53, 54, refer to the body, not the soul of man.<sup>107</sup> The soul does not die. It is instructive that we see this not only in the case of the rich man in hades (Luke 16:23) but in the case of the Beast and the False Prophet who were cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20) just before the beginning of the 1000 years, and then we read of the devil, who had been bound for the 1000 years, then loosed and leading a revolt of the unregenerate born during the millennium:

And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where [are] both the beast and the false prophet and; and they shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages (Rev. 20:10).

Horrible as hell is, and we can hardly imagine it, it is no kindness to anyone to tell him there is no eternal punishment. God will raise the dead and their bodies will be reunited with their immortal souls, in the resurrection of the unjust (Acts 24:15) to face the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, and Deliverer from the wrath to come, to have their persons judged, and to be cast into the lake of fire also (Rev. 20:11-15).

The sinner’s body is mortal, meaning subject to death. This was brought about by the fall. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Why, then, would you say that Adam would have eventually died even if he never sinned? Adam was capable of sinning -- and he did. Of course, God did not compel Adam to sin. God is not the author of sin.

But such was not the state of Christ’s humanity. His humanity was holy (Luke 1:35), as the gospel which presents Christ in the perfection of His humanity (i.e., Luke) tells us. Moreover, that holy humanity was taken into the Person of the Son. That holy humanity was united to deity, indissolubly so. He is not two persons, as if His humanity had had an independent existence apart from the incarnation. The Son did not unite with a Jewish person that was living in Israel. That would make Him two persons. Not so! Holy humanity, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit, entered into the Son’s Person. Son of God in eternity, He was Son of God in time. The state of His humanity was not like Adam’s -- innocent, and capable of falling -- rather, holy. His humanity was not mortal, i.e., subject to death, though it was capable of death. And we are assured from the Word that the act of His death was voluntary. It was the act of His holy will, giving His life in obedience to the Father. Listen:

On this account my Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again. I have received this commandment of my Father (John 10:17, 18).

107. The denial of the immortality of the soul undermines the atonement, See *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:77, 78.

May our hearts bow in worship as we contemplate this. His death was an act of His own will in obedience to the Father.

Adam was peccable but Christ's humanity was impeccable. Christ held humanity in a *holy* state, not an *innocent* state. Even saying that He was "able not to sin" falls far short of Scripture teaching concerning the truth of His Person. It is a statement that can be quite compatible with viewing Christ's humanity as peccable, only He was able not to sin. The truth is that He was "not able to sin."

<sup>108</sup> Deny this and you implicitly hold that He was two persons, one of which could have sinned and gone to hell, for surely you do not believe that the eternal Son of God could go to hell, do you? The notion of peccability in Christ is a fundamental evil that implicitly means He was two persons, denying the unity of the two natures in one Person!

But Christ is the second Man and last Adam. Christ's headship is not our subject here; but we must note that Adam had no offspring in innocence. He became the fallen head of a fallen race, the awful result of self-will.

### ***Man's Pleasant Surroundings: Gen. 2:8, 9***

Eden means "delights" or "pleasure." Eden was an area and within Eden God planted a garden in which He placed man. Everything good for man in innocence was there in that garden. Outside the garden there were no thorns and thistles -- anywhere. Such things were the result of the curse on the ground (Gen. 3:18). <sup>109</sup> We may be sure that in view of the testing of man in innocence, man was placed in so favorable a situation that no excuse would be valid for failure to acknowledge the rights of the Creator over man. The garden that Adam was in where he was given one command to obey stands in marked contrast to the wilderness where Christ was, with wild beasts, and He was tested -- the same Enemy of God and man testing Him as came to the woman (Gen. 3:1). There is a great moral order of God's dealings with man that is repeatedly found in Scripture and it begins with Adam:

Thus also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual (1 Cor. 15:45, 46).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the "*last*" Adam; not, observe, called the 'second' Adam

108. This is taken up in detail in my *Could Christ Sin?*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

109. For a result of ameliorating much of the curse on the ground for the millennial reign of Christ see Isa. 51:3, Ezek. 36:36. In Ezek. 31:9, 16, 18, Eden is used figuratively for the nations placed by God in reference to Israel, which in God's view has the central place in the earth. Ezek. 28 has nothing to do with the earthly Eden.

-- as if there might be a third one. There is no other such headship than that of the first Adam and then afterwards Christ's headship. So there are only two heads (concerning which more will be said later). They stand in contrast and also according to the moral order: first the natural then the spiritual. Saul and David illustrate this order regarding kingship. Saul illustrates the man after the flesh, while David, even with his personal failures, is called a man after God's heart (1 Sam. 13:14).

Not only do we see that Adam was placed in such favorable circumstances, but two trees are brought before us. We shall consider the two trees in detail when we come to vv. 15-17. Here we should take note of the mention of them as preceding the description of the river emanating from Eden and parting into four heads. We shall see how this river emanating from Eden and parting into four heads speaks of the Son of God coming from the Paradise of God above into this world and manifesting Himself (in holy manhood taken into His Person) in four ways, given us in the four gospels. And when we understand what the two special trees in Eden point to:

(1) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil being the tree of *responsibility*; and,

(2) that Adam partook of that tree of responsibility;

we see that the first Adam failed in responsibility and brought all under his headship into curse and ruin. Thus, before we come to the river emanating from Eden, pointing to God's grace manifested in Christ, in the power of the Spirit of God working in Christ, we have what foreshadows man's failure, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Another order to which our attention is directed by the Word of God is the order of the mention of the two trees. The tree of life is mentioned first and it points to Christ Himself. God eternally had before Him Christ and His free, sovereign grace in Christ. But before the display of His grace by giving Christ on the tree of Calvary, where Christ took on Himself our responsibility and its consequences, man would eat of the tree of responsibility and fall into sin and ruin, dragging the world into this state and its consequences. The history from the fall to the cross is an epoch of the trial of the fallen, first man to show that he was not recoverable. The presentation of Christ was the final test which ended the testing of the first, fallen man. Our Lord said:

but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

This ended the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable. Consequently, the mystery of Christ and the church was revealed.

### ***The River from Eden: Gen. 2:10-14***

For a discussion of theories regarding this river and the four rivers to which it gave rise, see *The Bible Treasury* 19:49-51. See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 6:106-108.

I would add to what is presented below, the observation that the river watered the garden.

The following notes are in keeping with the fact that in Gen. 2 God has before Him His glory in Christ.

## ***The River of Paradise and Its Four Heads***

by Adrian Roach (1968)

And a river went out of Eden to water *the garden*; and *from thence* it was parted, and became into four heads (or “four main streams” JND) (Gen. 2:10).

In Paradise (the Garden) there was only one stream but outside of the Garden we have four streams of refreshing. There was no varied display of God’s glory through Christ in Manhood in that place of bliss on high. <sup>110</sup> It is here in a sinful

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110. {The writer is thinking of the Son above in the paradise of God (cp. Rev. 2:7), before incarnation, as the one stream, then coming into the world in manifestation according to the personal glories and offices or stations given in the four gospels, to which the four heads correspond. Harmonies of the Gospels would be like merging the four streams back into one. God has chosen to give the four presentations of Christ.

The order is from John to Matthew. It is from what is highest to what is lowest, according to God, where all is yet so vastly high beyond our comprehension. The major offerings (Lev. 1-5) have this order also; for the four offerings omitting the bloodless offering (the meal-offering) have the character which runs through the four gospels. Thus, the burnt-offering is represented in John, the peace-offering in Luke (cp. Luke 15), and the two gospels which alone give the cry of abandonment give us the sin-offering (Mark) and the trespass -offering (Matt.). The offerings begin with what is highest to God. A harmony of the offerings would spoil everything, as do harmonies of the Gospels.

The Gospels are in the order of how a saved one apprehends the truths prefigured in the offerings of Lev. 1-5.

The four cherubim (Ezek. 1) follow the order of the Gospels. Such is the case with the four living creatures of Rev. 4, where we see characteristics of the cherubim, the executors of God’s government (such as being stationed to block the way to Eden). The four living creatures are *symbols* of the judicial power of the throne invested in Christ, for the Father has committed all judgment to Him (John 5:22). The seraphic character is seen in the living creatures having six wings (cp. Isa. 6), whereas the cherubim have four wings. It has been pointed out that mercy is swifter (six wings) than judgment (four wings). Though that is the case, the order follows the order of the gospels. Matthew (the lion) who presents the King -- thus governmental power -- is first. The ox is the servant (Mark). The face of a man points to Luke who presents the personal glory and perfection of the Son as man. In the flying eagle, we see the eternal Son, the Word, come from heaven (John’s gospel). Such is our

(continued...)

world (outside Paradise) that God is manifested in and by the varied glories of Christ. Hence we have four Gospels conforming to the four rivers.

## ***1. Pison***

This connects with the Gospel of John -- the Gold -- the Deity of Christ, who is set forth as Son of God predominantly by this Gospel. The name Pison means “increase”.

He must increase, but I must decrease.

He that cometh from above is above all (John 3:31).

This river has *scope* rather than the action which characterizes Hiddekel, “which goeth (flows) toward the east of Assyria” (v. 14) It “*compasseth* the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold” (v. 11). What a vast unlimited object is set before us in John 1:1-31. This is the pure gold of Godhead glory! “The gold of that land is good.” This is the voice of one in the enjoyment of it. Linked with this is the bdellium which means “White Pearl” or “White Gum.” In Numbers 11:7 it is the color of the Manna which speaks of Christ as Man here below. God and Man in one Person.

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven (John 3:13).

It shows forth His sinless purity -- “Which of you convinceth Me of sin” (John 8:46).

Next is the onyx stone which is connected with the priesthood. Ex. 28:9 gives us the two onyx stones with the names of God’s people engraved thereon and to be on the shoulders of the High Priest. Truly the strength of our High Priest on our behalf is shown in John 17.

I pray for them (v. 9);

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil (v. 15).

See also v. 20. His strength is for us, to carry us right on into the glory! (v. 24). Only in John do we get the seamless robe (John 19:23) which is associated with priesthood (Ex. 28:32 and 39:22-23). It sets forth the inscrutability of His Person. Truly, the “Gold of that land is good.”

## ***2. Gihon***

Gihon means “breaking forth.” It is the Gospel of Luke, the gospel of the Son of

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110. (...continued)  
Beloved, our friend, our Lord, our Savior!

Man, in which God's grace is shown breaking out from the bounds of Israel to the Gentiles. As Son of Man Christ will rule over the universal kingdom (Psa. 8) not simply Israel (Psa. 2). This river has *scope*, also -- "the same *compasseth* the whole land of Ethiopia."<sup>111</sup> That is, it takes in the Gentile. The Gospel of Luke is addressed to a Gentile by "Luke, the beloved physician" who is seen separately from those of the "circumcision" in Col. 4:10-14 which indicated that he was a Gentile. He joined Paul at Troas according to Acts 16:8-10. Note the change there from the pronoun "they" to "we" and "us".

Luke writing to a Gentile (Theophilus) is led to show a Godly remnant in Israel (Luke 2:25-38) so as to keep the Gentiles from being "wise in their own conceits" (Rom. 11:25). Simeon's pronouncement by the Spirit is remarkable as he declares that the Lord's salvation is prepared "before the face of all peoples" (Luke 2:31, JND trans.). Furthermore he states that Christ is a "light to lighten the Gentiles," and "the glory of Thy People Israel" (Luke 2:32). He puts the present age when "God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14) before that future day when "All Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26).

In the third chapter John the Baptist's quotations from Isa. 40 are given more fully to show the Gentile aspect of Luke -- "*Every valley*" -- *Every mountain* -- "*All flesh shall see the salvation of God*" (Luke 3:4-6 compare with Matt 3:3). Truly this is a "breaking forth" river that encompasseth the whole land of Ethiopia {Cush}.

### 3 - Hiddekel (the Tigris)

Hiddekel means (1) "Rapid," (2) "Riddle of the date palm." This river has action and fruitfulness instead of scope. Here we have the Gospel of Mark. "Behold My Servant" (Isa. 52:13). The marvel of it all is that the Servant is "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). Immediately He launches out into service (Mark 1:14) without genealogy tracing Him to Abraham and David (Matt.) or to Adam (Luke) -- He is Son of God but withal "My Servant." How much service is put forth in a single day! (Mark 1:16-32). "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth" (John 15:15). So only in Mark do we read

... of that day and that hour knoweth no man -- neither the Son, but the Father (Mark 13:32).

So perfectly did He become Jehovah's Servant! His feelings in service are more fully and often expressed here.

111. {Cush. In Scripture there was an Asiatic Cush (meant here) as well as an African Cush (Ethiopia).}

When He had looked round about on them with anger . . . (Mark 3:5);

Jesus beholding him loved him (Mark 10:21);

and looking up to heaven He sighed (Mark 7:34);

He sighed deeply (Mark 8:12).

Nor is He correctly called Lord (see JND Trans.) until resurrection (Mark 16:19). At the supper they ask: "Is it I" (Mark 14:19) whereas in Matt. 26:22 they ask: "*Lord*, is it I?"

As to the fruitfulness of the "date Palm" we see an increasing scale of blessing here: "Fruit that sprang up and increased, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred (Mark 4:8 -- contrast Matt. 13:23).

Even as the ascended one in glory He is still seen as the Servant: -- "The Lord working with them" (Mark 16:20).

### 4-Euphrates

Nothing is said about this river encompassing any land nor is its activity noted. The meanings of Euphrates are (1) fructifying, and (2) abounding. That is, ability to cause fruitfulness and to overflow. This indicates what the Lord will do for Israel as His people. They will say: -- "I am like a green fir tree." He will answer:-- "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hos. 12:8).

He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take roots: Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit (Isa. 27:6).

They shall also abound, --

Enlarge the place of thy tent-- for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited (Isa. 54:3).

The Euphrates is marked out as the boundary of the land given to Abraham in Gen. 15:18 -- "From the river of Egypt to the *great river*, the river Euphrates."

It is a *great river* and connects in our thoughts with the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of the Great King of Israel. In Matthew He -- our Lord Jesus Christ -- is immediately introduced as "Son of David" and "Son of Abraham." That is, He is vested with royalty as the true Solomon and He is the depository of the promises as the true Isaac. Notice two things here -- "Judah and his brethren" (v. 2) not "Reuben and his brethren" -- for Reuben was indeed the first born. Gen. 49:10 shows that royalty attaches to Judah who is seen as a lion in v. 9.

Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler (prince) (1 Chron. 5:2).

Next in Matt. 1:6 we have: -- "And Jesse begat David the king." This marks out the Jewish character of this Gospel. Here Christ is seen as "born King of the



Jews” (Matt. 2:2). The events in it are therefore presented in keeping with this fact and meditation on it will be greatly rewarded. Here only we get the fullest quotation from Zech. 9:9 mentioning both animals bearing in Israel’s King (Matt. 21:4-5 -- cp. John 12:12-15).

The Gospel ends with Christ seen among the Godly remnant in Galilee and there is no ascension. From Israel as the center He sends forth His message to the Gentiles (Isa 66:10 and 19). ♦<sup>112</sup>

### ***What Covenant With Adam? Gen. 2:15-17***

#### ***Man Appointed to Till the Garden and to Guard It***

Man was placed in the garden to till it. The garden would thus be ordered according to the exercise of Adam’s faculties which were, no doubt of a very high order. His naming of the animals indicated a high order of capability for zoological classification, as well as showing him there was not one like himself. No doubt he would excel in horticulture and botany also. He was created with full capacity of speech and no doubt his mind was richly furnished with an exceptional high order of intelligence.

We see from this also that it was not God’s intention that man be unoccupied. However, in the garden, without a curse on the ground, the work would not be as after the fall. The ground would yield abundantly. The tilling would not require sweating.

At first thought, it might seem strange that Adam was to “guard” the garden. But let us ask ourselves “how are we to ‘guard’ anything that God has committed to us?” Why, by obeying God’s Word! Just as obedience is the saints’ liberty, so is obedience the “guard” of what God commits to us. The guarding of the garden was bound up with obeying the one prohibition (Gen. 2:15-17): not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Guarding it should be viewed in connection with the inroad that the Enemy of God and man made (Gen. 3:1-7). Note, then, as soon as we see man put into the garden, the *command* of God comes before him.

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112. {In this short article we have seen the river emanating from Eden as pointing to the Son come from above and manifested here as given in the four Gospels. In Scripture, water is used figuratively for the Word of God (Eph. 5:26) and running water as figurative of the Holy Spirit. Scripture shows us that every word, way, and work of Christ was at the Father’s direction and in the power of the Spirit of God (Jn. 5:19). The figurative use of a river pointing to Christ, then, signifies the working of the Spirit of God in Him.}

## ***In Innocency Adam Had A Law, not The Law***

### **ADAM DID NOT HAVE THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

In his state of innocency there was *a* law given to Adam, not *the* law of Moses (John 1:17). It is important to dwell on this because it is part of Covenantism to state that Adam was under the law, thus placing all his progeny under the law. It is an effort to make the law the measure of everything moral, and even to call the law a transcript of the mind of God, which it certainly is not. Hos. 6:7 is pressed into a false use to bolster this far-reaching error, as if it stated that Adam had the 10 commandments. It states no such thing, nor does that text imply it because that would contradict other texts. The notion that Adam had the 10 commandments clearly violates Scripture statements. Not only does this contradict John 1:17, it also contradicts Rom. 5:13-14. Here are helpful comments by W. Kelly about this:

The apostle meets a possible objection, and certainly proves that the existence of sin is independent of law.

For until [the] law sin was in [the] world; but sin is not put to account when there is no law.

Thus the Jew could not even make the miserable boast (for what will not man boast of?) that the law preceded sin. The very object of law is to prove the sin of men. Alas! it is not confined to Israel; it is universal. “Sin was in the world,” where the law was not. When it was given by Moses, it put sin to account; but sin was already there, and far more widely than the sphere which law contemplated when it came. Law could work no remedy for sinners; it could only register - - not get rid of -- sin. Law gave sin the character of offence; sin, where law spoke, became the transgression of a positive and known commandment. “Where no law is, there is no transgression.” It is a pernicious mistake to understand that the apostle denies sin to be where no law exists. Sin is not the transgression of the law, though transgression assuredly is sin. But sin is a wider and deeper thing. The Authorized Version {KJV} notwithstanding, 1 John 3: 4 teaches really otherwise -- that sin is lawlessness, and not necessarily the violation of law. Thus both apostles are restored to harmony, instead of either clashing mischievously or tempting an expositor to a still more mischievous paring down of the truth to save appearances. Never is this needed with scripture. As being the word of God, we must eschew and resent all such manipulations of its language. It is only our ignorance which finds difficulties; it is ill-will which sets one passage in antagonism to another. If John could have meant us to gather that sin and transgression of law are the same thing, nothing could save the statement from opposition to our text.

This is yet more apparent from the support the Apostle Paul adds in v. 14 to what was laid down in v. 13:

But death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those that

sinned not in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was coming.

The two points are named when a positive commandment was imposed by God. Adam had *a* law; by Moses the law was made known. Between them there was no dealing with men by either the one or the other; yet men sinned as scripture abundantly shows. Hence death reigned, for it is the wages (not of transgression only but) of sin. It reigned in the case of Adam and Eve; it reigned from Moses' day; but not at either epoch only, but between them, when there was no law. Death reigned over all those that sinned; for sin they did, even though it was not in the likeness of our first parents' transgression. Their antediluvian posterity, as well as those who followed the flood down to the gift of law from Sinai, could not sin as their father in Eden or the children of Israel after they heard the ten words {i.e., the 10 commandments}. But they sinned, they did their own will, they were corrupt and violent, as they afterwards added idolatry to their evil ways. Accordingly death reigned even over them; for they were sinners, though not transgressors, like Adam at first and Israel afterwards.

It is interesting to note that the apostle refers here to Hos. 6:7:

But they, like men, transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

The margin gives the true sense, which is lost in the vagueness of "men" in the text. "They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." Israel had *the* law, as Adam *a* law; and both transgressed the bond by which they were held. But all between Adam and Moses were on a different footing. They were not a whit less truly sinners, but they had no law or laws proposed to them by God which they broke. So the nations in contrast with Israel are ever styled "sinners of the Gentiles." Having sinned without law, they perished without law {Rom. 2:12};<sup>113</sup> while the Jews who had the law sinned in the law and were thus transgressors, which the Gentiles who had not the law could not be. But the Jews were not sinners only but transgressors. Hence it is written,

Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

The law put sin to *their* account. Not so with the Gentiles: God winked at these times of ignorance.

Nothing, however, is said of Gentiles in our verses, for we are here led up to times before the Jews were called, or the Gentiles consequently could be left aside. We see the sons of Adam down to the promulgation of God's law at Sinai. If on the one hand there was no law to charge sin to the account

of the guilty, there was on the other hand the reign of death, and this over sinners, if not transgressors, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Men at large were guilty and died accordingly. We are here then in presence, not of the law and its special aims and its peculiar sphere, but of sin flowing down from its first source, Adam, through all the streams which descended thence. If law was not there to set sin to account, as it does precisely and in detail, their death was the witness that they were all sinners, whose dread wages were duly paid. Thus Adam, as we shall see more fully soon, is a figure of the coming One, of Christ (i.e., of a federal head who was to follow the first).<sup>114</sup>

The law is the rule for man in a state of sin, with lust at work within; but Adam in innocency was not in a state of sin and was not given *the* law which, when given through Moses, addressed man in the state of sin. In notes regarding Patrick Fairbairn's, *The Revelation of Law in Scripture*, J. N. Darby wrote:

'The law of the Ten Commandments was written on Adam's heart on his creation,' etc. This is simple, but well known nonsense. How could "Thou shalt not steal" be a law to Adam? Or "kill," or "lust"? It all supposes sin and a fallen state, and in principle so does every prohibition of evil, and indeed a command to love God. 'Binding to obedience' is all very well -- that Adam's law did, but it did not suppose sin. The moment Scripture is owned, which expressly declares that man got the knowledge of good and evil by the Fall, and that this part, if they please to call it so, was acquired then, as Scripture expressly and in terms asserts, "The man is become as one of us," all this falls to the ground.<sup>115</sup>

Since this matter is so important and is fundamental to Covenantism, let us hear more from J. N. Darby:

Where is a trace of promise of life to Adam and his posterity if they exactly kept the law? It is a pure invention, falsifying Adam's real position and relationship with God in order to propitiate the law of the ten commandments. There is not a tittle of scripture for it. Adam, having life, was tested by a positive well-known commandment of not eating the forbidden fruit; and the perfectness of this consisted in the point that there was no intrinsic moral question in it {in the fruit}. It was a test of simple obedience to a sinless being with a threat of death (for life he had). A promise of life to Adam on keeping a moral law, which supposed the knowledge of good and evil, is a mischievous fable, and denies the whole position of Adam who was innocent. There would have been no harm in eating that fruit more than another, unless it had been forbidden. And, as I have said, this test of obedience was the only true one for an innocent being, not, as is alleged, a righteous and holy one (both which terms suppose the knowledge of good and evil, delighting in one and abhorring the other). Adam acquired the knowledge of good and evil by his disobedience: "The

113. {Observe that if Adam had the 10 commandments, and his posterity were all under the law, there would have been no persons sinning without law. The Covenantist notion that all are under the law contradicts this Scripture.}

114. W. Kelly, *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, in loc on Rom. 5:13. See also J. N. Darby, *Notes and Comments* 5:8, 51; *Collected Writings* 7:290; 10:97; 21:197; 26:239; 33:334.

115. *Notes and Comments* 5:8.

man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” But this by the by. What I insist on is, there was no promise of life, which supposed he had it not; but a threat of death, which supposed him to be alive, but alive innocent with no knowledge of good and evil.

And when you come to details, just see, I must say, the nonsense of this system which Presbyterians accept by tradition. This law, we are told, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai “in ten commandments and written on two tables.” Think of bidding Adam to honor his father and his mother, and that his days might be long in the land Jehovah his God gave him! Think of his being forbidden to steal -- nay, what is more material, not to lust or covet! Cannot these doctors see that the law supposes sin to be there in the prohibition of it, and that (unless in the case of honoring parents, which could not possibly apply to Adam) all the commandments without exception are prohibitions of sin, or refer, as the fourth, to the labor which came in as the present punishment of sin? All this is not a mere mistake of interpretation, or an imperfect way of putting things (of which I should have much to say on the {Westminster} Confession of Faith, and to which we are all liable); but it is grave and fundamental error on man’s original relationship with God, and on the true state of our actual relationships too. The basis of the entire system of moral relationship with God in Presbyterianism is false; and it has tainted the whole Evangelical system everywhere. I believe it had its origin in the Reformation, or rather in reformed popery; but it has on this point been formalized in Presbyterianism as it has been nowhere else; and I defy anyone to give the smallest atom of scripture, or (if he knows what sin and innocence mean) of common sense either. It is a theological system without a scriptural basis, and absurd upon the face of it (assuming Adam’s innocence; that is, believing the scriptural statement).

This is strong language to me as to the famous Confession of Faith ; but the times are serious. We want the truth. We want the solid basis of scripture, of the word of God, for what we hold. Nothing else will stand in these days. Men may deny that word ; but then we know what we have to do with. Men may set up conventional systems ; but then popery is the strongest and will prevail, or infidel disgust throw up all, and (as I believe) devour at the end popery itself. But my business now is with the truth. Thank God, many Presbyterians love the Lord, and their traditional errors are partially dissolved in the power of grace, though, I believe, their system affects and injures their Christianity. Still every saint will cordially recognize every one in whom grace is. At any rate, that is what pleases God and is the true bond of comfort to the saint; but our question now is with a system of doctrine injurious to the saints we do love. In many parts I do not believe the Confession of Faith is really held by those who maintain it, as in the doctrine of absolute reprobation. Indeed it notoriously is not. They may talk about mysterious and deep truths when we bow. I have no objection to bowing to God on such points -- it becomes us; but they do not believe what is stated in the Confession of Faith -- I mean a vast number do not. And I

affirm that what they do believe, the promise of life to Adam by keeping the ten commandments, is an absurd and unscriptural folly, and one which subverts his and our relations to God, fatally modifying the truth of the gospel when it is preached.<sup>116</sup>

## CONFOUNDING TRANSGRESSION AND SIN

It is erroneous to confound transgression and sin. All transgression (breaking a given rule) is sin, but not all sin is transgression. Men sinned between Adam and Moses, but the law was introduced by Moses. **It is sinful for a man to have a will of his own** (i.e., apart from and contrary to God’s will); and *that*, men indeed acted on consequent upon the fall, though they had not the 10 commandments to transgress. For example, no law was given concerning approach to God through substitutionary sacrifice, like Abel’s sacrifice, and Cain brought the work of his hands from the cursed ground. His works were wicked (1 Jn. 3:12), without law. In view of this distinction, let us read Rom. 4:15:

For law works wrath; but where no law is neither [is there] transgression.

The Gentiles never were under the law:

For when [those of the] nations, which have no law . . . (Rom. 2:14).

The law came in 430 years after the promise to Abraham:

. . . the law, which took place four hundred and thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promises of no effect (Gal. 3:17);

and, it came by Moses:

For the law was given by Moses (John 1:17).

These Scriptures are quite clear when not transmuted through spiritual alchemy which places everyone under law.<sup>117</sup>

## SIN IS NOT THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW

W. Kelly noted that sin is lawlessness, not the transgression of the law, but we need to notice further.

116. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 14: 346-348, article “Presbyterianism,” p. 345.

117. Scripture, then, clearly shows, spite of theology to the contrary, that Gentiles never were under the law. ‘The work of the law written in the heart’ does not mean the same as ‘the law written in the heart.’ The law will be written in the heart of those under the new covenant (Heb. 8). The work of the law is to write the conviction of failure and judgment in the heart. The text just quoted shows that persons not under the law (and there are none such if the law was given to Adam and all his posterity) may have conviction of sin written in their heart. No amount of spiritual alchemy can get Gentiles actually under the law.

See also *Collected Writings*, 10:18, 59, 98, 149, 154, 284, 293; 13:385; *Notes and Comments*, 5:3.

Everyone that practices sin practices also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Lawlessness is acting without reference to the will of God. **It is sinful for a man to have a will of his own.** The KJV translation, “sin is the transgression of the law” hardly seems to be a blunder, but rather the consequence of the Covenantist idea that all are under the law, and sin is the transgression of the law. J. N. Darby had some pointed words to say on this very bad translation <sup>118</sup> of 1 John 3:4

The other is, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This is really, I must say, a wicked subjection of the word to theology; The word (*anomia*) is never used for “transgression of the law” anywhere else in the English translation of the holy scriptures; another expression is, *parabasis nomou*. I call it “wicked,” because by it a human system denies what the word of God carefully insists on. Not only so, but it is the word rightly translated elsewhere “without law.” Sin is not transgression of the law; to say so, universal as it may be, is a wicked anti-scriptural perversion. Sin is the evil nature which produces lust, the enmity of the heart against God. It is written, “Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful,” which could not be if sin was not there before the commandment. Again, the contrary is expressly stated. “Until the law sin was in the world.” There is no transgression without sin. Further, it is said, “They that have sinned without law,” the same word as an adverb (*anomos*), in contrast to sinning under the law. That is, the word of God puts it in direct contradiction to what this false translation does.

These gentlemen believe men are born in sin. I do not blame them for this, surely; but are men born in transgression of the law? It is false theological perversion, and nothing else; and it is time that false theology gave way to the word of God: for this affects the whole nature and character of Christianity. Patience has its just place; but, after all, souls are more precious than false theology. <sup>119</sup>

Sin is not defined in Scripture as a conscious transgression of a known law -- a notion at war with Rom. 5:13, etc. If sin was a conscious transgression of a known law, there would have been no sin in the world before the law was given. Certainly, transgression of a law under which one is placed by a moral governor is an act of sin, but there are acts of sin when not placed under law by a moral governor. Indeed, sinful acts reached such a height that the flood was brought upon the world filled with violence and corruption -- long before the law was given to Israel.

Confounding “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) with sins as acts committed is a basic error.

118. W. Kelly called it “the deplorable mis-rendering” (*The Bible Treasury*, 19:66).

119. *Collected Writings*, 23:307-308. The New International Version has this false translation.

Self-will and selfishness act without reference to the will of God. <sup>120</sup> This is what is intended in saying that sin is lawlessness, or lawlessness is sin. <sup>121</sup> It is acting in self-will without reference to the will of God. **It is sinful for a man to have a will of his own.** Between the fall of Adam and the flood man acted thus, having the knowledge of good and evil, choosing the evil -- a self-willed choice.

### THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW ARE NOT THE SAME THING

J. N. Darby wrote:

I deny the sense of responsibility and a law to be the same thing or either of them the knowledge of good and evil. A law may be the rule according to which we are responsible to One who has authority over us, but it is not the responsibility itself. Man was responsible before he had the knowledge of good and evil; and he had a law which implied no such knowledge. Responsibility is to a person: a law may be its measure. The knowledge of good and evil is a capacity of nature to discern right and wrong where there is no law. “So the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.” A law may give me God’s measure of it as to me, and so the divine law did as to man. But obedience always and in everything is what we are responsible for if the One above us is supreme -- has such claims over us -- to keep the law, if He has given one, and every commandment He gives. But this is only what the responsibility is shown in. The knowledge of right and wrong is in itself a contrast with law, because it is in us, and there is no one to whom (*if that be all*) we are responsible. We may be also responsible to another; and he, if a moral governor -- not otherwise, holds us responsible according to that knowledge. <sup>122</sup>

### The Rule of Life for Adam Innocent

Adams’ rule of life was not the 10 commandments. Rather:

The rule of life for unfallen Adam was consistency with the innocent nature and place of blessing in which God has set him. He should have felt and walked in consistency with this. <sup>123</sup>

The unbelief, which blinds sceptics where it is complete, darkens God-fearing men in the measure of their pursuit of human thoughts and theories. Thus soon after the apostolic age a patristic tradition grew up, from Rabbinism and philosophy, as if Adam, like Israel or fallen man generally, was under a moral government in respect of known good and evil in itself, or such a moral sense as man got by sin and a bad conscience. On the

120. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 23:134; 26:240.

121. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 3:60

122. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 32:41.

123. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:177.

contrary he had only goodness to enjoy in thankfulness to the blessed Giver of all, abiding in that normal condition which was the peculiar position of primeval Man. A general state of government where he could judge intrinsically between good and evil was in no way his originally, though it became his when he transgressed and God drove him out from the garden, with that sad but useful monitor along his fallen pathway. Before he fell, it was his place to live in the constitutional enjoyment of divine goodness and its abundant gifts with a simple test of his obedience. His condition therefore stands in plain contrast with ours, who, being naturally sinful, by faith know Him that called us by glory and virtue, whereby He has granted to us His precious and exceeding great promises. But Man, when unfallen, had just to abide in, not quit his first estate, instead of being called out of a fallen one as believers are. No reward was proposed to him in obeying God's gracious call as to us now, nor was there the least room, as we need, to have senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil. Adam was simply warned against disobedience in one particular, which was evil because forbidden. Free to act in the sphere subjected to him, he was responsible to obey in refraining from the forbidden tree.

Nor can notion here be more evil and false than the thought of freedom to choose. Alas! this suits man's pride, but it is bad and senseless to boot. Free to obey or disobey God! Can these abstract reasoners mean what they say? Unfallen or fallen, man is only and always bound to obey God. He was not a slave of sin then; he is now. This is the truth according to scripture. It was then a natural relationship to God where all was good, but with responsibility to obey, and loss of all -- death -- if he disobeyed. Sin put man out of that relationship to God; grace by faith alone gives a new and better and eternal one in Christ. Reinstatement there is none. The paradise of man is not regained, but the paradise of God opened by Christ to the believer, whom grace makes a child of God and teaches to walk in obedience, as Christ did perfectly and unto death -- death of the cross.<sup>124</sup>

## The Two Trees in Eden

The word "tree" brings before the lovers of the Lord Jesus the tree upon which He was hung, where he Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). And,

Cursed [is] everyone hanged upon a tree (Gal. 3:13; cp. Gen. 40:19; Josh. 8:29; Esther 2:23; see also Acts 5:30 and 1 Pet. 2:24; contrast Gen. 18:1-4 and Ex. 15:23-25).

The One who has inspired the Scripture of truth has been pleased to call the cross a tree, thus connecting it with the two trees in the garden of Eden (Eden means "delight").

124. *The Bible Treasury* 19:66.

These two trees signify two great lines of truth. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the principle of responsibility.<sup>125</sup> We observe that a command of God, coupled with a penalty for disobedience, attached to the eating of this tree. The eating of it brought sin, the curse, and death into the world of man. The eating of the fruit was evil because God had forbidden them to eat it. All works-for-merit religion is nibbling at, and eating from, this tree. It even goes on under a cloak of 'Christianity.'

The tree of life points us to the sovereign grace of God, manifested in Christ, who bore our sins in His body on the tree. *He* is the tree of life.

J. N. Darby wrote:

And you get a striking thing here, one which has been a question even with heathens, and it is also a ground of discussion between Calvinists and Arminians: the tree of life, which is free gift; and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is responsibility. Man has been trying to unite these in himself, and never can. Man did take the responsibility-tree, and was lost.

Then the promise came to Abraham to shew that grace was really the thing after all -- the tree of life; and then came the law, the other tree. People have made the life dependent upon the responsibility-tree, which is utter folly.

But we find in Christ the two principles united; for He is the man who charges Himself with our responsibility, as He is Himself the life. If I have Christ for my life, with whom also I have died, I can bring the two together. But if taken out of Christ, it is impossible to unite the two things, any more than they were one in the garden.

If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, he would have been an immortal sinner. As he was, we have got the responsibility-man, not the man of God's counsels; but to faith the first or responsibility-man is set aside for Christ, the Second man. We have Christ as our life, and are bound to live in that life, and not in the old man. When it comes to a question of responsibility and judgment, I say I am not in the old man, but in Christ. And in my actual condition I say, Christ is in me, and I am to manifest Him as my life.<sup>126</sup>

We see the two principles that these two trees point to in the two great ways of God with man.

- (1) *Promises* were given to Abraham; i.e., blessing comes by sovereign **grace**.
- (2) The *law* was given to Israel. The law took up the fallen first man, in fallen Adamic standing, dealing with him on the basis of **responsibility in performance to obey**.

125. The eating of the fruit was evil because God had forbidden them to do so.

126. *Collected Writings*, 19:62.

The law which came in 430 years after the promises (to Abraham) cannot annul the promises (Gal. 3:15-20). The trial of the fallen, first man, to show that he was not recoverable, ended in him crucifying the second Man. Yet through that most heinous deed, sovereign grace wrought for God's glory and our blessing on the principle of the tree of life.<sup>127</sup> Grace triumphed through the promised Seed enduring the cross and glorifying God in His nature as light and love. This triumph of grace over evil reminds me of the line in a hymn by J. G. Deck:

The very spear that pierced Thy side,  
Drew forth the blood to save.

Thus God overrules all for His own glory in Christ. The responsible man, the first man, is set aside and God has established the second Man in His place, in resurrection.<sup>128</sup> The testing of man to show that he is not recoverable was completed with the crucifixion of Christ.

### THE LAW IN THE TRIAL OF THE FIRST, FALLEN MAN

Before closing this section let us notice a further point regarding the law given to Israel under trial as representative of the fallen first man. The law is not of the character of the tree of life. A Scripture used as if it proves that man is capable of choosing salvation is Deut. 30:19, 20:

... life and death have I set before you, blessing and cursing: choose then life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed, in loving Jehovah thy God, in hearkening to his voice, and in cleaving to him -- for this is thy life and the length of thy days -- that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

The Arminian use made of v. 19 should be self-evidently ludicrous. The life is unending natural life (which is not what Scripture means by eternal life). It is natural life in Israel.

And ye shall observe my statutes and my judgments, by which the man that doeth them shall live: I am Jehovah (Lev. 18:5).

None ever kept the law (but One); and the proof is that they all died. Had Adam not sinned, he would not have died. *Endless being* is not what is meant by "eternal life" as found in Scripture. In eternal punishment the wicked will have *endless being* but that certainly is not the eternal life that a believer has. Even the resurrection asserts this distinction, for there is a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment Jn. 5:29). The law kills (the *letter*, 2 Cor. 3:6); it was a

127. God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrains (Psa.76:10).

128. The Lord Jesus was the second Man in His Person when He came here, while the trial of the first man was nearing its conclusion. In resurrection, Christ entered the *appointed place* of the second Man and last Adam. The first Adam is thus displaced and has no more standing before God. The first man's trial ended at the cross. There is no testing of man after the cross.

ministration of death (2 Cor. 3:6), a ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9). Adam chose death, and so do all his offspring.

### RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH MAN'S WILL AND POWER

This subject has been discussed in *God's Sovereignty in the Salvation of Lost Men*.<sup>129</sup> So, I merely direct attention to the fact that in the fall man acquired the knowledge of good and evil, he acquired a conscience -- a bad conscience -- and there arose in his soul what Rom.8:3 calls "sin in the flesh": i.e., what we call the old nature. These are passed on to his descendants. The old nature, i.e., "sin in the flesh," controls the will of fallen man so that he pleases himself, not God. This control by sin in the flesh is such that we read:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be; and they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:7, 8).

The word "can" denotes ability to do something. "Cannot" denotes *inability*. Inability is man's condition as fallen. Inability does not relieve from responsibility, though that is a common notion when it comes to this moral issue -- though persons who say that if man can not pay God then that would mean he is not responsible to pay. Persons do not apply that absurd notion to their own debtors. If one owed them one million dollars and he was penniless, they do not come to the debtor and say, "My principle of conduct is that if a debtor cannot pay me, then he is not responsible to pay."

Adam had free will and lost it, never to be recovered. No man has moral free will. His will is bound by "sin in the flesh" and he is under the dominion of sin (Rom. 6). God has never rescinded man's responsibility to obey. Even when Adam had free will, God had never given Adam a choice to obey or not obey. He was to obey on penalty of death.

The importance of this matter was concisely well stated by J. N. Darby:

... the doctrine of free will ministers to the pretension of the natural man not to be entirely lost, for that is just what it amounts to. All who have never been deeply convicted of sin, all those with whom this conviction is based on gross and outward sins, believe more or less in free-will. You know that it is the dogma of the Wesleyans, of all reasoners, of all philosophers; but it completely changes the whole idea of Christianity, and entirely perverts it.<sup>130</sup>

129. Available from Present Truth Publishers.

130. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:314; read the rest of this letter.

## *It Is not Good that Man Should Be Alone:* *Genesis 2:18-20*

### *The Not-Good Situation Remedied*

Adam, created, made, and formed by the Creator was endowed with great intelligence. Man's mind never evolved but was fully furnished with intelligence, with speech, with powers of classification, all no doubt of a very high order -- from the moment of his creation.<sup>131</sup> He did not have to learn to speak. He needed no course in Zoology (Gen. 2:19, 20). Why assume a vast variety of animal "kinds" that God created that is not stated in the text, unless to cavil? We have no certain knowledge of what passed before Adam. Was it what taxonomists call "phyla" or "orders" or "classes"? What we really know is that we do not know about that; but we do know *the purpose* for which this was done:

- (1) it indicates Adam's headship over the creation; and,
- (2) it shows that there was not his like.

He quickly saw there was no one his like, no one with his kind of intelligence, no one with his own nature; no counterpart, his like. It was not God's thought that Adam should remain in that situation (Gen. 2:18).

He had named the animals but there was not for him a suitable mate. Ruler of the earth, there was no one at his side, his like. That was "*not good*" (Gen. 2:18). So, everything was in place but one thing; there was no "like" for Adam. In Gen. 1:31, regarding the completed work of the sixth day, it is written:

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.  
And there was evening and there was morning -- the sixth day.

Thus, the creation of Eve changed the "*not good*" situation concerning man so that concerning the sixth day God said what He had not said on the other five days, "behold it was *very good*."

## *Speech*

Commenting on Gen. 2:21-23, another wrote:

Apples of gold truly in baskets of silver! The God Who wrought has communicated the truth worthily to us. He would give man the boon of companionship, the joy of fellowship, the interchange of affection; and as

<sup>131</sup>. His case is one of *creation with an apparent age*. That is true of the Lord's turning the water to wine, which necessitated the creation of carbon atoms, and that wine also had the appearance of age.

the end was good, so the way. For He threw the man into an ecstasy, as the Lxx. render it, that he might not feel painfully, yet know perfectly what God was giving him. It was not a separate human being independent of Adam, nor yet a female half severed from the male half of a Janus-like creature as Rabbins fancy. It was not from the head nor from the feet, an absolute equal nor an utter inferior, but from his side, as has been remarked by others of old, the object of nearest love and sustaining care, an associated yet dependent sharer of all joy and sorrow.

As Jehovah Elohim deigned to build his rib into an Ishah (woman), so He brought her to the man, the highest and best form of marriage: a source never absent from faith at any time, but as it was then, how admirably suited to primeval simplicity in the innocence of both! He who knew all had said that it was not good for the man to be alone. The recognition of Adam's authority in giving a name to the inferior creation only made the gap more sensible. And now that the woman was received as it were from the divine hand, not from Elohim only but from Him Who in all His action here recorded was laying perfectly the ground for mutual duty in the relationship of marriage, "the man said, This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: this shall be called Ishah, for out of Ish was taken this." He was instantly conscious of the intimate and suited relationship, though hitherto unacquainted with the divine purpose; and he gave her a name admirably expressive of the fact. How poor are all the imaginations of man on this theme in presence of the truth thus revealed to us! But it could be appropriately communicated, not under the head of creation simply (Elohim), but of its moral government (Jehovah Elohim).<sup>132</sup> So simple, sure, and unforced is the usage of the divine designations here employed, without the crude, superficial, and skeptical hypothesis of distinct writers, destructive as it is of all real intelligence, and of that good and profoundly wise design for God's glory which is the surest mark of inspiration from first to last.

Attention may also be drawn to the refutation, which the simple facts here revealed, give to the vain hypothesis that the use of intelligible speech was a human invention. We need not quarrel in the least with the science of language, any more than with other science. The ablest of comparative philologists cannot rise above the root words in the Aryan, Semitic, and Turanian families of speech, pointing to a common source, the darkness of which science utterly fails to penetrate. Nor need it be doubted that imitative sounds and interjectional cries have added to the force and variety of language since early days. It is only when speculators cry up their little contributions, as if they were an adequate account of the origin of language, that they expose themselves to the derision of the

<sup>132</sup>. On the use of the divine names see: *Bible Treasury*, 19:1-3.

Bow-wow and the Pooh-pooh theories. For those who believe the word of God the question does not exist. It is certain that Elohim blessed our first parents, and said to them, Be fruitful, &c. It is certain that, when moral relations were established, Jehovah Elohim brought the subject creatures to Adam as to their lord for the names he would give them. Even before this the man had received the injunction imposed on his tenure of the garden with the solemn sanction of death on disobedience; as after naming the animals Adam intelligently expresses the woman's nature and relation to himself in a way beyond all Rabbins on the one hand and all philosophers on the other throughout the ages, giving her and himself names accordingly.

To deny the reality of all this is worthy of the irrationalism of the Rationalist. It is untrue that God addressed the sea monsters and their congeners, though He blessed them. It is the revealed fact that He did from the first address Man. He puts honor on His word throughout; but He "commanded" in ch. 2 as Jehovah Elohim, and was thoroughly understood. So Adam is declared to have exercised speech according to that power of God, alone suited to the beginning, which formed him a grown man in mind as well as in body, and with language as set over the animal kingdom, and with woman the meet companion of his life, where imitative lessons or interjectional outbursts could have no place, any more than root-words.<sup>133</sup>

## Adam and Eve Typically : Genesis 2:21-25

### Creation of the Woman

Of course, God had Christ in view, the Son of Man as universal head, with His consort, His like, taken from His side (cp. Gen. 2:21-25) -- so to speak -- from which "that precious stream of water and of blood so freely flowed" -- the bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife (Rev. 19). Therefore Adam named her woman (*Ishshah*) because she was taken out of man (*Ish*). She also was created (Gen. 5:2), though taken from man. "Created" is not used of Adam and Eve's descendants.

Man was alone, and it was not good that he should be so. The earth and all that it contained was good, and man placed in unquestioned authority over

133. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:98, 99.

it all. But amid its various tribes of animals and plants, man had no companion with whom to share his affections and his thoughts. Whence was such an one to come? Had another been created out of the dust independently of Adam, where had been his supremacy? and where had been, moreover, the tender intimacy of relationship needed in such a companion? Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast and fowl, and brought them to Adam, to see what he would call them. Adam exercised thus his delegated authority, and gave names to all the animal tribes -- but for Adam there was not found an help meet. How blessedly was the lack filled up! Out of Adam, while he slept, did the Lord God make woman, and bring her to the man. His exclamation sufficiently evinces the joy with which he received her, as well as his perception of the infinite wisdom which had thus provided a partner, a companion, distinct indeed, and thus the object of his affections and delight, and yet so mysteriously linked with his existence as to have been once part of himself. "The woman is of the man" {1 Cor. 11}. Precious mystery, regarded as expressing the relation of the second Adam to His Eve, the church. No one in all the creation of which He is Heir, and Lord, and Head, suited to be the sharer of His dominion, and the companion of His heart, but the church, by virtue of His deep sleep of death, made partaker of His life in resurrection, and yet in the day to come to be presented by Him to Himself, a glorious church, without spot, &c. (Eph. 5).<sup>134</sup>

"I will make him a helpmate, his like" (Gen. 2:18), one to stand beside him, his counterpart, his complement, his like. One man and one woman is God's thought from the beginning (cp. Matt. 19:4-6). Man wants to change God's order: Psa. 2:3.

Notice that J. N. Darby translates "*built* the rib . . . into a woman," not "made," or "fashioned." Compare this with Psa. 78:69, bearing in mind that there is an earthly bride in connection with God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ in the two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly.<sup>135</sup> The thought of Jehovah Elohim building a woman from the rib, with its bone and flesh, brings before our souls much, much more than the creation of the animals by divine fiat. Certainly it includes her relationship to Jehovah Elohim, which animals do not share, and her relationship to Adam, which animals do not share. It forcefully presents the loving care and provision of Jehovah Elohim for Adam. Moreover, it points to the great secret in the heart of God. J. G. Bellett wrote:

134. *The Bible Treasury*, 12:194.

135. It is interesting also that Christ said He would build His assembly (Matt. 16:18), and that we also read of the assembly as viewed on earth:

So then ye are no longer strangers, but are fellows citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner-stone, in whom all [the] building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the lord: in whom ye also are built together for a habitation of God in [the] Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).



To perfect his condition the Lord God celebrates for him a coronation day, and a day of espousals. But this action has an order in it. The Lord takes counsel with Himself about Adam's espousals. This is done *first*. Then He introduces him to the scene of his sovereignty. He brings the creatures of the field and of the air to Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatsoever he called every living creature, that was the name thereof. This was investing him with dominion, setting the crown royal on his head. Then He prepares the help-meet, and presents Eve to him, following his coronation with his marriage.

This is the order of these events -- an order which has a sacred and interesting sense in it. It is not the mere progress of independent facts. It is the design so to speak, of a great master. For there is, as we now know, a mystery which had been "hid in God," purposed in Himself, "before the foundation of the world, His secret (Eph. 3), of which this marriage in the garden of Eden was the type (Eph. 5). And according to this the Lord, in the solitude of His own presence, in the musings of His own bosom, before He led forth Adam into his kingdom, prepares his help-meet for him.

This, however, is not merely the *design of a great master*, but the *well-known way of a perfect love*.

The *richest* purpose of joy is the *first* in counsel.

The Lord's earliest thought was about Adam's best blessing. The help-meet at his side, the one like unto him, his companion, was destined to be more to him than all beside. And that which was chief in his enjoyments was the earliest and deepest thought in the mind of his Lord. His Lord pondered it. He spoke of it to Himself. His coronation was taken in hand at once and disposed of; but the getting of his help-meet for him was counseled and talked of before-hand.

This is the way that love would take. We know it ourselves. We like to dwell in thought over the materials of the happiness of one we love. So that all this is sweet and important to our hearts; for we read in it that which may again draw out the admiration and the worship, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!"<sup>136</sup>

## No Basis for Feminism Here

God did not build the woman from Adam's "side" so that modern feminists would be provided with grist for their egalitarian mill. That Christian men "love their own wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:28) is the teaching of the apostle Paul, and it reflects Eve's being built from Adam's rib. The apostle says that in the context of the relationship of Christ and the church -- which is not an egalitarian context. Female animals, as male animals, were created by God's fiat:

136. *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 9,10, n.d.

Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind . . . (Gen. 1:24).

That was not how Adam was created, as we have noted before, and neither was it the way Eve was created. She, like Adam is over the creation, yet he is the head.<sup>137</sup>

The order in which they were created is also significant:

Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but I do not suffer a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over man, but to be in quietness; for Adam was formed first, then Eve; but the woman, having been deceived, was in transgression (1 Tim. 2:11-14).

Feminists, with their professed Christian supporters, speak of such directions (as in 1 Cor. 11) being culturally conditioned and so they claim these directions do not apply to *our* culture, which culture they are busy changing in order that our culture be hospitable to their agenda. Yes, the Spirit's teaching here, through the apostle, *is* culturally conditioned, but conditioned by the pristine culture and order in Eden as God's authority arranged it. It is creatorial order, order at the fountain-head of history before sin entered the world, and the Spirit insists on this order of headship also after sin has entered the world and sinful man has made many cultures.

When we read in 1 Cor. 11:15-16:

Does not even nature itself teach you, that man, if he have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But woman, if she have long hair, [it is] glory to her; for the long hair is given [to her] in lieu of a veil.

Do you see the apostle saying "does not even culture teach you?" No; *nature*. And does that mean women's hair naturally grows longer than men's hair, and that is the reason? No. "Nature" refers to the *constituted relationship* of man and woman -- set up by God in Eden. It acknowledges the hierarchy stated in 1 Cor. 11:3, as does the special covering of the woman's head when praying or prophesying prescribed in 1 Cor. 11.

Another point in the marriage relationship stated by the apostle is:

But *ye* also, every one of you, so love his own wife as himself; but as to the wife [I speak] that she may fear the husband (Eph. 6:33).

137. Regarding Adam being told by Jehovah Elohim:

Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and eaten of the tree . . . (Gen. 3:17),

though man is the head that does not mean that a wife cannot give him advice. His guilt here was in following her *in sinning*. In Abraham's case, Sarah gave bad advice which resulted in Ishmael being born. When Sarah said that Abraham should expel Hagar, he did not want to do so, but God told him to do so. Ultimately, the chief responsibility falls on the head, and he must weigh advice. But to cut off all advice is quite unintelligent.

The NT uniformly teaches that the true relationship of husband and wife, including 1 Pet. 3:1-7 and 1 Cor. 11:2-16, is not egalitarianism, but hierarchy. To speak of Gen. 1-3 as “historically conditioned patriarchy” in order to undermine its role partakes of the serpent’s saying, “Is it even so, that God has said . . .?” (Gen. 3:1).<sup>138</sup> It should be clear to Christians that egalitarian feminism is an attack on the relationship of Christ and the church, whether intentional or not.

## Formation of a New Household

It is also God’s thought that a husband not be “a mama’s boy”:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24).

*Leaving* and *cleaving* are forceful words, especially in view of ‘easy in - easy out’ marriages via divorce-for-any-reason, other than the one basis for divorce pronounced by the Lord Jesus in Matt. 19:9.

It may be that a number of families live under the same roof. That does not negate Gen. 2:24 regarding the immediate family unit of husband, wife, and then children, if the Lord gives them.

Gen. 2:24 does not mean that the man attaches himself to the wife’s family because he leaves his father and mother. The point is that a new family unit is set up.

Even mothers-in-law need to obey the bearing of this Scripture, whether it be her son or her daughter in the new marriage.

And, it is implicit in this that likewise for the wife, she is in a new household, and the man is her head, not her parents.

But I wish you to know that Christ is the head of every man, but woman’s head [is] the man, and the Christ’s head God (1 Cor. 11:3).

138. The use made of what is true in the *new creation*, “in Christ Jesus,” that there is neither male or female, in *the order in this creation* where Christian testimony takes place, to say that this makes man and woman equal, is patently absurd, and can only be explained by sinful willfulness to disobey God’s order. Just think of a Christian child reading Eph. 6:1:

Children, obey your parents in [the] Lord, for this is just, and saying that since Gal. 3:28 says that in Christ Jesus there is neither male or female, then in Christ Jesus there is neither child or parent, and therefore I do not have to obey my parent!

Scripture carefully maintains the familial structure, not only in the Scriptures we have been considering, but the Lord Jesus emphatically did so in Matt. 19:4-10. The created order most certainly had in view the family even though no children were born there, as Gen. 2:24 and Matt. 19:4-5 show. The family has a hierarchic structure, including children as subject to the mother and she and the children subject to the husband and father.

This is hierarchical, not egalitarian.<sup>139</sup>

Love and respect are owed the parents but not subjection, though their advice might be profitably sought.

## They Shall become One Flesh

We read that “they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Writers speak of this as if it involved a spiritual unity. It is false. Suppose that, after being married, a woman confesses Christ as Savior, but the husband is still unsaved. That is not a spiritual unity, but it is a subsisting one flesh union. We do not read that those that marry shall become one spirit (however desirable having oneness of mind is).

But he that [is] joined to the Lord is one Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).

Concerning:

This time it is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh (Gen. 2:23),

that has nothing to do with the incarnation. We are not one with Christ, or united to Christ, because of the incarnation, though incarnation was necessary for Christ to die. John 12:24 makes this clear. Believers are one with Christ as the risen stalk, the life of the stalk being in the grains, we forming one plant with Him. It is His resurrection-life in us. The beginning of the new creation is Christ Himself (Rev. 3:14), the Head of it the moment He rose from the dead, and on that resurrection-day He brought the disciples into this connection with Him as seen figuratively by being one plant with Him (John 12:24). See John 20:21, 22, where He breathed *into* them the Holy Spirit, not for union with Him as head in heaven, of one body formed by the special coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, but as the power of resurrection-life, the life in abundance noted in John 10:10. This is life in the Son (1 Jn. 5:11).<sup>140</sup> The comparison of God breathing *into* Adam the breath of life and the risen Christ breathing *into* his disciples is instructive.

## Adam a Figure of One to Come

Adam was a figure of One to come (Rom. 5:14), as having his companion, placed in paradise on earth. Christ will have His companion eternally, in the Paradise of God.<sup>141</sup> God never restores an original condition that was lost. He brings about something better by divine sovereignty. Everything in which man has failed will

139. See *The Deportment of a Christian Woman*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

140. See *From New Birth to New Creation*, available from Present truth Publishers.

141. The church has a distinct, eternal place (Eph. 3:21).

be made good to God's glory by Christ, in a fuller way.

Another wrote:

The type is methodically set out. On the man was laid the responsibility, when the woman was not yet in being (Gen. 2:15-17); as He Whom Adam foreshadowed was to glorify the Father and to bear all the consequences of man's failure in the judgment of God on the cross. Then began to dawn the hidden purpose about His bride, but His dominion is carefully shown over the subject creation before laying the basis of that purpose (vv. 18-20). Then comes the deep sleep on the man from Jehovah Elohim and the building up of his wife, owned by him as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, the intimacy of this relationship transcending every other in his eyes. So was it in the secret hidden from ages and from generations: even Christ, after His death of redemption, raised and glorified in a heavenly headship and universal supremacy, far above promise and prophecy; and the church made one with Him in sovereign grace, the sharer of all that is given to Him, His dependent but associated bride, even now His body, as each christian is a member in particular.<sup>142</sup>

J. N. Darby pointed out how Adam was a figure of One to come:

God took the man, and put him in the garden to dress and keep it, gave him one commandment, and then said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." So He gives him a wife, and also puts him in the place of authority, which is shown by bringing everything to Adam to be named. Giving a name is an act of authority all through scripture. And Adam says of his wife, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman." There we get the institution of marriage, but, above all, Christ and the church.<sup>143</sup> We see dominion which is entirely in Adam, not in the woman. Dominion belongs to Christ; but, being rejected, and accomplishing redemption, He is exalted on high, and instead of dominion He gets the church, which He associates with Himself now, as well as when He is in the dominion. This is the place of the church, which is neither the Lord nor the subject creature, but is associated with the Lord over the creation. God's plans are here in imagery. Adam was "the figure of him that is to come"

142. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:114.

143. {We do not know how long it will be before the law, or a judge, in the USA declares the Word of God to be "a hate book." Marriage is between those who have the potential to produce children (Gen. 1:28), a male and a female. God's intention was one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24), though polygamy came in and God tolerated it. The Lord Jesus taught the original order (Matt. 19:3-9), "male and female," cancelled the Mosaic permission of divorce for more than one ground (because of the hardness of their hearts), down to *one only*: i.e., where the marriage was violated by fornication. Divorce was permitted by Him on that basis, though He did not command that divorce must follow, for there might be forgiveness.

Marriage is not some "partners" living together, keeping their "options open," whether it is a male and a female or some other combination.

Marriage reflects Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). Christians subject to the Word of God understand the bearing of this on marriage.}

(Rom. 5:14), He was head over all things to Eve, who was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. We have in this relationship two states, the actual responsibility as created (which Christ was in a certain sense), and then what was historically true, the image of Him that was to come. Christ gave up everything, leaving father and mother (that is, Israel, if you take it as a figure). How often we hear it said, that Christ was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh! No doubt He did become incarnate; but really it is when He is in glory that we are made bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh; the other is never said in scripture.

Thus we have the responsible man set up, but still a figure of Him that is to come; and as Eve out of Adam, we are all taken out of Christ, in a sense; we are quickened together with Christ when He has gone down into death, and we are set aside in the place He has taken. Just so the deep sleep fell upon Adam, and the rib is taken and made a woman, and is brought to him.<sup>144</sup>

## *Man and His Wife Naked, but not Ashamed*

We shall consider nakedness when looking at Gen. 3:7, 10, 11. A husband and wife ought not to be ashamed by being naked before each other. The matter of nakedness has a different bearing. In connection with Adam and his wife covering themselves, it was because, as he said, "I heard thy voice in the garden and I feared, because I am naked; and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10). The acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil, with its accompanying bad conscience brought on his fear spite of the fig leaf apron designed to cover up the real case. God provided the true covering. The need for a covering signified a loss of innocency with the fall into a sinful state. The word *exposure* may help regarding this change. Their state was exposed. But more on all this later.

144. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:62, 63.

## Chapter 5

### *The Fall of Adam*

*They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them (Ex. 32:8).*

### *Introduction*

#### THE ENEMY OF GOD AND MAN WAS IN EDEN

It is the Word of God alone which accounts for how sin entered the world as a result of disobedience to a holy God. Ancient documents speaking of a once happy state in contrast with the conditions in the world when such documents were written do not deal with the moral issues we will consider in Gen. 3.

Gen. 3 is not mythical -- with some alleged moral; nor is it symbolic of something important that happened to man. What is moral does indeed characterize the passage, and certainly something of the most serious consequences happened -- and it happened as the text states it did and for the reasons that the text states. The apostle Paul commented on what took place regarding the serpent and treated it as literal (2 Cor. 11:3). The description "the ancient serpent" (Rev. 12:9) reaches back to Eden. Moreover, the curse on the serpent will remain in the millennium (Isa. 65:25). If the serpent is the personification of evil, what does the going on the belly and the eating dust signify for the personification of evil? Rather than a literal, talking serpent being allegedly like medieval superstition, it was a reality and used as an instrument of the great Enemy of God and man; a malevolent being who can (as far as God permits: Job 1, 2) use the elements (Job. 1:12-19), cause a malady in a child of God (Job 1:7; 2 Cor. 12:7), work power in the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:9), give breath to the image of the beast (Rev. 13:15), test the Christ of God (Luke 4), personally possess a man (John 13:27), and transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14).

Some people complain about the serpent being treated as if it were a moral being. This shows, they say, that the serpent is used only as a personification of evil, but they do not explain why the personification of evil is treated as if it were a moral being. We might note that:

1. In general, the animal kingdom suffered consequences from sin.
2. God smote the firstborn of beasts in Egypt (Ex. 12:12).
3. If a beast touch Sinai while God was there, it was to be killed (Ex. 19:13).

4. The firstborn of unclean animals had to be redeemed by the death of a clean animal (Ex. 34:30).
5. Animals involved in bestiality were to be killed (Lev. 20:15, 16).
6. The Lord Jesus sent the demons living in the demonic of Gadara into a herd of swine, which then rushed into water drowning themselves.

When professed Christians who assert that no literal serpent was present because animals are not moral creatures satisfactorily explain all such things involving amoral animals, we might talk again.

The serpent does not represent the "personification of evil." In effect, such an idea undermines the truth of how sin arose in Eden. When the Lord Jesus was tested by Satan, Satan does not mean the personification of evil. If so, that would make Christ a sinner because all would have been going on inside Himself. To deny that Christ was tested by an objective Satan actually constitutes Him a sinner and is fundamentally evil doctrine.

There *is* an objective Satan; he tested man in the garden and he tested Christ in the wilderness. It ought to be clear to the Lord's people that the testing of man in the garden and the testing of the second Man are meant to be compared and the results contrasted -- and, that there was an objective Enemy present in both cases.

Satan is a fallen cherub, an angelic being (Ezek. 28:11-19),<sup>145</sup> perhaps the highest in the angelic order. No doubt it was on account of his former position that Michael, though an archangel, did not dare to bring a railing accusation against the devil, for Michael is not numbered among those who despise lordships and speak railingly against dignities (Jude 8, 9). The cherubim are not personifications of something but creatures of God -- though there are symbolic representations of them to convey some truth. They execute God's judgments.

