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Pretribulationist***

*Including  
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Prophetical Views  
Of the 17th and 18th Centuries  
and  
A Brief Answer to  
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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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### ***6: The Pretribulation Rapture***

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#### ***Chapter 6.11***

### ***The Church Will be Kept Out of the Hour of Trial***

*(Continued)*

#### **REVELATION 3:10**

**Exemption From the *Time of the Trial*.** The truth that we state concerning Rev. 3:10 is often inaccurately represented by those who oppose the truth of the pre-tribulation rapture. For example, A. Reese misstates it thus:

... that what Christ promised ... was complete exemption from the trial ...<sup>1</sup>

Is this what is said by those who hold the truth of the pre-tribulation rapture? Not really. Rev. 3:10 tells us that there will be COMPLETE EXEMPTION FROM THE *HOUR OF TRIAL*. The difference is not slight. How blessed a promise Rev. 3:10 is! And He says, You have kept the word of my patience. What is that? Why, it is His patience as He waits. Have you thought about that? He is waiting to receive His bride, and He is waiting for the glory of the kingdom. Philadelphians seek to have the reality of this in their souls. His promise is to keep them out of the time of trial when His patience has come to an end and the judgments preliminary to the day of the Lord begin to fall on the earth. "Behold I come quickly." Philadelphia is the first of the seven churches to which He says this.

In 1865 Wm. Kelly said, regarding Rev. 3:10:

The Lord promises to exempt, not merely from tribulation, but from “trial”; and not from trial (of whatever sort, seductive, or even what may be terrible and perilous), but “from the hour of trial.” Out of that hour, containing within it the great tribulation which comes to try them that dwell upon the earth . . . .<sup>2</sup>

The exemption, then, is not from harm by the hour of trial but, from the very time (the hour) of trial.

**The Hour of Trial is Still Future.** Having considered the meaning of the previous passages discussed, we are better prepared to see the falseness of what has been argued against the true meaning of Rev. 3:10. This verse tells us that we Christians shall be kept out of the very time of trial. We are not kept in the great tribulation, nor kept through it; we shall not be here in the hour, the time, of it at all.

An amillennialist, G. L. Murray:

If God fulfilled His promise to them, then the “temptation” must have occurred in their day.<sup>3</sup>

Another amillennialist claim is that we are now in “Jacob’s trouble.” O. T. Allis said:

The time of Jacob’s trouble, or affliction, if reckoned, as it may well be, from that destruction of Jerusalem which took place in Jeremiah’s day, has been incomparably long; it still continues; and the end is not yet. The times of the Gentiles have been, and will continue to be until their close, a time of trouble for Jacob.<sup>4</sup>

A posttribulationist wrote:

In dealing with the passage which lends to the book its title, the author maintains that these words are spoken to the whole church throughout this age . . . , whereas they were, in actual fact, spoken to the church at Philadelphia respecting a period of trial which was to fall upon the ‘oikoumene’ -- not the ‘kosmos.’ That they minister encouragement to all churches through the age to keep the word of the Lord’s patience, no one will deny, but the period of trial referred to has nothing whatever to do with the intense tribulation of the last days.<sup>5</sup>

These objections are ill-founded for the following reasons:

1. If this hour transpired in the day of Philadelphia, Philadelphians were not kept out of *the hour* of trial as God said that they would be. They would have been present in the time of the hour of trial for they were here on earth when it allegedly transpired.
2. The hour of trial which will come upon the whole habitable world will

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2. *Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom*, p. 281.

3. *Millennial Studies*, p. 129.

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

5. “Reviews ‘Kept From the Hour,’ *Watching and Waiting*, May/June, 1958, p. 46.

certainly greatly affect “them that dwell on the earth.” This expression has a specific force in the book of Revelation. It is found in Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8; 14; 17:2,8. Rev. 14:6 is really “sit” or “settled on the earth.” Rev. 13:12 refers to the same class of persons. The phrase does not include every person dwelling on the face of this globe. The expression has a moral significance. It denotes a class of persons that have chosen, not heaven, but earth, for their portion. They are some of the tares of the kingdom of the heavens in its mystery phase (Matt. 13): those who received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God sends them a working of error to receive the Lawless One, i.e. the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2). Many of this class, I therefore believe, will be alive at both the rapture, which precedes the tribulation, and the appearing; for Christ will come upon this moral class in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1).

Phil. 3:19 speaks of the character of these earth dwellers, whose god is their belly, and mind earthly things. They stand in contrast to Christians noted in Phil. 3:20 (who will be among those whose tabernacle is in heaven -- Rev. 13:6), who await the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Those that dwell on the earth are that moral generation that says, “Away with this [man] and release Barabbas to us” (Luke 23:19); “This is the heir; come, let us kill him and possess his inheritance” (Matt. 21:38); “We will not that this [man] should reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Cp. also Rev. 13:3-5, where the two classes are contrasted. Note well that the earth is Christ’s inheritance (Matt. 21:38) which those men wanted for themselves without God’s Christ. They are like those of Noah’s day which was characterized by two things:

- a. Violence and corruption.
- b. Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage - without God, and as if they would dwell on earth forever.

Those that dwell on the earth stand in moral contrast to those who dwell in heaven, whom the beast blasphemes (Rev. 13:6). The Philadelphians will be among the dwellers in heaven. Those who dwell in heaven at the time the beast does this are the raised and raptured saints of the O.T. and N.T. (Heb. 11:40). The hour of trial, then, will come upon those under the sway of the beast. We will not be there in the time of this.

3. The hour of trial will come upon the whole habitable world. *Kosmos* means, in general, something ordered or regular. It is used to describe the created order in Rom. 1:20; the people of the world (John 3:16 and Rom. 3:6); and moral constitution of the world (1 John 2:16); etc., etc. *Oikoumene* means the inhabited earth. It is used in Luke 2:1 for the Roman Empire. The attempt to limit the geographical range embraced by the word *oikoumene* in Rev. 3:10 sounds like a convenient way to get rid of

application of the passage to Christians in general. Yet objectors to the pre-tribulation rapture tell us that Matt. 24:14 indicates that we are to preach the gospel of the kingdom everywhere in the world -- and here the word is *oikoumene*. It seems to me, therefore, that the above objection based on *kosmos* and *oikoumene* is either forgetfulness or an attempt to have things both ways to fit a humanly devised system imposed upon the scriptures.

J. N. Darby replied to another posttribulationist (B. W. Newton) on this matter. He said,

I have no doubt that the prophetic and specially the Roman earth is the scene of the greatest events and deepest evil principles of the latter day. But when the author said (p.83), "The great hour of temptation comes only upon the *oikoumene* (the Roman earth -- see Luke 2:1), but it is to try or put to the test them that dwell upon the earth," his use of *oikoumene* is wholly unwarranted. Augustus representing the imperial power of the beast, the habitable earth (for this is what the word means) was given to him; and the pride of man, ignorant as he might be of God's counsels, was prone enough to assume the title. But to use this in order to confine the word to the limited of the Romans earth actually possessed is entirely unwarranted. Is it only the Roman earth, the assurance of the judgment of which is given to all men by Christ's resurrection? (Acts 17:31.) Or is this the meaning of verse 6 of the same chapter? Is it only into the Roman earth that the First-begotten is introduced? (Heb. 1:6.) Or is the sound (Rom. 10:18) gone out only into the Roman earth, translated "the ends of the world?" There it is used for *Tebel*, the world, in its largest Hebrew sense. So the LXX. (Ps. 9:8.) We may remark that Romans 10:18, moreover, seems to set "earth" and "world" just in the contrary way to that in which the author put it. Nor am I aware of any passage which give *eretz* [Heb.], earth, a more extended sense than *oikoumene*. (See Isa. 24:4.) The contrary is the case, as in those already cited; that is *ge* [Gk] is used for *Tebel* [Heb.]. There is clearly no possible authority whatever for the use of *oikoumene* for Roman earth in Revelation 3:10, because it is applied to the empire once in a confined sense (that empire then including the civilized world, which indeed had been given up to it by God).<sup>6</sup>

Rev. 3:10 certainly does not apply to some local or limited trial. Nor is the hour of trial limited to the Roman earth, though the apostates of Christendom (those "that dwell on the earth") are special objects of this trial.

4. Limiting Rev. 3:10 to only a part of the world is an arbitrary device necessitated by the desire to avoid its application to the great tribulation. But just as we believe Rev. 2:7, 10, 17, 26, 27, 28: 3:5, 21 are not restricted to those respective assemblies and time, so Rev. 3:10 is not restricted in location and time to Philadelphia. The promise was indeed fulfilled to Philadelphia and it will be fulfilled to all Christians. They were kept out of the hour of trial and so will we be.
5. Posttribulationists define "the great tribulation" as only intense persecution so as to make the presence of the church during "the great tribulation" seem

reasonable. The "hour of trial" has for its object "those that dwell on the earth," so that it wouldn't do to have the two expressions both refer to the coming period of the outpouring of God's penal judgment and wrath.

6. As to O. T. Allis' allegation, note that "the times of the nations" (Luke 21:24) runs for the period covered by the image of Dan. 2; i.e., from Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the gold, until Christ comes as the smiting stone to crush the last Gentiles world empire. Now, Jacob's trouble will end when the times of the Gentiles does, but Jacob's trouble has not yet begun. And, since there cannot be two times such as never was or shall be, it must not have begun in Nebuchadnezzar's day. Daniel spoke of it as future (Dan. 12) as does Matt. (ch. 24). And John, who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem speaks of the hour of trial as still coming (Rev. 3:10). Besides this, Rev. 7:14 occurs in the third division of the book, which contains events after the church period. Thus Jacob's trouble and the times of the Gentiles are not co-extensive in time because the unparalleled time is yet future and Jacob's trouble is an unparalleled time (Jer. 30:4-10). Jacob will be saved out of the trouble. We shall be kept from, or *out of*, **the hour of trial**.

**The Word "From."** A posttribulationist said:

In any case 'keep thee from' truly means 'guard thee out of' and cannot imply absence.<sup>7</sup>

Another posttribulationist, J. B. Payne contradicts him by saying:

The second word of Rev. 3:10 that has received considerable attention is the preposition *ek*, "from": "I will keep thee *from* the hour of trial." *Ek* generally means "from" in the sense of "out of"; so, as a result, the church's being kept "out of" the tribulation has become a byword in dispensational circles. Not all, however, has been said. *Ek* may also mean "from" in the sense of "separated, but still in the presence of." Both senses occur in the one verse, John 17:15: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from [out of] the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from [separated, but still in the presence of] the evil one" (cf. Gal. 1:4). There is another Greek preposition, *apo*, "away from," which John could have used if he had wished to make the church's removal from the hour of trial clear; but this he did not do.<sup>8</sup>

Some have said it is a time of persecution for Christians. Others seem to want the Church in the presence of it, but kept from it. Have you been observing this confusion?

Notice how the writer's mind is focused on *out of the tribulation*.<sup>9</sup> This is not the language of the text. It says, *out of the hour*. Such writers do not come to

7. "Which Prophetic Teaching is Scriptural?" *Watching and Waiting*, Jan. - Feb. 1960, 16:199.

8. J. B. Payne, *The Imminent Appearing Of Christ*, p. 78. See also A. Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, p. 205. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

9. As also R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, pp. 55, 57.

grips with this. It sounds strange to be kept “separated, but still in the presence of” the hour. It sounds too close to a pre-hour removal. Perhaps this is why they fasten instead on the word “tribulation.”

And is our faith to be founded on what prepositions he has decided that the Spirit of God could have used in order to satisfy posttribulationists? If we were inclined to reason in this fashion, we might reply that the Spirit could have said, “I will keep thee through (*dia*) the hour of trial,” if He wished to make clear that the church would pass through the hour of trial and be preserved.

Before replying further with the pen of J. N. Darby, let us hear O. T. Allis, an amillennialist, again:

It is not to be overlooked that while Pretribulationists are quite positive that the Church will not pass through the great tribulation, they are no less positive that the Jews will do so. This involves a somewhat arbitrary interpretation of the word “from” as it is used in the relevant passages. Jer. 30:7 declares, “but he shall be saved out of it” (literally, “from it”). Dan. 12:1 says only, “thy people shall be delivered.” In Rev. 3:10 we read, “I also will keep thee from (*ek*) the hour of trial.” In chap. 7:14 we are told of those “who have come out of (*ek*) the great tribulation.” Matt. 24:22 by speaking of the shortening of the days of the tribulation clearly implied that the elect will pass through it. John 17:15 illustrates the ambiguity of the preposition “from” (*ek*): “I pray not that thou shouldest take them from (*ek* in the sense of ‘out of,’ ‘away from’) the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from (*ek*) the evil.” The purpose of the sealing of the servants of God before the pouring out of the plagues (7:3), favors the view that they are to pass unscathed through them. Why should not the same apply to Rev. 3:10? It seems rather inconsistent to insist that “from” in Jer. 30:7 must mean that Israel will pass through the tribulation, but that “from” in Rev. 3:10 must mean that the church of Philadelphia, and by implication the entire Church then on earth, will not pass through it but be delivered from it by rapture.<sup>10</sup>

J. N. Darby replied to just these objections, long ago, thus:

#### DIFFERENCE OF APO AND EK.

Ἐκ has the force (not merely of “out of” but) of “from,” as well as ἀπό. The difference, however, is according to the meaning of the words: ἔκ, out of, that is, from going into; ἀπό, aloof or away from. Thus, ἔκ in John 12:27; Hebrews 5:7; James 5:20, etc. It is a question of saving from, or from going into, this hour, death, etc. Again, ἀπό in Matthew 1:21; 6:13; Luke 11:4; Acts 2:40; Romans 5:9. The former supposes a state of circumstances, a condition, into which the person might come, but into which he did not come; while the latter supposes some persons or circumstances adverse to their interest, not allowed to act upon them or produced the effects of their malice, or which took them away from them. With ἀπό they are looked at as hostile existences; with ἔκ it is a state, as even ἔκ νεκρῶν ἄνασσι, from among the dead. They are not hostile persons or things; being among them is a state. So ἀπό του πονηροῦ is a hostile power. Luke 1:74 is a state in which they were or might be. So Romans 7:24 is the state in which he was; not a hostile power apart from himself. Romans 15:3 means hostile persons. In 2 Corinthians 1:10 ἔκ is used again because it is evidently a state: so Colossians 1:18, though “out of” the



power of darkness might be better here. In 1 Thessalonians 1:10 it is ἀπό της ὀργῆς, as wrath is not a condition but a hostile power of another. In 2 Thessalonians 3:2 it is from unreasonable and wicked men. This is evident. In 2 Timothy 4:17, I believe it would have been ἀπό του λέοντος, but ἐκ στόματος, into which he seemed to be getting -- a state he would have been in. 2 Peter 2:9 is more directly out of it when they are in it; at any rate, it is a state of πειρασμου. So in Revelation 3 the faithful are kept from getting into this state, preserved from getting into it, or, as we say, kept out of it. For the words here answer fully to the English "out of" and "from." "From," as to place, if the creation of distance from a distinct object, as they went from Jerusalem to Jericho; they put distance between him and the city. "Out of" means ceasing to be inside and into. With ἀπό it is always a distinct object from the speaker or person spoken to; while ἐκ implies a state he is or might be in.<sup>11</sup>

Concerning John 17, J. N. Darby said:

The quotation from John 17 proves exactly the contrary of that for which it is cited. That to which ἐκ applies, they are to be kept wholly out of; they are not to be kept wholly out of; they are not to be taken ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, but they are to be wholly and absolutely ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ: so here (Rev. 3:10), wholly and absolutely, not 'through' and 'in,' but ἐκ τῆς ὥπας.<sup>12</sup>

One can understand being wholly out of the evil and yet be on earth where it is present. Such was the case with Christ when He was here. How one can be "separated, but still in the presence of" *the hour* of trial we will leave to others to explain. How can one be separated from a time and yet be in it?

Besides citing John 17:15 in support of the false notion, A. Reese also cites Gal. 1:4 and Heb. 5:7. He says:

Here we are told that Christians are delivered out of this present Age, and yet it is obvious from the very fact of their existence that they are in it: in it, yet delivered from its sins, its spirit, and its doom . . . for Christians, whilst delivered out of this evil age, still remain in it.

Here is a case [Heb. 5:7] where we know that the Lord suffered and passed through death, and yet was saved out of it. Anything more decisive than this passage could not be wished for.<sup>13</sup>

It is well to have these two statements next to each other. Does anyone really believe that the Lord was *in* death and *out of it* at the same time? Why did A. Reese change his wording in the second statement? Was the difficulty felt and covered up with the sentence "Anything more decisive . . ."? Our Lord was not kept out of death, but saved out of it. The difference needs no comment. Nor was He kept out of the time of death. John 17:15, Gal. 1:4 and Heb. 5:7 confirm our understanding of Rev. 3:10.

11. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 13:376 (Stow Hill ed.).

12. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:370. This also answers R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 58.

13. A. Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, pp. 204, 205.

1. The disciples were wholly out of the evil.
2. We are out of this present evil age, and live, not in it, but in the time of it. We are not kept out of the time of it.
3. We will be kept out of the time of trial.

One can easily see the difference there would be in Gal. 1:4 if it had said: 'Deliver us out of the hour of this present evil world.' The above reasoning, however, would have us in the hour of it and out of the hour of it at the same time, which is exactly how Rev. 3:10 is handled.

We noted at the beginning of this section that attention is directed elsewhere so as to ignore the word "hour," and I call attention to the phenomenon again; and hence the incredible conclusion:

The use of *ek* in Rev. 3:10 distinctly implies that the Overseers [Scripture says "Angel"] would be in the hour of tribulation; the promise refers, either to removal from out of the midst of it, or preservation through it.<sup>14</sup>

R. Gundry discussed these matters at great length and then finally made comments that illustrate the misconception about *out of the hour* by citing another "hour" in order to make an analogy to being in the hour and coming out of it preserved.

The word "hour" appears many times in the gospels with reference to the passions of Jesus (Matt. 26:45; Mark 14:35,41; John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). The emphasis falls on the *experience* within the time, not the period as such. In the request, "Father, save Me from this hour," Jesus would not have been praying for deliverance from the period of time, through which He would have gone even had He not died. Rather, He contemplates, asking for deliverance from the *events* within the period of time (John 12:27). This is a common way of speaking. To pray, say, for deliverance from a time of illness is not to ask that one should be taken out of the world before he becomes ill -- he is already ill -- but that the Lord should preserve and bring him safely out of the period of illness. Stress does not lie on the period of time *per se*, but upon the prominent characteristics of the period.<sup>15</sup>

With the cited Scriptures before him it seems incredible that he would equate "this hour" with the mere passage of time. Without the specific events there would not have been "this hour." It is those very events which constituted "this hour," events that gave it their character. What moral force there is in those words, "Father, save me from this hour."

Furthermore, there is no analogy, for our Lord was not praying for preservation through the hour; He prayed for deliverance from it, to be kept out of it. And, of course, the Christian knows that it was consonant with the perfection of His Holy Person to so shrink from being made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). It was part

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

15. R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, pp. 59, 60.

of His perfection and holiness to pray “let this cup pass from me.” His prayer, then, was that the hour be removed, as in the case of the cup. And yet He had come for this hour, as we read in John 12:27, which gives us another aspect to this hour, as John also gives another aspect concerning the cup (John 18:11).

As to his analogy about illness: to be kept out of the time of illness means to pass through no illness. To be kept out of the time of trial means to pass through no trial.

It may be alleged that the error regarding “hour” in the gospels does not “prove” that the contention regarding “kept from the hour” is also wrong. True, but the error is as obvious in one case as in the other.

Let the reader keep steadily before him that Rev. 3:10 says that we will be kept from the hour, the time, of the trial. No amount of laborious citing of prepositions can alter the patent fact. One simply cannot be “separated, but still in the presence of” the **hour**, the time, of trial.

In Rev. 7:14 we learn about a Gentile throng that come out of the tribulation. The contrast with Rev. 3:10 is quite clear in spite of the inability of posttribulationists to see it. Those in Rev. 7:14 come out of the tribulation while those in Rev. 3:10 are kept out of the hour of trial. “Come out of” and “kept out of” *do* seem quite different.

**The Word “Keep.”** It is alleged that “keep” (*tereo*) “means to guard” and that therefore to be guarded the church must be in the tribulation. An analogy is drawn with John 17:5 where *tereo* and *ek* appear together, the assumption being that John 17:5 shows that the disciples needed to be guarded in the presence of danger.<sup>16</sup> We have already considered John 17:5 above and saw that they were to be wholly kept out of the evil.

The thrust of the argument, then, is that if the Church is absent from the hour, keeping (i.e., guarding,) would be unnecessary; and, the passage teaches that there will be protection issuing in omission from the tribulation.

Thayer’s Lexicon lists Rev. 3:10 under the following; “of any kind of separation or dissolution of connection with a thing or person . . . to keep one at a distance from, etc. [cf. B. 327 (281)], John 17:15; Rev. 3:10.” What is plainer than that “separation or dissolution of connection with” the hour, means that the saints will not be in the hour, but out of the hour, separated from the hour, disconnected from the hour? -- just as the disciples were to be out of the evil, separated from the evil, disconnected from the evil. One cannot be separated from a time and still be in the presence of that time.

## DO WE BELIEVE IN A PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE MERELY BECAUSE WE WANT TO ESCAPE THE HOUR OF TRIAL?

It is often confidently asserted that Christians readily accept the pre-tribulation rapture because it comforts the flesh and that this indicates it is unscriptural. See, however, 1 Thess. 4:18 for *spiritual* comfort. Moreover, Romans 8:35-37 has been the history of many saints passing through tribulation and Christians do not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture to escape these things. The whole mode of the argument on this point is of about the same caliber as if one claimed that posttribulationists want the church to go through the great tribulation because they are masochists.

At any rate, the root underlying this false assertion is really a denial that the leading characteristic of the great tribulation is wrath, not persecution; and hence some have thought of it as an honor to pass through it, or as a chastening of the church in preparation of Christ's coming. A. Reese said:

I must leave to another place William Kelly's contortions of exegesis on the nature of the Great Tribulation, put forth with studied offensiveness in his two books on the Second Coming. His statement, as miserable as it is inexact, that the "tribulation of those days is no honor" is answered by the glorious vision in Rev. 7:9-17, by the First Resurrection in 20:4-6, and by every exhortation to perseverance and faithfulness in the Apocalypse. It will be a great honor, fraught with the highest reward. Where is this not spoken of in the Revelation? <sup>17</sup>

Yet this divider of the church says that the sun-clad woman of Rev. 12 is the Israelitish Church and will be untouched! <sup>18</sup> Amazing!

It appears by how he objects to Wm. Kelly's remark about the "brayings of ignorance" <sup>19</sup> that he was quite stung by it. <sup>20</sup> He didn't tell his readers that W. Kelly was referring to this very allegation as the "brayings of ignorance"; namely, that it is an honor to pass through the great tribulation. And, concerning the "fleshly escape" charge, W. Kelly added:

I repeat, then, that in the New Testament tribulation is spoken of as the Christian's daily companion. It is a gift of grace which a saint is not to run away from, but to thank God and take courage for, whereas it is beyond controversy, that when the tribulation predicted by the Lord and the prophets falls on Judea and Jerusalem, our Lord Himself expressly provides minute directions for the faithful who are there to escape. And this, some people will tell you, is the tribulation we ought all to account so glorious, and which it is such rank cowardice to shirk! Infatuation could hardly go farther. My brethren, if this were but the word of the Lord, not the braying of

17. *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, p. 222.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 284.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

20. He might then have avoided using phrases like "aggressive sophistry" (pp. 287, 292), "grasshopper exegesis" (p. 184), "supreme rubbish" (p. 207), "freak exegesis" (p. 146) and "Kelly and Gaebelein joining hands with the Sadducees" (p. 264) if he was touchy. There might also be other grounds for [www.wordsfromheaven.com](http://www.wordsfromheaven.com)

ignorance, who of us would not, by His grace, welcome fire or water in obedience and love to Him? But it is the very reverse of all He teaches, even for the future Jewish remnant. In truth He has given the Christian something incomparably better, and harder too; not one great trial, but on the contrary, if faithful, one continuous trial, of seduction on the one hand, and of tribulation on the other. To you who know your own hearts I appeal, whether you find it a severer test to bear some sharp, heavy, but single trial, or to wade through and endure never-ceasing shame, loss, pain of mind, and still to be faithful to Christ, through faith rising above the world, and, still in sorrow, to rejoice in the portion God has given you? It is not for any believer to institute a vain comparison, or to disparage that jewel of martyrdom which will never lose its brightness in the eyes of Christ or of those who are His, but me thinks, even in the blessed apostle to whom that grace was given, nothing is finer than the love and faith which made his whole life a dying daily. To live Christ is to die in this world.

On the other hand, in Scripture, whatever men may dream, the last tribulation (Dan. 12; Matt. 24 and etc.) is never once presented as an honor to those who have passed through it, but as a deadly scourge upon the ungodly and apostate Jews, because they received the Antichrist after refusing the Christ of God.<sup>21</sup>

## REVELATION 2 AND 3 IS A FORESHADOW

It would be better to avoid the term “prophetic history of the church” in reference to Rev. 2 and 3. The church of God is not a prophetic subject. Yes, it is true that Rev. 2 and 3 foreshadow seven aspects of the church. Does the fact that the sleep of Adam and God’s building a woman from his rib typify Christ and the Church (Eph. 5) mean that this was a prophecy? Certainly not. Let us not stumble over a word. Just so is it with these seven assemblies. They are not a prophecy but rather (besides those assemblies literally passing through these things) a picture of the condition of the professing assembly on earth at various times in various ways. O. T. Allis has grounded an objection on the fact that dispensationalists say that the meaning of prophecy is known without the aid of history so why should this “prophetic” history need history to explain it! The answer is simple! It is not a “prophetic” history any more than what happened in the garden of Eden is a “prophetic” history or that Gal. 3:21-31 speaks of a “prophetic” history. His objection that Rev. 2 and 3 therefore became “predicted events” and are signs, is groundless. They are not predicted. They are nowhere stated to be necessary events that we must expect before the rapture. It turned out to be a foreshadow (God is over all) and it has been discovered; and I believe we still cannot tell when the Lord will come. Can you or anyone else? Then why talk of Rev. 2 and 3 as being signs?

Thus, the application of Rev. 3:10 is not limited to a class of persons who live in a period of time that has been given distinct bounds by the prophetic word. Prophecy speaks of other classes in that way. For example, the martyrs of the

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21. *Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom*, pp. 265-267, 270-272. See also *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:223.

tribulation are restricted to the 70th week of Daniel. Rev. 3:10, however, is a promise, not a prophecy, and applies in all its force to those that are described by it. Some of the descriptive marks that are written of the assembly at Philadelphia are true of all believers, and so it is consistent to find that some of the promises made to them are applicable to all believers as well. Rev. 3:10 is one such promise. Not one true believer will be left behind to pass through the tribulation period when Christ comes to catch up His saints to Himself and to keep them out of the hour of trial, though many that are Christ's may not answer to Philadelphia.

Ed.

## *Church Obedience.*

To apply the ruin of the assembly to sanction disobedience is a principle wholly unallowable. I cannot appoint elders: it is not a question of obedience, but authority, and I have not the authority. The assembly had it not when Paul was alive, nor can they assume it now. They had not power to deliver to Satan then, they have not now; but they were bound to obey the command to put out then, and they are so now. Wherever two or three are really gathered together unto the Lord's name, He is in the midst; and there is the "within" and the "without." It is a clearing of the conscience of the assembly: ye have proved yourselves clear in this matter" (2 Cor. 7). Otherwise the assembly would be positive sanction (and by Christ's presence) of the association of Christ and sin; and it would be far better there should be no assembly at all than that. 2 Tim. 2 gives us the general principle of every one who calls himself a Christian separating from iniquity, purging himself from false teachers, and walking with those who call upon the Lord's name out of a pure heart. It is individual duty when evil has come in.

In bestowing power God is sovereign. When the word has spoken, I am bound to obey. To refuse obedience to it is to disobey -- to assume on my own will authority not to act till God chooses to do that which rests on His own will.

J.N.D., *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 4:352.

## ***Elements of The Two Resurrections***

### ***Chapter 3:***

#### ***The First Resurrection Is not a Point in Time***

It is very evident that we should not think of the first resurrection as a point in time. It refers rather to a class of persons: the just, the sons of the resurrection, the sons of God (Luke 20:35; Acts 24:15), and, of course, Christ Himself. So rather than being one instant in time, it is made up of parts during an epoch beginning with Christ's resurrection and ending with the resurrection of the martyrs, killed during Daniel's 70th week, just preceding the millennial kingdom.

Posttribulationists treat the first resurrection as a point in time, a single occurrence just preceding the millennium. They momentarily forget that Christ is the Firstfruits of the first resurrection. When pressed, they will allow two parts only,<sup>1</sup> and the admission breaks the point-in-time concept. The fact is that the first resurrection began when Christ rose from the dead -- and it is an epoch, not a point in time. It is quite essential to see this truth.

#### ***The Resurrection of Christ, The Firstfruits of Those Fallen Asleep***

The soul does not sleep after death. It is serious error to say so. "Sleep" applies to the body (1 Cor. 15:51; John 11:11). See also Acts 7:60. If the soul sleeps when out of the body, Paul could hardly have said, "whether in [the] body or out of the body, I know not (2 Cor. 12:3). Nor was Christ's soul sleeping when He died. He told the thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Nor was Moses' soul sleeping on the Mount of transfiguration. Christ is

Firstfruits of those fallen asleep. "Asleep" clearly refers to the body.

Compare 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Rev. 14:13. The souls of the martyrs under the altar certainly weren't sleeping (Rev. 6:9-11), nor were Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration. The rich man, too, was conscious in Hades (Luke 16:23). So was Samuel (1 Sam. 28:19) conscious. Furthermore, the statement, firstfruits of those fallen asleep, does not include unbelievers. Christ is not the firstfruits of the resurrection of unbelievers. Having noted that scripture only applies "sleep" to the body, we see that 1 Cor. 15:20-23 is speaking of bodily resurrection.

But now Christ is raised from among [the] dead, firstfruits of those fallen asleep. For since by man [came] death, by man also resurrection of [those that are] dead. For as in the Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own rank; [the] firstfruits, Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming. Then the end, when he gives up the kingdom to him [who is] God and Father; when he shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:20-24).

This scripture shows that He was first to rise in resurrection life; not Lazarus, or others, who were restored to natural life. He is blessed and holy as are all who are raised in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6). This is the "resurrection of the just," a description applied also to the Lord Jesus, for He is called "the just one" (Acts. 7:52; 22:14, JND transl.). He is the firstfruits in this resurrection and is thus first in rank (1 Cor. 15:23).

A. Reese is quite wrong that Christ is First-begotten because He rose first in time.<sup>2</sup> "First-fruits" designates priority in time. First-begotten denotes first in rank. Does First-begotten (Firstborn in both cases) of creation (Col. 1:15) denote that He was the first one created? Hardly! He is rather the Creator, but having entered the creation by incarnation, He is preeminent as Firstborn of all creation. So we see clearly that Firstborn (or Firstbegotten) does not denote priority in time. Rather, it is a title of preeminence, as a study of this throughout Scripture reveals.

The thought of Christ as the firstfruits connects with the third "set feast" of Jehovah in Lev. 23. Lev. 23 views these feasts from a dispensational standpoint. The Passover took place on any day of the week according to the year in which it occurred, but the feast of firstfruits when a "sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest" was waved before Jehovah always fell on the day after that Sabbath which immediately followed the Passover. It fell every year on what is now called the Lord's day, the day that He rose as firstfruits of those fallen asleep.

Moreover, there is a harvest of which this sheaf of first-fruits was representative. How blessed to think that He shall "transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory" (Phil. 3:21)!



We have already noted that Christ is firstfruits of those fallen asleep and that the expression “fallen asleep” applies to children of God (John 11:11; 1 Cor. 15:20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13, 14). There is a moral connection of persons in each resurrection and these persons form two groups, as we have seen. The children of God are morally and spiritually connected with Christ and form the subjects of a distinctive resurrection of which He is the firstfruits. As the firstfruits, He gives character to the resurrection. It is a resurrection from among the dead, a resurrection of the just.

But not only is there this harvest, there are gleanings (Lev. 23:22). No doubt, the harvest occurs just before Daniel’s 70th week when O. T. saints and we are raised or caught up together (Heb. 11:40) and gleanings will follow (Rev. 20:4, groups two and three).

## ***The Resurrection of The Old Testament Saints***

Some reasons for believing that O. T. saints are raised at the rapture are these:

1. Hebrews 11:40 is quite express. “They should not be made perfect without us.” I don’t see how this can be regarded in any other way than that they shall be made perfect with us. So O. T. saints will be caught up with us at the rapture of the saints.
2. In Rev. 20:4, groups 2 and 3 do not contain the O. T. saints, nor Christians. We and O. T. together form group 1. This is consistent with the fact that both groups were raised at the same time.
3. Hebrews 12:23 distinguishes them as the “spirits of just men made perfect” from “the assembly of the firstborn.” As being just, it is consonant that they have their part in the harvest of the resurrection of the just; that harvest occurring at the rapture. We might liken the resurrection of other just persons who die subsequently to the resurrection at the time of the rapture as gleanings.
4. And thus we view the 24 elders in heaven (Rev. 4) as representing both O. T. saints and us.
5. Finally, just as there is a distinction between “the spirits of just men made perfect” and “the assembly of the firstborn,” so in Rev. 19 we see those “who are called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb” (O. T. saints) and “the Lamb’s wife” (the Church) distinguished. Thus, we see that both those who compose the bride (and in another relationship are in the family of God) and the wedding guests (who are also part of the family of God) were raised and caught up together at the time of the rapture.

There is no reason in the nature of the first resurrection itself why O. T. saints must wait until the appearing of Christ to be raised. Certainly they do not have to wait until then because it is alleged that “the resurrection of Israel” takes place then. Why should Noah and Job (non-Israelites) be raised at this mythical “resurrection of Israel”? And does the Word of God assure us that no non-Israelite converted after the rapture will not be killed before the appearing? And if such a one was killed, is he to be raised at the “resurrection of Israel”? There is no such thing as a “resurrection of the church” or a “resurrection of Israel.” There is but **one class** in the resurrection and that is **the just**. It is incredible that at the time of the rapture any of the just will be left in their graves. Heb. 11:40 shows us that it will not happen.

J. F. Walvoord has presented two difficulties concerning the thought that the righteous of Israel will be raised when the rapture occurs.

1. There is a difficulty in finding in the O. T. any clear passage that teaches the resurrection of Israel’s righteous ones if Isaiah 26:19 and Dan. 12:1 are understood as using resurrection as a figure for Israel’s national restoration, rather than as meaning literal resurrection.<sup>3</sup>
  - a. I believe that the use of resurrection as a figure in these two passages assumes the knowledge of resurrection itself and thus most strongly implies the fact of the resurrection of the righteous even if the time of literal resurrection is not given. Thus the remnant in our Lord’s day, and the pharisees were quite correct in expecting a resurrection of the dead. Cp. Job.
  - b. We are not authorized by God to require that the O. T. “clearly” enunciate any particular doctrine.
2. He says that since Dan. 12:1 places the resurrection of Israel’s righteous dead after the tribulation, it places an unnecessary burden on the pretribulation view to link Israel’s resurrection with the rapture.<sup>4</sup>
  - a. The difficulty is manufactured by rejecting the view that Dan. 12:1-3 uses resurrection as a figure for the literal restoration of Israel.
  - b. What about Abel, Enoch and Noah, etc.? Will they be identified with Israel in an alleged “resurrection of Israel’s righteous dead”? This question is meant to show that the above objections evince some misconceptions regarding the first resurrection as the resurrection of **the just**. Nor is there such thing as the resurrection of the church *as such*. It is the resurrection of *the just*. We are well aware that “the dead *in Christ*” in 1 Thess. 4 refers to those who have died in Christ, and not to O. T. saints. However Heb. 11:40 refers to the persons spoken of in the

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3. *The Millennium*, p. 284.

4. *Ibid.*

chapter and vv. 4-7 are about **just** persons who were not Israelites. On what Scriptural grounds would you exclude them from Heb. 11:40? And since Heb. 11 speaks of the just among Israel also, it is clear that Heb. 11:40, speaking of **just men**, is not excluding any spoken of in the chapter -- O. T. just men, both those of Israel and those not of Israel. Since they are all designated by the *classification* **just men**, it negates notions about an alleged resurrection of Israelites, as such. Moreover, Heb. 11:40 tells us that, not Israel's righteous ones as such, but O. T. **just men** and the Christian dead and living ("they should not be made perfect without us") shall be made perfect with us -- necessarily at the time of the rapture. This is not only the truth taught in Heb. 11:40; it is the only thought consonant with the fact that the first resurrection is characterized as "the resurrection of the just."

- c. Heb. 11 is not speaking of Israelites as such. Hence the mention of the worthies begins before Abraham. These are the just. They are part of the righteous family. They are referred to as "the spirits of just men" and distinguished from "the Church of the firstborn" when distinction is properly made. And when Heb. 11 speaks of being made perfect, we without them shall not be made perfect. Thus we have a clear text that not only tells us about Israel's righteous ones, but all O. T. worthies and those who belong to Christ now.
- d. 1 Cor. 15 speaks of resurrection in a general way. "They that are Christ's at his coming" does not mean 'They that are in Christ at his coming.' It is not a question of being *in Christ* but of belonging to Christ. This latter includes O. T. saints.
- e. The "burden" is imagined, not real. The false view gets into insurmountable difficulty on Dan. 12:1-3 (discussed at length elsewhere), introduces misapprehensions concerning the character of the resurrection of the just, and contradicts Heb. 11:40.

## ***The Resurrection of The N.T. Saints***

All who have ever been born again, from Adam to the millennium, are children of God and part of the family of God. It is true that in different dispensations there is more or less knowledge and enjoyment of what this means, but non-the-less, such form the family as having life from God. This life may be coupled with special associations as in the present time, so that it may be said of the Christian that he has "life in the Son" (1 John 5:11). Because he is indwelt by the Spirit, he is united to Christ and is one Spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6). Being "in Christ" he is new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). These things were not true of O. T.

saints. You could not rightly say that they were raised up and seated together with Christ in the heavenlies, for example.

We will be raised in the resurrection of the just, and they will be also. However, just as the divine life which has been communicated to us by God has associations now, which could not be true in O. T. times, so the resurrection of the saint indwelt by the Spirit has special associations.

The indwelling of the Spirit characterizes the Christian before God, and it is on account of His Spirit which dwells in us that He will quicken our mortal bodies. We possess the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from among the dead (Rom. 8:11). W. Trotter remarked,

... the resurrection of the saints is represented as the completion of everything that relates to their position and state. It flows from the gift of the saints to Christ by the Father, and from Christ's faithfulness to the charge with which the Father has entrusted Him. It is inseparable from the everlasting life which is the portion of every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him. It is the final issue of the Father's drawings, and of that faith in a crucified Savior which is described as "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man." . . .

The Church has its existence by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The life by which it is animated is His life, as risen from the death which He underwent for our sins, by the infinite efficacy of which death those sins are put away. In Eph. 1, 2, where the Holy Ghost unfolds a truth beyond even this, this truth is most strikingly developed. The truth there specially revealed, and which does pass beyond the subject of our present meditations, is that of the association of the Church with Christ, not as risen only, but as ascended also. But ascension implies resurrection; and our participation in Christ's resurrection is, moreover, expressly declared. "The exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe," is "according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved:) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus even now is the Church partaker of the resurrection-life, as well as of the heavenly exaltation of Jesus. The life has not yet been communicated to our bodies, and therefore it is in spirit, not as yet *actually*, that we are in heavenly places. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." The resurrection of our bodies will place us *actually*, where our oneness with Christ by the Holy Ghost now places us *spiritually*, in the heavenly places whither our risen Lord has ascended, and where He has sat down. It is surely of all importance to have such a testimony, that the resurrection of the Church is on a principle common with that of her glorified Head, and by virtue of her association with Him in life, in inheritance, and in glory!

... As to the simple fact of restoration to life after death, he was not the first in whom such restoration took place. Instances are recorded both in the Old Testament and in the Gospels, of persons being recalled to life. But it was to the natural Adam-life that they were restored, and so had a second time to sleep the sleep of death. But as to the life which exempts its subjects from weakness, dishonor, corruption, and mortality; the life received, moreover, by virtue of sin's penalty having been undergone, God's glory manifested and secured, Satan vanquished, and death completely overthrown; as to this life, and resurrection in the power of this life, how evident that Christ was indeed the first that rose from the dead. He who

went down under all Jehovah's waves and His wrath on account of our sins, atonement for which He had undertaken to make: He who tasted all the bitterness and felt the power of death, though Himself the Prince of life, and the only-begotten Son of God: He was the first to emerge from death's dark dominions, as the One on whom death had no claim, and over whom the grave had no power. "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." "In him was life." He had "power to lay down" His "life and power to take it again." He had laid it down, that God might be glorified, His Church redeemed, sin put away, Satan overthrown, creation itself delivered; and that all the counsels of eternal wisdom, holiness, and love might be accomplished. It was sin that had made it needful that at such a cost, in such a way, God should be glorified, and the good pleasure of the Father's will fulfilled. Christ shrunk not from the mighty work. He took flesh and blood that He might accomplish it. While passing on towards it He could cry, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished." When the hour arrived, He was in perfect readiness, and went out to meet these to whom He said, "Now is your hour, and the power of darkness." He died. The sun was darkened, the rocks were riven, the temple's vail was rent, the graves were opened. Even at His expiring cry, the domains of death were laid bare; *and was it possible that He could be holden of death?* No. "Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," and bearing with Him the trophies of His victory, "the keys of death and of Hades," He came forth, "leading captivity captive." Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself." But though in the conflict He stood alone, and the glory of the victory belongs entirely to Himself, of its fruits we are favored to partake.<sup>5</sup>

While it is true that there are special associations for the Christian in connection with the resurrection, we have seen that the resurrection itself is not a distinctive matter concerning the church. So, I do not object to the phrases, "resurrection of the Church" and "resurrection of Israel" because the expressions are not found in scripture. If the thing thus described is there, the phrases would be acceptable. But the phrases set aside the thing that *is* in scripture. The class of persons that the phrase "resurrection of the just" describes is not the church in its church character, or Israel in its national or spiritual character. The class of persons is **the just**.

In 1 Thessalonians 4, we learn that the dead *in Christ* rise first -- before the living are changed. God gives the dead precedence, no doubt, because it is characteristically resurrection. This character is maintained in giving the dead the first place. The rapture of the saints is an adjunct to the second part of the first resurrection. The change in body of the living results in the same thing that the resurrection of the dead saints accomplishes.

1 Thessalonians 4 is one of many scriptures which are fatal to the notion of a general, promiscuous resurrection followed by a general judgment. The events take place "in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Yet, we, the living, shall be changed *after* the dead in Christ rise (1 Thess. 4:17). We are caught up together. What *follows* our catching up? We "meet the Lord in the air."

O. T. Allis says of them that "they hold that after meeting the Lord in the air,

all the saints will return with Him to earth for the last judgment . . .”<sup>6</sup> And what, think you, will happen then? W. E. Cox says:

The judgment will not be for the purpose of determining men’s destinies, but merely to manifest them.<sup>7</sup>

Two pages later, referring to Matt. 25:31-46, which is alleged to be the general judgment (whereas it is the judgment of the living at the appearing of Christ), he says:

What will happen once the nations are gathered before the throne? “And he shall separate them one from another,” placing one group on one side and the other group on the other side. Different destinies will then be assigned to the two groups.<sup>8</sup>

The following considerations show the confusion and error of the above theories:

1. My destiny is already assigned (Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51ff.; 1 Thess. 4:17; Col. 3:4, with Rev. 19:14; 17:14; etc.).
2. And as to manifestation of destiny, on the basis of his own scheme, the meeting of the Lord in the air would have manifested it.
3. Based on this scheme, it follows that “and he shall separate them one from another” indicates that after having met the Lord in the air, after having been given a body of glory like His, and after having thus been separated from the wicked, we will be spread among them in order to be separated again. Those other people were resurrected also (since there is allegedly only one general resurrection) and left on earth when the saints are caught up. We will then be spread among them in order to be separated. (This does not explain what happens to the living wicked when Christ comes.)
4. It must be also that David, who has been with Christ these many years, and Paul and Timothy, too, must be placed on earth, in glorified bodies among the resurrected unbelievers, in order to be judged and separated and then have their destiny assigned.
5. Since the dead in Christ rise first, i.e., before we are caught up (1 Thess. 4:17), it follows from the false system that unbelievers will be resurrected before we are caught up, since it is alleged that all are raised at once.
6. Think of this system of theology. The reader will please read again the quotation from J. N. Darby above, wherein he said, “And if the first resurrection is not seen, the gospel is obscure.” Perhaps at this point the reader may better appreciate the justness of the remark. See also his “The Two Resurrections” in *Collected Writings*, vol. 10. We must all be manifested before the judgment seat

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6. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 223. So also W. E. Cox, *Biblical Studies in Final Things*, p. 151.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). Why assume that the holy and the wicked will be there at the same time? Why assume that they will be there for the same purpose? Scripture is not unclear about these two points. The two assumptions stand or fall together. We have already seen that the two resurrections are distinct in time.

The word “condemnation” in John 5:24 (A. V.) is mischievous. The word is “judgment” -- “not come into judgment.” One may come into judgment and not be condemned. Such is *not* the doctrine of scripture concerning the judgment.

And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight no man living shall be justified (Psalm 143:2).

There is no acquittal at the great white throne. They are shown the book of life to see that their names are not there. There is no coming of Christ, no resurrection of the just and no acquittal at the great white throne. There, *persons* are judged “according to their works.” John 5:24 expressly excludes us from this.

It is an outrage against the position that the believer occupies to assert that he must appear at the bar of God’s justice with unbelievers. It is an outrage against the results of Christ’s work as making the believer fit to share the inheritance of the saints in light. It is an outrage to say that the apostle Paul must be placed among the nations to be judged and have his destiny assigned.

The amillennial system is a Judaizing system. It tends to obscure the gospel and its results and tends toward Jewish ideas concerning the resurrection and judgment.

## ***The Resurrection of The Martyrs of Daniel’s 70th Week***

We have seen that the first resurrection has at least two parts. It doesn’t matter how many parts it has because it describes a class of persons, not a point in time. It actually has more than two parts.

The dead in Christ will be raised when the rapture occurs (1 Thess. 4:15-18; 2 Thess. 2:1-3;) and they will come from heaven at the appearing of Christ (Col. 3:4; Rev. 17:14; 19:14; etc.). O. T. saints will also be raised when the rapture occurs (Heb. 11:40). But there will be two groups of martyrs after the pre-tribulation rapture. When are they raised? Scripture does not tell us the exact moment in time but it does tell us that they will live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones; and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and the souls of those beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus, and on account of the Word of God; and those who had not done homage to the beast . . . and they lived and reigned with the Christ a

thousand years . . . .”

There are three groups mentioned in this verse:

1. Those who sat upon thrones and judgment was given to them. This refers to O. T. saints and all raised and changed at the rapture. They were seen as the 24 elders in Rev. 4.
2. Souls of those beheaded during the first half of Daniel’s 70th week. Cp. Rev. 6:9.
3. Those killed under the authority of the beast during the last half of Daniel’s 70th week. Cp. Rev. 6:11; Dan. 7:21; Rev. 13:7.

We know from other scriptures that many children of God will not die during Daniel’s 70th week and will be blessed in the kingdom (Matt. 25:31ff; Rom. 11:26; Rev. 7:9ff; etc.). But Revelation 20:4 is describing *all* saints who have part in the *first resurrection*. The second and third group noted above lived and reigned with the Christ for a thousand years. Necessarily, they are raised before they reign for a thousand years. Therefore, the first resurrection has several parts. Additionally, the two witnesses are raised from the dead 3-1/2 days after the end of the 1260 days from the middle of Daniel’s 70th week (Rev. 11). Christ has not yet come, and they will ascend into heaven. To this discussion we add some remarks by W. Kelly:

Afterward others are seen in the vision put to death, martyrs at the end of the age during the time of unparalleled trouble, who become not elders but priests, not chiefs, if one may so speak, but simply priests. How blessed to be so! Yet they do not arrive at the dignity of the twenty-four [Rev. 4]. Thus the elders have a very special place; and accordingly there is never an addition to their number. Others may be called and blessed; but the elders remain twenty-four as from the beginning to the end. It confirms this to see that from Chap. 19, . . . we do not hear a word more about the elders. They disappear. Why? Because the Lord Jesus will have come from heaven, wither he will have taken them up, and when afterwards spoken of, it is as his armies or hosts. Then comes the question of making war on a guilty world. Elders do not make war; but hosts do. Consequently the figure of the elders is dropped, and that of armies is taken up. There can be no solution, it appears to me, of the case, other than this -- at least I am not aware of any other that has given even an appearance of meeting the conditions of the problem.<sup>9</sup>

### ***How Many First Resurrections Are There?***

I admit that the above title sounds like a silly title. And how shall we characterize the objection that we believe in two first resurrections? We will let the characterization pass.



Referring to 1 Cor. 15:20, 23, A. Reese wrote:

. . . how does this prove that there are going to be two "first" resurrections in the future, separated by a generation? If the resurrection of the saints is to take place at the Millennium, how can there be another "first" resurrection years after it, yet still at the beginning of the Millennium? Having thus disposed of the sophistry that seeks to find a resurrection prior to the "first" . . . .<sup>10</sup>

The way this mode of reasoning is often repeated indicates the esteem in which it is held as a conclusive answer. It seems implicit in this answer that it is denied that our Lord has part in the first resurrection. If He has part in the first resurrection and was raised over 1900 years ago, then using the above reasoning, John should have called the premillennial resurrection the second resurrection.

I did not say Christ's part in the first resurrection is denied by the opponents. It is, however, implicit in any scheme that makes the first resurrection one point in time.

I feel it has been long ago proved from scripture that the first resurrection has at least two parts, which invalidates the above reasoning. Happily R. Gundry has at least partially acknowledged this. He says,

The first resurrection does, in fact, take place in phases. But only *two* phases of the first resurrection can be determined from clear and specific chronological notations: that of Christ, the firstfruits, and that of the saints who are raised at the close of the tribulation. In principle we should not consider a pretribulation phase of the first resurrection impossible, but we need scriptural evidence.<sup>11</sup>

Of course, he decries what evidence is needed. However, we are happy that this much is acknowledged; and may we hope for a cessation of the "three resurrections" and "two second comings" objections?

Refuge may still be found, by R. Gundry above, in admitting several phases to the first resurrection but denying any but two: Christ, and those raised at the appearing. Most posttribulationists hold that all saints are raised or raptured at the appearing, the epiphany. The last trump -- seventh trump argument runs like this, we will recall:

We may well equate the "great trumpet" at the post-tribulation advent in Matt. 24:31, the last trumpet in 1 Cor. 15:52, the trumpet of God in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, and perhaps the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11:15-18 as well.<sup>12</sup>

I have shown elsewhere that a trumpet is blown to regather Israel after the seventh trumpet of Rev. 11 and that this posttribulationist theory is false because a trumpet is blown after "the last trump" and the seventh trump.

My point is that posttribulationists connect the raising of the two witnesses with

10. *Op. Cit.*, p. 82. So A. Katterjohn, *The Rapture -- When?*, p. 21. *Watching and Waiting*, Jan.-Feb. 1972, p. 193. N. S. McPherson, *Tell It Like It Will Be*, p. 29.

11. *The Church and the Tribulation*, [www.truthpublishers.com](http://www.truthpublishers.com)

12. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

the appearing. They have to do so since they don't want saints raised before the appearing. But the two witnesses are killed right at the end of the 1260 days (and therefore are not the souls under the altar (Rev. 6) or the martyrs during the tribulation) and are raised 3-1/2 days later; i.e., on the 1263-1/2 day. This *precedes* the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11). The two witnesses are certainly among the just. The time of their resurrection is *exactly* pinpointed. And they are raised and ascend in the sight of their enemies. *After* that the seventh trumpet sounds. Thus they are raised and ascend before the appearing.

This, of course, does not prove a pretribulation phase. However, the reader will note that the post-tribulation understanding of the first resurrection is very faulty. I have noted that in 1 Cor. where Paul said "they that are Christ's at His coming," the phrase may not really have within its direct subject matter the martyrs of Rev. I remark this lest some might make an objection because the two witnesses are raised before the appearing. In any event, I do not see any real difficulty. The truth remains that Christ is in a rank by Himself and all others form another rank, whenever in time they may be raised from among the dead.

(to be continued)

Ed.

## *Charismaticism*

A book supportive of the ecumenical thrust of charismaticism says:

### 2.1 The Search for Categories

Charismatic theology is still in its infancy; and yet when one surveys the literature of the last decade it is impossible not to be impressed by the way in which several theologians have tackled the problem of giving a comprehensive theological interpretation of that central renewal experience, the so-called baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Roman Catholic scholars have led the way.

In many of the early attempts at constructing a theology of Spirit-baptism, however, we do not find much coherent theology but rather a reflection on personal experience and a generalizing from that. As time went on this changed and we now find the first serious analyses on Spirit-baptism.

The charismatic renewal movement is unashamedly experiential in its nature. It is this "experience" of Spirit-baptism that usually takes people by surprise. Several theologians have started to attend charismatic gatherings as observers, ending up as participants. Due to the strong influence of a Western rationalistic mind-set very few modern Christians have the theological resources and historical insight to be able to interpret "what has happened to them" immediately. Their "theological apple cart" has, as it were, been overturned and the new charismatics are left scurrying in all directions to try and retrieve and maintain something of their religious tradition. This state of theological imbalance only seems to occur in contexts where religious

experience is either frowned on as something “primitive” or else resolutely ignored in theological training.<sup>1</sup>

The book contains a thorough examination of attempts to ‘theologize’ the experiences of the dupes of this plunge into uncontrolled subjectivism. As to those who have these wonderful experiences, they glow about their new sense of devotion (for Romanists, devotion to Mary and the Mass), etc. The latest is “the Toronto blessing” which is a laughing mania that seizes these dupes until exhaustion. Oh how they come away edified! No doubt the ‘laughing theologians’ are at work to show how this fits in with Scripture.

When such writers refer to past ‘charismatic-type’ outbursts or movements, they slur over the evil in them. Take for example the Irvingites, to whom the above writer refers approvingly. E. Irving was deposed from the Presbyterian ministry because he taught that Christ had the carnal nature. J. N. Darby remarked:

It may not be generally known that the “gifts” among the Irvingites were founded on this doctrine of Christ’s being a sinner in nature like ourselves. Mr. Irving’s statement was, that he had long preached the “gifts,” but there were none, because there was nothing for the Holy Ghost to testify to; but that when he preached this doctrine {that Christ had the carnal nature}; they came as a witness to it.<sup>2</sup>

The “charismatic renewal movement” is an instrument for the spread of evil doctrine and also serves as an instrument of ecumenicalism in preparation for the formation of the great whore of Rev. 17. The spirit in all this is not the *Holy Spirit*, the Spirit of *Truth*.

As an example of what is transpiring right now that illustrates the mentality we are examining, take the “Oneness Pentecostals.” There are over ½ million of them in the USA. They are Sabellians, i.e., they believe that God is one Person manifested in three ways. This is sometimes called modal Trinitarianism. They do not, in fact, believe in the Trinity of divine Persons. They hold that speaking in tongues is necessary in order to be saved. They have the gifts of the Spirit in the Pentecostal sense -- and in the Charismatic sense. Here is the dilemma. Either this must be rejected as fake, or it must be accepted.

- If it is accepted, the Spirit of *Truth* of the Trinity is sanctioning the lie against the truth concerning the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity.
- If it is rejected, then it is rejected because of doctrine, and thus doctrine must take precedence over the “experience.” But this is just what is not wanted.

Finally, there is a small chapter in the book we are noticing, “Cessation as

1. H. I. Lederle, *Treasures Old and New: Interpretations of “Spirit-baptism in the Charismatic Renewal Movement,”* Peabody: Hendrickson, p. 37.

2. *Collected Writings* 6:285. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

Popular Theology -- John Darby's Dispensationalism." He makes ludicrous, undocumented statements, such as that JND predicted the Lord's coming for 1842.<sup>3</sup> The chapter involves an attack on his person. Perhaps the Spirit of *Truth* led him to do these things. He also classes JND as a "cessationist" regarding the gifts. The fact is that not only did JND never teach that all the gifts have ceased, rather he taught that only the 'sign-gifts' ceased, as well as the apostles (Irvingism had twelve restored apostles, but they all died before the coming of the Lord, obviously).

In the past, movements such as Montanism, etc., were referred to as "enthusiasm" and histories of "enthusiasm" have been written. While I do not approve of all the strictures or positions from which writers judge of these things, nonetheless there were various outbreaks of "enthusiasm" in church history. The Irvingism mentioned above is a case. So is charismaticism -- which is fanaticism. These movements are a vehicle of fundamentally evil teaching.

Charismaticism involves the foolish virgins looking for oil (Matt. 25:1-13).

The Promise Keepers <sup>4</sup> also brings together a host of persons with fundamentally evil doctrines and serves as an instrument of ecumenicalism. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

A PTP book, *The Word of God Versus the "Charismatic Renewal"* (230 pages) responds to the "charismatic renewal" in accordance with correct dispensational truth. It discusses, among many other things, the four marks of evil in 2 Timothy that characterize the great house of 2 Tim. 2 and how this is seen in Charismaticism. It also traces similar historical movements and has an appendix on Irvingism and its demonism.<sup>5</sup>

Ed.

## *Charisthusiasm*

Above, it was pointed out that there have been outbreaks of what has been called "enthusiasm" in church history. There are books written on this subject. <sup>1</sup> I regard the so-called "Charismatic Renewal" as perhaps the last movement of

3. *Op. Cit.*, p. 98.

4. This name reminds us of Israel under the Law: 'all that the Lord has said, we will do.'

5. Available for \$8.50 plus \$2.25 postage.

1. For example, R. A. Knox (Roman Catholic), *Enthusiasm, A Chapter in the History of Religion, with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries*, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, etc. Another is by Isaac Taylor, *Fanaticism*, London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1833. He also wrote *Natural History of Enthusiasm*. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

“enthusiasm” in Christendom. It is a reworked Pentecostalism. It fosters the ecumenical movement towards Rome -- as, for example, seen in the “Promise Keepers” movement. It seems like the activity of the foolish virgins in Matt. 25. In Scripture, oil is a type of the Spirit. The foolish are seeking oil. Oh, I know that they say they *have* wonderful Spirit-manifestations. But think about it; the movement revolves around seeking Spirit-manifestations. The movement is seeking experiences, is experience-oriented, and explains Scripture in accordance with these experiences -- instead of that Scripture must be above, and control, experience.

There is an immense difference between *Christian* experience and other experiences that a Christian may have, for he may have many of which the flesh is the source. Moreover, a professed Christian who is not really Christ's may have the experiences touted by the “Charismatic Renewal.” There are, for example, more than a half-million “Jesus Only” Pentecostals (who are Sabellians) that have the tongues, healings, etc. They do not believe in the trinity of divine Persons in the Godhead. They hold that there is one divine Person who has manifested Himself in three ways. I would not count them as real Christians.

Since the “Charismatic Renewal” is a manifestation of “enthusiasm” I suggest it be named *Charisthusiasm*. This identifies its claim while at the same time indicating its character as “Enthusiasm,” which is really fanaticism professing to be Christian.

Trying to deal with what are called “excesses” in these movements, W. DeArteaga wrote:

Thus the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are imperfect and contaminated because of human sinfulness, flawed human institutions, theology and practice. This even happened in New Testament times. Paul's Corinthian congregation was among the most Spirit-filled and the most unruly and contentious at the same time.<sup>2</sup>

Nowhere does it say in 1 or 2 Corinthians that they were “Spirit-filled.” Moreover, the apostle wrote to them:

And I, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly (1 Cor. 3:1).

They were fleshly, or carnal. They were not spiritual, says the apostle; they were “Spirit-filled,” says the writer quoted. The above Charisthusiast has them as “among the most Spirit-filled,” and that illustrates the character of discernment of those in the movement.<sup>3</sup> Having this miserable example before us, let us see

2 *Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit*, Lake Mary: Creation House, p. 55 (1992).

3. Likely because they were much gifted (1 Cor. 1:7), he equated this with being “Spirit-filled.” In his opening, Paul commended what grace had wrought for them, but did not commend anything  
www.presenttruthpublishers.com  
 (continued...)

what he says about how to discern:

Discerning spiritual phenomena by their fruits is far more demanding than the pseudo-discernment of reference to consensus theology . . . The fruit of Christian miracles leaves the person with a new, deeper experience of freedom and ability to develop the fruit of the Spirit such as joy, peace and longsuffering (Gal. 5:23).<sup>4</sup>

Plainly, then, doctrine is downgraded. But cp. 1 & 2 Timothy. The phenomena are judged to be real and then "theology" must be brought into line with them. We just saw how this works concerning the Corinthians. So if you want to diminish your discernment, join in with the Charisthusiasts. You can be carnal and not spiritual, but "Spirit-filled" at the same time. Charismania is truly an astonishingly flexible system.

Ed.

## *The Lawful Use of the Law*

The true secret of putting us under the law is, that, having nothing of the discipline of the primitive church, they are obliged to modify the gospel, and make the law a schoolmaster after Christ to keep men in order. Then all naturally fall under it. Because man has the keeping of it, it flatters man; if he has a tender conscience, it tortures him, as we often see; if not, he thinks of himself, takes for granted some failure is to be there, judges it perhaps pretty easily, will really sorrow if the new nature be there; but in any case he can think of himself, and this the heart likes. A man likes thinking badly of himself, and saying so, better than not thinking of self at all, and simply displaying Christ's precious life by thinking on Him only. We have to judge ourselves; but our right state is thinking of the Lord alone.

*The Bible Treasury* 10:386.

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3(...continued)

in their walk. In Galatians, where doctrinal evil was so much before him, he commended nothing at all in his introduction. The Corinthians were next to the least Spirit-filled, but a Charisthusiast would not discern that.

4. *Op. cit.*, p. 238. One of the fruit of the Spirit is "self-control" (Gal. 5:23), something conspicuous by its absence when people are "filled with the Spirit" and laughing uncontrollably, as in the "Toronto Blessing," etc., etc.

## *Matt. 18:20*

In Matt. 18:20 we read:

For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This is connected with discipline in vv. 15-18 and with prayer in v. 19.

We do well to connect Matt. 18:20 with 1 Cor. 5:3, 4:

For I, [as] absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as present, [to deliver,] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (ye and my spirit being gathered together, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ), him that has so wrought this.

They would thus be gathered together to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He being in the midst, His power was there in the assembly to act through the assembly in the exercise of this discipline to clear His name, clear the assembly, and recover the guilty -- three important matters, and in that order of importance. (It is important to note that it is the assembly, as such, gathered together, that receives and excommunicates, not some individuals.)

In a happier connection we have:

Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind . . . (2 Thess. 2:1).

It is very sweet to think of such a mighty gathering together to *Him!* That will be effected by His great power and none shall be absent for that. What about now? Meanwhile let us be sure as to this:

And the first day of the week, we being assembled to break bread . . . (Acts 20:7).

When ye come therefore together into one place . . . (1 Cor. 11:20).

. . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom is with some . . . (Heb. 10:25).

All of these Scriptures have to do with the assembly that Christ was going to build (Matt. 16:18). Of the four gospels, the assembly is only directly named in Matthew's gospel because of that gospel's dispensational character. It indicates much concerning the ways of God. Not Israel but the New Testament assembly was going to be the center of administration consequent upon the final rejection of Christ at the cross. The assembly is also viewed in Scripture as the house of God -- the place where God's order and governmental ways (cp. 1 Cor. 5) were to be manifested. This would be so from Pentecost until the rapture, after which He will again begin acting with respect to Israel to establish His ancient people, during the millennium, in the good of His unconditional promises.

Ed.

## *Casting Stones*

**Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at her (John 8:7).**

The glory of Jehovah, come down in holy manhood, shines so brightly here. For there stood the Lord Jesus, who, as Jehovah, had written the law with *the finger of God*. In John's gospel the hands and side of the Lord Jesus are especially seen as upholding the divine glory. And here His finger writes again, only this time it is a literal hand of man who is also God.

His opposers sought to pit Him against Moses (John 8:5, 6), not at all conscious that Jehovah-Jesus stood before them, even He who had given Moses that law they attempted now to use against Him. This attempt to pit Him against Moses is of the essence in understanding what was going on -- and concerning the above text.

Moreover, since the woman was "taken in the very act," where was the guilty man who was necessarily, therefore, also caught in the very act? Were they not sinning in bringing only the woman forward?

He wrote on the ground "*with His finger*." Let them think about that. But they pressed Him. Rising up He said, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at her." The law also was written the second time, and He stooped down again and wrote on the ground. Rising up again when the accusers had all left, He did not condemn her, but did say, "go, and sin no more."

The use of John 8:7 to hinder assembly discipline required by God's word is an evil thing. That discipline has nothing to do with the casting of stones by dishonest persons, bent on ensnaring the Lord, and using this woman in public, while leaving the guilty man out of the matter. How could a Christian in a right state of soul use such a text against godly discipline? He could not. It is persons who would have the flesh in themselves spared, who so pervert Scripture. They pretend to be "nice" and "compassionate." In reality, they are unholy in their thinking. It would be well if they really meditated on the passage and saw the Lord's glory in it; and the suitability that this passage appears in John's gospel, which emphasizes His deity and Sonship. The *finger of God* was before them, writing on the ground. The spiritual ignorance of the "nice" and "compassionate" perverters of God's Word seems quite commensurate with that of these opposers of the Lord Jesus. It is merely a differently appearing form of opposition to Him, but at bottom it is also opposition to His glory.

Ed.



## *Looking for Approval?*

Those who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be, in no respect, accounted of -- they must expect to be, in no wise, encouraged by the prospect of human praise. And if you make an exception, "that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say," beware of this, for you *may turn them into a world*, and find in them a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive -- so long as you are conscious as to how they will think of you. All such motives are a poison to you, and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God -- and because such a time may be needful for you, I beseech you, be prepared for a time when you shall be as persons unknown, even to those that know God. It is not the fact that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labor under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. The man of God must walk *alone* with God, he must be contented that the Lord knoweth. And it is such a relief, yea, it is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenance, and human sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it brotherly love, when we are just resting on the earthly sympathy of a brother worm.

You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice that you are not alone, *because the Father is with you*, that you may give true glory to God. Oh, I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been, through the flesh, accessible to the praise of man, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, peaceful and happy in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand and misconceive! Here was the victory of Jesus!

*The Remembrancer* 7:99, 100.

"True simplicity is forgetfulness of self; and there is only one way to arrive at it (for it is all spiritual life, a matter of overcoming), and that is by being much with God, and God known in grace, because then self (the opposite of simplicity) dies down."

## *The Truth Requisite*

We cannot have too clear a view of Paul's teaching union with an ascended Christ, putting us in a wholly new position. The more I go on, the more I see that the loss of this by Christendom is the secret of its state; and it is mainly that which God has recovered in a measure in these last days. But this it is makes it so important that the truth should not be discredited, by denying or in any way slighting, any other part of scripture. It is curious, that this was just the ruin of the Paulicians. They had nothing else but Paul's epistles, and the Gospels; and their adversary took up this very point against them, a certain Peter Siculus.

But it is a mistake to think only Paul speaks of the new place; John does too. Nor is this all. The other parts of scripture are the word of God; and if any have not attained to Paul's doctrine, we are to walk by the same rule. Besides, the other aspects of the truth are as important in their place as that. Where that truth is held alone, there is a hardness, a want of daily dependence, which leaves the best Christian affections dormant. Further, the whole system is false. Those other parts of the New Testament were certainly available for Christians then, and, if BO, for Christians now. "Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling," is clearly Christian ground; and wilderness life is a part of Christian life, as Canaan and conflict are.

Further, the person who makes light of John's writings makes light of the manifestation of God tend of the Father, and makes his own acceptance before God the only thing of importance now. This is a very very bad state of soul, and such are clearly on low ground. We have to, maintain redemption against the Puseyite heterodoxy of making incarnation the saving work. But if we hold redemption tenaciously fast, the Bread come down from heaven must not be lost. And as to Peter, if I lose his writings, I lose the government of God and the connection of this in Christian times with O.T. times. Now the glory of God is concerned in these things; and it is B poor boast of knowledge to leave that aside, and think only of what exalts. So of Jude where it directly concerns the professing church. In no place is the Lord's personal glory as Christ brought out more fully than in Hebrews. Is that nothing for the Christian, because the unity of the body is not there too ?

Even Paul's Epistles give different aspects of truth. The Epistle to the Romans does not hint at our resurrection with Christ, nor allude to Christ's ascension (save one in chap. 7 to lay the ground for intercession, which is really dropped out of their scheme). Ephesians never goes on Romans ground at all; Colossians takes up in substance both. The vaunted clearness is not sound knowledge, but rejection of many important parts of truth; and it uniformly produces selfsufficiency and hardness, not personal dependence on grace and on Christ.

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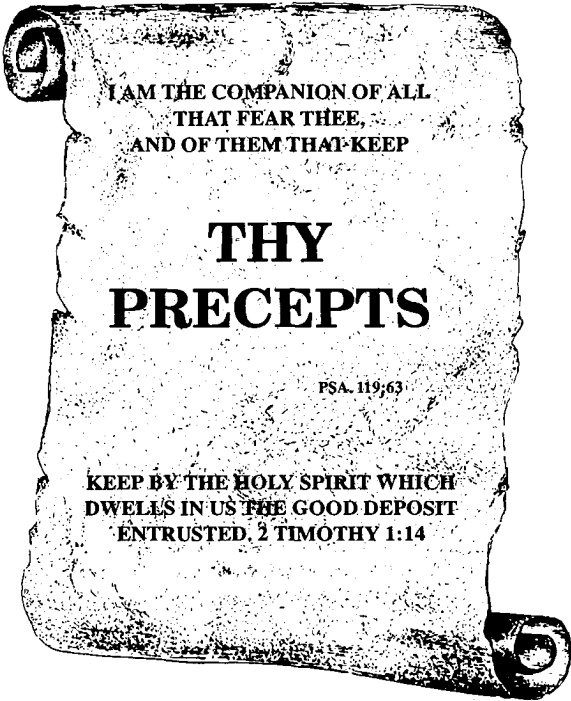
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## THOUGHTS FROM READINGS ON JUDGES

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### *Nazariteship Combats Philistinism: Judges 13*

As is well known, Samson judged Israel in an evil day, when there was little power against the Philistines. Yet he who had great renown for his strength was, morally, the weakest of all the judges of Israel. Today, also, is an evil day, and God's word and what is due to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is despised. At the same time, Christian men and women long for strength. "Give us oil in our lamps," the plea of the false professor, is the cry of many a saint of God nowadays. Still, power in an evil day is shown in separation from evil unto the Lord. And you can tell that a separation is the right kind of separation when you see that it maintains the authority of God and honors the blessed excellence of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every way, forming the basis of true Christian unity as we bow to the authority of the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of those gathered together to His precious name. As in the days of the apostles, there are many vain and unruly talkers whose mouths must be stopped, but where is the moral strength to do so? For the weak to cry for strength is natural enough. But who will cry for the grace and strength whose special character is that it separates from evil unto the Lord?

Philistinism has a particular moral lesson. The Philistines represent the intrusion of the world into the inheritance of God's people. Israel entered the land of their inheritance by passing through Jordan and by way of Gilgal. The Philistines come up into the land another way. Death with Christ signifies an end to the old man and Gilgal is the place of the cutting off of the flesh. Philistinism is the activity of the flesh in the things of God and the toleration of such fleshly activity. We tolerate the flesh in others because we do not want to judge it in ourselves. Sometimes, fleshly activity among believers appears as the perversion of public Christian ministry of the Word into occasions for entertainment and amusement. Sometimes, it appears as toleration of men speaking in public ministry without being gifted by God with gifts of public utterance. When what is said is not of the Holy Spirit by gift from Christ the Head in heaven, can anyone be surprised to find that earth is stopping up the wells, as in Abraham and Isaac's day? It is an evil thing to be trafficking in the inheritance of God's people with worldly principles and unjudged flesh.

In the case of Israel in Judges 13:1, the people did not cry to the Lord

about anything, no, not for deliverance, nor to confess their sins. For example, there is no record of anyone praying to God that He would send a Nazarite to combat Philistinism. Now, the complacency of Israel at that time is an unusual circumstance in the book of Judges. In the cases of the other judges, there was crying to the Lord and ultimately deliverance for Israel. But there is no real victory for Israel in the days of Samson in spite of some small setbacks for the Philistines.

Another unusual feature is that Samson is the first Nazarite in the Scriptures who was a Nazarite from his birth. Moreover, he was followed immediately by another man who was a Nazarite from birth. Because this Nazarite from birth (Samson) was so morally weak, not having the moral power to do what was expected of him to do and not being true to his Nazariteship (although he shined brightly at the very end after he had lost his eyesight), God raises up Samuel and God thunders on the Philistines in the days of Samuel in a way that was not seen in the days of Samson. Thus, God brings in Samuel as a Nazarite of a different character than Samson. During the judgeship of Samson, no doubt, Eli was a priest in Israel and Samuel was born. In Samuel, the moral power of Nazariteship shines out brightly, without the physical strength that Samson had. The Philistines had the upper hand for forty years and Samson judged Israel for twenty of them, but it was not until 1 Sam. 7:13 that the Philistines were subdued.

To complete the list of those in Scripture who were Nazarites from birth, there is also John the Baptist. Perhaps, also there were some Rechabites who had that character, but distinct Scripture testimony identifies these three (Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist) as Nazarites from birth. A three-fold cord is not easily broken. In Samson, we see strength. In Samuel, we see judgment. In John the Baptist, we see power in testimony. These three features mark Nazariteship.

In this chapter also, we read for the first time of a woman who lived the life of a Nazarite. Not very many women Nazarites are mentioned in the Scriptures, but the mothers of the three who were Nazarites from birth also lived lives of devotedness to the Lord. Samuel's mother, for example, had a deep exercise that something should be done to bring judgment upon the evil that had arisen at the place where Jehovah had chosen to place His name there, at Shiloh. The gross dishonor to God maintained by the house of Eli moved her soul to ask God for a man-child, not to spoil and dote on, but to put right where the evil was in order to be the occasion for the fall of the house of Eli. And when she prayed, we see her Nazarite character because Eli thought she was drunken. In fact, she was a spiritual Nazarite, not able to deal with the evil by human strength but asking the Lord to use her to be the instrument through whom deliverance from the evil would come.

The name of the woman Nazarite in Judges 13 is remarkable in that it is not recorded. So John 11:5 lists three whom the Lord Jesus loved, two being mentioned by name. www.presenttimpublishers.com The third has a well-known name, but it is not mentioned there. She had chosen the good part (Luke 10:42), and that part



was to sit at Jesus' feet so that the Lord Jesus should be everything and she herself be nothing. And even in this verse where the Lord's love is so prominent, that good part remains the portion of Martha's sister. So also Manoah's wife may have been of a similar character, content to be nothing that the Lord should get all the glory. At least she is rewarded with the same honor of having her name omitted from this chapter.

In Judges 13:1, the bondage of Israel to the Philistines is traced to the allowance of evil in Israel. So today, when Christians tolerate unjudged flesh (whatever enters the land without going through Jordan and Gilgal -- death and the cutting off of the flesh), they get into bondage too, and Philistinism spreads like a disease.

The Philistines are descended from the man by whose name Egypt is designated in Scripture (cp. Gen. 10:13-14 with the Hebrew word translated "Egypt" in the O. T.). They are like Egyptians living in the promised land: they represent one of the distinct aspects of the world. We run into these Philistines early in the book of Genesis and there they are busy putting earth into the wells that Abraham had dug. Those wells speak of the outflow of grace in the word of God, but Philistines put earth into them. They are earthly minded, and yet they dwell in the land. Another interesting feature about them is that Shamgar killed 600 of them and that was enough to deliver Israel, but here in this chapter they fill the whole land. Destroying a single band of Philistines, or defeating a single invading army, will not work deliverance for Israel at this time. Indeed, previous attacks on Israel in Judges came from outside the land proper, but these Philistines dwell right inside the inheritance of Israel. From this we may learn from God that what meets the enemies' workings within is Nazariteship.

What then is a Nazarite? The Nazarite was not to be occupied with the joys of this world. He was not to touch the grape, no, not in the seven aspects listed in Numbers 6, including the seeds, the skins, moist grapes, or dried grapes or grapes moistened in water. It was complete separation to God. In the second place, his hair was to grow long. That is, his hair was to be like a woman's hair. This gives the thoughts of subjection and dependence. The third thing is that he was not to be defiled by touching a dead body. He was to live in complete separation from a world characterized by moral death. These are the three features needed to overcome Philistinism.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the true Nazarite, although He did not live down here according to the letter of the law of the Nazarite as given through Moses. He did not have uncut hair, nor did He abstain from wine. It was a lie that He was a wine bibber, but He was not a literal Nazarite either. He was a spiritual Nazarite. All that Nazariteship sets forth spiritually, that is what He is. He is a Nazarite now also in another place altogether: He said that He would not drink wine until He drinks it anew in the kingdom of God. As in the case of Samson, so also the angel came to Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus before His birth. However, Samson failed to live according to his

Nazariteship. So instead of comparing him to the Lord Jesus, we must more often contrast him with the Lord, Who is the true Nazarite.

Moreover, what a great contrast there is between true Nazariteship and legality! Even under Moses, the law of the Nazarite regulated a voluntary devotedness. There is no "thou shalt be a Nazarite" in the Bible. Those who willingly devoted themselves to the Lord became Nazarites. Even those who were Nazarites from birth and never had the option of choosing not to be a Nazarite depict the sovereign call of God, not legality. After all, the truth of election does not set aside the grace of God. Nor is a Nazarite's picky-picky behavior with respect to grapes an evidence of legality of spirit. Surely, the spiritual Nazarite is called to live in devotedness to God. No doubt, many a spiritual Nazarite is accused of legality, a common reproach from those who tolerate Philistinism. The reader should note that deliberate indulgence in worldly behavior will not prevent accusations of "legality," but will instead provoke increased accusations that combine "legality" with "inconsistency." Is there not a solemn lesson about inconsistent departure from the true character of a Nazarite in the life of Samson?

In Samson, there were the outward marks of Nazariteship, but he was not an inward, spiritual Nazarite. In the later chapters, we read that his heart went out after many things that a spiritual Nazarite would have shunned. There is no power in outward forms. Samson does many feats, many exploits, but when his life was ended, Israel was under the power of the Philistines just as when he had begun. Judges 13:5 says that the beginning of the deliverance from the Philistines would be under Samson and God used him for blessing. But Samson was not the deliverer from the Philistines that Israel needed; real deliverance waited until the days of Samuel.

Moreover, spiritual Nazariteship should be distinguished from having a large heart. Samson had a large heart. It is written several times that he loved someone. He was capable of large affections and they got him into a lot of trouble. Yet, for all his largeness of heart, he was a lonely man. He did all his heroic exploits single-handedly.

The best that can be said for Samson is that he had the outward reputation of being a strong man, and the foremost lesson from his life is that true Nazariteship (which Samson did not have) is the source of moral strength. If a believer wants to be strong for the Lord, what does he have to work at? Bodily exercise to get stronger physically? No, but spiritual exercises based on the principles of separation from this present evil world, and of dependence on the Lord and of separation from all that speaks of moral death. The lessons of the Nazarite are the sources of moral strength. The same principles are found as the source of moral strength in 2 Tim. 2:1, 19-21. Here also separation from evil and being strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus are linked together in one chapter. The law of the Nazarite and the book of 2 Timothy tell the same story of the origin of moral strength. The spiritual Nazarite in 2 Timothy finds his strength in the same principles of Nazariteship that ought to have characterized the life of Samson.

For a man, long hair also speaks of shame and humiliation. For a man it is a shame to have long hair (1 Cor. 11:14). So separation to God involves binding on humility. In Judges 13, God comes to the woman first. In general, the woman in Scripture is seen in a more retiring place, the man in a more public place. The man is seen as stronger, the woman as more dependent, but not as morally weak. That is not what it means to be the "weaker vessel." But out of the weaker vessel, came Samson in all his strength. Out of weakness comes strength. Paul said, when I am weak, then am I strong. This also is a foremost lesson from the life of Samson. If we feel strong and able to handle a matter, God will teach us our inability. This woman is the instrument that God will use in His work and she represents weakness, but out of her comes the strong man, Samson (although, he did not live up to the character of his Nazariteship).

The condition of Israel in these days was, no doubt, a grief to the godly remnant in Israel because of the toleration of evil (Judges 13:1). An atmosphere of restraint on God's part lies over this whole chapter. The Angel maintained a distance from Manoah, he not being spiritual. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God," said Isaiah (59:2) at a later date, but a similar distancing of God from Israel marked their condition when Philistinism had the upper hand.

Manoah's wife, however, was a part of the godly remnant of Israel. The Angel of the Lord felt free to appear to her (Judges 13:3). Not only was she a weaker vessel, but she was affected by the departure of that nation from the Lord. Surely, there was some reason why she was sitting in the field (Judges 13:9). Is not the possession of those fields of Palestine central to the whole book of Judges? God gave them to Israel as their inheritance from Himself. Those who valued the inheritance valued those fields. So, later, Shammah stood in a plot of ground full of lentils (2 Sam. 23:11-12). Well, here a woman sits in one of those valued and important fields of Israel's inheritance.

Her proper place ordinarily would have been in the house of her husband and his proper place was out in the field, hard at work. But in this household, things were not in the normal order. Moreover, a profound statement is made about her and her husband in the end of Judges 13:9: her husband was not with her. So later in the chapter we learn that the Angel who felt free to speak to the woman had some reservations about speaking to the husband, Manoah. When Manoah came to the Angel in Judges 13:12, he asked again about the circumstances of the child. He wanted to be in on this thing, to be a part of it all. The Angel answered that the woman should beware to do all that had been told to her. It was a matter between the Angel and the woman and not with Manoah. In other words, Manoah asked how to order the child, and **the Angel answered how to order the mother**. Pay close attention to that.

The mother was ~~what needs to be ordered~~. So often in connection with the kings of Israel, the great formative force of the mother who spends so

much time with her children is noticed when the king's mother's name is given along with his own name at his accession. Where the mother in the home exercises a Nazarite character, the children are formed for good according to God's ways.

No doubt the woman may have been frightened by the terrible appearance of the Angel. She, the weaker, dependent vessel, delivered the message about Nazariteship to her husband. Now neither this message, nor the messenger, is according to the natural man's ideas about how deliverance from the enemy can be obtained. Manoah also was not afraid to hint to the Angel what the Angel should tell him (Judges 13:12), but the Angel never answers him according to his own thoughts.

The second visit of the Angel to the woman, not to Manoah, emphasizes that God is working in a certain way: God is working through weakness and through dependence in order to deliver Israel according to the principles of Nazariteship.

In passing, note that Manoah's wife behaved in a comely manner toward her husband. The first thing she did was that she went and told her husband. Then, the second time (in Judges 13:10), she hastened and ran to inform her husband. Manoah may have had confusion in his mind as to what his place should have been in these events and he may not have been entirely right in all that he said, but this woman recognized that her husband was over her. She acknowledged his authority. She ran. She informed her husband, and she was not the loser for that. To run cost her nothing; to run did not hurt. There was blessing for her and for her husband in her comely behavior. The same is shown later in verse 23 when her husband was afraid to die. There, she was a help suited to her husband in his confusion to set his mind at ease. If she had not been quick to inform him from the first, would her words of wisdom later have had moral weight to help him in his mind's distress? A Christian wife ought to covet the capacity to help her own husband in such a way: to tell him the word of the Lord, to show him where the Lord is, and to remove his confusion. When a husband needs these ministrations, a wife who is able to do these things without leaving her place of submission and dependence is a woman of worth indeed.

The same character is seen in the great woman of Shunem in 2 Kings. She told her husband about the prophet. The husband does not seem to understand what God is doing. He seems not able to figure out what to do when the son is sick, so he sent the boy to his mother. On the death of the boy, she asked to be sent to the man of God. The husband does not, apparently, feel a need to bring the man of God into the matter. But she went ahead with his permission, having greater spiritual understanding of what was suited to the case. Not getting out of her ordered place under her husband's authority, she was the instrument through whom God worked that day.

In Judges 13:6, we may well ask why Manoah's wife brings up the fact

that the Angel did not tell her his name. Would asking an angel his name be high on your list of priorities if one visited you? Perhaps also, her words are connected with Manoah's question in Judges 13:17. The fact is that the true character of the Angel and His origin are not brought out until after the burnt offering is mentioned in Judges 13:16. The revelation of the Angel's name earlier and apart from the burnt offering would have been to lower these events to a merely human level. Perhaps, they could have offered hospitality. Perhaps, they could have expressed gratitude for the blessing of a child being granted to them by the Lord. Yet the message was really greater than these things in that the child was to be a born Nazarite. The woman deduced already from what she heard that this was "a man of God" (Judges 13:6), but she did not really know who this was that had spoken to her. The Angel, therefore, refuses to allow them to treat Him as though He was merely a man. He was more than just a man of God. He would not eat their bread under this condition.

Now it is true that the three who came to Abraham did eat, but there is a clue in that chapter that Abraham recognized that one of those three was God Himself and he brought out the three measures of meal and the animal that was slain, all having a typical significance. Abraham's reception was not, therefore, just as though he had received a human guest. Manoah's intention, however kind and well-meant, did not suit the dignity of the Angel of Jehovah. The Angel speaks instead of a burnt offering. He directs their hearts to God Himself and to the burnt offering, and still Manoah knew not with Whom he was speaking (Judges 13:16).

Is there an implication in Judges 13:16 that Manoah was such a borderline person among all the idolaters in Israel that he needed instruction as to Whom the offering should be made if offered? Now, the offerings of Lev. 1-7, and in particular burnt offerings, are expressive of a certain kind of worship that belongs only to God. Divine honors are not rightly given to anyone else.

This is "the Angel" with a capital "A" because this Person is a manifestation of the Son of God, a theophany. In human form, He appears as an Angel (the word means "messenger"), as One come from God with this message. This is no mere man. Now the secret comes out as to His name: it is Wonderful. The same word is used in Isaiah 9:6 with respect to the Son. From this we know that it is the same divine Person that is here.

Essentially the same word, "wonderful," is in Judges 13:19. What did He do when He did wondrously? They thought He was merely a man, and He, the Son, went up in the flame of the burnt offering. This looked forward to the cross. The burnt offering speaks of the Son giving Himself up entirely to the will and pleasure of God, irrespective of whether a sinner is ever saved or not. He offered Himself as a sweet-smelling savor to God by the eternal Spirit. In every step of His life as the perfect man, the only true Nazarite, He glorified God, but at the cross, truly, He did so wondrously. Through weakness, He o'er sin prevailed, according to the words of a hymn. He took the place

of a humble, subject man and was perfectly separate from all that the flesh finds attractive in the world. And the savor of all that He is went up in the flame of the cross, as it were, to God.

Then to Him belongs all the honor, and intelligently so. Manoah, in Judges 13:17, takes the place of a man who freely dispenses honor wherever he feels like doing so. Manoah was not averse to giving honor to this person who came by, whoever it might have been, providing that the words spoken came true. But that kind of honor is lower than the honor that is due to the Son of God.

When poor Manoah did find out Who it was, it does not say that Manoah honored Him. Nor, when the sayings of the Lord came to pass, is it written that Manoah paid special honor to the Angel of the Lord. Instead of honoring Him later, he said, "We shall surely die" (Judges 13:22). That was the time for him to have honored the Lord intelligently, knowing Who it was that he had been speaking with.

The great thought in connection with the burnt offering is that it would be accepted for the offerer. The offerer would lay the hand on the head of the offering. So we are accepted in Another. The offering being offered up for God's delight, we are identified with it. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are accepted entirely, as the burnt offering is accepted entirely. The flame went up to God and He totally accepted it, one hundred per cent. That is the measure of our acceptance before God. The burnt offering was attended with a meal offering, the perfection of the Lord Jesus from His birth to His death. Some meal offerings had various forms of cakes: some were baked in a pan, heat being applied to them. These forms speak of the various testings of Christ. What came out of it all was just the fine flour, mingled with oil and with frankincense, as a sweet odor to God. So it is really the excellency of His person that gives value to the work of atonement. No other one could offer to God an atoning sacrifice. What is represented by the meal offering is not true of them.

Somehow Manoah did not get the point of this burnt offering, this flame going up, this going up of the Angel in the flame of the burnt offering. But his wife did. She saw that they were accepted in the acceptance of the burnt offering. So in our case, the exact measure of our acceptance before God is the acceptance of the offering up to God of Christ as the great burnt offering. And faith lays hold of this.

This was a time of trouble and of the enemy having the upper hand, and yet God received a burnt offering at that time. There is encouragement in that. Even in times of declension and trouble, God has not changed and our acceptance in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son, is exactly the same. What kind of encouragement, we may ask, was there on this day for Manoah's wife? Once the poor woman in a day of trouble, whose husband was not with her, had only Philistines to look at from day to day. But here she has a burnt offering and she trusts in it (Judges 13:19). The

words are repeated in Judges 13:20: they “looked on” the burnt offering.

The result was that they fell on their faces to the ground. If we really contemplate the death of Christ, it will have an effect on us. It produces worship, it produces reverence, it produces attitudes and postures. To fall with our faces to the ground every time the work of the cross was mentioned out of reflex or habit would not be enough. But there should be holy awe and reverence in the heart over what God has done at the cross. Not merely an outward form is called for, but an inward reality in the soul that responds to what was done upon the cross.

At the end of the chapter, the child is born and grows and is blessed. The Spirit comes upon him, too, in his home territory. There is a suited order in the Spirit's movements being seen in the home sphere first and in the public sphere later on. We begin to be for the Lord first in the home sphere, where everybody knows us and all our failures.

Now the place mentioned in Judges 13:25 has its significance, too. The tribe of Dan was not as faithful as it ought to have been. The tribe of Dan was cramped in there because they were driven up into the mountains by chariots of iron. Later on those men of Dan came across the defenseless inhabitants of Laish and found an easy place to dwell without anyone to rebuke their idolatry. They were not as aggressive in battle as they should have been when Israel first entered the land. Yet at that very place of Israel's failure in conflict with the Philistines, the Spirit begins to move Samson. “When the adversary shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah will lift up a banner against him” (Isaiah 59:19).

That so much of this chapter should revolve around the burnt offering and that such a wonderful setting forth of the offering up of Christ to God on the cross should appear here in a book of such evil and failure in Israel is an encouragement indeed. In a day of weakness, it is encouraging to be reminded of where true strength is to be found: the lessons of Nazariteship, the truth of the burnt offering, the principle of paying respect to God's order in created relationships, the importance of valuing the inheritance that we have from God, the twin necessities of obedience and reverence stand before us as a door of hope through which we shall find sufficient strength for separation from evil unto the Lord. May we take heart and live for the Lord wholly no matter how dark the days may seem to be!

Dennis Ryan, 1995

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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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# *6: The Pretribulation Rapture*

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## *Chapter 6.12: The 24 Elders*

### *The 24 Elders and the Rapture*

#### INTRODUCTION

All who oppose the truth of the pre-tribulation rapture of the saints are forced to reject the truth that the 24 elders include the raptured and raised saints. Their various systems require this. If they believe in a future "great tribulation" they must have the church passing through it and therefore the saints cannot be raptured at the point depicted by Rev. 4:1. Or, they may think that the whole of the present period, which they allege ends with "the last judgment," is denoted by the "great tribulation"; and since they claim that Christ comes at the end of time, the elders cannot represent the raptured and raised saints.

Furthermore, the martyrs of Rev. 6:9-11 are regarded as Christians by the opposers of the pre-tribulation rapture. This they must also understand in that way for the reasons given above and do so right in the face of the imprecatory prayer of these martyrs. The elders are therefore viewed as being either angels or else as representing that theological figment, "the church of all ages," or something else, so long as they do not represent glorified saints.

It will be shown that the elders are not angels; nor do they represent angels, or represent "the church of all ages." Rather, they represent the raptured and raised saints, of the Old Testament and New Testament; and the presence of the elders in Rev. 4 denotes that the rapture has transpired before the events of the rest of the book.

#### **THE OCCURRENCE OF THE RAPTURE IS NOT DIRECTLY NOTED IN THE REVELATION**

R. Gundry said,

Furthermore, the purpose of the Apocalypse is "to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place" (Rev. 1:1). For the Church, by far the



most important event shortly to take place is the pretribulational return of Christ if there be such. Yet though John provides minute delineations of tribulational events and of the posttribulational advent and addresses and relates his book to churches, not a syllable depicts a pretribulational return of Christ. For the most part the book of Revelation becomes an anachronism under pretribulationism. It is incongruous that the major book of prophecy in the NT, written to churches for the express purpose of instructing them regarding final events, should not contain a full description of the hope of the Church and yet in its major portion painstakingly chronicle events which according to pretribulationism have no direct bearing upon the Church.<sup>1</sup>

The incongruity is only in the minds of opposers and results from knowing neither the nature, unity and calling of the church or the character of the Revelation with respect thereto.

The objection is astutely worded; and, it hides the facts. The hope is the coming of Christ, he says. But let us change the wording a little, more in accord with Scripture and say that the hope is to meet Christ in the air and to have John 14:1-3 fulfilled. Let us say that the hope is expressed in 1 Thess. 4:15-18. Where then do we find this in the Rev.? Where is "a full description of the hope of the Church"? Exactly nowhere! Posttribulationist inferences, about Rev. 14:14-20, Rev. 19:11-16 and about trumpets and about saints who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, we may have; but no rapture, no assembling shout, no meeting Christ in the air, no Father's house, no abodes. Be it so that the rapture is not said to occur between Rev. 3 & 4. But it is not recorded anywhere in the book of Revelation. It is inferred, or assumed, to occur at some point by all. Not a single verse "straightforwardly" describes a posttribulation rapture!

Rather, then, than pretending that the rapture is stated to occur at some point, the lack of such statement should cause us to desire light from God concerning why the rapture is not directly noted. W. Kelly wrote:

One important thing, then, we have seen to be assumed -- the removal of the heavenly saints from the earth. In chaps. 4, 5 and throughout the body of the book they are no longer found there. They are glorified in heaven, and yet it is not until Rev. 19 that they are manifested, when they come out of heaven. Between these two points we have evidently a long series of events. We have seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, with various episodes of great interest and importance. These three different series of judgments are not executed by the Lord in person. It is manifest that they must occur after the Lord has come to receive His church, but before He executes His grand personal judgment in chap. 19 For it is beyond dispute that, before the saints are taken to the Lord and so can come *with Him*, He must have come for them. How then did those symbolized by the four and twenty glorified elders get to heaven?

It may be said, they might have been taken into this position individually through death, or that their souls might be glorified there. But there is no such thought in scripture as the souls of the saints being seated on thrones, and having crowns on their heads. Neither do the souls of the saints form the complete headship of heavenly priests, as taught us by the four and twenty

elders; for we know from 1 Thess. 4 that part of the heavenly company will be found alive on earth up to the presence of the Lord which raises the dead and changes the living believers. There can be no such completeness, then, as is meant by the symbol till the Lord will have translated both to meet Him above. The allusion is to the twenty-four orders of the priesthood set up by king David. Now Christ is at that time about to take the place of king; and, just as before the kingdom of Solomon was established, David divided the priesthood into twenty-four courses, so we find that before the true Solomon, the Lord Jesus, comes out in all His glory, we have the antitypical courses as a whole. The heavenly priesthood is seen complete.

It might be asked, Why is it only the heads that are seen, and not the body of the priesthood? It appears probable, but I only offer it as a suggestion, that those that are taken up when the Lord comes will form the heads of the priesthood, and that those who suffer after and join them may be the subordinate body. Twenty-four is necessarily the complete sum of the courses, or of their chiefs. Now, the souls in heaven can never be even that completed; because till Christ comes, there will always be a part of the church remaining on the earth, as we have just seen. I conceive, therefore, that by the full priestly number twenty-four surrounding the throne, God intends to show that they are not that portion which consists of the souls in paradise;<sup>2</sup> for it requires the addition of us who are alive and remain, in order to make up the church of the firstborn, or the then complete sum of the risen and changed saints. The heavenly saints up to that time must then be necessarily removed to their seats on high.

How and when did this take place? There is no real difficulty about their translation, because they never can be removed as a complete body, and changed, till the Lord Jesus comes Himself; as He said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come and receive you unto myself." And this evidently is not sending angels for them. We find angels sent to gather in elect Jews, or Israel, from the four quarters of heaven (Matt. 24); but to gather in His church He comes Himself. And this falls in with what we said elsewhere. The saints in Thessalonica were told to wait for God's Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1); and as to those who were gone, they were not to sorrow as those who had no hope. For the Lord Himself -- not merely by angelic or providential intervention, but the Lord Himself -- would descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. There might be angels, but there is not a word said about them here. When the Lord is revealed executing vengeance, angels will accompany Him; but here, at the descent of the Lord Himself, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," forming one portion of the heavenly saints; then "we which are alive and remain" shall be caught up together with them. There and then, as it seems to me, we have the twenty-four elders, evidently the whole of the priestly heads. The saints whose bodies are in their graves are raised first, then the surviving saints are changed, by the presence of the Lord. There is but the barest interval of a moment between those two momentous effects of the voice of the Son of God. And so shall we, caught up together, ever be with, the Lord.

This most solemn and blessed event must occur therefore between Rev. 3

2. The reader of the *Horae Apoc.* [by E. B. Elliot] will remember how embarrassed the author is on this very point (1:91-96). He is compelled to own that the elders' insignia points to the resurrection-state after Christ's coming, page 92; yet in the next page, 93, he says, it seems that it is especially the *departed in paradise* that we must suppose figured here. For want of seeing the distinction between the *παρόδησις* of the Lord and the *ἐπιφάνεια τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ* (2 Thess. 2:1, 8), these and other perplexities constantly spring up.

and 4 of this book. It is not described, because the object of the Revelation is not to show the Lord's coming in the way of grace, though there are of course allusions to it. There is an entire passing over of His presence to meet His heavenly saints in the prophetic visions of the Revelation, but a full description of His coming *with* them in Rev. 19. This last is what is styled elsewhere the appearing or day of the Lord, when He punishes with everlasting destruction from His presence, and from the glory of His power. During this interval the heavenly saints are with the Lord above; all the members of the church are there, and in their bodies of glory. The first mention of them is in the fourth chapter, where we find not angels, but redeemed men -- persons whose very vesture of white, whose thrones, and crowns of gold, are all connected with redemption -- persons who are evidently exercising their priesthood before God in Rev. 5. These are the elders. How did they get there? The Lord must have come, and have gathered them to Himself in the air, and so have accomplished His promise to them: "In my Father's house are many mansions." "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." So now when this future scene arrives, having prepared the place, He will have come for them, and taken them to the Father's house.

It is remarkable, however, as showing the character of this book, that, although we do see them in the presence of God, it is not called the house of the Father. On the contrary, it is a throne that is seen; and so too, when He who sits thereon is named, it is not as the Father, but as the Lord God Almighty. When we speak of God as "the Father," it is to express the nearest place of affection into which God has brought us; and when we hear of God as "the Lord God Almighty," it is connected with the putting forth of Divine power and government. "God," as such, is the most general and abstract name, and implies no relationship with another being. But to be called "the Father" necessarily implies the closest relationship of love, whether spoken in the highest and intrinsic and eternal sense of Jesus as the Son of the Father, or subordinately of those whom He has taken into the adoption of sons, loved with the same love (John 17 and 1 John 3).

In Gen. 1 creation is the subject, and God (or Elohim) is spoken of as the One who originates. In the next chapter of Genesis He is called the "Lord (or Jehovah) God," because He is there entering into special connection with His creatures, and Adam is put in the place of responsibility to Him as Jehovah Elohim, that is the God of creation in moral relationship. How perfect is every word of God! Infidels, instead of seeing the perfectness of His word, have only reasoned from their own ignorance and impotence, and have endeavored to prove that these chapters must have been written by two different persons, because of the different titles given to God. But instead of being the varying style of different men, it is the wisdom of God that discovers itself in these distinctions. When the relationship of authority occurs, and man is put under the test of obedience, Jehovah-Elohim is the title used; but when in the New Testament He enters into relationship with sons, it is "the Father." He did not bring out the latter name as a formal name until THE SON came, who opened, so to speak, the sluice, that all God's grace might flow out, and specially in His resurrection by virtue of His death. But between the two extremes of the trial of the creature in Eden and the accomplishment of redemption, God brought out first the name of Almighty, and next that of Jehovah. Abraham was called to leave his own country and kindred, called to be a pilgrim, having none but God to look to, and so Jehovah most suitably reveals Himself to him as El-Shaddai, God Almighty (Gen. 17:1). Subsequently He makes Himself known to Israel by His name Jehovah, as a ground of national relationship.

Here the Lord constantly brings out these names, but not that of Father, or at least not to us, but to Jesus. Just as the scene is not the Father's house, but

the throne, so the title taken by God is not that of Father. The center of this heavenly scene is the throne of God, and the saints are not alluded to as enjoying mansions with the Son in the Father's house, but are seen enthroned. God will be no longer gathering the church on earth; Jesus will have come for it, and gone above. When the church was the object of God's care on the earth, they even here below called Him Father; but when He is going to execute judgment on the earth, they, already raptured and in heaven, understand it and address Him accordingly.

The Lord's coming, then, to receive the church must have been before the facts which answer to the vision of the twenty-four enthroned elders. Some people may be slow to believe that the prophecy would pass over such an important event in silence. But it is forgotten that, whenever and wherever you put it, there *is* silence as to the act of the saints' rapture in the book of Revelation. The only question is, Where according to our best light from scripture is it to be understood here? It must, in my judgment, be supposed before the heavenly saints can be seen as a complete body above, which is in Rev. 4. The Lord will then have come and received the glorified saints, and given them their place in the presence of God, before any of the judgments come on the world. Terrible things in righteousness are going to be enacted, but the saints will be above them all. The seals, and vials, and trumpets, have no terrors for them; they call out from the glorified not trembling, but worship only. Nay, these risen ones will be occupied, it seems, about their brethren who are still in the midst of trial; for there shall be saints called after the present work of God in forming the church is done with, brethren who will suffer on the earth after we are gone. Of these the central part of the Revelation treats (chaps. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, &c.). Again there will be godly souls alive when the King comes to sit on the throne of His glory, and all the nations are gathered before Him, whom He will call "my brethren." As is plain in the latter part of Matt 25, the living Gentiles, or nations then on the earth, will be treated according to the way in which they may have behaved to the messengers of the King. The sheep will have proved themselves to have faith in the King, because they have received His servants; the conduct of the goats will have shown their incredulity. For when all the preliminary warnings given to those on the earth are over; when all the judgments that proceed from the throne in rapid succession have been proved to be in vain, and the rebellious hearts of men are only rising higher against God, the Lord says as it were, "I will send them no more chastenings, will wait no longer for a repentance which is refused, but will come myself and sweep them away to destruction." Accordingly this day of judgment on the quick we have in Rev. 19. And the interval, from Rev. 4 and 5 to Rev. 19, is filled by new dealings of God in providential judgments, by intermingled mercy to Jews and Gentiles, and by glances at the heavenly saints in the presence of God.

No doubt the souls of dying saints go to God during the interval, but whatever may be the blessedness reserved for such (Rev. 14:13), the saints who are already changed remain there through the whole period. The heavenly saints, including those that are true Christians now, those that have been such before, and the Old Testament saints, may be caught up at anytime to be with the Lord. I know no scriptural ground which entitles a believer to say, He will not come tomorrow. Who can affirm with divine authority that there is something yet remaining to be done before; that there must be a delay? No doubt there *may* be more or less time to intervene; but scripture never puts the delay between us and Christ's coming, but before His day. As a servant with his hand upon the door, and on the stretch as it were for his master's arrival, so as to be able when he comes open unto him immediately -- such is the true attitude the child of God should assume towards the Lord Himself. He would have, if so we may speak, everything settled up. He looks for practical

readiness at all times. Not as though we could do anything by way of preparation. Thanks be to God, He has made us meet through the grace of Christ. But there may be things in our ways and walk, in our spirit and hopes and objects, which will not stand the light of His presence. Whatever we do, we should seek to enter on nothing that renders the thought of the Lord's coming unwelcome.

We must then, if wise, beware of speculations or plans which suppose us to have a long time before us. The Lord desires us to be as travelers passing through a foreign land, and withal going out in desire to meet Him who is speedily coming for us. The Lord may be a little longer than we think; but He is coming, and this too at an hour when men think not. His coming will immediately act on all the heavenly saints, raising the dead, changing the living, and removing both to Himself above. Then follow the scenes of Rev. 4 and 5, which let us see the interest of the glorified saints in the righteous who suffer on the earth, after the others are gone to heaven. They cannot apply fully, either while only a part of the church is above and in the separate state; or when the millennial reign is arrived. They suppose an interval between these two things, when the Lord will have come and changed them into His risen likeness, and before they accompany Him from heaven in order to judge and reign.<sup>3 4</sup>

We have spent considerable space on the reason why the rapture is not noted in the Revelation because it is important to understand that the objection against its occurring between Rev. 3 & 4, based on non-explicit mention, is invalid. In effect, *the objection really means that it will occur at no time (because it is not mentioned anywhere)* and thus is an invalid objection because the rapture *will* occur. The book neither records a pretribulation, posttribulation, or postmillennial rapture. Thus the Revelation is not "an anachronism under pretribulationism." The lack of "a full description of the hope of the Church" is not "incongruous" but rather what we would expect:

- when once we understand the nature and calling of the church;
- when once we understand that our hope is not a link in the chain of prophecy;
- and when once we understand the true character of the book of Revelation.