Note, then, that Gen. 3 begins with a fallen cherub ruining the work of God which He had pronounced "very good," and the chapter ends with (unfallen)

145. Isa. 14:12-15 is not Satan. Isa. 14:4 refers to the king of Babylon, who is the Lucifer in this chapter, the last one who holds the power of empire first committed to the Babylonian, Nebuchadnezzar. That is the beast of Rev. 13:1-12, i.e., the coming Roman prince of Dan. 9:26. The reader should keep in mind the image of Dan. 2 depicting the epoch of Gentile power of empire down to the appearing of the smiting stone (i.e., the appearing of Christ in glory to smite the nations) while Israel is Lo-ammi (not-my-people), forming one whole; and the starting point gives character to this whole, so much so that the last one holding the power first given to the Babylonian, Nebuchadnezzar, is styled king of Babylon in Isa. 14. That this man reflects characteristics of Satan, as Lucifer does, should not surprise students of prophecy. We should keep in mind that the Beast in his final phase -- i.e., during the last half-week of Daniel's 70 weeks -- receives governmental power directly from the dragon (Rev. 13:2-4). That Lucifer should reflect Satan is not surprising. This, of course, is governmental apostasy, paralleling the Jewish apostasy and the apostasy of Christendom.

This use of Babylon also bears on the use of "Babylon" in the Revelation.

cherubim guarding the way to the tree of life. Such is the result of disobedience to God.

Note also the falsity of pictorial representations of the pair in Eden with the serpent present. No one knows what the serpent looked like in Eden since it was drastically changed by the curse on it. It went on its belly consequent upon the curse on it, and ate in a different manner than before the curse.

## TWO CHARACTERS OF THE ENEMY OF GOD AND MAN

The two great ways in which the Enemy of God and man -- an implacable, malignant foe -- acts are corruption and violence. Usually corruption is tried first. In Eden we meet with his subtle corruption of what God declared to be "very good." J. C. Bayley wrote:

We are told in Rev. 12:9 and 20:2 very definitely that the serpent represents our great adversary the devil. The figure is apt in these points, deceit and death. The two most characteristic features of all sin I believe to be craft and cruelty . . . All the attributes of the father of sin are comprehended in these two terms,

A liar and a murderer. <sup>146</sup>

In the serpent this is graphically expressed: it is

more subtle than any beast of the field {Gen. 3:1};

and under the hooded glory of the cobra lurks the malignant virus of death. If we could forget this, we should see that it is not without semblance of outward innocence and beauty, which, however, only makes it the more to be dreaded . . .

It is for this reason that the worship of the serpent -- ophiolatry, which has extended, in one form or another, all over the world <sup>147</sup> -- is peculiarly heinous: it is the supplanting of God, not merely by a stock or stone, but by the symbol of Satan. For this reason also the character of its worship was distinct from general idolatry, in that it was the avowed worship of a dreaded and hated object, being somewhat similar in this respect to the worship of Ahriman the evil deity by the Persians, in contrast with the more intelligible worship of Ormuzd, the beneficent one. But it was reserved for professing Christians to develop this abysmal wickedness to its utmost depth. The oriental sect of Gnostics, called the Ophites, <sup>148</sup> even went so far as to connect their adoration of the serpent with the observance of the

146. John 8:44.

147. Deane traces its origin from Babylon, whence it overspread the ancient world. {see also *The Bible Treasury*, 7:2}.

148. The Ophites, however, seem not to have dreaded but to have adored the serpent. A subdivision of them, -- for they had their divisions too! -- called the Cainites, had a peculiarly reversed way of reading the Bible; Cain and Judas were good men; Moses and Paul bad men &c. Yet these people flourished till the sixth century.

Eucharist; and that in a repulsive manner which I forbear describing . . .

There is another figure used of Satan in the lion <sup>149</sup> seeking whom he may devour. Here the prominent feature is violent destructiveness, as in the foregoing figure it is the crafty destructiveness. These two features always alternate and, so far as I can see, the violent hostility comes first, and, when this fails, the crafty one generally succeeds. Thus, in the beginning, he seems to have assailed the power of the Omnipotent, but was defeated . . . Then the tactics are changed and the specious deception of Eden succeeds -- for a time at least. In like manner (not to mention other dispensations) he assailed the church, first, as Peter describes, imprisoning, burning, crucifying; but when three hundred years of that left the church still triumphant, the methods are again altered. *Now* it is as

Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses {2 Tim. 3:8};

that is to say, by imitation and deception. The important thing to see is that it is the same opponent and hostility though under different forms. <sup>150</sup>

## *The Fall of Adam : Genesis 3:1-7*

### "IS IT EVEN SO, THAT GOD HAS SAID . . . ?"

**Questioning If God Really Said That.** The apostle Paul commented on what happened here (2 Cor. 11:3) as actually taking place. Considering that there is no indication of surprise on Eve's part that the serpent talked, here is something that can trigger speculative minds into action. Did God give us this for fodder for speculation? There is no indication, either, that Balaam gave an indication of surprise when he was rebuked by the ass he was riding on. <sup>151</sup> The apostle Peter had no difficulty with believing this happened (2 Pet. 2:6). FAITH, which comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), knows nothing by speculation of the human imagination.

We know by the Word of God that it was the Enemy of God and man that was speaking; the serpent was his instrument. <sup>152</sup> That the serpent itself was in a different condition before the fall is clear from the sentence on it, that "on thy

149. 1 Pet. 5:8.

150. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:93-95.

151. That the serpent was more crafty than any other animal is not grounds to suppose it was "a talking animal," i.e., having an inherent power of speech. There is no reason to suppose that Balaam's ass had an inherent power of speech. The serpent was the instrument of the Enemy of God and man.

152. See also Job 2:7; 1 Chron. 21:1; Zech. 3:1; Luke 10:18; 22:3, 31; John 8:44; 12:31; 13:27; 14:30; 16:11; Acts 5:3; Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 11:14; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 John 3:5, 12; 5:19; Rev. 12:9; 20:2, 7, 10.

belly shalt thou go” (Gen. 3:14). That *descent* does seem to reflect the *fall* -- which was down, while evolution says that man rose up; up from the slime, indeed from the “big bang.” And many call Gen. 1-3 myth! Why the “big bang” notion cannot even be called a myth with a moral lesson.

The approach to Eve was, then, not in over-powering angelic form, but through a creature over which Adam had dominion (Gen. 1:26). As his consort, and as *of* the man (1 Cor. 11:8 with Gen. 2:21-23), she was above all other earthly creatures also, except Adam her head.<sup>153</sup>

The use of the names of God in Scripture are of great significance, and in Gen. 1-3 we find the use of Elohim and of Jehovah Elohim. In ch. 1 Elohim is used regarding God’s activity in ordering the condition of the waste and empty earth for the habitation of man and the unfolding of His purpose in Christ to glorify Himself in the earthly and in the heavenly sphere. In chapter 2:4ff, Jehovah Elohim is used where man is taken up as in *relationship* to Him. In Gen. 3:1-7 the name Jehovah Elohim is not used. The Serpent only used Elohim:

and ensnares Eve into fatal forgetfulness of it, v. 3, in a section which everywhere else carefully maintains it: phraseology consistent with moral purpose, not at all so with an Elohist scribe, a Jehovist, a junior Elohist, a redactor, or any of the other fancied actors in the rationalistic farce. Scripture tells things simply as they were with the calm and simplicity of divine truth.<sup>154</sup>

The various use of the names of God is no proof of various documents being redacted or conflated, rather than being divinely inspired. Scripture is filled full of accuracies and the use of the divine names is in accordance with spiritual meaning.<sup>155</sup>

Yes, the woman followed suit. How well it is for us to ever keep the names

153. W. Kelly remarked:

Undoubtedly the man was first in being, the woman first in sin; yet another being mysteriously intrudes, not yet alluded to, but availing himself of a creature best adapted to his fell purpose . . .

Truly we may say, *An enemy, the enemy hath done this*. There is no allegory whatever, any more than in a dumb ass which, speaking with man’s voice, forbade the folly of the prophet. Here it was the great adversary of God and man, who employed the crafty serpent as the vehicle of his temptation. The great apostle of the Gentiles in 2 Cor. 11:3 has ruled in the Spirit that Gen. 3 presents the actual, no fable or myth, but a positive fact . . .

How then did he approach Adam? Through Eve, the weaker vessel {1 Pet. 3:7} (*The Bible Treasury*, 19:129, 130).

154. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:129, 130.

155. Concerning the fact that Ex. 6:3 does not mean that the name Jehovah was unknown before Moses’ time, see *The Bible Treasury*, 7:79, 80 and also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 6:114, 190 -- answers to critics of Scripture.

of *relationship* before us at all times and not slip away from them. The Enemy, however he was aware of what God had commanded Adam and Eve, questioned the Word of God. While it is true that in one sense God had said they were not to eat of every tree of the garden, that is not the form in which God had given the commandment.

| JEHOVAH ELOHIM   | SERPENT   | EVE   |
|--|---|---|
| Of every tree of the garden thou shalt freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die (Gen. 2:16, 17). | Is it even so, that God has said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Gen. 3:1). | We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, and ye shall not touch it, lest ye die (Gen. 3:2, 3) |

## *Satan the Father of Eisegesis.*

As W Kelly said of Satan’s question:

It was but a question, as if surprised, at most an insinuation . . . If He made and pronounced all very good, why keep back any? Is this love? Did Elohim really say this? Are you not mistaken? Distrust of God and His goodness was his first effort.<sup>156</sup>

Exegesis is supposed to be drawing out of the text. Eisegesis would be placing things into the text that are not really there.

“Wonderful things in the Bible I see,  
Things that are put there by you and by me.”

What W. Kelly remarked seems to me to be at the bottom of numbers of new views on Scripture that claim to be the result of exegesis -- things that set aside God’s instituted order for the sexes, for marriage, and for the womb. Even some so-called Evangelical exegetes and expositors have joined in Western society’s present behavior noted in Psalms 2:3.

## CONCEALING THE INFLUENCE OVER THE MIND

In the very first temptation, when Satan beguiled Eve through his subtlety, we get the main traits which mark every one of his great assaults on man. Here Satan came in the form of “the subtlest beast of the field which the Lord God had made” -- in the form of a serpent. Now the verb, “to use

156. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:129, 130.

enchancements,” is a cognate of the word for serpent, both being spelled alike, without points, (YGPJ) to which I may allude presently. I only adduce it now to show that Satan assumed the serpent form with the same intent that he would use enchantments -- in order to deceive -- and hence the Apostle comments on this deed, as “the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety,” and Eve says herself, “the Serpent beguiled me.” We need no more than this, to establish that the first great aim of Satan is, to conceal from man the power which is exerting its influence over his mind and conscience. And this is a most important discovery for me to make. Evil likes to accomplish its malicious designs without its origin being discovered; whereas good, like every thing divine, is always more confirmed by being traced to its origin. We may conclude, then, that Satan will always deceive man when he seeks to make his prey of him; and, therefore, if I cannot see distinctly the origin of the influence brought to bear on me, i.e., from whom it proceeds, I have need to beware and tread cautiously, lest I fall into the snare of the devil. Let us note this well. Satan’s first appearance in an assault is with deception and subtlety; the next (and from this, if I have spiritual sense I may discover my danger) is, that he always proposes to me something which will magnify myself; it matters not whether it be so morally or naturally, he seeks, in either case, to make self my object, and will use God’s name to lend a weight to his lie. In the case of Eve; he sought to make her disobey God by first asserting a lie, and then presenting the gain that would arise to her from acceding to his counsel; which is backed up by reference to God. Even though it be an evil insinuation, yet the appeal to God, in its very hardihood, often reaches the simple and inexperienced with the force of truth. Who, it might be said, would assert so openly, in the face of heaven, if he had not truth on his side? But this dogmatic effrontery is, in reality, diabolical profanity. Now, if I am spiritual, I immediately suspect any specious counsel addressed to me exclusively or primarily with reference to my own progress or advantage. The gospel, I may be told, presents to me pre-eminently my own advantage. True, but does it not connect me with God? And is it not in the setting forth therein of His grace and His glory that I find a place of everlasting *nearness* to Him? “Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” -- a message from the glory of God! Satan would occupy me about my own advantage, and my own ability too, to secure it. Having first deceived me as to the real source of the influence which addresses me, and having obtained a hearing, he presents to me how I may advance myself, and that in a line known to God; all scruple as to Divine restrictions being overborne in the God-known assurances of positive gain, and man’s own ability to attain and acquire it. When man yields thus to Satan, the same thoughts in principle pass through his mind as through Eve’s; there is a scrutiny and a conclusion, that great personal and self-elevating advantages will arise from the Tempter’s propositions. And then the fatal course is entered on. Adam and Eve are naked! They see too much! So much for the advancement they had derived from listening to Satan! They now see what they cannot remedy. God’s grace is always to keep before the soul of His people the remedy equal to the need. Adam, in having recourse to fig-leaves, makes a miserable effort,

considering his extensive natural information to remedy his need; and in skulking behind the trees of the garden presents a still more melancholy exhibition of resourcelessness and inadequacy to meet his case when he had to do with God.<sup>157</sup>

## *The Woman’s Parley with the Enemy and The Enemy’s Contradiction of Jehovah Elohim*

### EVE’S ADJUSTMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD

Her words, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden” (v. 2), omitted the word “freely.” Jehovah Elohim had stressed His liberality. But the goodness of God was not now strongly before her soul. Moreover, she spoke of “the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden,” whereas Jehovah Elohim had spoken of the tree of life in the midst of the garden.<sup>158</sup> Something erroneous was getting a place in the midst of her mind, so to speak. Her attentiveness to the Word of God was lapsing. Next, she added to the Word, by saying, “ye shall not touch it” (see Prov. 30:6). There is a progression here in a downward course. In Luke 8:18 we read, “Take heed how ye hear.” This refers to the moral state of soul in which we listen to the Word of God. And, finally, she mitigated the sentence for disobedience, saying, “lest ye die.” Jehovah Elohim did not say “lest,” but “thou shalt certainly die.”

Persons undermine God’s Word in the same way. They state things in a way that God did not say them. They add to His Word. Then they mitigate the force of God’s Word. Finally, they contradict it.

The Enemy accused God of withholding a blessing that man ought to have and did so on the ground that God would be envious. This was craftily implied in the way that he worded the question.

The Enemy quickly discerned the opening that Eve’s handling of the Word of God gave him. Now he would openly contradict God and impugn Jehovah Elohim’s authority and goodness:

How evident, from the mode of the enemy’s attack, that faith is the root and spring of all obedience in the creature, even in innocence, as well as that which receives the Savior and His great salvation when man has fallen! No wonder that such stress is laid on it as the fundamental principle of the Christian’s life, walk, endurance, and victory. Perfect confidence in God’s goodness would have assured our first parents, though they knew nothing of the reason for the prohibition, that it must be, and was, for their good and

157. *The Present Testimony*, 14: 22-23.

158. The reader may have noticed in the NT the place that the Lord Jesus has, in various situations, *in the midst*.

happiness. They would then have repelled the base insinuation against God's goodness, implied rather than expressed in the artful question, "Yea, hath God said? &c. How much more was contained in such an inquiry than appears on the surface!

His own pretended anxiety for their enjoyment; the insinuation that such a thing was too bad for God to have said; but if He had, what a foe to their happiness He must be, to grudge them so small a gratification? What could have met so poisoned a dart from Satan's quiver, but the perfect confidence which would have replied in the very words of the LORD God: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat" -- "such is our Creator's goodness; and, having made the one only exception to this, we can trust His goodness in this also -- that it is for our good." Faith would have noticed the "every" and the "freely" in Gen. 2:16; and such observation of the very words of the "Lord God" would again have strengthened faith, and led to the instant repelling of such thoughts as the enemy sought to suggest.

But Eve's first reply has two sad features: first, that God's very words did not constitute it; and, secondly, that the two {words} she omitted were such as show that the tempter's insinuation had already begun to take effect. Her answer betrays that already her thoughts of God's bounty are less vast and magnificent than the words had expressed. The thin edge of the wedge was already inserted. All the rest, alas! was easy. The threatening was all that now stood between her and the enjoyment she had alas! begun to covet. And even as to the threatening, the solemn words, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," have got diluted in Eve's lips to, "lest ye die." The heart set on a prohibited indulgence, the threatened punishment the only barrier, and even this viewed through a diminishing medium, how easily can Satan silence all remaining fears by the bold contradiction of God's word: "Ye shall not surely die!" To this, moreover, he now adds, what he had but insinuated before, that God has motives of His own for the prohibition. According to the enemy, it was to perpetuate their inferiority to Himself that God had forbidden them the fruit.<sup>159</sup>

J. N. Darby remarked:

Thus there were three things in which the devil desired that man should dishonor God; first, as to His grace; secondly, His truth; thirdly, the majesty of His Godhead.<sup>160</sup>

### THE SERPENT'S THREE-FOLD RESPONSE

The crafty one's ploy was to speak about what the pair would gain (by disobedience) while hiding the awful result (of disobedience). He gave a three-fold response to what the Woman said.

159. *The Bible Treasury*, 12:194; see also 19:145-146.

160. *Ibid.*, p. 309, note.

**1. Ye <sup>161</sup> Will Not Certainly Die.** The Enemy of God and man directly contradicted God. It was a certainty. "Thou shalt certainly die" (Gen. 2:17). Concerning the day in which Adam would die, it may mean that in the day He sinned the penalty would fall on him. It was many years later that Adam actually died, but his death was certain. And so, it is appointed unto man once to die (Heb. 9:27). See the refrain, "and he died," in Gen. 5. This was the result of God's government in this world. The issue of eternal matters is not raised here.

### **2. But God Knows That in the Day Ye Eat of It, Your Eyes Will Be Opened.**

He then said, rather than certainly dying, "Your eyes will be opened." That is, of course, a figure of speech regarding the knowledge that will be acquired. "I see" is often used as a figure of speech for understanding something. In a quotation above, the writer said, "What did they see?" They saw that they were in an estranged position from Jehovah Elohim.

The thrust is that God is withholding something good. And so distrust of God's goodness is in all mankind.

**3. And Ye Will Be as God, Knowing Good and Evil.** Moreover, you will be as Elohim in the knowledge to be gained. Yes, they obtained the knowledge of good and evil, but the evil seized on them, and characterized them, and exercised dominion over them. They did not hold the knowledge of good and evil in the same way as the Holy One does. God hates the evil (for "God is light") and does only good. Fallen man loves (moral) darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil (John 3:19).

It is true that Elohim is plural, but it was not meant that they would be as gods (plural). They had no knowledge concerning gods. The snare was to be like the Creator.

How different this is from what we read of One in the form of God:

... Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied Himself . . . becoming obedient even unto death, and [that the] death of [the] cross (Phil. 2:8).

Is it not clear that this stands in direct contrast to Adam who took the position of his wife? Is it not a diametrically opposed thing to what the second man, the Lord out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:47) did compared to the first man? Do you not think that it is meant by God that we contrast the first man and the second man?

Resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7).

**Satan's Masterpiece Is Yet to Come.** Just before Christ comes to smite the nations and take His power of the coming kingdom, the Man of Sin will appear, who will

161. "Ye" refers to both the woman and her husband. However, that is no basis on which to assert that Adam was standing by listening to the conversation.



“sit down in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2:4). The apostates of Christendom and of Judaism will be sent a judicial working of error, from God, to believe what is false (2 Thess. 2:11).

A man-god was Satan’s bait and man’s ruin. The God-man dying in obedience and for redemption is the triumph of truth and grace.<sup>162</sup>

## *The Woman Taken in the Three-fold Snare; and The Man Follows the Woman*

### DISTRUSTING GOD

Eve began to lust for the fruit that would make her as God, knowing good and evil. Oh, to have what God withheld! Oh, to be God-like! She knew better what was good for her than her Creator Himself did. Thus, obedience and trust in the goodness of God was set aside. Such is the deceitfulness of sin. Distrust of God’s goodness is now in the soul of all, even the Christian, for it is implanted there by the acquisition of “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) which entered the soul in the fall.

Verse 6. What a contradiction here to the One who judged not “after the sight of his eyes,” or “the hearing of his ears,” and what an answer to the infidelity which prefers “sight,” or what men call “demonstration,” to faith in God’s word. She saw through the medium Satan had interposed, and what she saw was neither more nor less than three enormous lies. God had said, by prohibiting the tree, that it was not good for food: she saw that it was. Had God retained His place in her heart, she could not have found pleasure to her eyes in that which He had forbidden, but she saw “that it was pleasant to the eyes.” Believing Satan rather than God, she saw, moreover, that “it was a tree to be desired to make one wise.” “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” {1 John}, having thus entered, the act of disobedience was all that remained, and soon, alas! she took, ate, gave to her husband, and he also ate.

We have divine authority for believing that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman” (1 Tim. 2:14). Hence learn:

1. The wisdom of God in making the man the head of the woman.
2. Satan’s craft in addressing himself to the weaker vessel.
3. The evil and misery which flow from practical disregard of God’s arrangement. It was evidently Eve’s place to have referred the serpent to Adam, or to have herself referred to him the representations falsely made to her by the serpent; and how evident, as Adam was not deceived, that the tempter would in this way have been foiled.
4. God’s claim ought to have been, with Adam, superior to that of

conjugal affection, whether the latter led him to choose, with his eyes open, to sin, and perish with his wife, or whether it was in some other way that it operated.

5. How solemnly does the whole illustrate and enforce the subjection due from the church to Christ (Eph. 5), as well as the chosen symbol of this in the actual and willing subjection of the wife to her husband!

It has often been said, and still oftener thought, that the act of our first parents in thus eating of the forbidden fruit was a trivial act, when compared with the consequences it involved. Nothing can be more absurd than such a thought. The occasion afforded them of obeying or disobeying was certainly in itself, viewed apart from God’s command, a trivial one. But not only did it cease to be a trifle, when it had become the subject of a divine command, and a test of man’s obedience, but the more trivial in itself the prohibited act, the more fearful and manifest the guilt of disobedience. The man who would be a traitor for a toy would be justly held more culpable than one whose inducement to revolt was the anticipated possession of a kingdom. If it were a small matter to eat the fruit of any particular tree, it was surely a small matter to abstain therefrom. But, for the sake of so confessedly small a matter, to disobey God’s command, was not a trifle, but an act of gravest significance and deepest guilt. Consider the elements which are combined in such an act -- which were combined in this. Distrust of their Creator’s goodness; the denial of His veracity; ingratitude for all the bounties He had bestowed upon them, and all the favors He had shown them; contempt of all the blessedness involved in His continued favors, along with the hardihood which dared Him to fulfil the threatening He had denounced. These, as well as the trampling under foot authority, the aspiring to equality with Him, and the preferring Satan as their friend and counselor to the God who had given them existence, with all that made that existence a blessing, were some of the chief moral elements involved in the act which has been deemed so trivial by their fallen and corrupted offspring.<sup>163</sup>

There are three stages to take note of: we have just considered *distrust* of God; the next step that we will consider is *lust*; and after that the overt act of *disobedience*.

### HER VIEW OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

In 1 John 2:16 we read:

... all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

These are the three features of sin that motivate the sinner, perhaps one of them more prominently. It was through Adam that sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12) and we see all three of these things at work in Gen. 3:6 and in the very order of 1 John 2:16:

162. W. Kelly, *In the Beginning and the Adamic Earth*, p. 105.

163. *The Bible Treasury*, 12:195, 196.

1. “and the woman saw that the tree was good for food”;  
-- the body -- the flesh -- comfort --
2. “and that it was a pleasure for the eyes”;  
-- the soul -- the world -- acceptance --
3. “and the tree was to be desired to give intelligence.”  
-- the spirit -- <sup>164</sup> the devil -- pride --

Lust was now at work in her soul and it broke out into open disobedience. See James 1:13-15, keeping in mind that lust is itself sin in its principle, i.e., in its root within us -- “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3) working within -- that breaks out into open sin in an act, and produces death.

Examination of the testing of the Lord Jesus in the wilderness (a far different situation than the garden in Eden) will show that the three temptations are of this character. He overcame by the Word of God. The three excuses made in Luke 14:18-20 to not accept God’s invitation also have this character. These three excuses show how everyday, normal things are used to set aside the will of God. Why, the first two persons were even polite: “I pray thee hold me for excused”; while the third did not say so -- and he could have brought his wife along. God instituted marriage and he used marriage to peremptorily refuse God’s invitation! Let us beware of the working of such things in our souls, for we do indeed have within us “sin in the flesh.” The apostle John has warned us:

And the world is passing, and its lust, but he that does the will of God abides for eternity (1 John 2:17).

## *Adam Eats Of The Fruit*

**Adam Was Not Deceived.** W. Kelly observed:

She “gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” Mankind was now fallen. Cleverly had Satan planned his temptation. He addressed himself to the weaker vessel, and deceived her as we have seen. He left it to the woman to draw the man into her error; and we are told by authority beyond appeal, by the apostle Paul, that “Adam was not deceived.” This is characteristic. The woman was deceived, not the man. So says the Holy Spirit in the Epistle {1 Tim. 2:14}. We perhaps might have failed so to infer from the ancient record, but feel none the less assured that the difference is true and important, as appears from the application of it to Timothy. The man

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164. Man is tripartite, spite of what dichotomists say:

Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly: and your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23).

Notice the reverse order (spirit, soul, body) from the account in Gen. 3. See also Heb. 4:12.

without being deceived was entangled by his affection, and shared her transgression to universal ruin. Affection is an excellent bond and a great support when it works in God’s order. But here all was out of course. The woman acted first in weak but known opposition to the divine word, and also, as compared with her husband, was not subject to him as became her. He followed, instead of directing her, in too bold disobedience, and so must share the punishment she had incurred. God was not in his thoughts. Satan triumphed for the while, always doomed to defeat in the end. <sup>165</sup>

Indeed, the woman was deceived and Adam went into it without being deceived. But he was enticed by his wife, his woman. She enticed him. She was doing the serpent’s will. How many women since then have practiced enticement on their husbands to lead them into disobedience of God? I was once told that it is true that man is the head, but woman is the neck and turns the man. Is that the relationship of the man and the woman as God instituted the relationship? -- and as it points to Christ and the assembly (Eph. 5:22-33)? Try to work that “neck” notion into Eph. 5:22-33. The “neck” notion is rather found in the sinful enticement of Adam.

**The Free Moral Agent Became the Bound Moral Agent.** Before the fall Adam had free will. That is not to say that God offered him a choice, as if God offers anyone the right to disobey. Here in the most favorable circumstances, with only one prohibition, free will in man was put to the test. Man chose to disobey and in doing so acquired what Rom. 8:3 calls “sin in the flesh.” This is what we call the old nature. This brought man into a state of dominion of sin (Rom. 6). The old nature within controls the will, as so powerful is this control that we read in Rom. 8:7, 8:

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be; and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

“Neither indeed can” are words stating *inability*, but inability is disbelieved by many professed Christians. The 4000 years of the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable does not convince them.

He that’s persuaded against his will,  
Is of the same opinion still.

Thus books are filled with arguments attempting to prove that man in his fallen state still has free will and can choose to please by free will to obey God. But God must implant a new nature into the soul, a nature that acts on the will to please Him:

According to his own will begat he us by the word of truth . . . (James 1:18). <sup>166</sup>

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165. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:161, 162.

166. See my, *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Men*, where these things are considered (continued...)

## BEING FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST

He that is faithful in the least is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in the least is unrighteous also in much (Luke 16:10).

Here is a moral test for our souls. The “little” things are an indicator of what is going on in the soul. Luke 16:10 is contrary to the natural thought.

Gen. 1:26 had “the whole earth” in view, but God set Adam in a garden within Eden. It was ‘little’ compared with the whole earth, and it was just there that Adam fell. Is there nothing to be learned from this and our Lord’s words in Luke 16:10?

The ‘little’ thing of being forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the assertion of God’s rights to be obeyed. God is to be obeyed in the ‘little’ things! They are not so little as we imagine. The first man was, then, unfaithful in the little thing (though obedience to God is not a little thing) and when Christ came, which was a very large matter, the first man cast Him out. Unfaithful in a little thing, he was unfaithful in such a large thing.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was not the environment that caused sinful behavior, nor was it society, nor anything else that disobedience to God.

## *The Change in Adam’s and Eve’s State*

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Gen. 3:7).

### THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

The fruit eaten had no intrinsic power over the moral faculties. It was *the act of disobedience* that was the spring of their new-found knowledge of good and evil. The acquisition of this knowledge opened their eyes. What did they see? Surely they saw more than merely physical nakedness, though they saw that also. How different in result was this from the case of the two discouraged saints on their way to Emmaus. The stranger that had walked with them was constrained to sup with them:

And it came to pass as he was at table with them, having taken the bread, he blessed, and having broken it, gave it to them. And their eyes were opened,

166. (...continued)

in detail. A companion volume is *The Work of Christ on the Cross*. These two books address the Calvinistic-Arminian controversy and present a dispensational understanding as J. N. Darby taught dispensational truth.

and they recognized him (Luke 24:30, 31).<sup>167</sup>

Who but our beloved Lord Jesus was so gracious? When He opens eyes it is really for seeing Him, not our own wretchedness as in Adam’s and Eve’s case, though the more we learn of Him the more we see how wretched man’s lost condition is.

## THEY KNEW THEY WERE NAKED

Concerning the change that took place in Adam consequent upon his act of disobedience, God said:

Man is become as one of us, to know good and evil (Gen. 3:22).<sup>168</sup>

Clearly, Adam was not created with the knowledge of the distinction of good and evil.<sup>169</sup> The acquisition of this knowledge also resulted in him acquiring what Rom 8:3 calls “sin in the flesh” which all the children of Adam have. When we speak of the old nature in man we are speaking of “sin in the flesh,” a disposition to sinning, a disposition in his soul that characterizes fallen man, that controls his will in opposition to God. In the point of view concerning man’s condition before God given in Eph. 2, man is spiritually dead before God and in need of the divinely initiated action of quickening. See also John 5. With sinning, Adam had died in that sense though such things were brought to light in the gospel. However, God communicated to Adam a new, spiritual life, concerning the soul -- but there was another consequence, for Adam’s body must eventually die and he must be expelled from Eden. He brought death into the world of man by sinning.<sup>170</sup>

... by one man<sup>171</sup> sin entered into the world and death by sin (Rom. 5:12).

167. It has been suggested that as He reached the broken bread to them with His nail-pierced hands, they saw the nail-prints! Pause; does not this say more to us?

168. Concerning the knowledge of good and evil, and conscience, see *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 22:365-367.

169. I suggest that it is erroneous to think that Adam had the knowledge of good as created and acquired the knowledge of evil in the fall. Good and evil are correlative terms. It is the knowledge of the distinction of good and evil that Adam now had in himself. As created, he was innocent, and by this we mean that he did not have the knowledge of good and evil. I suspect that the idea that he knew good as created is coupled with the erroneous notion that Adam was holy and/or righteous as created.

170. Since Cain killed Abel, we see that physical death did not first occur in the world when Adam physically died.

171. The apostle Paul did not regard Gen. 3 as “myth.” See also Rom. 5:14, 15.

It is evident from the pair's behavior when they heard the voice of God that they had acquired a conscience, <sup>174</sup> a bad conscience, for they had *no conscience in innocency*. Fig leaves in Scripture typically signify profession; <sup>175</sup> they had realized that they were naked and sought their own device to hide it; but hearing His voice they realized God saw through them (cp. Heb. 4:12, 13). They stood before him in spiritual nakedness, with a bad conscience. Such will be the condition of all who stand before the great white throne as Christ looks at them in judgment. <sup>176</sup>

172. This text is speaking about the world of which Adam was the appointed head, not about any life that may have preceded the Adamic earth before Gen. 1:2, with which he had nothing to do.

Concerning mankind, Scripture speaks of Adam as the first man, and does so in contrast to Christ, the second Man (1 Cor. 15:45, 46). There were no pre-Adamite men.

173. "And he died" is a characteristic phrase in the chronology in Gen. 5.

174. Dave Hunt, who appears to be a four-point-Arminian Scofieldian, wrote that any person has a conscience in which God has written His moral law (Rom. 2:14-16) . . .

(*The Berean Call*, Jan. 2005, p. 3).