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3. It will be observed that this, if well-founded, decides the question of the true and proper application of the rest of the book. For what more weighty than to know whether it speaks throughout its central visions of the time during which the church is still on earth, or of the days which follow -- the great crisis when the church is not here but risen, and God is dealing with the earth after another pattern? To say that it is given to us to know these visions proves nothing. All scripture is given to us and is good for us, but it is certainly not all *about* us; and we are most profited, not by the fancy that God is always thinking of us, but by really understanding its objects, scope, and end. Had Abraham imagined that he was to be involved in the impending catastrophe of Sodom because the Lord graciously revealed it to him before it came to pass, such a delusion would have done him harm. It was not to Lot who was there, but to Abraham who was not, that the fullest communication was made. And so it will be, I doubt not. A remnant [of the Jews] is to be saved -- saved as through fire. May our place be above it all -- above the world in spirit now, and looking down upon its plans and progress with the abiding consciousness of a judgment that hastens -- destined to be actually above when that judgment comes.

If the 24 elders do not represent celestial beings or disembodied souls, we are left with raptured and resurrected saints. The rest of this chapter, therefore, will endeavor to show the position and occupation of the 24 elders, and that this indicates that they represent the glorified O. T. saints and saints of the present period, changed and caught up. The O. T. saints and we Christians will be made perfect at the same time (Heb. 11:40), when the perfection of glory arrives (1 Cor. 13:10), at the coming of the Lord for His saints. Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23). As firstfruits, He has part in "the first resurrection." His resurrection is phase one. Phase two will occur at the time of the rapture of the saints. Those raised from the dead at that time will have part in "the resurrection of the just. The O. T. "just" will be also raised then (Heb. 12:40). When the millennium commences, the tribulation martyrs will also have been raised from the dead, for at that time the entire "first resurrection" is seen reigning (Rev. 20:4). "The first resurrection" states its priority before the resurrection of the unjust after the thousand years (Rev. 20:5), while "the resurrection of the just" describes the character of those who participate in the first resurrection, while "the resurrection of life" describes its result and blessedness. "The first resurrection," then, is not a point in time, but a class of persons. Phase two of the resurrection of the just will occur at the time of the rapture, and the O.T. "just" will not be left in the grave. The objection that godly Israelites must be raised after the tribulation not only flies in the face of Heb. 12:40, it fails to deal with the O. T. "just" who are not Israelites. "The resurrection of the just" does not distinguish among saints preceding Israel, Israel, or the church.

## SUMMARY

A summary of the reasons from only the book of Revelation for believing that the rapture occurs between Rev. 3 and 4 is given below.

1. The divinely stated structure of the book requires it.
2. The elders are not angels or disembodied souls; therefore, they are raptured ones.
3. The saints come forth from heaven with Christ and so were caught up before the appearing.
4. The marriage supper takes place in heaven before the saints come forth with Christ.
5. Rev 3:10 excludes them from the *time* of the trial.
6. God has noted the place of His various companies of saints in the book of Revelation. The elders are enthroned before the seals are opened. The 144,000 of all tribes of Israel, and the Gentiles saved out of the tribulation are noted before the trumpets sound (ch. 7). The 144,000 of Judah are sealed before the bowls are poured out (ch 14).

Ed.

## *Elements of The Two Resurrections*

### **Chapter 4:**

## ***The Figurative Use of Resurrection in the O. T.***

### ***Introduction***

In his chapter, "The Resurrection of the Saints in the Old Testament," A. Reese seeks to overcome W. Kelly's regarding Isa. 26:14 and 19 and Dan. 12:13 as using resurrection as a figure for Israel's national restoration. His premise is: "wheresoever the resurrection is, there will the Rapture be also."<sup>1</sup> His purpose is to show, then, that these passages refer to literal resurrection and that that is the Rapture -- *necessarily posttribulational in time*. His method used in accomplishing this is:

1. Able Hebraists take these passages to speak of literal resurrection.
2. Since the resurrection takes place on one day, and since the resurrection of Israelites, in these passages, is post-tribulational, then the Rapture must be post-tribulational too.
3. Since all admit Isa. 25:7-8 denotes literal resurrection, and since (he alleges) 1 Cor. 15:54 connects the resurrection of N. T. believers with the *time* of Isa. 25:7-8, Isa. 25:7-8 being post-tribulational, the Rapture is also.
4. The above procedures are followed for Dan. 12:3 also.
5. I shall quote the final blow! "I have not found a single work of any importance that upholds the spiritualizing of Isaiah 26:19 and Dan. 12:2 by the Sadducees and Darbyists."<sup>2</sup>

Since subsequent posttribulationist writers regard A. Reese as having settled this, and since I am convinced that he did not do justice to W. Kelly's

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1. *Op. Cit.*, p. 34.

[www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

2. *Ibid.*, p. 51. See also p. 40 and 50.

criticism of this view, we shall look at the matter at length.

Before proceeding to the passages in question several general remarks are in order.

1. His premise, stated above, is assumed at this point, and he proceeds as if his dictum established it as fact.

2. And, since he knows that W. Kelly regarded Isa. 25:7, 8 and other passages as denoting literal resurrection, why the comparison of "Sadducees and Darbyists"? Is this not cheap polemics? Because, observe, A. Reese and the Sadducees believed that Ezek. 37 uses resurrection figuratively.<sup>3</sup> What does this prove? Does it mean that if Hebraists agree with him it's all right to believe as did the Sadducees, but if we differ from Hebraists, why, then we are Sadducean in view?

3. Since it is admitted that Ezekiel 37 uses resurrection as a figure for Israel's restoration there is nothing strange in such use.

4. Hosea 6:2 uses resurrection figuratively also. And A. Reese allows it.<sup>4</sup> He couldn't utilize it for His purpose of showing a post-tribulation resurrection for Israel anyway. Besides, it is "manifestly to be interpreted as figurative."

5. The N. T. nowhere uses Isa. 26:14, 19, or Dan. 12:1-3, or Hosea 6:2 or Ezekiel 37 in connection with resurrection, but 1 Cor. 15 does make a reference to Isa. 25:6-8, which we will notice later. Evidently the truth of the resurrection of the body is taught in the N. T. without appeal to, or aid of, those very passages in question.

6. We call the attention of those who insist on literal interpretation (where the thing is self-evidently figurative) to Romans 11:15 where the final reception of Israel is "life from among the dead." Literal interpretation is right and good and the prophecies are to be generally regarded as literal in intent; but where figures are used, we must understand the figurative use.

Since A. Reese's arguments are regarded as conclusive, as noted below, we will examine the passages a little. A posttribulationist says:

Now Alexander Reese . . . proved conclusively from Isa. 25:8; 26:19 and Dan. 12:1-3 that the resurrection of the Old Testament saints would not take place until the end of the seven-year period of tribulation and he concluded his argument by saying, The whole Darbyist case collapses, therefore, before their admission that 1 Thess. 4 includes the raising of the O. T. saints" . . . Reese is

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 36, 49.



on impregnable ground here.<sup>5</sup>

There is an additional error here. I don't know of such an admission. The case is thus:

1. The dead *in Christ* does not include O. T. saints. Why, there was no Christ (God and man united in one Person) in O. T. times. "In Christ" is distinctive Christian position consequent upon Christ's exaltation and the consequent seal of the believer with the Spirit.
2. Still, O. T. saints and Church saints are raised at the same time, as Heb. 11:40 shows. But this is pretribulation.

### ***Isaiah 26:19***

We affirm that Isa. 26:19 does not refer to a literal resurrection but rather uses resurrection as a figure for Israel's national resurrection, just as does Hosea 6:2 and Ezekiel 37.

A. Reese takes Isa. 26:19 as literal resurrection also, using a modified translation along with an explanation from Delitzch (who, by the way, contrary to A. Reese's view, understands Ezekiel 37 as literal resurrection also. See him on Isa. 26:19, *in loco*; where all of this is spiritually alchemized into the church). He objects to W. Kelly's explanation which I will quote later for those who do not own his valuable exposition of Isaiah.

There is one fallacious argument against this that we should notice. A. Reese said:

It is observable also that the theory that the resurrection in Isaiah 26:19 merely signifies the national revival of Israel is clearly inadmissible, because the resurrection in that passage, as we have seen, takes place *after* the Great Tribulation, and consequent upon the Coming of Jehovah. But we know from all Scripture that the national revival and restoration of the people *precede* it, for the Seventieth Week opens with the nation of Israel already restored to the land, and in league with the Coming Prince (Dan. 9:24). In other words, the national restoration predicted in Ezekiel 37:1-14 takes place years *before* the fulfillment of the resurrection in Isaiah 26:19.<sup>6</sup>

Error compounds error. It is astonishing that he could really claim that the restoration of Israel precedes the 70th week and then appeals to this as proof of his other assertion. The case is actually this:

1. Jews are indeed in the land and in league with the Coming Prince at the beginning of the 70th week. This is not their national restoration but the

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5. H. E. Brockett, "The Collapse of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Theory," *Watching and Waiting*, Jan.-Feb. 1965, p. 300.

6. *Op. Cit.*, p. 37. The error is repeated on p. 43. On p. 74 he says that Isaiah 27:13 occurs on the day of the Lord. Isaiah 27:13 is a reference to the regathering of Israel, actually.

work of man that is depicted in Isa. 18, not in Ezek. 37.

2. Apparently posttribulationists do not understand the seven feasts of Jehovah. Israel will reach the full blessing on day 1335 from the middle of the week (Dan. 12). This will be the feast of tabernacles, the 15th day of the month. On the 10th of that month is the day of atonement (cp. Zech. 12:10-14), but on the 1st is the blowing of trumpets signifying the regathering of Israel (cp. Lev. 23). Following that regathering, there is still fighting and finally the invasion by the Russian coalition -- signified by the attack from Gog (Ezek. 38, 39). The regathering of Ezek. 37 just precedes this.

3. The regathering is God's work, not man's as in Isa. 18. Then, all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26, and see Isa. 59:20). Christ does not come to a nation already restored for those outside the land will be gathered first to the wilderness and the rebels purged (Ezek. 20:33-38). "They shall not enter into the land of Israel." This occurs when the Lord is there. It seems incredible that someone would claim that the regathering precedes the appearing of Christ in glory.

4. The agencies of the regathering are given in Jer. 16:15, 16; Isa. 49:6; 14:2; 49:22; 66:20; 60:9; 27:13; Matt. 24:31.

5. Ephraim regathering is given in Isa. 11:12, 13; Jer. 31:7-9; Ezek. 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 37:16; Hosea 14:8; Zech. 9:13; 10:6; Obadiah 18.

6. Ephraim and Judah are spoken of together in Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:18; 30:3; 31:27, 31; 33:7; Ezek. 37; Zech. 9:13; 10:6.

7. Besides that we have a general picture in many other scriptures.<sup>7</sup>

Let us now proceed to examine the passage, via Wm. Kelly's remarks:

The prophetic Spirit turns to speak of the blessing for the Jews. "Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works for us. Jehovah our God, other lords than thee have had dominion over us: by thee only will we make mention of thy name" (vv. 12, 13). What had become of them? "[They are] dead, they shall not live; deceased, they shall not rise: for thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made all memory of them to perish" (v. 14). This is of course highly figurative language. If we look at the resurrection, we know that the wicked are to rise as well as the righteous; that is, there is a resurrection of all men just and unjust. These Gentile oppressors of Israel must rise in the resurrection of judgment. They will rise like other bad men. But when it is said here, "They shall not rise," the Spirit does not describe the literal resurrection of the body, but the complete reversal of the lot of the nations and Israel in this world. These old lords are no longer to live or rise again in this world. This will suffice to show that the language here is put figuratively.

In Isa. 25:8 it is said, "He will swallow up death in victory." This, we know from God Himself, will be realized in the literal resurrection of the body, when the saints are raised. But in Isa. 26:14 the allusion to resurrection is

employed as a figure, because the context proves that it cannot refer to that literal fact; for if it did, it would be to deny that the unrighteous are to rise. This is the true criterion for the understanding of any passage of the word. If a person bring you a text against what you know to be true, always examine what surrounds it, see what God treats of. Here it is plain that it is a question of the way in which God will deal in that day with the nations who lorded it over Israel. But is it not the fact, some may ask, that these Gentiles were literally dead? Certainly, is the answer; but in this case it is not true that they shall not rise.

Perhaps this would not be worth dwelling on, were it not that many apply Isa. 26:19 to the same literal resurrection as Isa. 25:8. We must never force but bow to scripture. The passages that do refer to a raising of bodies we must hold fast; but it is dangerous to misapply others which only use it as a figure, because in this case one might infer, as from our chapter, that which is unfounded. In truth, as we know, all men must rise. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29). There we have the most decisive proof that all the dead, just and unjust, are to rise again from the grave.

Here contrariwise the wicked enemies of Israel "shall not rise." John clearly teaches the resurrection of all, good and bad. Isa. 26:14 refers only to the figure of not rising, to comfort Israel from all fears of their old troubles. "Dead, they shall not live; deceased, they shall not rise: for thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made all memory of them to perish." Thus effectually will Jehovah have disposed of Gentiles who had lorded it over the Jews.

But what has been done for the nation? "Thou hast increased the nation, Jehovah, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified. Thou hadst removed [it] far [unto] all the ends of the earth" (Isa. 26:15). He does not here speak of the resurrection of the body. Clearly when this takes place as described, it could not be said that He had removed the risen saints far unto all the ends of the earth. Take it of Judah, and how true it is!

Equally plain is what follows. "Jehovah, in trouble they sought thee; they poured out a lisp[ing] [when] thy chastening [was] upon them. As a woman with child, [that] draweth near the time of her delivery, is in travail and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been before thee, Jehovah. We have been with child, we have been in travail, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought the deliverance of the land (or, earth); neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen" (Isa. 26:16-18). They will review their past conduct, and see that they have not accomplished God's design by them. Where had they brought in a divine flow of blessing? They had learnt the bad ways of the Gentiles, and brought a curse on themselves as well as on others; the name of Jehovah was blasphemed because of them.

But now it is said, as a glorious reverse, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise." What mighty words, and how tender! Jehovah awakens Israel, and even calls them *His* dead bodies. It is no question of bodily death, but of national revival, and yet it will have spiritual character too. The daughter of Zion awakes from her long sleep, and Jehovah speaks of the Jews (so long defunct as His people) as His dead. They, for their part, own themselves to be just as bad as the rest of the nations; but the momentous difference is that Jehovah claims them as His own. "Let them be dead," He says, as it were, "still they are Mine." It is the Jewish nation that had been like a corpse which Jehovah is graciously pleased to identify as His own, and is bringing them out again. If Abraham would bury his dead out of his sight,

here Jehovah asserts His title to fill them with a new life: "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing in triumph, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is the dew of the morning, and the earth shall cast forth the dead" (Isa. 26:19). It indicates how fully the truth of the resurrection of the dead was familiar to the Jew seeing the prophet uses it so freely as the best expression for God's resuscitating His people when they shall have been long defunct as a nation.<sup>8</sup>

"Indignation" is a word used to describe God's abandoning the Jews in a future day to their enemies' power. See Isa. 10:5-25. In Isa. 26:19-21 it refers to Jehovah's visiting the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth (i.e., the nations) upon them. Isa. 26:29 describes Israel's national restoration under the figure of resurrection, as does Dan. 12:1-3, Hosea 6:2 and Ezek. 37. The restoration of Israel (Ezek. 37) clearly precedes the attack by Gog (Ezek. 38, 39). Hence in Isa. 26:20, Jehovah tells His people -- who are now Lo-Ammi, but at this point in time are Ammi -- to hide themselves in their chambers till the indignation against the inhabitants of the earth be past.

Further, Wm. Kelly has warned about the consequence of taking Isa. 26:19 as literal resurrection.

But further the next verses are explicit, where we read, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy door about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be past. For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place to visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth on them; and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isa. 26:20, 21). Those who interpret the context of a literal resurrection are led into the error, that the risen saints (for such this scheme supposes to be here meant) would be here on earth whilst the divine indignation is going on! One could understand their holding that some are to pass through the tribulation, though this is not quite the same thing as the indignation. But it is clearly a question of men alive here below, not of men changed. God tells them (the Jews) to enter into **their** chambers until He has spent all His wrath upon the nations. Is this what we look for? Are we not to be taken out of this earthly scene and to enter into the Father's house above? We are not an earthly but a heavenly people. We know the Lord is coming Who will take us to be with Himself where He is; and when He has translated the Christians above, the Jews will be called for the earth. The little remnant will be grievously tried, when the vast body of the nation will receive the Antichrist.

Hence, when the day of Jehovah comes for the judgment of the quick, it is said, "enter into thy chambers." He will not provide a heavenly abode for them, but they are to enter into *their* chambers -- assuredly some place of refuge and earthly security. All this renders plain the right interpretation of the passage, and shows that God is not speaking about the heavenly saints, but refers to the remnant of the Jews in the last days, who are to have a haven of refuge provided for them.<sup>9</sup>

V. 20 follows v. 19 chronologically. I do not think anyone who believes the

8. *An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, London: Hammond, pp. 221, 222 (1947 reprint).  
www.presenttruthpublishers.com

9. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

rapture to be pretribulational, would believe that the risen saints need to hide in earthly chambers. But the point is that this does follow from taking Isa. 26:29 as literal resurrection, as posttribulationists do.

I am sorry to say that some who regard the rapture as pretribulational have concluded J. N. D. and W. K. were in error here, and now hold that the resurrection of Israel is post-tribulational, thus seeking to circumvent A. Reese's arguments (which are really ill-founded from beginning to end anyway).

The results of this yet another divergence from the truth is many-fold:

1. One result is as stated above.
2. Secondly, Heb. 11:40 is undermined which expressly states: "they should not be made perfect without us." To find in this merely that O. T. and N. T. saints will be together in the city of Rev. 21 is very bad. That city is *symbolic* of the *bride, the Lamb's wife* (Rev. 21:9). O. T. saints are not part of the bride, the Lamb's wife. These divergences in teaching will get worse and worse. Heb. 11:40 indicates that the O. T. Saints (not merely Israel) will be perfected when we are. They are *just* men and are raised as part of "the resurrection of the just." The Lord was the first-fruits. The next installment of "the resurrection of the just" is at the time of the rapture -- and then all the just saints that died up until then will rise from the dead. The church will, of course, have its own distinct place in glory.
3. "The resurrection of Israel" is a misleading phrase. In this new scheme it is only Israel that are raised at the appearing. What of the saints in the O.T. that were not of Israel? If they are raised at the appearing it is not right to call it "the resurrection of Israel"; similarly, if they are raised at the rapture, it is not the resurrection of the Church. No, it is *the resurrection of the just, the resurrection of life*. These divergences undermine this. While 1 Thess 4 contemplates those "in Christ," i.e., those of the present period, 1 Cor. 15 is more general and applies not only to those "in Christ" but to "those that are the Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23).

The O. T. saints are among "those that are the Christ's." They have *life* and part in the resurrection of life when those that are the Christ's are raised. They are the just; and when Christ comes for us they will be raised then. All of this is consonant with scriptural modes of expression concerning the resurrection.

Ed.

(to be continued, if the Lord wills)

***Addendum for the Book:  
Precious Truths Revived and Defended  
Through J. N. Darby  
Vol. One  
Revival of Truth  
1826-1845***

***In 1827 J. N. Darby Understood  
the Pretribulation Rapture***

**INTRODUCTION**

*Notes and Comments* comprises seven printed volumes of notes from J. N. Darby's note books. Vol. 7 (369 pages) is composed of notes on John's gospel. F. Marotta drew my attention to a date on p. 261 that indicates when that was being written which places the notes in 1827. The date reads, "Lord's Day, April 8/27." Thus, more than half these study notes were written before April 8, 1827. The connected thread of exposition that runs through these notes bears witness to their having been written together as a single work which thus can be dated from 1827. In these notes we find how advanced he was in apprehension of truth, though he did not always word himself as became more standard later. For example, it is clear that he held the doctrine of the ruin of the church by the time John wrote the book of Revelation, though he did not use the words, "the ruin of the church."

Concerning the future tribulation, he understood the apostate Israelites and the Jewish remnant would be in it. He does not speak of the church in it, but rather that the church is heavenly. He saw the bride in heaven before Rev. 4:1. Moreover, he was waiting, and longing, for the Lord to come.

As we briefly examine some of this material, keep in mind the typical way he views many things in John's gospel. These are typical of future events. But this may not do justice to the range of his understanding because what he says is, generally, limited by his purpose of examining John. He was not generally ranging over Scripture.

These notes from 1827 have a bearing on the allegation that JND was a historicist through 1830, which we will touch on at the end.

## IN 1827 JND DISTINGUISHED MORE THAN ONE SPHERE OF CHRIST'S GLORY

John 11:51, 52 shows that the death of Christ provided for the several spheres of the display of His glory:

In this little sentence, then, we have the conversion of the wickedness of man into the purpose of God . . . The purpose is fully opened in verse 52. But there is much to be learned in every letter of this; for it is not, Not for the nation, but, etc.; but, "not for the nation only, but that also." Its present purpose was the Church, Jew or Gentile. The full purpose was "not for that nation only," etc. and the prophetic character attached to Caiaphas . . . as exhibiting that point, is fully confirmed and established. And, indeed, on the whole, it is a remarkable synoptical view of the whole counsel of God . . . The blessed Lamb (to Him be all honor, to whom it is due) was led to the slaughter in the accomplishment of it, that we might see Him there, and the just stamp of honor on Him, as in our affections. For He "walked no more . . . among" them.

We have, moreover, in detail the peculiar character and stamp of this dispensation in purpose: gathering into one the children of God. He died negatively, so to speak, for the world; that is, the purpose effected in dispensation is this gathering together in one the children of God. The world ought to have obeyed. But compare Ephesians 1:9,10. This was the result of rejection; for the children of God, through grace, would rather have Him rejected than the world received; that the result of full purpose in glory as passing by rejection; for God is glorified in all His ways (pp. 189, 191).

The distinction between the Church and Israel and blessed Gentiles in the Millennium runs through these in various forms such as the distinction of the earthly and heavenly spheres (p. 25), "Its present purpose was the Church, Jew or Gentile" (p. 190), etc. He understood Eph. 1[:10] to speak of the millennium (p. 25). On page 28 he says:

... and if I have told you the earthly part of the kingdom, and ye believe not, how will ye believe if I tell you of the heavenly things that are the crown and glory of it? It is not merely "earthly things" but "the earthly things," definitely, I think, pointing out the two associated portions of the millennial glory, the earthly and heavenly. "Earthly things" and "heavenly things" are doubtless contrasted in their knowableness, but also in fact, as in Ephesians.

## IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD CHRIST'S EARTHLY GLORY IS POSTPONED UNTIL A FUTURE MILLENNIUM

At this time he wrote of the millennium as the future fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles (pp. 95-96, 102-103):

Christ was to be hid, hid in God (see Col. 3) till the time of the restoration, the true Feast of Tabernacles; He was to be with the Father, sitting there till, etc. (p. 102).

But when the future Feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled, the Jews will experience "the Jewish millennial rest" (p. 96). "They will be delivered. The power of that will be to the Jews in that day, as well as the power of the

Kingship”(p.191).

Thus there is a *postponement* of Christ’s glory as Son of Man.

Chapter 7. His glory, still as Son of Man; or, rather, postponement of glory, as connected with the Feast of Tabernacles and giving of the Spirit as ascended, the witness of the glory meanwhile; this specially including Gentiles . . . (p. 363).

The glory of the Kingdom, not yet fulfilled (p. 20), shall occur at “His ascension to the mediatorial throne” (p. 350). Thus, He is not on His throne of glory now. His glory is *postponed*. Observe that implicit in the above quotation is the postponement of the Kingdom. This involves the setting aside of Israel temporarily. He speaks of the future Jewish remnant here and there in these notes on John and understands Nathaniel (John 1) to typify that remnant (p. 16) that will receive Christ in a future day. Following that will be the millennial glory:

Accordingly hereon follows (as we have seen, chapter 2) the two parts of actual millennial glory in their objects and service . . . (p. 46).

The marriage in John 2, then, is typical of the marriage with Israel:

Note, the first miracle in Cana of Galilee was (as noted heretofore) the expression of the change from Jewish purification to the joy of the millennial [rest], when Jehovah shall espouse Israel in truth; as the subsequent acting at Jerusalem was the judicial cleansing part of the same period (p. 60).

This involves Israel being laid aside now (Lo-ammi, p. 20) but then being restored as life from the dead. This is brought out typically by the second miracle in John’s gospel:

Thereon the second miracle in Galilee is the life-giving power of faith . . . an analogous and larger expression of the full, real state of things *dispensationally*, which is not His going down to heal, but the child really dead. Then He heals by virtue going out of Him by the way, where He is touched by active faith, and afterwards restores to life; Israel being really dead, but in God’s eyes only asleep; that is, laid aside for a season, though morally dead. This second miracle, then, is in special connection, but contrast, with the first (p. 61; see also p. 68).

### **IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FUTURE JEWISH REMNANT WOULD BE THERE IN THE TIME OF JACOB’S TROUBLE**

The glory of the kingdom is preceded by the formation of a Jewish remnant. A Jewish remnant existed in Christ’s day when here, but found its place in the Church as the “Israel of God” (p. 187). Note the implicit distinction between Israel and the Church in his use of this designation. Nathaniel is a type of this future remnant (p. 16). This remnant shall be in the time of Jacob’s trouble. JND notes that the Lord departed from His own to a mountain (John 6) while His own are in difficulty on the sea. JND saw in this something typical of Christ and the future remnant:



. . . and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went, but not till Jesus was in the ship rejoining it in the midst of, and walking over, the difficulties and trials they were in: the time of Jacob's trouble; but when they shall be delivered out of it, when a King shall indeed be among them, and the troubled and isolated Remnant, the yechidim, find themselves in the rest they could not attain, and that immediately, troubled as they may have been, even as his brethren before Joseph at his approach (pp. 75, 76).

So as to the Jewish remnant in that day, they will be in the "tribulation," but forget the trouble for the abundance of joy when the Son is given to them. They recognize that the Child was born to them, coming in by faith, even as the Gentile did, who, seeing the glory and the Lord, had to be taught faith, "I am Jesus," that One that was slain (p. 287).

That future owning of Messiah by the Jews is typified by Thomas. He was absent when the Lord manifested Himself to what typified the Church in John 20:19 (p. 352). But concerning John 20:28, 29:

And there are those who shall believe when they are looking on Him whom they have pierced, to whom Jesus will yet show Himself in due and appointed time in mercy, but with this reproach. And, as verse 28 will give the full confession of the Jewish Church and brought in Gentiles in that day, so verse 29 gives the judgment of the Lord on the difference. The saints are those who, having not seen, yet have believed, and they shall be in the glory . . . The conduct of Thomas, as we have seen, represented the Jewish people (p. 354).

Note that he here used "the Jewish Church" as an expression for the blessed nation of Israel in a coming day. Observe also that the saints who have "not seen" refers to ourselves. Here again he distinguished the Church from Israel and from the blessed Gentiles of the millennium.

## **IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THE ANTICHRIST TO BE OVER THE APOSTATE JEWS**

In notes on John 17, he connected Antichrist with the desolation of the Jews:

[the Lord] kept those who owned Him Son of God in the Father's name. When another comes (to wit, Antichrist) in his own name, him they will receive. It will suit their selfishness. Hence the desolation of the Jews in the latter day (p. 311).

The idol shepherd of Zech. 11 is the Antichrist:

The idol shepherd of Zechariah 11 is, I should think, however, the Antichrist as in his connection with the Jewish people. Compare that prophecy; it is most important. His object was to steal, etc., even as to the fold, which shows (though specifically resulting in the sheep) the generic character of the one there. He could not touch the sheep. He had no life to give. It was the contrast of the object and the existing state; not of the objects of application; though, if followed out, this was in result, as to the life, the sheep only. This could be most fully shown in Antichrist himself (p. 157).

On pages 223, 224, he speaks of the apostate Jews as connected with the Antichrist.

He also understood that Elijah has a future, literal mission. Elijah (contrasted with Moses), *has* his body, as suits that mission:

It is not known what became of Moses' body, save that God buried it; a great honor put upon it; though not such as Elias, for it would not have suited his mission (p. 210).

### **IN 1827 JND WROTE ABOUT ISRAEL AND CHRIST'S EARTHLY GLORY DURING THE MILLENNIUM**

In the millennium "Jehovah shall espouse Israel in truth" (p. 60) though they are now "Lo-AmMi" (p. 20), for He has a "relationship with Jerusalem as bride; chap. 3:29-36" (p. 61). JND referred to "earthly things, for which the Jews . . . must be born again, as the prophets testified, for the real enjoyment under God of the earthly things" (p. 362; see also p. 25, and especially p.28). That Day will be for Israel "life from the dead" (p. 68). Israel will be blessed under the King as priest upon His throne. Christ's earthly glory will then be a royal glory:

Accordingly our Lord showed His royal power of feeding and sustaining His people unlimitedly (for this shall be His portion in gift in that day over the creature, as it is also in Colossians, but not thus). See also Psalms 132:15, 68:10. So see the time of Solomon's manifestation in the temple when the Feast of Tabernacles was kept . . . also exercised in unity of royalty, as not simply over the house of David (though so) but also as Melchisedec, the Priest upon His throne; for as over the house of Judah and Israel it is exercised actually in royalty: "They shall hear Jezreel" (p. 74).

### **IN 1827 JND DESCRIBED THE CHURCH'S PART IN CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL GLORY**

The future fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles will introduce the millennial glory:

I remark in John's gospel, chapter 1, all the glory of Christ's Person set forth in a remarkable manner, from His divinity WHO IS to His millennial glory among the Jews as Son of Man; and this very methodically. . . .

Then we have specially what the Lord is as regards the Church, or as effecting His *work*: the Lamb of God . . . Hereon He becomes a witness and a gatherer. Then He is presented to us as Messiah, Son of God and King of Israel; and the angels ascending and descending upon Him as Son of Man; thus closing with His millennial glory.

It seems to me that the following chapter [John 2] shows the Church's part rather in that glory, or the principles of it, at least. The third day evidently gives some meaning. It was not the third day of the preceding, for He had passed into Galilee. Three days were elapsed withal in the former chapter: John's testimony, the Church, and the millennium (pp. 15, 16).

Note the sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, with Christ's respective relationships to these. Here, at the beginning of these notes, early

in 1827, he displayed a wonderful understanding of the *typical* import of these chapters. What he meant by the church's part in the millennial glory was explained later:

. . . the third day [chap.2 ] the day of resurrection. This is the association of the Church, a new character; His (Jewish) mother cast aside; the water turned into the wine of the kingdom. It is not introduced consecutively (for Nathaniel properly includes the earthly part, and consequences of it), but a separate statement to show the Church, and withal in a certain sense the Jewish marriage of Christ. We belong, as it were, to the third day. Verse 12 seems to show, after the purpose in the Church was manifested or set about, that mother, brethren, Jesus and disciples were all together; which was just His earthly ministry in that place . . . and so the Kingdom in two parts: earthly things, for which Jews (for it also hung on resurrection in "the sure mercies," and was really with God) must be born again, as the prophets testified, for the real enjoyment under God of the earthly things. Besides, the Son of Man must be lifted up, not received of the Jew now (His miracles only affected what was in man), and so be the door of heavenly things; fit men for them too, even eternal life; enable them to enjoy them according to the love in which, as Son of God, he was given (pp. 361, 362).

The distinction between the heavenly portion of the Church and the earthly portion of Israel is quite clear in this passage.

### **IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THE CHRISTIAN POSITION & THE HEAVENLY CHURCH**

The Church is united to Him, as in heaven, by the Holy Ghost, and the universe itself is to be put under the risen and now heavenly ascended Man, with the Church associated with Him as His body and bride. Hence all that takes Christians back to the world, to the law, to all that flesh has its part in, takes them back to the system they were redeemed out of. That they do not, and as in Christ, never belonged to at all; the law being the measure of responsibility in it, the intermediate system antecedent to which the Church had its place with God, before the very sphere in which mortal man has had being existed; the Church which God has now set up actually in the heavenly place into which Christ has entered, when the man or Adam sphere, the world, has rejected Him, not knowing the Father.

Under this Man and the Church the world will be. But we are not of it, as Christ was not of it, but of the Father, and now gone to Him, Man with Him, and we in Him. Of this the Holy Ghost is the revealer and the power, uniting us with the Head. But the law as a true measure, fleshly religion and its ordinances, the attempt to regulate the world, all belong to the Adam system, though the first be God's rule for it, not the Christian; it is going back to it, the beggarly elements. This it is that Paul insists on, the Church's place connected with redemption, the divine place of the Son before the world, with which (as now made good and returned into) the Church *is* connected with the Holy Ghost. It is true of life, life and incorruptibility being brought to light by the gospel; only this *life existed*, before the world was, in Christ; hence has in itself been true all through, whereas the heavenly Man, Man in heaven, and the Church raised up, and in Him there, did not and could not exist in fact; for

He was not there as Man.

But in what a place this puts the sticklers for law, and those who insist on influence in the world for the Christian! No doubt the law is perfect; but they are putting man back, out of Christ on high, into the system of the world and Adam responsibility. John is just as clear as Paul as to eternal life and Christ's place, but he does not treat the question of the Church. Paul was made the minister of that. Hence Paul would not know Christ after the flesh; that is, Christ as connected with the world, come to it in connection with men's Adam existence, in which Judaism was the testing form, and hence in His Jewish connection, to which He had offered Himself, and had been rejected. Hence, while fully owning Him as the fulfillment of promise (even as to this only in resurrection) he would only know Him as He had been revealed to him, the glorious Christ who had taken His place, really His own, but as Man, according to the eternal thoughts of God before the world in which man, as responsible creation, was tested. Hence our conversation is to be in heaven, and our life the display of that of Christ. This is the mystery (Ephesians 1 as a whole) of Christ; as to its form down here, Ephesians 3. So Christ hope of glory in Gentiles (Col. 1).

I fear I have given this confusedly and feebly; but the subject is of first-rate practical importance; it alters the *whole* nature and character of Christianity, and enters into every detail of life. Am I a living man, a child of Adam? or have I died and risen, so as to belong to a heavenly Christ, drawing life from Him, and having to display that, not take the law for my guide, as still alive in the flesh? This put down flesh; dropped Judaism, which was in it; revealed the Father; shows we are in Christ (who is in heaven), and He in us. This shows the Church now wholly heavenly, as suited to the heavenly Man, the fulfiller in fact and object of pre-worldly desires, thoughts, with which the world can have nothing to do. It did not exist when they were in God's mind, and so the Church cannot belong to it; yea, exists as composed of those redeemed out of it, and connected wholly with the rejected and ascended heavenly Christ. The world is "*this present evil world.*" The two great points are eternal Life and the Church; connected with Christ as Son and as Man set far above all principalities, etc., in heavenly places. The Church exists only in connection with Him . . . Where has the Church got? What is the putting it under law? . . .

Note, in practice as to this, what is said: "*We are clear from the law.*" We have not ceased to exist, but we have been nullified (*vernichtet, annulled*) as regards, cease to have any existence, *as to law*; my existence is annulled (Rom. 7:6, flowing from verse 4). Then on the other hand Galatians 5:4: "*Ye are deprived of all profit from the Christ whosoever of you are justified by law.*" So death: "*Who has annulled death,*" 2 Tim. 1:10.

The first two are very remarkable in their contrast. The law is not annulled, but we from it as dead in Christ; we are no longer thus alive as in the nature <sup>1</sup> which we were of this world, children of Adam. On the other hand, if we turn back to this, we turn back to life in the world and flesh. Thus the two things being contradictory we nullify ourselves as regards Christ, do not

exist as and in connection with the risen and ascended Christ, who is out of the world. Hence, too, what is heavenly, what is Christ, is necessarily the cross down here (pp. 329-331).

## IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THE RUIN OF THE CHURCH

B. W. Newton spoke of a very early book by JND (lost) on the fall of the Church. In 1827 JND wrote:

We know that John continued till the whole system of the Church was broken up (see beginning of Revelation) . . . (p. 360).

## IN 1827 JND UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IS ABOVE DURING THE JUDGMENTS ON THE APOSTATE CHURCH

Speaking of Peter and John as typical, in JND's notes on John 21 we find this:

. . . the Apocalypse looks only into a gloomy future of judgment in the Church (the bride of Christ above); for such is that book. It has no earthly blessing or form, which note. It is entirely heavenly as to the Church . . . In prophecy it is judgment. Below, the Church is in mystery, and the marriage above. Peter ministers the kingdom of heaven; Paul, the house of Christ, as on earth holding a certain place. John goes up, and looks down into judgment here, and has the Church for the marriage of the Lamb above (p. 367).

"The bride of Christ above"! In the Revelation when John takes the viewpoint from above, looking down (Rev. 4:1), John sees the church above, no longer on earth. Implicit here is a pre-Rev. 4 rapture of the saints.

The post-tribulation view sees Christ coming into the air, catching up the saints and immediately proceeding to earth. Not so JND. He wrote:

He could not rest here with them, but He goes to prepare a place for them in His Father's house; and He would come again, not to be with them as to the Jews and the world, but to take them to be with Him. But then they had seen and known where He was going, and the way; for He was going to the Father, and they had seen Him in Him, and He Himself was the way (p. 300).

So John 14:3 means Christ would come and take them into heaven and not rather, be with them as to the Jews and the world. The Jews and the world would pass through the events here on earth while His own, now, would be "with Him" (the bride of Christ above). Well, that is just how they are able to come forth from heaven when He appears in glory.

## IN 1827 JND HAD THE HEAVENLY HOPE

We close with these words of ardent longing to see the Beloved One by this 27 year old student of the mind of God revealed in His holy Word:

. . . the Apocalypse gives the end of all these things, and teaches (as to those of them which pass now) the Church to cry, "Come, Lord Jesus," come quickly. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, Amen. ~~Do not~~ ~~hear, O Lord?~~ In this my heart says, Come. My soul says, Come. We are here so as in a manner to

be “sick of love”; yet in spirit so with Thee, and above this world’s, living with Thee; set down with Thee; that we can say, “Thy will be done.” Be thy name, blessed Jesus, fully glorified by their power and ways. Yet Thou knowest me to be “sick of love,” desiring Thy presence, holy and blessed Savior, Lamb of God, our Lord, Prince of peace, King of kings, the Word of God (pp. 235, 236).

## ***JND and Historicism***

For many years JND thought that a general *application* of the Revelation could be made to Christians and the world. The *interpretation* of the Revelation was a different matter. JND’s 1839 work, *Notes on the Revelation*, contains a chart titled, “New Testament -- Viewing the Revelation on the Protracted or Historic Scale” (*Collected Writings* 2:262, 263). This is followed by another chart, “Synopsis of the Revelation -- The Prophetic Part Viewed as the Lord’s Assumption of the Inheritance, Consequent On the Church Being in Heaven” (pp. 264, 265).

Interestingly, W. Kelly remarked upon this book by JND:

Years before the first edition of the *Horae Apocalypticae* [by E. B. Elliott] appeared in 1844, there were Christians who waited for Christ and looked for [believed that there would be] the personal Antichrist, with the many momentous consequences of both views, yet held the general application of the Apocalypse to the saints and the world since the time of St. John, as stated in my lectures. Nor ought Mr. Elliott to have forgotten this (as I doubt not he did); for I have so told him orally and given him a work by a friend of mine to that effect, which was published in 1839. He should not therefore have spoken of [my] “renouncing” futurist dogmas once entertained, any more than of “a person originally altogether opposed to the Protestant view” (*Lectures on the Book of the Revelation*, p. 8).

Without the slightest doubt, in 1839 JND held the pretribulation rapture (the church in heaven by the opening of Rev. 4), yet made a historicist application. The same is true concerning his comments referring to Historicism in his 1829 and 1830 papers. These comments do not prove he did not hold the immediate coming before 1830. And this simple and obvious accounting for such comments harmonizes with the evidence that he held the immediate coming in 1827 already. How could anyone who does not have an anti-Darby agenda fail to see that? Even in 1860 JND wrote:

I believe a certain prolonged application can be given in the sense in which John said there were many antichrists, but they were not the Antichrist. In this moral sense, then, passages may have an application to the present order of things; but I do not doubt that the things which come after “the things which are” do not belong to the present order of things . . . (*Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:306).

## ***The Darby Disk***

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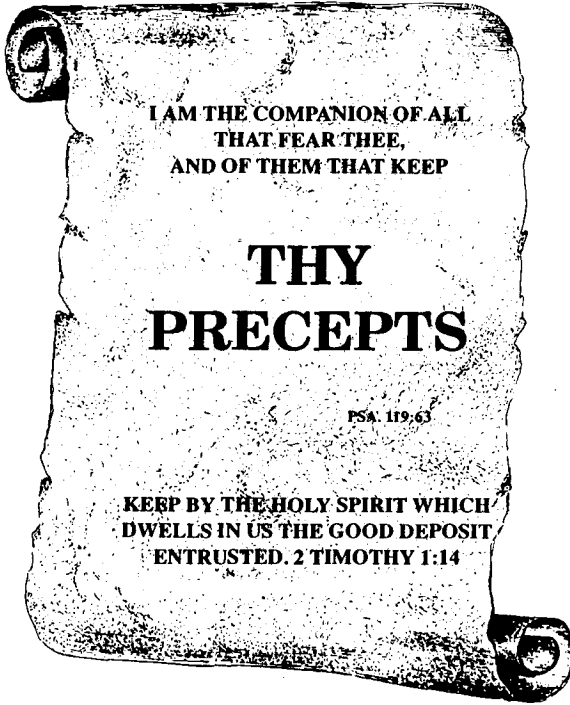
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## THOUGHTS FROM READINGS ON JUDGES

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### *Philistinism Combats Nazariteship: Judges 14*

The lesson of the life of Samson is that Philistinism robbed him of his Nazarite character. In addition to the Philistine enemies around him, the principles of Philistinism were active within the heart of Samson. These were inconsistent with and contradictory to his Nazariteship. He is, therefore, greatly in contrast to the Lord Jesus Christ Who was no physical Nazarite but was the perfect spiritual Nazarite. All those features of Num. 6 which ought to characterize a Nazarite were seen perfectly in a spiritual way in the Lord Jesus. "He pleased not himself" and did "always those things that pleased the Father." But the same can not be said of Samson. It was Mr. Kelly who referred to Samson as the lowest instrument that God has used, from among His people.

Yet note well that Samson's character reflects the condition of the people of Israel as a whole at that time. Later on we will see that they come and tell Samson, "Don't you know that the Philistines reign over us?" They spoke this way because they were not looking for any deliverance. Nor was there any cry of repentance from the people in connection with this major judge of Israel.

Starting points are critical junctures. For example, the twelve apostles saw the Lord go up into the cloud, but afterwards the apostle Paul saw the Lord on the other side of the cloud: that vision of the Lord in the glory was the starting point of his ministry. A starting point and what is seen at the starting point characterize a course. And except for those who drift aimlessly through life, every one of us has a course. In Judges 14, we read of Samson launching out into public view and his starting point was contrary to his Nazariteship: he went down.

Perhaps we have been told that Samson went down to the Philistines to seek an occasion against them. No doubt, God was seeking an occasion against the Philistines, but, for Samson, this was a downward journey. Nazariteship signifies devotion to the Lord in separation from the world and has an upward character. Philistinism today is the intrusion of worldly principles into Christianity, which is a downward thing. Timnath is downstream from where Samson grew up. Reference to a map will show that upstream from Samson's home are the mountains around Jerusalem. Of course, it is easier to go downhill than uphill, but Samson was going in the wrong direction: the combat of the Philistines against Samson began with their occupation of the lower ground, an invitation for Samson to take the easy way! "Uphill work," wrote JND, "is good work," something that Samson avoided at his starting point.

Moreover, he went morally down by what he saw there. He was caught by

a daughter of the Philistines in the snare of his own eyes and had no thought of the end that would result: the cutting off of his hair which was the sign of his Nazariteship, and the putting out of his eyes. Nor did this woman think that she was a part of the battle of the Philistines against a judge of Israel. Nevertheless, she was the moral starting point in the conflict that led to Samson's ruin.

Job knew better, who said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; and how should I fix my regard upon a maid? For what would have been [my] portion of God from above, and what the heritage of the Almighty from on high?" (Job 31:1-2) The things that we allow our eyes to see affect our hearts. Samson would have been better off if his whole history had been reversed and he had lost his eyesight at the beginning of his days. Young men can take note of Job 31:1 and file it away as good sound advice, because it keeps the mind and the heart. Is not our inheritance from on high in the glory anyway? Is that not our better portion from God above? See also Prov. 4:23.

Putting the regulation of one's eyes into practice requires forethought. It would not make sense, for example, for a young man exercised about living according to Job 31:1-2 to go down to the public beach at Timnath. Forethought shows that there are places where Christians ought not to be found because of what they will inevitably see there. There are places where it is difficult if not impossible for a Christian to be a shining example of separation from the world. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not take forethought for the flesh to [fulfil its] lusts." (Rom. 13:14)

Samson did not have the foresight appropriate for a Nazarite. If he was a Nazarite of marriageable age and looking for a wife, he had no business being anywhere near the Philistines; he should have stayed away from them. If he was looking for something and was looking in the wrong place, is it any wonder that he found the wrong thing? If we put ourselves in positions of danger, we are really giving up a part of the strength of separation that the Lord has intended for us.

Samson did not have to go looking for a woman among the Philistines. What kind of Nazarite was he in this? A Nazarite means one who is separated from all that is in this world, and a Philistine means the intrusion of all that is in this world into the inheritance of the people of God. And these two concepts are contrary to each other. Samson's attempt to marry a Philistine is an attempt to join together two contrary opposites.

Ordinarily, God's order in natural relationships is a great defense against Philistinism. For example, children's obedience to their parents is a right thing in their lives, no matter how highly the free expression of the flesh is hailed by worldly counselors. Samson's desire for a Philistine woman leads him to give orders to his father and his mother. That was more than a little contrary to the principle of obedience to one's parents. When children learn to give orders to their parents, trouble surely comes. He makes a demand on them: "Get her to me for wife."

With this demand, we may compare Deut. 7:3-4: "And thou shalt make no marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor take his daughter for thy son; for he will turn away thy son from following me, and they

will serve other gods, and the anger of Jehovah will be kindled against you, and he will destroy thee quickly." This demand of Samson was a demand that his parents should disobey a direct commandment of God through Moses. It was a sin.

But the thought may have arisen in his heart, perhaps, that "I am strong enough to enter into such a marriage and still come out on top." Samson may have thought that he was strong enough for anything. He did not know his own weakness. Samson's life is towards the end of the times of the judges, and a long history of failure under judges precedes him. In his ignorance of his own weakness and of the history of failure that went before him, Samson is a true likeness of the Laodiceans of whom John wrote in Rev. 3. They also "knew not."

How happy it is when a father and a mother are of one mind to train up their child in the ways of the Lord! From Judges 14:3, we learn that his parents knew that Samson's course was wrong. But their words were as weak as those of Eli, who reproved his sons weakly. At any rate, Samson makes an end run around the united voice of his parents. He had a spiritually strong mother and a spiritually weak father. Children soon learn who they have to ask in order to get their own way in the home. Dear children can learn a lesson here: if you have a request to make and think that your Daddy will say "yes," be sure to ask your Mother instead. But if you think Mommy is more likely to let you have it, be sure to ask your Father instead. Samson did not do it that way: he was pretty sure that his weak father would let him have his own way and so he demanded it of his father.

In Judges 14:1,5, and 7, Samson went down morally as well as physically. The result was that Samson's father went down also (Judges 14:10). Fathers ought, in contrast, to set good examples for their sons. Sons should see their fathers going up, and the sons should go up too. Nowadays, however, many fathers feel that if they do not cater to their children's appetites and lusts, they will lose the affection of their children. In truth, fathers who cater to the appetites and lusts of their children lose the respect of their children. Children are very quick to discern the stances of their parents.

And what about the effect of all this on Samson's mother, who showed such intelligence and wisdom in the previous chapter? She also went down with her husband (Judges 14:5). Yet, to her, perhaps, "a foolish son is the grief of his mother" (Prov. 10:1) was realized.

How often discipline and restraint are replaced by "get it for me, Daddy, it pleaseth me well. I want one." The answer to that is "Son (or Daughter), I love you so much that I am not going to let you have that. I have something better for you." Let every Christian father's heart be exercised as to how much he possesses that he may give to his children that is really better because it is the fruit of holy separation from the world in every way.

In following his eyes, Samson betrayed his lack of discernment. What Philistines set out for the eyes to see is not indicative of their true character. Samson seems to have fallen repeatedly for the fair but false exterior, and never to have discerned the true characters of those with whom he came in contact. In

using his physical eyes so much, he showed that he was not capable of using his spiritual eyesight.

In Judges 14:4, we learn that antagonism toward the Philistines was according to God's will, and God permitted Samson's marriage to the Philistine woman in order to create an occasion for smiting the Philistines. In this way, it was of the Lord, not that the Lord approved of a marriage which He had explicitly forbidden in Deut. 7. It was not His appointment, but it was allowed according to His permissive will.

In Judges 14:6, are we surprised to see the Spirit coming upon Samson in his downward course? Or, we may ask, why would the Lord use an evangelist for the conversion of thousands when he has infidel and modernist clergymen on the platform beside him? In Daniel 4:17, we learn that "the Most High ruleth over the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." Christians try sometimes to make excuses to act outside the principles of the heavenly calling and say that they will vote for the best man. So if you vote for the best man, you could be voting against the will of God. What does it prove when a woman preaches the gospel publicly and souls are saved? It proves that God is gracious. So the raising up of Samson in Israel proves something too. It proves that God had not abandoned Israel.

The raising up of a judge like Samson was consistent with the general state of the people of Israel. Who did we think the Lord was going to raise up in those days? some true Nazarite in heart? But that would not have been consistent with the state of Israel when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Similarly, God allowed Saul to become Israel's king when really David was the king that He had in His mind for Israel. They got Saul because Saul suited their state. A similar sequence is seen in Samson and Samuel, who followed quickly after Samson. After Israel's state was fully brought out in the days of Samson, the Lord raises up Samuel to show that spiritual Nazariteship is what meets the power of the Philistines (the intrusion of the world into the proper inheritance of God's people).

The young lion in Judges 14:5 was a fearsome thing, a picture of Satan as a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour. The lion represents the power of the Enemy in his violence, as the woman represents corruption. The earth was filled with these two snares before the Flood. And all that God had at hand to use against this lion was a Samson. Is it not a reproach to Israel that there was no instrument at hand for use against violence that could also stand strong against the snare of corruption?

That the lion was young may remind us of the particular efforts of Satan to attack those that are young in the faith. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:16) are brought to the attention of the young men. By these things Satan works against us all, and against the young especially. The word of God is their resource by which they overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:14).

This lion was found by Samson in the vineyards. What was a Nazarite doing in the vineyards? Will we defend Samson by saying that grapes were forbidden to Nazarites but that vineyards were not specifically listed as forbidden

places? Is it true that all that is not expressly forbidden is therefore acceptable whenever it may be according to our will? No, Samson was supposed to be separate from vineyard things. He did not, perhaps, pick up any grapes in the vineyard or taste any grapes in the vineyard. But he would have been a happier Nazarite if he had gone another way. "All things are lawful to me, but all things do not profit" (1 Cor. 6:12).

Something of Samson's character comes out in how he defeated the lion. He "rent it as one rends a kid." This does not sound like the manner of a judge who has a real shepherd's heart. What real shepherd knows how to "rend a kid"? The tearing into pieces of what was created to be one body is horrible to contemplate. "Divide the child" betrayed a wicked heart to the wisdom of Solomon. Those who are strong enough to accomplish the division of whatever stands in testimony to the church's oneness may think they have done some feat of strength, but the absence of a shepherd's heart is all that appears.

Moreover, God had a moral lesson for Samson on this occasion. How much strength did it take to rend the lion? It might be easy to rend a kid or a lamb, and more difficult so to rend a lion. Samson's physical strength was such that he needed "nothing" in his hand. Also, he had made no unholy alliances as yet and had no entanglements with Philistines. In such a condition, Samson triumphs over the violence of the Enemy. The result is a foreshadow of the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ over all the power of Satan when He was on the cross. There was nothing in the Lord's hand there, and through death He prevailed over the Enemy. The moral lesson for Samson is that he did not have to use unholy means to accomplish God's warfare. The ends do not justify the means, no, not in Scripture. Did Samson learn this lesson?