Rom. 2:14-16 says no such thing. The "work of the law" is conviction of sin, and it is possible to have a conviction of sin apart from law, though that is the work of the law. "The work of the law written in their hearts" is the conviction of sin, and the conscience bears witness -- to what? that they are guilty or not. The passage clearly states of the Gentiles "which have no law" and "having no law." To say, 'Oh, but they have it written by God in their conscience' means that they *do* have the law in some form. But if the moral law was written in sinners' consciences, when did that first happen, and how did it happen?

175. The fig tree that the Lord cursed (the only thing He cursed) was a picture of fruitless Israel. The tree had leaves, which means figs should have been present. That is representative of profession without fruit.

176. Concerning physical nakedness, it is only in the innocent state that the Word of God speaks of it without attaching shame to it. "The shame of thy nakedness" (Rev. 3:18) uses nakedness figuratively; and what is figurative has a literalness underlying it. Cp. Nah. 3:5. One has but to look in a concordance under "naked" and "nakedness" to see how these words are used in Scripture and what God thinks of it. Professed Christian women in the West, with the consent of their husbands, follow the world in its skimpy dress. A 'principle' has been generated to even cast a holy aura on it: 'Christian women should not dress so as to look different.' Dressing for the purpose of being different is an entirely different thing from dressing this way:

. . . whose adorning let it not be that outward one of tressing of hair, and wearing gold, or putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible [ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. For thus the holy women who have hoped in God heretofore adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands . . . (1 Pet. 3:4:6).

In like manner also that the women in decent deportment and dress adorn themselves with modesty and discretion . . . (1 Tim. 2:9).

The answer to the kind of dress, or rather undress, appropriate to certain places indicates that the Christian does not belong there. In case you do not understand the thrust of this, allow me to ask if you seriously think that you ought to go swimming at a nudist beach? You say *no*? But you think

(continued...)

It is clear from the character of God's providing a covering for the pair that something deeper than mere physical nakedness is meant. The fig-leaf aprons could have taken care of mere physical covering. Speaking of the resurrection of the just, Scripture says:

. . . if indeed being also clothed, we shall not be found naked (2 Cor. 5:3).

A believer already has the garment of salvation (Isa. 61:10). For such, 2 Cor. 5:3 means that his mortal will be swallowed up in life (2 Cor. 3:4) at the resurrection of the just (or by rapture of the living), i.e., at the resurrection of life. The unbeliever will be raised in the resurrection of the unjust, and though he will then have a never-dying body, he yet remains naked. He has no eternal garment of salvation, nor does the resurrection of judgment cloth him in the sense of 2 Cor. 5:3.

### RECOURSE TO THE FIG TREE

Their new-found knowledge is accompanied by inventiveness. There was no change in the bodies of Adam and Eve apparent to the eye (though, of course, death was now at work within them). They looked as before and there were only animals there. But they had acquired a *new awareness* and a *bad conscience*, and with that a desire for *concealment*. Thus we hide from one another and from God. The fig-leaf aprons were a sign of hypocrisy -- two-facedness. We do not want others to know the secret chamber of our souls and the soul is locked in its own hiddenness and loneliness. It will be the unbeliever's awful, eternal portion.

Adam and Eve's fig-leaf religion (the first invention in Scripture), the result of *the work of their hands*, comes out in Cain in the form of an offering to Jehovah from the cursed ground, *the work of his hands*. All of man's religions are works-religions. It is an attempt at what is really a useless palliative for a bad conscience. <sup>177</sup>

Above it was noted that the fig leaves were a sign of hypocrisy in Adam and Eve. In John 8:2-12, the hypocritical scribes and the Pharisees, wearing the fig leaves, so to speak, came to the Lord in an attempt to either manipulate Him to contradict the law of Moses or to show Him as no different from themselves. His addressing their bad consciences revealed their spiritual nakedness, manifested in leaving that place where He was.

176. (...continued)

a bikini swimsuit (which is no suit) is alright? You retort, But where do you draw the line? Such a question betrays a state of soul that appears not to be seeking to please Him Who never pleased Himself.

Rom. 1:21-32 describes the condition when the gospel came, as well as the true condition of the moralist (Rom. 2:1-16), and of the Jew (Rom. 2:17-29).

177. Concerning conscience, see "*Conscience*" in *Subject Index to J. N. Darby's Writings*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

We would do well to consider the question, “where are you,” as addressing their consciences regarding their newly acquired fallen state. They were afraid now of their Creator. And he asks, “what have you done?” for all must be manifested in His presence. With sin having entered the world, blame-passing begins.

Before examining Adam’s excuses, and the discipline under which he was brought by God, let us consider some thoughts on morality, will, freedom of choice, and man’s sinful condition, as connected with Adam’s fall. J. N. Darby wrote:

I am not questioning the door being freely open and the blood on the mercy-seat, but this is the final proof that man will not come, when he can as regards God, and God has proved that NO motives suffice to induce him: he must be born again wholly afresh. The history of scripture is of God’s using all means and motives, the result being, the rejection of His Son and judgment. The case of Adam was somewhat different, because lust and self-will were not yet there: man was not captive to a law of sin in his members; sin was not there, nor was deliverance required; he was with God in innocence. Clearly God put no restraint on him to leave Him and disobey: his obedience was tested; it was not a question of coming to God when already evil: the prohibition was a pure test of obedience, and the act innocent if it had not been forbidden. There was as yet no conscience in the sense of knowing the difference of good and evil for oneself; he had only to stay where he was and not disobey. There was nothing in him, nor, I need not say, in God, to hinder him; in this he was free: his fall proved that not the creature was bad, but if left to himself could not stand firm. But in this state, so far from choice, and freedom of choice being what he had to do to go right, the moment there was choice and will there was sin. Obedience simply was my place; if a question arose whether he should obey, sin was there. Choice is not obedience. The moment he felt free to choose, he had left the place of simple obedience. Think of a child who takes the ground of being free to choose whether he shall obey, even if he chooses right. I deny that morality depends on freedom of choice. Man was created in a given relationship with God; morality consisted in walking in that relationship. But that relationship was obedience. There he could have continued simple and happy, and not set himself free from God. This is what Christ did. He came to do God’s will, took the form of a servant. Satan in the temptation in the wilderness sought to get Him to leave this to be free and do His will; only in eating when He was hungry. What harm was there in that? It was freedom and His own will: and its answer is, that man shall live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. There was no movement in His heart or will but from or by the will of God; and that is perfection. Not a rule checking self-will, which we, alas, often need, but God’s will the motive of our action -- of the action of our will. That is what is called in scripture the obedience of Christ to which we are sanctified. Man has in one sense made himself free, but it is free from God, and thus is in moral apostasy and the slave of sin. From this Christ wholly delivers, and sanctifies us to obedience, having borne the penalty of the fruits of our free will. How came I to have

to choose? If I have, I have no good yet, and what is to make me choose it?

They confound too, conscience as to good and evil, with will. Man acquired this by the fall, and it is thus exercised in a state of alienation from God in the unconverted; and will is a distinct thing. In the flesh it is enmity against God, lust and lawlessness, and, if the law comes, transgression. If even I have the Spirit of God, it lusts against it. It is expressed by the heathen in saying, I see better things and approve them, I follow the worse. There is conscience and lust governing will. If all this be so, man was perfectly at liberty as to what he might do as put to the test, but the exercise of will or choosing was just sin, obedience being his place with God. He was created in good, and had it not to choose; now he loves sin and his own will, and has to be delivered from it.<sup>178</sup>

Let us continue with this deeply instructive line a little longer and consider the workings of the result of the fall, namely, “sin in the flesh,” i.e., the old nature, in ourselves:

The principle which is called the “flesh,” or “old man,” is produced at once, and at once begins to work. Confidence in one another is immediately lost. Innocence had needed nothing; but guilt is necessarily shame, and must get some kind of covering. Every man to this hour carries in him what he cannot comfortably and confidently let out; even to his fellow-creature. Restraint has taken the place of freedom, and artifices come to the relief of guilt and shame. So is it now; and so was it in that hour when the flesh was generated.

More deeply still does it retire from God. Men can bear each other’s presence under the dressing of form and ceremony, and the common understanding of the common guilty nature; but they cannot bear God’s presence. Though he had the apron of fig-leaves, when His voice is heard, Adam retreats under the trees of the garden. This is the flesh, or the old guilty nature, to this day. God is intolerable. The thought of being alone, or immediately with Him, is more than the conscience can possibly stand. All its contrivances are vain. God is too much for the flesh. It secretly whispers and lays all the mischief on God Himself, but it cannot come forth and tell Him so. Out of its own mouth it is judged.

These are its simplest, earliest, energies: we are hateful and hating, and we are at enmity against God.

But the working of this same principle (thus produced in Adam through the lie of the Serpent) is manifested in other ways afterwards in Cain. “Cain was of that wicked one.” He becomes a tiller of the ground. But he tills, not as subject to the penalty, but as one that would get something desirable out of the ground, though the Lord had cursed it; something for himself, independent of God.

This is a great difference. Nothing is more godly, more according to the divine mind, concerning us, than to eat our bread by the sweat of our face, to get food and raiment by hard and honest toil. It is a beautiful accepting of

178. *Letters*, 2:166-168.

the punishment of our sin, and a bowing to the righteous thoughts of God. But to get out of the materials of the cursed ground what is to minister to our delight, our honor, and our wealth, in forgetfulness of sin and of the judgment of God, is but perpetuating our apostasy and rebellion.

Such was Cain's tillage. And accordingly it ended in his building a city, and furnishing it with all that promised him pleasure, or advanced him in the world. This he seeks after -- and seeks after with greediness, though he must find it all in the land of Nod, in the regions of one who had left the presence of God.

He had his religion withal. He brings of the fruit of the earth that he was tilling, to God. That is, he would fain have his enjoyment of the world sanctioned of God. If he could command it, he would keep God on terms with him, though he was making the very ground which he had cursed the occasion of his enjoyments. This is very natural, and practiced by our hearts to this hour. Cain desired to link the Lord with himself in his worldliness and love of present things, that he may keep conscience quiet. But the Lord refuses, as he does to this day; though as we have said the heart to this day would fain make the same efforts, and get its worldliness and love of present things sanctioned and shared by Jesus, that conscience may not interfere with the pursuits of lust.

What ways of the flesh or of "the old man" are here? All this is the very thing that is abroad in the world to this hour. It is the working of that apostate principle which was generated by the lie of the Serpent in the soul of Adam. And being of the wicked one Cain "slew his brother." He had religion, as we have seen ; but he hated and persecuted the truth; just as to this day. Look at the same thing in Saul of Tarsus, as he gives you the account of it himself in Acts 26. Look at it in the person of the Pharisees set against the Lord. Look at it in the history of Christendom all down its generations to the present hour.

This is the enmity of the seed of the Serpent to the Seed of the woman. "Cain was of that wicked One and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." This was the cause. It was the enmity of sin to godliness, the enmity of the carnal mind against God, the lusting of the old man, the lusting of flesh against Spirit; it was the hatred of the world to Christ, because he testified of it, that "the works thereof were evil." It does not always wear such garments stained with blood; but it is always in the heart, "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

Such is the flesh, the old nature, in the history of its production, and in the course and character of its workings. It is exactly now what it was then. It rules "the course of this world" under Satan, but it is found also in each of us, if provision be made for it. But we are to know it -- to know it whence it came, and how it works, and to mortify it in its principle and in its acts, in

all its proper native energies which so continually beset the soul.<sup>179</sup>

As fallen, Adam was still Adam, having human nature as before, but in addition to human nature he had that working of evil in the soul which we refer to as the old nature. To be born anew (John 3) the Lord describes as a birth (John 3). The new birth does not mean an amelioration of, or modification of, or a lessening of, the character or force of, the old nature, i.e., of "sin in the flesh." It does not mean that there is an infusion of some holiness into "sin in the flesh," i.e., into the old nature. The new birth is not a change in the old nature. The old and new natures remain fixed in their respective characters. So we speak of the two natures, referring to "sin in the flesh" and to the new nature implanted<sup>180</sup> within us by the Spirit's action using the Word of God; but we need to keep in mind that human nature remains, and is acted on by the old and new nature.

Fallen man's moral condition is that he is in conflict with God. Eph. 2:2, 3 describe the condition from the point of view that man is spiritually dead toward God. In Romans, man is viewed as alive in sins and under the dominion of "sin in the flesh."

179. *The Bible Treasury*, 15:145, 146.

180. James 1:18, and other texts, attribute the implantation of the new nature to the sovereign act of God. For more about this, see my *The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of Lost Man*.

## Chapter 6

### *The New State of the Man and the Woman Manifested,*

**Genesis 3:8-13**

#### *Hiding From God*

If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom . . . ( Job 31:33).

Even darkness hideth not from thee, and the night shineth as the day: the darkness is as the light (Psa. 139:12).

#### **OCCUPIED MORE WITH THE SHAME OF SIN, THAN THE GUILT**

Jehovah Elohim came in the cool of the day to visit Adam and Eve. He did not dwell there. He visited various ones at various times but did not dwell. When redemption *in type* was accomplished, Jehovah dwelt among His people, giving the visible sign of the Shekinah, the cloud that marked His presence. God now dwells in the holy temple, a habitation of God in [the] Spirit (Eph. 2:21, 22). This will be distinctive of the assembly eternally (Eph. 3:21). Concerning the eternal state, the assembly, the tabernacle of God will be with men and so God will be with them (Rev. 21:2, 3).

With the knowledge of good and evil came a conscience, and they knew that communion with God was broken and that they were naked. So here we have another “first,” an attempt to hide from God. This is characteristic of all their descendants, and calls forth such Scriptures as Heb. 4:12, 13. In their case it took the form of hiding among natural things that God had created. Yes, even “in the midst” of it. We cannot hide from God in nature nor is God found in nature though nature is evidence of

his eternal power and divinity, – so as to render them inexcusable (Rom. 1:20).

In Cain’s case hiding was in the form of the false offering he brought (Gen. 4:3), called in Jude 11 “the way of Cain.” “Cain was of the wicked one” -- seed of the serpent -- and his offering? -- “his works were wicked.” Such are all religions of works; and such hate the grace of God’s sovereign acceptance of the substitutionary sacrifice that accounts the offerer’s works of substitutionary offerings *righteous* as Abel’s was (see 1 John 3:12). Cain’s religion is a form of approach to God while hiding oneself from Him; a refusal to acknowledge the naked position. The lost will spend eternity in nakedness as well as in much else. How good it is to be clothed with the garments of salvation (Isa. 63:10) and to have the best robe (Luke 15:22). Think of that one who came to the wedding

without a wedding garment (Matt. 22:11-12) -- provided by the One Who provides the wedding feast. Awful end -- horrible!

God has said:

. . . there is no one that seeks after God (Rom. 3:11).

This began with the first sinners in the earth. The fact is that it is God who seeks the sinner and we find the first seeking by God in Eden.

Regarding shame, guilt, and bad conscience:

Here we find conscience at work, not conscience towards God, but that of shame, the conscience that drove out the accusers of the adulterous woman (John 8). The guilty pair have the sense of the shame of their nakedness, and they seek to hide it the one from the other. The divine work in enlightening the conscience gives a man to see the guilt of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of sin; but sin has its shame as well as its guilt, and the natural conscience always seek to hide the shame of its sin with some fig-leaf covering.

This is no proof of conversion; it is only the main proof that man has got into a bad conscience, and cannot get out of it. Adam and Eve dare not look at each other, nor yet to God. They cannot bear the condition they have got into, and they cannot change it, therefore they hide it. But do not mistake this for repentance. Shame merely drives them to hide from, and excuse themselves to, God. And so with ourselves: as long as the shame of sin continues, we try to hide it, to get away from it; but it only drives us farther and farther from God. It is not a divinely-taught conscience, because we are more concerned about the shame before men than the sinfulness before God. Until God has the place which man now occupies in our hearts, there is no conversion: the soul is not looking to God. We may be able to reason about the tender love and grace of God, but our sense of the guilt of sin should ever be deeper than that of its shame. When the conscience is before God, guilt brings sorrow; and yet we can as sinners reckon upon the love and the kindness of God.<sup>181</sup>

### *Two Questions That Expose the State*

Of the two questions that God asked Adam the deeper question has to do with the new state of Adam as a result of the fall. We certainly are not meant to assume that because God called to Adam asking where He was that God did not know where he was. We need to look at the two questions as morally directed to the soul. Certainly it is true that the question, “Where art thou?” teaches us that there is no hiding place from God that the workers of unrighteousness can find, neither in location -- behind the trees, behind things the God Himself has created -- nor under aprons of fig leaves -- inventions of men to cover themselves from being viewed by man or by God.<sup>182</sup> “Thou God seest me” (Gen.

181. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 12:311.

182. All of man’s righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Here is the source of works-religion; (continued...)

16:13). All is naked and opened before Him with Whom we have to do (Heb. 4:13). J. N. Darby pressed the moral import of the question concerning where Adam was:

... I have sometimes said, when they have talked about the race damned for eating of the tree, that it is not God shutting man out for an apple {a fruit}, but that man shut out God for an apple. His heart was separated from God, and then he got lusts and self-will instead of subjection. Then follows the judicial part, "Where art thou?" -- where? that is, as to my state (not what? a question of my deeds), though men are judged according to their works {Rev. 20:12}. When there is spiritual intelligence in me, the first thing that strikes my conscience is my deeds. Ordinary evangelization takes up what man has done; but this alone never sets one clear with God. A soul still has to learn another thing, and that is where he is; that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing {Rom. 7:18}. But the preacher who dwells on this does not reach the consciences of people. If I take the "What hast thou done?" and the "Where art thou?" then I have all. From this point of view men as men are alike bad, and the prodigal son was as great a sinner when he just crossed his father's threshold as when he was eating the swine's husks, because he had from the first turned his back upon his father. Nor is the work done in a soul, until it finds out how bad it is in itself, the tree bad, the root bad, itself away from God. My works refer on to the day of judgment; but by what I am I am lost already.

Both are perfectly true of every man. It is works rather in Adam's breaking the law, and still more distinctly in Cain, in whom it is sin against a neighbor or a brother. Adam sins against God. Cain's terrible act brings the inquiry, "What hast thou done?" But the what or where we are is a great deal deeper in the testimony of the thing than what we have done.

Nothing is more important than to have these two clear before the mind. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." This is not what I have done. "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin" {Rom. 5:12}: this, too, is not what we have done; but we "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" {Rom. 3:23}, this is what we have done, that is, it is sins.

The right translation of Rom. 5:12 is, "for that all have sinned," not "in whom."<sup>183</sup>

Before passing on, we should note another recorded 'first' in Scripture. Adam said, "I feared." This is the first fright -- and was brought in through sin.

182. (...continued)

and it was expressed in Cain's offering of the fruit of the cursed ground (Gen. 4:3-7). Cain slew Abel because his own works were evil (1 John 3:12). Works-religion is evil because it is the expression of sin, of rebellion against God.

183. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:70, 71.

## Passing the Blame Began in Eden

### SELF-JUSTIFICATION BEGINS

W. Kelly remarked:

They had believed Satan, they had forgotten and rebelled against God. In both the sin was aggravated. The man was bound to lead the woman aright, not to follow her in disobedience; the woman was not to direct but obey her husband, instead of inducing him from natural affection to join her transgression against the Lord God Who had blessed and warned them. Nor as yet was there repentance toward God. They were convicted and compelled to own their respective acts of sin; but there was no true self-judgment, no grief at their dishonor of God, no horror at the evil and their own guilt. On the contrary, there was the self-justification that proves the spirit unbroken, and the shiftings of the blame one on another, and even on God Himself.

Indeed the man was bold, instead of abasing himself as inexcusably wrong; for he not only put forward the woman as his excuse, but dared virtually to upbraid Him Who had in His goodness given her to be his counterpart. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." And when Jehovah Elohim asked the woman, What is this thou hast done? her answer was, Not I have sinned, or I am guilty but "The serpent deceived me, and I did eat." Thus our excuses only make bad worse, and God cannot but righteously deal with pleas so vain and unworthy, which show that unrepented sin is apt to eat as doth a gangrene, and is truly ungodliness.<sup>184</sup>

At bottom, the words "I did eat" confess the guilt, and that was all they really needed to say. But 'extenuating circumstances' are brought forward to mitigate the guilt. How like that we are.

### ADAM BLAMED GOD

Our hearts are quite capable of giving voice to the brazen effrontery that Adam showed when he said:

The woman whom thou hast given [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate (Gen. 3:12).

Why did he not merely say, 'The woman gave me of the tree, and I ate'? Did he think Jehovah Elohim forgot that He gave the woman to be with him? No, rather: 'You, Jehovah Elohim, are to blame for this because you are the One that gave that woman to be with me. Why, if You had not done so, I would not have sinned. It is your fault.' The craftiness of the serpent is evident in this reply! How politic. Wonder what Eve thought as she heard her husband speak this way about Jehovah Elohim and about herself?

184. *The Bible Treasury*, 19:194.



But it is contempt of his Creator to so speak! -- making it appear as if the Creator was the sinner -- or, at least a mitigating circumstance, whereas it was rebellion against the Word of God. The essence of sin is in moral departure from obedience. It is to have a will of one's own. First and foremost, an offense against God, its fruit is seen in social conflicts of every kind.

Moreover, it is distrust of God for the future, for Adam knew that his wife had disobeyed, and she would die, and he would lose her. What then?

Oh, the wickedness of fallen man. We had better be aware of our own propensities. This sinful blaming is rampant everywhere. Why, the guilty charge others with their very own sin. They reverse the matter. No, it is not I, but the other person. And if blaming others is not sufficient, blame God! <sup>185</sup> It was really sinful for Adam to blame God. It is from this fountain that there has issued such a question during World War Two as: if there is a God, why does He not stop the war? or, if there is a God, why is the world in such a mess? And so some men seeking to escape the reality of their own sinful condition will say that since evil exists (not referring to their own evil), if God is love then He cannot be omnipotent, because otherwise He would stop the evil. If He is omnipotent, and He does not stop the evil, then He cannot be love. It is not in their mind that if God acted against evil, He would begin with them! At bottom, they want to do away with God and be autonomous.

Under Psychology, however, the effort is to get rid of guilt feelings, and to change sin into 'normalcy.' See Rom. 1:21-32. Into this condition came the light of the gospel and Christianity spread. Today we live at the other end of the Christian epoch and the condition of 2 Tim. 3:1-9 prevails. As Satan had his way with Eve, so in Christendom he has transformed himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), while the haters of Christianity work in parallel. Moral darkness is loved rather than light because men's works are evil (John 3:19).

The many ways in which sin is excused and covered up have their origin in Adam. They are varied manifestations of what he did.

### *Adam's Excuses, And Discipline*

The following is from *The Girdle of Truth* 2:46-64: <sup>186</sup>

. . . Adam was not deceived, but he was influenced. He early discovers the propensities of nature (no doubt in their best estate) which eventually led to his fall. Neither the world, nor its glory, nor any class of the inferior creatures, supply

185. See also *The Bible Treasury*, 8:274.

186. The reader would be profited by reading W. Kelly's remarks on Gen. 3:10-13 in *The Bible Treasury*, 19:193-194; Gen. 3:14-15 in 19:209-211.

the craving of the sociable heart of Adam : for him there was not found an help meet for him, and it was not good for him to be alone. The instincts of his nature must be satisfied; but still more, when his wife was deceived, he yields to her influence, as he himself admits, "she gave unto me, and I did eat." The first man disclosed this secret of his heart, that he was dependent on another; so that when Satan would not venture to beguile *him*, the object of his affections successfully tempted him. Now they are both naked, and both estranged from God, and hiding themselves from His presence, the first lessons of His grace are propounded to them. In discipline there is properly *conviction* of sin, as well as correction of it. With a saint it is never penance or compensation for wrong-doing. Chastening or correction is to make me a partaker of holiness, not a sufferer for sin. It is not to improve my nature, but to so convince me of its utter helplessness that I may be devoted unto God, which is the true and distinct meaning of Sanctification, and without which no man shall see the Lord. There is exceeding pain in being convicted of sin; and if there be not a strong sense of the grace of God when we are convicted, there will be great depression, and a tendency to give up all in despair. Hence the exhortation, "faint not when thou art *convicted* [Greek] of him." God does not convict hastily. He likes that our cogitations on our own acts should convict ourselves. It is very little use to tell a vain man of his faults; it generally only urges him the better to conceal or extenuate them. It is very hard to induce a person in ill health and unconvinced of it, to adopt the necessary regimen; the more you remonstrate with such an one, the more strenuously will he endeavor to prove you mistaken, and you exasperate the malady you would assuage, while the really sin-convicted soul, like the patient tremblingly alive to his danger, is ready to receive every true palliative and remedy offered. When Adam had *perfected* the devices of his now estranged and corrupted heart, when the aprons are on and he behind the trees, the voice of God searches him. We are continually allowed to run to the end of our own plans, and thus to learn how futile they are. Many a weary hour and long day is squandered in the execution of plans which, when tested by the searching word of God, must be entirely abandoned. What is the nature of your plans? are they to distance and conceal you from God, or are they to bring you nigh unto Him, and to unfold to Him the minutest secrets of your heart? You may thus test your plans. Adam's were to cloak him and to escape the eye of God, and God allowed him to complete his schemes. Oh, how well each of us knows what this is! The poor prodigal tries the far country, but returns to his father's house a really humbled man. The many inventions are all tested and found to be as husks, and then the soul listens to the gracious tones of that voice it would fain escape from. It is a terrible question to answer, "Where art thou?" when you find out the insufficiency of all expedients to screen your conscience from the action of God's word. Did the prodigal like to answer it when feeding the swine? Did Peter like to answer it when enjoying the cheer of his Master's foes, when warming himself at their fire? Did Adam like it when he remembered the position which he occupied in contrast with the one

he had forfeited? The answer to that question tells his state. The voice of God searches the conscience, and if it has not learned that it is with God it has to do, the history of it must be, "I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." Concealment is the first effort of a suffering conscience. You, neither like to see yourself, nor that any one else should see you, as you are; and when *God's* voice reaches you, you hide yourself; while concealment betrays distance as well as evasion. There must be some activity in the conscience when concealment is resorted to, especially when no penalty (but the fact of your guilt being known) is attached to it. The babe who breaks a toy conceals it! Concealment is, in fact, resorted to in order that we may appear better than we are. If we were willing that every one should see us as we are, there would be no concealment. A disguise was never yet adopted but for self-exaltation. A lie was never maintained but to give us credit we did not deserve. When God deals with us we learn that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom *we have to do*." The word (see Heb. 4) acts on our conscience, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"; but it conducts us to God. It is with Him, and not the word merely, "we have to do." The voice of the Lord penetrated the soul of Adam; and though girdled with fig-leaves, which satisfied his own standard of morality, yet when the word came it tried him, and he was afraid because he was naked (naked before God), and he hid himself. It is important to study those two actions of the conscience. They give rise to much exercise and trouble in the soul, because they are confounded; that is when one has satisfied his own conscience, has adopted some system which conceals from himself and others the real state of his soul, he floats for awhile on peaceful waters; but no sooner is the voice of the Lord heard, but all the elements seem to him involved in a mighty tornado. His sleep is broken; he is another Philippian jailor, "he is afraid." The fact that he is naked and opened before God flashes fearfully before him, and so much the worse because he had deceived himself, and his reputation with others had helped it on. The action of the word of God would be desperate and overwhelming to the soul if we had not a "great high priest passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God." His sympathy, on the ground of His atonement, in full effect before God, sets the convicted conscience at rest, and at the throne of grace, *too*, to receive the grace and the mercy it needs. This is just what Adam had to learn; consequently the voice pursues him to his hiding-place. It is in vain that one seeks to escape the eye of God. When He determines that it shall search you, if you take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there He will reach you! Oh, how the conscience that seeks escape from God overshadows itself within the foliage of this world! It engrosses itself with man's leading and most ambitious pursuits, but in vain. The "watchers" will cry aloud, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves." The refuge of lies shall be exposed, and the soul must have its account with God. It must answer, "WHERE ART THOU?" and all the answer needed is the tale of the plain and simple facts, "I

was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself!" The moment the soul of the saint is in full confession, he is in the region of forgiveness and restoration, and the Spirit expostulates with it as man would with his fellow. Adam tried his own expedients, and they were vain and profitless; now he will be a listener to the grace that tells of the sure and perfect remedy. But mark, he first discloses the true and full tale of the condition of his soul; he confesses his fear -- his nakedness -- his *effort* to hide himself! Discipline had effected this. Now God instructs him. Adam is "meek," and God will teach him His way. He has learned that innocence was no protection against an undue influence, and that the absence of evil motive is no guarantee for true moral action. He, of all men, knew what this was preeminently; and yet it was no safeguard. He was tempted, and he yielded to it. Conscious, indeed, that innocence was gone, and evil motive could rule, he still trusts to himself to screen and rectify his disgrace. The expedient he adopted satisfied his own moral sense, and, what was infinitely more delusive, the moral sense of the one whose good opinion he loved to secure, and whose satisfaction was a bulwark to his own. This is a snare that few, even godly men, escape. It is, in other words, the reputation with one's friends; pressed on the conscience as the verdict of the last court of appeal, and conclusive to it on any recurrence of anxious enquiry. There is a reciprocity in this kind of reputation. What you admit to me, I in return admit for you. If a girdle of fig-leaves measures the demands of *your* moral sense, and *you* accept it as sufficient for *me*, I in return do the same for *you*. This is the essence and true character of all human and religious reputation. But the voice of God sounds, and Adam is troubled in his deceitfully serene and false position. That voice probes the entire condition, and at last he finds himself "naked and opened before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." He confesses all, and he is on the uppermost form for instruction with an humble and a contrite spirit. To the divine challenge he admits (though with an excuse and mitigation) that he was tempted and had eaten. His justification lowers him morally more than the charge he seeks to justify. Yet it is a confession, and it is accepted as such; and our God enters on the gracious work of unfolding His counsels. To each actor in this wondrous scene is now meted the judgment due to the part he has played in it. *Satan's* sentence is first pronounced, and while *his* doom is fixed, the deliverance from his power and the eternal remedy of the gospel is declared to the listening and convicted Adam. It is the divine way, in restoring a soul, to establish it *first* in the power of God, and in His grace. The draft of fishes and the words of Jesus brought this to Peter. It is the ground work for all godly improvement. When the heart is established, as David's was ("the Lord has taken away thy sin"), then it can bear to hear what is the discipline necessary to correct that in him which sin could act on. It is important to carry with us the process by which the Lord reveals to the soul the discipline which He will impose. Whatever has provoked our failure is denounced, not in general terms, but in the proportion, and in the order too, of its guilt; at the same time commanding and promising the true mode of deliverance.