The communion of children with their parents about their daily activities is a part of the natural sweetness of their relationship. In Judges 14:6, we find that Samson did not tell his parents about the lion. Where did you go, my son? Out. What did you do all day? Nothing. The result was that the parents shared in the sweetness of the honey in Judges 14:9 without knowing its origin. They did not know that the lion had been slain in connection with the sweetness and they were the losers for that. It is a good thing for children to tell their parents where they have been. If we have been somewhere and hope that our parents never find out that we have been there, then we never belonged there in the first place.

In Judges 14:8, God shows Samson the sweetness that comes out from the overthrow of the Enemy through death. Bees are very ordered insects and beehives are organized places. Samson found life, food, sweetness, and order in the place of death. The Christian recognizes that these very things result from the conquest of Satan by Christ upon the cross. No unholy alliance was needed in order to obtain these blessings. Did Samson's mind appreciate this incident enough to frame a riddle upon it? Yes, but what evidence is there that the moral lessons made any impact on him? According to the tempting advertisements of the world, "stolen waters are sweet" (Prov. 9:17), but those who fall for that line are "in the depths of hell" (Prov. 9:18). True and holy sweetness is found in Christ, Who, through death, annulled "him who has the might of death" (Heb. 2:13). Should not Samson's character as a Nazarite have increased his

appreciation of the moral lessons of this incident so as to learn the difference? The path of separation from the things of this world, even from those that are advertised as being sweet, is the path of moral strength and blessing for the Christian.

The question also arises if Samson was acting in consistency with his holy Nazariteship when he went near the dead body of the lion. The Nazarite was to "come near no dead body" (Num. 6:6). No doubt, this was a reference to dead human bodies (see Lev. 21:11 where the same Hebrew word is used), else the Nazarites would have been forbidden to eat meat. Of more relevance, perhaps, is Lev. 11:39. Whoever, Nazarite or not, touched the dead carcass of an animal that went on its paws was unclean until the even. Thus, the dead carcass of a lion was to be unclean to an Israelite. Was it so to Samson? Alas, this Nazarite who should have been experienced and careful in discernment with respect to defilements associated with death had, as far as is written, no hesitation to thrust his hands within this dead carcass. Laodiceans in Rev. 3:14-22 have a similar lack of sensitivity towards what is contrary to God.

There are only two men in the Bible who ate honey plain, without other food: Samson and Jonathan (in the time of Samuel and in the midst of a battle against the Philistines). Others, of course, ate honey but with something else, as John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey. The Lord Jesus in resurrection had a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. But Samson ate his honey plain. The locusts represented God's governmental judgments on Israel. The broiled fish had passed through the fire, a type of judgment. But Samson ate his honey plain, with nothing that hinted at the judgment of God against sin. Philistines, who never passed through the Jordan (death) or camped at Gilgal (the cutting off of the flesh) are commonly outraged at the thought that God's judgment against sin should be connected with the sources of natural sweetness. In eating honey plain, another facet of Philistinism appeared in Samson's life.

By comparing Jonathan with Samson, we can see that Samson's manner of eating was sadly deficient too. How strange to see a Nazarite with two hands full of honey! Honey is a picture of natural sweetness, but Prov. 25:16 was copied out in the time of Hezekiah for the days in which the kingdom was in a time of revival after years of decline. To fill ourselves too full with mere natural human sweetness (even if from divinely sanctioned human relationships) is not good. There were Philistines around about him too. How could he hold a weapon in his sticky hands against the Philistines?

In contrast to Samson, Jonathan dipped his staff of pilgrim character in the honeycomb (1 Sam. 14:27). The staff kept a small moral distance between him and the honey. His hands stayed clean for the wielding of his weapons. And he ate specifically from the honeycomb, the part of the hive where the honey was stored in the orderly array of honey cells, those beautifully hexagonal sacks of honey. The natural sweetness, when used but not abused by Jonathan, lightened his eyes to strengthen himself in the fight against the Philistines. The two hands' full of Samson seem not to have strengthened him against the Philistines.

In Judges 14:10, the influence of the honey that Samson gave to his parents bore its fruit. His father went down to him, ~~and he could not get a wife for~~ ~~himself~~ ~~and he could not get a wife for~~



his sweet son who brings him the honey?

From Judges 14:12 onwards, we read of Samson and his riddle. The real question was whether Samson had the moral strength to keep his secret. His riddle was not a vital secret, but his Nazariteship was. Samson begins here to learn how to give away his secrets, and ultimately he gives away the secret of his Nazariteship too. His moral stream flows steadily downwards. The wiles of Satan are different from his violence, and the wiles of the Philistines ultimately prevail against Samson. How different were the words of Paul, who wrote, "we are not ignorant of his [i.e., Satan's] thoughts" (2 Cor. 2:11).

We do not see the ends of things from their beginnings because we lack discernment. Now Samson gave away the secret of the riddle in the end because the woman nagged at him. She nagged at him because she was threatened by the men. The men threatened her because they stood to lose over the riddle. They stood to lose over the riddle because Samson proposed it that way. Samson proposed the riddle because he was entertaining them at a feast. Samson entertained them at a feast because "so used the young men to do" (Judges 14:10). The young men all did so. Everybody did it. In the end, Samson gave away the secret because, in the beginning, he followed the crowd, doing what all the young men did. But it is not safe to allow ourselves to be influenced by the customs of this evil world in which we live. To follow the customs of this present evil world is not practical Nazariteship, but practical Philistinism!

Of course, there are many cultural things (even some that all the young men do) which present no moral difficulty. But some cultural things have a built in subtle working of the Enemy so that they work themselves into a compromise. Discernment comes from the word of God and from practice at discerning. A habitual exercise that all things of life should be passed before Christian discernment will keep us from much that would otherwise defile us. Such discernment in practical exercise promotes a life of practical Nazariteship.

The cost of refusing to make a feast like the young men always did may have seemed large to Samson. Who can estimate the reproach of being the only young man who did not make a feast? He put this temptation to act like all the young men of the world into his own way by his self-willed demand for the young Philistine woman. Can we imagine Samson praying to the Lord for guidance as to how to order the feast? Could he expect to find God's counsel in a path as to which God's command would have been only that he should get out of it? Yet how often we get into a wrong path and then turn to God for guidance in the wrong path! At all times, it takes purpose of heart not to follow the crowd (compare Daniel 1:8), how much more difficult is it to avoid worldly ways when in a wrong path!

Note that the details of the feast were not left under Samson's control. He lost the initiative by his compromise with the customs of young men, and had to receive thirty companions and one particular companion who was "friend of the bridegroom" to him. Philistine friends have no true friendship in their hearts. Yet to have Philistine friends, one must show oneself friendly. There must be compromise and lowering of standards in order to please the friends, because this is how they recognize friendship when they see it. Thus it is written, "A man of

[many] friends will come to ruin" (Prov. 18:24, compare the KJV which is often misunderstood). Thirty Philistine friends, we learn here, are too many Philistine friends.

In Judges 14:12, we learn that those who penetrate the riddle get something, even a change of garments. If we see how life comes from Christ's victory on the cross over Satan, then we too get a change of garment. Our leprous outward habits that others see are changed for garments of salvation. Our image is transformed. But Samson's companions used unlawful means and received replacement garments taken from other Philistines. These were not the garments that Samson ought originally to have intended when he proposed the riddle. When no change takes place in one who claims to understand the secret of the cross of Christ, then something is very wrong. One of the blessed results of Christ's death is to change our habits, our ways of thinking, our appearance (in modesty, etc.).

The thirty men working for three days failed to find the secret out. People of every culture have interest in riddles and this riddle is not very difficult compared with the tricky riddles in the world. The natural mind, however, cannot conceive of the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14). They trafficked in the land but did not enter it by the way of the Jordan and of the Red Sea. So they turn to plough with Samson's heifer for the remainder of the week long feast. She, however, had already been weeping before him from the very first. Her Philistine heart was after his secret. That she had a Philistine heart is shown in Judges 14:17 when it speaks of "her people."

Why did she not tell Samson of the threat of the thirty Philistines and trust to his strength to preserve her from it? Instead, she turned to her feminine wiles. Christian women need to be careful to avoid such conduct. In this case, she availed herself of the strongest of all the wiles of the Enemy (see Judges 14:16): she made the revealing of the riddle a test of his love. Is not the accusation of a lack of love the great taunt against those who are faithful to the Lord? "It is lack of love that makes you act so." Who said that? Dear brethren, this woman did. And so did Delilah: "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?" (Judges 16:15) The same line was used twice against Samson and he fell for it both times. In the end, of course, what she feared so much came upon her. Her failure in submission to Samson in submitting to the threats of his companions ended in the very destruction that she feared (compare Judges 14:15 with 15:6).

Moreover, Samson's wife wept before him. Her tears may be compared with many others described in the Bible. Jesus wept. So have many godly saints when persecuted for Christ's sake. But this woman wept to get her own way, not submitting herself to her own husband. These are not the kind of tears laid up before the Lord in His bottle (Ps. 56:8).

Samson's response to her was very weak: he told her that he had not told his parents either. At least, he did not tell her a lie to put her off. Yet, a young man who keeps secrets from his parents can be expected to yield to nagging and weeping. Perhaps, she sensed this. If Samson had answered instead with the uprightness and righteousness of keeping the secret hidden until the end of the

week, then the true character of the tears would have been exposed. Admittedly, it is a hard thing for a young woman to exercise self-judgment at her own wedding feast. But if she had repented and confessed to Samson that she had asked for an unrighteous revealing of the riddle, she would have laid the foundation for a long and happy marriage.

In this chapter those who aspire to be spiritual Nazarites for the Lord's sake may find a list of Philistine principles that do battle against the true character of a Nazarite. These include:

- taking the easy way (down)
- the lust of the eyes
- not using foresight to avoid temptation
- judging from outward appearances
- demanding (instead of obeying)
- catering to natural appetites
- walking where snares abound
- gorging on natural sweetness
- neglecting the judgment of God
- ignoring defilement
- following worldly customs
- making worldly friends

(to be continued, if the Lord will)

Dennis P. Ryan

## ***“A Man in Christ”***

### ***Ephesians 1:1 - 2:10***

I wish in these papers not so much to dwell on the doctrine of the epistle to the Ephesians, as on the conduct to which this doctrine leads. If the teaching of the epistle unfolds the highest character of Christian standing, its exhortations enforce the highest character of Christian walk. But in the Spirit's teaching these subjects are always combined. The rules laid down for the believer's conduct are drawn from the exposition of the place in which he is set. While therefore we shall look more at the practical than at the doctrinal parts of the epistle, we must ascertain the believer's standing as here revealed, in order to comprehend the nature and motives of the conduct afterwards enjoined.

The epistle to the Ephesians, though of course owning Jesus as the eternal

Son, looks at Him generally in another character. We read in Phil. 2:6-11 that He, though

in the form of God, thought it not an object of rapine [a thing to be grasped at] to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now here we have glory conferred upon Jesus, not in consequence of His being equal with God, but in consequence of His humbling Himself, being found in fashion as a man, and becoming obedient unto death. As God, all dominion and glory were His own; nor could anything be given Him. But as man, He had voluntarily emptied Himself, taking the lowest place, and bowing even to the power of death, in order to carry out God's purposes of grace. God's righteous response, then, to this obedience and devotedness was to exalt Him in the same character in which He had humbled Himself, giving to the man "Jesus" a name at which every knee should bow, and making every tongue to confess that He is Lord.

Now it is in this character that Jesus is generally presented in the epistle to the Ephesians. And this gives occasion to the unfolding of two great mysteries, till then hidden in the counsels of God from before the foundation of the world. The first of these is, that God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10). This is a vast expansion of the Messiah's glories predicted in the Old Testament, and is the dignity which Jesus has acquired by His humiliation the exalted "name" given Him because of His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." The other mystery is, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and, partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6). This shows the complete suspension of God's earthly purposes while He is bringing in a new people. In this new people the distinction between Jew and Gentile entirely disappears, and the two are classed together on the same ground. The new people are not an earthly people; for though still in the world, they are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places" – nay, are even made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Their distinguishing feature is that they are seen and accepted "in Christ."

The two mysteries are, then, the counsels of God, first concerning the full glory of the Lord Jesus, and next concerning the blessedness of the people who are thus closely associated with Him. The development of these two mysteries is the great object of the first half of the epistle. Hence it is not the sinner's side of salvation, as in the epistle to the Romans, but God's side, that is brought into prominence. In Romans the sinner is seen in his evil nature, and the cross is brought in for his deliverance. In Ephesians God's eternal purposes are disclosed, and the object of redemption and the blessedness of the redeemed in connection

with Christ set forth. The epistle to the Romans starts from man's need to God's grace; the epistle to the Ephesians starts from God's grace to man's need. The one shows how God can be righteous while He justifies and delivers the sinner; the other how the sinner's need gives occasion to the display of God's wisdom and grace. Hence in the Romans the sinner is regarded as alive in the flesh, and death is brought in as the means of his deliverance; while in the Ephesians the sinner is regarded as spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins, and the quickening power of God is shown in raising him out of this state, and setting him in the heavenly places in Christ.

The epistle begins therefore with thanksgivings for the standing which the believer now has in Christ. The question is not how far he comprehends or enjoys the privileges and blessings into which he is brought. In this there may be wide differences; in the privileges and blessings themselves there are none. The babe in Christ is in this respect on an equality with the young man and the father, for both are "in Christ," and have the full blessedness of this standing. All believers are "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; have been "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before God in love"; have been

Predestinated unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus [unto God,] according to the good pleasure of His will; [and are, therefore,] to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:3-6).

These are the privileges, though the very unequally-enjoyed privileges, of all believers as seen in Christ, just as the foundation on which everything rests, "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace" (v. 7), is the common portion of all saints. They are not future, but present privileges, and our possession of them arises from our having an acceptance *in* Him who has perfectly glorified God, and is now -- not as the eternal Son of the Father, but in virtue of His work and obedience unto death -- the object of God's special delight and love. To speak of our being accepted, or of our being "in Christ," when He is looked at in His divine nature, would be a grave error. But we are accepted, and are, as to our standing, "in Christ" the risen glorified man at God's right hand. In Romans believers are not spoken of as being "in Christ" until the eighth chapter, because there only do we arrive at the true Christian standing. In Ephesians this remarkable expression occurs at the very threshold, because all is here seen according to the counsels of God, and the full standing of the believer is therefore at once set forth.

And now the apostle, having put us in possession of our present privileges "in Christ" goes onto show how God in His grace "hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (v. 8), disclosing to us His own marvelous purposes concerning Christ. These purposes are not only concerning the earthly glories foretold by the Old Testament prophets, but also concerning the heavenly glories now first made known. Hence they are called a *mystery*, and we are told that God hath "made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure

which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (vv. 9, 10). The Christ, God's anointed, was always predicted as the One who was to exercise sovereign authority on earth; but that the man Jesus should, by virtue of His obedience and humiliation, have this supreme dignity conferred upon Him *in heaven* as well as on earth, was a mystery now first revealed. Of course it is not Christ's glory as God that is here spoken of, for that He had always and inalienably; but it is as the risen man, the One in whom we are accepted, that He is thus exalted and glorified. Hence believers have a share in this dominion; for in Him "also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ" (vv. 11, 12). And not only had the believing Jews, "who *first* trusted in Christ," this inheritance, but the believing Gentiles had the same; for they also had trusted when they heard the gospel, and after they believed, "were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (vv. 13, 14).

The possession has been purchased by the cross, but has not yet been fully redeemed, has not yet passed into the hands of the purchaser. Hence Christ is waiting, seated at the Father's right hand, until "the dispensation of the fulness of times," when this gathering together of all things in Himself will take place. We, too, are waiting, often indeed with very feeble faith and hope, but still with no uncertainty as to the result; for God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the pledge or earnest of our title till the time of redemption, when the possession will be entered upon and fully enjoyed.

The subject here is not the believer's blessedness when he goes at death to be with Christ, nor even the richer blessedness he will know when the Lord comes to complete the work of redemption as to him, by giving him a body like His own, and taking him to the Father's house. The redemption spoken of is not the redemption of the believer, but the redemption of the inheritance which the believer will receive together with Christ. The possession spoken of is not the possession of the joys and blessedness of the Father's house, but the possession of that dominion which Christ will take, together with us as His joint-heirs, when all things are gathered together in Him.

Thus we have brought before us, in the opening of the epistle, our present privileges and our future possession "in Christ." The apostle then prays that we may understand these things, and also

what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (vv. 15-21).

If our acceptance in the Beloved involves our receiving the same privileges and possessions that He receives, it is brought about through our being quickened by the same power by which He was quickened. We are not only one with him in our blessings and prospects, but also in our life. The same power was exercised in the same way in quickening us as in quickening Him. God has wrought toward us "according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead;" for He "hath quickened us *together with Christ*" (Eph. 2:4, 5). He has also wrought according to the power which has set Christ "at His own right hand in the heavenly places;" for He "both raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*" (Eph.2:6).

All this is most beautiful. We, poor helpless sinners, had no spiritual life whatever; "were dead in trespasses and sins." Jesus in grace put Himself in our stead under God's judgment, and died "the just for the unjust." Thus we are fully delivered -- not only freed from the righteous judgment of God, but, as shown in the Romans, "dead with Christ," "crucified with Him," our old sinful nature {the old man, rather} regarded as dead and buried with Him. The epistle to the Ephesians begins at this point of our history. It takes Christ up in death, and shows how God's power "raised Him from the dead"; it takes us up as "dead in trespasses and sins," and shows how the same power which raised Christ has quickened us. Thus in Romans we are delivered from the {power of the} old nature by the cross of Christ; in Ephesians we are quickened in the new nature together with Christ. And this is something much more than new birth. It is a new birth, or a new life, of a peculiar character, conferred by the same power which raised Christ from the dead, so that we are not only quickened with Him, but are identified with Him -- the risen and glorified One at God's right hand. And so close is this identification, that, though still on earth, we are even now spoken of as seated together "in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The closing words of the first chapter show the character of this identification in a very striking way. There we are told, concerning Christ, that God "hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). This is the first time the Church is named in the epistle, and a most marvelous revelation it is as to its character. From it we learn that when Christ takes the dominion over all things, according to God's purpose, He will take it, not alone, but in conjunction with the Church. It is not Christ that will reign merely, *but Christ and the Church*; the Church being so inseparably united with Him that it is said to be His "fulness" or completion -- as much one with Himself as the body is one with the head.

Hence Christ is not complete, in the character in which He will take the headship over all things, until the Church, His body, is complete also. Until the last member has been added, Christ waits; for until then His body has not received its "fulness," and the Head cannot take the dominion apart from the whole body.

It is perhaps unnecessary to repeat, but it is most important to remember, that

this union, with all its blessed consequences, is not with Christ as the eternal Son, the Word who "was God," but with Christ as the risen glorified Man. As God, there could be no union with Him. Nor again, as born into this world, could we be united with Him, or He with us. Until the corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and died, it must abide alone; but having died, it could bring forth much fruit {John 12:24}. In His sinless life He was the spotless and obedient One, the revealer of the Father, but alone. In the death in which "He was made sin," He was our Substitute and Savior; but there too He was all alone. In resurrection He became the head of a new creation, and it is by new creation that we are now "in Him"; for "if any man be *in* Christ, it is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Union with Christ is always spoken of in this connection:

He is the Head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead (Col. 1:18).

It is after He has been on the "horns of the unicorns" that He says,

I will declare thy name unto my brethren (Psa. 22:21, 22; Heb. 2:9-12).

Not till after His resurrection does He use the words, "Go to my brethren," or associate the disciples with Himself by speaking of "*my* Father, and *your* Father; *my* God, and *your* God" (John 20:17). So, too, it is by our being conformed to the image of the risen One that He becomes "the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

Such then is God's grace towards us, who were once walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air . . . fulfilling the desires of the flesh . . . children of wrath (Eph. 2:2, 3).

Grace has delivered us from this lost state, quickened us together with Christ, made us members of His body, given us His own acceptance before God, and associated us as fellow-heirs in His universal dominion. Surely this is worthy of God! He has thus wrought for His own glory,

that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

All is of grace. Works can have no place here, nor the boastings of man. But is God indifferent to good works? Nay;

for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

As to our standing, good works have no place; for we are God's workmanship. But this very fact demands that good works should follow as a result. We are not created by good works, but we are created unto them.

T. B. B., *The Christian Friend*, 1878.



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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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# *6: The Pretribulation Rapture*

## *Chapter 6.12: The 24 Elders*

(Continued)

### *The Identity of the 24 Elders*

#### THE 24 ELDERS REPRESENT O. T. AND CHURCH SAINTS

Some think that the 24 elders represent the church only. And some who reject dispensational truth assert that "Darby and the Brethren" taught this. For example, O. T. Allis, an amillennialist, claims that J. N. Darby taught that:

... the 24 elders are or represent the raptured church. This was the view of Darby and the Brethren.<sup>1</sup>

J. N. Darby said:

The number 24 represents twice 12. One might perhaps see here the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles -- the saints of the two dispensations.<sup>2</sup>

W. Kelly wrote that the 24 elders represent:

... the full complement of those whose mortal was swallowed up by life, the saints of both O. and N. Tests changed at Christ's coming and caught up.<sup>3</sup>

In Rev. 19 we hear of the bride *and* guests. The figure of the 24 elders is there dropped because the church is seen in distinction among the heavenly saints as the bride. The O. T. saints are guests at the marriage but not part of the bride. They are there because they will have been resurrected and caught up when the saints composing the church are resurrected, or changed, and caught up (Heb. 11:40). You will find that some of those who refuse to see the raised O. T. saints included in the 24 elders (seeing only the raised and raptured saints of the present period in the 24 elders) have to have the marriage with its attendant guests take place on earth, in order to have the noted guests in attendance (Rev. 19:9). It is

1. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 199.

2. *Collected Writings* 11:22. See also *Selected Writings* Series 12:77.

3. *The Revelation Expounded*, p. 84.

the refusal to have the O. T. saints resurrected at the time of the rapture that leads to the exigency of saying the marriage takes place on earth, when clearly it is in heaven. The Lamb's marriage takes place before He comes forth from heaven as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The marriage takes place before the manifestation in glory:

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

It is morally fitting that this marriage is consummated before the display of glory, for it is part of Christ's glory. Then follows the coming forth of the rider on the white horse and His armies in His train.

Some have thought that the elders represent only the church because we are priests and *only* we are priests. But Rev. 20:6 shows that all who are included in the first resurrection, i.e., all of the redeemed that had died and were raised from the dead, will be priests. This includes the three classes noted in Rev. 20:4 which comprise the heavenly saints. Earth will have its own order during the millennium (Ezekiel 40-48).

Some have thought that only the church has been promised co-enthronement (Rev. 3:21) and therefore these elders, who sit on thrones, cannot include O.T. saints. This is an incorrect conclusion even supposing the premise is true. The elders are not co-enthroned according to the sense of Rev. 3:21 because Christ does not take His own throne until after the appearing in glory (Psalm 110:1; Matt 25:31; Rev. 3:21). Thus the thrones indicating association with Christ in His reign are not seen until Rev. 20:4. The thrones of Rev. 4 are not reward thrones.

The elders *are*, however, associated with the throne of Rev. 4:4. "And *round* the throne twenty-four thrones . . ." J. N. Darby explained in a footnote to his translation why he used the word *round* and not *around*.

I use 'round' for what is connected with anything, (not necessarily united to it) as a center, as the tire of a wheel, but 'around' is used for detached objects encircling.

The throne is the throne of God's judgments (Rev. 4:5). Rather than signifying co-enthronement in Christ's reign, the 24 thrones round this throne signifies association with the pouring out of God's judgment and with the wrath of the Lamb. There is nothing in this that precludes O. T. saints from participation in what is figured by the 24 elders.

Some have thought that only the church can sing the new song. This is another assumption without proof. Rev. 14:3 is not the new song of Rev. 5. The song of Rev. 5 is sung by some who form no part of the church; and, at any rate, it is a new song. So the fact that a song is new does not mean that it can only be sung by the church. Nor does the subject of the new song exclude O.T. saints.

Some have thought that only the dead *in Christ* are raised at the rapture and since the expression *in Christ* in 1 Thess. 4:17 indicates only members of the body of Christ (which it does), therefore O. T. saints cannot be raised at the

rapture then they will be made perfect without us. God says of the O. T. saints, "they should not be made perfect without us" (Heb 11:40) This means that they shall be made perfect with us. When we are made perfect, they shall; when they shall be made perfect, we shall. It is at the rapture of the saints. In 1 Thess. 4, the apostle is meeting the difficulty of the saints there and does not take up the subject of the relationship of O. T. saints to the coming of the Lord.

It has been noticed that in the Revelation we find no addition to the 24 elders, yet God will have others in glory. The symbol of the 24 elders is not a symbol that in itself distinguishes the church from others. Where distinction is required, as in Rev. 19, the symbol of the elders is dropped. The souls under the altar (Rev. 6) are disembodied souls of martyrs during part of Daniel's 70th week and are not, of course, added to the 24 elders who symbolized the heavenly priesthood composed of raptured and resurrected saints who are in their new bodies. The tribulation martyrs will be resurrected at the end.

### WHY ARE THERE 24 ELDERS?

W. Kelly observed that:

The number of these is twenty-four, corresponding with the twenty-four courses of priesthood in Israel. When the forerunner of the Lord was to be born, his father Zacharias was a priest of the course or order of Abia. In 1 Chron. 24 we must look to see these divisions, and we find the eighth was the one in question. The priesthood was divided into these courses in order that each in succession might take up the work of the priesthood, every course having its own chief priest. The High Priest is not named here: we all know who He is; but we have the twenty-four elders answering to these twenty-four courses of priesthood, or rather to the chiefs who represented them (verse 4).

But a deeply interesting inquiry arises: If these enthroned elders represent the heavenly saints, as few will deny, when and to what condition does the vision apply? Does it speak (1) of those who have departed to be with Christ? Or (2) does it foreshadow the manifested kingdom of Christ and His millennium? Now it appears certain that both these questions must be answered in the negative, and that the time of this chapter iv., and therefore the interval during which the elders are thus engaged on high, is after the separate state is over, as far as they are concerned, and before the millennial reign begins.

For (1) it is obvious that the symbol of the twenty-four elders implies the sum of the heads of the heavenly priesthood -- not a part, however large, but the whole. There were just so many courses, and no more. In the vision they are complete; and in the reality, which it symbolizes, this can never be the case, while the saints are absent from the body and thus present with the Lord. During that state of things there will always be members of the church on the earth. For "we shall not all sleep." And when, at the Lord's return, the dead in Christ shall rise first, we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." That is to say, the symbol understood and interpreted aright requires that all the members of Christ should be together and in the same condition; and as this will never be true of the separate spirits, it necessarily follows that the vision will be realized only when "we shall all be changed" and with the Lord.

But (2) it is clear, that whatever may be anticipatively presented in the songs of the elders, or of others who catch up as if they were the chorus of their strains, both the actions of the elders, and the entire heavenly scenery, in which

they take so prominent a part from Rev. 4 to 19, suppose that the reigning over the earth does not arrive as a literal fact till Christ and His saints have left heaven for the judgment of His enemies. But the full complement of the elders is made up a considerable time previously: none can deny they are *in heaven* before and during the seals, trumpets, and vials. The inference is plain. The saints represented by them must be as a whole in heaven before these judgments begin to be fulfilled. The millennium does not come till Rev. 20; the elders, shadowing the glorified saints, are with the Lord in their changed bodies long before. When He comes from heaven to the destruction of the beast, they follow, and they subsequently reign for a thousand years. Others, I doubt not, will be joined with them in that reign: these will not be glorified in their bodies till Rev. 20, having suffered after the rapture of the church under the beast, &c. But Rev. 4 intimates, that the rapture will then have taken place, and that the saints caught up are viewed as a royal priesthood, interested, as having the mind of Christ, in the trials, sufferings, testimony, and hopes of those who succeed themselves, as witnesses for God, during the hour of temptation which, will then come upon all the world, to try those that dwell on the earth. Even for the raptured saints on high it is not yet the time for the marriage of the Lamb; and therefore, as well as for other reasons, they are here regarded, not as the body or bride, but as kings and priests worshipping, and as yet waiting for their manifestation in glory when they shall judge the world. There is a solemn connection with this in Ezekiel, where we have twenty-five men named (Ezek. 8:16); and to my own mind it appears that they were the whole of the heads of the priesthood -- the twenty-four chiefs and the high priest besides. But where were they now? Alas! they were the promoters of the idolatry and wickedness perpetrated in the temple of Jehovah. They were there not as those whose raiment told of the blood that cleanses, but the corrupters of God's holy standard and the defilers of Israel, leading them on to apostasy; so that, if judgment is to be inflicted, it must begin with the house of God. There is a tacit contrast between the scene here described add that in Ezekiel. There we had the living creatures first, the symbol of the executive judgments of God--of His judicial power putting down evil. The earthly result of the action of these living creatures, as seen in Ezekiel, might be the destruction of Jerusalem; but this was only what man saw.<sup>4</sup>

### **WHY ARE THEY TERMED ELDERS?**

The term "elder" conveys the thought of:

- spiritual maturity (1 Tim 3:6).
- intelligence in divine things (Titus 1:9).
- government (1 Tim 3; Titus 1).

This characteristic of intelligence in the mind of God is seen in Rev. 5:5 and 7:13. The 24 elders are associated with God's throne of government as seen in Rev. 4:4.

There is a theological dictum that if a term used concerning Jews is used in connection with the church, the sharp distinction drawn between Israel and the church by those who hold dispensational truth is invalid. We can see the Judaizing at work here. O. T. Allis, an amillennialist, states the objection this

way:

It is a view which is quite inconsistent with the Brethren position. They hold that "eldership" is Jewish, that the "successive authority" which it represents was characteristic of the professing (Petrine) church, but inconsistent with that expectancy of any moment rapture which is distinctive of the Pauline mystery Church. Furthermore, if the word "elder" is Jewish, the number "24" is also Jewish. Darby and Scofield connect it with the 24 courses of the priests as established by David. This would mean that the mystery Church which is held to be quite distinct from the Old Testament Church is designated in Rev. 4-19 by a figure which is distinctly Jewish. Scofield seeks to justify this interpretation by pointing out that the Church is called a priesthood in Rev. 1:6. He appeals also to 2 Pet. 2:5-9. But this passage is clearly based on Ex. 19:6 which makes no reference to the Levitical priesthood, which was instituted by Moses and further organized by David, but refers to Israel the nation as a kingdom of priests, i.e., as a people to be set apart for the service of God. If this prediction is taken literally, it refers to Israel. If it is regarded as applying to and fulfilled in the Church, we have an example of an Old Testament prophecy regarding Israel fulfilled in the New Testament Church. How Dispensationalists can with any show of consistency find the raptured Church in the 24 elders it is certainly very difficult to see.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the fact that the 24 elders do not represent "the mystery church," his argument proceeds and amounts to this: if a Jewish figure is used in connection with the church, the church cannot be distinct from Israel. If this is to be believed, it will have to be received on *his* authority. We do not accept the imagined, theological dictum of his system. The Jews had elders, a temple, a tabernacle, a priesthood, etc. and all of these words are used in the N. T. in regards to the church. What about the N. T. references to persons and objects from the time before the Jews? Thus the argument seems as sound as saying that because the ark and the eight souls saved through water is a figure of something that has to do with Christians, we cannot be distinct from Noah (1 Peter 3:20, 21), who, of course, was not an Israelite. Adam and Eve are types of Christ and His bride (cp. Eph. 5:1). They were certainly not even part of the "Jewish church." At any rate, does this indicate a connection between Adam and the church? Surely not.

As to Ex. 19:6, equating priesthood with the service of God is quite erroneous. Israel never was a kingdom of priests; or a royal priesthood. The Levite typifies the service of God and the priesthood typifies approach to God, and worship. See also Wm. Kelly's *Notes on Peter*, pp. 140, 141. And the suggestion that Ex. 19:6 may be taken as a prophecy does raise the question of whether the amillennial system renders one incapable of distinguishing between prophecy and types (cp. 1 Cor. 10:1-14). See also Rom. 16:25.

As to elders, no doubt eldership among Jewish Christians was somewhat different, at least at the beginning of the church's history, than the apostolic order

among Gentiles. The question for us is actually quite simple once Titus 1:5 is received into the soul. Titus 1:5 shows that the apostle or his delegates designated elders, *on the authority of the apostle*. This authority is now lacking. There might be men who meet the moral qualifications of 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 and they may exercise oversight by moral power. To call such, in an official way, "elder" so and so, is, however, lacking apostolic authority and thus a sham. Official power is gone; moral power abides. There is nothing in this inconsistent with the "any-moment rapture." The inconsistency is not real, but only exists in the minds of those who connect Israel and the church in a theological figment called the "church of all ages." The difficulty in seeing is due to this theological mist.

As to the "professing (Petrine) church" and "the Pauline mystery Church," the doctrine of "the Brethren" is that every person sealed with the Holy Spirit from the day of Pentecost until the rapture is a member of the one body, the doctrine of which was never revealed or prophesied in the O.T. (Rom. 16:25),<sup>6</sup> but was expounded by the Apostle Paul. The "Pauline mystery Church," began on the day of Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:13).

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

### *Aphorisms*

"We purge out the leaven {but do we?} and fill the lump with honey" (J. G. Bellett).

"Beware of sweet brethren" (said by A. C. Brown to the editor numbers of times).

"Some brethren think to be more gracious than God Himself" (said by A. C. Brown to the editor numbers of times).

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6. It was hid in God (Eph 3), not hid in the O.T. Why not simply how to Rom. 16:25 about it? True, it may cost a cherished theological system, but is it not better to have God's Word?  
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## *Elements of The Two Resurrections*

### *Chapter 4:*

## *The Figurative Use of Resurrection in the O. T.*

(continued)

### *Daniel 12:1-3*

#### **OUTLINE OF DANIEL 12**

A reading of Daniel 12 shows that the prophecy relates to Daniel's people, the Jews. The prophecy refers to the same time of unequalled trouble that is found in Jer. 30.

Notice that the expression "that time" in Daniel 12:1 refers to "the time of the end" of Daniel 11:40. In Daniel 11 we see the king of the south (Egypt) and the king of the north (the Assyrian of Isaiah) come against the king of Palestine (Daniel 11:36-39) who is the Antichrist. The Antichrist is the Lawless One of 2 Thess. 2, the second beast of Rev. 13, the false prophet of Rev. 19. The end of Daniel 11 and also Daniel 12 describe events that are connected with Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30).

Daniel 12 tells us that there will be Jews who will be delivered, as does Matt. 24:22. The deliverer will come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). But not all will be delivered. When God gathers the people, the rebels will be purged and never enter the land (Ezek. 20:20-23). And so Daniel 12 tells us that some shall awake to shame. Resurrection is used as a figure for the bringing together of Israel out of the nations. The word "many" shall awake should have preserved persons from supposing a bodily resurrection is meant. It cannot mean the amillennialist "general resurrection" because according to that idea *all* are supposed to rise. It cannot mean the post-tribulationist resurrection of all (and only) the saints at the appearing, because some awake to shame. The resurrection of the unjust, posttribulationists rightly hold, takes place after the millennium (Rev. 20).

The distress is placed within the last half of Daniel's 70th week as may be seen by the expression time (one year), times (two years) and half-a-time (one-

half year). Also, there are two other periods noted: 1290 and 1335 days from the placing of the abomination that makes desolate. This is the abomination of Matt. 24 and probably also refers to the image of the beast (Rev. 13). It will be set up in the middle of the week (Daniel 9:27).

We are not always given the detail necessary to precisely locate every event of prophecy. However, the awaking must take place after Christ appears.

### THE WORD "MANY"

Daniel 12:2 cannot be a general resurrection -- because not all are raised. This is a partial, mixed thing. Nor can it be a total premillennial resurrection of the saints because some awake to shame. Weigh this carefully!

This takes place after the end of the tribulation and synchronizes with the deliverance of Daniel's people, i.e., the faithful remnant in the land of Israel.

Some of the unbelievers among Israel will have gone back to Israel before this, <sup>1</sup> as we see in Isa. 18 where God is depicted as watching this human activity. But *many* will still be scattered among the Gentiles. At the end God will gather the elect of Israel from the extremities of the earth (Matt. 24:31). What about the non-elect? Ezek. 20:34-38 tells us that God will gather the Jews into the wilderness and purge out the rebels from among them. Then only the elect are left to enjoy the land in millennial blessing. So then the people shall be all righteous (Isa. 60:21). So all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26).

Some of those rebels, however, will have previously gone back and will be judged in the land by the judgment of God poured out in, and towards the end of, the tribulation. *Many* will not have gone back. These *many* Jews scattered over the earth are elect or rebels as we have seen from the above scriptures. These *many* will be brought back from the nations which are figured by dust and graves. The elect awake to eternal life and the non-elect awake to contempt or abhorrence. And so, if it is literal resurrection, it involves the resurrection of some unjust before the millennium; or a partial resurrection if it denotes the alleged, one general resurrection.

Wm. Kelly remarked,

It is attempted, by the help of Augustine, (*De Civ. Dei.* XX, xxiii, 2,) Calvin, and others, to maintain a strict parallel between this text and John 5:28, 29. But it is not true that "many," is equivalent to "all." The chief witness called by most is the alleged interchange of these expressions in Rom. 5:18, 19. But we deny the fact even there; for in the latter verse οἱ πολλοὶ τὸ employed in relation to ὁ εἷς, (the mass connected with the one,) and in the former there is no such relation expressed; and the idea is the *universal bearing* of one offence and of one righteousness respectively, not the actual effect which follows in the next verse, where, accordingly the phrase is altered. Moreover, "many" is not the same thing as "*the many*": they are very particularly and frequently distinguished in Daniel. Compare, for the former, Dan. 11:34, 44; 12:2, 4, 10,



and, for the latter, Dan. 9:27; 11:33, 39; 12:3. Marckius' reply to Cocceius, which identifies them, is therefore unfounded, and even Dr. B. {David Brown} "now greatly doubts it." And it is evident that he has little confidence in the explanation of Munster and Clarius, who suppose that the *change* of the living righteous is hinted at in the word "many." The truth is that, on no view premillennial or postmillennial, can our text be applied to a literal resurrection consistently with other scriptures or with the context. We have no doubt, therefore, that it refers to God's revival of Israel, both nationally and spiritually, and with the open judgment of the wicked among them, after the destruction of the last king of the North, "the Assyrian," so often predicted in the prophets. Dan. 11 had already spoken of the Jews in the land up to their closing troubles and deliverance for the elect. Dan. 12:2 shows us the reappearance on the scene of "many" long slumbering among the Gentiles. They had been "asleep" when movements of the deepest interest had been going on in the land and people of the Jews. Now they "awake"; but, as among the Jews in Palestine, not a few were apostate and cut off by God and only such were delivered out of their last time of unparalleled tribulation as were "written in the book"; so of these returned Israelites, some are found destined to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. We doubt not that, though employed figuratively, as often in the Psalms and Prophets, the language presupposes the known truth of a bodily resurrection, and this of just and unjust. It is possible that John 5 may allude to the passage, but that would not prove the literality of Dan. 12:2. It is much more certain that itself alludes to Isa. 26:19, which Dr. B. correctly refers to the figurative resurrection of Israel (pp. 284, 235). The language is at least equally strong in both, and the resemblance striking and undeniable. "Thy dead shall live, my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, (the prophet addressing them,) ye that dwell in dust," &c. Ezek. 37 is, if possible, stronger than Dan. 12. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Beyond a doubt, not a physical, but a figurative, resurrection is here meant, just as in Daniel. It is the only interpretation which meets all the conditions of the text and context, and it is entirely free from the insuperable difficulties which encumber the use made of it by many on both sides.<sup>2</sup>

### TRANSLATION OF THE PASSAGE BY POSTTRIBULATIONISTS

Some who hold a measure of dispensational truth regard the passage as speaking about literal resurrection. The difficulty of the word *many* is generally keenly felt to be an embarrassment and so retranslation is the method by which the passage is handled.

Interestingly, J. F. Walvoord, who holds the pretribulation rapture, appeals to a retranslation by S. P. Tregelles and Nathaniel West, both posttribulationists.<sup>3</sup> Posttribulationists try to find the resurrection of *all* the righteous dead in this passage because the passage clearly relates to the end of the tribulation and thus they hope to destroy the truth of the pre-tribulation rapture.

R. P. Culver, who also holds the pre-tribulation rapture, summarily

2. *The Bible Treasury* 1:157n. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

3. J. F. Walvoord, *The Millennium*, p. 282.

dismisses the contention of A. C. Gaebelein that the passage uses resurrection as a figure, and eventually gives Tregelles' translation.<sup>4</sup> The only worthwhile portion of this treatment is that he shows that *many* cannot mean *all*.

These brethren, and others, have been influenced by the opposers' hue and cry about literal and spiritual interpretation. They cannot allow this passage to be figurative without feeling that their system is thereby endangered.

Here is the translation by the posttribulationist, S. P. Tregelles:

And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those [the rest of the sleepers] shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt.

J. F. Walvoord quotes this with the brackets which contains words *supplied* by S. P. Tregelles. R. P. Culver retains the words in the brackets but omits the brackets and adds after them the word "those who do not awake at this time."

If we turn to S. P. Tregelles' *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, p. 164, we actually find this:

And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those [the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time] shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt.<sup>5</sup>

On p. 158, he had given this translation with the brackets but omitted the words "those who do not awake at this time."

The translation quoted in full is exactly what he defended in *The Christian Annotator*, vol. 2, p. 319 (1855).

The words in brackets are not translation, of course, but interpretation. S. P. Tregelles defended his translation as follows:

The expression (הַאֲנֵלִים) - אֲנֵלִים is never used in the Hebrew Bible as taking up distributively a general class previously mentioned: thus I judge that the first occurrence of this demonstrative relates to those who awake from amongst the sleepers, and the second to the contrasted class, the mass of those who do not then awake.<sup>6</sup>

If this statement by S. P. Tregelles is not true, his translation (and especially his addition) has no sure foundation.

Two lengthy replies were given to S. P. Tregelles which show that his contention is unfounded. I give the first only partially and the second in its entirety.

True, indeed, it is that Dr. {S. P.} Tregelles has constructed an imposing battery against it in defence of his theory, but his boldness seems to me to defeat its

4. R. P. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days*, pp. 172-175.

5. In his, *Daniel*. . . Dr. Walvoord quotes this in full, but without the brackets. Was it right for him then to call it a translation?

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6. *The Christian Annotator*, vol. 2, p. 319 (1855).

intended aim, and provoke discomfiture. Against the right of our translation to run thus: "Many of them that sleep shall awake, some (אלה) to everlasting life, and some (ואלה) to shame and everlasting contempt," he has made and promulgated this formidable rule:

The expression אלה - אלה is never used in the Hebrew Bible as taking up distributively a general class previously mentioned.

Now, how, I ask, is this rule to stand the test of the following passages? I have not, at the present moment, that access to concordances, which would enable me, I dare say, to multiply them. But even one would apparently be sufficient for my purpose.

In Deut. 27:11, we read, "And Moses charged the people the same day, saying" – here is the "general class; and then immediately follows the charge, taking up the distribution by אלה - אלה, "these shall stand to bless," naming half the tribes of the people; "and these shall stand to curse," naming the other half.

Again, in Isa. 49:9-12, we read, "These shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim"; a distribution taken up by the expression in question (אלה - אלה - אלה). And if we inquire who are "these," and "these," and "these," we find the general class previously mentioned (v. 9) to be "the prisoners in darkness," who shall come forth and show themselves, when Jehovah shall comfort his people, by gathering the outcasts of Israel from the four corners of the earth.

Another passage I have to refer to, which is Joshua 8:22. There the men of Ai fell into the snare which Joshua laid for them, between one portion of his army in their front, and another in their rear; and it is said, "So they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side" (אלה - אלה). Israel is the "general class previously mentioned," while "some on this side and some on that side" exhibit the distribution taken up by the expression in question. In none of these passages could "these" and "those," as demonstrating two previous classes be admitted as the right translation.

A more clear authority for interpreting our prophet (Dan. 12), as intending his twofold distribution to refer to one class previously mentioned, and that one class to be the many who shall awake, it seems hardly possible to desire.

"Many" is, in fact, the only true subject of which the verbal action of awaking, whether to life or to shame, can with correctness be predicated. And does it not hence follow that, sinners being involved in the same awakening with the saints, the passage cannot possibly be explained, in the way proposed, to apply to the premillennial resurrection? The key has yet to be found.<sup>7</sup>

W. Kelly responded to S. P. Tregelles also:

Many Christians, whose judgment is to be respected, apply this passage to a literal resurrection. But they are involved in difficulties, from which ingenuity essays in vain, as I think, to extricate them. Instead of commenting on what appears to me mistakes, let me state my firm conviction that a national resuscitation of Daniel's people, i.e., Israel, is in question here, as in Isa. 26 and Ezek. 37. This being understood the entire context is plain. It is at the time of their deepest distress that Michael stands up, and not merely are all those elect Jews delivered who have been glanced at in the previous parts of this prophecy, but many who are dispersed, as it were buried, or at least slumbering, among

the Gentiles, awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Compare Isa. 66 *sub finem*.) Then follows the peculiar blessedness of the "Maschilim," i.e., the understanding ones, that instruct the mass in righteousness, who, instead of going out like the moon, though it may appear again, shine as the stars for ever and ever. This figurative application of a resurrection to Israel's circumstances at the close of the age, is of course perfectly consistent with a real bodily resurrection of saints before, and of the wicked after, the millennium, as in Rev. 20:4-12.

I am aware of the assertion that the phrase  $\text{לְאֵלֵינוּ} - \text{לְאֵלֵיכֶם}$  is never used elsewhere in Hebrew as distributive of a general class previously mentioned. But I believe it to be unfounded. The reader has only to examine Joshua 8:22, and he will see that the pronoun is used in a similar way, Israel being the general class, and the same expression as here taking it up distributively. Accordingly, our English Bible in both cases, and in my judgment rightly, translates "some . . . and some." Of course, it is not denied that in certain circumstances "these" and "those" would well represent the meaning. My opinion is that the other is an equally legitimate rendering wherever required by the context, as I conceive it to be in both the texts cited. And such, I find, is the view of the Vulgate and Luther as to Daniel 12:2.

Again, I have no sympathy with those who apply this verse to mere temporal deliverance. But it is not a necessary inference, on the other hand, that the words "everlasting life" imply a resurrection-state. People forget that the saved Israelites in question are supposed to possess eternal life, which certainly may be before any change as to the body. It may help some readers to notice a somewhat parallel case, both in good and evil, as respects the Gentiles in Matt. 25:46. Plainly, they are the nations at the beginning of the millennium discriminated as sheep and goats, and dealt with by the king without delay. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." So, when Israel reappears in that day, sad examples are to be there, whose "worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh; while others are to be brought an offering to the Lord, who shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. These awake to everlasting life; the others are abandoned to shame and everlasting contempt, apart from the question of resurrection. It will be a time, not of national deliverance merely, but of signal mercy and judgment from God; and this for Israel after their long sleep among the Gentiles, as well as for such Jews as will have figured more in the previous crisis in the land. The Maschilim seem to be a special class still more distinguished (ver. 3).<sup>8</sup>

S. P. Tregelles then again defended his idea (which he claims that he obtained from Gesenius). I quote one portion to illustrate his method of defence.

Joshua 8:22 -- The reference of each ( $\text{לְאֵלֵינוּ}$ ) has been previously defined, the one relating to those who turned against the men of Ai, and the other to the ambush issuing from the city; there is here no distribution of Israel as a general class (though) they all belong to Israel, for they had been previously separately

defined.<sup>9</sup>

This is of no account. The class that is distributed were those assigned to the battle, no matter what they were designated. Immediately following S. P. Tregelles' defence was a paragraph by H. Girdlestone, which said in part:

The rule asserted, that the phrase in question is never used as a distributive of a general class previously mentioned has been disposed of as unfounded.<sup>10</sup>

The fact is then that the awaking of both classes occurs at the *same* time; and this does not describe literal resurrection.

Dr. Walvoord, then, thinks it "strange" that A. C. Gaebelein, W. Kelly and H. A. Ironside (and he could have included J. N. Darby) should understand a figurative use of resurrection here. He says that the motive is zeal to harmonize the passage with their teaching that O. T. saints will be raised at the rapture.<sup>11</sup> So they are accused of adopting the "spiritualizing" method of the opponents. It is just the way amillennialists handle Rev. 20.<sup>12</sup> Apparently it is all right for "literalists" to understand Ezek. 37 as using resurrection as a figure (and perhaps Hosea 6:22, but certainly Rom. 11:15) and not be Sadducean (A. Reese) or forsake 'literalism' (Dr. Walvoord)!

There remains to supply an alleged deficiency of which we are accused by Dr. Walvoord. He alleges that the part of the verse referring to those who awake to shame, and everlasting contempt is passed over. I have already touched on this under the heading "The Word "Many." When the Deliverer comes and turns away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26), He will purge the rebels that were brought into to the wilderness (Ezek. 20:34-38). They will thus be put to death

9. S. P. Tregelles, *The Christian Annotator*, vol. 3, p. 32 (1856). The same type of reasoning appears in his *Tregelles on Daniel*, i.e., *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, p. 164.

10. H. Girdlestone, *The Christian Annotator*, vol. 3, p. 33.

11. We considered Heb. 11:40 previously, showing that the character of the first resurrection as the resurrection of the just, and the classification of the O.T. saints, both of Israel and not of Israel, as just men, means that there is not such thing as a resurrection of Israel's righteous dead, as such. Concerning the O. T. just men, "they should not be made perfect without us."

In reality, what is "strange" is the idea that the O. T. Israelite saints will be resurrected at the time of the appearing of Christ in glory. It not merely leaves the question of non-Israelites (Heb. 11:4-7) hanging (when will they be resurrected, and why so?), it upsets the truth of the resurrection of the just. Moreover, it is those with Dr. Walvoord's view who get into this because of their insistence that certain O. T. texts, which in reality use resurrection in a figurative way, are alleged to be speaking of resurrection in a literal way. Perhaps their doing so is because of the complaints of spiritualizers, regarding the subject of prophetic interpretation, that "literalists" do not take everything literally! In regards to prophetic interpretation, see chapter 1, "A Brief Introduction to the Study of Prophecy" in my *Daniel's 70 Weeks and the Revival of the Roman Empire*, obtainable from the publisher. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

12. *Daniel the Key to Prophetic Revelation*, p. 286.

and await the resurrection of the unjust. The fact that 1000 years intervenes before the full execution of this sentence does not differ in principle from the premillennial sessional judgment conducted by the greater than Solomon (Matt. 25:31-46). There, some are consigned to eternal fire (v. 41) but 1000 years intervenes before the final execution of that sentence.

### DANIEL 12:3

It is thought that Dan. 12:3 applies to the persons of v. 2 alleged to be literally resurrected.<sup>13</sup>

The wise (the maschilim) are not necessarily among those gathered at the final regathering. They are more likely those who are of the faithful remnant. We read of them again in v. 10. Dan. 12:10-13 speaks of occurrences during Daniel's 70th week and afterwards. The wise are not dead ones, but those who understand the abomination that makes desolate. We read also of those that turn the many to righteousness. It seems to me that these are the future preachers of the gospel of the kingdom. No, Dan. 12:3 does not lend support to the idea of bodily resurrection in v. 2.

### DANIEL 12:13

Daniel 12:13 is not a statement of a post-tribulational resurrection as A. Reese claims.<sup>14</sup>

Verse 12 had stated that the time of blessing would come for Daniel's people. Verse 13 is first an exhortation for him to continue steadfast to the end (i.e., to his death) and, yes, he would rest in the grave, but he would also enter into the blessedness at the end of days. Many will come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom (Matt. 8:11), and Daniel among them. No doubt that will be in the heavenly department of the kingdom.

### THE AMILLENNIAL METHOD

Another way in which the passage is handled is to treat it as a general resurrection (this involves *all*, both the just and unjust). E. J. Young says that we should expect *all* in the text and that is how some expositors take it; but that is forced.<sup>15</sup>

With a *paraphrase*, which turns out to be a mental gymnastic, he manages to make the passage refer to a general resurrection anyway in spite of the word "many."

Another idea is that it applies to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. P. Mauro said that John, our Lord, and the apostles and evangelists awoke Israel out of a sleep of centuries. Those that turn many to righteousness are the preachers

13. A. Reese, *Op.cit.*, p. 42.

14. *Op.Cit.*, p. 48, 49.

15. *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 236. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

of the gospel.<sup>16</sup> O. T. Allis said that those “found written in the book” were the disciples who fled just before the city’s destruction.<sup>17</sup> This is refuted by consideration of the parallel passages and the time of the great tribulation.