Satan is not only sentenced, but the effect of his malice on man will be his own irremediable retribution. Man shall be avenged of his enemy. The serpent is not only assigned, as a signal judgment, to crawl and to eat dust, in perpetual hostility to the lord of the creation, but its “violent dealing shall come down on its own pate”; its head shall be bruised. The next brought up for judgment is the *woman*. She was the proximate cause of Adam’s failure; but as the principal had received his sentence, she must now hear hers. She is condemned to times of great sorrow on every addition to the human family which she has been instrumental in subjecting to the power of death; with unconditional subjection to her husband, the want of which bore its first-fruits in her own fall, and led to Adam’s also. Each transgressor is not only sentenced to a penalty corresponding to his guilt, but the relation in which that guilt has affected Adam is also markedly repaired. God’s servant must not be touched with impunity, but he must not err himself. The righteous God will avenge his cause, but only in *righteousness*. He cannot overlook the frailty of His servant, though He will rescue him when the unmitigated sentence is executed. When God enters into judgment, even-handed justice is dispensed. But acts are criminal in a greater or less degree: that which implicates God’s witness in distance from Him being more so than the failure which that witness evinces by being drawn into distance. The one who misleads another comes under a severer penalty than he who is misled; though he is not exempted because he discovers moral feebleness. The infliction of penalties are not necessarily for correction, nor is the discipline. There was no hope of amending Satan, but yet severe penalties are inflicted on him because Adam had suffered from him. Man was God’s representative on earth; injury to him was treason against God. Hence in divine discipline there is always a correction of the evil principle of nature, and also correction for the trespass we may have committed on our fellow-man. This is exemplified in the sentence on Adam. His sin was yielding to his wife’s request in opposition to the word of God. Probably he did not do so with intent; that is, not after weighing both he decided in favor of the former. But the word was not hid in his heart, and did not control him; for if it had been he would not have hearkened to the voice of his wife. But having surrendered his place, he is to bear the penalty of it, and become the great slave and laborer on the earth, of which he was the ruler and prince. Everything on it would bear indications of insubjection to its rightful master. To assuage the evil, he should spend his life and live thereby; but in the end return to dust, as dust he was. There is deeply instructive teaching in all this; even that if we surrender the position in which God places us in any relation, the one we retire to will inevitably notify to us, in fearful reminiscences, what has been our forfeiture. The smallest thorn and briar reminded Adam that he had surrendered his lordship in hearkening to the voice of his wife. If David retires from the duties of the king, he must surrender, in a painful way, the honors of one. He is reminded how lightly he regarded them by the successful rebellion of his own son. “Cursed be he who doeth the work of the Lord negligently.” All the influence of Barnabas

would not induce Paul to take Mark who had returned from Pamphylia. The refusal of the apostle reminded him how he trifled with and abandoned the post once his, but easier lost than regained. This is the nature of Adam’s discipline. He is reminded by everything of what he surrendered, and the less carefully and diligently he labored to subdue the numerous reminiscences of his failure, the more they increased, and the less able was he to sustain himself against them. By the sweat of his brow he regained his position for his own need. David returned, after a severe campaign, to the throne. Mark was profitable for the ministry after the discipline had produced its effect. Faith always walks above discipline, though walking under it. Adam hears the sentence on all, and, in faith consenting to it, rises above it, and calls his wife’s name Eve, because she is “the mother of all living.” Faith reaches unto God, therefore it can submit to the position which judicially and correctively falls to an erring soul, and looks to God for His own time and mode of deliverance. It accepts the punishment of its iniquity, not as retribution for it, but as correction. Discipline has in fact produced its greatest effect where the soul submits to it as trusting in God. Adam shows this in making amends to his wife (in thus naming her) for his former reproaches; and what was, in unsubdued nature, the agent of harm to him is now, in the eye of faith, the channel of life. Adam, disciplined in faith, God clothes him, yet discipline must not be arrested nor reprieved. God drives out the man, and sends him to till the ground from whence he is taken, to find out what sort of a man he was, and to learn how his faith would sustain him.

It is in our immediate relations of life, in the innermost circle, where there is least reserve, we most truly disclose ourselves. A man who cannot rule his *own house* how shall he take care of the Church of God? {1 Tim. 3}. Power is more effectively applied immediately than at a distance. If Adam is learning from his discipline, it ought to be seen in his power to avoid the evil for which he was suffering. It does not appear that he does; for *Eve* assumes the place of naming his eldest son, again losing sight of her own place, and again, beyond doubt, filling her first-born (which his name alone would suggest) with aspirations which led to his fearful contradiction of it, as well as the painful evidence of her own misapprehension of God’s promise. The introduction of death where life was expected; the fact that one child was murdered and the other the murderer; the one in whom their hopes centered must have been a trial to Adam that we can little conceive -- a discipline which had its effects -- for though it is said that *Eve* named Seth in the first instance, yet it is also written that *Adam* called his name Seth, showing, as it appears to me, that he at length had learned what the discipline was sent to teach him, namely, to act for God, above all influence, and not to allow any influence to distract him from the path of faith. He appears to have learned this in the last recorded act of his life, a very pleasing consummation, showing the effect of discipline; and a very fit and happy finale to his history. To sum up, we learn from this history that innocence or absence of

evil motive is no safeguard *against* influence. That satisfying our own moral sense, or the moral sense of any one else, is no proof that we can answer, or have answered, to God's claim on us. That if we cease to maintain our divinely appointed place, we are sure to fall, and the word of God, which would have preserved us in our place, does not act on the heart outside that place. But that learning to follow our own inclinations, our discipline will always be of a character to correct our failure, and to remind us, in very minute ways (as did the thorns to Adam), what our frailty has reduced us to.

Lastly, when discipline has effected its object, our history closes. ❖

## Chapter 7

### *Sentences on the Serpent, the Woman, and Adam, Genesis 3:14-19*

#### *The Sentence on the Serpent*

#### THE RESULT FOR THE SERPENT BECAUSE OF HIS VICTORY

**Cursed above All.** Verse 14 implies that the serpent was above the cattle and beasts of the field in its position in the animal domain. It was to be cursed more than they all. The instrument of evil is cast down. Satan will be cast down from heaven (Rev. 12), then cast down into the abyss (Rev. 20), then loosed for a short period from his temporary prison (Rev. 20:7), he will be cast into hell (Rev. 20:10).

**On Thy Belly Shalt Thou go.** We do not know what the original form of the serpent's locomotion was, though knowing its present one. It was part of the degradation inflicted by God that it would go on its belly, slithering through its life. Compare Lev. 11:8.

#### **Eat Dust All the Days of Thy Life.**

"Dust" means utter and entire humiliation, as "lick the dust" {Psa. 72:9; Mic. 7:17}; "Arise ye that dwell in the dust," and so on. It is constantly used in this way. In Dan. 12 it is the same; "many that sleep in the dust of the earth." In the text it is used to express the judgment that shall be upon the power of Satan.<sup>187</sup>

While in the millennium there will be a great reduction in the effect of the curse on the ground, etc., not so regarding the serpent (Isa. 65:25), though it appears that there will be no venomous attacks (Isa. 11:8). This is so during the epoch when "the ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan" is bound and cast into the abyss, which is shut and sealed over him, figures which denote the complete removal of any power and influence, until God allows him to be loosed to foment the final assault against "the camp of the saints and the beloved city" (Rev. 20:9), i.e., Jerusalem. Fire poured down from the heavens will make short work of this final exposure of the heart of man in the face of the just and beneficent reign of Christ.

The slithering snake is a reminder to mankind of the fall, even during the

187. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:66. See also, "The Sentence on the Serpent: Serpent Worship," in *ibid.*, pp. 109-113. Those that take a low place before God refer to dust as did Abraham (Gen. 18:27) and Hannah (1 Sam. 2:8). See also Job. 42:6.

millennium. The animal that was more crafty than all others was debased more than all others. And, it might be added, it would be silly to think that what is meant is that the diet of serpents consists of dust.

For us, the Lord Jesus was laid in the “dust of death” (Psa. 22:15).

**Satan’s End.** Below we will consider the crushing of the serpent’s head and the final casting into the lake of fire. He and all his apparent successes are but instruments used by God to unfold the purpose of God to glorify Himself in Christ in the heavenly and in the earthly spheres. What the Enemy of God and man did was the occasion for God’s announcement of the Seed of the Woman, the Deliverer.

## THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

### No Promise to Adam.

(1) God was speaking to the serpent when He announced that there would be enmity between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s Seed. There was no promise made to Adam.

(2) Moreover, Jehovah Elohim did not give a promise to man in his unregenerate state, which would be dealing lightly with sin.<sup>188</sup> At the moment Jehovah Elohim pronounced His sentence upon the serpent (i.e., including the Enemy using the serpent) Adam was not regenerate.

(3) Promise made to man in connection with the Seed was first made to Abraham. He is the depository of promise and that marked a change in the ways of God. In the ways of God, *promise as a ground of relationship with God* was introduced in connection with the call of Abraham to a position of *separation*.

Covenant Theology may teach that God made a promise to Adam in Gen. 3:15 in order to find there the disclosure of the Covenant of Grace, but it is false.<sup>189</sup>

188. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 12:277.

189. Covenant Theology needs Gen. 3:15 to be a promise to Adam so as to have all saints be participants in the Covenant of Grace. That system would be in serious trouble if the Covenant of Grace did not include pre-flood saints. That would mean that they formed no part of the church of all ages, as conceived in Covenant Theology. So these saints are force-fitted into the system created by Covenant Theology because of the exigency to do so. Concerning no promise made to Adam, see *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:115; 29:96; *Letters* 2:166.

I am sorry that it appears that the exigency of F. W. Grant’s system, centering on assertion that OT saints had life *in* the Son, caused him to claim that:

The prophetic announcement of the Seed of the woman and of His victory is plainly the “promise of life which is in Christ Jesus” . . . (2 Tim. 1:1, 9; Titus 1:2),

and he renders a phrase in those texts

“Before the *age*-times,” – the dispensations of which this earth has been the theatre

(continued...)

Adam was listening to what was said. The announcement concerning the remedy for sin, i.e., the Seed of the woman, was not made to Adam, though he heard it, and faith could, and did, lay hold of it, though it was no promise made to him.<sup>190</sup>

**Seed of the Woman -- Not the Seed of Adam.** The tree of life had foreshadowed Christ. Fallen man, as such, was hindered from eating of that tree, which would have resulted in immortal sinners. Sinful man must needs come under a new Head in order to enjoy the true tree of life, i.e., Christ. And He would be hung upon a *tree*, made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Until then, fallen man was under probation -- testing -- that would demonstrate that he was not recoverable.

The announcement of the Seed of the woman points to the virgin birth<sup>191</sup>

189. (...continued)

. . . The texts we are considering require us to omit the period of innocence from those “age-times,” or dispensations . . . (*The Numerical Bible* 1:36, note).

The fact that OT saints all had life *from* the Son is not the same thing as saying that they had life *in* the Son. For OT saints, that would have placed them in deity, for He had not taken manhood and died. It is clear from John 12:24 (without expanding further) that even as man He abode alone (none were “in Him”) before His resurrection. John 12:24 shows us that it is as the risen stalk that the plant is formed with grains upon the stalk. Thus, it is in resurrection that He no longer abode alone. Being *in* the Son (the *character* of the life), and being *in* Christ (the *place* where we have it) is a distinctive blessing of those who form the assembly of God. The reader might find help in *From New Birth to New Creation*, available from the publisher.

F. W. Grant’s view of 2 Tim. 1:9 is to make our salvation and our “holy calling” given to us there in Gen. 3:15, not in eternity. Thus, Titus 1:2 must point to Gen. 3:15 also. He has used the word “plainly”; what is plain is the bending of Scripture to theological systems. Blessings in the earthly sphere, for Israel and millennial Gentiles, are spoken of as *from* the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 13:8; 17:8), and the church’s from *before* the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). The promise of life in Christ Jesus refers to a promise in eternity, not to Gen. 3:15.

190. Nor was Adam on the ground of promise in Eden when unfallen. He was given no promise of “eternal life.” (*Endless being* is not what is meant by “eternal life” in Scripture, whether in innocence or even as an immortal sinner.) Rather, he was told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and if he did, he would die. He was not told, “do this and live”; he was told ‘do not do this or die.’ See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:150-151.

191. W Kelly wrote:

Granted that Josephus seems to have read these pregnant words as unintelligently as a heathen, divorcing them from the solemn fact of the temptation and the fall just before, ignoring Jehovah Elohim as the speaker and the judge, and utterly dark as to the purpose of God gradually growing into fuller clearness throughout till Himself came, the true Light. Was it the place for nothing more than a common-place on natural history? on the relative position of the serpent henceforth? on its hostility to the human race, provoking no less in turn? on its aptness to bite heels and in retaliation to have its head crushed? This may satisfy those erudite critics who are bent as far as they can on reducing the holy letters to a compilation of legendary tales or myths. But the irrationalism as well as the impiety of these sceptics of Christendom is self-evident to every believer; and the inspired word, though it may by grace convert the worst infidel, is addressed to faith, and given first to Israel, and now, that they are for the time Loammi {i.e., ‘not my people’} and worse, to the church of God. Even an unbelieving Jew may not be so blind to the depths

(continued...)

through which the second Man and last Adam would enter the world -- Man of a holy order. Luke, which Gospel sets before us the perfections of Christ's manhood, notes that He is that holy thing (Luke 1:35). The Son, "come of woman" (Gal. 4:4), took holy humanity into His Person. He alone solves the issue represented by the two trees:

From the first existence of man on the earth the question between responsibility and grace was placed at issue. In the earthly paradise there was the tree of life which only communicated life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to which the responsibility of man was attached. As to the tree of life, man did not eat of it ; and (once become a sinner) the mercy of God, as well as His righteousness and the moral order of His government, closed against him the way of this tree. An immortal sinner on the earth would have been an insupportable anomaly in the government of God. Besides, man had deserved to be shut out of the garden. On the other hand man failed in his responsibility. Before his fall he did not know sin, but he was in the relation of a creature towards God. There was no sin in eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, except inasmuch as this had been forbidden.

When man fell, the Seed of the woman, the last Adam, was immediately announced: the hopes of the human race are thenceforth placed upon a new ground. The deliverance presented does not consist in something which would have been but a means of raising up again founded on the moral activity of man already in a fallen condition; but another person is announced, who, while of the human race, should be a source of life independent of Adam, and who should destroy the power of the enemy; a person who should not represent Adam, but replace him before God, should be the seed of the woman, which Adam was not, and should at the same time be an object of faith for Adam and for his children -- an object which, being received into the heart, should be the life and salvation of whoever should receive it. The first Adam was made a living soul; he was lost: the last Adam, the second Man, is a quickening spirit. Until the coming of Christ the promise only was the source of hope; it alone, through grace, begat and sustained faith. We believe in its accomplishment. When God called Abraham, He gave him (Gen. 12) the promise that in him all the

191. (...continued)

of what was meant to arouse enquiry and awaken a blessed hope, as well as search the conscience; as we may unhesitatingly say such a God must do if He spoke to man at all in the circumstances. Hence Maimonides (More Nevochim ii. 30) owns that this is one of the passages in scripture which is most wonderful, and not to be understood according to the letter, but contains great wisdom in it. He too was struck by the mention of the woman's Seed, rather than the man's, as the bruiser of the serpent's head; and both Targums openly point to Christ, Whom we know to be none other than Jesus, not Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben Judah, but one and the same Christ, come and coming again to complete in manifested power and glory what He has already done in the efficacy of His reconciliation-work in death and resurrection. His second advent is as sure as His first (*The Bible Treasury* 19:210).

nations of the earth should be blessed. Afterwards (Gen. 22) this promise was confirmed to his Seed. The one who was to be the seed of the woman was also to be the seed of Abraham. Thus the ways of God towards man were established on an indefectible promise. It was without condition, a simple promise, and consequently it did not raise the question of righteousness nor of the responsibility of man.

Four hundred and thirty years afterwards the law comes, and, as we have said, raises the question of righteousness, and that, on the footing of the responsibility of man, by giving him {the law} . . .<sup>192</sup>

He, the Seed of the woman, was to bruise the serpent's head, the serpent to bruise His heel -- the latter in the cross, the former when He comes in power. This is no promise to the first man, though his faith might lay hold of it, but a revelation of the Second. Adam assuredly was not the Seed of the woman. The history is referred to as unquestionable truth by Paul (1 Tim. 2: 9-15), as a ground for minute details as to woman; as a basis of the profoundest doctrine (Rom. 5: 12-21), showing sin to have been there by this means before the law, and when there was none; but referring to Hos. 6:7, showing that Adam was under a law (not to eat of the tree of knowledge), but that from him to Moses man had none, confirmed as to the character of judgment (Rom. 2:12), those that have sinned *anomos*, without law, being distinguished from those who have sinned under it. So for watchfulness it is referred to in 2 Cor. 11:3. So the whole order and structure of God's plan in Christ, connected with ruin in the first Adam, is unfolded in 1 Cor. 15, specially vv. 20-28, and vv. 45-49, and that in resurrection. The accomplishment in Jews, Gentiles, and the raised saints, is founded on Isa. 25:6-8.<sup>193</sup>

### Enmity Between the Two Seeds.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel (Gen. 3:15).

It is clear that Christ, the seed of the woman, is in view, as is the cross where His heel was crushed.<sup>194</sup> There is also in view the overthrow of the Enemy. In Rom.

192. From, "The Testimony of God: or, the Trial of Man," *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 22:345, 346. The article is quite instructive. See also p. 367. See also *ibid.*, 10:150-152; 19:62-111-116.

193. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 29:96.

194. A note in *The Bible Student* 3:35, says:

Thou shalt bruise his heel. In *Oriental Illustrations* the Rev. J. Roberts quotes various parallel passages in the history of Jacob, Job, and David, with a view of showing that attacking or injuring a person in the "heel" included the idea of treachery, of craft and deceit. "Thus," he says, "was the serpent to injure the seed of the woman. The heel was the part to be wounded, which conveys the idea of being followed for that purpose. A similar phraseology exists in the East at this day; for the heel is the part which is said to be wounded when a treacherous person, under the guise of friendship, has injured another. The man who has thus perfidiously conducted himself is called *kuthe-kal vetukurravlu*,

(continued...)

16:20 we read:

But the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

That refers to Satan's being cast into the abyss by an angel empowered by Christ to do so (Rev. 20:1, 2). The angels are the instruments of His government but the saints reign *with* Christ and thus participate in this. It is a preliminary stage to Satan being cast into the lake of fire after he had been loosed for a little time and led the final rebellion in the earth (Rev. 20:7-10). Then will he and his seed be in eternal, conscious punishment. The very crushing of the heel of the unique Seed of the woman is the instrumentality through which the Seed of the woman works:

. . . that through death he might annul him who has the might of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14).

There is no hope for the Enemy. Christ did not die for fallen angels. No hope for fallen angels is reflected in the fact that in the millennium the condition of the serpent is neither changed or mitigated (Isa. 65:25). God has the final say and His malediction will stand.

The seed of the serpent are those not born of God. 1 John 3:8 says:

He that practices sin is of the devil; for from [the] beginning the devil sins.

We see a sample of the seed of the devil in John 8:43-45:

Why do ye not know my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of the devil, as [your] father, and ye desire to do the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks falsehood, he speaks of what is his own; for he is a liar and its father: and because I speak the truth, ye do not believe me.

So is it in Matt. 13:38: "the darnel are the sons of the evil [one]." <sup>195</sup>

The fact is that the seed of the serpent are all born of Eve, who is the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20). But in Gen. 3:15 we see that those not born of God are not counted as "seed of the woman"; they are the seed of the serpent. However, God saves some persons and they are not counted as seed of the serpent. They

194. (...continued)

that is, a heel-cutter, which reminds us of the Russian proverb, "He fawned on me and then bit my heel."

195. We see that the unbeliever's character, as controlled by "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), is traced back to the devil. The sinner is a slave to sin in the flesh (Rom. 6:13, 16, 20), which controls him. Men have no ability to remove that evil disposition under the power of which the Adamic race is bound. While man was under testing to show that he was not recoverable, Satan had the title "prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), but after the testing was over -- after the cross -- he has the title "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4); and 1 John 5:19 declares that the whole world lies in the wicked [one].

belong to Christ the great Seed of the woman; and as born of God they are the seed of the woman.<sup>196</sup> Rom. 16:20 couples us with Christ's bruising of the serpent's head. There has always been enmity between those who are the seed of the serpent and those who belong to Christ. This is seen early in man's history in the case of Cain and Abel, and in the godly line and the ungodly line taking us down to the flood. The Enemy hates Christ -- and the Enemy's seed hate those who are Christ's as well as Christ Himself.

It is remarkable that in Rev. 12, where we read of the male son who is destined to shepherd the nations with a rod of iron (i.e., in the millennial reign of Christ), and was "caught up to God and to his throne" -- clearly, Christ --

the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, in order that when she brought forth he might devour her child (Rev. 12:4).

The sun-clad woman is not Mary, the mother of Christ. The sun-clad woman is not the church.<sup>197</sup> The woman is Israel and is depicted in the vision as she is *according to the purpose of God for Israel*, as she shall be in her millennial position and glory -- not in the condition as she actually was when Christ was born into the world, nor in the condition in which the future godly remnant of Israel finds itself in the great tribulation. But the vision connects Christ with *the godly* of Israel, for they are all seed of this woman:

And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed . . . (Rev. 12:17).

This seed is also spoken of in Psa. 22:30, 31.

All, Jew or Gentile, who belong to Christ, who are under His last Adam headship -- every one whose nakedness is covered by God -- are seed of the woman as God spoke of it in Eden. The seed of the woman in Psa. 22:30, 31 and Rev. 12 is a special aspect of this. The church, too, has a special aspect, but that is not our subject here. And in the millennium there will be Gentiles, as such, being blessed also (Rev. 7:13-17).

The head of the serpent will be crushed. The head is where the poison is located. The fatality of this is not extinction but eventual casting into the lake of fire. The heel of the great Seed of the woman would be crushed. The power of darkness arrayed itself against Christ (Luke 22:53). And Satan Himself entered into Judas to ensure the Lord's death. Thus, in Eden, the originator of the Lord's death is pointed out, whatever human instrumentality and responsibility there is

196. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:172.

197. The idea that the sun-clad woman is the church supposes that OT saints were part of the church, failing to see the distinctive place of the church, which never had existence till formed at Pentecost (Acts 2) consequent on Christ taking His place there and sending the promise of the Father (Acts 2:32, 33) uniting those saints into one body, united to Himself in heaven, as Head (1 Cor. 12:13; etc.).

in connection with it. The crushing of His heel indicates His death but it is not fatal, for He rose from among the dead, and as victorious man over sin and death and hell, He is the crusher of the serpent's head.

### THE SEED OF THE WOMAN AND THE INTRODUCTION OF GOD'S WORKING IN MERCY AND GRACE

The rest of God regarding the six days work had been broken by sin. Sin is the occasion of God working again, but working in mercy and grace. Sin is an instrumentality used by God for bring out His purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, to be manifested in the heavenly and earthly spheres (Eph. 1:10).

No scripture seems to be better fitted to purge one's heart of all its natural self-confidence, than this chapter, Gen. 3. Or shall man, when fallen, have more purity of intelligence, love and purpose, than man unfallen had? If in Eden, man stood not against Satan, how can I, outside of Eden, sold under sin as I am in nature, justly count upon anything in myself? The folly and madness of so doing are apparent. But there is a rest for the weary and the lost, in that which was not shaken in Eden; even in that which found in the very ruin which man introduced into Eden, a scene in which it could unfold His own glory; I mean the mercy of God. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion: but more than this, He was, even when creating the earth, preparing scenes in which, according to His own good pleasure, He would show forth mercy; and that Seed of the woman, first named on earth after the fall, was the one for whom this globe was made, in order that its heavens and earth might become parts of His glorious mediatorial kingdom. No creature could stand if out of God or independant of Him, and be blessed; this was one lesson taught by the fall; but brighter light gleamed and sparkled in the fall, -- for then came there forth a testimony of *redemption*. God would become manifest in the flesh. The God-man would take up and redeem, from out of the fall, a people for God and Himself: the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head! Aye! the triumph of that blessed One shall be complete, and all headship shall be broken down before Him: none shall be allowed in the end, to walk abroad in heaven or on the earth, which bow not to His name.

Scene may follow scene, upon earth, showing the unmendableness of man. He goes from bad to worse; and the brighter the light, and the greater the privilege vouchsafed to him, the more vile does he show himself. But all the evil upon earth changes not, cannot change, God's pleasant purposes concerning His Son, manifest in the flesh, Lord of heaven and earth; -- the one in whom it was purposed to set up in Him, and for Him, by the Spirit, a heaven and an earth, in which man should find perfect blessing: perfect blessing not out of God's presence nor with an occasional and transient visit, but centralized around Christ, in the various circles of blessing ordained for that blessed time, and therein abide for ever. Man shall be blest, and permanently so; because He who is the Blessor then, able Center for all God's counsels and plans, is God manifest in the flesh.

The mode chosen for the announcement of this truth is to be observed.

"It" (the seed of the woman) "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," was not a promise given to Adam or Eve, but an announcement, in their presence, to the serpent; -- for *he* lay at the bottom of the mischief done; and the evil of the mischief was not chiefly in the marring of man as a vessel, but in the dishonor to Him whose workmanship man, the vessel marred, was. The gospel never will be seen clearly or be held with full blessing, unless looked at in its native width and magnificence of scope. If we look at it merely as suiting ourselves, or fallen man, or the human race, we look not at its unity and greatness. These are found in it, when it is looked at as the developed action of the Father's counsel for the Son. He should be the one who, in defeating Satan and pouring contempt and shame on him, should pour forth the blessedness of a display of the character of God as the God of mercy and grace, such as never had been before, -- such as it required a new sort of vessel to contain, namely poor sinners, plucked by the power of the quickening Spirit, from the ruins of the fall.

Wonderful as the excellency and beauty of all in Eden was, -- great and glorious as were Adam's possessions there, man brought forth, with all his ruin and misery, out of Eden, something that was more glorious, wonderful, and precious, than all that he left behind. Aye! that predictive declaration about the Seed of the woman was a bright light, -- the germ of all mediatorial glory in heaven and on the earth. Unfallen, with every blessing of Eden his, Adam was not so rich or richly blessed as he was afterwards, *if* that word was in his heart. He brought out of Eden *a word*, which when unfolded contains all that victory over Satan and his power which God has ordained for Christ, -- a word, too, which is a sure prize to every one that receives it, their security of being partakers in the blessings of His triumph.

And here, clearly, begins the trial of man in grace, -- by the word of *grace*. It is important to remember, that God has not given up, as to man, his original relative position. He is God, and must be God; and if man is to be blessed by Him, man must be subject to Him, and be a receiver, -- simply a receiver, -- from Him. *How*, without impugment to His holiness, God can deal with a sinner *at all*, was still wrapped up in darkness; but to suppose any other fountain or source of blessing and benefit, besides God, is to deny His glory as God. Man may do it, -- does so every day, under the delusion of the fall. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" is still the delusion; and, until grace enters the heart, man not only accredits himself, though he is fallen, as being higher, wiser, and stronger, than he was when first created and unfallen, but also, he goes a step further, and assumes that he is as God, -- having a spring inexhaustible in himself; yea, and that he it is who is to be the giver to God Almighty. Nothing but grace can open a man's eyes and deliver him from the delusion of the fall, and give him to own God -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- in their proper place, as to counsel, salvation, and power; -- nothing but grace can deliver us from our own delusive idol, self.

But man is out of Eden; and GRACE is the only thought consistent with God's plea for dealing with man or man's plea for approaching to God: the very fact of the continued existence of Adam was the proof of grace in God.



## The Sentence on the Woman

### THE EFFECT ON CHILD-BEARING

There are two parts to what Jehovah Elohim pronounced to Eve as the governmental effect upon her (and, of course, her progeny) because of her sin. The first is that sin brought in sorrow and pain, and increased pregnancy. Sin has affected child-bearing. Difficulties, pain, and sorrows connected with child-bearing are familiar to us, though in it all there is joy in having children. The children of God should be much concerned that there be “a seed of God” (Mal. 2:15), not children to indulge and “spoil” (See Eph. 6:4).

Implicit in this governmental sentence of Jehovah Elohim is that Eve was going to bear children.

### THE EFFECT ON MARRIAGE

**“He Shall Rule Over Thee.”** The other part of the governmental consequence of the sin is the effect on the relationship of husband and wife. One modern line is to view Adam and Eve in innocency as in a “partnership” and that Eve took the lead rather than maintaining the partnership. That will not do; for, if it was a partnership, then Adam would also have been in the wrong for taking the lead. What is right for one partner is right for the other. The relationship was not a partnership. Adam was *head* in the relationship while enjoying companionship, but sin was now brought into that relationship.<sup>199</sup> It does not follow that because God said “he shall rule over thee” that as unfallen they had an egalitarian relationship -- as if Adam was not head. Sin was not at work in the relationship at first, but now, as fallen, marriage was affected. “He shall rule over thee” is not a command to husbands; no, it points to the ill treatment (harshness) that women have traditionally received as a result of sin. It does not point to “leadership,” for Adam had that in the created order in the garden of Eden. The modern, Western movement of equality for men and women is not the answer for this because that contravenes God’s created order of Adam’s headship. Bring Christ into this matter:

But I wish you to know that the Christ is the head of every man, but woman’s head [is] the man, and the Christ’s head God (1 Cor. 11:3).

This is hierarchical, not egalitarian, though faithless Christendom, including

198. *The Present Testimony* 2:462-465

199. Adam’s headship in the unfallen state means that Eve was subjected to him as head. The *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 9, n3 (1917) says, regarding the changed state of the woman involved “(c) the headship of man (cf. Gen. 1:26, 27.” Not so; Adam was her head both before and after the fall.

many evangelicals, apply their “exegesis” (really, *eisegesis*) and “hermeneutics” (really, pre-determined ideas) to overthrow what is plain in Scripture to subject hearts. Such things undermine the authority of God’s Word and reflect the words of the serpent, “Is it even so that God has said . . . ?” (Gen. 3:1). Moreover, it undermines the authority of Christ over the church:

But even as the assembly is subjected to the Christ, so also wives to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives, even as the Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it . . . (Eph. 5:24, 25).

It is stubbornness or naivete to think that setting aside the truth of God’s order for man and woman does not affect the truth of Christ and the assembly.

**“To Thy Husband Shall Be Thy Desire.”** I have first noted what God said about Adam and rule, but God spoke about Eve first. This is the order in Eph. 5: 24, 25 also. And in Eph. 6:1-4 children are exhorted before the fathers are exhorted. There is an order to what God says and a reason for it. It follows a hierarchic order beginning with the subject one. However, in commenting concerning what God said regarding Adam ruling over her, and then that the woman’s desire would be to her husband, it might be clearer for seeing that a governmental infliction came upon the marriage relationship, and in both cases it was something affecting the relationship in an unhappy way. “To thy husband shall be thy desire” also is something that has come into the relationship and this points to women attempting to influence their husbands, asserting themselves, acting contrary to God’s order -- trying to be the neck that turns the head, if not the head. Indeed, that is what Eve did in sinning in the garden of Eden. Sin has thus affected the marriage relationship.

### YES AND NO IN MARRIAGE

A Christian man comes under exercise before God concerning some matter regarding his pathway. In his conscience he knows that he must separate from this thing as not having God’s approval. It might be something that involves him individually, or also his wife and children, or ecclesiastically. He says to his wife, “this calls for separation, unto the Lord.” His wife says: NO! She *feels* differently about it. That is a NO of self-will, of impiety, and worldly lust.

This situation has been increasing over the years. *Feelings* set aside conviction based on God’s Word. The woman is exercising headship.

Self-pleasing, not what is due Christ, who pleased not Himself (Rom. 15:3), is increasingly the order of the day. Self-will, not God’s will (see Rev. 4:11) expressed in His Word, is preferred, as the time of the Wilful King (Dan. 11:36) gets closer. Self-indulgence (James 4:3) is the order of the day -- self, self, self -- me, myself, and I.

Gilgal speaks of the rolling away the reproach of Egypt (Josh. 5:9). Gilgal represents judgment on the flesh. It was the entry point for the Israelites into the

land of promise. It is the great NO upon the flesh. The pretender, Saul, went down to Gilgal after he was told to destroy Amalek, Amalek pointing to the power of the Enemy acting on the flesh.

And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said to him, Blessed art thou of Jehovah: I have fulfilled the word of Jehovah (1 Sam. 15:14).

There we have it -- a reflection of what is in our hearts; and, alas, in our conduct. The name of Jehovah is used to cover up self-will and disobedience.

Was Saul deaf? Not physically, but the ear of hearing the will of Jehovah in his conscience was corrupted. He made some effort, doing a partial work. But a partial work is not acceptable to God. Do we really believe that we can obey the Lord only as far as we wish and He is bound to accept that and recognize what we have done? Well, God has a NO also.

So, Saul reasoned on the matter with Samuel (1 Sam. 15:17, 21). Regarding the things that were to be devoted to destruction, Saul indulged in the blame-game, blaming it on the people, over whom he was king (1 Sam. 15:21). And then he told Samuel that the people saved those things to sacrifice at *Gilgal*! The effrontery of all this, the hypocrisy, blaming someone else, and whatever self-deception was involved, was swept away:

And Samuel said,  
Has Jehovah delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices,  
As in hearkening to the voice of Jehovah?  
Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice,  
Attention than the fat of rams.  
For rebellion is [as] the sin of divination,  
And self-will is [as] iniquity and idolatry,  
Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah,  
He hath also rejected thee from being king.

How pathetic it is that we delude ourselves into thinking we can deceive Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Yes, it *is* as idolatry. "Self-will is [as] iniquity and idolatry." We make God according to our self-will. That is an idol. "Rebellion is [as] the sin of divination." We consult, as it were, with a spirit -- even if it is our own, displacing God. This is horrible! Do we have a sense of it in our souls?

But there is a place for a *godly NO*:

For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, *having denied impiety and worldly lusts*, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise thee (Titus 2:11-15).

You ask, where is **YES**? It comes *after* the **NO**. Grace teaches us to say *no* to impiety and worldly lusts, and then *yes* to living soberly, justly and piously. Note the order. Are you wiser than God concerning the order? Do you have a notion of first presenting the positive and *then* the negative? That is a fleshly self-deception. What that is really about is to present the positive so as not to have to deal with the negative -- and in avoiding the negative, the result is that the positive does not receive its full place. Such handling of God's Word is, at bottom, a Saul-like subterfuge. It is disobedience to God's Word. It is, in reality, sparing self and making God's Word sanction it.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Gen. 2 God had blessed; in Gen. 3 sin put Him in the position of a judge, though He may freely bring out better things by sovereign grace, which He certainly has done according to His purpose to glorify Himself in Christ. The church is the highest aspect of what God is doing for the manifestation of His glory in Christ.

May the marriage of Christians be a living exposition of the relationship of Christ and the church.

## The Sentence on Adam

### ADAM HEARKENED TO EVE TO EAT OF THE FORBIDDEN TREE

Is it false to see that Adam's act showed more love for Eve than for Jehovah Elohim?

He had toil-less eating in the garden and the character of his eating would now be drastically changed. He would eat by toil and in the sweat of his face. It was never God's intention that man should be idle (cp. Ezek. 16:49), even in innocency. God had placed Adam in the garden of Eden to till it and guard it (Gen. 2:15). But that was not of same character as the toil and sweat resulting from the fall. Parallel to what was said to Eve regarding increase of travail, and of pain, "toil" would characterize man's efforts to sustain himself from the now cursed ground.

### THE CURSE ON THE GROUND

"Thorns and thistles shall it yield to thee." It is a sample of the resistance to men's efforts that the ground would now yield to the toil of extracting sustenance from the earth. The whole of what was under Adam's headship was profoundly affected. We should see that sin is the fountain-head environmental pollutant, the father of the condition we read of in Rom. 8:20-23.

Eating vegetables is noted in Gen. 3:18. Meat was permitted to man after the flood where we read of the prohibition of eating blood, a thing insisted on in Christianity (Acts 15:29).

See Gen. 5:29.

### UNTO DUST SHALT THOU RETURN

This is the opposite of all that was implied by the words of the serpent, “Ye shall be as God,” and, “Ye will not certainly die.” Concerning the introduction of death, it has been correctly pointed out that this is “present and earthly judgment”:

Here as before it is present and earthly judgment. On account of the man the ground is cursed. His superiority entails wider and more serious results. He too must face sorrow here below all his days. Thorns and thistles oppose the food he needs and seeks; and hard toil must be his portion to eat bread, for the herb of the field was allotted, as to the subject beasts, to him who had lost through rebellion the beautiful and abundant garden which Jehovah Elohim had planted. In the sweat of his face he was to eat till he returned to the ground whence he had been taken {see Job 7:1, 2}. How evidently the body only is here regarded, and the end of life on the earth! Yet the source of man’s soul had been carefully shown in ch. 2 as emanating from Jehovah Elohim’s inbreathing, contrasted with every other creature on earth, to the confusion of materialists old or new. Present government is the theme, and neither hades nor the lake of fire. So in the Psalms, though Sheol or Hades appears appropriately, we read, in Psa. 146:4, man “returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish.” The body alone returns to dust, out of which the soul was not taken, but, as we are told elsewhere, the spirit returns to God Who gave it. All the notice here taken of man is to humble him who did not look up to God, nor obey Him: sorrow and toil, death and dust. We shall find that more is intimated even here in what follows. If the apostle tells us that the wages of sin is death, we ought not to overlook that the sentence does not mean the whole of sin’s wages, but the first part; as in the Epistle to the Hebrews we are expressly told on the one hand that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment, on the other that Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time apart from sin to those that look for Him unto salvation: the portion respectively of unbelievers and of believers {Heb. 9:28}.<sup>200</sup>

### GOD’S GOVERNMENTAL WAYS

Cavilers say, how could God so punish the pair for so little a thing as eating a piece of fruit? The correct view is, how could such an intelligent and favored man throw away all for a piece of fruit? Persons complain of bringing upon the pair such sentences of lasting judgment for such a minor thing. That is a sinful view of the matter, making something out of self, as if competent above God to measure the degree of guilt. It is an arrogant and *self-righteous* complaint.

200. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury* 19:226.

The new circumstances into which Adam was brought as the consequence of his sin was laid upon him by Jehovah Elohim. This is the first example of His governmental ways. This is a different matter from God’s dealing with the soul judicially concerning the question of being saved from the wrath to come. Adam was driven out of Eden as a consequence of His sin, and here we have described a new condition for the ground from which he was to sustain himself as driven out of Eden. A person who is a child of God is safe as to the eternal destiny of his soul, but God’s way with him in connection with disobedience is another matter. This is according to the principle given in Gal. 6:7 that whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. The subject of God’s governmental ways seems ill understood by Christians, if they have even heard of such a thing. It is a matter that should be inquired into by the reader.<sup>201</sup>

201. A place to obtain some help is to find “Government of God” in the *Subject Index to J. N. Darby’s Writings*, available from the publisher. In *Letters of J. N. Darby* 2:78-79, he wrote:

One great cause of error on this subject is, that the saints do not make the difference which scripture does between the government of God exercised over this earth and the necessary rejection of sin by God’s nature -- His wrath from heaven. The evangelical world does not make the difference, and hence is liable to be misled, and unable to answer, though God may preserve souls by the instinctive sense of what is in scripture. Israel may be carried to Babylon, but Daniel finds it his sure path to heaven. All above twenty years old fall, save two, in the desert, but Moses and Aaron, and very likely many others, find their place in heaven too.

These dealings of God must be in connection with God’s character, and immediately flow from it; but they are not the expression of it: they are His ways in and through men. Life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. Just judgment was expressed in these ways, but not the judgment of the secrets of men’s hearts, but of men on the earth, for their conduct on the earth. This is so true that, though there are passages which lead the spiritual mind to see the loss and ruin of man (“He drove out the man”: that God was lost to man: that man had left God, the way back to the tree of life being barred), yet the express positive judgment as pronounced does not go beyond this world, even when it reaches death. Man was made out of the dust, and returns to the dust: but that is man, the object of our senses here; nor was more openly revealed. But the breath of God was not dust nor made out of the dust. Hence death, and destruction, and the like, in the Old Testament, though they may imply that displeasure which is the sign of what is connected with eternal misery, yet mean habitually, in the Old Testament, death and destruction by judgment in this world: a solemn and dreadful thing as God’s displeasure, but which is not in itself eternal misery. The state of the soul afterwards may be learned from other truths, but what is expressed is present judgment without the smallest hint of what comes of the soul afterwards. It is judgment here.

## Chapter 8

### Adam's Faith and Covering

Genesis 3:20, 21

#### Adam Called His Wife's Name Eve

This is the first time the woman is called Eve. In Gen. 5:2 we see the basis for calling her Mrs. Adam. It was God who called them Adam. Is there something to be learned from this?

In accordance with his headship, Adam had named the animals. He had named the companion woman. Here, in accordance with that headship, he named the woman Eve.

Adam having heard what Jehovah Elohim had said to the serpent regarding the seed of the woman, laid hold of this by faith, apprehending that God would provide a deliverer (and thus he would have offspring):

Adam has only to *listen*., and through hearing to believe and live. The word is nigh us, and we have but to receive it without working anything in the heights above, or in the depths beneath. The *activities* are God's; the *sacrifices* are God's. The profoundness of our silence and passiveness in *becoming* righteousness is only equaled by the greatness of the divine activity and sacrifice in *acquiring* righteousness for us. In the sight of such a mystery we may well stand and say, "What hath God wrought!" "Simple indeed it is to us," as one once said, "but it cost *Him* everything."

There is nothing in the heart of man like faith in this gospel. The faith of a poor sinner in the redeeming grace of God is the most beautiful condition the soul can be in. As saints, beloved, we may trust God for our need. We may look to Him for counsel, or for provision. We may trust Him to vindicate our doings, comfort us in sorrow, and strengthen us in difficulties. But the faith of a sinner, in the justifying grace and work of His divine Savior, transcends them all. Nothing is so precious, for nothing apprehends God in so glorious a character, or gives Him to the soul in so wondrous a relationship. This faith it is which uses the richest resources in God, and acts upon the most blessed discoveries of Him. For while all the ways of His glory shine brightly -- His strength, and comfort, and wisdom for His needy saints -- yet, that He has grace and salvation for sinners, this excelleth them all.

The Spirit of God, in these early times, gives us some most precious samples of this most precious faith ; as though (may I say it?) delighting in such a thing, He produced an impression of the finest character *at once*, as soon as occasion served.

Thus Adam, in his faith, talked only of life, though in the midst of death

-- death, which he himself had brought in, a standing witness against him. He was doomed to be an outcast in a scene of ruin which his own sin had produced. He knew this and allowed it. But he had listened to the story of the conflict between his destroyer and the woman's Seed. In the very place of judgment -- from among the trees of the garden, where conscience had driven him his ear had caught the sound of the sweet gospel, not of mercy merely, but propitiation and victory , and forth he comes, talking of life. He called his wife "Eve," the mother of all living. All life was in the promised Kinsman-Redeemer. In creation Adam himself had been constituted head of life -- "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"; but that, in his esteem, was now forfeited and gone. Life must flow in a new channel -- "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

How grand in its very simplicity all this was! And there was recovery also of *moral* glory, in a great sense, in all this. Adam had not *submitted* himself to the majesty of God, but affected to be as God. But now he does *submit* himself to the *righteousness* of God. His shoulders bowed themselves to receive the covering wrought for his nakedness by God's own hand. See Rom. 10:3. He was now honoring God the Redeemer, though he had just before been doing all he could to dishonor God the Creator -- so simply was he led by the Spirit to value the divine provision for a sinner in the promise of our bruised but victorious Kinsman.<sup>202</sup>

To this we add from W. Kelly:

But Adam did not hear in vain what Jehovah Elohim had intimated in His sentence on the enemy: a conflict, and not merely a successful temptation, from the enmity set between the old serpent and the woman and above all her Seed in some exceptional way specialized; and that conflict issuing in the final and irretrievable destruction of the foe, but not without previous anguish to the victorious Seed in achieving it. Hence in the depths of shame and wretchedness because of his transgression, with the woman's special penalty ringing in his ears, with his own doom to the ground cursed for his sake -- to toil all his days ending in death, and to return to the dust whence his body was taken --, he calls her not Death but Life, or Living! The divine assurance that the woman's Seed should bruise the serpent's head (can we doubt?) led him to the new name. It was faith, and founded on the word he had heard; faith real, if not explicit. He confessed that which was before no created eye, what rested simply on the divine word, that she was "mother of all living." Mother of all *dying* would have been the natural sentiment. But a hope founded on revelation glimmered through the darkness of sin, and Adam's mouth confessed what his heart believed. This he knew without a question that future blessing turned wholly and solely on the woman's Seed; and that woman, actually Satan's means of the mischief, would in due time give birth to Satan's Vanquisher . . .

Adam then looked above the just forfeits of sin, trusted not to his own

202. J. G. Bellett, *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 15-17, n.d.

strength, wisdom, or virtue, spoke of no seed of his to regain the lost paradise, but took occasion, by faith of God's gracious holding out the suffering but triumphant Seed of the woman, to call her Life, even then because she was mother of all living; an expectation most unsuitable and unwarranted, unless by the faith however dim of Him Who was coming (and now come), Who brought to light life and incorruption through the gospel. He, like those who followed in the growingly bright path of faith, knew little compared with what is now revealed. But they all looked to God for a Deliverer born of woman, yet in some mysterious way to defeat and destroy the evil one; a hope more than realized in Him Who became man that through death He might annul him that has the might of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage {Heb. 2:14-15}.<sup>203</sup>

### *God Provided the Sacrifice*

See Isa. 61:10. A work of God had taken place in Adam's soul, as evidenced by his appropriating, by faith, the coming of a deliverer, this faith having been expressed in his naming his wife Eve. Then God clothed the pair with animal skins, pointing to the sacrifice as providing the covering -- a covering provided by God Himself, reminding us of Abraham's words:

My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering (Gen. 22:8).

Yes, indeed; and we read:

and *he* is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2).

This shows us that the work of propitiation has its value before God because Christ is the propitiation. *He* being the propitiation means that the value and glory of the propitiation are commensurate with the value and glory of His Person. *He* is it! And thus God is glorified in His majesty, in His nature as light and love, and in His glory.

Let us note, also, that God acted in *sovereign grace* in providing the covering. Once again, in these first few chapters in Genesis, we read of what points to Christ, through Whom God glorifies Himself. The details of how the skins were obtained, is not the point, but God meeting the need signified by the nakedness, meeting it by death of a substitute. Death they had brought on themselves, yet through death a covering would be provided. Concerning us, 1 Pet. 2:24 says:

who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

Thus did the Seed of the woman in those three hours of darkness on the cross

203. W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury* 19:241.

when shut in away from sight and the judgment against us was poured out on His holy soul.

We do not know if God killed the animals before their very eyes. It certainly would have brought before them what death is. However that may have been, it is the life-long privilege of the believer to have the Person and work of Christ before the eyes of his heart -- and meditate on the cause and this answer to the cause -- and then finally to see the Lamb as it had been slain (Rev. 5) come forward to take the seven-sealed book and open the seven seals thereof; for all judgment is committed to the Son (John 5:22).

As to what God had before His eyes when He looked at Adam and Eve, i.e., what God saw, it was what He Himself had provided. So is it with the believer when God looks at us; He sees Christ and His work. His dealings with us as Father if we are naughty is another subject.

Moreover, we may note the fact that in His ways with man, God provided the covering *before*, in His governmental ways, He drove the pair out of Eden. The governmental consequence of the sin was maintained even though they were in a new state of soul before Jehovah Elohim, the sin being forgiven. Forgiveness of sins does not necessarily mean that consequences of sinful behavior are removed.

We Christians should keep in mind that it is God's thought that man's nakedness should be covered. Our covering is a constant reminder that innocence is forever lost.<sup>204</sup>

Finally, it appears that Abel must have known what had transpired, for he brought a sacrifice of the *firstlings* of his flock, *and the fat* (Gen. 4:4; see John 1:29). It is thought that in the sacrifices the fat speaks of the excellency of the sacrifice. Cain brought the fruit of the cursed ground, for faith was not in him. It was fig-leaf religion, works-religion, and his deeds were evil (1 Jn. 3:12).

### *God's Rest Was Broken by Sin*

Regarding the seventh day:

God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it, because that on it he rested from all his work which God had created in making it (Gen. 2:3).

The seventh day was not hallowed because man needs a day of rest in one out of seven. The text states the reason it was hallowed: it is because God rested on that day. The sin of Adam broke God's rest. How can man rest in sin? Thus, subsequently God must work regarding sin and sinners. Therefore:

204. God covering them to relieve them of embarrassment and to provide protection for a hostile environment is beside the point, and detracts from the issue. They could take care of that themselves.

My Father worketh hitherto and I work (John 5:17).

Fallen man has no rest in this creation and if a sinner is to have rest, God must work to bring the sinner into His rest. There *is* a rest coming but it is not a rest for this creation. Heb. 4:9 tells us:

There remains then a sabbatism to the people of God.<sup>205</sup>

The rest of God is not in the present creation. The sixth day of Gen. 1 points to the millennial reign of Christ. Adam and his consort as head of the earthly order points to Christ and His consort (the bride, the Lamb's wife) over the earth in His millennial reign. That still will not be a perfect state. The sixth day is followed by the seventh day, pointing to the eternal rest in the new heavens and new earth. It is a rest that God will share with all who are His -- which does not annul the eternal distinctness of the assembly of God (Eph. 3:21).

It is certainly true that the believer has rest of conscience now (Heb. 9, 10). Having no more conscience of sins does not mean that the believer is not conscious of sinning, but that he knows that sins do not stand against him so as to bring him into judicial rejection by God. He has no more conscience of sins as standing against him regarding acceptance by God. The Lord Jesus called sinners to Himself that they might have this rest of conscience in their souls (Matt. 11:28). Hebrews looks at saints now as in what answers to the wilderness journey of Israel. "This world is a wilderness wide, we have nothing to seek or to choose." The rest spoken of in Heb. 4 is future, for the wilderness is not the place of rest but of endurance in a contrary place. A Christian seeking present rest is in grave danger of failing in watchfulness and faithfulness; and in Hebrews there are warnings to beware of apostasy.

There is a rest entered upon at the rapture of the saints. The Thessalonians had been troubled by a spurious letter allegedly from Paul (2 Thess. 2:2) as if they were in the great tribulation troubles, as if the Day of the Lord had arrived. The thrust was that the troubles and trials they were experiencing were part of that Day. Anticipating what he would write (in ch. 2) he says:

... and to you that are troubled repose with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven ... (1 Thess. 1:7).

They will have been at rest when the day of the Lord strikes, and indeed, accompany Him Who will introduce that day at His revelation from heaven in flaming fire. Our rest is not in the unclothed state, when absent from the body but present with the Lord, but when we receive the body of glory fashioned like His own.

205. The words, "For we enter into rest" (Heb. 4:3) is not saying, 'For we have entered into rest.' The point is that we Christians are of that character, persons who enter into rest, without stating when.

Concerning millennial saints, there is a kind of rest that the nation of Israel will have, but the rest of God is not here in this creation. It will be in the new earth. May that not be reflected in the opening verse of Rev. 21: "... and the sea exists no more"? The Scripture tells us that the wicked are like the troubled sea (Isa. 57:20), but then a totally new state is entered into with no sin present, where righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13). The seventh day was rest concerning God's work in making *this* earth a place for man, its head. Broken, it will never be restored but God will bring His own into a better, higher rest. God never restores an original state but brings in something better.

The matter of God's rest and God's rest being broken, the law and the Sabbath, and the Christian and the Lord's day, is interconnected in understanding what God is doing in displaying His glory in Christ in the heavenly and in the earthly spheres. Following is an extract from J. N. Darby concerning these things.

I shall here add a few words on the subject of the sabbath, submitting them to the spiritual thoughts of my brethren. It is well to be subject to the word. First, the participation in God's rest is what distinguishes His people -- their distinctive privilege. The heart of the believer holds that fast, whatever may be the sign that God has given of it (Heb. 4). God had established it at the beginning; but there is no appearance that man ever enjoyed in fact any share in it. He did not work in the creation {process}, nor was he set to labor or toil in the garden of Eden; he was to dress and keep it, indeed, but he had nothing to do but continually to enjoy. However the day was hallowed from the beginning {Gen. 2:3}. Afterwards the sabbath was given as a memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt (Deut. 5:15), and the prophets specially insist on that point -- that the sabbath was given as a sign of God's covenant (Ezek. 20; Ex. 31:13). It was plain that it was but the earnest of the word, "My presence shall go, and I will give thee rest" (Ex. 31:13; 33:14; Lev. 19:30). It is a sign that the people are sanctified to God (Ezek. 20:12, 13-16, 20; Neh. 9:14; compare Isa. 56:2-6; 58:13; Jer. 17:22; Lam. 1:7; 2:6; Ezek. 22:8; 23:38; 44:24). Besides these passages, we see that, whenever God gives any new principle or form of relation with Himself, the sabbath is added: thus in grace to Israel (Ex. 16:23); as law (Ex. 20:10). See also, besides the verse we are occupied with, Ex. 31:13, 14; 34:21; when they are restored afresh by the patience of God through mediation (ch. 35:2), and in the new covenant of Deuteronomy already quoted in the passage.

These remarks show us what was the radical and essential importance of the sabbath, as the thought of God and the sign of the relation between His people and Himself, though, being only a sign, a solemnity, and not in itself a moral commandment; for the thing signified the association with God in His rest, and is of the highest order of truth in connecting the heart with God. But if that be of the utmost importance, it is of an equal and even higher importance to remember that the covenant between God and the Jewish people is entirely set aside for us, and that the sign of this covenant does not belong to us, although God's rest be yet quite as precious to us, and

even more so; that our rest is not in this creation<sup>206</sup> -- a rest of which the seventh day was the sign; and moreover (which is more important still) that the Lord Jesus is Lord of the sabbath, a remark of all importance as to His Person, and null if He was to do nothing with regard to the sabbath; and that, as a fact, He has omitted all mention of it in the sermon on the mount, where He has given such a precious summary of the fundamental principles suited to the kingdom, with the addition of the name of the Father and the fact of a suffering Messiah, and the revelation of the heavenly reward, making a whole of the principles of His kingdom, and that He uniformly thwarted the thoughts of the Jews on this point; a circumstance which the evangelists (that is, the Holy Ghost {, actually}) have been careful to record. The sabbath itself Jesus passed in a state of death, a terrible sign of the position of the Jews as to their covenant -- for us, of the birth of much better things.

It has been tried, with much trouble, to prove that the seventh day was in fact the first. A single remark demolishes the whole edifice thus reared; it is, that the word of God calls this last the first in contrast with the seventh. What is, then, the first day? It is for us the day of all days -- the day of the resurrection of Jesus, by which we are begotten again unto a lively hope, which is the source of all our joy, our salvation, and that which characterizes our life. Thus we shall find the rest of God in the resurrection. Morally, in this world, we begin our spiritual life by the rest, instead of finding it at the end of our labors. Our rest is in the new creation; we are the beginning, after

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206. {But our rest is not in this creation. We have been rejected out of it, as Christ has been too, who (if man had not been a sinner as he was) had power to bring in rest, when He first came. But now He has introduced us by resurrection into a new and heavenly rest of God, a brighter and a better hope; and the seventh day, the sabbath, the sign of the old covenant, the rest of this creation, in no way meets our hopes. For the writer of the "Record," who puts us under Adam headship, this might do, but not for a Christian; and, even so, it is impossible, for how could a sinner have the rest of God under the old covenant? And what introduces us into this new and better hope? It is resurrection -- the resurrection of our blessed Lord. In the grave on the sabbath (the only rest He found here), He rises up to begin, as the head of the new creation, brighter and better hopes founded on His sacrifice. Hence, to the Christian Church, the first day of the week, as all the New Testament after His resurrection testifies, not the seventh, becomes the sign and pledge of her rest. It is not a law, but established by the testimony of scripture. It is monstrous, as Christians, to say or think that the neglect of that which is not established by law is not ruinous in its nature. We do not pray by law, nor read scripture by law. And this day is marked out in the New Testament. The day of Christ's resurrection He met His disciples assembled; the next first day He did the same. The first day of the week, we read, "the disciples met together to break bread." \* The first day of the week they were to lay by for the poor, as God had prospered them. And in Rev. 1 it is formally called "the Lord's day," with the testimony that John was in the Spirit on it. To make it the seventh day, and a mere change of day, which scripture always positively contradicts, is to confound the old creation (which is under condemnation by sin) with the new, into which we are risen with Christ in resurrection. That corrupt Christianity, which has lost all spirituality, should have lost this altogether, is but too natural; that reformed Christendom could only go back to the law, and make a seventh day of it, is only one of the sad proofs how little its members have known the privileges that God has conferred on us.

\* "When we came together," &c., as the true reading runs, rather strengthens the case as being more distinctively Christian. -- ED. {W. Kelly}.

*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 10:88.}

Christ, who is the Head of it, of that new dispensation.

It is clear, then, that the rest of God cannot, in our case, be connected with the sign of the rest of creation here below. Have we any authority in the New Testament for distinguishing the first day of the week from the others? For my part, I do not doubt it.<sup>207</sup> It is certain we have not commandments like those of the old law; they would be quite contrary to the spirit of the gospel of grace. But the Spirit of God has marked out, in divers manners, the first day of the week, though that day is not made binding upon us in a way contrary to the nature of the economy.<sup>208</sup> The Lord, being raised on that day according to His promise, appears in the midst of His disciples gathered according to His word: the week following He does the same. In the Acts the first day of the week is marked as the day on which they gathered together to break bread.

In 1 Cor. 16 Christians are exhorted to lay by of what they had earned, each first day of the week. In Revelation it is positively called the Lord's day, that is, designated in a direct manner by a distinctive name by the Holy Spirit. I am well aware that it has been sought to persuade us that John speaks of being in spirit in the millennium. But there are two fatal objections to that interpretation. First, the Greek says quite another thing, and uses the same word that is used for the Lord's supper, lordly or dominical -- the dominical supper, the dominical day. Who can doubt as to the meaning of such an expression, or, consequently, can fail to admit that the first day of the week was distinguished from others (as the Lord's supper was distinguished from other suppers), not as an imposed sabbath, but as a privileged day? But the reasoning to prove it refers to the millennium is founded on a totally false idea, in that only a minimum portion of the Revelation speaks of the millennium. The book is about the things which precede it {Rev. 4-19}, and in the place where the expression is found, there is decidedly no mention whatever of it, but of the existing churches, whatever withal might be their prophetic {foreshadowing} character; so that, if we hold to the word of God, we are forced to say that the first day of the week is distinguished in the word of God as being the Lord's day. We are also bound to say, if we desire to maintain the authority of the Son of man, that He is superior to the sabbath -- "Lord of the sabbath"; so that in maintaining for us the authority of the Jewish sabbath as such, we are in danger of denying the authority, the dignity, and the rights of the Lord Jesus Himself, and of re-establishing the old covenant, of which it was the appointed sign, of seeking rest as the result of labor under the law.<sup>209</sup> The more the true importance of the sabbath, the seventh day, is felt, the more we shall feel the importance of the consideration that it is no longer the seventh, but the first day which has privileges for us. Let us take care, on the

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207. {See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 18:74-76; 21:72-74; 24:245-246; 25: 132-133; 31:340-342.}

208. {He refers to the order for the assembly of God.}

209. {As in using the 10 commandments for sanctification.}

other hand, because we are no longer under law but under grace, not to weaken the thought not only of man's rest but of God's -- a governing thought in the whole of the revelation of His relationships with man. The final rest for us is rest from spiritual labors in the midst of evil, not merely from sin; a rest which we, as fellow-laborers, shall enjoy with Him who has said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."<sup>210</sup>

## Chapter 9

### *Driving Man Out of Eden*

#### *Genesis 3:22-24*

He had lost his innocence and purity, and was no longer fit to live in an innocent world.<sup>211</sup>

Yes; and never again will any man on this earth ever live in an innocent world. The new earth will be inhabited by those who will have experienced the new birth, and in changed bodies, will dwell where righteousness, not innocence, dwells (2 Pet. 3:13). God does not restore that which has fallen to an original condition.<sup>212</sup>

### *Jehovah Elohim's Appraisal*

The NT would cause us to believe that the use of "us" is more than the plural of majesty as kings may speak when one says "we." Jehovah Elohim is the triune God, Who alone has intrinsic immortality and dwells in light unapproachable (1 Tim. 6:16).

Man became as Jehovah Elohim in this one point -- knowing good and evil; but not dwelling in light unapproachable, he is not intrinsically holy. Rather, he fell under the dominion of the evil (Rom. 6).

In man's present state as fallen, Jehovah Elohim would not allow it that man have access to the tree of life and have immortality of body in an earthly, sinful condition. Man will never have access to that tree of life, but God has something infinitely better, for His Christ is the true Tree of Life. All who eat of that tree will, in due time, put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53).<sup>213</sup> Endless being in hell is

211. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 12:13.

212. This is true also of, for example, the church. 2 Timothy shows the change and the book of Revelation is the standing witness to the fall, for therein we see that Christ has taken the position of Judge amidst the assemblies (Rev. 2, 3). At Rev. 4 we see "the things which must take place after these things" (Rev. 4:1), i.e., after "the things which are," i.e., after the church period. The Revelation is, characteristically, a book of prophecy. The occasion of giving prophecy is failure, and prophecy marks out what God will judge, providing instruction for the faithful to be separate from what will be judged.

213. Keep in mind that mortal only applies to our bodies (not souls) and means *subject to death*. Adam in innocence had a body capable of dying but was not subject to death in innocence. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). But the soul is never regarded as mortal in Scripture and 1 Tim.

(continued...)



not designated in this way in Scripture. It is well, and instructive, for us to observe the way in which Scripture speaks of things and hold our imaginations and speculations in check.

## Expulsion From Eden

### MAN DRIVEN OUT

Man in his present state is not fit to be in the place made for man in a state of innocency. Though Adam had faith and was covered by the skins of God's providing, there was the exhibition of God's governmental ways upon him. Paradise on earth was never to be regained. Even the millennium will not restore Paradise on earth. The curse on the serpent will remain (Isa. 65:25), there are marshes that will not be healed (Ezek. 47:11), and sinners will be cut off (Isa. 65:20).

In the face of all sin and failure, God has before Him something better; and that which is better is always connected with Christ. Concerning the better Paradise, see Rev. 2:8).

But in contrast to driving man out, there is the thought of God of bringing man near to Himself through the work of Christ, on the ground of redemption. Thus, all the redeemed are brought near. It does not follow that all are in the exact same nearness. In the millennium, Israel will have a distinctive place and privilege. This is seen in Ezek. 40-48, for example. That temple will not have a veil, for that was once-for-all rent. However, the approach to God at that time does not rise up to that of the church now. The temple will have two-leaved doors (Ezek. 41:24) and a priesthood, the sons of Zadok (Ezek. 44:15), the offspring of the faithful Phinehas, for God will make good the covenant made with him (Num. 25:11-12). The Gentile saints are blessed also (Rev. 7:14-17). These things do not rise to the place of the assembly which even now enters the sanctuary above by the new and living way (Heb. 10:19, 20), where Christ is minister of the holy places (Heb. 8:1, 2).

In the new heavens and earth the *earthly* distinction of Israel and the Gentiles is removed and the tabernacle of God (the assembly) is with men, and God Himself shall be with them (men), their God. The church, being *heavenly* in constitution, remains distinctive eternally (Eph. 3:21).<sup>214</sup> Nearness to God is most

213. (...continued)

6:16 does not mean otherwise; that text speaks of God as intrinsically being the only One Who has immortality. The soul of man is immortal derivatively from God's creation.

214. Bear in mind that when the dissolution of the present heavens and earth take place (2 Pet. 3:10), saints in heaven are not changed in order to enter the new heavens and new earth. Those on earth (continued...)

fully realized by the saints forming the body of Christ, for such are taken into favor in the beloved (Eph. 1:6). **Christ's place is our place**, brought so very near to God that nearer we cannot be; for it is Christ's own nearness that is the measure of our nearness. This is distinctive of those composing the assembly of God now.

The blessing that we have is because we are *compelled* to come to the supper celebrating God's grace (Luke 14:23). The servant in the parable points to the divine operation of the Spirit of God. The house furnished with compelled ones will be full, and it is vastly, undescribably, better than the Eden from which Adam was driven out; and it is vastly superior to the blessing of any OT saints and millennial saints, though all saints are born again. There are common blessings and there are distinctive blessings.

### THE CHERUBIM PREVENT RE-ENTRANCE

Adam had been put into the garden "to till it and to guard it" (Gen. 2:15). He failed to guard it, and then the cherubim were placed "to guard the way to the tree of life." In the case of fallen man, the executioners of God's holy government<sup>215</sup> were stationed to ensure that there would be no pretentious claim of man to repossess the garden of Eden in man's fallen state.

A better paradise await us (Rev. 2:7), provided by the work on the cross of Him to whom the cherubic and seraphic characteristics point. Regarding these two angelic orders, J. C. Bayley wrote:

It is difficult to understand why the meaning of the cherub should be generally so misapprehended: the popular idea is expressed by the figure of a baby's face, which represents very correctly the exact reverse of the scriptural idea. The cherubim are described in much detail by Ezekiel (Ezek. 1). It is frequently said that the cherubim meant in Genesis and Exodus are different from those; but on what ground this is said I could never discover. The *onus probandi* of the matter is on the person who makes the assertion, and not on one who -- in the absence of any qualifying terms -- takes a word to mean substantially the same thing in different parts of the same book. In Ezekiel (Ezek. 1-10) it is very apparent that they are majestic and awful descriptions of the faculty and progress of Judgment; as from Isa. 6 we can see that the seraph expresses the faculty and progress of Mercy.