To try to prove that the tribulation is past, accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem, is fruitless. The whole amillennial system collapses if the great tribulation is future, hence these efforts to get rid of the future great tribulation. We saw it stated concerning that day of Jacob’s trouble that “none is like it” (Jer. 30:4-10). Dan. 12:1 told us that for the children of Daniel’s people the time would come “such as never was since there was a nation.” Matt. 24:21 said, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, *nor ever shall be.*” There is only *one* great, unparalleled, tribulation.

John wrote the Revelation *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. Speaking of “the things that *are*” (Rev. 1:19), he tells the Philadelphians that they shall be kept out of the hour of trial. This hour of trial, therefore, must transpire after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Speaking of “the things that shall be after these” (Rev. 1:10 and 4:1), i.e., after the time occupied by the assemblies (Rev. 2, 3), he speaks of a vast company that comes out of the tribulation, the great one (Rev. 7:14). There is only one great tribulation and it is future.

Besides all this, Matt. 24:29 says that **IMMEDIATELY** after the tribulation of those days Christ would come. He hasn’t come yet. To explain Christ’s coming in clouds as a coming of providential judgment is nonsense befitting adamant refusal to give up a baseless theory. The elect are not gathered yet either. Rather, Jews were led captive when Jerusalem was destroyed. Luke 21:23 applies to the past destruction of Jerusalem, not Matt. 24.

## CONCLUSION

We may conclude that:

1. The K. J. V. translation of Dan. 12:1, 2 is satisfactory and that there is no reason for the desired retranslation except preconceived notions. Note, too, that the translators of the K. J. V. did not know of the pretribulation rapture.
2. The passage refers to the end of the future tribulation.
3. The passage uses resurrection as a figure of the gathering of many Jews whether for blessing or rejection.
4. The passage refers to a partial, mixed action; hence it cannot be a general resurrection, nor can it be only a resurrection of the righteous.
5. Objectors do not face the force of the word “many.”

Ed.

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16. *The Seventy Weeks* . . . pp. 164-176 (3rd ed.) truthpublishers.com

17. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 208.

## *Ostriches*

Have you ever thought of how much like ostriches modern women have become?

Sixty years ago we visited the Cawston Ostrich Farm in South Pasadena, where we saw fine specimens that had been captured from the Nubian desert in N. E. Africa, 12,000 miles away. We still have the snapshot which was taken on that occasion, showing the keeper on an elevated platform feeding a tall ostrich oranges. A little rooster at its feet makes quite a contrast. Two women standing by watching the performance, wearing dresses reaching within four inches from the ground make another noticeable contrast to the naked-legged ostrich. It was amusing to watch it swallowing a whole orange as it traveled down its long thin neck. They will swallow most anything that is bright, such as jewelry and even watches. They are especially fond of dates. Their Latin name is "strut-hi-o" apropos to their long legs and neck. They "walk with stretched forth neck and wanton eyes" (Isa. 3 :16). Their plumes are indeed their pride, which they love to display, especially at courting time. It is then that "the wing of the ostrich beats joyously" (Job 39:13, J.N.D. trans.). Little wonder the translators of the 1611 A. V. mistook "ostrich" for "peacock," whose mate God created not at all glamorous. But their wings do not enable them to fly, or soar heavenward. It cannot be said of them "in vain the net is spread in the sight of anything that hath wings" (Prov. 1:17, J.N.D. trans.). Although wild, they are easily ensnared. "God hath deprived her of wisdom" (Job 39:17), and classed them among the unclean and the abominable (Lev. 11:13, 16, J.N.D. trans.). They are native to the borders of the "holy land" in the Syrian and Arabian deserts, and are sometimes found within the limits of Palestine. "As birds of a feather flock together" so do these in groups inhabit waste places for their lairs. When pursued they run in circles as often do people that are lost. They do not mind associating with Zebras. It is embarrassing to look upon their most conspicuous flesh-colored naked thighs. It was said to lewd Babylon, "Bare the leg, uncover the thigh . . . thy shame shall be seen" (Isa. 47:2, 3).

Because God is holy, the sons of Aaron, when coming into the presence of God, were to wear "linen breeches to cover their nakedness, from the loins even to the thighs" (Ex. 28:41-43). Now, in this Christian age, the priesthood of all believers includes women as well as men. Should Christian women be less clothed? "Aged women . . . admonish the young women to be . . . discreet, chaste" (Titus 2 :3-5, J.N.D. trans.). "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of His mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and . . . Lamentation" (Jer. 9:20).

Speaking to the most privileged people on earth who were gathered at God's center, Jeremiah writes, "The daughter of my people is become . . . like the ostriches" (Lam. 4:3).



“Women adorn themselves in modest apparel . . . which becometh women professing godliness.” 1 Tim. 2: 9, 10.

“Not conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2); “Not follow a multitude to do evil” (Ex. 23:2).

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man” (Deut. 22:5).

Revoltig wigs, painted eyes and nails like bird’s claws -- all such worldly vanity, glamor and earthly-mindedness is a denial of our heavenly calling and most dishonoring to the Lord.

Some “sigh and cry for all the abominations” (Ezek. 9:4). Lot’s soul was vexed by the filthy things which he saw (2 Pet. 2 :7, 8). Such lamentable things should be rebuked, but too many say “Speak unto us smooth things” (Isa. 30:10).

Godliness is rare but beautiful in those who “adorn the doctrine” (Titus 2:10) by overcoming these worldly tendencies. “They receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1).

“Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth . . . be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:16-19).

Because it seems futile to say anything to those who are “all legs and no conscience,” who glory in their shame, a brother wrote, “It is like a bantam rooster trying to fight an ostrich!” Another brother wrote suggesting we write a word on “Ostriches.” Still another gracious brother wrote, “It is sad to see some of our young folks so eager to take on the vulgar fashions of this world in direct disobedience to God’s Word!” What a shameful witness is all this to our faces of our lamentable low state! The truth does not hurt unless it should.

“I cried in the congregation. I am become . . . a companion of ostriches” (Job 30:28, 29, J.N.D. trans).

A. C. Brown

### ***Is this Your Attitude Regarding the Above Article?***

And they said, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor word from the prophet. Come and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us give heed to any of his words (Jer. 18:18).

## *The Ecumenical, Revivalist, Legalists*

Those joining in with the *Promise Keepers* are the types that are concerned about "legal" Christians. Evidently they do not agree with C. H. Mackintosh that legality is 'the flesh attempting to carry out the precepts of God.' Not that these loose persons have that much regard for the precepts of God, otherwise they would flee from this ecumenical evil, obeying 2 Tim. 2:19-21. Moreover, hidden from them is that the virtual vowing to keep a set of promises morally connects them with those **promise keepers in Moses day**, who said that all that the Lord had said they would do. This is the vanity of the flesh in the things of God. It can feed on revivalist emotionalism as a *human method*, instead of the true self-judgment in the sanctuary, based upon the truth of God finding its rightful lodging in the soul via the conscience.

The scorn for God's holy principles of separation from evil is seen from the following report:

Promise Keepers held a "1996 National Clergy Conference" (2/13/96 - 2/15/96) in Atlanta's Georgia Dome stadium. The purpose of this gathering, according to PK's founder, Bill McCartney, was to "tear the hearts of pastors wide open so that a single leadership can be produced." He hoped to bring as many as 100,000 ministers and priests of all races together" (7/1/95, *The Atlantic Journal-Constitution*, p. C8).<sup>1</sup>

One report said that 40,000 clergy attended, of which 6000 were priests. What would any Christian who professes to be "outside the camp" have to do with this? Intimately connected with the recovery of so much truth last century is the truth enunciated in J. N. Darby's paper, *Separation from Evil is God's Principle of Unity*. I do not hesitate to say that the recovery was the result of acting on that principle. The above quotation shows the working of the inverse of this principle -- and the eventual results must correspondingly be the opposite. But you say that this movement *is* producing unity. A human, ecumenical unity, founded on the inclusion of evil -- is that your idea of scriptural unity? Is that your idea of what God calls to?

Are you being invited by believers with whom you break bread to attend with them? Why do you go on in fellowship with that? Why are you not faithful to the Lord who gave Himself for you? God has not bound you to fellowship with evil (2 Tim. 2:19-23).

Ed.

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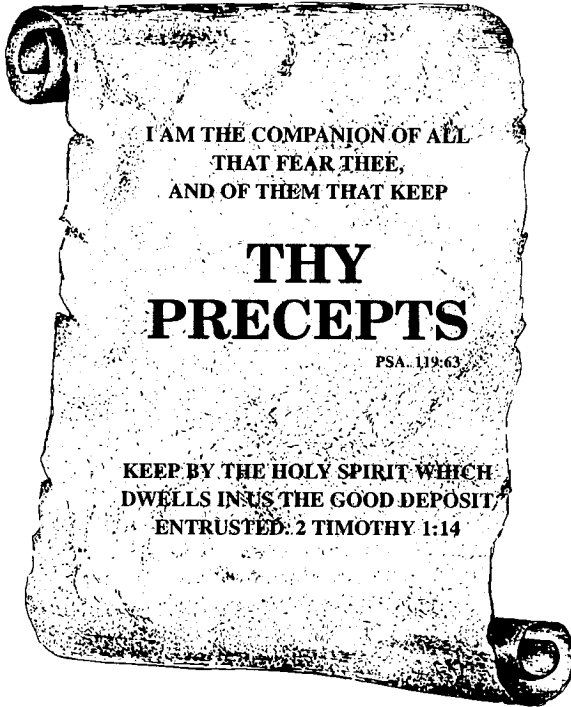
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## **THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON**

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### ***F. E. Raven's Apollinarian Doctrine***

FER's paper, *The Person of the Christ* (not to be confused with FER's *The Person of Christ*), was issued in 1895. An edition of this paper was reprinted, with footnotes, by someone (a D. J. S., Columbus Ohio, perhaps) who evidently objected to the paper. Most of the footnotes this person added are from J. N. Darby. The references to CW means the *Collected Writings* and refer to the Morrish edition. The numbers in braces { } have now been added and refer to recent printings.

FER's paper is an Apollinarian statement of Christ's Person, really denying that He had a human soul and spirit. This teaching logically flowed from his previously stated views on the humanity-in-essence in the Son in eternity. The remainder of this article is a reprint of the annotated version of FER's paper.

### ***The Person of the Christ***

<sup>1</sup> While extremely unwilling to enter on the field of controversy, especially on subjects touching the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have thought it right, in the interests of the truth and of the Lord's people, to put out a few remarks on two points of importance which have been in question. In so doing I decline to reply to any attacks which have appeared, based on isolated statements culled from letters I have written, partly from reluctance to notice them, and partly because I see in these attacks the tendency to shift (it may be almost unconsciously) the ground of conflict, in order to gain a point of vantage. In what I have to say I adhere therefore to two points that have been in question, which are these:

---

1. Abstract discussions on the nature of the Lord Jesus are, I believe, very unhealthy things for the soul; and if in the form of a positive attempt to define incarnate Godhead -- always erroneous in some expression or other -- CW15:208 {134}.

To enter upon subtle questions as to the person of Jesus tends to wither and trouble the soul, to destroy the spirit of worship and affection, and to substitute thorny inquiries, as if the spirit of man could solve the manner in which the humanity and divinity of Jesus were united to each other -- CW10:286 {181}.

<sup>2</sup> 1. As to whether Christ is ever viewed in scripture as man, distinct and apart from what He is as God.

<sup>3</sup> 2. As to whether the truth of His Person consists in the union in Him of God and man; a favorite formula with those so holding is "God and man one Christ" -- and with this is connected the idea that every title referring to Christ covers the whole truth of His Person.

<sup>4</sup> Now I affirm that the denial of the first, while claiming to maintain orthodoxy, is destructive of Christianity in its real power; and I would affectionately warn saints against giving up, in zeal for orthodoxy, the blessed foundations of Christianity. Further, that the assertion of the second is derogatory and dishonoring to the Son; and I proceed to show that both the denial and the assertion are contrary to the teaching of scripture.

<sup>5</sup> The first betrays a singular inability to apprehend the great reality of the incarnation, at all events in a most essential aspect of it, namely, the fact of Christ having by it a place as man *Godward*. As the Word become flesh He dwelt among men and revealed God, and in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell but He Himself filled and still fills a place as man toward God (see Psalm 16); and the two thoughts are wholly distinct conceptions, which cannot be grasped at one and the same time by any finite mind. "No one knows the Son save the Father." As Man He is both Apostle and High Priest. In other words, in the Apostle God has, so to say, come out, and in the High Priest man has entered in. Now these two thoughts, though realized in one Person, must of necessity be separately and distinctly apprehended. The one presents God, the other, man.

2. It is as if one dissected the body of his friend, instead of nourishing himself with his affections and character -- CW10:290 {183}.

3. It was a real human body -- real flesh and blood . . . one whose *nature* was as real as it was pure and incorruptible . . . His *human nature*, His flesh, having in view the *union of the two natures in His Person* . . . This *union* is so true that . . . The true humanity of Jesus is fundamental . . . He who would so separate the natures in the person . . . is on very slippery ground -- CHM and JND -- CW10:76, 77, 78 {48, 49}.

In the Trinity; in the incarnation; in the true humanity of the Lord: . . . in the UNION OF THE TWO NATURES IN ONE PERSON in the blessed Lord, as I myself adoringly recognize all this -- CW29:307 {203}.

4. I am quite aware of and accept the ordinary *orthodox* statement of TWO NATURES IN ONE PERSON -- CW29:321, note {212}.

5. The union of the divine and human nature in Christ -- CW17:26 {17}.

Christ was here God as well as man, and His Person cannot be divided -- CW17:541 {378}.

The simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied in (sic) Christ's individuality as a man -- CW29:322, note {212}.



<sup>6</sup>The reality of Christ's manhood in its aspect Godward is amply presented in the New Testament. There we have the truth, that Christ, having died to sin once, lives to God. (Rom. 6.) The having put off the old man and having put on the new is said to be, "as the truth is in Jesus," (Eph. 4). Christ Jesus before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession. (1 Tim. 6.) He sings praises to God in the midst of the assembly. (Heb. 2.) He praises in the great congregation. (Psalm 22.) He has entered in for us as Forerunner. (Heb. 6). He appears in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9).

<sup>7</sup>Now, while fully admitting that morally Christ's manhood had its unique and blessed character from God, for in becoming man He gave character to manhood, yet in the thoughts above presented it is utterly impossible to introduce the idea of Deity in its proper character and attributes, because in every case it is man that is presented, or rather, Christ is viewed in the light of man Godward.

<sup>8</sup>The refusal of this is destructive of Christianity in its true power, for it is on the side that I have indicated that Christ is placed within the reach of our appropriation, so that we can eat Him and live by Him. He is, as second Man, the

6. These things may be difficult as to human explanation, but not as to communion -- CW13:2 {1}. To separate wholly the humanity and divinity in springs of thought and feeling is dangerously overstepping scripture -- CW15:220 {147}.

7. While he was the Son in personal union with flesh as Jesus -- CW13:1.

"The human nature of Jesus" is a frequent expression in *Synopsis* on Lev. 2.

It is not an equivalent to "human condition," but to personality and implies it.

Christ's humanity was not superhuman; but it was humanity in a superhuman condition -- CW15:244 {157}.

8. I assume that my reader holds, as myself, the true and real humanity of the Lord, both in body and soul, -- that he was a true living man in flesh and blood . . . Christ was a man in the *truest sense of the word*, body and soul, . . . He had true humanity, but UNITED TO GODHEAD.

He was God manifest in the flesh. Scripture speaks simply, saying, He partook of flesh and blood. That is what the Christian has simply, and as taught of God to believe -- CW15:228 {146, 147}.

Christ partook of flesh and blood; that is what Scripture states, and that is the whole matter. He was a real true man in flesh and blood -- CW15:236 {152 -- Stow Hill ed. Says "true real"}.

There is, however, one consideration which should weigh heavily in the estimation of every Christian, and that is, the vital nature of the doctrine of Christ's humanity. It lies at the very foundation of Christianity . . . Almost all the leading errors which have found their way into the professing church disclose the Satanic purpose to undermine the truth as to the Person of Christ -- CHM's Notes, Lev. p. 29 {see different page in more recent eds.}.

A common phrase in CHM is "Christ's humanity," and His personality as man is very evidently CHM's belief

The abstract word humanity means humanity, and no more, and being abstract, must be taken absolutely, according to its own meaning. . . . Now, that Christ was truly man, in thought, feeling, and sympathy, is a truth of cardinal blessing and fundamental importance to our souls -- CW15:229, 230 {147, 148}.

pattern of our blessing, the Leader of our salvation. He draws us to Himself by making known to us His love; and the affection on our part begotten by this appropriates Him as the expression and pattern of what we are according to the counsel of God; and it is in this way that the believer is led into the true sense of the greatness of his portion, and even partakes morally in the life of God. As "Lord" Christ is the Object of faith, as Head He is held by the believer, who is led by Him into heavenly blessing. Hence I am entirely at a loss to understand how the truth of Christianity can be maintained in the absence of the apprehension of Christ in His place as man Godward, distinct and apart from the glory and attributes which belong only to God, and in which Christ has part as Himself being a divine Person.

I may observe here that Christians are as a rule, uninstructed in three important points of Christian doctrine:

1st. Reconciliation, which they do not know as in the mind of God. The distance between God and the sinner must have been removed to effect it, and but few know the nature of the distance. They do not see that the man after the flesh has been terminated judicially in the cross in the Man Christ Jesus.

2nd. Christ as manna. They do not apprehend in any degree the manner of life of Christ here as man, "the life of Jesus."

3rd. The mystery. They have no true conception that the church is the complement of the *Man* who glorified God here; but while admitting that all saints are united to Christ, they are leavened with the error that they are united to the Son of God, and they thus betray their ignorance of the mystery.

Hence, it is not surprising that many find difficulty in the apprehension of Christ in the point of view which I have sought to make plain.

<sup>9</sup> The second error maintains that the truth of *Christ's Person* consists in the union in Him of God and man.

Now, this idea arises, I judge, from confusion of thought as between *person* and *condition*, and has been fostered by expressions found in hymns, and the like, which have been used simply and devoutly by Christians without any very strict inquiry into their real force; but it involves a thought very derogatory to the truth of the Son, namely, that in becoming man a change has taken place as to His Person -- He is *in person* something which He was not before. This is not the teaching of scripture, nor do I think that it can be entertained. When I come to the word, I find that while in three gospels the truth of Christ in certain official positions is prominent, the fourth (John) is given to us to afford full light as to His Person, that is, "the Son"; and in this respect He is seen in three positions, namely, as eternally with the Father, as

9. But as I am on this point, I add, they have no true Christ at all. I read, "How such human nature, as body, soul, and spirit, including a human will, could be held in personal union with the divine, so that this human was complete, without a human personality or ego, we cannot understand, but we believe it is a mystery revealed for faith." Where? Why does the blessed Lord say, "Not my will but thine?" Why does He say, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" if there was no ego, no human personality? . . . Why does He say, "My God and your God, my Father and your Father" (not our) if there was no personality? CW 29:321 {212}.

come into the world, and as going back to the Father, the same Person unchanged and unchangeable.

<sup>10</sup> Further than this, the Person is even viewed as acting in regard to His form or condition, divine or human; "Being in the form of God, he emptied himself and took on him a servant's form, becoming in the likeness of men."

He comes to do God's will in the body prepared for Him.

He raises up the temple of His body.

He gives His flesh for the life of the world.

He lays down His life (human condition) to take it again.

<sup>11</sup> We have thus a divine Person presented, even apart from the question of form, and the idea of the unity of the Person in the sense asserted is not found.

<sup>12</sup> The One who being in the form of God, emptied Himself, and took on Him a servant's form, is the same who, having become man, humbled Himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross, and is now highly exalted. There is no idea either of unity, or of change, in the person. It is the same person in servant's form, and entering into what that form involved.

<sup>13</sup> The truth of a divine Person assuming human condition, the Word becoming flesh, and in such wise as that He can be viewed objectively as man, I believe; but that is not a question of unity of a Person. It is a Person in a condition in which He was not previously.

<sup>14</sup> Another idea connected with the above appears to be that every title or name

10. Heb. 13:8 -- The same yesterday, and today, and forever . . . The Word *became* flesh . . . That which not having actually been in being before (i.e., in the world) now begins to be so Note to John 1:17, New Tr.

11. Such is the Son of man. He who came down to reveal the Father -- truth and grace -- but who divinely remained in heaven in the essence of His divine nature, IN HIS PERSON INSEPARABLE FROM THE HUMANITY *with which He was clothed; the deity which filled this humanity was INSEPARABLE IN HIS PERSON from all the divine perfection*, but he never ceased to be a man, really and truly man before God -- Notes on John, JND, p. 36 {CW33:148}.

He was as really a man as any of us, without the sinful part of it . . . we cannot fathom what {Stow Hill ed. says "who"} He was . . . Our hearts should not go and scrutinize the person of Christ, as though we could know it all. No human being can understand THE UNION OF GOD AND MAN IN HIS PERSON . . . But He *in His very nature* is associated with God, and associated with man. He is the "daysman that can lay His hand upon us both" -- CW27:530, 531 {357, 358}.

12. This statement that Christ had no human personality, no ego, . . . is heresy (though God and man were united in one person), and the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the mystery of His person, when He has said, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father . . . -- CW29:322 {213}.

13. . . . the Word was made flesh. God was manifest in the flesh. Thus acting in this true *humanity*, *His presence* was incompatible with sin in the UNITY of the same person -- CW10:287 {181, 182}.

14. The humanity of Jesus cannot be compared. It was real and true {Stow Hill ed. Says "true and Real"} humanity, body, soul, flesh and blood, such as mine, as far as human nature is concerned --

(continued...)

inherited by the Son or applied to Him in scripture embraces or covers, if it does not describe, the whole truth of His Person. Now I believe this to be a fallacy, and a mistaken way of apprehending scripture. Unquestionably the Lord is identified or designated, and designates Himself, by official names or titles, as "the Christ" or "Son of man"; but such titles, though serving sufficiently to identify or designate the Person, do not cover the truth of His Person; and different titles applied to or fulfilled in Christ have to be understood each within its own appropriate limits. They describe the office, but not the Person that holds the office. In the same way we commonly use official and acquired titles, as 'The Queen,' 'The Colonel,' 'The Doctor,' to identify or designate a person, but we have no idea that such a title is descriptive of the person, or covers all that is true of the person, though once the person is so designated, many things can be said which refer to the person, and have nothing whatever to do with the particular designation; for instance, I might say, 'When the Queen was a child.' She was not queen as a child. It is simply a title used for designation, which has its own particular force and meaning.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus is the anointed of God, that is, the Christ, but not properly so until He was anointed, whatever might be true in purpose. So too, He was not Son of man until He became Man, yet He says, "The Son of man came to minister." "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before." "The Son of man which is in heaven." The simple fact is that a title serves to designate the Person,

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14(...continued)  
CW10:286 {181}.

I would solemnly admonish my reader that he cannot be too jealous in reference to the vital truth of the person and the relations of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . question His unspotted humanity, and you have opened the floodgate for a desolating tide of deadly error to rush in . . . In point of fact, we know that all His offices are connected with His humanity, and in assuming that humanity -- CHM, Notes, Lev. pp. 9-39 {see pages in more recent editions}.

But with FER His humanity is but a condition assumed by a divine Person, not that a divine Person became personally man, then according to FER all the offices of Christ are attached to a "Condition" of a divine Person and not to one who is personally man.

The Son of Man was truly of the race of men {Stow Hill ed. says "man"} (precious and comforting truth!) born of a woman, really and truly a man, and partaking of flesh and blood, made like unto His brethren, (sin excepted) -- CW34:60 {39}.

Surely His brethren were persons, -- had personality as men.

15. The errors which JND is refuting in CW29:305-364 {202-240}, include the following, copied here (from p. 324 {214}), because of the close resemblance to the teachings of FER:

We have thus the Lord's incarnation, the point where, (they say) He connects Himself with human nature; not merely personally, or rather not personally (so they expressly say), but in nature as a new head of the race (He is not a man, not a human personality, but) with humanity.

Our precious Savior was quite as really man as I, as regards the simple and abstract idea of humanity; . . . and, moreover, He was God manifest in flesh -- CW10:290 {183}.

Particular attention is asked to the last two sentences, showing as they do, how indissolubly, in the mind of JND, was the idea of our Lord's personality as man associated with His humanity.

without being descriptive of the Person, or involving any question of the unity of the Person. The titles "The Christ" and "Son of man" are both official titles which could have had no place or meaning except in the Son having become man; and it is remarkable that the Lord does not in the Gospels use what is, perhaps, the nearest approach to a personal name, i.e., Jesus, in the same way.

<sup>16</sup> In conclusion, I earnestly entreat saints to come prayerfully and patiently to scripture to get their thoughts of Christ formed by the word of God; and not to adopt the creeds or molds into which men, often with pious intent, have cast the truth in the vain effort to guard against error; and it is significant that those who have of late come forward to expose what they deemed to be error, have shown a tendency in their minds in the direction of a kind of Tritheism. It is not in this way that the truth of Christ's Person is guarded, or that of the unity of the Godhead maintained.

F. E. R.

\* \* \* \* \*

**1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 9, 10.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God. He that abides in the doctrine, *he* has both the Father and the Son. If any one come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes in his wicked works (1 John 9-11).**

**A little leaven leavens the whole lump (Gal. 5:9).**

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16. Now dear \_\_\_\_\_, having said thus much, I recommend to you with all my heart to avoid discussing and defining the person of our blessed Savior. You will lose the savor of Christ in your thoughts, and you will only find in their room the barrenness of man's spirit in the things of God and in the affections which pertain to them. It is a labyrinth for man, because he labors there at his own charge. It is as if one dissected the body of his friend, instead of nourishing himself with his affections and character. It is one of the worst signs of all those I have met with for ---- . . . I may add, that I am so profoundly convinced of man's incapacity in this respect, that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define how the divinity and the humanity are united in Jesus, that I am quite ready to suppose that, with every desire to avoid, I may have fallen into it, and in falling into it, said something false in what I have written to you. That He is really man, Son of man, dependent on God as such . . . really God in His unspeakable perfection -- to this I hold, I hope, more than to my life. To define is what I do not pretend. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" -- CW10:290, 291 {183, 184}.

THE STATEMENT THAT CHRIST HAD NO HUMAN PERSONALITY, NO EGO, IS HERESY -- CW29:322 {213}www.presenttruthpublishers.com

"THEY HAVE NO TRUE CHRIST AT ALL" -- CW 29:321 {212}.

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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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### *6: The Pretribulation Rapture*

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#### *Chapter 6.12: The 24 Elders*

(Continued)

#### *The Elders are not Angels*

All opposers of dispensational truth must necessarily deny that the elders represent raised and raptured saints. One of the ways to do this is to allege that they represent, or are, angels. We shall examine this and learn much more about these elders while doing so. Angels are never called elders. The very word "elder" should have kept Christians clear of the notion that these are angels. It obviously implies that human beings, saints, are meant.

#### **1. ELDERS AND ANGELS ARE EXPRESSLY DISTINGUISHED**

The distinction between the angels and the elders is plainly noted in Rev. 5:11. It is noted also in Rev. 7:11. One would think that this is sufficient to settle the matter for those who tremble at God's word.

#### **2. SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ELDERS ARE NOT MORALLY SUITABLE FOR ANGELS.**

W. Kelly noted:

Whatever is done, the elders understand it: heaven and God's ways are familiar to them. If the living creatures ascribe honor and glory to God, at once they rise from their thrones and prostrate themselves before Him in worship. Hence too they sing songs suitable to each circumstance which calls them forth. If God on the throne is celebrated, they praise accordingly. If the Lamb takes the book and opens the seals, at once the elders are found with a new song. "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue." No matter what the subject, the elders display divine intelligence. Of whom else could this remarkable spiritual intelligence be predicated? What characterizes an angel is his power. They "excel in strength," as the Scripture says. They are the beings that give effect to the providential arrangements of God. Then we find that the living creatures preside over the execution of His judgments in the earth. Thus, in Rev. 6 the four living creatures are active on the opening of the early seals, and the four angels come forth successively

to do his appointed work on earth. But when the understanding of God's mind in heaven is the point to be shown by any creature there, the elders are the appropriate. They sing the sweetest songs in heaven; they worship more frequently and characteristically than any others. In them combine exalted position on thrones, active office as priests, as well as prophetic intelligence. At home in the presence of God, they have loving communion not merely with the throne and what issues thence, but with Him who is seated on the throne and with the Lamb. Now, what body in heaven is so capable of adequately answering to all these things as the assembly or Church of God taken up to heaven and glorified there? The elders may include the Old Testament saints, but assuredly the Church also, if not confined to it.<sup>1</sup>

Almost all worship noted in the Revelation is rendered by the elders (Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 11:16). Rev. 19:4 includes the four living creatures. The remaining scripture is Rev. 7:13; and I do not believe the angels are included even in this case. Then, it is the four living creatures and the elders that fall before the throne (Rev. 4:10; 5:7).

It is the 24 elders that sing the new song. It has been observed that angels do not sing (the reference in Job about the morning stars singing is poetic). Neither did the "herald angels sing, glory to the new-born king." Thus the word *say* is used in Rev. 5:12 where the angels join in. And note this. The song of the elders, which the angels do not sing, as addressed directly to the Lamb (Rev. 5:6-8) and when they "say" *directly* to Him that sits upon the throne, the angels are excluded; (Rev. 4:10-11) but when "saying" *about* the Lamb, angels may join (Rev. 5:11-13; yet they are excluded in v. 14).

Note, also, what the elders have in Rev. 5:8. Could anyone but a ritualist suppose that angels have these golden bowls full of incenses, which are the prayers of the saints? This is a priestly function. Angels are not redeemed nor are they priests.

We might note here that contrary to what is claimed by some,<sup>2</sup> the four living creatures were not seen in heaven in the O.T. The four living creatures combine both cherubic and seraphic characteristics and are neither one or the other, nor another class of celestial being. They are SYMBOLS. They are symbols of the variegated forms of God's judicial power, "the characters of His power in which His judgments are going to be executed" (W. Kelly). It is false to say the living creatures join in the song of the 24 elders.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. THE ELDERS UNDERSTAND THE MIND OF HEAVEN

The posttribulationist, J. B. Payne, who necessarily wants the church on earth at the time the 24 elders are seen in heaven, wrote:

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1. *Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, Broom: London, pp. 274, 275 (1865).

2. *Ibid.*

[www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

3. *Ibid.*

Their activity in interpretation (7:13-14) is the very task elsewhere connected to angels (cp. 10:8; 17:1).<sup>4</sup>

We may not be always sure what he believes because he likes to present alternative views as possibilities. At any rate, let us examine the differences in the activities of the elders and the angels regarding conveying the thoughts of God.

The angelic remarks (not interpretation) made to John concern the judgments of God directed against the earth (Rev. 10:8, 17:1) but the explanations given by the elders are altogether different. In Rev. 5:2 an angel asks "who is worthy to open the book?" The elders know and reply (Rev. 5:50). They know also of whom the "multitude" is composed (Rev 7:13-14).

#### 4. THE ELDERS HAVE HARPS AND GOLDEN BOWLS (REV. 5:8).

W Kelly observed:

They had "each a harp and golden bowls full of odors, which are the prayers of saints." In the tabernacle service of the wilderness silver trumpets were used for holy purposes by the priests. David first introduced the harp, separating the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, for songs in the house of the Lord with cymbals, psalteries, and harps. These, like the priests, were divided into twenty-four classes; so that the allusion is obvious, with that measure of difference which is characteristic of the Apocalypse. Priestly and choral services are here blended in perfection. Does not this also serve to show that the elders only are here said to have harps and basons of incense? In Rev. 15 the four living creatures give the angels the seven golden bowls full of divine wrath. Thus all is in keeping: the elders being the heads of royal priesthood, as the cherubim wait on the execution of God's judgments, though both unite (Rev. 5) in the fullest homage to the Lamb. But who are those "saints" that pray? The elders, or the church, were in heaven, and in full choir of praise. Whose prayers then are these? They come from saints who will suffer when the church is above. The elders are those heavenly saints who have been removed previously, including perhaps the Old Testament saints. They are in the place of adoration and praise, whereas prayer implies need. If they have to do with prayers, it is the prayers of others, not their own. Besides they sing a new song, that of the Lamb's purchase by blood, saying, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain," &c.

A very important change occurs in this verse,<sup>5</sup> well known to every person tolerably acquainted with the original scriptures. Persons who have studied the most ancient manuscripts and other witnesses of this book, all agree that it is, "and hast made them to our God kings (or a kingdom) and priests" (Rev. 5:10). Who are those meant by "them" and made kings and priests "to our God"? They do not speak of themselves.

Indeed, I am prepared to go farther, and am bound to state my firm impression that in the ninth verse the word "us" was put by copyists who supposed that the elders were celebrating their own blessing. But the elders are so perfectly at rest about themselves, that they can be occupied about others. I believe, accordingly, that the true sense is this: "Thou art worthy to take the book, . . . for thou wast slain, and hast bought to God by thy blood

4. *The Imminent Appearing of Christ*, p. 79

www.presenttruthpublishers.com

5. [Considered at length in a footnote on pp. 118, 119 in the reference below.]



out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth." They are speaking about the saints whose prayers they were offering. As they were occupied with their prayers, so here they were praising the Lord for His goodness to the saints still on earth. They intimate that in taking above the heavenly saints, He had not done with His rich mercy; that, even in the midst of His judgments, He would have a purchased people, who were to share the glory of the kingdom as a royal priesthood, instead of being swallowed up in the delusions of Antichrist.<sup>6</sup>

These anticipated companions are the same probably that we see in Rev. 6 as "souls under the altar, slain for the word of God," &c.; and in Rev. 14, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth," &c.; and in Rev. 15, "Them that had gotten the victory over the beast," &c. There are other allusions also in the body of the book to the righteous. Clearly they were saints of God upon the earth in conflict or tribulation, after the elders (who, as we saw, represent the church or the heavenly saints) were translated to heaven. As to the saints who won the victory over the beast, "they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." Observe the mingled character of the scene. True, it was the song of the Lamb; but it was the song of Moses too: it was partly earthly and partly heavenly. Again, in Rev. 20:4, it is said, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them." These are the elders, already risen or changed, seated upon the thrones. "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" (i.e., the people whose souls he had seen in Rev. 6); and, again, those "which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads"; these last being the persons that had sung the song of victory in Rev. 15. Thus the two classes which had suffered, after the rapture of the church, are at length united with the rest in glory, and all reign together with Christ.

It will be remarked how thoroughly the whole agrees with the song in Rev. 4. The elders are in heaven, in the enjoyment of God and the Lamb; but there are saints on earth who are praying, and the elders above are occupied about their prayers, and celebrate the worthiness and work of the Lamb in behalf of others who should reign over the earth as well as themselves. Instead of this taking a single fraction away from us, it adds indirectly, if not in itself, to the place of glory in which the church is seen in heaven. They are so fully blest that they can heartily rejoice in the good of others. There are some too apt to be restless if they are not always listening to the gospel for themselves -- not because they value it more than others, but because they are not thoroughly established in grace. When our hearts are quite satisfied, we do not feel the need of anxiously picking and choosing in the scriptures; we prefer the Lord to choose for us, and are thankful, because it may be something to His praise that we perhaps have not known before, or a weapon we may want in our next conflict with the enemy. Whatever exalts Christ and glorifies Him is that which we should delight in. Whatever detects the deceitfulness of our hearts is most salutary to us. When the elders are found thanking God, they take up His goodness to those who are suffering on the earth, and they bless the Lamb because He had been slain and had bought these also to their God. It was their delight to think of that work so rich in results for God -- to think of others from every quarter who should share the

kingdom over the earth.<sup>7</sup>

## 5. THE ANGELS ARE NOT ON THRONES

The elders are characteristically "round" the throne but the angels form the outer circle. Concerning the word *round* (the throne, twenty-four thrones), a footnote to J. N. Darby's translation of Rev. 4:4 says, as we noted before:

I use 'round' for what is connected with anything (not necessarily united to it) as a center, as a tire of a wheel, but 'around' is used for detached objects encircling.

The angels are *around* the throne (Rev. 5:11, 7:11), and thus form a distinct company from the elders, even the outer circle of the scene in heaven. Rev. 5:13 gives us that which is even beyond the circle of angels. The four living creatures are both in the midst of the throne and around the throne (Rev. 4:6). They are symbols. They combine both cherubic and seraphic characteristics, and are not either one or the other. The thrones of the elders are thus associated with the throne of judgment in some special way which cannot be so for angels.

It is not true that angels are seen sitting in the presence of God. Gabriel said,

"I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19).

Micah said:

"I saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him . . . (1 Kings 22:19).

But they may sit on earth (John 20:12).

## 6. IT IS NEVER SAID THAT ANGELS WEAR CROWNS

Based on Psalm 89:6-8, Col. 1:16, Rom 8:38 and Eph 3:10, it is thought that the 24 elders may be angels "pictured as executing the divine rule of the universe." There are two objections to this allegation.

(1) Angels are no where seen wearing crowns and this is consonant with God's intention to have only redeemed persons reigning with Christ.

(2) Rev. 4 does not picture the general sovereignty of the divine rule of the universe. Rev. 4 & 5 are introductory to the judgments of God preparatory to setting His King on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2). We have considered the general bearing of Rev. 4 & 5 and found that the connection between the 24 thrones and the central throne precludes their occupancy by any but saints.

The crowns are *not* reward crowns. We have stressed elsewhere that scripture connects rewards with the appearing of Christ in glory, not with the rapture. These crowns denote the kingly dignity and position of the 24 elders. This is the uniform teaching of brethren during the last century.

## ***The Elders are not Another Order of Celestial Being***

Recognizing the force of the fact that scripture distinguishes between the elders and angels, it has been *imagined* that the elders are another order of celestial being. Rev. 7:13, 14 compared with 17:1 is alleged to give plausibility to this view.<sup>8</sup> As this is merely *imagination* in order to circumvent a pretribulation rapture, it need not detain us. It reminds us of the imaginative interpretation that the "abodes" of John 14:1-3 refer to abodes in Christ rather than in the Father's house above. These are tactics used to circumvent the truth of a pretribulation rapture.

It is false to say that the elders are set off from redeemed men in Rev. 11:16-18 and 14:3.<sup>9</sup> It is correct to say that they make a statement concerning God's saints, and that they are distinguished from some of the redeemed.

The 24 elders include O. T. saints and saints of the period terminated by the rapture. The number 24 neither increases or decreases. The other saints spoken of in the book of Revelation are saints in the tribulation period on earth while the elders are in heaven, other than the reference to the souls of the tribulation martyrs under the altar (Rev. 6:9). The elders are distinct from all these.

When considering Rev. 20, it will be observed that the first resurrection is made up of three groups. These are all redeemed persons, yet forming three groups. The elders form group one. The martyrs under the sixth seal (Rev. 6) form group two. The martyrs during the beast's reign (Rev.20:4) form group three.

## ***The Elders do not Represent Disembodied Souls or the Church of all Ages***

We have already seen that the 24 elders represent the O.T. saints and the church. I wish to show again, here, that the opposition to this is Judaistic in character. O. T. Allis says,

We conclude, therefore, that chapter 4 is completely silent regarding the rapture of the Church, that there is no conclusive proof that the 24 elders symbolize the Church, but that if they do, it is as representatives, not of a mystery parenthesis church, but of the Church of all the ages, Old Testament and New Testament alike, a church which may be regarded as still on earth, while ideally, representatively, and in large measure actually in heaven, in the

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8. R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 70.

9. As does R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 71. See also G. E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* p. 98. The idea only seems to have validity if posttribulationism has already been accepted.

heavenlies, in the presence of Christ and of God. <sup>10</sup>

But the more natural inference would seem to be that the Church is clearly on earth prior to chap. 4 and is not expressly referred to as being in heaven during the events of chaps. 4-19 it is to be assumed that it (the Church Militant) is still on earth during these events. <sup>11</sup>

We believe that this is false for the following reasons:

1. This view Judaizes. Since it is alleged that the elders are disembodied souls, of Christians, or "the church of all ages," the souls under the altar in Rev. 6:9-11 are also alleged to be souls of Christians. This poses a problem concerning their imprecatory request. W. Hendricksen, also an amillennialist, says that this prayer is reconciled with Luke 23:24 and Acts 7:60 by regarding the request of these martyrs for retribution as not for their sakes but rather for God's sake because the world scorned God by killing them. <sup>12</sup>

If that is the meaning we are all in dire need of theologians to explain it, because Christians in general are not adepts in such subtle views! But it patently means no such thing.

(a) In v. 10, they are calling for vengeance for *their* blood. Is it not so?

(b) In v. 10, we see that they wish to hurry the vengeance on their persecutors. Compare Psalm 9:19, 20; 10:15; 94:1-3; 74:9, 10 and see how (properly) Jewish this is.

(c) They address God as Sovereign Ruler, which does not sound like what we have learned in the Epistles concerning our relationship to God as Father.

(d) These as a group are distinct from another group of martyrs. See v. 11. The elders form group one in Rev. 20:4; the martyrs under the fifth seal form group two; and the other company in Rev. 6:11 form the third group in Rev. 20:4.

The explanation of this is that these disembodied souls of Rev. 6 are not another view of the elders, nor are they Christians; they are Jewish martyrs during the first half of Daniel's 70th week. Their cry is imprecatory and consonant with the imprecations in the Psalms. Their cry is felt by W. Hendricksen to be not consonant with Luke 23:24 and Acts 7:60, hence the explaining away the imprecation. And, by alleging that they are souls of Christians, the imprecatory prayer is made suitable to a Christian, whereas it is suitably Jewish. This is but another result of a Judaizing system.

2. The 24 elders cannot represent "the redeemed of all ages" of covenant theology because the elders distinguish themselves from other redeemed ones in Rev. 5:9-10.

10. *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 201.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

12. *More than Conquerors*, p. 106. W. Hendricksen understands these martyrs to be the souls of Christians who are told "to await their vindication in due time by the Lord . . .", *Church and Kingdom*, p. 122.

The translation is discussed at length by W. Kelly.<sup>13</sup>

The point is that the 24 elders are representative of a certain company of redeemed people. Their number never increases or diminishes. They are representative of a fixed company and form group one noted in Rev. 20:4,5. Rev 7; 11:16-18; 14:3 shows that others will be redeemed while the elders are in heaven. Those redeemed during the period from the rapture to the appearing will also reign as kings and priests (Rev. 5:10) and form groups two (cp Rev. 6:9-11) and three (cp Rev. 20:4) of the first resurrection. This being so, the 24 elders do not represent all of the redeemed of all ages.

3. Spirits of men are never described in scripture as crowned. Any crown that the believer will possess is always linked to the future, never with being absent from the body and present with the Lord.

4. Spirits of men are never described as enthroned. Rev. 4 does not depict disembodied souls reigning or participating in the rule or control of the earth or universe. The throne is a throne of judgment, as evidenced by the lightning, thundering and voices proceeding from the throne. In the midst of judgment, God will remember mercy, as denoted by the rainbow.

The seven lamps of fire tell us of the perfection and manifestation of that judgment.

5. In Rev. 5:8 the elders are seen in priestly character. Spirits are never thus seen.

Ed.

**PK AND CATHOLICS.** . . . *Foundation* (3-4-96) says: "Some people find it difficult to believe that Roman Catholics are actually participants in the Promise Keepers movement, but it is true. A Promise Keepers Wakeup Call brochure distributed in San Luis Obispo, Calif., urges pastors, churches, and their men to attend special rallies during March, one of which is to be held at the St. Rose Catholic Church in Paso Robles. This fact was confirmed by a phone call to the PK leader in that Church." *Christianity Today* quotes a Catholic bishop official: "Promise Keepers re-ignites in men an awareness of the spiritual dimension in life and offers them a safe place in which to find support for Christian values and virtues." The *Christianity Today* article said PK representatives will be among the speakers at a May 31-June 2 Catholic men's conference in Stubenville, Ohio. Dr. Ernest Pickering says: "To worship and cooperate with Roman Catholics and others who are in doctrinal error promotes the idea that correct doctrine is less important than fellowship."

*Calvary Contender*

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## *Elements of The Two Resurrections*

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### *Chapter 5:*

## *An Alleged General Resurrection in the N. T.*

The parable of the sheep and the goats in Matt. 25:31-46 has been vigorously pressed into service by those who believe in a general resurrection. What it really describes is the judgment of the quick, i.e., the living, (2 Tim. 4:1) when Christ takes His throne of glory for the 1000-year reign. The Lord willing, we shall consider Matt. 24 and 25 in greater detail in a separate paper.

T. B. Baines is the author of the following comments on this subject.

Another passage supposed to contain a description of a general resurrection and judgment at the end of world, is that comprised in the last two sections of our Lord's discourse with His disciples in Matt. 24 and 25. The former (25:14-30) shows Jesus as the master who returns after being absent, and demands an account from his servants of certain talents entrusted to them. The second (Matt. 25:31-46) represents Him seated on the throne of His glory, and judging the nations. The question is, whether either or both of these scenes must be taken as figures of a general judgment on those raised from their graves at the end of the world.

The first remark that occurs is, that the two scenes are so different in their character that it is not easy to regard them as representations of the same event. In the first parable, the persons spoken of are dealt with individually; in the second, in two great masses. In the first, the question tried is faithfulness to a certain trust; in the second, it is the conduct pursued towards a set of persons called "these my brethren."

But another remark speedily suggests itself. Why should these events be supposed to happen at a general resurrection and at the end of the world, when not so much as a passing allusion is made either to the dead, or to a resurrection, or to the world having come to its closing hour? The only answer that can be given to this question is, that the ordinary interpretation of Scripture left the interpreters no choice. Assuming that Christ only comes at the end of the world, and that all will then be raised and judged, these scenes must happen at that period, for there is no other time at which they could happen. But those who have already learnt that Christ will come before the end of the world, will hesitate to add so enormous a fact as a general resurrection to a narrative in which Scripture has remained wholly silent about it, and will seek some other explanation demanding no such outrage on the Word of God.

The parable of the talents follows those of the steward and of the virgins. The parable of the steward shows the results of carefulness or carelessness in watching for the Lord's return; that of the virgins the necessity of having oil in the lamp, that is, true spiritual life. The parable of the talents shows the responsibility of those called by the name of Christ to be diligent in His service. As the unwatchful steward is cut off, and the careless virgins are shut out, so here the unprofitable servant is cast into outer darkness, while the diligent ones enter into the joy of their lord. All three parables are fulfilled at the coming of Christ, looked at in both its aspects. The watchful steward, the virgins with oil, and the diligent servants, all receive their reward, while false professors are detected and left behind, or consigned to the dreadful judgments that overtake the world when Christ appears in His glory. While, then, this parable entirely fails as a description of a general resurrection, it perfectly agrees with the rest of Scripture as a picture of what takes place at Christ's second coming.

There is another point of agreement that deserves notice. In Luke, the same parable is related, but a difference is shown in the rewards. The servant who has made ten talents becomes ruler over ten cities; he who has made five, over five (Luke 19:12-27). Do we ever hear of saints being made rulers over cities in heaven? No, but we do hear of saints reigning with Christ over the earth, and to such a state of things the reward in the parable is exactly suited. The picture, then, agrees with other portions of the Word in describing what will happen at the Lord's second coming, believers being first caught up, and afterwards manifested with Christ in power, each rewarded according to the measure of his faithfulness, and unbelievers being cast out and brought to judgment.

It may be asked whether, if this is the case, such a dialogue could occur as that related in the parable? But a parable is not a history -- only a fictitious narrative meant to illustrate a principle. The dialogue is part of the figure, bringing out man's natural reasoning on one side and God's thoughts on the other. Who would understand literally the entreaty of the foolish virgins, or the reply of the bridegroom? Who supposes it to be a real conversation between the Judge and those on His right hand or those on His left, in the parable immediately following? . . . In the parable before us, as in those to which we have just alluded, the thoughts and desires of the heart are clothed in words, and the scene is not a description of anything that really takes place, but a story illustrating the principles on which God and man are respectively acting.

The last section of the twenty-fifth chapter relates the judgment which Christ will execute on the nations of the earth, when He comes in His kingdom glory, to "break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces, like a potter's vessel." It represents Jesus coming as the minister of judgment. But this judgment is divided into various acts. In the Revelation, we have nothing described but the judgment executed on the beast and false prophet and the armies that followed them. Other acts of judgment are, however, related elsewhere. We read in the prophecies of Joel that the Lord will "bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem," and that He will then "gather all nations and will bring them down unto the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations" (Joel 3:1, 2). Without discussing how far this is to be literally or figuratively understood, let us compare it with the scene described in Matthew. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels will present themselves unto Him, He shall sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all THE nations" (Matt. 25:31, 32).

The article here is important, because it helps materially to determine the real character of the scene enacted. The translators, believing the event to be a general and final judgment, dropped it in order to give a more universal character to the gathering. It is, however, in the original, and the question is, who are meant by "all the nations"?

The word "nations" means "Gentiles," and is ordinarily used to describe them as distinguished from the Jews. Now, in this scene, there are not two classes as generally supposed, but three -- the sheep, the goats, and "these my brethren." These persons called Christ's brethren are neither sheep nor goats, nor are they themselves brought into the judgment. It is for their conduct to these "brethren," who have been hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick, and in prison -- a persecuted, despised, forsaken people that the Gentiles are judged. How exactly this agrees, then, with the prediction of Joel, and, indeed, with the general current of Old Testament prophecy! All Scripture concurs in representing the Jews as forsaken of God for an indefinite period. When this period has elapsed, the Lord will "bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem," and will judge the nations for the cruel oppression with which they have, especially towards the close of this epoch, treated His people. It is true that in this scene described in Matthew, the saints are not mentioned as accompanying Jesus, but, as I have already shown, our Lord purposely left this subject obscure throughout His whole teaching. On the other hand, the angels are named, thus bringing the account into close accordance with the description of Christ's return in judgment given in 1 Thess. 1:7, 8. This judgment of the nations then, foretold in Old Testament Scriptures, is the very judgment, represented figuratively, no doubt, but with striking vividness, in the passage before us. "These my brethren" are the saved remnant of Israel, who, having received of the Lord's hand double for all their sins, are now delivered from their enemies, and owned by Christ as His people. "All the nations" are the Gentiles, who are now dealt with according to the favor or hostility they have shown to God's chosen race.

The passage shows the simplicity of Scripture when its light is directly received, instead of being refracted through the distorting medium of man's theological systems. As a judgment of the nations on Christ's return for Israel's restoration, the narrative is free from difficulty, but describes a striking fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. As a picture of the traditional resurrection and judgment, it is full of contradictions and absurdities, being an account of a universal judgment in which some are not judged, and of a universal resurrection in which nobody is raised! <sup>1</sup>

Ed.

(Concluded)



## *The Present Portion of the Believer*

There could be no more practical inquiry entered upon by our souls than the endeavor to discern the present character of our blessing as distinguished from what is future. Every child of God delights to dwell on the bright prospect before him; and in the measure of the certainty his soul possesses concerning it will be found the degree of comfort it affords him as he anticipates it. But after all we live in the present, and it is of the deepest moment we should turn it to account for Christ in which way alone do we make the best of it; and to this end we must learn the character God gives it.

Many live their soul's past history over and over again; not even the future charms them out of this form of self-occupation. But they can scarcely be said to have a present who live in a perpetual occupation with the past; and they may be said to be ensnared by the future who are so occupied with it as to be heedless of the present. The past and the future are alike beyond our direct control; each has however contributed, prospectively or retrospectively, to form the present. The past is only Adamic history, now irrevocably closed up in the cross; my future is the glory I am predestinated to share, in the image of God's Son, together with Him; my present, the wonderful paradox compounded of such a past and such a future. We cannot re-travel the one, or pre-travel the other; but we have more than enough for faith's brightest efforts in the wonderful issues for every soul of the path we are now treading. How little do saints understand this! Starting from the same point, the full knowledge of eternal salvation, and all equally certain, it may be, of the same consummation in glory, how differently is the space between viewed, how mistakenly is it apprehended, how poorly is it filled up! Does the past enter into it? It does. Does the future enter into it? It does. But how different it is to both, how unique in itself! And as the past anticipated the present, and has undeniably toned it, so does the present anticipate the future, and will indelibly color it. In the government of God it must be so; "the child is father of the man." Happily my past cannot haunt me, for between it and me is the cross; my future admits of no concern, for it begins with glory in the presence of Christ. Not that portion or element of my present which has been formed by the past, but that which is unprejudiced by it, contributes to my future. In other words, the governmental dealings of God with me are through grace completed here; and I have also in the same scene committed to me means for attaining and acquiring honors and rewards of an eternal character, in the use of which means my soul is moreover educated in His ways, and I glorify Him. It is a sorrowful feature of the saint's course when he seeks how much he can evade in his ordinary avocations, or in his domestic circle, instead of how much he can incorporate, of the feelings and ways of Christ. Surely whatsoever we do, in word or in deed, should be done in His name; and the saint who sets Him before him, and wins glory to Christ by his earnestness of purpose, uprightness of principle, and diligent discharge in practical righteousness of every duty, is the one who will naturally prove that He has a right hand, that he should

not be moved.

We are not sufficiently impressed with the gravity of these issues, which add so deep an interest to the path of faith, which prefer so wondrous a claim upon every child of God, and which lead to redeeming the time by a suited saintly life, because the days are evil. And if we speak of "issues," they are issues inseparable from the glory of Christ; if of "claim," it is none other claim than His; if of "a suited saintly life," it is only found in living to Him who died for us, and rose again. If I revert to the past, I see His cross, and the word is, "Dead with Him;" if the present occupy me, I see Him crowned with glory and with honor, and the word is, "To live is Christ"; if I anticipate the future, I see the bright and morning Star, and His word is, "Surely I come quickly" the past His cross, the present His crown, the future His throne ! Thus our wonderful identification with Christ, which began in His death, has no interruption and no end. Shall we admit the identification as to the cross and as to the glory, and practically eliminate it as to the interval of his absence? The sober conviction of every thoughtful believer will surely be, that the change in the past from his sins to faith in Christ, and from a standing in Adam to a standing in Him, and the change awaiting him in the future from a sinful body here to a glorified one there, are neither one nor the other more wonderful than that poor, feeble, failing vessels such as we should, by viewing Him, be changed into His image from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit, and made capable of representing Him in the scene of His refusal. How little have we seized the divine favor shown us in the present implied in the words of Rom. 5:9, 10. We have been saved from our sins by His death; much more, shall be saved from wrath at His coming. Meanwhile much more are we saved, while passing through this world, by His life. Justified in the power of His blood, we are now being saved by the power of His life. These two things -- saved by the power of His life at the right hand of God, and transformed by His Spirit into the same image -- mark a wondrous character of divine blessing flowing from divine activities limited to the present period, and carrying with it, as in every case, an answering and weighty responsibility. The past blessing of my soul is indissolubly connected with the finished work of Christ, and I know nothing of result in blessing to myself apart from Him, for even the eternal life I got was Himself! The future blessedness I am equally incapable of disconnecting from Him. It begins the moment He is in this atmosphere again. If I awake, it is in His likeness; if I am changed, it is to be like Him when I see Him as He is. At His coming I go to be with Him, having no heaven but His presence. All I hold and all I get -- be it the crown of life, the hidden manna, the white stone, the new name, power over the nations, the morning Star, or a seat in His throne -- He Himself gives me. If we reign, we reign with Him; if we be glorified, we are glorified together. The Bride is His Bride; God is His God; the Father is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God's Son giving us the Joy of His own relationship. The saints are His saints; serving, they serve Him; worshiping, they worship Him. They never lose His likeness, nor leave His presence; He who fills all heaven with His peerless personal glory covers the whole field of vision to every eye, and enraptures every heart with His own ineffable blessedness! This all will fully acknowledge, that our past and our future blessing

are alike definitely and divinely bound up with the work and person and place of Christ.

Is it any less true of our present blessing? May it not be safely predicated that we can learn our present portion as believers only from the place He has taken for us, the service He is rendering us there, and what His heart is occupied with during His session on the Father's throne? In other words, I learn my own portion this side the glory, simply by observing the present place and service and interests of Him who is made Lord and Christ. No research in any other field will shed light on this subject; every inquiry must be referred to Him, every problem find solution in Himself. What He is must govern what I am; His relation to this scene must determine mine; the scope and character of His interests and claims here decline my aim and object and service in the same field. I am suited to my vocation only as I am a vessel sanctified and meet for His use; only as I am a mirror held up before His unveiled face, reflecting Himself in all the marvelous and manifold colors and shades which the Holy Ghost, as the light of the glory, brings into play, as upon the Urim and Thummim, on the heart of the true Aaron. The service of that blessed Man in glory, and of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, here, suggest the nature and character of the believer's portion now. "By the grace of God I am what I am," and in it I am practically maintained by the presence and priesthood of Christ within the holiest; and all that I am as connected with Christ here, and all my present blessing in association with the risen and glorified One there, the Holy Ghost makes good to me in divine effulgence, and He is the practical power for my apprehension, enjoyment, and expression of it in this scene. But no greater dignity surely could be conferred upon us than that we should represent Christ, be His chosen representatives where He has been rejected -- impersonations, through grace, of Himself; feeble ones truly, but yet similitudes of Himself. It is the fact that we have this singular place and portion according to His sovereign favor, which it is so important for us to seize. As one has said, "We shall never be the people that we ought to be until we see what a people we are." I must know what, in the sovereignty of God and in the grace of Christ, is accorded to me here before I can adequately occupy it for Him, or enjoy it in my own soul. And what a magnificent thing it is, surpassing human thought, that we should be thus set here for Him according to the revelation of a grace superior to all our failure, and more patient than the persistency of our crookedness, rising in its richness and supremacy above all our poverty and feebleness, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. Whatever be the special character of one's line of service, or the mission one has to fulfil, the generic thing which covers every case is, that I am here for Christ, I represent Him, and thus have to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Who could say he is exempt from this, and who would wish to be? It should be the glory and the joy of every heart -- the heart and the life alike expended upon Him in worship and in service, and above all, in presenting, according to all the capacities of the divine life, a true expression of the grace of Christ and the power that worketh in us for His glory. It is of moment that we should remember that we are not here as Kings, priests, or prophets, but as representatives, standing for Himself in the virtue and power of His life, and in union with His person, whose

interests we are here to further and defend, and whose grace it is our privilege and our province to express. In the which wondrous commission and character, as seen in John 17 -- men given unto Him out of the world, and of Him sent in to it -- we are divinely ministered unto and sustained, and are made so eminently superior to everything of the world around us, that in the most absolute sense we refuse to draw from its resources, or to accept its patronage in whatever form presented. Just as all the expenses and charges of an embassy are defrayed by the court from which it is accredited, so is every supply for us at the charge of Him whom we represent, and we thus repudiate as a reflection upon the resources of our liege, or upon our own allegiance and loyalty, any suggestion of countenance or help from the world, our high dignity being that we represent the court of heaven, and are here on a wondrous mission to men, freighted, as it were, with the unsearchable riches of Christ -- the One who became here so poor, that wethrough His poverty might be in the same scene so rich, both for ourselves and for others; not only never thirsting ourselves, but out of our belly the flowing forth of living waters for others. As we read in 2 Cor. 4, God "has shined in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That wondrous revelation which shines in the face of the Man in the glory of God has shone in our hearts, that it may shine forth from us now in the luster and purity of its own essence like the brilliant light which emanates from a diamond of the finest water. It is thus that we are to set forth the excellencies of Him who has called us "out of darkness to His wonderful light," as a coruscation of brightness, exhibiting, amid the ever-varying play of light and shade here, all the exquisite coloring of every tint and tone concentrated and conserved in Christ on high, like a moral rainbow dipping at either end to the earth, carrying the unsullied purity of its glory and beauty to man, but having the crown of its arch in the heavens, from whence all its lustrous hues are derived. And as the diamond which sparkles with the light of heaven is of the substance of the earth, and as the rainbow, deriving every ray of its beauty from the sun, discloses its loveliness only by means of the reeking atmosphere in which it is displayed, so also is it that only in men, and only upon the earth, is the moral glory of Christ now manifested, and by the very means which such conditions alone afford!

It is an invigorating and a cheering thought, that every effort of ours in singleness of eye to glorify Christ here reacts upon us for eternal as well as present blessing to our own souls, so that in glorifying Him we are graduating for heaven, and imparting a halo to the life of a saint below, the heart elated "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." What a privilege it is just to go along through this scene with an open hand towards Himself, and towards none else! to take whatever He gives me to do or to suffer for His name's sake! And it is indeed a signal honor and a peculiar privilege to serve Him in however limited a way; for even the gift of a cup of cold water must meet its reward. But may we not venture to affirm that what is highest of all in character is that which is the common heritage of every believer; namely, that we are through grace fitted to represent Him by adorning His doctrine in every walk of life, from the highest to the lowest? This honor have all His saints." Can anything be more amazing, and more magnificent, than that we should have been extricated out of our state and condition "here," judicially and

morally lifted out of all the ruin and the wreck of the first man, and then re-established in the power and plenitude of divine life in the second man as a new creation, in the virtue and grace of the last Adam, its glorious Head, in the very place from whence He had been relegated in His own person, to be maintained there by a power that makes good that characteristic word of promise, "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

The magnitude of such issues is beyond expression for every saint who understands his calling. What a superiority to creature exigencies does faith's discovery of this impart! What a singular elevation does it put us upon! What a moral pre-eminence to everything under the sun is mine when I have accepted the fact in all its deep and far-reaching import, that I have no interests nor resources but Christ's, and all my aim and all my desire is to represent Him to the joy of His own heart, in the beauty and grace of His character and ways, whether to the world's eye, or to the saints in whom is His delight; as He says, "I am glorified in them!" (John 17:10).

Surely even heaven itself cannot supply conditions surpassing in moral grandeur the transcendent beauty and dignity of those which go to make up the present portion of the believer!

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

W. R., *The Christain Friend*, 1878.

**WARNING: PROMISE KEEPERS IS DANGEROUS!** . . . Dr. Ralph Colas says: "As a reporter who covered (the Atlanta PK Clergy meeting) with press credentials, I would describe it as a meeting which included compromise, ecumenism, apostasy, Jesuit casuistry (the end justifies the means), and hyper-emotionalism, along with a theology based on relationships rather than Biblical Truth."

*Calvary Contender*

**PALAU'S ECUMENICAL CHICAGO CRUSADE.** Luis Palau began an 8-week crusade in Chicago on April 4, with over 1,500 churches participating. Moody Church pastor Erwin Lutzer, MBI {Moody Bible Institute} president Joseph Stowell, and Bill Hybels are supporters. Speakers include Palau, E. V. Hill, Tony Evans, and Ron Hutchcraft. Rock musicians perform. Individual Catholic priests are involved in leadership roles. Palau is a Promise Keeper speaker.

*Calvary Contender*

*Nazariteship's Victory  
over Philistinism:  
Thoughts from  
a Series of Readings  
#3*

That God gave Samson victory over Philistines with the jawbone of an ass should speak to us today, because there is a lesson in the life of Samson: Nazariteship has so much power against Philistinism that it gains the victory even when the Nazarite himself is full of flaws and inconsistencies. This is the central lesson of Judges 15, to which we will now turn. Samson's victory when he was dwelling at Etam is characterized by certain circumstances, including the means that were used to achieve it. If we imagine that we can win a victory over Philistinism by "out-Philistining" the Philistines, i.e., by being more oblivious to the lessons of death (Jordan) and of the cutting off of the flesh (Gilgal) than the Philistines are, we deceive ourselves. God chose the instrument (Samson) and the weapon (the jawbone of an ass) and gave the victory in such a way as to set out moral lessons for us.

Samson was a Nazarite from his birth and his mother lived as a Nazarite before he was born (Judges 13). He is, therefore, inseparably linked with Nazariteship. Of course, Philistinism waged a war against his Nazariteship within his own heart and was so far successful that Samson's Nazariteship was flawed and uneven (Judges 14). The result was a kind of poor quality Nazariteship. So it is not surprising that he had little or no interest in the wheat harvest.

What is the relation between the wheat harvest and the strength of the man who held the jawbone? Well, what was the source of his strength? Is that not the great riddle of Samson's life? The weakness and strangeness of the weapon that Samson used should remind us that true spiritual Nazarites have Christ as their object because they are separated to the Lord from the world, and such a Nazarite can do all things through Christ Who strengthens him (Phil. 4:13). In a similar way, the excellence of the wheat harvest in Judges 15:1 reminds us of Christ, the portion of the true spiritual Nazarite and the source of his strength. The lack of interest that Samson had in the wheat harvest reveals what kind of Nazarite he was.

For example, there was more blessing for Ruth in the time of barley harvest, than for Samson in the days of wheat harvest (Judges 15:1). Wheat in Scripture implies also a greater appreciation for the excellencies of Christ than does barley, being a finer, more expensive grain. Yet during the barley harvest Ruth found a kinsman redeemer, a strong man in whom she could rest: Boaz. Samson, here, just got into trouble. It was a barleycake also that the Midianite saw in his dream in the days of Gideon. Yet Gideon's history begins in the days of wheat harvest: he threshed wheat because he was interested in removing the chaff from the good grain, and he took a kid (Judges 6:19) and offered it to the Lord. Samson, however, seems to have no connection with the wheat harvest and took his kid to his Philistine wife. The truth is that Samson could have labored in the wheat harvest too, if he had so wanted. He could have taken his kid to the Lord, if he had so

desired. And we can have as much of Christ in our lives as we want, while our lives display how much of Christ we have wanted. Nevertheless, in spite of flaws and inconsistencies, it is Nazariteship in our Christian lives that gives us the victory over Philistinism.

Samson's marriage had not been consummated because he had left in anger at the end of the feast. Her father had given her in the mean time to the "friend of the bridegroom." The reason given is Samson's hate, a subject that came up in Judges 14:16. Yet he told her the secret of his riddle to prove that he did love her. The result is that his father-in-law concluded that Samson really hated her -- the opposite of what Samson intended to convey! When we give in to a Philistine, what we desire is never really granted to us. So Samson never got the place of love and affection for which he had sold his riddle.

We saw earlier that thirty Philistine friends are too many Philistine friends, but what about just one Philistine friend? It appears from Judges 14:20 that Samson made one of these companions his special friend. He was a faithless friend, taking Samson's wife for himself. A faithful friend rebukes and admonishes when appropriate. A faithful friend on a wedding day rejoices with the joy of John the Baptist, who said, "He that has the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3:29). But this Philistine friend stole Samson's bride for himself, never receiving his own proper joy as the special friend of the bridegroom. (Moreover, according to Judges 15:6, he had only a short marriage, becoming a widower very soon. Judging from the character of the woman, his marriage was as unhappy as it was short.) Just one Philistine friend is too many Philistine friends! Did Samson have the Lord for his friend? The Lord Jesus is the friend that sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24). He is able to make Himself enough to fill our hearts to the brim, so that there is no room left for even one Philistine friend.

His father-in-law had Samson figured out pretty well. He had discerned that the main attraction in the first place was what pleased Samson's eyes (Judges 14:1). So he plays on that aspect of his character and offers a younger daughter fairer than her sister (Judges 15:2). How is it that the father-in-law was such a good judge of character and Samson never seemed to discern the character of the father-in-law?

What are we to make of these fair young Philistine women? It is said that a light bulb makes a brilliant light, but that there is essentially nothing to be found inside. "A fair woman who is without discretion, is [as] a gold ring in a swine's snout" (Prov. 11:22). God puts no premium on physical attractions, but "a woman [that] feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30). What does that mean? Is not a woman who fears the Lord left on the side in this world? Yet, the Scripture says, "them that honor me I will honor" (1 Sam. 2:30). Do we expect to get the honor in this world or in the next?

Is it not remarkable that there were so many jackals in the land of the Philistines? These were unclean beasts according to the law, neither chewing the cud nor dividing the hoof. Jackals are known to make a mocking howl (cf. Isa. 13:22, New Translation). A stone thrown into a pack of dogs can sometimes be traced by noting which dog begins to howl. Moreover, like most wild beasts, they fear and hate fire, a picture of God's judgment against sin. Then, Samson's feat in catching so many jackals was great, but their presence also implies something about the character of the land of the Philistines. Where many howlers wax loud in their

cries of opposition towards the judgment of God against sin, there is a place where Philistinism is thriving still.

And how would we like to tie a firebrand to the tails of a pair of jackals? A jackal in this hand, a jackal in that hand, a rope perhaps, and a blazing firebrand! What a frenzy there must have been! In the case of Gideon, God gave him 300 men to demonstrate Gideon's weakness and display His power. Gideon's men cooperated with Gideon and were submissive to his instructions to carry the pitchers and firebrands. And each one of Gideon's men stood calmly outside the camp with his own torch, the burning light of individual testimony. Here Samson has one jackal for each man that Gideon had, but he had only half as many torches! A single jackal, able to raise ever so wild a howl, is not able to hold up one torch of testimony. And two jackals are not willing to hold one up either. Where were Samson's men? Surely, this method of revenge demonstrates that Samson's heroic feats were feats of a man who fought alone, the absence of fellowship with like-minded companions being a part of Samson's weakness.

Fire is an emblem of judgment, and here the jackals ran from the fire throughout the fields of the Philistines. How widespread the havoc wrought by Samson's messengers of judgment as they fled from the emblem of judgment themselves! Still it is better to hold high the torch of testimony as did Gideon's men, than to run from God's judgment ourselves, spreading destruction as we go. Poor Jonah who ran from God was not unlike one of Samson's jackals in this way. Not until he had learned to submit to God's command, did God give him a testimony at Nineveh larger than anyone's expectations, while his testimony to the sailors was like the testimony of Samson's jackals.

In passing, let us not forget that God allowed the wickedness of the woman and her father to come down on their own heads (Judges 15:6). She had cheated Samson out of his secret to avoid this consequence and her treachery returns upon her. This is God's government, about which we hear less and less nowadays. Consider Rebekah and Jacob who played a trick on Isaac: God's government was upon them in that she never saw her son again and Jacob was tricked over and over again all his life until at last his own sons tricked him with blood on Joseph's coat. God's disciplinary ways bring a man's sins back on his own head. His good government has as its object to bring us into communion with Himself, but how much better to be guided by His eye than by the bit and the bridle (Psa. 32:9).

The Philistines returned fire for fire, but Samson smote them again (Judges 15:8). The Philistines then seek for him (Judges 15:9-10), and the awful state of Israel manifests itself. The men of Judah want just to go on in peace. Now peace is a precious thing to be prized as a mercy from God. But the men of Judah wanted peace so much that they had no interest in deliverance from Philistinism. Instead, they willingly acknowledge the Philistines as their rulers. Samson was a disturber of their peace, one who rocked their boat. When things among the people of God decline to such a state, we should ask who the real troublemaker is. Did not Ahab speak of Elijah as the troublemaker of Israel (1 Kings 18:17)? Yet Elijah was not the troublemaker of Israel. Ahab's words were 180 degrees in error. Neither Elijah, nor Samson, was a troublemaker of Israel.

The question, "Knowest thou not that the Philistines rule over us?" was not an honest question. The men of Judah knew that Samson was aware of the power of



the Philistines. They were not looking for information. They meant, "What is the matter with you, Samson? Are you trying to bring trouble and unhappiness on us? We were going along all right and now an army comes against us." For the men of Judah it would be hard to imagine a lower moral state than this. Yet a lower moral state in the men of Judah confronted the Lord Jesus when they, who were under the rule of the Romans, claimed not to have been in subjection to anyone (John 8:33) - no recognition of any bondage at all!

The second question of the men of Judah shows that they did not care about what had happened to Samson, the infidelity of his wife, the treachery of her father, the cruel murderous ways of the Philistines. What was "done to us" was their great concern. They did not even care about the reproach to Israel that a Nazarite had fallen from spiritual Nazariteship as Samson had done in seeking a Philistine wife! They put the blame on Samson, instead of on themselves. How often when we get away from the Lord we put the blame on others instead of on ourselves! An alternative question to have raised is "what is this that has come upon us that the Philistines have become rulers over us?" Such a question does not seem to have occurred to them.

The sad fact is that while Judah means "Praise" and Judah was a chief tribe, the tribe chosen by God that the ruler of Israel should come from Judah, these were 3000 traitors. These traitors mark the end of the road for Israel in the book of Judges, because Samson comes at the end of the chronological part of the book. The rest of the book of Judges after the life of Samson is a moral appendix that recounts events that occurred years before Samson was a judge. So the low state of Israel in the book of Judges hits bottom here.

The mind becomes torpid and the judgment becomes perverted and hostility against the witnesses replaces the neutrality that people began with, as noted many years ago by dear J. G. Deck. So here the men of Judah bind Samson and deliver him to the Philistines. Samson allows them to do their wickedness so that he would not have to use his strength against his brethren. Except the grace of God keep us, our natural hearts are as capable of treachery as the perverse hearts of these men of Judah.

The men of Judah turned against Jeremiah later on. He said, "But as for me, behold I am in your hand; do unto me as seemeth good and right in your eyes: only know for certain that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof" (Jer. 26:14-15). This attitude of Jeremiah is similar to Samson's. For all his moral weakness, the hand of Samson was against the Philistines, not against the men of Judah. This is consistent with his Nazariteship.

The rejection of Samson by God's people has certain analogies to the rejection of the Lord Jesus by His earthly people. Samson was a morally weak man and the Lord Jesus was morally perfect so that the analogy is very imperfect. Samson's dwelling in the cleft of the cliff shows how he found abiding strength in a great rock in that weary land. Is there not a business in this world that claims to have the strength of the Rock of Gibraltar? Well, Etam is said to mean "Strength" and as long as Samson dwelled there, he found strength from outside himself and here he enjoyed victory over the Philistines. J. N. Darby once wrote, "It is of the last importance that we should ~~know ourselves to be brethren~~ <sup>know ourselves to be brethren</sup> are a testimony and

**nothing** else; that is to say, that it is the truth that has kept us for the glory of Christ, and not we ourselves. This is easily forgotten . . . A late fruit from this root is, that Christian conscience has become valueless from neglect of its promptings, and ceases to act. From this it results that brethren are feeble, and become guilty, even in matters of simple righteousness, in such a way that even the world would condemn them. The assemblies of God are little thought of as such, and the presence of the Lord Jesus in the assembly is forgotten and ignored" (*Letters*, 3:201-202, 1881). In a similar day of moral depravity, men of Judah bound Samson with two new cords.

The two new cords were "new" things. One can always come up with something new to use against a man whose hand disturbs the status quo by smiting Philistines, if the moral state is low enough. The practice of binding a man somehow or other, after a general consensus has been reached in order to promote peace, is an old practice. What has the seeking of a consensus to do with the true unity of the people of God? The men of Judah ought instead to have been united with Samson in opposition to the Philistines! When these cords became as threads of flax that are burned with fire, Samson found a fresh jawbone of an ass. God placed something "new" just there for Samson to use as a weapon, when the "new" cords were loosed. Indeed, this was a new kind of weapon for a man to use.

Now what are the moral and spiritual implications of the jawbone of an ass? The only time the jawbone of an ass had anything to say in the Bible was when Balaam's ass rebuked his madness. Perhaps, then, something can be learned by comparison of the times when the jawbone of an ass spoke out loud (to Balaam) and when it was used so mightily (in the hands of Samson).

To begin, we should understand that Philistinism is truly a kind of "madness." Who would try to possess the inheritance of the people of God without learning that death is God's decree for the old man (Jordan)? And who would try to dwell among the people of God without the reckoning of oneself to be dead in the putting to death of Christ on the cross (Gilgal)? Only those who are filled with wrong thoughts. There is nothing like the cross of Christ, where God put an end to the first man so completely that possessing the mind of Christ depends on this truth. "O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you; to whom, as before your very eyes, Jesus Christ has been portrayed crucified [among you]?" (Gal. 3:1) Legality among the Galatians was "senseless" because legality commands the first man to obey, giving Christless commands as a means to holy living. "Do this" and "Don't do that, or else you are disobedient indeed." The result is either miserable failure or miserable self-sufficiency. Instead, give the Christian Christ, the object of God's heart and ours, and if that does not work, nothing will. The result of Christ as the object of the new nature in love and obedience is a sound mind.

In contrast with the mind of Christ there is the madness of disobedience and self will: the word "madness" in 2 Peter 2:16 is literally, "contrary to." . . . "the mind" (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). But what exactly does that mean? Let Scripture teach us the meaning of the madness of Balaam. Those who are mad (i.e., angry) are filled with anger, a different Greek word than that used in the case of Balaam: of course, anger against his ass was a wrong thing, but that was not the point. Those who are insane are said to have a mania (see Acts 26:24, etc.): so insanity is ~~not the exact meaning here or~~ [www.presenttruth.com](http://www.presenttruth.com) or else that word would have been used. Those who were empty of thought had yet a different kind of madness

(see Luke 6:11). But the word used for the wrong mindedness of Balaam is a special word, used only one other time in the New Testament. Only Paul, of all the men of the Bible, joins Balaam in behaving in such a way that he was characterized by the specific kind of madness that the dumb ass rebuked. Paul wrote, "I speak as being beside myself" (2 Cor. 11:23) and the words "beside myself" are the same in Greek as the "madness" of Balaam! Now Paul wrote by the Spirit in words that describe a kind of "madness" in order that we might judge the evil of that madness (Paul was not himself afflicted with the madness, but Balaam was). So what exactly did Paul write? "Are they ministers of Christ? . . . I above measure [so]" (1 Cor. 11:23)! These wrong minded words express the pride that lies in the heart of a man who stands up between man and God (as Balaam did literally and morally) to pronounce words of power (as Balaam was hired to do). The notion of a clergyman, wrote J. N. D., is in this dispensation the sin against the Holy Spirit. That notion is directly traceable to these words of Paul and is supremely wrong minded. That notion is the notion of one who is beside himself. Because Balaam's life agrees with that notion and because of the use of the Greek word for madness, that notion is what the dumb ass rebuked. That notion then is reflected, as by this chain of associations, in God's choice of a weapon for Samson.

Let us pause, just for a moment, to reflect on Balaam's madness. Of course, Balak hired him to curse, and God forced him to bless instead. The essence of the madness was not that cursing was bad and that blessing was good. No, not even the fact of payment for religious services rendered (how evil is the making of money by the use of what is a gift from God!) was the root of the madness of the prophet. Nor was his madness rooted in his abuse of his ass: of course, a man should treat his beast well. But the appearance of the same word only twice in the New Testament may well direct our thoughts in a different direction. After all, he thought he could speak only what God wanted him to speak (Num. 22:18) before the ass rebuked him, and he still thought of himself as a man whose eyes were opened, afterwards (Num. 24:3). He continued to think well of himself until he was slain by the men of Israel among the Midianites after he had spoken to them words that led to Midian enticing Israel into moral evil (Num. 31:8). The fact that a man's eyes are opened to see more than others does not put him in between God and His people. The whole proud course of Balaam was madness, not just some facet of his behavior at the moment when the ass spoke! The sin of clerisy that rejects the presence of the Holy Spirit come down into the world on the day of Pentecost to unite all believers into one body with one Head in heaven while it lifts man up as "above measure" a "minister of Christ" is the same sort of madness. For example, wherever and whenever an action of a clergyman, or of a presbytery of older brothers, is presented to an assembly as an accomplished thing, already done by those who stand between the people of God and God Himself, the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is the midst of His assembly has been set aside and the madness of Balaam has appeared again! Where this madness reigns, the ground of gathering is not and cannot be of God. (Remember: the reign of the madness of Balaam often appears only during times of trouble and distress, while it lies dormant at other times.)

To meet this madness of Balaam, God opened the jawbone of his ass, and to defeat the Philistines God gave Samson the same weapon. Many would be quick to condemn Balaam's ass, calling her disrespectful, disobedient, and rebellious for her rebuke of the mad prophet. Let us then listen to the ass as she speaks to Balaam

(while we think about Samson confronting the Philistines): “What have I done to thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?” What part of this question constitutes a rebuke of the madness of the prophet? These are respectful words, constituting a legitimate question, and the ass carried Balaam onwards after the incident was over. Hear the words of the ass, the second time: “Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine to this day? was I ever wont to do so to thee?” Where is the rebuke in these words? No, the rebuke was not in the words, but in the fact that God, for Whom the prophet professed himself to be the great mouthpiece, chose instead to speak by means of the jawbone of the ass. The words were submissive words, not provocative, but their existence at all was a standing rebuke to the prophet. In the same way the Nazariteship of Samson was a standing rebuke to Philistinism. And in the same way that the ass was justified in its rebuking of its master, Samson may be defended against all his critics among the men of Judah.

The men of Judah caused Philistinism no problems, being at ease in their servitude. But Samson’s Nazariteship was a testimony against the Philistines by its very existence. The ass just stood there and its submissive words rebuked Balaam’s madness, and Samson’s Nazariteship while dwelling at the rock Etam was a rebuke to Philistinism, also. His moral victory was as great before he slew a thousand Philistines as afterwards.

At the end of Judges 15, the word of God connects En-hakkore and the jawbone of the ass. En-hakkore means “The caller’s spring.” Samson’s thirst was not quenched by his strength or by his victory. Killing Philistines dries a man out, but where is refreshment for the soul to be found? Spiritual refreshment is found in paying to Christ that which is due to Him while rejecting the fleshly religious aspirations of the first man. The hill was called the “Hill of the jawbone” and in that hill, God brought water out of a hollow rock to quench Samson’s thirst. The rock, we see, is the important thing, not the strength of Samson. What a lesson for strong Samson to learn! Out of weakness, using a weapon of weakness, while dwelling in a rock, he slays a thousand men, only to be taught that true refreshment comes from that same rock on which he dwelled.

In Hebrews 11:32, Samson’s name appears among those men of faith of whom there was not time to tell. Some one or more of these is explicitly said to have become strong out of weakness. This was not Gideon, because he was told to “go in this thy might”; he was strong before he was sent. Indeed, no other name in that list matches being made strong out of weakness so well as Samson’s. In Judges 15, therefore, the victory of Samson’s Nazariteship over Philistinism is a total victory by an intrinsically weak instrument in the hand of Almighty God. God’s hand on Samson was like Samson’s hand on the jawbone of the ass. The result was that Samson spoke to God about this victory as having been given to him as a gift (Judges 15:18). What a contrast to those hollow victories that result in proud boastings from men!

As wise as other “feeble folk,” Samson had made his house in a rock (Prov. 30:26), and out of weakness he was made strong. That is how he got his victory. Remember Samson’s riddle.

D. P. Ryan

## *What Does John 12:24 Mean?*

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

Just as Paul used the human body as a figure for the body of Christ, here the Lord used the figure of a grain of wheat dying and then coming forth and bearing much fruit. This is not the truth that we form one body with Christ the Head in heaven; rather, we form one plant with Him. The life of the *risen stalk* is in the grains on the stalk!

This text tells us that before the Lord died and rose again, *He abode alone*. This shows that though the disciples were born again, before the Lord died and rose (John 13:10), they did not form one plant with Him. OT saints did not form one plant with Him. It is quite clear that the "fruit" spoken of was on the *risen stalk* and not before that rising. It is not retrospective either. He did not rise and then place the OT saints on the stalk. He clearly distinguished two conditions separated by His death and resurrection.

Since He rose from the dead, He no longer abides alone. There are now grains in the plant and the life in the risen stalk is in the grains! We have this life, then, in connection with His risen manhood -- for it was as man He died<sup>1</sup> and rose again. Hence, this life has been spoken of as "resurrection-life." JND remarked that "brethren" coined this word; but I suggest that it was himself.

What did John call this life? He referred to it as "life in the Son" (1 John 5:11). This life is in the grains of wheat in the one plant. Life from God in its essence is always the same, but the grains in the one plant have it in an association never enjoyed before. The disciples did not receive a second giving of life, in that essential sense, after the resurrection, but the Lord brought that life into a connection with Himself not enjoyed before the cross.

Now, before the resurrection, since our Lord then abode alone, and the disciples were then already born again, they were after His resurrection connected with Him in the new way, forming grains on the risen stalk. When did that occur? We see it occurred on the day that He rose from the dead (John 20:22). They received the Spirit (not as the Pentecostal gift to unite them to the head in heaven as one body, but) as power of that life and connection with Him as forming **one plant in the risen stalk**. It is well to distinguish these different, though complementary, lines of truth in John and Paul; and not to confuse and confound them in some hodge-podge that does justice to neither.

Might we desire to understand this more fully.

Ed.

## *Women Teachers*

That the elder women in like manner be in deportment as becoming those who have to say to sacred things, not slanderers, not enslaved to much wine, teachers of what is right; that they may admonish the young women to be attached to [their] husbands, to be attached to [their] children, discreet, chaste, diligent in home work, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be evil spoken of (Titus 2:3-5).

Who did the Spirit say are these women? “Elder women.” He did not say “able women.” The moment you set up “able women” to teach women, you have violated this precept of the Holy Spirit. You say that many elder women cannot, or are not qualified to, teach these things to the younger sisters? Well, shame, *shame*, **shame!** And how does that shame authorize you to set up a different order?

Moreover, the type of subject matter is here specified. It does not include the propounding of doctrine in a public meeting of sisters (only). Teachers of the Word propound doctrine in public meetings -- and not even all elders <sup>1</sup> (all of whom had to be “apt to teach”) labored in the Word and doctrine (1 Tim. 3:17, 18). There is no class of teachers called ‘elder men,’ or “elder women.”

Perhaps you appeal to 1 Tim. 2:12 so as to make it mean that a woman is merely not to teach men, but can teach women. So, you really do support women teachers of doctrine!

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** (1 Tim. 2:11, 12).

Paul would not allow it. Do you? I ask your attention to the bold-faced words. Does setting up to be a woman teacher of women really show subjection to this Word of God? She is to learn in quietness in all subjection; she is not to teach; she is not to exercise authority over a man; she is to be in quietness.

Surely you have W. Kelly’s *Exposition of the Two Epistles to Timothy* in your library, do you not? See what he has to say on these various texts. He speaks of Lydia, Phoebe and Priscilla. He wrote:

This clearly is not limited to the assembly; as the apostle traces the ground of it in the constitution and natural character of woman. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” Her subsequent formation out of man is never to be forgotten by such as fear God and believe His word. All other thoughts are presumptuous theory in forgetfulness of the truth which goes up to the beginning. An individual woman may be comparatively able and well-instructed; but under no circumstances is leave given for a woman to teach or to have dominion over a man; she is to be in quietness.

Ed.

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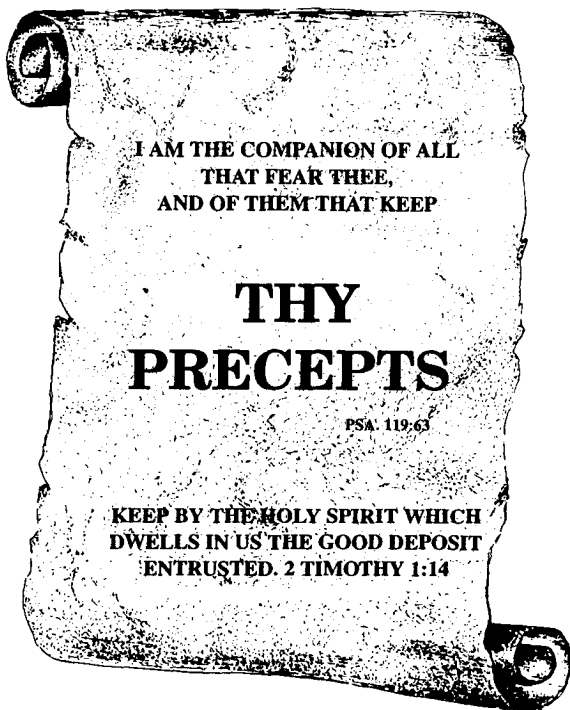
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# *New Book Announcement*

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*by R. A. Huebner*

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## **THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON**

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### *Divine Attributes and The Second Man*

*by W. T. Whybrow*

I would point out the real object of attack in all the system of error {of Ravenism} now so prevalent. The endeavor is to separate divine attributes, such as having life in Himself, omnipotence, omniscience, &c., from the Second Man, the Son of Man. This, moreover, is not merely deduced or inferred from the general drift of certain teachings, but Mr. Raven has actually stated it word after word, more than once, in letters published with his consent. He says:

What characterizes the Second Man could not include all that is true of a divine person, such as self-existence (having life in Himself), omnipotence, omniscience, and many other attributes of a divine person.

(Again he says) I cannot imagine how anyone can think that the Second Man covers all that is true of the Son.

As the Second Man, he practically limits Him to what is true in us as well as in Him -- what "we have in common with him." (See *Some Letters of F.E.R.*, pp. 4, 5, 6), and in connection with this negation of divine attributes, he brings in "the position of mediation, which belongs to the Man Christ Jesus" (p. 7). Why is this? Have we forgotten the touchstone given by the apostle John (1 John 4:1-3), "every spirit which does not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God"? Moreover, Paul tells us concerning spiritual manifestations, that "no one can say *Lord Jesus* unless in the power of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). Again, Peter speaks of false teachers "who shall bring in by the bye destructive heresies, and deny the *Master* that bought them" (2 Pet. 2:1-10). These are they that despise lordship, and speak injuriously of dignities. Jude characterizes them as turning the grace of God into dissoluteness, and denying the only *Master* and our Lord Jesus Christ. These Scriptures clearly show that it is the lordship of Jesus in His mediatorial position -- the Second Man, the Man Christ Jesus -- that is so resisted by the spirit of evil, seeking as he does place and power in the Church itself (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9).

If the truth of Christ's humanity or of His person as "Second Man," "Son of Man," can be separated in the minds of Christians from divine attributes, such as omnipotence, omniscience, &c. (not to speak of self-existence), then Satan could boldly assume lordship, for, if this were true, he would have to meet One who was not all-powerful nor all-wise. But what does Scripture say? The One who ascends up where He was before is none other than the "Son of Man." It is the "Son of Man" who is in heaven {John 3:13}, though the lowly Man on earth. He it was who "knew all men," who "Himself knew what was in man," and could say, "I say unto

thee, we speak that which we know, and we bear witness of that which we have seen." Does not this bespeak omniscience? Authority is given Him to execute judgment also, "because He is the Son of Man," {John 5} even as the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins -- omnipotence, surely, yet it is the Son of Man. It is by believing on the Son of Man that we have eternal life, and the rejected Son of Man, lifted up, is the gathering point and center of all (compare John 8:28; 12:31-36), and test of everything for God. How dare anyone say that the Second Man has not omnipotence, omniscience, and other divine attributes! What divine attribute is lacking to the Son of Man when He comes as the "Ancient of Days"? (compare Dan. 7:13, 22). And who is this Man, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who comes, but the blessed and only Potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light unapproachable, whom no man has seen, nor is able to see? to whom be honor and eternal might. Amen. (Compare 1 Tim. 6:15-16; Rev. 19:11-16).

But one may suppose that this is not His character for the Christian. Who, then, is it but the Son of Man who is seen among the seven golden lamps? {Rev. 1}. And is He not characterized by omnipotence, omniscience, self-existence, and many other attributes of a divine Person? Surely so! Divine righteousness girds Him about; He bears conspicuously the proof of eternity of existence; omnipotence speaks in His voice, and all the ministry of light by the Holy Ghost is wielded by His right hand. He stands in the consuming power of God's judgment which tests everything -- a judgment which the word of His mouth exercises.

As to His Person, first of all deity is His and self-existence (that which Mr. Raven specially denies); He is the Living One! True, He became dead; but He lives to eternity, and has the keys of death and the grave -- than which there can be no fuller expression of omnipotence. All this is specifically what characterizes Him as Son of Man. In the house of God, as in the kingdom, it is the Son of Man who is seen to be a divine Person -- a Man to whom deity and all divine attributes belong (compare Heb. 2:8-9, 3:3-4, with Psa. 8:1).

If anyone object that Mr. Raven would perhaps allow the Son of Man to possess divine attributes, but insists that the Second Man *does not* possess omnipotence, &c., I would first ask what warrant is there in Scripture for such an evil dissection of the truth of Christ's Person? And secondly, I would point out that he distinctly classes the Second Man and the Son of Man, together, and that to do so is a part of his specific system of teaching. He says,

Now that the "Son of Man," "the Second Man," and "Eternal Life," have, so to say, taken form, Scripture shows that they "are from heaven,"

and he quotes as proof John 3:13 and 6:62, which precisely refer to the Son of Man. Moreover, the living corn of wheat, who died and brought forth much fruit after His kind {John 12:24}, was none other than the Son of Man. Well might J. N. D., in the quotation given by Mr. A. {Anstey} (*Reply to the German Brethren*, p. 2), insist upon the distinction between the Person of the Son, and the believer as receiving life from Him; and that the Son of Man, who is in heaven, speaks of Christ as a divine Person, with whom the believer cannot be identified so as to possess omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, which attach alone to Him! But what would J. N. D. say to Mr. Raven who actually denies these divines attributes to the Second Man Himself?

In the Scriptures above quoted the Son of Man on earth is positively identified

as an omnipresent and eternal Person, not an eternal humanity, but the same divine Person, though now Man, for He came down from heaven and is in heaven {John 3:13}, yet ascends up thither {John 20:17}, and was in heaven before ascending. Faith bows with joy and adoration, and presumes not to reason. Mr. Raven, however, believes that the Son of Man, the Second Man (though not yet revealed) was ever essentially and in purpose in the Son. He

has become it . . . Now that the "Son of Man," "the Second Man," and Eternal life have, so to say, taken form, Scripture shows that they are from heaven.

For him the Son of Man is an "it," and together with the Second Man and Eternal life, forms a "they," essentially ever in the Son, which now, having taken form, are distinct from deity, and destitute of divine attributes though from heaven and of the Son; and, as to Eternal life, it is, he says, an "integral part" of His Person. Thus what is true in Him is true in us. He says:

Christ is the Second Man, and there is that which we have in common with Him. We are "all of one" (*Some Letters*, pp. 5-6).

And in order that this might be fitted in to Mr. Raven's system, he declares that the Second Man does not cover all that is true of the Son, and that as such divine attributes do not attach to Him, viz., omnipotence, omniscience, self-existence, &c. That is to say, Mr. R. fears not to deny the attributes of a divine Person to this blessed One, as Second Man, because grace associates us with Him as "all of one"! Who, then, is this Son of Man that was lifted up that we might have eternal life? Deity and every divine attribute is His, else were the value of His deity eliminated from the atonement He made. This teaching dissolves, so to speak, the Person of Christ into parts, whether integral or essential, destroys true propitiation, and introduces into Christianity an essence -- eternal, but not deity<sup>1</sup> -- ever the Second Man, but having taken form, not including divine attributes, nor covering all that is true of the Son! Scripture abhors such theorizing.

This, again, is the stepping-stone to a further statement by Mr. Raven (*Some Letters*, p. 13). He says:

What they saw was man after the flesh in divine perfectness before God. (Again), What came under the eye of God and before the eyes of man, apart from fruits and power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit for service and glimpses of divine glory, was the perfect setting forth of man . . . after the flesh.

What, may I ask, was there in Jesus apart from fruits of the Holy Spirit? Perfect Man, indeed, He was, and far more -- the Son of God, the Christ of God, God manifested in flesh, and never was He apart from this as under the eye of God, or indeed before the eyes of men, however blind they were to it. Those who saw Him were "eye-witnesses of and attendants upon the Word" (Luke 1:2). A miraculous star announces His birth to far off Gentiles. A babe unborn, His great forerunner, who was to make ready for Jehovah a prepared people, leapt in presence of such grace. The angelic hosts fill the heavens to gaze upon that lowly Babe, and own Him as the Lord. The Holy Spirit by Simeon gives testimony that He is God's Salvation

---

1. (That is, FER held, as we may call it, a humanity-in-essence, and an eternal life-in-essence, ever in the Son eternally, though not part of deity.)

-- Jehovah's Christ. The Magi do Him homage, and the Scriptures put in evidence the eternal ways of Him who is born in Bethlehem. He is the object of the Father's care, of the Angels' ministry, and even of Satanic hatred, while on every hand the hearts and consciences of men are aroused. Perfect Man He was, and called a Nazarene -- in the likeness, surely, of sinful flesh, come of a woman under the law -- a body prepared for Him, but what came under the eye of God was more than "perfect man according to the flesh." This Adam innocent was; but Christ was that "holy thing" {Luke 1:35} and Adam never was that.

But Mr. Raven separates what Scripture does not. He says:

What came under the eye of God, apart from fruits and power of the anointing of the Holy Ghost, was the perfect setting forth of man according to the flesh;

but Scripture, on the contrary, connects the perfect humanity of Christ with the "fruits and power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit." Never is the fine flour in the meal-offering "apart from" the mingling or the anointing with oil.<sup>2</sup> May God preserve us from this evil doctrine, which is the negation of the truth of Christ!

A second edition of a letter, by Mr. J. A. Trench, has just been put into my hands, in which much truth is raked together and used to cover the evil of a doctrine of which he has to say:

You will understand that it is not that the expression of the truth in him (Mr. Raven) commends itself to me, nor that I have received or find any help on the subject so much before him in his sentences (p. 1). (Again), Raven is far too one-sided in the way he treats the subject, and . . . does not "preserve the balance of Scripture as to it" (p. 9). (Again), I distrust his systematizing, and do not go with all the details of the development of it, fearing narrowness (p. 13).

Who, then, is the teacher around whom such brethren are gathered to-day? And for whose sake have they rejected the solemn judgment of the two or three gathered to Christ's Name {at Bexhill, June 29, 1890}? Is it Mr. Trench or Mr. Raven? The former knows perfectly well that he himself is the disciple following and supporting Mr. Raven, and using truth to pander to and shelter the evil doctrine of the latter. For instance, Mr. Trench says:

there is the determination to construe all that Raven says in the worst sense even if it seem capable of another (p. 1).

But should a teacher use words bearing the worst construction, even if, as a possible alternative, they may seem capable of another sense? Thus, according to Mr. J. A. Trench, Raven's words have, or may have, a double sense, one the worst and the other good, or at least not so bad. Mr. J. C. Trench went even farther than this in his defense of Raven (*Reply to One in Difficulty*, p. 5) where he gives the senses of "involve" meaning "to result in," and "is essential to," and "has the capacity of" (three entirely different expressions), to the word "means," used by Mr. Raven in the sentence "eternal life *means* for a Christian a wholly new order of things." Such futile playing upon words exposes fully the spirit of partisanship at work, and causes

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2. An apparent exception is found in Deut 23, but notice the difference between v. 13 and v. 17. In the latter case the loaves were "baken with leaven."

Mr. J. A. Trench's animadversions to recoil with tenfold force upon himself.

In p. 4 of this recent letter of Mr. J. A. T's, in reply to Mr. Rule, he has a remarkably good statement as to the glory of the Second Man. He says:

The Second Man, last Adam, is the central subject of Scripture . . .

If He fills all in all, it is not as God, but as He who has been raised from the dead.

. . . Not to angels, but to man -- the Second Man, I need hardly say -- Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet . . . every ray of the glory of God concentrated upon the face for ever, once more marred than that of any man.

Here evidently the Second Man is a divine Person, with divine attributes, and divine glory; but suppose Mr. Raven's bad doctrine were tacked on to this extract, viz., that "What characterizes the Second Man could not include all that is true of a divine Person, such as self-existence (having life in Himself), omnipotence, omniscience, and many other attributes of a divine Person"! It would deny and stultify all that J. A. Trench previously said. His tract indeed is but daubing the evil with the good -- the wall with untempered mortar. Forms of piety are thus used to set aside the glory of Christ as Man.

Mr. J. A. Trench writes much that is good, and speaks well of the supremacy, and deity, and divine glory, and attributes of the Second Man, but why does he speak so? It is in effect to force upon the saints a doctrine that absolutely denies divine attributes, such as omniscience, self-existence, omnipotence, and "many other attributes of a divine Person" to the Second Man -- a doctrine that asserts that "the Second Man does not cover all that is true of the Son."

Such doctrines may indeed suit Mr. R., and his followers, but Scripture contradicts this statement in both its parts, for the blessed Savior adjured by the living God to say if He was the Christ, the Son of God, replied "Thou hast said. Moreover, I say to you, from henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:63-64). Thus He identifies the Son of God, and Son of Man, and predicates omnipotence, precisely of the latter. Scripture is everywhere consistent in its testimony to this. In reply to His enquiry, "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Peter, by the revelation of *the Father*, could say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." True He was to go away to Jerusalem and suffer, but raised from the dead, the Son of Man would "come in the glory of His Father with His angels" (Matt. 16:13-28). The Son of Man was Son of the Father. Grace had brought Him into the world the first time, and His second advent would be characterized by glory, but His Person was the same unchangeably. For if the Son of Man takes the kingdom, it is He the Christ, who gives up the kingdom to Him who is *God and Father*, and then shall *the Son* also Himself be placed in subjection to Him who put all things in subjection to Him (1 Cor. 15:20-28). Here it is "the Son Himself" who is placed in subjection, and it is also "the Son" that can do nothing of Himself, but does this deny His omnipotence? Surely not. Nor is omniscience denied to "the Son" by the Scripture that states "of that day or of that hour (of the coming of the Son of Man) no one knows, neither the angels who are in heaven, *nor the Son*, but the Father only" {Mark 13:32}. On the other hand, it is "the Son of Man" whom the angels serve (John 1:51), and to whom every knee shall bow.

I fearlessly assert that there is no Scripture, and no Scriptural warrant, for denying divine attributes to the Second Man; if there is, let them produce it. The statement as it stands, rests merely upon the "I cannot imagine" of a man. But more, all Scripture is consistent in its testimony to the positive deity and divine attributes of the Son of Man. Nor could it be otherwise. Scripture reveals the objects of faith, and faith receives and knows them as they really are before God. It does not systematize Scripture, which is in fact subjecting the truth to the mind of man, and thus is infidel in its tendency, and leaves God out. Into this error these teachers have fallen. On the contrary faith, however instructed and intelligent -- for there is such a thing as unintelligent faith -- ever sees as God sees, and for Him, Christ, the last Adam, the Second Man, the Son of Man, the Son of David though David's Lord, Son of God, Son of the Father, is ever the same blessed Person to whom deity and divine attributes absolutely belong, whatever the character and position He may assume, and however He may in grace empty Himself to become Man, and indeed humble Himself, even unto death, and that the death of the cross.

## *Railing -- What Is It?*

This old paper was found in a defective condition; some of the words no longer being readable. Where this condition exists words have been inserted which fit the context and are shown within square brackets [ ]. The editor would welcome receiving a more complete copy of the original.

--edited by D. P. Ryan

Scripture designates "railers" or the "abusive" as "wicked persons" with whom saints are "not even to eat." Railing is a heinous crime against GOD and His saints. It reviles them and despises God, to Whom they are as "the apple of His eye." To have been charged by one's brethren with so despicable a crime ought to cause deep distress of soul, and drive one to his knees in earnest exercise of self-examination before God. But likewise, those so charging him must use meticulous care lest the charge be mistaken, poorly conceived, or even malicious; lest the brother be indeed innocent of railing according to SCRIPTURE USAGE of the term, rather than their opinions or whims. Yet how many have ever examined the Word carefully to ascertain what it is that GOD calls railing?

SCRIPTURAL REBUKE is sometimes mistaken for railing -- a hideous error. Railing is an act of wickedness that ought not once to be named among us. But on the OTHER HAND, we are STRAITLY CHARGED by the Word of God to "reprove, rebuke, exhort," etc., as led of God when the occasion calls for it. "I CHARGE THEE before GOD and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. . . . will turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4:1-3. The Greek sentence structure here denotes great urgency. Not a particle connects the verbs. Again, to Titus, "These things speak and exhort and rebuke." The charge is URGENT because the work is essential to the spiritual welfare of saints and because we, like Timothy, shrink from the task as irksome and disagreeable, yet it



is a matter of simple obedience to GOD, Who is wiser than we, and knows far better than we do what are the needs of His weak and erring people.

It is thus no light thing when scriptural rebuke is mistaken for railing, and discipline meted out for it. To place this vile stigma; this mark of infamy; upon a brother in Christ if his fault indeed was but obedience to GOD according to the clearest directions in His Word, in love and care for souls whose carelessness or ungodliness called for rebuke, is a reprehensible error. If done wilfully or maliciously, it is an outrageous crime against GOD and His saints.

[The Greek word for "railer"] is LOIDORUS; translated "Reviler," in the R.V., and, "Abusive," by Mr. Darby and Mr. Kelly. LOIDORUS is found also in 1 Cor. 6:10, where the A.V. and R.V. have, "Revilers," as does Mr. Kelly. Mr. Darby has "Abusive persons." The word in its verb form (LOIDOREO) is found in John 9:28, where the A.V. and R.V. have, "Reviled," and Mr. Darby, "Railed at." In 1 Pet. 2:23, where we again find this word, all translators use, "Reviled." These are some of the more significant references. For most practical purposes, the verbs "Rail at" and "Abuse," and the nouns, "Railer" and "Abusive person," are synonymous. It can be assumed that the translators used these and related English words in their commonly accepted sense as found in standard dictionaries. Webster's gives this:

RAIL -- To revile, in harsh, insolent or vituperative language; scoff.

REVILE -- To despise; regard as vile. To subject to abuse in speech.

ABUSE -- Vituperative words; coarse, insulting speech.

ABUSIVE -- Given to, or practicing abuse, vituperative, scurrilous, opprobrious.

We shall correlate this information with the scriptures. In the scripture passages above, railing is against the Lord and His saints by hateful men -- men full of envy, malice and spite. Such men railed on the Lord when He was dying on the cross for them!