214. (...continued)

must be changed in order to enter it (we are not told details of how) and in Rev. 21:1-5 we see "men" and also "the tabernacle of God," i.e., the church, which remains distinct for eternity (Eph. 3:21). In the OT, the prophecies that speak of "forever" regarding Israel's distinctive blessings last only as long as the present sun and moon. This is really not surprising since Israel's distinctive blessings are of an earthly order. A thorough examination of all relevant to this point will assure the reader of this conclusion. Moreover, to carry Israel's distinctive blessings, including producing offspring, leads to fantastic absurdities, akin to the Mormon notion of infinite worlds that are peopled.

215. Let us reject such notions as that the cherubim were "probably sphinxes or human-head lions." They are spirit beings (Heb. 1:7) that wait upon the divine government.

The cherub has four wings; the seraph six: so Mercy is swifter than Judgment. In Rev. 4 we see in the “beasts” <sup>216</sup> round the throne the characteristics of both united -- the numerous eyes and four faces of the cherub, and the six wings of the seraph -- Mercy and Judgment met; ceasing not day or night in ascribing praise to the Holy Lord God Almighty.

It is sometimes said that the cherub signifies the executive function. Yes, very true, but executive of what? It is without doubt executive of judgment in Ezekiel, and here in Gen. 3 too its glittering sword reveals the same function (though for a merciful end no doubt). Then it may be thought that the fact of the cherubim being on the ends of the mercy seat yields a difficulty; but I think there is singular beauty in the expression of Judgment and Mercy being combined <sup>217</sup> as the basis of God’s dealing with sinners; and especially is it to be remarked that the faces of the cherubim were to be turned downwards towards the mercy seat -- not towards the sinful being -- so that they ever saw the blood which the mercy seat provided as the sinner’s atonement; Judgment looks upon what Mercy provides and maintains.

The cherubim then (perhaps some readers may need to be told that cherubim and seraphim are merely the plural forms of cherub and seraph; they are untranslated words though somewhat distorted in being Anglicized, as most untranslated words are) come forth from the north (the place of judgment, Lev. 1:11) in resplendent glory of cloud and fire. They are four in number -- universal operation: they have four faces -- universality of aspect: they have four wings -- slower than mercy: straight feet, like a calf’s, and like burnished brass -- progress ever stable and judicial; wings joined -- every judicial operation interlocks with all other judicial operations, turning not as they went. Their faces were like a man’s -- intelligence and authority: a lion’s -- majesty and vengeance: an eagle’s -- omniscience and ubiquity: a calf’s (or a cherub’s, these were the faces no doubt which were to be downward toward the mercy seat) -- patience and stability; and they have hands -- the executive faculty.

Whither the Spirit was to go, they went (Ezek. 1:12)

-- the blood is sprinkled before the oil.

They are further characterized by the color of amber or fire, but

the appearance of the wheels and their work {Ezek. 1:16}

a more hopeful color, beryl, connecting itself with the rainbow that ever in Rev. 4 rises in divine promise above the fearful prospects of judgment.

Their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel

216. It is ζῶον, a living being, (not necessarily, however a *creature*) in contrast with θηρίον, a wild beast -- Mark 1:13 and Rev. 13:1. {The living creatures are *symbols* of the judicial power of God; and this power is invested in Christ, to Whom all judgment is committed (John 5:22). As in Him is the solution to the tree of life and the tree of responsibility, so in Him combine the cherubic and seraphic characters.}

217. They were to be beaten out of the same piece of gold.

{Ezek. 1:16}

-- indirect and collateral results, besides the leading characteristic of straightforwardness. They are full of eyes -- see everything before and behind, judging not only results but causes.

Ezekiel says twice that the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels -- not in the amber fire; the spirit of judgment is not in its direct work of destruction, but in the revolutions proceeding from its indirect work, -- the beryl, the rainbow (Ezek. 1:28) the beneficent results. And here also may our spirits well repose, not in the horror of its yellow consuming flames, but there where the heavenly blue mingles with the yellow, -- a verdant hope, like springing grass, of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. <sup>218</sup>

These agents of the divine government wielded “the flame of the flashing sword” (Gen. 3:24), the sword being another symbol of governmental power (cp. Rom. 13:4). Similarly, the flame points to the justice and holiness of the divine government (cp. 2 Thess. 1:7, 8). Thus, the cherubim, the sword, and the flame point to the impossibility of man as a sinner gaining access to paradise. <sup>219</sup>

### IT WAS A MERCY THAT MAN WAS EXPELLED FROM ACCESS TO THE TREE OF LIFE

Likely, we are not accustomed to think of God’s governmental ways as a mercy. Here is something J. N. Darby observed:

But we read, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life”; because God would not let him take of it and live for ever: that would have given him life in sin. Man might have attempted to countervail the whole thing, and to set up the old man thoroughly.

Thus the turning out of the garden was more than judgment; it was mercy, when we come to think of it. It could not be allowed that man should not die in spite of God. So it was judgment, but mercy at the same time in another way. There would have been no possibility of a flood to destroy, or any-thing else to put an end to man’s wickedness. <sup>220</sup>

Man would have been immortal in sin. Is that “eternal life” as Scripture speaks of it? Certainly not. And would an Adam in innocency living forever be what Scripture speaks of as “eternal life”? Certainly not. Cp. John 17:3. Neither is it proper to speak of the those in eternal, conscious punishment as having “eternal life.” *Endless being* is not the same thing as what Scripture means by “eternal life.” This is implicit in the designations regarding the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked:

218. *The Bible Treasury* 15:93-95. See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:71-72, 74-76. The sword turning every way left no loophole for fallen man to get through, though he is always trying to find loopholes in the word of God, as lawyers look for them in the law.

219. For more on the cherubim, see *The Bible Treasury* 1:120-123.

220. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:78.

... for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall go forth; those that have practiced good, to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment (John 5:29).

“An hour” refers to an *epoch*, as is characteristic of the use of the word “hour” in John’s Gospel, for the two resurrections differ in time and in character. Those who are part of the first resurrection live and reign with Christ for the 1000 years (Rev. 20:4-6). The rest of the dead lived not till the 1000 years are completed. So all eventually “live,” yet, concerning the character of the two resurrections, the “resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14) is the *resurrection of life*. This means much more than merely being made alive again, for that will be true of the unjust also, those who have part in the resurrection of judgment.<sup>221</sup>

## *The Quick Departure From What God Commands*

J. N. Darby frequently traced the quick departure from whatever God introduced and the following brief tracing of this instructive line of truth from his pen serves as a fitting summary of the effect of the introduction of “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3), i.e., the old nature, into man’s soul, in the fall:

There is no history of man in innocence. The first thing we find in the history of man is the fall. Children were begotten after the fall, and all else follows. The fall comes in first both historically and morally; and so it has always been. The first thing Noah does is to get drunk. The children of Israel made a golden calf even before they had really got the law, though they had just promised obedience. It was the same thing with the priests, Nadab and Abihu: they offered strange fire the very first day; and then Aaron was forbidden to go into the most holy place in the garments of glory and beauty. Was not all this serious? It is not a question of the “first day” exactly, but of their first act noted in scripture. And it is just as true of the church {Ananias and Saphira, Acts 5}. Peter says, “The time is come that judgment should begin at the house of God”; Paul, that “all were seeking their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s”; and then John says, “even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time.” All the apostles tell us so, though they stemmed the torrent while there. So Jude says, “of these Enoch prophesied, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment,” etc. There they are, he says; more morally there, perhaps, than historically.<sup>222</sup>

**They have turned aside quickly out of the way**

221. The two resurrections have received lengthy treatment in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, available from Present Truth Publishers.

222. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 19:67.

that I commanded them (Ex. 32:8).

## *God’s Way is: Purpose First, Then Man in Responsibility, Then Purpose in Accomplishment*

This heading notes the over-ruling truth concerning God’s purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, in the heavenly and in the earthly spheres, united under Christ’s headship (see Eph. 1:10). It is very important to understand the order of what is stated in this heading. It is the key to understanding what is unfolded in the Scriptures concerning the purpose and ways of God in carrying out that purpose. His purpose is eternal (Eph. 1:11) and has two parts: His purpose regarding the earth with Israel at the center (Isa. 14:24-27) and his purpose regarding Christ and the church. These things are purposed in *eternity*. In *time*, the things purposed are committed to man’s responsibility and man fails in glorifying God in what is committed to his responsibility. Then Christ takes up those things that are purposed, regarding which man has failed, and brings God’s purpose to accomplishment for God’s glory, regarding those very things -- but in a higher way. There is no return to what man fell from. Rather, something better is introduced to fully unfold God’s glory in Christ, in the heavenly and in the earthly spheres.

Now let us look at two quotations from J. N. Darby regarding this matter. First, one which is more of a sketch of this matter and the second one of greater detail.

The first Adam was the image of him that was to come; the last Adam takes the place of the first: only the last Adam was in counsel before the first was in responsibility. The last Adam was first before God, and when the first has failed, the counsels are brought out in the last Adam. You get the first man put in responsibility after the counsel, and then the second Man was brought out in the accomplishment of counsel. That settles all Calvinism and Arminianism and such like systems. All the responsibility goes on until it has been thoroughly brought to an issue at the cross, and man will not have God at all: but in that cross God does a work that lays the foundation of everlasting glory; and then as soon as that is done, all these counsels are revealed, not accomplished yet, but revealed. Thus since the cross man’s responsibility, as such, is over; it is not that he has not debts and sins, or that he was not responsible: all that is true, but God was rejected finally, and God comes and works His own work all alone by Himself. When that is done, He tells out His counsels and what He is going to do. At the beginning of Titus, we read “the acknowledging of the truth” -- the gospel comes and man is responsible to own his ruin --

in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised

before the world began, but hath in due time manifested His word through preaching which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior.

First, He begins with Adam, and that is all ruin. 2 Tim. 1:9 gives us who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel; whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles.

It was all in God's counsels settled in Christ, but when Christ came, it all came out to us. <sup>223</sup>

. . . the purpose of grace, though revealed after, came before the responsibility of man (I do not say the predestination of persons here, but the purposes of grace); while the bringing in of the accomplishment of that purpose came after the question of responsibility was settled as to the first Adam. Thus 2 Tim. 1:9,

Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works --

in which clearly our responsibility is engaged, and to which judgment is applied --

but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death --

the fruit of failure in responsibility --

and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel.

Works according to which responsibility is judged of are not that according to which God has saved us; death, which failure in responsibility brought in, is abolished, rendered void. That is, the principle on which responsibility is tried, and with which judgment deals (for He will judge every man according to his works), is not that according to which we are saved. The purpose of grace goes on another principle; and, further, positive power is come in, in which Christ has risen above and annulled the effect of failure, and which has besides acted in producing its own effects. But the purpose of grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Nor was it brought to light till He came.

So Titus 1:1-3,

The truth which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath

in due times manifested his word by preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior.

This is very plain, only we have to remark that it is eternal life which is promised. So our election leads to the same truth. If God were to choose a part of the world now, it would be as sovereign as doing so before the world: I know in His holy wisdom He does not, but it would be as sovereign as doing it before the world. But He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world; and the effect is, He has chosen us for what is not of the world, but far above the world and all consequences of our responsibility, even if we had fulfilled it; namely, to be before Him as sons, like Christ Himself, according to the *good pleasure of His will*. This was sovereign goodness, giving us a place according to His own counsels.

The whole of that first chapter of Ephesians (be it calling, be it inheritance, and indeed the whole of the epistle) goes on this ground. Our place with the Father, our place with Christ as His body, is not grounded on responsibility in the first Adam, but on purpose accomplished in and through the Second. Romans meets man's responsibility and sin; Ephesians unfolds God's purpose. Hence our part in it is by a new creation. Is the Christian then beyond responsibility? In nowise; but his responsibility is according to his new place, not according to the one he has failed in and been *saved out of*. I will, with the Lord's help, touch on this before I close.

The purpose in the Last Man is before and beyond responsibility in the first.

Let us now examine the development of the two principles of gift and responsibility in the history of the first, for it is full of interest.

The two great principles stood side by side in the garden of Eden. There was the tree of life, of which, as we find afterwards, if a man ate, he would live for ever; and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to which responsibility was attached, and a law, and judgment on failure. Life was there independent of responsibility or works, and a prohibition which involved responsibility. Neither supposed sin in man; for that which was prohibited was perfectly innocent, but that it was prohibited. I do not enter into the details of the fall. It is evident to me that departure from God in distrust of heart, introduced by Satan's wiles, came before lust; and when the heart had departed from God, lust and disobedience came in. The blessed Savior came to win man's confidence back to God, sinner as man was -- no doubt to do a great deal more, but to do that: God was in Christ reconciling, not imputing; and the history of this is of the most affecting grace; but I cannot enter on it here. But the first Adam had taken the path of responsibility, broken through the hedge of the law, was lost; afraid of God, when there, calling him in gracious familiarity, bringing his state home to him; convicted and excluded from God's presence. And the *world* began. It was so filled with violence and corruption, that it was necessarily judged by a present judgment. On this I do not dwell.

In the new world, after it had been set on foot by the formation of nations, by the judgment of man at the tower of Babel, promises came first

without condition,<sup>224</sup> as the apostle reasons in Galatians.

The question of responsibility and righteousness was not raised at all. But still righteousness must be; and the question is raised in the law, and founded entirely on man's responsibility; life is brought in, but made, not the fruit of gift, but of man's satisfying his responsibility. "This do, and thou shalt live." Life was to be had as the consequence of doing what the law required. But man was a sinner, and, if he knew himself, had only to say, "the law, which was ordained for life, I found to be unto death."

But this responsibility of man had a further trial in the way of grace. Not only God sent His prophets to recall Israel to the paths of peace and obedience, but He of whom they had testified came. This was the activity of God's love when man was already a sinner, when he had already broken the law, when his responsibility had had its full result without law and under law, and every mouth was stopped, and all the world guilty before God. But God was active in goodness. He sent the prophets, and at last He sent His Son, saying, "I have yet one Son: it may be they will reverence my Son." This was voluntary goodness when sin and guilt were complete as to human responsibility. To the Jew this had even a double character: a message to them as responsible, seeking for fruit; and pure grace as such making a marriage for the King's Son. But they refused alike the fruit and the invitation. This (although the patience of God even yet visited them in Christ's intercession, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,") completed the sin of man. "Now," said the Lord (John 12), "is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Man's history was complete -- the world judged, Satan its prince; the result of responsibility fully brought out. The world was judged. It had, without law, produced intolerable sin; under law, transgression; and when, being such, it was visited in grace, it refused grace that recalled to law, and grace that invited to blessing. It had proved, not only that it naturally produced sin, and could not be subject to law, but that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God, not only as a Judge, but enmity against God when in ineffable grace He visited the world in mercy, reconciling it to Himself. For His love He had hatred, hatred without a cause. Satan they had, and could not help it; God, when He was there in the power of divine help and goodness, they would not have. Such was sin; such was man. Self-will that would always have itself, and hence not God nor law, which, both of them, will meet with a claim of subjection; self, which cannot be satisfied with self, and hence turns to unsatisfying lusts of things beneath itself; for it has not God, for whom, and to enjoy whom, man was created. Man has not only sinned, he is a sinner.

Neither life nor righteousness was to be had by the law.

224. It is a mistake to suppose that there was any promise to Adam at the fall. In the judgment on the serpent the revelation of the Last Adam, the Seed of the woman, was given, and of His destroying the serpent's power utterly. But the Seed of the woman is just what the first Adam was not. It is the revelation and promise of the Second.

If there had been a law which could have given life, righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Hence the Lord adds in the passage just quoted,

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

It is as rejected by the world, not continuing in it (for they had heard out of the law that Christ should abide for ever), that He becomes, as rejected, the attracting centre to draw men to Him, delivering them from this present evil world. Hence it is too that it is said,

but now once in *the end of the world* (or the consummation of ages {of the trial of the fallen, first man} hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;

that is, it was morally the end of the world. All the ages, all the phases of man's probation had been gone through -- without law, under law, prophets, and the only-begotten Son having come, and in vain tested by grace presented to his responsibility, showing not only that he sinned by his will, but that he was irrecoverable if it was to depend on his nature and will, even with all God could bring forward to try to reclaim it. A new creation, being born again, is not reclaiming the old thing; it is substituting a new. Man is not recoverable as such, but he can be redeemed by, and created anew in, Christ Jesus. Such is the testimony of God.

Man is preached to as lost; Christ (when the full truth came out, man having been tested by grace as well as law) came to seek and to save that which was lost. The law may be presented to a man now to prove it. It is made for the unrighteous, as the en-lightened saint taught by the word knows. Christ may be presented to the sinner too; but if grace works not, he will none of Him; he will prove in his particular case -- what the word has proved of the world in its history -- he is a wilful doer of his own lawless (*ἄνομος*) will, and a hater of God, even if He come in grace. And if God gives every evidence,

Ye will not come to me that ye might have life (John 5).

Thus the principle of man's responsibility was fully tested in every way.

And now comes God's part. Is it mixing up the new thing He brings in with the old, as a principle to recover and rectify it? Is it digging about and dunging and pruning the old tree that He may have good fruit? He has done it, and done it in vain. His word is -- "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" and this was the meaning of Christ's cursing the figtree. {Natural} Israel, even with all the appliances at God's disposal, bore no fruit; it was to bear none for ever. Flesh may remain in us, as the old stock in the grafted tree, as a thing hostile to the Spirit, for exercises and humbling profit, so that we may overcome, and have our senses exercised to discern good and evil; but it is never formed into a new (till glory changes all); it is as a nature hostile and condemned, and only that; not subject to the law of God, nor can be {Rom. 8:7}; enmity against God, where it has a mind at all. The second

{i.e., last} Adam is, morally and spiritually speaking, substituted for the first, does not restore and recover it. Without law it is lawless; with law it transgresses; with Christ it rejects and slays Him, and in him even who has the Spirit as a believer, lusts against it. What is Christ then, if we have followed the effect of responsibility out to “the end of the world,” to the full effects of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Can I give up the knowledge of good and evil and go back innocent to the tree of life? Impossible; not meant to be. Christ, the Second man, the Last Adam, meets the case wholly. How? He bears atoningly the effect of our responsibility. It is wholly, fully met, and not only so, but God Himself glorified in that by which He met it. He died, having been made sin. He is the source of life to us, a new life, and life in the power of resurrection, clean out of the whole scene in which the first Adam fell, for He has died in that and is risen. The whole case resting on the two trees in Paradise, in the law founded on satisfying the responsibility so as to have life, is completely met, by Christ being the source and power of a wholly new life, having perfectly met the responsibility we were lying under in guilt; and done more -- glorified God so as to enter as man into God’s glory. Redemption and eternal life, promised before the world began, the glory of God and conformity to Christ’s image in it—such are the terms of divine grace and the condition of the believer in Jesus; but by death, not by the restoration of the first Adam, but by his death and condemnation, and a new creation in Christ Jesus. This is Christianity in its true power.<sup>225</sup>

225. “The Sabbath: Is the Law Dead, or Am I?” *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 10:271-276. See also 26:256; 29:94ff; *Letters*, 2:166.

## Chapter 10

### *Excursus on “Original Sin”*

Persons mean different things when they speak of original sin. The following quotation may be helpful regarding this:

As to “original sin,” it is requisite that we should know what is meant by it. And in the first place it is necessary carefully to distinguish between sin and sins, -- the root and the fruit. We all have sin in us, as we all have committed sins, and the latter are the fruit of the former. They are most clearly distinguished in Scripture, and are separately, and in some respects differently, treated of. Christ was *made sin* for us {2 Cor. 5:21}, but He *bore our sins* in His own body on the tree 1 Pet. 2:24. Sins are forgiven, sin has been condemned {Rom. 8:3} in Christ as sin-offering on the cross. If we go to the Articles of the Church of England, we find (Art. 9) original or birthsin defined as, “the fault and the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the nature of Adam.” In Rom. 8:3, this is called “sin in the flesh,” (φρόνημα σαρκός). But this is never said to be forgiven, -- God has condemned it in the sacrifice of Christ; and to faith, the Christian is dead to it (Rom. 6:2, 7), though sin is not dead in him (1 John 1:8). Even in the case of the true Christian, as a matter of fact sin remains in him till he dies (or puts off this body of humiliation), though his sins have been forgiven. How absurd then is it to say that original sin has been washed away in baptism! Evidently the corrupt nature is not washed away, and as to the new or divine nature and reconciliation to God, that depends upon true and individual faith in Christ, and not upon baptism. As we have seen, “by His own will begat He us with the word of truth” {James 1:18} -- this is irrespective of any ordinance. As regards the sin of the world, the work is done in virtue of which it will in due time be removed, viz., the work of Christ on the cross: as yet, however, all that can be said is, “we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19).

The sin of the world consequently is no more yet removed, than sin in the flesh is removed from human nature. In the eternal state no trace of sin will exist in the heavens, or on the earth, which will then have undergone its baptism with fire; but, terrible to think, or to say, apart for ever, and in the place of punishment, Satan and all evil doers will be, where they can no more mar or blot the rest of creation . . .<sup>226</sup>

We will now trace the history of original sin from extracts from J. N. Darby, written in a conversational style:

H. . . . The history of the Bible is the history of original sin; the doctrine of the Bible is the doctrine of God's putting it away for ever.

226. *The Bible Treasury*, 14:148.

W. You must explain yourself a little.

H. I will. Does not the history of our race (I do not say our creation) begin with the declaration that Adam, fallen and driven out from God, begat a son in his image after his likeness {Gen. 5:3}, the fruit being shown in sin against his brother {Gen. 4:8}, as Adam's sin had been against God, and so death being actually brought into the world, but the death of the pious marking the predominance of evil?

W. It does.

H. That is the early history of original sin -- sin attached to our origin and so in our nature. Further, when the Flood had swept away the insupportable violence and corruption of the world, and the world began again in Noah, in whom rest was given concerning the work of men's hands, and the curse taken so far off the ground, did he not turn the blessing into drunkenness -- he to whom government had been entrusted, and shame and a son's wickedness inaugurate the new career of man?

W. Yes.

H. This is the history of original sin. Did not man then sink -- what there is no appearance of his doing before -- into idolatry, having built a tower to establish his own will?

W. True.

H. This too is. The form of the world in nations and peoples is founded on it. God then called out Abraham from the midst of this idolatry, and after a lapse of some 400 years, so that a people should be formed, brings them out of Egypt with a high hand, leads them to Sinai to give them His law -- the rule of life for a child of Adam. What did they do before they had time to get it graven on stone, though they had heard the voice of God out of the midst of the fire?

W. They made the golden calf.

H. Such then is man according to the history of the Bible; and so you will find it throughout. Before the consecration of Aaron and his sons was over, Nadab and Abihu had offered strange fire and were slain; and Israel, responsible under the priesthood, closed its history by the ark's being taken, and judgment coming on the priesthood itself in Eli: so that the whole system was closed, for without the ark there was no regular association with God at all. God interfered by a prophet; but this was sovereign grace. When the royalty was established, Solomon fell into idolatry. And at last Lo-ammi, Not my people, was written on the chosen people of God; where He had set His name that it might be owned in the midst of the universal corruption and idolatry of the world, and where grace and warning had dealt "till there was no remedy." When God set up a head of Gentile power in Nebuchadnezzar, he sets up an idol and persecutes the saints, and the whole series of these monarchies takes the character of unintelligent ravenous beasts. But, chief and last of all (save special mercy on His intercession), when God declared -- "I have yet one Son, it may be they will reverence my Son when they see him"; when they saw Him, what did they do?

W. They said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours."

H. They had then "no cloak for their sin." "They had both seen and hated both him and his Father." There was a reprieve through His intercession on the cross, and the Holy Ghost . . . announced a glorified Christ, and the open door of repentance, but they would not go in. They closed the history of man with this word of judgment -- "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." A judged world, a broken law, persecuted prophets, the slain Just One, a resisted Spirit, sum up the history of man, the history of original sin. Man "must be born again." . . .

H. God has not said in vain, "All the imaginations of his heart are only evil, and that continually"; and this said too in grace, "I will no more curse the ground for man's sake, for the imaginations," &c. It was not merely the previous wickedness of the antediluvians. They were gone. It was His motive for dealing with the race no more in that way. So the Lord, "Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries," &c. Did you ever see it stated in scripture that good things came out of his heart naturally? God has tried {tested} it in every way. It was lawless, broke law, killed His Son, resisted His Spirit.

W. I see what you mean by scripture being the history of original sin; and in truth it is so. The dealings of God in patient mercy, which we find there, in truth only brought this out, so that we might have a scriptural delineation, a history which proved that sin; which, after all, is the history (however far that sin may be developed in them) of our own hearts. For self-will, law-breaking, slighting Christ, resisting the appeals of God, was not confined to antediluvians or Jews.

H. No; it is the picture of my heart brought carefully out. The scripture hath concluded *all* under sin, that all might come on the ground of pure mercy. And you will see that, developed only in promise in Adam's time, then by prophecy, in figures under the law (in spite of senseless rationalist judgment as to them), in accomplishment in Christ, in testimony to His glory by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the putting of it away is the great *doctrine* of scripture. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin [not the "sins," as often falsely cited] of the world" {John 1:29}. It is changing the whole principle on which the world, as such, stood, as we saw before. So again, "But now once in the consummation of ages" -- these times of testing responsible man from Adam to Christ -- "he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" {Heb. 9:26}. This is morally founded, as to the glory of God, on the death of Christ; and man after Him is introduced by resurrection into the new condition, beyond sin, consequent on that glorifying of God. At the same time there is the bearing of sins for the redeemed; but that is not our subject now . . .

H. But it is better to know ourselves; and the largest supplies of grace, and divine objects, are there to take us out of ourselves. In the Philippians we have the pattern of it in one of like passions with ourselves. There, in the picture of the christian normal state, the flesh (save having no confidence in it) and sin are not mentioned. Yet the writer had a thorn in the flesh to keep

it down. If we were perfectly humble, we should not need humbling; but we do, all of us, even Paul, as we see in this case. Christ, then, has been manifested to put away sin out of God's sight, out of man's heart, and out of the world. The great work which does it is accomplished, the results not all accomplished in power. He who has not judged original sin has not that estimate of the new nature animated by the Spirit of God which is on God's side against sin. I judge the individual in no way. He may hate what he sees in himself of actual sin. I speak of abstract moral truth. He who does not see the principle and nature and guilt of sin, as it stands in man's self-will, has not the estimate which the knowledge of a holy nature in reconciliation to God gives.<sup>227</sup>

227. "Inspiration and Interpretation," in *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 9: 289-291, 293. See also *ibid.*, 19:69-70; *Letters*, 2 239.

## Chapter 11

### *Covenant Theology and Adam: C. I. Scofield's Eight Covenants and the Seven Major Covenants of Scripture*

#### *What a Covenant Is*

Man's covenants are agreements of terms mutually consented to and ratified in some accepted manner. But God's covenants are from Himself -- without mutually considered and agreed upon terms. J. N. Darby remarked:

*Covenant*, when used in connection with the Lord, is always, it seems to me, some order established by God and announced to man, according to the terms of which He enters into relationship with man, or according to which man is to approach Him.<sup>228</sup>

W. Kelly regarded it in the same uncomplicated way:

In divine things it means an order established by God and made known to the men concerned, according to which He forms relations with them, and they walk before Him.<sup>229</sup>

#### *C. I. Scofield's Eight Covenants*

The following note is given to Heb. 8:8 in *The Scofield Reference Bible*.

The Eight Covenants, Summary:

- (1) The Edenic Covenant (Gen. 1. 25-28, note) conditioned the life of man in innocence.
- (2) The Adamic Covenant (Gen. 3. 14-19, note) conditions the life of fallen man and gives promise of a Redeemer.
- (3) The Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9. 1, note) establishes the principle of human government.
- (4) The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15. 18, note) founds the nation of Israel, and confirms, with specific additions, the Adamic promise of redemption.
- (5) The Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19. 25, note) condemns all men, "for that all have sinned."
- (6) The Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 28.-30. 3, note) secures the final restoration and conversion of Israel.

228. *Synopsis*, 1:18, note.

229. *F. E. R. Heterodox*, London: T. Weston, p. 57, 1902.



(7) The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7. 8-17, note) establishes the perpetuity of the Davidic family (fulfilled in Christ, Mt 1. 1; Lk. 1.31-33; Rom. 1. 3), and of the Davidic kingdom, over Israel and over the whole earth; to be fulfilled in and by Christ (2 Sam. 7. 8-17; Zech. 12. 8; Lk. 1. 31-33; Acts 15. 14-17; 1 Cor. 15. 24).

(8) The New Covenant rests upon the sacrifice of Christ, and secures the eternal blessedness, under the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. 3. 13-29), of all who believe. It is absolutely unconditional, and, since no responsibility is by it committed to man, it is final and irreversible.<sup>230</sup>

The second covenant in this list is non-existent. The sixth, his "Palestinian Covenant,"<sup>231</sup> is an adjunct to the Mosaic Covenant, involving its conditional character, taking up the unconditional land promise to Abraham, by the first, fallen man under trial to show that he cannot obtain the promise by performance and merit. We will consider the alleged "Adamic Covenant" shortly and the other covenants as we come to them. Missing in this list is the covenant of the priesthood for Phinehas. It is necessary to understand this covenant in connection with the Davidic Covenant because it is related to Christ's office as priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:13) in the millennium, for then the sons of Zadok, offspring in the line of Phinehas shall officiate under Christ's millennial, Melchizedec priesthood.

Regarding the alleged eighth, the eternal blessedness that we Christians have (cp. Eph. 3:21) is not secured under the Abrahamic Covenant or any covenant. The distinctive Church position and blessing is not *of, through, or by* any covenant. The Church is above ages and outside covenants. Indeed, C. I. Scofield's "Church age" is also a false age. We are presently in the Mosaic age, though the Mosaic system is ended. The designation, "the end of the age," is the end of the Mosaic age, which will be displaced by the Messianic age when the new covenant is put into force. The Church is a heavenly work going on meanwhile as the Mosaic age continues until displaced by the age to come.

## The Seven Major Covenants of Scripture

There are, then, *seven major* covenants and these *complete* God's dealings with man in the earth from the beginning to the end (the church is not viewed as seated in the earth, but seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, though it is here concerning testimony). The New Covenant is the seventh and final one. After that there is something entirely new, the new heavens and earth in which there are no

230. New York: Oxford, pp. 1299-1300, 1917. The *New Scofield Reference Bible* carries essentially the same note.

231. Later when we come to the consideration of the covenant, I shall speak of it as the Land-Tenure Covenant.

covenants nor a continuation of any covenant from the present earth. Israel will not have eternal distinctiveness, though the church does (Eph. 3:21). The seven covenants are:

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Adam (in the garden) | obedience covenant       |
| 2. Noah                 | merciful covenant        |
| 3: Abraham              | <b>gracious covenant</b> |
| 4. Moses                | obedience covenant       |
| 5. Phinehas             | <b>gracious covenant</b> |
| 6. David                | <b>gracious covenant</b> |
| 7. New                  | <b>gracious covenant</b> |

The covenant with Noah is a *merciful* covenant of the Creator for the preservation of the creation in view of the working of sin. It is a **general** covenant not made with a select group. Without arguing about graciousness on God's part, to have made this covenant, I have used *merciful* covenant to distinguish it from the **particular, gracious** covenants of promise, which are four of the seven named in Scripture, starting with Abraham, the depository of promise, coupled with calling to a path of separation, belonging exclusively to Israel. Concerning God making these covenants good to Israel, these have in view only saints. These four are "the covenants of promise" of Eph. 2:12 which belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3-5), but we know that when they are made good to Israel, all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26). They shall all be righteous (Isa. 60:21). Thus, "the spiritual Israel," composed of ethnic Jews, will be blessed under Messiah's reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23) -- the Church is not "the spiritual Israel." The Mosaic covenant is an *obedience* covenant, a provisional covenant in the trial of the first man to show that he was not recoverable. The issue was, could the first man gain the promises to Abraham by obedience and performance. The answer was that the first man, under the obedience covenant, put the second man on the cross. Gal. 3:17-20 shows that the Mosaic system did not annul the promises to Abraham and God will make good on those promises in the millennium under the new covenant. Three of the gracious, unconditional covenants of promise come to realization under the new covenant. It should hardly need saying that *new covenant* has particular reference to the *old covenant*, meaning the Mosaic system.