Thus, correlating the above dictionary information with the above scripture passages, and others, together with contexts, we may say that to rail at or abuse, in the SCRIPTURE USAGE of these terms, is to WANTONLY REVILE without rational cause; with only a malicious spirit, motive and intent, in a clear show of hatred; to unwarrantedly, wilfully, and shamelessly set others forth as vile and contemptible in person, motive, and act -- a perverse, shameless, irresponsible heaping of abuse without mercy or palliation.

But please note that harsh or even scathing language is not, of itself, railing. It may be EITHER railing or scriptural rebuke according to the circumstances, motive and intent. Mere harshness does not make it railing. A severe but warranted scriptural rebuke might be as harsh as some instances of railing. How sharp were Jesus' words to Israel's venerables on two occasions: - "O, generation of vipers." The baptist also similarly charged them. Witness also Paul to Elymas: - "Thou child of the devil, enemy of all righteousness." The word, "Rebuke," is EPITIMAO in 2 Tim. 4:2. [The same word is used of the Lord Jesus in speaking to the] beloved Peter in Mk.8:33 thus: - "He (Jesus) rebuked (EPITIMAO) Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan." And Joseph, though he loved his brethren, "spake roughly" to them, called them liars and thieves, and threw them into prison; yet though wicked and hardened, they REPENTED rather than resented, and received blessing. None

of the above were cases of railing, but we find in them *harsh language* and *severity of manner* in righteous indignation ("Be ye angry and sin not") in justified rebuke --- **SCRIPTURAL REBUKE** according to 2 Tim. 4:1-3 and Tit. 2:15, where it is indeed the saints individually, collectively or corporately, whom Timothy and Titus were to rebuke. **SEVERE ILLNESS** may call for **SEVERE REMEDIES**, the saints no less than others; indeed the more; for God is the more careful for their welfare. We shall not be free from the need of rebuke till we are perfected; hence God has provided the necessary love, care, and gift for it, that saints may be found growing up "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

In general, rebuke should be kind and understanding, as a tender father dealing with his children in love, but cases occur when rebuke is called for as to something particularly reprehensible. The resulting indignation might then, rightly or wrongly, find expression in anger, harshness, withering words, the raising of the voice, etc., but this is not railing. Indeed, there might be great failure in the rebuke -- an inordinate lack of grace or even of mercy; poor judgment; a show of flesh; disproportionate rigor, or wrath, etc., but these are not railing. We must not charge railing for failure in rebuke, or put one out for his anger at sin. **GOD ALSO** is angry at sin. To love God is to hate sin. Is rebuke ever perfect? It is as faulty as the poor imperfect person administering it.

Railing is as far from scriptural rebuke as night from day. The one is of evil; the other of good; the one of hatred, the other of love. Railing is an act of pure self-willed hatred of the saints, with little or no cause, or an imaginary one conceived in a warped mind. A railer will avidly seize on the grossest falsehood in furtherance of his hateful purpose. Scriptural **REBUKE**, on the other hand, while it may use harsh language, is exercised toward those whose ways or actions **CLEARLY WARRANT IT**, and is administered by those who own an obligation, as **CHARGED IN THE WORD OF GOD** to do it. It owns a total commitment to the **TRUTH**, and to what is open and manifest. [On the other hand, it is not easily provoked] and duly allows for inadvertence, faulty judgment, or other human weakness. Railing makes no allowances; shows no understanding, no grace, no mercy, no heart; has no desire to do so. Can one think any good of one he hates, when in the very act of showing it?

Scriptural rebuke is not accusing or judging. Railing is both. Rebuke, instead of desiring or invoking wrath on another, entreats and **WARNS** him **IN HOPE** of his taking heed and thus **AVOIDING IT**. It warns that "there **IS ONE** Who judges"; that in His government, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This requires alleging the nature of the sin for which the reproof is given, but that is not judging or accusing. Reproof is impossible without allegation.

It will be instructive and profitable to look at some cases in scripture that bring out the character and differences between railing and scriptural rebuke.

Shimei came forth and cursed. . .and cast stones at David. . .and said, Thou bloody man and man of Belial. . .the Lord has returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul. . .thou art taken in thy mischief because thou art a bloody man. . .and David said, Let him alone; let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction and requite me good for his cursing ( Sam. 16)

Shimei's act has all the elements of railing in scripture usage. Shimei, of the house

of Saul, David's enemy, envied and hated David bitterly. He says not one good word about him. It is a villainous personal attack on David, declaring him a voracious, blood-thirsty murderer deservedly under divine judgment.

But how gracious is the answer of the man whom God twice called "a man after mine own heart" because of his grace toward his enemies! He casts himself upon GOD, and instead of blaming Shimei, even allows that he did it at God's bidding! God cannot but honor such a spirit, for it was of Himself, and He "cannot deny Himself." It was the Spirit of HIM Who, "When He was reviled, reviled not again, but committed Himself to Him Who judges righteously." In the FINALITY, David was honored and Shimei met a well deserved end.

I know of no instance in scripture when a railer said the good, kind, or palliating word about his victim. It would be totally outside his thought and intent. This is one of several guidelines for distinguishing railing from rebuke. Railing is a show of pure hate; often of envy. Hence indeed does God term a railer a "wicked person." Thus before I glibly charge a BROTHER [IN CHRIST with such a sin I must ask] myself earnestly BEFORE GOD if I can truly and honestly ascribe this wickedness of SPIRIT, MOTIVE AND INTENT to him; if ALL THIS has INDEED been brought out and PROVED INDISPUTABLY. Let me investigate it thoroughly in the pure clear light of the Word of GOD.

How terrible the paradox; how pernicious the heresy; that the saints of GOD, who by reason of their common position as having been delivered and separated FROM THE WORLD by the cross of Jesus, and thus subject to reproach and ostracism from IT, should, instead of being drawn closer together, and comforting, encouraging, strengthening and sustaining one another in their common trial; and more, our common bond as ONE IN CHRIST and in His purposes of grace, and instead of thus being "knit together in love" -- be found actually turning on one another internecinely and attacking, backbiting and destroying one another!

Often these attacks are provoked by acts of love! One seeks, "in the bowels of Christ," to help another by entreating him to turn from a wrong path that can only end in sorrow and shame -- how often is he answered by bitter resentment! Rebuke, even if angry or sharp, or even mistaken, should be received graciously, in the meekness of Christ. That is Christianity. But scripture shows that those who refuse reproof will often turn on the reprover in malice. Scripture equates them with scorners or worse. Prov. 9:7-12.

We are a strange people, and I doubt not that our gross inconsiderateness and ill treatment of one another; our "biting and devouring" have, through the ages, repeatedly brought divine chastening upon us. How many a soul "for whom Christ died" has been stumbled and turned aside into the world and been ruined spiritually; lost to the service of Christ and lost to his own and others' blessing; to recover, it may be, after having lived most of a useless, aimless life.

Nathan's dealing with David about the death of Uriah was an eminent case of scriptural REBUKE. Nathan was a confidant of David, and they loved each other as only two earnest men of God can. David's crime was monstrous in contriving the death of one who also was one of his close confidants and was deeply devoted to him and to the service of God and His people -- one who had originally been a Hittite; of the enemies of God's people. But he had been delivered by God's grace, brought into His congregation, and given a place of privilege, blessing and service

in it. I doubt not that Uriah the "little ewe lamb" of Nathan's [parable is one of the little ones of] which the Lord spoke many years later as "little ones who believe in Me," when pronouncing that terrible anathema on all who would turn them aside. Matt. 18:6.

Uriah was purposely placed in a position to be killed in the very act of hazarding his life in devotedness to God's people in overthrowing their enemies!

Nathan, in dealing with David about it, showed him first the hideousness of the *crime itself*, with no hint that the crime was his, for seldom do we view our own sins in the same light as those of others. Then Nathan said straight out, "THOU art the man." Nothing could have been more harsh or staggering, just after he had exposed and elucidated the wickedness of it. But though terrible, it was true, and David, ever a lover of truth and tender of conscience; bowed to it, though shocked to the quick. We find his confession in Psa. 51, a jewel of "repentance towards God."

In the instances of RAILING in scripture, we find the following, IN CONTRAST to scriptural REBUKE:

1. It is wanton; void of any visible useful purpose.
2. Often alleges its victim to be deservedly under divine wrath or close to it, and without hope yet
3. Shows no interest in his spiritual welfare.
4. Does not bring Christ and His claims before him.
5. Does not seek to bring him consciously before God about the alleged evil.
6. Does not entreat him to give up the alleged evil.
7. Allows of nothing good in him; says nothing good.
8. Shows him no grace or mercy; even curses him.
9. Is ignorant of God's grace, mercy and ways.
10. Shows no understanding, allows no palliation.
11. With little, or no justification at all, will allege the grossest wickedness of even the most godly.
12. Never allows for inadvertence or other failing.
13. Totally disregards the truth; will employ the grossest deliberate falsehood in its accusations.
14. It is all accusation and condemnation.
15. "Incontinent, fierce, despises those who are good."
16. Seems to act without conscience, heart or shame.
17. Is wholly irresponsible and irrational.

Now a word about FALSE WITNESS. In SCRIPTURE USAGE, it is falsehood without basis, deliberately fabricated and presented as a charge with intent to condemn the innocent. This vile crime drew the penalty it intended for the innocent. Here again, careful insight is needed. MISTAKEN TESTIMONY, if honest, guileless and unintentionally in error, is not "false witness" in scripture usage, even if it causes the innocent to suffer.

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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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### *Chapter 6.13*

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#### *Revelation 19 and Colossians 3:4*

##### **THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB WILL TAKE PLACE IN HEAVEN**

In the book of Revelation we do not see the bride until the false one, the harlot, is judged. She is judged about the middle of Daniel's 70th week. But before the marriage of the Lamb is brought before us, we must see the harlot judged.

Heaven rejoices in the overthrow of the harlot (Rev. 19:1). The vision continues about things in heaven until the Word of God comes forth from heaven (Rev. 19:11-21). Rev. 19:6 also clearly indicates that the event of Rev. 19:6-10 transpires in heaven.

There is another indicator that this will take place in heaven. The armies which follow Christ are not angels as we shall shortly see, and they are dressed as the bride is. If the marriage is on earth, if Rev. 19:7-10, takes place on earth, how is it that the armies are already dressed as is the bride? Was she made ready in heaven in preparation for the marriage on earth? That cannot be if the rapture follows v. 11 because the bride, as such, is not therefore in heaven. Part of the church will be in heaven and part on earth when Rev. 19:11 occurs if the rapture follows v. 11. Thus the bride could not have made herself ready before v. 11. And thus it is contradictory that the armies should be so dressed. The marriage takes place in heaven before the armies come forth. The bride is there at this time because it is really true that Christ had previously come for His saints. Following the vision of the marriage, we see Christ coming forth and His armies with Him. The sequence of events recorded in Rev. 19 is just the sequence we would expect since the rapture is pretribulational. Those who reject a pretribulation rapture must invert the sequence of the marriage and the appearing, as some do who believe in a pretribulation rapture, because of theories they have about the bride.

It is claimed that the context indicates that the marriage supper includes an "Israelitish segment of the bride" resurrected after the tribulation. Rev. 21:9,

10, 12 is cited as the "context" that shows that the marriage supper includes Israel. Anything can be proved by this method! But the fact is just the reverse. The marriage supper taking place in heaven before the appearing, the martyrs of Israel during the tribulation are excluded. The bride is the church only.<sup>1</sup>

The **Lamb's wife** is a virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). Israel, as the **wife of Jehovah**,<sup>2</sup> (Jer. 3:14-20; 2:2; Isa. 54:1) has been divorced and is not a virgin. Israel will receive Jehovah's favor again (Isa. 54:1; Hosea 2:14, 15) but she is not a virgin and not part of the chaste virgin espoused to Christ. Old Testament saints will rise when the church saints do, but they are carefully distinguished in Heb. 11:40; just as they are distinguished as the spirits of just men made perfect compared to the assembly of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23). No doubt the tribulation martyrs will rise at, or about the time of, the appearing. We have already noted that the first resurrection is not a point in time but *a class of persons*: the just. We noted that it is one moral class raised at various points in time, including Christ, as firstfruits, raised over 1900 years ago.

The wife of Jehovah, i.e., "Jerusalem as the expression of Israel" (E. Dennett) is reinstated (at the appropriate time) on earth. The marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven. The wife of the Lamb will have made herself ready before the manifestation of Christ Who is our life (Col. 3:4). The judgement seat (2 Cor. 5:10) will have occurred before she comes forth in display (2 Thess. 1:10). The harlot wore scarlet and purple, claiming power over Israel and the nations, and decked herself with everything except white linen, fine and clean. Before the world sees the true bride she will have made herself ready. Blessed be God, "It was given to her . . ."

How all heaven will ring with Hallelujahs when the corruptress is judged, when the false system is overthrown. And then the marriage is seen to be followed by the public display. Besides the doctrine of it in scripture, is this not a morally fitting order? The fine linen is the display of practical righteousness, righteousness in conduct; it does not denote imputed righteousness. She will have made herself ready. She will be in perfect agreement of thought and judgment expressed at the judgment seat of Christ where all contrary to Himself is put away. What is left is the fine linen. *Then* comes the marriage, and finally the manifestation (1 Thess. 1:7; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2, 3).

## THE ARMIES

**The Armies are not Composed of Angels.** If the armies (Rev. 19:14) are disembodied saints, or angels, that suits the posttribulation scheme, for if these

1. R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 85.

2. Some opposers talk of thus making God a bigamist. Such is the result of refusing dispensational light.

armies are composed of resurrected saints that sounds like a pretribulation rapture is involved.<sup>3</sup> But the armies are clothed in the same clothing as the bride, which represents the righteousnesses of saints. No doubt there are angels present (2 Thess. 1:7) but that is not seen in the armies. Rev. 17:14 tells us that those with Him are CALLED! Do you know a scripture that says that angels are "called"? No. It is *saints* that are called.

**The Armies are not Composed of Disembodied Souls.** This is another method of avoiding the pretribulation rapture. But what we have considered about the marriage taking place in heaven reflects the idea that these armies are disembodied souls as does consideration of the 24 elders.

This coming forth from heaven of the saints is just what 2 Thess. 1:7 would make us think. And Col. 3:4 tells us that when He is manifested in glory we will be manifested with Him. Now, in the scripture, i.e., the way in which scripture presents the revelation of Christ, He is revealed from heaven, not from the air, and I cite 2 Thess. 1:7 and Rev. 19:14 in proof. Just so with His manifestation when we are manifested with Him in glory. This is from heaven and the pretribulation rapture explains how resurrected persons were in heaven so that they might be manifested with Him. 1 Thess. 3:13 and 4:14 affirm this also.

"Manifestation" stands in contrast to being previously hidden. Where is He hidden? In the air? You know it is not so (John 13:1; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 16, 28; Heb. 1:3; etc.). He is at God's right hand (Psalm 110:1). "Revealed" is "coming forth from being concealed." It is the apocalypse, the unveiling, the revelation, Rev. 19, is "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven (2 Thess. 1:7) and our manifestation with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

This coming forth of the saints from heaven is consonant with what we have seen in John 14:1-3 where the Lord comes to take us to the Father's house above, not to a marriage below.

Let us remember that "God will bring with him [with Christ] those who have fallen asleep through Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14) does not mean that God brings disembodied souls with our Lord when He comes out of heaven. That would mean these souls are sleeping. We have considered this in the notes on 1 Thess. 4.

**The Armies are Composed of Saints.** Old Testament saints and the saints that compose the church are seen in their priestly place in the figure of the 24 elders. The church is distinguished for the first time in Rev. 19. There are blessings and a place common to all the children of God; but there are also blessings distinctively for the church. All live and reign with Christ for 1000

years. All are priests (Rev. 20:6) but not all are the bride, the Lamb's wife. Seen in millennial display, she is called "the holy city Jerusalem" (Rev. 20:9-10). And where does she come from? "Descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 20:10). This is what we would expect since the saints were caught up before Christ's revelation from heaven. On the city's gates are the names of the twelve tribes. The gate is the place of judgment. We shall reign with Christ, as all saints will, but the church has a special place. There, government is seen as going forth from the gate but actually executed by Israel. The name of the tribes on the gates do not indicate that Israel is part of the church. Neither does "new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2) mean that Israel is part of the church. The figure of "armies" is broader than what is signified by the bride symbolized as a city. The word "armies" leaves room for all who had previously been figured by the 24 elders. All glorified saints will be manifested at the judgment seat and thus all will have that practical righteousness in display. The armies, then, include all the saints who had been caught up, but the church's special place is not brought out in the figure of "armies". Her beauty and place is noted in Rev. 21.

### **RESURRECTION AND THE COMING**

In Rev. 19, rather than saints rising from the earth to meet the Lord in the air, we find them following Christ out of heaven. Furthermore, the final stage of the first resurrection appears to take place after the appearing and after the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-4). Indeed, nowhere in the New Testament has anyone produced a scripture that shows our meeting the Lord in the air is coincident in time with the appearing. It is a favorite argument of posttribulationists that not one text states that the rapture is pretribulationist. One would have thought, then, that at least one text would have been produced that says that the church will be in the great tribulation. But it has not been produced. It is pretended that it has been produced, e.g., in Matt. 24 where **elect** persons are seen in the tribulation. But they are elect Jews. At any rate, it is not stated that they are church saints or members of the body of Christ.

Ed.



## *A Victory for Philistinism over Unfaithful Nazariteship?*

### *Thoughts from a Series of Readings*

#### **# 4**

When we hear the word, "Nazarite," do we remember Samson? If we remember Samson, do we think at once of Delilah? If we think of Delilah, do we recoil in disgust? Then, by a chain of mental associations, is Nazariteship necessarily a disgusting thing, because of the way in which Samson was defeated by the Philistines? The power of such associations is a strong power over the mind, teaching us by sad experiences that wickedness in one of God's people will defile in our own minds every precious truth of God. For this reason, many Christians today are abandoning precepts in which they have walked for many years. These practical truths, they say, are now identified in their minds with every disgusting evil that they have known to be tolerated by men who hold truth in one hand and evil in the other.

Judges 16 teaches a completely different lesson: the power of Nazariteship according to the will of God never ceases its opposition to Philistinism, not even at the time of the defeat of an unfaithful Nazarite. Here Samson defiles his Nazariteship by consorting with Philistine harlots, reveals the secret of his Nazariteship, and loses his strength, his eyes, and his life. But true Nazariteship loses nothing! Samson had been a Nazarite from his birth (Judges 13). The principle of Philistinism had warred against his soul within him (Judges 14). A victory over Philistinism was given to him anyway because Nazariteship always triumphs when its weakness depends upon God (Judges 15). At last, however, Philistinism appears to gain a certain kind of victory over his unfaithful Nazariteship. Understanding the character of this supposed victory of Philistinism will destroy in our minds any association between God's holy principle of Nazariteship and Samson's moral evil. This chapter is nothing less than God's antidote for the false associations of thought that are described above and which so strongly influence many who are abandoning truth today because evil is tolerated by professing Christians.

Samson was particularly attracted to Philistine women. God had a controversy with the Philistines but never meant for Samson to contract an alliance with them. Philistine women represent unholy traffickers in divine things: they profess to live in the inheritance but pervert true principles of holy conduct. Man in Scripture is connected more with doctrine, and woman is connected with principles of conduct, a subjective side of truth. For example, in the book of Ruth the young men provided water in the water pots; in 1 John 2 the young men are strong in the word. But Ruth was told to abide fast by the maidens of Boaz; this signifies subjective response to the water of the Word. Man sets forth more the positional and doctrinal side of things. Woman represents more our subject place and principles of conduct. Brethren, we must beware of what we flirt with and what we indulge in as to principles of conduct. Samson brought the Philistines to light and indulge himself with Philistine women and come away unscathed.

At Gaza, lust and defilement brought Samson into a trap stronger than the walls of the city. In consorting with a Philistine harlot he made the members of his body the "members of an harlot" (1 Cor 6:15). They two became "one body", but not in marriage. Thus, Samson was trapped into a continuing defilement. Then, he did a bravado thing: in a feat of strength he dragged the gates off and carried them to a hilltop. What did he think he was doing with a Philistine gate on his shoulders? Removing the gate was not a necessary part of his escape from Gaza, but it does make a good story. Instead of setting himself up for later boasting, his conscience should have taken warning from the results of his evil conduct. Unfortunately, persons whose consciences are getting less and less active do not lose their spiritual power all at once. Christians, too, have experienced this. It is possible for a man to preach in the power of a gift from God. Then he falls into some evil and yet continues to preach until he is exposed. Although conscience is deadened, power is not cut off instantaneously.

Samson's Nazarite strength was meant to be used against the Philistines, not for self-gratification and to get himself out of the troubles that he had gotten himself into. There is often a certain self-directed energy that continues on beyond a break in communion with God. The moral worth of a man of God is not to be estimated according to his gift: at Corinth there was energetic exercise of gift without the leading of the Holy Spirit of God. For example, they had descended so far from dependence on the Spirit that what is called "machine-gun ministry" was common among them (1 Cor. 14:26) and they needed to be told that two persons speaking at once was confusion (1 Cor. 14:30,33). Samson's strength out of communion with God is like the exercise of gift without waiting upon the Spirit's leading and subjection of the spirit of the prophet to the prophet himself. "I could not help myself," is certain evidence that the flesh was the power behind the speaking. Spiritually-minded persons react with disgust to such displays of unjudged flesh. Similarly, Samson held on to his holy Nazarite-strength with one hand, while he filled his other hand with disgusting whoredoms. Does this chain of associations join Nazariteship with disgusting evil in our minds?

### ***Samson Had No True Fellowship With God***

The beginning of God's antidote to this wrong-minded chain of mental associations is found in Judges 16:3, where Hebron is mentioned as being at a distance. Hebron represents true fellowship and association with God. Jacob, the father, sent Joseph, the son, from the vale of Hebron, the place where father and son were in communion, to see how his brethren did. In Num. 13:23, we learn that "Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." This means, in type, that the perfect place of association and fellowship between the Father and the Son in the Godhead existed before this world was ever set up. Hebron was the place that faithful Caleb wanted for his inheritance, and he promised his daughter to the man that took it from the enemy. Samson never rested at Hebron: he was indeed associated with disgusting evil, but God never was.

Samson only placed the gates where they would point towards Hebron afar off: he had himself left the path of fellowship with God and was relying on his own strength to get out of the entrapments that his lusts led him into. How is it with us? Do we ever wistfully long for fellowship with God that we once enjoyed but have

departed from? Perhaps, we may even point others in the right direction, as Samson did here. But the moral strength that comes from the true chain of associations according to the mind of God is seen in those who  *dwell at Hebron*, not in those who just point towards it.

The connection of Samson with Hebron is so tenuous that he appears here as a man does who gives out truth in which he does not walk himself. No wonder that Nazariteship gets a bad name through Samson's fall! How blessed when a man walks in all the truth that he gives out! If we checked up on ourselves, whether in ministering according to gift that the Lord has given us or in Christian testimony, we would find, sadly, that we sometimes express ourselves in speech that goes beyond the measure of truth in which we walk. This is what makes the words of the Lord Jesus so precious. They asked Him Who He was and He answered, "Altogether that which I also say to you" (John 8:25). He was the only One in Whom the words were in 100% moral identification with the life.

### *Samson Reaped What Samson Sowed*

The second part of God's antidote for those who are tempted to abandon truth because they have been confronted by moral ruin in other believers is that Samson reaped what Samson sowed. Why is Samson's fornication with a harlot at Gaza written here? Is this incident in his life written down because the Holy Spirit could not resist including the exciting exploit of Samson with the gate? Let us not be deceived: in the matter of the gate, Samson was mocking God by using his Nazarite strength in connection with his evil life. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man shall sow, that also shall he reap. For he that sows to his own flesh, shall reap corruption from the flesh; but he that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:7-8). In Judges 16, in the house of Delilah, Samson reaped the whirlwind, having sowed the wind at Gaza (cp. Hos. 8:7). As we examine this reaping in its sordid details, the evil of Samson's Philistine-like behavior will become more and more apparent: this aspect of Samson's life is easily overlooked if we have been trained from childhood by Bible story books to applaud all of Samson's exploits.

The true strength of a spiritual Nazarite is connected with his heart. "Thou hast left thy first love" is written of Ephesus (Rev. 2:4) and marks the point of departure of the church of God. The ruin of the church and the ruin of Samson have certain points of similarity. In the first verses of the chapter, Samson sought a temporary alliance with a Philistine woman. Now, however, he loves a woman. What a difference! At first, he thought only to dabble, but it grew into something stronger. Not learning anything from his earlier troubles, his affections become engaged. The trap of his enemies closes upon him within his own heart. That the harlot of Sorek had more strength against Samson (by her hold upon his heart) than the gates of Gaza had to resist his muscles is a part of the harvest that Samson reaped from going down to look on Philistine women.

The second way in which we may discern Samson's sowing and reaping is by listening to his words. When standing for God in the strength of Nazariteship, the first thing is to have the loins girt about with truth (Eph. 6:14). Dallying with Philistinism is sporting with religious pretension and leads to dishonesty. We grow to be like what we tamper with. We refuse to judge the flesh in others because we

refuse to judge it in ourselves, and the kinds of things that we tolerate impress their character upon us. The corruption at work in the house of this Philistine woman impresses itself on Samson and is reflected in his words.

Even Delilah knew they were lies. "Thou hast mocked me," she said, "and told me lies" (Judges 16:10,13). How sad that her reproaches were righteous reproaches! She spoke the truth about his lies, because Samson had been corrupted by tolerating her corrupting influence. The seven fresh cords, the new ropes, and the loom came from lies that Samson told. Moreover, Samson's words betrayed the growth of pride within his soul until he had the nerve to tease her with a reference to the seven locks of his head. Like a proud daredevil, Samson phrased his words closely to the true secret so that he could glory in his skill to skate so near the edge of disaster.

Destruction is what Samson reaped from the proud words that he sowed (see Prov. 16:18). In Judges 15:16, Samson boasted of his heaps upon heaps. His exploit with the gate of Gaza, no doubt, was a fruit of pride also. Here, when Delilah asks him about his strength, he pointed to himself repeatedly. Why did he never attribute his great strength to God? A similar pride was found at Corinth where their ministerial exploits were connected with fleshly pride in the grandness of their spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 4:6, etc.). They were puffed up. Puffed up people end up hollow. Clean vessels for the Master's use, on the other hand, often find themselves filled with what comes from Himself. When the energy to carry out a work comes from Him, He should get all the credit for the work. Too often we seek some credit for self, wanting others to recognize what we have done for the Lord. Paul was not that way: he just pressed for the mark, seeking the Lord's approval at the end.

The third way in which we may observe Samson's sowing and reaping is by watching him return again and again to the house of Delilah. Each time, Samson sowed a little more, and each time the danger signs grew a little louder. Samson was flirting with death at the hands of his enemies. Once they found out how to bind him, they would kill him and Samson should have known it.

The first time, Samson broke the fresh cords that were put on him. The second time he broke the new ropes. The third time he broke out of the loom. Why did Samson not see the danger of visiting a woman who was able to bind him in so many different ways? Perhaps, he had the foolish thought that she was just playing games with him when she bound him. That he played along with her in allowing himself to be bound repeatedly was a part of his sowing. Perhaps, it appealed to his own flesh to do so.

The first time, he found liars in wait in Delilah's chamber. On each subsequent visit, he found that his enemies had repeated access to Delilah's chamber. Why did Samson not see the danger of relaxing his guard in a place frequented by his enemies? Instead, he slept! His sleep there (Judges 16:14) was a significant part of Samson's sowing. While he slept, he was neither awake nor on his guard. Of course, wakeful Christians must learn to bear reproach. A common Philistine tactic is to accuse watchful Christians of having evil minds, of looking for evil, or of being occupied with evil. True Christian watchfulness begins with having the eye fixed on Christ and what is due to Him. We are exhorted: "Wake up, [thou] that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. 5:14). The light here promised to those that wake up will manifest the truth of all that is around them. Alas, Samson was spiritually asleep among the spiritually dead in a

Philistine's chamber.

In a fourth way, Samson's sowing and reaping is apparent in the various devices with which Delilah bound him. The more he sowed, the stronger the shackles grew. First, seven fresh cords were used. These were 'bonds of a woman' and 'cords of lust' because Delilah bound him with them. They signify attempts to control a man by subjection to principles of conduct that have man as their object. The number seven signifies the completeness of the binding, an indication of how complete the bondage was that Delilah intended for him. If Jehovah "drew them [Israel] with bands of a man, with cords of love", it was to "take off the yoke on their jaws" (Hosea 11:4) that they might praise Him in holy liberty. The Lord Jesus also spoke of His yoke as being easy and His burden light (Mat. 11:30), and of setting His people free (John 8:36). Are His yoke and being set free contradictory? Not so, because He has created within the believer a new nature that delights to do His will. True spiritual Nazariteship, total devotion to Christ in separation from evil and from the world in every way, is the gentlest and most gracious expression of the new nature. Because legal bondage to ordinances does not spring from the heart's devotion, legality is a miserable counterfeit for Nazariteship. Like the fresh cords, the latest fads and ordinances of self-help instruction, twelve new steps to behavior modification, the most recent glossy paperback pronouncements of Christian psychologists, etc., may manipulate the masses of Christendom. To the extent that they all address man in the flesh, they are only 'cords of a woman'.

For her second attempt, Delilah tried new ropes "with which no work has been done." These ropes are not exactly the same as the fresh cords because of the explanation that no work had been done in them. These ropes are, therefore, connected with the subject of labor. To what extent is hard work according to the Lord's calling a burden? Paul wrote, "To the present hour we . . . labor, working with our own hands" (1 Cor. 4:11-12). Suppose Satan had offered Paul an easy kind of employment (or none at all), or a life of laziness, or a lifestyle of ease (filled with time to pray and to read his Bible, etc., etc.), would such an offer have been liberating? Would it not rather have been an attempt to use Delilah's ropes? "Uphill work", wrote J.N.D., "is good work." Devoted service to Christ, which includes (but is not limited to) laboring for Him in the use of one's own hands in the calling of life in which one has been called, does not restrict the true Nazarite: instead, it sets him free (sometimes even with enough left over to experience the more blessed part of having somewhat to give to others). The perversion of gift into a meal ticket by the sin of clerisy is as much a binding with ropes as is the laziness of those who will not work for slothfulness.

Thirdly, the bondage of the loom is a trap that is based on a multitude of little entanglements. The loom is not seven big knots, but 7000 little ones. The thin edge of the wedge need not always be followed by a single 'thicker end of the wedge'. Philistinism gains its point if it can get many little wedges inserted where they ought not to be. If in gospel preaching there is a little accommodation to the flesh, in children's work a little more of a different sort, in so-called young peoples' work a bit more, in every sphere of Christian service a different shade of fleshly wisdom, what results is a thorough bondage to Philistinism. Perhaps, the big question never arises: do you tolerate Philistinism? But the battle is lost in the multitude of little concessions to the flesh [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

The specific target of the bondage of the loom was the seven locks of his head

(note: not 'hair,' but 'head'). The implication is a complete bondage over the thoughts of Samson's mind. Weaving is a pretty complicated process and the product is all woven and knotted together. The apostle Paul feared lest our "thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). In that doctrine of Christ, the faithful heart of the true Nazarite rests, "leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). This is Christian liberty of thought. Free-thinking, as practiced by infidels, is like the slavery of Delilah's loom. When our thoughts are formed by the word of God instead of being woven according to the opinions of men, the new nature recognizes its holy liberty to think on Christ and His glory.

Moreover, Samson's growing weakness is now apparent in that he went away with the pin of the beam, but apparently not with the heavy beam itself. Goliath was strong enough to carry a weaver's beam (1 Sam. 17:7), but not Samson. The champion of the Philistines met David with the kind of beam that Delilah had used to fasten Samson's hair. Satan does know how to use the weaver's beam of little mental bindings as a heavy weapon against the soul.

Was there a fourth binding of Samson? Yes, there was, although it is often overlooked when this passage is read. The fourth time Delilah bound Samson, she bound him with what we may call a 'harness' because it bound him so that she could control his conduct by means of her bonds. The 'harness' was neither cords, nor ropes, nor a loom: it was a set of straps and links of command. These straps were not bound on his muscles, but on his heart, and we recognize them for the first time when she said, "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?" (Judges 16:15) This harness was firmly strapped around his heart, and she increased its strength daily as she nagged him day by day. She pressed. She urged. What did she press and urge? She pressed and urged the claims of love. And all the time, she held the reins firmly in her own hand so that she could manipulate him as a puppet is manipulated until he would tell her his secret. She hit him right in his heart and kept it up day after day until he was vexed. Perhaps, she saw him weakening. She had the advantage against him, because he was ignorant of her thoughts (cp. 2 Cor. 2:11).

No doubt, Samson thought that she said such things because she loved him too. She may have spoken much of love but there was no true love in Delilah's heart for Samson. There are many Nazarites that love Philistines, but there never was a Philistine who loved a Nazarite. It does not work that way. It is a one way street. So Delilah never said, 'I love you' although she did love the money. Samson did not reap the crop that Samson really wanted; instead, Samson reaped from the flesh what Samson sowed to his own flesh.

### *The Discipline of God*

The discipline of God is the third reason why Samson's sins do not really besmirch Nazariteship. The whole subject of the discipline of God is a large one. It is sufficient here to note that God's discipline falls on Laodicea as described in Rev. 3. "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love," says the Lord Jesus Christ to Laodicea (Rev. 3:19). Ah, lukewarm Samson! In what way was he lukewarm? The secret of his Nazariteship was not totally despised by him: his thoughts toward his Nazariteship were not so cold that he would lightly tell his secret. Esau was so cold

of heart towards his birthright that he sold it the first time he got an offer for it, but Samson held out against Delilah for a long time. On the other hand, he did not keep the secret of his Nazariteship in the power of red-hot devotedness to God, because he did tell it at last! Hence, he was neither cold nor hot. The coming of the government of God upon Samson in rebuke and discipline distances the truth of God about Nazariteship from his evil deeds.

Samson's Nazariteship was a secret between his soul and his God. That was where the secret should have stayed. Delilah knew it when she heard it. The lords of the Philistines sensed it too, because this time they brought the money. But the most significant fact of all is that God knew it, and Samson had to deal with God about the loss of his secret.

Of course, very many souls refuse to recognize the discipline of God. This is a kind of spiritual blindness, often covered over with a plea about ignorance: "I am ignorant," some say, "of why anyone would ascribe my circumstances to the discipline of God. After all, such troubles are common in the world." Because this Philistine woman did not understand Nazariteship, she had to ask him wherein his great strength lay. Her object was to tie him up, but her ignorance is nothing to reproach her with. On the other hand, many Christians today are ignorant of the power that comes from devoted separation from the world to God and of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ Who rebukes and chastens those He loves. Power in an evil day is manifested in separation from evil. That may not have been so apparent at the beginning of the church's history, but now corruption has come in everywhere, and God's discipline follows according to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Rev. 3:19. Widespread Laodicean blindness prevents many from seeing what ought to be more evident now than ever. When there is a deliberate forsaking of truth, that blindness has a judicial character and is tantamount to a chastening. And so it was both for Laodicea and for Samson.

Consider what happened to Samson's discernment. When he knew not that the Lord had departed from him (Judges 16:20), he still had his physical eyesight, but where was his spiritual eyesight? Why did he think Delilah was asking these questions and where did he think they might lead? We may judge that he was blind to Delilah's evil because he did not want to see it. This is wilful blindness. But later he was blind to the loss of his own strength and did not know that he was blind: in the same way, Laodicea knows not that she is blind (Rev. 3:17). Because Samson was as ignorant of his blindness as Laodicea is of hers and because Laodicea is the object of God's discipline, we may recognize Samson's blindness as to his loss of strength as a judicial blindness. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, but Samson did not have the fear of the Lord in going into this association with a Philistine woman. Thus, his wilful blindness was the just prelude of judicial blindness coming upon him according to the discipline of God.

In a similar manner, many other circumstances of Samson's ruin come from the disciplinary hand of God. The loss of his hair, the loss of his strength, his capture, his bonds, the putting out of his eyes, his imprisonment, his shackles, his being forced to make sport for the Philistine crowd — all these things came upon Samson according to the discipline of God. For each item listed, there was a wilful sin in Samson's life that preceded it. For example, Samson had already given up his Nazarite character, why should he not lose his hair? His discernment was gone, why should not he lose his eyes also? The brass of his chains typified the judgment he

was justly under, just as brass sets forth the judgment that the Lord Jesus willingly bore for our sins on the cross. The moral correspondence between Samson's sins and the circumstances of Samson's ruin are so plain that they may look like more of Samson's reaping of what Samson sowed. Gal. 6:8 may help us to discern this difference: when Samson sowed to his flesh (as described above), he reaped a harvest from the flesh, that vile principle of sin, and the harvest led him down further into iniquity. Now, however, the circumstances of Samson's ruin came from God (not from the flesh) and brought his fleshly course to an abrupt end. Faith, dear Christian reader, sees the hand of God in the ruin of Samson, not a reaping from the flesh, and definitely not a victory for the Philistines!

Because the hand of God was on Samson in discipline to bring him to a place of repentance, no credit goes to the Philistines for Samson's ruin. No, not even a little. Samson was weak now, and there is no ground to boast in overcoming a weakling. The Philistines were not strong, merely rich enough to pay for the betrayal of Samson. In passing, we may note that the price was high that the lords of the Philistines paid. Delilah had her eye on the money, as Judas Iscariot did also when he betrayed the Lord Jesus. Do we not also know that a little looseness in principles to make Philistine professors of Christianity feel at home brings in the money? Is the temptation to use larger donations for great exploits in Jesus' name so great that the Spirit's leading according to the Word must become our great resource only after a contributory base has been laid by fleshly means? Shame on us if it is so! And no one should ever give any praise to Philistines who buy their victories with money.

Delilah also begins to afflict him herself. She who was a woman, a weaker vessel according to nature, was stronger than Samson. This was adding insult to injury. But no one gives Delilah credit for her strength in being able to afflict strong Samson. And how could anyone think that Philistinism gained in stature for binding a man who was already so weak that a woman could afflict him?

To recognize the discipline of God in the circumstances of Samson is to see the hand of God, not the hand of man. When professed Christians (especially those who have long proclaimed the truth of separation from evil) embrace toleration of the grossest forms of sin for the sake of peace or politics, the discipline of God cannot be far behind them. When we see such ruin as Samson's, there should be no temptation to give up truth because God's discipline is there to teach the value of holy devotion to Christ in true separation from evil and because no credit goes to Philistines when the people of God fall into moral ruin. The people of God today would do well to meditate on these things in the light of the sanctuary of God.

### ***Did Philistinism Win the Final Victory over Samson?***

Although the Philistines rejoiced to honor their idol Dagon in the matter of Samson's capture, the victory of Philistinism over Samson was a victory in name only. It is true that Samson was defeated. But credit for Samson's defeat goes to the discipline of God, as we have already seen above. Moreover, the real victory in this chapter belongs to God, not to Dagon.

Most commonly, victory is determined by a body count of the slain. The heaps



upon heaps of dead Philistines at Etam, a chief feature of Judges 15, demonstrate irrefutably that Samson had won a victory. Often, however, the body count is restricted to the more significant body (or bodies). For example, David was so precious to his people, that his death would have meant defeat and his survival implied victory, no matter if half his men should die (2 Sam. 18:3). So the dead body of a single young lion, a chief feature of Judges 14, is of great typical significance in that its death portrays Christ's victory over Satan at the cross. In some cases, a dead body appears but is not relevant to the issue of victory or defeat. The dead body of Manoah's kid, a chief feature of Judges 13, was a sacrifice of a burnt offering: the dying substitute was not defeated at all when it made atonement for him. Finally, in some cases, victory and defeat are assessed in terms of property destruction or in the gain or loss of territory. Therefore, we must turn our thoughts deliberately to the corpse of Samson and to those who died around him: here we will be able to assess the results of the conflict between Nazariteship and Philistinism. We shall see that Samson was restored to true Nazariteship before he died, with disastrous results for Philistinism.

First, let us count the corpses. If a dead Samson counts as one point for the Philistines, then how many points does Samson get for the 3000 men and women on the roof when he pushed the pillars down? He slew more than the "heaps upon heaps" of Judges 15:16 because there he slew only a thousand men. Is counting corpses in this way a reasonable method of assessing a victory? Do intelligent people conclude where a moral victory lies by such enumerations? Of course not. It is a very foolish procedure. Then why are so many professed Christians so proud of themselves when they count the numbers of their converts? Why are baptismal records totalled? Why is the 'planting' of a multitude of so-called churches a cause of more rejoicing if someone else has 'planted' only a few? Remember that the Lord Jesus spoke comforting words to His "little flock"! In controversies that center around the maintenance of Christian unity (i.e., excluding from consideration disputes over fundamentally evil doctrine, etc.) it is almost universally true that the glory of the Lord will be found allied with the smaller remnant. The reason for the Lord standing with the minority so frequently is that majorities trust in numbers and minorities must trust in the Lord alone. And He will never disappoint their faith. The unity of the church of God is not a unity of consensus of larger numbers, but a unity of devotion to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The essence and substance of unity, which will appear in glory at His coming, is conformity to His death, by which that glory was all wrought," wrote J.N.D. in 1828 (CW 1:27). What an apt way to describe the essence of true Nazariteship! Counting numbers, therefore, is a fleshly, Philistinish thing to do. But if you insist on counting numbers anyway, be sure of this: Philistinism lost!

The second way to assess a victory is to count only the most significant dead body (or bodies). On one side, there was dead Samson. On the other, there were five lords of the Philistines (they were all there, Judges 16:27). When the house fell in on the lords of the Philistines (Judges 16:30), surely the victory did not belong to Philistinism. All their lords were swept away in this one blow. Moreover, it seems likely that the roof fell in on Dagon also at the same time (Judges 16:23ff). Let us then count Dagon also as destroyed by Samson. In contrast, Israel lost one Samson, whose leadership had already been rejected by the men of Judah (Judges 15:11-13). He was therefore an expendable man as far as Judah was concerned.

Admittedly, Judah lost Samson, but did God lose him? For Samson, as for all others, the place of departure was the place of recovery. This does not always mean a geographical place, but rather a return to the same moral circumstances that marked the soul's departure from the ways of God. At Etam, the place of Samson's victory, he prayed, thanking God for giving him the victory. Then he went down to Gaza and farther down to Delilah's chamber where he learned to lie. Accordingly, Samson's recovery is not to be found so much in the regrowth of his hair (a natural thing that did occur), but in his learning to pray again (Judges 16:28). In his prayer, Samson used three names for God: Jehovah, Adonai and Elohim. Jehovah means the self-existent One, Adonai means the Lord of all the earth, and Elohim means God in His supremacy. He called upon the God that he knew to strengthen him this one more time in vengeance for his eyes. In short, now he knew God and returned to the path of dependence on Him. And so, God's strength is made perfect once again in Samson's weakness (cp. 2 Cor. 12:9), who again rested in the Rock, as it were. He took up his rightful place as a Nazarite in conscious weakness and asked for strength, knowing that the strength of a true Nazarite always comes from above.

Moreover, Samson humbled himself: he bowed himself with all his might. The flesh lifts itself up with all its might, but true Nazariteship is characterized by dependence, obedience and bowing oneself down before God.

And so Samson entered at last into a (short but happy) life of true fellowship and communion with God. His thoughts and God's thoughts about Philistines became the same thoughts. No longer did he love where God hated. The light at last shined brightly into his soul, so that he (though blind physically) could see clearly the true character of Philistinism. The corruption that goes with bypassing Jordan and Gilgal is so vile that "every one who thinks of it has to testify with his whole strength, that somehow or other he may keep himself clear of it, that he be not ashamed in the day of the Lord's coming" (wording by J.N.D. in 1828, CW 1:33). With his whole strength, Samson proved himself to be clear of Philistinism on the last day of his life.

When Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines", he who had lived all his life in closer and closer association with Philistines separated himself completely and forever from Philistinism. You know he hoped that Delilah was on that roof. Dead men have no associations of this world, having been set free forever from all the entanglements of life. Samson left their prison, their fetters, the heart-attachments of their women, the handhold of the lad — in short, he distanced himself from Philistinism in every possible way. From these considerations, then, we may be sure indeed that God did not lose Samson, but instead received him back, restored in grace to the ranks of the faithful Nazarites who combat Philistinism wherever and whenever it is found. Thus, the true score is: 5 lords of the Philistines and Dagon destroyed by Samson, and 1 Samson lost by Judah offset by 1 Samson restored to God. When God is looked to in the outcome of the conflict, we may surely see that Philistinism lost!

The third possibility is that the question of who won or lost is not connected with the dead bodies at all. Destruction of property, for example, is a significant part of conflicts between nations. Here in Judges 16, Samson destroyed the gates of Gaza, Delilah's loom, two pillars, one roof and the house of Dagon (as we may suppose that was the house where they sacrificed to their idol). The property loss

to Israel was nothing. Were any of the Philistines' losses significant? Well, they could all be replaced, no doubt, because idols are mere handcrafts. But the pushing over of the two pillars of Philistinism may be of rather more typical significance. The two pillars of Philistinism are: 1) the notion that man in the flesh can possess the inheritance of God apart from death with Christ (Jordan), and 2) the folly of supposing that the inheritance of God can be inhabited without the cutting off of the flesh (Gilgal). Against these principles, God raises up the strength of spiritual Nazariteship and they fall like the pillars on which Samson pushed with all his might. Solomon's temple at Jerusalem also had two pillars, but Solomon's pillars were never pushed over by a Philistine: one was named Jachin (meaning 'He shall establish') and the other was named Boaz (meaning 'In Him is strength'). Then, from this point of view also, Philistinism lost!

Finally, there is the question of the loss of territory. Nations care very much about this issue. According to Judges 13:25, the region between Zorah and Eshtaol was a place where the Spirit of Jehovah moved at the beginning of Samson's career. The last verse on Samson (Judges 16:31) shows that Samson was buried in the same place. From this we see that Samson's life marked an era in which no ground was lost to Philistinism. Admittedly, there is no evidence that Judah gained any ground from the Philistines at this time either, but Judah was not generally characterized by Nazariteship. The absence of lasting progress under Samson correlates with the lack of prayer and the absence of confession for sins by the men of Judah. There are, therefore, no grounds whatsoever from any point of view for awarding any real victory to Philistinism.

As "Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex. 17:16), so true Nazariteship never ceases to oppose Philistinism while life and breath remain. Abiding in fellowship with God is the secret of successful Nazariteship: this is the lesson of Hebron. The Holy Spirit of God dwells within the believer, and submission to Him is the only source of strength so as to reap the fruits of eternal life: this is the lesson of sowing and reaping. God chastens each of His sons according to His perfect wisdom and love so that we might each enjoy full fellowship with Him: this is the lesson of the discipline of God. And Philistinism never wins when it fights against Nazariteship. Never.

Dear Christian reader, there do not exist enough true Nazarites today. Surely, you have noticed this sad fact. Perhaps, you have heard the voice of the Spirit calling your soul to a life of more complete devotion to the Lord Jesus and more thorough separation from the world as you have been reading about the history of Samson. Because there are more than enough would-be Samsons in the world today, be careful that you know the difference between a Samson and a true Nazarite.

Let us not be discouraged because we live in a day of ruin. Let us not lower our standards of devotion and separation as Samson did. Let us be true spiritual Nazarites with our whole strength, for the Lord Jesus' sake. Do you fear being slandered as a practitioner of legality? Do you despair because you think that true devotion to the Lord will lead you into a lonely life of isolation? Do you think that separation from worldliness will doom you to a life in which there will be fewer opportunities for service? Do you think that you may not be strong enough to be a Nazarite? Do you doubt the value of Nazariteship because you have known respected and intelligent Christians who have deliberately sheltered some heinous

sin (incest, for example, or abortion or the remarriage of divorced persons whom Christ has pronounced to be adulterers)? Does structured religion (clerisy instead of the pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus, liturgy instead of the leading of the Spirit, religious entertainments instead of sober ministry by gift) seem more suited to these Laodicean times? Does the notion of the autonomy of local assemblies have strong appeal because you have seen Christian fellowships of larger vision ruined by indifference to moral evil? Does true union on the ground of the oneness of the body of Christ in separation from evil seem so elusive that 'reunion' begins to sound like an acceptable substitute? Dear brother and/or dear sister, as surely as Rev. 3:20 is not primarily a gospel verse, so there are moral lessons for us all in the life of Samson.

"Be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:19, 20).

Lord Jesus, open our ears to hear Thy voice.

Dennis Ryan, 1996

## ***"A Man in Christ"***

### ***Ephesians 2:11; 3***

In our last paper we saw the privileges of the believer as associated with the risen Christ in new life, in present blessing, and in future dominion and glory. This is the portion of the individual Christian; and in the scriptures then before us only a brief, though very blessed, reference was made to the character of the Church. The part we now come to is, however, more concerned with the Church than with the individual Christian. In the passage already looked at, the Church was shown as the body of Christ -- "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." But the passage we are now to examine regards it in another aspect, bringing out its exceptional nature, its wide departure from all God's previously pursued or previously announced plans. In former times God had called a people into special relationship with Himself. This people was "the commonwealth of Israel," and to it belonged the knowledge of God, the birth of the Messiah, the covenants of promise, and the outward mark of circumcision. In Old Testament history, they had been His favored, though rebellious, people. In Old Testament prophecies, they were the centre of all His dealings. The glories of the Messiah were to be displayed in their midst, and no promise of blessing was made to the Gentiles save through them.

But God was now performing a work entirely distinct from anything recorded in Old Testament narrative, or predicted in Old Testament prophecies. The apostle therefore calls upon the Ephesian believers, who were of Gentile origin, to remember that they had no title such as the Jews might claim, not having one of those marks, which the Jews possessed, of relationship with God. They had been "in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands." Moreover, they were at that time "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph.

2:11, 12). But though the Gentiles had no title founded on covenant, promise, or national connection, God was now bringing them in by His own sovereign grace. The Jews, who had a direct interest in the Messiah, had rejected Him and shed His blood. This had caused them, as a nation, to be set aside, and had ended, until their restoration, all those purposes to which the covenants and promises referred. God had therefore turned, as it were, to another object. "The blood of Christ," which caused the national rejection of the Jews, was made the means of bringing people nigh. But in this sovereign and wonderful action of grace, God was no longer confined within the channels traced out by prophecy. All the prophetic blessings were postponed, because the nation in whom they centered was rejected. A new class of blessings, richer, higher, and with no restriction of nation or class, was thus brought in.

Hence the apostle says, "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (v. 13). Thus Gentile believers were brought nigh by that very blood, the shedding of which caused the rejection of the Jews and the postponement of their national blessings. And not only was the blessing entirely different from what they as Gentiles could have enjoyed, if the covenants of promise to Israel had then been fulfilled; it was of a far higher order than even the Jew Himself could have enjoyed under those covenants. For these Gentiles were now brought nigh "in Christ Jesus," which is a standing never spoken of in Old Testament prophecy. In this wondrous place the believing Jew and the believing Gentile were blended together, all earthly distinctions disappearing in the new character of blessing, into which both were now introduced. Christ not only had made peace for them, but was their peace, and had "made both one," having "broken down the middle wall of partition," and "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (vv. 14, 15).

This passage conclusively shows that Christianity is not the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, but something brought in while this awaits its fulfilment. In the fulfilment of the prophecies, the Jew will receive the place of pre-eminence which the covenants of promise assign him, and his blessings will be of a national character. The blessings here named are not national, but individual, and require the setting aside of all national distinctions for their accomplishment. Moreover, the passage speaks of both Jew and Gentile being made in Christ into "one new man." Understood literally, this could have no meaning; but understood figuratively, its sense is at once clear and beautiful. The Church is the body of Christ; and the Church and Christ are the "one new man" here spoken of. Language such as this is wholly foreign to the old prophets. It implies a nearness of relationship which the Old Testament never contemplates, and which indeed would be entirely inconsistent with the character in which the Messiah will be known by His earthly people.

But this nearness of relationship is the blessed portion of the believer, without distinction of Jew or Gentile; for Christ's object was, "that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (v. 16). The cross has not only obtained for us forgiveness of sins. It has ended up our standing in the flesh. As "dead with Christ," earthly and fleshly distinctions cease; and in the new creation, that is, in Christ Himself, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, circumcision nor uncircumcision. By the cross we are dead, and the enmities of the flesh are slain with us. Thus both Jew and Gentile are reconciled "unto God in one

body." This body is, of course, the body of Christ, the Church, which stands therefore entirely outside all earthly distinctions or covenant relationships. Hence peace can now be preached alike, says the apostle, "to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (v. 17); for those that were nigh having forfeited their claim, and those that were afar off never having had any claim, both are now dealt with on the same footing of sovereign grace. They are brought, not into the position which as a nation the Jews had lost by their rejection of the Christ, but into an entirely new position; "for through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (v. 18). Jehovah is the name and character in which Israel will yet know God. But under the new order of things introduced by grace, the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, knows God as Father.