Another point before we pass on is that we should recognize that the order of

- (1) promise to Abraham;
- (2) attempting to secure the blessing by obedience of Israel under the Mosaic system, which failed; and,
- (3) God making good the promise to Abraham through the second man, in the millennium,

is in accordance with the principle -- which is warp and woof of God's ways -- namely:

But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual (1 Cor15:46).

In Israel's case, under the Mosaic system Israel was the *natural Israel* (though, of course, God caused some to be born of Him) and in the millennium Israel will be the *spiritual Israel*, all being born again.

In concluding this brief survey, we may note that the Church, then, is not a participant in covenants, all of which have to do with God's ways in the earth. And this is quite in keeping with

- (1) the mystery of Christ and the Church, concerning which silence was kept in former ages, and was hidden from ages and generations, hidden throughout the ages in God (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3); and,
- (2) the covenants of promise being for Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh (ethnic Jews, Rom. 9:2-5).

## C. I. Scofield's First Two Dispensations

See J. N. Darby's *Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages, Administrations, and the Two Parentheses*, as well as *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, for the truth brought out in the 1800s regarding dispensational truth.<sup>232</sup> All that material will not be repeated here.

There are some elements of C. I. Scofield's system which are true but the system is false. The first objection is his scheme of the testing of man, a scheme that has two important errors, errors necessary to the artificial scheme of seven dispensations. His definition of a dispensation is:

A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture (SRB 5, n4).<sup>233</sup>

These seven are:

The First Dispensation: Innocency . . . Conscience (Gen. 3:23); Human Government (Gen. 8:20); Promise (Gen. 12); Law (Ex. 19:8); Grace (John 1:17); Kingdom (Eph. 1:10) (SRB 5, n5).

This scheme is the classic seven dispensations scheme. This system sets aside the truth that the testing of man ceased with the cross. The testing is the testing of the fallen, first man to show that he was not recoverable. The final test was Christ, and the revelation of the Father in the Son. The conclusion was:

232. Available from Present Truth Publishers.

233. This reference means *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 5, note 4, 1917 edition.

but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24), and crucified Him. All is then over with the trial of the first man. We have been over this subject previously.<sup>234</sup> Christ then rose from the dead as the beginning of the new creation, a heavenly work that is outside of, and above, ages. Thus He took His place as the last Adam, *displacing* the standing that the fallen, first man had before God as still under trial to show that he was not recoverable. **There is no trial of the first man after the cross.** There are no ages of trial after the cross.<sup>235</sup> Since the rejection of Christ, God has no further open dealings with the world (it lies in the wicked one -- 1 John 5:19) until Christ comes in glory and takes the kingdoms of this world. And that is not to test man (that was settled at the cross) but to crush all opposition by power. Moreover, the assembly of God is under no covenant, neither under the Covenantist's Covenant of Grace, nor C. I. Scofield's covenant of grace, nor under the modification of this by some of his followers, the Church covenant, nor the invention of L. S. Chafer called a church new covenant (as if there are two new covenants).

The error of seven dispensations wherein man is tested is false; and it began as false with the alleged "dispensation of innocency" and the "dispensation of conscience." At the end of Chapter 3 there is a chart showing the distinction of innocency from the trial of the fallen, first man. The testing of a man in innocency is of a different order than testing fallen man to see if he is recoverable. It is its own, distinctive thing. The merging of this trial of man in innocency into a trial of fallen man is a scheme, an imposition upon Scripture, and it is wrong at both ends, and alerts us to examine the middle carefully.

God created man innocent. He did not dispense innocency. Did God dispense innocency to man to administer it? Man fell and in the fall acquired a bad conscience with the knowledge of good and evil. God did not dispense conscience with the knowledge of good and evil. Did God dispense the knowledge of good and evil (and/or conscience) to man to administer it? Contrast that with Noah, to whom God dispensed government. Noah was not created in government, nor did he do something so that he acquired government. Weigh the non-analogous situation between the *dispensing* of government to Noah and the *creation* of man as innocent, and his *acquisition* of a bad conscience with the knowledge of good and evil in the fall. I am sorry if you cannot see the difference

234. See also my *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1; and my J. N. Darby's *Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages and Administrations, and the Two Parentheses*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

235. Moreover, there is no such thing as a "Church Age," another serious fallacy in the scheme. We are in the Mosaic age. The phrase "the end of the age" refers to the end of the Mosaic age -- hardly to the end of an alleged church age. The efforts to handle this phrase consistently with the false notion of a "Church Age," by followers of the Scofieldian system are discussed in *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1.

in kind.

There was no second dispensation, an alleged “dispensation of conscience.” It is quite true that there was *an age* <sup>236</sup> from the fall until the flood when God left man to his acquired bad conscience with the knowledge of good and evil -- forming an epoch in the testing of the first, fallen man to show that he was not recoverable.

## C. I. Scofield's First two Covenants

### THE FIRST, OR EDENIC COVENANT

There is reason to believe that it is scriptural to speak of a covenant in Eden judging from what is said in Hos. 6:7. Adam transgressed the covenant. What did he transgress? He disobeyed the commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why drag into this covenant what is written in Gen. 1:28-30 as in SRB, p. 5, n.1? Adam did not transgress those things. And what is the result of merging those things into an “Edenic Covenant”? Merrill F. Unger gave essentially the same contents to this covenant as did C. I. Scofield; and he wrote of the “Edenic Covenant”:

... having been abrogated by the Fall, God placed man under the Adamic Covenant. <sup>237</sup>

### “THE SECOND, OR ADAMIC COVENANT”

The Adamic Covenant conditions the life of fallen man -- conditions which must remain till, in the kingdom age, “the creation also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:21) (SRB, p. 9, n.1)

Then seven conditions are listed, which are on-going consequences of the fall, and are true except stating that the changed state of the woman involved man's headship, which is not so, as Adam was head before the fall and after the fall.

Why call this a covenant -- unless to establish a scheme of covenants; or, to offer a counter scheme to the Covenantists' alleged Covenant of Grace made by God at this very time when this alleged “Adamic Covenant” was made? With

236. Ages and dispensations are not the same thing.

237. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1981, 1:13. William MacDonald, *The Believer's Bible Commentary*, Old Testament, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, p. 41, follows the SRB concerning these two covenants. He adds “Solomonic Covenant” to the eight named in the SRB, thus making nine. He seems to follow the seven dispensations system also (p. 106). The New Scofield Reference Bible (NSRB), p. 5, n. 2 follows the eight covenant scheme. Concerning the dispensations, it has a shift from the SRB dispensation of “Grace (John 1:17),” (p. 5, n. 5), to “Church (Acts 2:1),” p4, n. 1.

whom was this “Adamic Covenant” made? Since this covenant “conditions the life of fallen man” was it a covenant made with fallen man? Is it supposed to be a “covenant of promise”? That could not be because Gentiles are strangers to the covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12). Is it a covenant of works, like the law? No, for there are no works specified to perform to please God. Well, there is no covenant at all. The things listed are governmental inflictions by God upon fallen man.

Apparently there was an effort to find a name for this imagined covenant and so the Edenic, or first alleged covenant, was not called the Adamic covenant so that the name Adam could be used for *this* non-existent covenant.

The covenant with Adam was a covenant from God's side only. It called for obedience to the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil along with a penalty for disobedience. Adam “transgressed” (Hos. 6:7) and came under what we call governmental consequences, the results of God's *moral government*, inflicted as a result of his sin. The divine imposition of these governmental consequences do not constitute another covenant with Adam fallen. There was no second covenant until what is often called the Noahic covenant -- which was another covenant from the divine side only. The Noahic covenant was made after the epoch of fallen man left to his bad conscience and to the knowledge of good and evil, having filled the earth with violence and corruption, was swept away by the flood. And with the dispensing of human government to man, the first dispensation, or administration, began. Human government was given in view of the pre-flood condition -- a restraint now set upon fallen man. Man has failed in this also, as in all else. But in the kingdom, the Son of Man will take government into His hands and carry out God's will perfectly, for the appointed time, the 1000 years. We read in 1 Cor. 15:24-28 about this, and that when all is done He will *deliver up* the kingdom. He is the first one concerning whom it did not need to be *taken away* -- having perfectly discharged the kingdom rule, He Himself *delivers up* the kingdom.

## W. Kelly's Remarks in 1857 Concerning No Dispensation From Adam to the Flood

Doubtless, from the fall to the flood, God did not leave Himself without witness; but the period was not characterized by government entrusted to man. The law was not then given to a people separated from all others by peculiar privileges, nor had Gentiles, as yet, been suffered to exercise universal empire in the sovereignty and providence of God. These things and more (not to speak of the developed dealings of promise and grace) came in subsequently to the deluge, and they are the subject-matter of the dispensations, the millennium included, when every principle which has crumbled in the feeble hands of man, of Israel, and of the Gentile, shall be established and maintained, in manifest unfailing glory, by the Lord Jesus

Christ. They will flow on till the judgment of the dead before the great white throne terminates such displays of God's ways among men, and ushers in the everlasting state; when they who despised or abused the holy grace of God shall meet the due reward of the evil which they feared not; when the family of the second Adam shall enjoy the blessedness procured for them by their Head, in whom they, while here, had trusted.

For, looking more closely at these early days, do we find anything like a period regulated, under God, on distinctive principles? The facts are as simple as they are opposed to the notion. There was a positive place and command given to Adam.

And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Obviously such was not the tenure outside Eden, or afterwards. It was not a principle which governed men, or any portion of men, during a finite period. The tree of life, the creation-tree, was barred from the outcasts by divine power; and this, not in judgment only, but, in a certain sense, in mercy. For man was in sin, and death was the declared penalty. Not to have executed the sentence would have dishonored God, would have introduced hopeless confusion into His dealings, would have set His words openly at naught. And besides, what could "living for ever," then and thus, have been but never-ending misery to him whose sin was unremoved? But if the transient condition of Paradisiacal innocence differs essentially from the fallen, sinful humanity which succeeded, there was no new system set up thereon by God, no subsequent human test given to the antediluvians. Man sinned then without law, as afterwards he sinned under it.

It will be said, perhaps, that the first Adam had no sooner broken down, than God appeared and announced the last Adam. There is no doubt that such is the bearing of the judgment which God predicted of the serpent in Gen. 3. Unquestionably, also, His providential might and wisdom secretly ruled then, as always. But the question is of distinctive dispensational dealings on God's part, extending through the antediluvian period; and the answer is, there were none. These ages, ruled by characteristic features impressed on them by God, find their suited place and scope in the space that intervenes between the deluge and the "end" (1 Cor. 15), when, the kingdom being given up, God shall be all in all.<sup>238</sup>

## Covenant Theology's Covenant of Grace

238. *The Bible Treasury* 1:119. See also J. N. Darby's *Teaching Regarding Dispensations, Ages and Administrations -- and the Two Parentheses*, available from the publisher.

There are three covenants that many Covenantists hold that allegedly cover what God has done and is doing. It begins with a Covenant of Redemption of the Father and the Son covenanting together in eternity. The Father covenanted with the Son that He would be the redeemer of the elect and be their head; and the Son covenanted with the Father to die for the elect. Observe that this involves two parties agreeing. At any rate, there is no such covenant; this is a theological figment.

The next covenant is called the Covenant of Works. If Adam would obey God he would have eternal life<sup>239</sup> as a consequence of his obedience; if not, Adam as the appointed head of the race would die and pay eternal consequences, plunging the race into these consequences of disobedience.

Adam fell, and then, allegedly, in Gen. 3:15 God instituted another covenant called the Covenant of Grace. God promises the elect sinner salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner believes and promises a life of faith and obedience.

The other covenants are administrations of this covenant of grace; yes, even, amazingly, the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, each covenant is an unfolding of redemption.<sup>240</sup>

The idea of two parties agreeing is an idea drawn from humans dealing with each other and Covenantism has not only projected this on to divine covenants regarding man, but projects this on the Father and the Son, as if divine Persons would bind one another in the way supposed.

In the mid-1800s J. N. Darby wrote:

*Covenant*, when used in connection with the Lord, is always, it seems to me, some order established by God and announced to man, according to the terms of which He enters into relationship with man, or according to which man is to approach Him.<sup>241</sup>

However, in more recent times there are Covenantists who take the view that the covenants are in the form of Near Eastern suzerainty treaties. After stating that:

When God makes a covenant with His creatures, He alone establishes its

239. The covenant of works "was addressed to Adam in his state of innocence, and its provision of eternal life was directed only to the first (representative) man in that original condition" (Peter Golding, *Covenant Theology*, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, p. 113 (2004).

240. Viewing the Adamic covenant as "a covenant of works" (rather than as "a covenant of life", as Charles Hodge called it), Peter Golding said, "the covenant of works is not the old covenant {meaning, the Mosaic Covenant}, and it is not redemptive, as the Mosaic Covenant was" (*ibid.*, p. 113).

241. *Synopsis* 1:18, note. There is no reason to pattern divine covenants after how man patterns his, any more than that the Lord used the word *hades* to denote what the Greeks thought about *hades*. The Lord used it for the unseen, not with the mythology of the Greeks attached to it. So did Peter with the use of the word *tartarus*. God's use of the word *covenant* is to be learned from *His* covenants.

terms . . . ,

and mentioning the Noahic Covenant, the alleged Adamic Covenant of Works, and the Abrahamic Covenant, *The Geneva Study Bible* says of the Mosaic Covenant:

God's covenant with Israel at Sinai is in the form of the ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties. These are covenants imposed unilaterally by a powerful king on a vassal king and a servant people.<sup>242</sup>

That approaches what J. N. Darby wrote, but does not change the character of Covenant Theology.

Now, we do not say that Covenantism does not have in view the glory of God; it does, but Covenantism is about God's glory in the salvation of the elect, and that this is what unifies the Scriptures. Well, God *is* glorified in the salvation of the elect, but this is not what unifies Scripture. The matter is much, much, much grander than this, even God's glory in Christ manifested in the heavenly and in the earthly sphere. What is meant by this in dispensational truth is not the Covenantist view.

And so, Covenantism makes the church, which is Christ's body to be the "spiritual Israel," and sees all of the saints of all ages as composing the church.<sup>243</sup> It regards Adam as having had the law of 10 commandments, and that the Christian is under the moral law. Thus, there is no future for a distinct Israel to which the prophecies apply; and where some Covenantists believe in a future for Israel, Israel will be part of the church.

242. Nashville: Nelson, p. 30, 1995.

243. L. Berkhof wrote:

Up to the time of Abraham there was no formal establishment of the covenant of grace. While Gen. 3:15 already contains the elements of this covenant, it does not record a formal transaction by which the covenant was established. It does not even speak explicitly of a covenant. The establishment of the covenant with Abraham marked the beginning of the institutional church {Melchizedec was outside it, then}. In pre-Abrahamic times there was what may be called "the church in the house." There were families in which true religion found expression, and undoubtedly also gathering of believers, but there was no definitely marked body of believers, separated from the world that might be called the Church {where is *that* Church today?}. (*Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 295, fourth ed. (1941).

Peter Golding wrote:

The Abrahamic Covenant 'marked the beginning of an institutional church'. What we see in Abraham and his family are the beginnings of the church as a visible community of believers and their children. Here again, there is frequent misapprehension in that many think of the church, the *ekklesia*, as beginning at Pentecost. But according to Paul's illustration in Romans 11, Gentile Christians are grafted into a stock already in existence, the stock of Abraham (*Covenant Theology*, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, p. 134, 2004).

The Olive tree does not figure the Church. It represents the line of privilege.

There are Covenantists who would like to change the name of the Covenant of Grace for reasons we need not inquire into. The system remains as described above, except that some Covenantists start with the Abrahamic Covenant. Let us now consider the idea that God established a Covenant of Grace with Adam.

## *Alleged Initiation of the Covenant of Grace with Adam*

The Covenant of Grace is said to be a covenant first made with Adam and other covenants are administrations of this over-all covenant.

Speaking of the representative position of Adam and of Christ, the *Geneva Study Bible* says:

In each case the representative involved those whom he represented in the fruits of his personal action, whether it was for their wealth or their woe. This divinely chosen arrangement, whereby Adam determined the destiny of his descendants, has been called the "covenant of works," though this precise phrase does not occur in Scripture.<sup>244</sup>

Then, Adam and Eve having not obeyed:

. . . God did not destroy them, but revealed His covenant of grace by promising a Savior (Gen. 3:15). God's covenant rests on his promise, as is clear from His promise to Abraham.<sup>245</sup>

The sudden shift to Abraham is interesting. The Abrahamic Covenant is indeed a covenant of promise, so here a link is sought to the idea that a promise was made to Adam, since promise is of the essence of a covenant of grace. We can see this attempted connection with Abrahamic promise at work in the next quotation. The Covenantist, Peter Golding, has provided us with a view of the initiation of the Covenant of Grace.

According to Robertson, 'If those elements essential for the characterisation of a relationship as "covenantal" are present, the relationship under consideration may be designated as covenantal despite the formal absence of the term' [Robertson, 1980:25]. Working on this principle, Louis Berkhof does not hesitate to assert: 'The first revelation of the covenant is found in the protevangel, Gen. 3:15.... It certainly does not refer to any formal establishment of a covenant.... At the same time Gen. 3:15 certainly contains a revelation of the essence of the covenant' [Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*:25].

Ultimately, it is the presence of all the elements essential to the existence of a covenant that justifies the use of covenant terminology to describe man's relationship to God prior to Noah. In full sovereignty, God monergistically established a relationship bond involving a commitment for

244. Nashville: Nelson, p. 13, 1995.

245. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

life and death. Although man fell and came under the sanctions of that 'Covenant of Works', God immediately revealed to him in embryonic form a redemptive economy, with a promise of victory for the woman's seed (a human Saviour) over the serpent and his malice ['In this mother-promise is contained nothing less than the announcement and institution of the covenant of grace' Bavinck, 1956:271]. In the words of the Westminster Confession: 'Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace' (VII;3). To be sure, there is no explicit record of a separate covenant entered into by God with Adam, but there is one interpretation only which does justice to the scriptural data, and that is the one 'which takes seriously the claims of the Bible that God truly entered into covenant with unfallen Adam, and that he again entered into covenant with fallen Adam' [Young, 1958:69]. This fact is basic to a true understanding of all Old Testament revelation, and upon it all subsequent revelation is built. What is certain, however, is the 'record of the enjoyment of covenant-grace before the ratification of the Abrahamic Covenant,' e.g. Genesis 5:22; 6:8-9 [Campbell, 1973:25].<sup>246</sup>

The *assumption* is that God cannot show grace without it being the Covenantist's notion of "covenant-grace." The *dictum* is that all grace shown by God is "covenant-grace". As *The Geneva Study Bible* states:

The covenant framework embraces the entire economy of God's sovereign grace.<sup>247</sup>

Note also the viewpoint that the Covenant of Grace was there since Adam's fall, but it "comes to expression" in the Abrahamic Covenant. We deny both the presence of a Covenant of Grace and its thus "coming to expression." At the same time we acknowledge that Enoch "walked with God," that Noah "found favor in the eyes of Jehovah" (Gen. 8:6), and "was a just man" and "walked with God" (Gen. 6:9), all because of God's uncovenanted grace, and that such was Job's case also. This alleged Covenant of Grace is a fabrication (just as is C. I. Scofield's second covenant, the Adamic Covenant). During the epoch from Adam's fall to the flood men were left to both their conscience and the knowledge of good and evil, acquired in the fall, resulting in an earth filled with violence and corruption -- God's grace meanwhile being operative in certain ones according to His sovereignty.

Returning to the *Geneva Study Bible* comment on Gen. 3:15, notice the words "revealed his covenant of grace." Well, God must have revealed it to the serpent to which He addressed the words found in Gen. 3:15. True, Adam was standing by listening but there is no basis in Gen. 3 to think otherwise than that Adam was

246. *Covenant Theology, The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition*, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, p. 148-149, 2004.

247. Nashville: Nelson, p. 30, 1995.

in a lost state of soul when God spoke Gen. 3:15 to the serpent. I suggest that this shows what a flimsy basis there is for a far-reaching Covenant of Grace "having begun to be dispensed to men."

## *The Covenant of Grace is Alleged to be the Channel for All God's Grace to Men*

John Murray stated:

The Covenant of Grace from the earliest period of the Reformation was conceived of in terms of the administration of grace to men and belonging, therefore, to the sphere of historical revelation. It was regarded as having begun to be dispensed to men in the first promise given to Adam after the fall, but as taking concrete form in the promise to Abraham and progressively disclosed until it reached its fullest realisation in the New Covenant.<sup>248</sup>

This *conceiving* "from the earliest period of the Reformation" is a departure from Scripture, a theological construct embracing the whole Scripture, lowering the true position of the saint now down to something like a millennial Jew.

Why is it important to Covenant Theology to have a Covenant of Grace begin then? Because otherwise regenerate persons would be left out of blessing based in a covenant, and the object of Covenant theology is to include all sovereign grace as administered through the basis of covenant.

The covenant framework embraces the entire economy of God's sovereign grace . . . Salvation is covenant salvation: regeneration, justification, adoption, and sanctification are covenant mercies; God's election was God's choice of the covenant community, the church . . . God's law is covenant law, and keeping it is the truest expression of gratitude for covenant grace and loyalty to our covenant God.<sup>249</sup>

Thus Adam and Eve were the recipients of covenant grace of the Covenant of Grace. Was there not an administration of grace to Adam? Is there reticence to state that God made the Covenant of Grace *with Adam*? If God made the promise to Adam, then why would it not follow that God made the Covenant of Grace with Adam? Well surely the alleged Covenant of Grace had to be made with Adam, and he has to be an agreeing party to it. Note again, when the words of Gen. 3:15 were uttered, they were addressed to the serpent, not Adam; and, moreover, at the moment the words of Gen. 3:15 were spoken Adam was unregenerate. He was fallen. Adam was listening to God's announcement to the serpent, and by grace, through God-given faith, saw that there was a deliverer coming. None of this has anything to do with a covenant.

248. Quoted in Peter Golding, *Covenant Theology, The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition*, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, p. 122, 2004.

249. *Geneva Study Bible*, p. 30.

## Conclusions on Covenant Theology and Adam

We see from this that the church began with Adam and Eve and embraces all the saved in all ages.<sup>250</sup> We see that saints now are under the law, if not for justification then for sanctification. The seventh day Sabbath is spiritually alchemized and transmuted into the first day of the week Lord's day, for you cannot be without the Sabbath if under the law for sanctification. All ten commandments must be obeyed. And on and on it goes. Paul's words "For me to live is Christ" must actually mean 'for me to live is to live covenantally'.<sup>251</sup> Doctrine is the basis of practice, so keeping "covenant law" "is the truest expression of gratitude for covenant grace and loyalty to our covenant God." Thus, "covenant law" is the basis of Christian walk. No wonder we read of such nonsense as that the law is a transcript of the mind of God. In the outworking of this Covenant Theology, Christ's life is measured by (really reduced to) the law, and this must necessarily be so because since Gal. 6:3 speaks of the law of Christ, and since regarding "covenant law" "keeping it is the truest expression of gratitude for covenant grace and loyalty to our covenant God," then that must be the law of Christ. There is nothing higher for Christ, and for us, than the law.

All this, and very much more, is dependent on Gen. 3:15 being a "Covenant of Grace" made with Adam. No promise was made to Adam and what was said by God in Gen. 3:15 was addressed to the serpent.

The reader should understand that "Covenant Theology" adjusts all Scripture to conform to the ideas we have already examined. Let us look at an example, keeping in mind that as far as we can tell the "Covenant of Grace" was made with Adam as a head, and that he was not a Jew. We read in Eph. 2:12:

that ye were at that time without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope . . .

Concerning Gentiles:

They were not citizens of the nation with whom God was in covenant relation. Though God's relationship with Israel included a promise to bless the nations (Gen. 12:3), Gentiles had no awareness of that hope.<sup>252</sup>

Let us back up to before there was "the nation with whom God was in covenant relation"; let us choose the time from Adam up to Abraham. Is the Covenant of Grace allegedly made with Adam a "covenant of promise"? Were not all humans

under this covenant, at least until Abraham? Were not non-Jews, at least until Abraham, under the Covenant of Grace, a covenant of promise? If the Covenant of Grace is only for the elect, were there not non-Jews before Abraham that were elect? Were these non-Jewish elect persons under a "covenant of promise"?

There was no "God's relationship with Israel" at the time of Gen. 12:3. Moreover, Eph. 2:12 does not speak of "no awareness of that hope" but of being "without hope," a far different matter. The truth is that there existed no covenant of promise for Gentiles. Our text is speaking of covenants of promise and Gentiles are not participants in any of them -- no, not even the mythical Covenant of Grace. The Covenant of Grace is supposed to be a covenant of promise -- and would that not mean it is a covenant of promise above all others? And what of Rom. 9:4?

The unbelief of Israel is magnified by the multiplied blessings they have experienced in the eightfold privileges Paul lists in vv. 4, 5; he confirms his earlier statement in 3:1, 2.<sup>253</sup>

It was well to connect this with Rom. 3:1, 2 where we read of Israel that "to them were entrusted the oracles of God," not to Gentiles. In Rom. 9:3-5 we read concerning the covenants:

. . . my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose is . . . the covenants . . . and the promises . . .

The *Geneva Study Bible* did not attempt spiritual alchemy on this passage. At any rate, it is as clearly stated as can be to whom the covenants of promise belong and to whom the promises belong -- and we can clearly see what "strangers to the covenants of promise" in Eph. 2:12 means. Not ignorance of them, but exclusion from them, for they belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:2-5). Moreover, since the covenants of promises belong to Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh, and since Adam was not a kinsman of Paul's according to the flesh -- this is Jewish flesh, not common humanity which all Gentiles have as well as Jews and Adam too -- no promise was made to Adam. Is the Covenant of Grace a covenant of promise, one established with Adam? It is a plain contradiction of Scripture to say, 'yes, with Adam a covenant of promise was established,' a contradiction at the base of Covenant Theology.

What is needed here is subjection to the statements of God just as is the case with the secrecy regarding the mystery of Christ and the church. This mystery is outside of, and above covenants; and to regard it otherwise is to lower it to the level of "Covenant Theology" which is an expression of law-keeping. That antinomianism necessarily follows is Covenantist mythology. They adjust the meaning of the law of Christ in Gal. 6:3 and so, if we actually fulfill the law of Christ, we are in their view not doing so because we do not see the Covenantist

250. "Upon the basis of this one covenant, there is one true Church extending through all ages (Acts 7:38, Eph. 2:11-20, Rom. 11, etc.)," G. I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, , p. 67, 1964. The texts cited teach no such thing, of course.

251. Take, for example, Daniel J. Ford, *In the Name of God, Amen. Rediscovering Biblical and Historic Covenants*, St. Louis: Lex Rex Publishing, 2003.

252. *The Geneva Study Bible*, p. 1863.

253. *Geneva Study Bible*, p. 1782.

legal view of it. Moreover, the Christian's rule is:

. . . new creation. And as many as walk by this rule peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15, 16). <sup>254</sup>

The law is for the earthly creation, not the new creation.

## *Covenant Theology is Judaistic*

The first "covenant of promise" was the Abrahamic Covenant. Gentiles are blessed by uncovenanted grace. The operations of grace in them are not part of a covenant but the result of God's sovereign choice as it pleases Him. God acts outside of covenant as it pleases Him to do so. Covenant Theology puts God into a covenant straight-jacket, dictating that no grace is shown but covenant-grace -- meaning that grace results from, or is channeled through, a covenant, or on account of a covenant. It is a figment of theology bending the entire Scripture to this theological reasoning, ending with making the assembly of God to be the 'true Israel' and under the New Covenant, and under the law for sanctification, with a spiritual alchemized seventh day Sabbath into a first day Sabbath, and transferring Christ's righteous law-keeping to the Christian, etc. etc. It is *Judaizing*. The whole of Scripture is bent to this mental construct, including what we have seen such theology do to such Scriptures as Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:5, 9; where silence means partial silence, where hid from ages and generations does not mean that it was hid, but means partial hiding -- allegedly it just was not as clearly revealed in the OT as it is now -- and its being "hidden throughout the ages in God" means it was hidden in some degree in the OT, but not so completely that Covenant Theology could not find it there. So, Covenant Theology *does* find the mystery in the OT and includes all OT saints in the assembly of God. On and on it goes.

Such is the result of Covenant Theology with its Scripture-distorting Covenant of Grace under which all other covenants are subsumed and administered, including the Mosaic Covenant, as we shall see if the Lord will. Just think of the Mosaic Covenant being an administration of the Covenant of Grace! But the OT is not about the administrations of the nonexistent Covenant of Grace; it is about the trial of fallen man to show that he is not recoverable -- not recoverable under all the situations and conditions that God allowed or specified; and tested until the first man killed the Second Man, the Lord out of heaven!

## *No Law of Ten Commandments Before Moses*

254. See *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 1, Ch. 5.2.

For the law was given by Moses: grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

For this [cause], even as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death passed upon all men, for all have sinned: (for until law sin was in the world; but sin is not put to account when there is no law; but death reigned from Adam until Moses . . . (Rom. 5:12-14). <sup>255</sup>

Adam, we have seen, had *a* law, not the ten commandments. And just as there is no basis in Gen. 3:15 to assert that there we see "the covenant of grace," there is no basis to say that Adam had *the* law, or that anyone had *the* law before it was given by Moses. We have previously considered that sin is lawlessness, not the transgression of *the* law. It is acting by one's own will, not with reference to the will of God, which is the essence of sin. The following from J. G. Bellett may be helpful:

In those times, or as the apostle speaks, "from Adam to Moses," *law* did not give character to the state of the people of God. Adam was under law in Eden, and so were the children of Israel after the day of Mount Sinai. But not so the generations from Adam to Moses. Sin was equally in the world, but there was no law (Rom. 5:14).

But not only, I may observe, were they not under law; there was also almost a total absence of moral or preceptive instruction. Much revelation of the divine pleasure and counsels there was; but scarcely anything of precept. Under the Spirit, revelation worked its result on character and conduct, and formed the mind and the ways of the saints. Evil was resented by them, and judged of God; but without a written standard of right and wrong. Without any law against murder, Cain is exposed; without a fifth commandment, Ham's dishonor of his father is punished. And so Jacob's guile is visited and resented by the Lord; and the wicked way of Joseph's brethren. And without the light of any precept the soul of a saint can thus plead with temptation, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

All this is so, though neither law nor moral instruction was then published. It was revelation in matters of faith which, under the Spirit, formed patriarchal character. Abraham was not enjoined {to put up} either his altar or his tent; but his call of God, through the Spirit, suggested both. No precept required his high, generous treatment of Lot; but his faith and hope in God dictated and commanded it. Without direction on the case, his knowledge of God and the mind of Christ that was in him disposed him, and taught him to let the potsherds of the earth strive with their fellows, but as soon as his kinsman was a captive to go forth for his deliverance. No word, no oracle from God, distinguished for him between the king of Salem and the king of Sodom; but the light that was in him did.

I might go through other histories in this book, and find these same

255. Rom. 5:13-17 is parenthetical.



things. The holy judgment of the mind that was in them, under the Spirit, suggested to those early saints conduct by means of revelation, promise, and calling of God. And this is ever beautiful, when we get genuine samples or instances of it. <sup>256</sup>

These are helpful observations, though no doubt unacceptable to those who will have it that *the* law is the measure of all.

256. *The Patriarchs*, London: Morrish, pp. 3-5, n.d.