The result is that old distinctions altogether vanish. "Now therefore ye" (the Gentile believers) "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints" (that is, believers generally, whether Jewish or Gentile) "and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone" (vv. 19, 20). Both Jewish and Gentile believers are transplanted from their old ground and placed in entirely different soil. They are "fellow-citizens," but not of an earthly country; for "our citizenship is in heaven." They are of the "household of God" -- a closer relationship than the Jew will enjoy when his national blessings reach their highest point. They are built into a new and wonderful structure, of which "Jesus Christ Himself" is the chief corner-stone, and "the apostles and prophets" the foundation course.

In the next chapter we read that the mystery of the Church was in other ages "not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). This shows that the prophets here spoken of in connection with the apostles were not the Old Testament prophets. In the times of the Old Testament prophets the mystery was not made known. To the prophets here named, as well as to the apostles, the mystery was made known. In this epistle "prophets" are only named three times, and each time in connection with "apostles." Both apostles and prophets are spoken of as gifts of an ascended Christ. The prophets therefore here mentioned as forming part of the foundation on which we are built are not the Old Testament prophets, but the prophets to whom this mystery was now first imparted.

But the figure of our oneness with Christ is still strikingly continued; for after speaking of Him as "the chief corner-stone," the Spirit adds, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (vv. 21, 22). Strictly speaking, it is not correct to say that a building grows, or that the various materials added are built together, in the corner-stone. But this very departure from strict accuracy only shows with greater vividness the prominence in which the Spirit seeks to set the thought of our standing "in Christ." In another epistle Paul writes, that "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Here the Church is the body, and Christ is the head; but the two are looked upon as so identified that the body itself, as well as the head, is spoken of as "Christ." It is the same blending together of Christ and the Church that we find in the passage before us. Christ is the corner-stone, and believers are the rest of the building; but so bound up are they with each other that the whole is spoken of as in Him, and is said to be builded together

in Him "for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

This is God's building, consisting only of real believers, who are built together in Christ, and form, as thus constructed, a suitable dwelling-place for Himself. It must be carefully distinguished from the building raised by man on the same foundation -- a building in which all sorts of worthless material are brought in, and which will therefore be tried by fire. A confusion between these two buildings has been the source of very much and very lamentable error.

Thus we have two remarkable figures of the Church, in both of which its oneness with Christ is very strikingly set forth. Considered as a body, it is the body of Christ -- a thing necessary, as it were, to His own completeness. Considered as a temple, a dwelling-place for God, it is "buildd together" in Christ, He Himself being the chief corner-stone, all believers being reared upon this foundation, and the whole growing up to completeness in Him.

To Paul was specially entrusted this truth concerning the new thing which God was bringing in. For this cause he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles, having had given to him "a dispensation of the grace of God" towards them. He had received "by revelation" a mystery -- or secret purpose of God -- not disclosed in past times, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:1-6). That the Gentiles should be "fellow-heirs" with the Jews was a new thing, not only in fact, but in the revealed purposes of God. Still more marvelous was it that they should be "of the same body;" for this was something which neither Jew nor Gentile had ever heard of. They were made "fellow-heirs" with each other by being made fellow-heirs with Christ; they were made "of the same body" with each other by being made members of the body of Christ. It was thus that the Gentiles became "partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel." According to covenants and prophecy, Christ was the special hope of Israel. But the promises of blessing in Christ went far beyond Israel, and were wide enough to embrace God's present work, in which Jew and Gentile are blended together, as well as that work to which the covenants and prophecies of the Old Testament look forward.

Paul therefore had before him two objects. As a servant of the gospel he had "this grace given;" to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3: 7, 8). And as the one to whom the mystery was revealed, he was "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 9-11). This is a wonderful passage. God, as creator of all things, had shown His wisdom. But there was a still more marvelous display which this wisdom was to receive, a display contemplated in God's counsels from all eternity, but now first brought to light. When all His earthly purposes seemed to be frustrated, when Satan seemed to have succeeded, God's manifold wisdom displays itself by turning this very apparent defeat into the crowning victory of His grace. The great seeming triumph which Satan achieved at the cross, the temporary setting aside of all the revealed purposes of blessing and glory through Christ, only gave occasion for God to put a higher glory on Christ, and to introduce a richer and more unrestricted blessing than any before revealed. Thus the manifold character of God's wisdom shows itself, and not only to men, but to the principalities and

powers in heavenly places. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" when they beheld His wisdom in creating the world; but they see its manifold nature and its brightest display in His ways concerning the Church.

This leads the apostle to a very remarkable prayer, which closes the third chapter. In the prayer which concludes the first chapter, Christ is looked upon as man, as the One who was raised from the dead. The prayer is, therefore, addressed to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the prayer of the third chapter, the subject is not our standing in Christ, but Christ dwelling in our hearts. Christ is looked upon, not as the man raised from the dead, but as the One who accomplishes the purposes of God, and manifests His love. It is more as the Son revealing the Father, than as the man glorifying God and glorified by Him, that He is here presented before us. The prayer is therefore addressed, not to "the God," but to "the [father of our Lord Jesus Christ]" (v. 14). While the earlier prayer, moreover, is, that we may understand God's purposes and power, this carries us into a still higher region. The apostle prays that we may, according to the riches of God's glory, "be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled to all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19).

Here we have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as the source of strength, and that "according to the riches of God's glory"; Christ taking His abode in our hearts by faith; the soul, "rooted and grounded in love," able to enter into the vastness of God's ways; "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of those purposes which His grace has formed for His own glory, as well as for our blessing; and, finally, ourselves taught to know, not indeed in its extent -- for in this it passes knowledge -- but in its nature, the wondrous love of Christ Himself, that we may "be filled to all the fulness of God." This last expression is beautiful in its very indefiniteness. That we can be filled to God's fulness is, of course, impossible; but this is, as it were, the measure in which God is willing to supply, and the only limit of the Holy Ghost's desire for us. Full as we may be, there is still infinitely more beyond; so that there is no limit to what is placed at our command.

And then, after bringing out all God's wonderful purposes, His power and His grace; after showing His manifold wisdom, as displayed in the Church, the apostle concludes by an outburst of praise to Him. "Now," he says, "unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20, 21). It is surely meet that He who has displayed His wisdom and grace in calling the Church should throughout eternity derive glory from it. Such is the apostle's desire, and such should be the desire of every believer brought into this marvelous place. It will be fulfilled in the ages to come; but just in proportion as our hearts enter into the spirit of this prayer will it be their desire that, as far as may be, it should be fulfilled now.

T. B. B., *The Christian Friend*, 1878, pp. 150-153, 182-188.



## *Document Q and Dr. Eta Linnemann*

Dr. Linnemann is a woman. She was

a student of Rudolph Bultman and Ernst Fuchs, broke with higher-critical scholarship and wrote *Historical Criticism of the Bible* to rebuke its abuse of Scripture. *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* Offers a specific example.

"I am shocked," she says, "when I look at the books of my former colleagues and examine the justification for their position. Instead of proof I find assertions. Instead of arguments there is only circular reasoning."<sup>4</sup>

She was in the same state of mind as the rest of the "higher critics," but the Lord saved her. This caused a revolution in her thinking.

The *Trinity Journal* 17NS (1996) 3-18, carried an abridged article by her, *The Lost Gospel of Q -- Fact or Fantasy?*, in which, like Samson with the jaw bone of an ass (an appropriate weapon with which to be struck, don't you think, for braying about solemn, divine communications?), she wacked the absurd higher critical myth of the Philistines about the 'fairy tale' of a document named Quelle (Q -- "source"); believed, by those hostile to the inspiration of the gospels, to underlie the gospels. The mythical Q provides grist for the mental mills of higher critical minds -- and, sad to say, of so-called evangelicals influenced by this show of superior learning. She aptly applies 2 Pet. 1:16 to this "fantasy." In this article she wrote:

In sum, Q's existence cannot be corroborated from manuscript evidence, Paul's letters, or the known history of the church. Q and the "Q people" are an historical fiction, no more real than the man in the moon. It would be intellectually irresponsible to rethink Christian faith based on such a tale.

Let us hope that so-called conservative evangelical scholars will follow suit.

Now, I suggest that this Christian woman's case is a rebuke from the Lord. It indicates the awful condition of the church. It indicates the condition of Christian scholarship. Why was this notion about Q ever acceptable to any who profess to believe in the divine inspiration of the gospels? Readers know that we do not approve of women teachers, because the Word shows us this. That is not to say that He cannot use a woman in this way; and clearly she is a very capable person. That is God acting sovereignly. Ours is to obey. But we can recognize His hand -- and we ought to recognize the Lord's rebuke through the instrument used to denounce the Q figment.

For we have not made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, following cleverly imagined fables . . . (2 Pet. 1:16).

Every scripture [is] divinely inspired, and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, fully fitted to every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Ed.

## *Higher Criticism in Philadelphia Showing its Paganism*

In Nov. 1995:

Eight thousand professors of religion, Bible scholars and Christian theologians filled the Convention Center in downtown Philadelphia, and attended seven hundred and thirty eight official meetings, seminars and consultations of all sorts -- in one long weekend. This is a mammoth meeting of the minds of North American religious academia, and it gets bigger every year.<sup>5</sup>

What would any faithful, separated Christian be doing among this mass of Philistines? -- except to observe and report. Sounds like a mixture of feminists, liberals in divine matters, radical scholars, those who enjoy Q-fests, etc. The Word is to be treated like any other book and any other religious views. The truth claims and exclusiveness of Christianity are to be rejected as something only for grossly deficient minds.

Persons present were connected with the American Academy of religion (AAR) and the Society of Biblical literature (SBL). Commenting on the grossness of what went on, the author wrote:

Beyond seminars on Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, and American Indian animism, AAR welcomes Swedenborgianism, Theosophy (the study of the occult), pagan mysticism, and, muted forms of witchcraft, as well as religious/political movements like lesbianism and gay studies. The pro-gay, lesbian and feminist agenda is everywhere, and caressing lesbian couples, who train our youth, much in evidence. The radical nature of AAR can be captured by some of the lecture titles . . . But the SBL offerings {are} not too far behind . . . Roman Catholic Scholar, Rosemary Radford Ruether, of Garrett Evangelical Theological seminary, whose own feminist spirituality is informed more by pre-Christian pagan goddesses than Christ and the Bible . . . called for the recognition of the diversity of family patterns, the rediscovery of pre-Christian spiritualities, and the need for repentance on the part of Christians for rejecting native religions as pagan . . . These feminists are completing the movement of SBL, begun years back, to cut the Bible back to size, to give other religions equal time, and let scholars follow truth where it led. We now see clearly where religious egalitarianism leads -- directly into paganism.

It is leading to the revelation of the next **AVATAR**, the **Director of Religious Affairs for the West**, the highest expression of human occultism, the Lawless One, i.e., the final **Antichrist of Prophecy**.

Ed.

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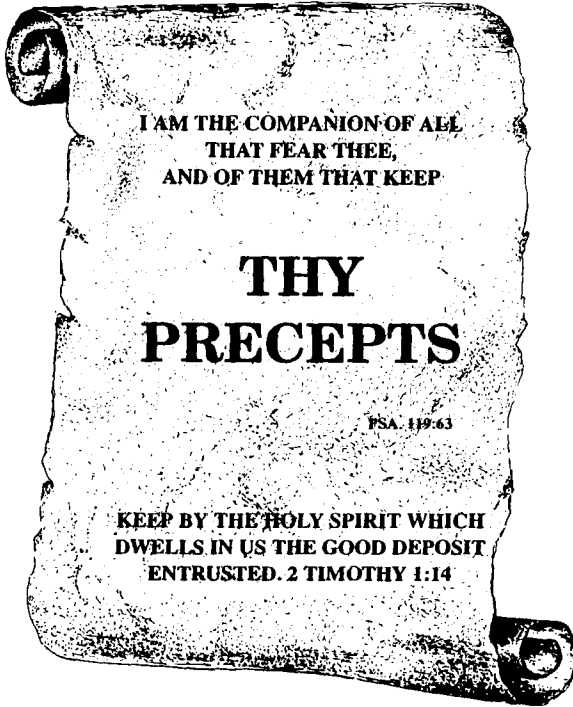
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## **THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON**

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### ***The truth of Christ's Person: Is It Taught by Mr. F. E. Raven?***

**By W. T. Whybrow**

To one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ no apology will be needed for drawing attention to Mr. Raven's last paper, entitled *The Person of the Christ* (issued in 1895), to which may now be added *Notes of Readings, etc., at Quemerford*.<sup>1</sup> Months have passed since the publication of the former pamphlet; and now, instead of rebuke or protest from those associated with him, and who are involved in the responsibility of his erroneous teaching, a company of them gathered at Quemerford are found sitting at his feet and drinking it in, if not striving to enforce it. The few objectors are practically crushed.

### ***Humanity a Part of Christ's Person***

The principle he has now adopted, namely, that humanity forms no part of the Person of the Lord, fatally compromises the truth of Christ. He says it is derogatory to the truth of the Son to think that, in becoming man,

He is *in person* something which He was not before.

It is a Person in a condition in which He was not previously.<sup>2</sup>

Christ, he says,

is not man in the sense that He is God.<sup>3</sup>

In Person He is God, in condition He is Man.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore he would not allow that He is *personally* man;<sup>5</sup> He is a divine Person who came into human form and condition.<sup>6</sup>

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1. *Truth for the Time* (Part 8), Morrish.

2. *The Person, &c.*, p. 3.

3. *Truth*, p. 145.

4. *Truth*, pp. 132, 146.

5. *Truth*, p. 132.

6. *Truth*, p. 134.

a divine Person assuming human condition.<sup>7</sup>

Christ's humanity is thus, according to Mr. Raven, a condition. He does not believe in Christ's individuality as a man. He denies personality in the man Christ Jesus. Christ's humanity is for him impersonal. He may, perhaps, allow that it consisted of body, soul, and spirit;<sup>8</sup> but his reply on the point leaves it very doubtful whether he holds even to Christ's human spirit.<sup>9</sup> But it is clear he refuses Christ's human personality. For him the Lord's humanity is "actual condition," as opposed to the Gnostic idea.<sup>10</sup>

### ***If Not, No True Christ***

Well would he be able to say with those Puseyite theologians who have preceded him in these profane reveries,

How such human nature as body, soul, and spirit, including a human will, could be held in personal union with the divine, so that this humanity was complete without a human personality or ego, we cannot understand, but we believe it is a mystery revealed for faith.

Mr. Darby asks, Where? and adds, "They have no true Christ at all."<sup>11</sup>

How strange and solemn the fact that this should be no less true of Mr. Raven and his followers to-day!

A Christ without human personality, but merely a divine Person in the condition of human life<sup>12</sup> is not a true Christ at all.

### ***Jesus, God and Man in One Person***

It is well that in his pamphlet he has come to Scripture. The attacks he therein speaks of, "based on isolated statements culled from letters he has written," were but demands for Scripture proof of the doctrines he now reproduces and develops. To speak of these as attacks does not mark a consciousness of having Scripture for his ideas on the Person of Christ. He must remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Object of faith and love to every believer. It is therefore quite out of place for Mr. R. to adopt an injured tone when introducing thoughts about Him which are acknowledged to be in opposition

7. *The Person, &c.*, p. 2.

8. (In using the words soul and spirit in another paper, *The Person of Christ*, for example, he was attaching new meanings to these old terms, as such heretics do. That paper is not to be confused with the title that W. T. Whybrow is reviewing here.)

9. *Truth*, p. 135.

10. *Truth*, p. 125.

11. *Bible Witness and Review* 1.206 (1877). [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

12. *Truth*, p. 129.



to those entertained by Christians generally, as well as hitherto accepted by brethren as true. He repudiates the statement quoted from the Liturgy of the Anglican Establishment, "God and man, one Christ." <sup>13</sup> Not that this, or any other creed, is of the least authority for faith, but the phrase quoted fairly expresses, in a human way, the revealed truth of the Person of Christ. Mr. R. would substitute for it a formula of his own, namely:

a divine Person assuming human condition,

a Person in a condition in which He was not previously,

denying at the same time

the union in Him of God and man; <sup>14</sup>

and in reply to the question "Why is He not *personally* man?" saying:

He is the Son, but in the condition of a man. <sup>15</sup>

Thus he as plainly falsifies the truth of the Person of Christ as Athanasius fairly expresses it; and flatly contradicts the teaching of Mr. Darby, who says as to the Person of Christ:

The simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one person, can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you *deny* personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. <sup>16</sup>

### ***Mr. R.'s Teaching Systematized***

The two points taken up in Mr. Raven's pamphlet are by no means new, nor have those who reject his doctrines shifted the ground of conflict. From the first, the Person of Christ was, more or less, distinctly in question. He writes,

#### 13. A friend communicates the following:

The Athanasian Creed runs as follows -- "We believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man . . . who, although He be *God and Man*, yet He is not two, but *one Christ*." And again, lower down, "So *God and Man* is *one Christ*," where the Greek has *ἑστι* (ὡσπερ γὰρ ψυχὴ λογικὴ καὶ σὰρξ εἰς ἑστὶν ἄνθρωπος, οὕτως θεὸς καὶ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ἑστὶ Χριστός).

Athanasius himself says (*De Trin.* Dialog. 5): *Χριστὸς ἐν πρόσωπόν ἑστι συντεθὲν ἐκ θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρωπότητος, ὡς πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὁ κοινὸς ἐκ ζώου καὶ λογικοῦ.*

Augustine says (in *Joh.* Tract. 783: *Utruncque autem simul non duo, sed unus est Christus. Ne sit quaternitas non trinitas Deus. Sicut enim unus est homo anima rationalis et caro, sic unus est Christus Deus et Homo.*

These, out of innumerable passages from early Christian writers, show clearly that Mr. Raven introduces thoughts which are in opposition to those entertained by Christians representative of the faith of Christians in all ages and places.

14. *The Person, &c.*, p. 3.

15. *Truth, &c.*, p. 133. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

16. *Bible Witness and Review* 1:205 (1877).

under date of August 25, 1890:

What characterized the second man could not include all that was true of a divine Person;

and, again,

I cannot imagine how any one could think that the second man covers all that is true of the Son; yet the second man was out of heaven, as eternal life was with the Father.

November 25, 1890, three months later than the above, the same thing is repeated in almost identical terms,<sup>17</sup> yet three days afterwards, in a letter published by himself,<sup>18</sup> he says:

I had no system of doctrine, nor the faintest idea of propounding any.

In the same letter he says:

I think that I have, through grace, received light on these subjects, though four months previously he had disclaimed having "found new light."<sup>19</sup>

The climax of irreverence is reached in a letter of his, printed in a tract form, and circulated widely in Canada and the States, but without publisher's name, under date of October 30, 1891, which says:

It is perfectly certain that Scripture can, and does, constantly view Christ as man, apart and distinct from what He is as divine.

The year following (May, 1892), and again after the lapse of some fifteen months, in a letter dated August 29, 1893, he repeats: "Christ is viewed as man, distinct and apart from what He is as God" in many passages of the Word.

Finally, in 1895, the same formula appears in a published form in the present tract.

It is, therefore, a plain matter of fact that we have here a regularly formulated doctrine, and not mere "isolated statements culled from letters." Forms of words, reiterated at intervals during a period of at least three or four years, reveal a well-defined system existing, though one would fain believe unconsciously in Mr. Raven's mind. It is this that has to be met.

## ***Christ not Viewed in Scripture Apart from What He is as Divine***

The question is a plain one, and fairly put -- whether Christ is ever viewed in Scripture as man, distinct and apart from what He is as divine, or as God? Scripture alone must, therefore, settle the question for us. In the first place remark, it is not whether Scripture views Christ as man "apart from God." It

17. *Some Letters of F. E. R.*, pp. 4, 5, 6.

18. Letters dated Nov. 28, 1890, July 3, 1890. [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

19. Letters dated Nov. 28, 1890; July 3, 1890.

constantly does. For example, "God is one, and the mediator of God and men one -- the man Christ Jesus," but this does not view Christ apart from what *He is* as divine, nor question the union of the divine and human nature in Christ,<sup>20</sup> as Mr. Raven does. The difference between his statement and that of Scripture is immense. His view abstracts Deity, so that Christ is seen apart from what He Himself is -- an absurdity which is its own refutation. It falsifies the truth, for if the Deity of His Person be eliminated, where is the value and efficacy of His mediation? Were it true, such passages would present a manhood without any Divine Person, or, indeed, a true personality at all. On the other hand, Scripture does view Christ as man necessarily so, and thus apart, one may say, from God as in the passage quoted, but not "*apart from what He is*" in His own Person as God or divine. He, and He alone, is God manifested in flesh, and to view Him "*apart from what He is,*" is impossible in faith or fact. Mr. Raven tells us that Christ's Person is divine -- true; and he says the truth of it is "a divine Person assuming human condition." If, then, as he also says, Scripture views Him "*apart from what He is as divine,*" or as God, then in such scriptures only a human condition would be presented to us!

Here it is no question of a title or condition, such as the term "the Christ" supposes, but of Christ Himself. Mr. R. makes "No man knows the Son save the Father" {Matt. 18:27}, equivalent to grasping what Christ is; firstly, as being "the Word become flesh," and secondly, as filling "a place as man toward God." The *unknowableness* of the Person of the Son is with him the impossibility of a "finite mind" grasping these two thoughts "at one and the same time." He thinks, however, to do so separately, and thus, perhaps, to know this unsearchable mystery.<sup>21</sup> It is impossible. Can a finite mind grasp the thought of the Word become flesh -- whether separately or not? Nay, faith receives the revelation and worships. But the error of his theory is evident from a simple consideration. He says Christ is viewed as man "*apart from what He is as God.*" If so, it must equally be allowed that Christ can be viewed as God apart from what He is as man. But this would be utterly false, for once come in flesh you can have no personal Christ at all as an object of faith apart from His manhood.

## ***Christ in Manhood Ever Recognized to be Divine***

No one questions that "the reality of Christ's manhood, in its aspect Godward,

20. See *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 17:26 {17}. It seems as if Mr. R. had appropriated Mr. Darby's words, without understanding them, and now reproduces them unintentionally perverted.

21. {This is the conclusion I had reached before the above was set in type. FER was bringing this into the area of *scrutability* by the human mind.}

is amply presented in the New Testament.” This is fundamental to the Christian faith, but the point with Mr. Raven is that in this respect He is “viewed apart and distinct from *what He is* as divine.” In proof of this he quotes Rom. 6, but in no wise does the passage separate Christ as man from *what He is* as divine. It is “by the glory of the *Father*” He is raised from the dead. He is, therefore, the divine *Son*. It is not only “to sin,” but “for sin,” he has died. Will Mr. R. exclude what He is as divine from the sacrifice? <sup>22</sup> True, He died in manhood, but will Mr. R. deny the value of His Deity to that death? If so, there would be no propitiation. He is of the seed of David according to the flesh, but the same person is marked out Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead {Rom. 1:4}.

He quotes also Eph. 4:21, “As is truth in Jesus.” Does he mean thereby so to eliminate the divine from the person of Jesus as to place Him on our level as set forth in that passage? Far be such a thought. He had not to put off the old man corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, nor had He to put on the new man. We needed to be created according to God. He was the creator Himself -- God, according to whom we are created.

The scriptures chosen by himself to support his theory, especially that from 1 Tim. 6:13, most emphatically deny it. Who is this Christ Jesus who witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession? Is He viewed apart from what He is as divine? Nay, He is linked with absolute Deity, as having divine claim upon the faithfulness and obedience of the servant. “I enjoin thee,” Paul says, “before God . . . and Christ Jesus,” and then immediately presents the inaccessible majesty of the unseen and sovereign Ruler. But our Lord Jesus Christ alone appears as the divine source and repository of this glory. Will He, then, be seen apart from what He is as divine? Will the Deity in Him be unrecognized, albeit that He is the faithful man? There is no such thought in Scripture, which, when speaking of that time, ascribes to Him the titles and attributes of Deity. (Cf. Dan. 7; Rev. 19). Here Christ is seen “in His place as man Godward,” but not “apart and distinct from what He is as divine.”

### ***The Testimony to Christ's Deity Involves His Manhood***

Again Mr. R. quotes Heb. 2, 6, 9, and says, “the Apostle” presents God; “the High Priest,” man. The latter is presented in the above scriptures, and he says:

It is utterly impossible to introduce the idea of Deity in its proper character and attributes.

This last clause is a new and somewhat vague limitation. What does he mean by the proper character and attributes of Deity? Well, we will suppose those already spoken of in 1 Tim. 6:15, 16, "Who only has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see." Here we have a general statement given by the Holy Ghost of the attributes proper to Deity, essential and incommunicable. Can he say, then, that these are found in "the Apostle," who, he says, presents God? Certainly not. If we view Christ as "the Apostle," He is not inaccessible, not unseen. Viewing Him as God, you cannot leave out what He is as man. Nor does Scripture do so. Of whom is it said, "Thou art my Son: I have to-day begotten thee"? Of Messiah born in time -- a Man. Again, "I will be to him for father, and he shall be to me for son." Was not this said of the Son of David's Seed? Is He seen here apart from what He is as Man? Yet all this is said of Him precisely in His divine character. The address to the Son is, "Thy throne, O God," and in the same Psalm, "Thy God hath anointed Thee." Here we have His positive Deity and reality of Manhood spoken of as it were in the same breath. The divine Firstborn, whom all the angels shall worship, is clearly not the "idea of Deity" simply, but Messiah, Son of God and King of Israel, Son of David. You cannot abstract what He is as Man from these passages, though presented as testimonies to His positive Deity (Heb.1:1, 2). To attempt to do so in that solemn and wonderful Psa. 102 (or, indeed, anywhere), would deserve the reprobation of every Christian heart. Who is this person whose heart is smitten and withered like grass; who has eaten ashes like bread, and mingled his drink with weeping; whose strength is weakened in the way, and his days shortened? Surely a Man. Yes, but He whose years are from generation to generation, the Creator eternally the Same, whose years have no end.

### ***The High Priest a Divine Person***

But to turn to the other side of the question: When viewed as man is He seen apart from what He is as God? The great example given by Mr. Raven is that of the High Priest. Here He is seen, he says, apart from what He is as God. The whole drift of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the studious denial of this. In order to establish the wavering minds of the Hebrew Christians, the Apostle insists most diligently that they have "a great high priest . . . *Jesus the Son of God*" (Heb. 4:14). Again, he links the testimony to His divine Sonship with His call to the everlasting priesthood in Heb. 5:5-8. It is the Son who fills this office according to all the glory of His Person. Jesus is entered as forerunner for us, and is presented surely as man Godward. This is not the point in debate, but whether, if so, He is viewed apart from what He is as divine. To suppose so would deny the whole scope of the Apostle's argument in Heb. 7; that is,

would be destructive of Christianity. He sets forth most powerfully the spiritual force of the term "order of Melchizedek," used to describe the Priesthood of Christ. Being Son of God, He answers divinely to that of which Melchizedek was a figure -- king of righteousness, king of peace, without genealogy -- contrasted with human descent, He abides as *Son of God*, a priest continually.

In this character He is our forerunner, but so far from being viewed apart from what He is as divine, or as God, He, in contrast with human high priests, is a *Son* perfected forever. The importance of the use of "Son" here is seen by comparison with the first chapter, where it is quoted in testimony to His essential Deity.

The theory in question is thus disproved in every particular. "We have such a one high priest who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1). Is there nothing divine here? Is it "utterly impossible to introduce the idea of Deity in its proper character and attributes"? On the contrary, the object of the apostle is to bring in the idea of His Deity, and to show forth the divine excellence of this glorious man. Moreover, who is He that appears in the presence of God for us? The answer is supplied in Heb. 10. It is He who, according to His own eternal competency, could say, "Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, Thy will." Is this viewing Him apart from what He is as divine? As in Psa. 45 He says, "O God," but it is the divine and eternal One, in the eternal scene, who says it. The fact, then, is clear that the disassociation of the divine and human in the Person of Christ is destructive of faith and of Christianity.

Moreover, Mr. Raven's interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews is largely leavened with a misapprehension of the force of the rending of the veil. It does not represent "God coming out."<sup>23</sup> This was true in Christ in the days of His flesh. The veil was rent for man to go in. If Christ presents man to God Scripture views Him therein as Jehovah's Fellow (Zech. 13:7), not as Mr. Raven says, "Apart and distinct from what He is as divine"; and if God to man, it is a man who is God manifested in flesh. If I think of Him as God it is the man I see, and seeing Him the eye rests upon God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

## ***To Say that Christ had No Human Personality Is Heresy***

The second portion of Mr. Raven's tract insists that "the truth of Christ's Person" does not consist "in the union in Him of God and man" (p. 3). This

idea is, that in becoming man Christ is not "in Person something which He was not before," that in Him is no human personality or individuality at all, but His humanity only relates to form or human condition, which could be taken and given up and taken again (p. 3), and the Person, the Son, remain without any difference. Mr. R. considers that to reject his teaching on this subject approaches very near to heresy, and infers a dual personality. But he may remember Nestorius was anathematized because he taught that there was a *separate* basis of personality in the human nature of our Lord, that He was, in fact, a double being. It is Mr. R. who now would view Christ as man, *distinct and apart* from what He is as God or divine. And in avoiding the Scylla of Nestorianism he has fallen into the Charybdis of an impersonal humanity, for he denies the union in Christ of God and man, and

that in becoming man . . . He is in *person* something which He was not before.

For Mr. R. it is simply "the same Person unchanged and unchangeable" -- "a divine Person assuming a human condition" -- "a condition in which He was not previously." "In Person Christ is God," he says, "in condition He is man." There is no human personality, but only human condition. This is the High-church doctrine of the incarnation. It is strange that Mr. R. should have imbibed it, coupled, indeed, with other thoughts, which they and most other Christians would repudiate with abhorrence. It is this, too, that Mr. Darby so strongly condemned in his article on "Christological Pantheism."<sup>24</sup> J. N. D. writes:

That Christ had no human personality . . . is really heresy (though God and man were united in one person) (again), Why does the blessed Lord say, "Not my will, but Thine"? Why does He say, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me"? if there was no ego, no human personality? (And in a note he adds) It shows the danger of those early discussions, for the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth, but the moment you *deny* personality in the man Christ Jesus you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied is Christ's individuality as a man.

This is precisely what is now in question. Unconsciously, or, at least, inconsiderately, Mr. Raven has followed the doctrine of the Bampton Lectures of Dr. Liddon<sup>25</sup> which teach the impersonal humanity of Christ, a figment invented in conformity with their doctrinal and sacramental theory of union with Christ in incarnation. As Dr. Liddon writes,

Our eternal Lord has thus taken upon Him our fallen nature in its integrity, (and consequently we are) sanctified by a real union with the Most Holy." (p.65).

24. *Bible Witness and Review* [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com) 1/2006

25. *The Divinity of Our Lord*, pp. 259-269.

If Christ's personality or individuality as a Man is denied, then there would be no "Person" to raise up out of death. It is death and resurrection that exposes the futility of Mr. Raven's teaching, identical as it is with the system in this respect.

### ***The Human Personality of Christ not lost by Death***

Mr. Raven's reasoning is fallacious and unscriptural, for the contrast presented in Phil. 2, which he quotes, is between "the form of God" and "a bondman's form," "the likeness of men." When, being in the form of God, He emptied Himself, did He cease to be God? Certainly not. When He laid down His life ("human condition," Mr. R says), did He cease to be Man? Indeed, no! Resurrection was surely needed, but death was no relapse into abstract Deity. He was still Man. Having become Man, He abides Man uninterruptedly in death as well as out of it (Psa. 16:10). It is, therefore, vain to insist that Mr. R.'s term "human condition" is equivalent to the scriptural expression "likeness of men."

The drift of Mr. Raven's teaching is that manhood in Christ is "human condition" in contrast with His Person -- a condition which can be wholly laid down. If this were so, then it would be equally true of our manhood. But we have no "person" at all apart from manhood, and never shall have. If, therefore, manhood be merely "human condition" and brought into death, then all personality for us would be gone for ever. On Mr. R.'s principle, death for Christ would mean relapse into abstract Deity, and for us annihilation. But our manhood consists of "soul" with "spirit" and body. In 1 Pet. 3:19, 20, personality is connected with the "soul" in this world, and with the "spirit" in the intermediate state. Personality is, therefore, not gone with the body. Mr. R.'s doctrine has a distinctly Sadducean tendency.

His error consists in conceiving of Christ's humanity as "condition" or "form," distinct from Person; whereas Scripture presents the form and His Person both as God and as Man. Ever remaining God, He emptied Himself, and now ever remaining Man He, having humbled Himself to death, received Lordship, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God the Father's glory.

### ***The Person of Christ not Limited to the Deity in Him***

It is not true that Scripture confines the Person of Christ to that which was



simple Deity in Him, “unchanged and unchangeable” (p. 3), and apart from His becoming Man, which is “something which He was not before” (p. 3). A passage quoted by Mr. R. (p. 1) itself disproves any such thought. In Col. 1:10, we read, “In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell.” This is clearly essential Deity and of His Person, yet it is spoken of in distinction with “Him.” It reconciles all things to Itself by “*Him*,” and makes peace by the blood of His Cross. The Divine “unchanged and unchangeable” does not, therefore, cover all the Personality which is expressly attributed here to Him, in whom the fulness dwelt, and whose blood was shed upon the Cross. There is no dual personality; but Christ’s Person now covers His Manhood equally with His Godhead. In seeking to grasp what is beyond a finite mind, Mr. R. has fatally erred in denying that humanity forms part of the Person of Christ.

It is scarcely possible to acquit him of subtility in his teaching on page 3. He says that to hold “the union in Him of God and man . . . involves a thought very derogatory to the truth of the Son, namely, that, in becoming man, a change has taken place as to His Person.” So far one would agree that becoming Man has not, in any degree whatever, changed, or caused any change, in the essential Deity of His Person. But immediately Mr. R. adds, as if it were the same thought, something entirely different, namely, that He is not “in person something which He was not before” (p. 3). Now though His divine Person is “unchanged and unchangeable,” yet, in becoming Man, Scripture shows us, as we have seen in Col. 1, that Personality is expressly predicated of Him, whose blood was shed, by Whom the fulness which dwelt in Him, reconciles all things to itself. It is not a dual-Personality, but a divine and human Person, who, in becoming Man, is *something which He was not before* --that is, a Man. He is, moreover, not viewed in Scripture distinct and apart from what He is as God or divine. Were He not Man He would not be the image of the invisible God; yet, in being this, the attributes of Deity are necessarily included. He was not, like Adam, made in the image of God; but, being Man, He was, and is, the image of the invisible God, because He was, and is, Himself God. So also, were He not God, the Creator, He would not be the First-born of every creature; yet Manhood is of necessity involved in being it.

Mr. Raven would view Christ apart from what He is as God or as divine, and thus having conceived a mere humanity, he declares this is “condition,” not “Person.” Thus, instead of a living Christ, there would be but a “human condition”! The wonder is how any Christian can allow the truth of Christ to be so frittered away in abstractions.

### ***The Christ and Son of Man***

The last question, www.presenttruthpublishers.com taken up in page 4 of the tract, is thoroughly

misapprehended. He states it thus: whether

every title, or name, inherited by the Son, or applied to Him in Scripture, embraces or covers, if it does not describe, the whole truth of His Person.

Undoubtedly, each title has to be understood within its own appropriate limits. But this is not the question, but whether, when “applied to Him, it embraces the whole truth of His Person.” Emphatically, yes! Mr. Raven does not distinguish between a title or office, abstractedly considered, and the application of it to a person. The title, “anointed,” is applied to the Patriarchs, to Saul, to David, to the Son Himself, and to the Saints, as joined to Christ. In each case the title has a different force, according to the person to whom it is applied. Saul’s anointing was that of a king given in anger; David’s, that of a man after God’s own heart; Christ’s, that of the divine Son; of the saints as united to Him, it is said, “So also is the Christ” {1 Cor. 12:12}. In each case the term has no unvarying abstract force, but extends to the truth of the person to whom it is applied.

“Jesus is the anointed of God”; but immediately it can be said that *Jesus* is that, then the how and why declare, at once, what the term covers in His case. Anointed by the Holy Ghost, on the ground of His own personal worthiness and relationship as Son of the Father -- a divine Person, though truly Man, yet Son of God; this and more is what “the Christ” covers, as applied to Him.

“Christ”<sup>26</sup> is a name applicable to the Person only. “The Christ,” the Messiah or Anointed, designates a condition into which He has entered, and which, as now applied to Him, so covers the truth of His Person that, as “the Christ,” all that He is is embraced.

“Son of Man” is a character found in Scripture (Dan. 7:13); but immediately it is taken by the Lord Himself it becomes personal, and covers the truth of what He is. Thus the Lord uses it to embrace or cover, as Son of Man, the whole truth of His Person, so that no divine attribute can be denied to Him; as for example, “The Son of Man, who is in heaven”; “If then ye see the Son of Man ascending up where He was before” {John 6:62}.

Jesus having become “the Christ” and “Son of Man,” they are filled according to the glory of His Person, and the reverent heart feels instinctively that it is ruinous to treat them as merely official titles. Can a title be lifted up, or an office suffer? Granted that the former is a condition, now that Christ is in it, it covers the truth of what He is as such.

## *Death Destroys The Christ of Ravenism*

Bad as Mr. R.'s teaching is on this point, it is the making Christ's humanity to be "condition," with nothing of "Person," that is so fatal. A humanity of this sort, if laid down in death, would be gone for ever. Nor can we doubt that it is this kind of humanity he contemplates; for he denies, as to the blessed Lord, that in becoming Man "He is in person something which He was not before" (p. 3). Moreover, he identifies "His life," which He lays down, with His "human condition" (p. 3), and insists, as to "Person," that it is "unchanged and unchangeable." It is clear, then, that he excludes humanity from Christ's Person, denying "that the truth of Christ's Person consists in the union in Him of God and man,"<sup>27</sup> and denying that He is personally man.<sup>28</sup> He carefully distinguishes between Christ's "*person and condition*," and says He is "a divine Person assuming human condition" (p. 3). But he declares that Christ lays down "human condition." Then, if so, the divine Person alone remains -- humanity is gone. It is in vain for Mr. Raven to say that He takes it again -- not only resurrection, but re-incarnation would be needed. Man is body, soul, and spirit. If Christ had not all this in manhood -- if He had not a human personality or individuality as a man, then death was the end of His humanity. True, Mr. R. allows that He takes "human condition" again, but if this is without human personality, and is separated from His divine and unchangeable "Person" by death, it must be lost, and another and a different "condition" taken. The Man is not the same; the true character of His humanity would be gone for ever -- that which fitted Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest would be utterly lost. The Man, who suffered and was tempted in all things in like manner as we, would have perished. Man is something that Christ was not before incarnation, but Mr. R. asserts this is untrue of Christ's Person. On this principle there is no humanity in Christ's Person, and if brought into death the "unchanged and unchangeable" divine Person alone remains, and the body raised, but the Man is lost. It is only in that case, just what Mr. Raven says, "a divine Person assuming human condition" (p. 3).

While pretending to put the truth of the High Priest in its place all this Raven system destroys it. The Man who offered up both supplications and entreaties to Him who was able to save Him out of death, with strong crying and tears, is the same Man, though He were a Son, who, having been perfected, became to them that obey Him author of eternal salvation. Scripture does not

27. Mr. Darby asserts, "God and man were united in one person" (*Bible Witness and Review* 1:206, 1877). [www.presenttruthpublishers.com](http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com)

28. *Truth, &c.*, p. 132.

present His humanity as a “condition” which He laid down and took up again, though this is true as to His life, but shows Him to be personally Man, divine also, who suffered in the days of His flesh, died and rose again, as really as any one of His saints, but the same blessed Man throughout, and now Man eternally -- God and man in one Person.

Deny the part that manhood has in the person of Christ, and you deny any true man in resurrection. Moreover, as to this, what is denied of Christ must be denied of His saints.

### *Ravenism and Unitarianism*

Mr. Raven’s scoffing remark about Tritheism, at the close of his paper, is one that Christians are well accustomed to from the lips of Unitarians. The difference, however, between the two systems of teaching is simply this: the Unitarian would offer you a Christ in whose person there is no Deity. Mr. R. presents a Christ in whose “Person” there is no manhood. For him Christ’s humanity is no part of His “Person,” for he says His Person is “unchanged and unchangeable,” and is not “something which He was not before,” as is His manhood. The latter is, according to his theory, “a condition” assumed by a divine Person, but distinct from “Person.” Scripture teaches us that being in the form of God Christ was and is eternally and unchangeably God. Becoming in the likeness of men He was a man, not merely in a “human condition”; and there was naught of humanity in Him before. In death He laid down “human condition,” yet remained man, being ever God.<sup>29</sup> In resurrection He takes life again, and abides Man for ever -- a servant in grace, even if exalted Lord of all. It is death and resurrection that tests and exposes Mr. Raven’s teaching. ■

**Note:** A new series will be begun with the January issue, if the Lord will, under the general title, *Elements of Prophetic Persons and Powers*.

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29. {The reader should appreciate the fact that when our Lord’s body lay in death, the human soul and spirit remained united to the Deity, and so the incarnation continued to subsist.}

## *Death is Ours*

R. Holden

All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or DEATH, or things present, or things to come, -- all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

Death is here mentioned among the "all things" which belong to those who are Christ's. As the apostle is evidently speaking of privilege -- of blessing, it follows that death must be understood as being that -- as coming in blessing, if it come at all, to such as are addressed in these words.

It is a common thought in Christendom that when death comes, even to the household of faith, it comes as a penalty. But is this a true thought? Did not Christ bear the whole penalty of sin on the cross? and are not believers divinely seen to be "dead with Him"? Then, are they not beyond death in the sense of a penalty? If so, should death come to such, before the Lord comes, does it not come as a servant, to take off the fetter which keeps them in absence from the Lord?

It is worthy of remark that Grace not only bestows actual blessings -- that is, things which are blessings in themselves, but it takes those things which are not blessings, but which are the results of sin, and having put away the sin through the cross, it uses those results for blessing, making them act as blessing. In this way all things work together for good to those who love God.

This blessed truth applies even to death. Grace having put a silver lining into that dark cloud, -- in other words, made a road of light through the dark valley. This is clearly taught in our passage, -- "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death*, or things present, or things to come."

What is meant by death being ours, -- how it became ours; and the blessedness of it being ours, are questions which suggest themselves. May the Holy Spirit guide and bless.

### **WHAT IS MEANT BY DEATH BEING OURS?**

As to the first of these questions -- What is meant by death being ours? -- we get the answer, in part, in our text. It will be readily seen that death is here placed in company with certain things, namely, "the world," "life," "things present," "things to come," -- some of which are blessings in themselves; and all of them are represented as being in some sense blessings. It is also placed in company with persons -- blessed persons, as "Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas." In what sense could it be said to those who are here addressed that Paul and Apollos and Cephas "are yours"? The context will aid us to a true answer. The next verse reads, "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." In the fifth verse of the chapter before us we have these words: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" Thus Paul and Apollos were ministers of Christ -- that is, His servants, by whom these Christians had believed, and by whom they were being helped. In the second epistle to the same assembly, the apostle says, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor. 4:5). Mark the expression,

“*your servants for Jesus’ sake.*” Thus Paul and Apollos and Cephas were the servants of believers for Jesus’ sake. But the Holy Spirit in our passage puts death in company with these servants of Christ and His people.

This being so, it may be said to those who are Christ’s, Death is your servant. This view of death, of course, can only be taken with reference to believers. To those who do not receive Christ, death is a tyrant, a king -- the king of terrors; whereas to those who receive Him, -- to those who are a new creation in Him, all is changed; death is theirs -- their servant.

But it may be asked, Is not death an enemy? Yes, for the Word says so; yet an enemy is not always in a situation to do harm. If you are in the hands of an enemy -- if he can say, You are mine, then he can harm you; but if he is in your hands, or in the hands of your all-powerful Friend, then he cannot harm you, but may be obliged to render you service. It is just so with death for those who are Christ’s -- a conquered enemy; retained as a servant.

It would not be well for all the household to remain awake during the long, dreary night; so this dark servant is used to put them to sleep, one by one, until the day dawn and the Lord come.

What has thus far been said will perhaps be sufficient to make plain what is meant by death being ours.

### **HOW DID DEATH BECOME OURS?**

The next question which seems naturally to arise is, How did death become ours? We owe this, as well as all else of blessing, to the Lord Jesus and His death. He who knew no sin, gave His life in love as an atonement for sin, thereby dethroning death, and assigning it a new place, even that of serving those who accept God’s salvation.

We read that

our Savior Jesus Christ . . . *hath abolished death*, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

It is not here said that He *will* abolish death, though He will do that in another sense in God’s own time; but it is affirmed that He “*hath*” done it. He has abolished it as a king, and detained it as a *subject* -- abolished it as a *master*, and detained it as a *servant*. Precious truth for faith.

These words to Timothy simply inform us that we are indebted to the Lord Jesus for this victory over death. A few passages will show that He gained this victory for us by His death.

Two in the epistle to the Hebrews are very plain and blessed on this. In the former, after a quotation from Isaiah, in which the Son is saying, “Behold I and the children which God hath given me,” it is added,

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:13-15).

In what sense had the devil the power of death? He had not power to take life -- he could not kill people; but he managed to induce man, the representative man, to sin -- to disobey God, and of course the penalty previously and divinely announced must follow. This was the nature of the devil's power over man; getting him to do that which according to God must bring in death. It is as though you have an enemy who has no direct power to injure you, but who by some deep-laid plan draws you into the doing of that which is contrary to the laws of the land, thereby bringing you to grief. In this way he gains his point, and exults over you through your own misdoing and its penalty. This may aid in comprehending the sense in which the devil had the power of death.<sup>1</sup>

How did God in His grace counter work the enemy? How did He foil him who had thus the power of death? Our passage replies that "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood" the Son of God "took part of the same," being manifested in flesh, "that through death," -- His own death as an atonement for sin, "He might destroy," that is, annul, dethrone, or bring to naught, "him that had the power of death." Thus the divine Son became man, that through death He might put away from before God that which gave the devil his power. And having fully done this, -- having conquered him who had the power of death, it follows that death is in the hands of the Conqueror, and therefore those who are His may say in happy confidence, Death is ours. In this way it got in company with Paul and Apollos and Cephas, yea, all things, in working for good to those who are Christ's. How mortifying, then, must it be to the great adversary to see that which he meant for evil used in grace in the service of those whom he sought to destroy! And how happily may the children of God pass their days in this scene, instead of spending a lifetime, through fear of death, subject to bondage!

In another part of the same epistle, we get the same precious truth, freedom from judgment being added:

Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:26-28).

Here we have the awful situation in which "men" are, -- appointed to death and judgment, -- death as the result of the first sin, and judgment in view of personal guilt. How did Christ meet all this for those who believe? The answer is, "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many"; thus taking them from under that appointment; and, therefore, "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hence, instead of believers coming into judgment as to their sins, Christ, who bore the judgment for them, appears unto their salvation. One cannot but be reminded of His own blessed words,

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1. It may be added that the devil has the power of death in the sense of being able to portray death, even to the children of God, in a way to bring them into bondage, through fear of it. In this way he has ever actively used it since he got man to do that which brought it.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life (John 5:24, Revised Version).

Instead, therefore, of mournfully singing, --

How long shall Death the tyrant *reign*,  
And *triumph* o'er the just

it is the privilege of the believer joyously to sing, --

Death and judgment are behind me,  
Grace and glory are before;  
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,  
There exhausted all their power.

First-fruits of the resurrection,  
He is risen from the tomb;  
Now I stand in new creation,  
Free, because beyond my doom.

Jesus died, and I died with Him,  
Buried in His grave I lie,  
One with Him In resurrection,  
Seated now in Him on high.

What claim can death and judgment have on those who are thus seen of God -- as having died with Christ, and who are now seated in the heavenly places in Him? Yet those who are *thus saved* will be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be *rewarded* according to the fruit they have brought forth. A full salvation through Christ, and Christian responsibility, are alike taught in the Word of God, and are to be alike maintained in Christian teaching and ways. But then, those who have preached a full gospel, however much they have taught and practiced holiness of walk, have ever been charged with being antinomian, and therefore we need not be surprised that it is so now.

But I must give a little more testimony from the Word, on the question, How death became ours. The apostle, in 1 Cor. 15, after stating the gospel which he had preached unto them, and by which they were saved, namely, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again; -- and after stating the blessed results, he exclaims, in the present confidence and triumph of faith,

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, Christ died and rose, that those who are His might thus exult over death and the grave. He went down into death as an atonement for sin, -- went down into death to extract its sting, bearing the full curse of the law (sin's strength); and as a proof that He had done it, -- that He had fully satisfied divine righteousness and holiness, that He had perfectly glorified God in finishing the work which was given Him to do? God brought Him out of death, yea, set Him at His own right hand. In this way death became ours. Its sting being gone, it can not harm. Visiting, then, the



household of faith, it must do so in grace, -- it must do so in service. In any other capacity, it has no place there. This is a part of the gospel -- a part of the glad tidings which Paul, with others, preached. Blessed truth to the believing soul! Precious thought -- the cross endured! and the tomb empty! Surely those who enter into the divine meaning of this may joyously exclaim, even now, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" and not wait till the resurrection-morning for the utterance of this note of triumph.

The apostle John, in telling of the sight which he had of the Son of Man in His judicial glory, in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, says,

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead, and He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. 1:17, 18, Revised Version).

The One whom John saw in such glory was the One who had died in love to put away sin, and whose soul was not left in hades, nor His flesh suffered to see corruption. He is alive for evermore -- thus telling us that all is done, that the keys of death and hades are at His girdle, that through His death He has acquired full authority over them, that He, the First and the Last, has title to put His gentle hand on His own, and to say, "Fear not." Death is conquered, and coming to the believer, it comes subject to its Conqueror. All is in grace to those who are dead with Him, for such are "under grace."

In 1 Thess. 4:5 we read,

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

The word here rendered "in" is the one usually rendered *through*. Though the Revised Version retains it in the text, it gives *through* in the margin as being the Greek. Mr. Darby in his translation renders it *through*, -- "those who have fallen asleep through Jesus." Dean Alford reads the passage, "them also which fell asleep through Jesus will God bring together with Him." Those who have departed this life in the faith of Jesus owe their happy death to Him, and to His death. Having part with Him in "the resurrection of life," and in His manifestation in glory, will follow.

Thus, by the light of the sure Word, we are guided to the conclusion that death is ours, not through any thing in us, or of us, but through what grace has wrought for us on the cross. We owe all to the love of Jesus in giving His precious life for us. We *may* sing, --

His be the Victor's name,  
Who fought the fight alone;  
Triumphant saints no honor claim,  
His conquest was their own.

By weakness and defeat  
He won the meed and crown,  
Trod all our foes beneath His feet  
By being trodden down.

He, Hell's dark pow'r laid low;  
 Made sin, He Sin o'erthrew;  
 Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
 And Death, by dying, slew.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain, --  
 Slain in His victory;  
 Who lived, who died, who lives again,  
 For thee, His Church, for thee!

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF DEATH BEING OURS

We may now dwell a little on the blessedness of death being thus ours.

If death be ours -- our servant, then we need not pass our days here in fear of it. The fear of death is natural to the natural mind. This is observable, not only where the Bible is read and known, but where revelation has not gone. The heathen have a great dread of death. A little while ago, I saw a missionary from India, who said, "The Hindus have an intense fear of death." He narrated how they dispose of their dead. They burn the body, and carefully preserve the ashes; and then, on a certain day of the year, take them to their sacred river, the Ganges, and having put them in a tiny boat, with a little lamp, they are committed to the stream. The missionary, observing a Brahmin doing this to his dead, asked him why they put a lamp with the ashes. The reply was, "It is to give a little light; death is so dark!" And all the tapers of man, all his devices, all his religiousness, even in the most enlightened lands, can give no more true light than the little lamp of the benighted Hindu. Christianity as taught in the New Testament -- Christianity as known in reality, can alone, in the true sense, take away the fear of death, and enable souls to pass their days in rest and peace, free from dread and uncertainty.

In John 8:51, 52 Jesus said, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never *see* death." Thus, the one who keeps the saying of the Lord, though he may die, shall not *see*, shall not *taste*, death. Our blessed Lord, in taking our place, *saw* death in its dread reality, He "tasted" it in all its bitterness. Hence, the reality -- the bitterness of death is passed for faith.

Jesus can make a dying bed  
 Feel soft as downy pillows are;  
 While on His breast I lean my head,  
 And breath my life out sweetly there.

If death be ours, then, as Christ could not employ a useless servant, *we cannot pass through it without being the gainers*; and we are assured in the Word of God that we do not pass through it without gaining thereby -- this servant being used to let us out of "our earthly house" that we may go to Him who is our all. The Lord said to the dying penitent at His side, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The apostle speaks of being "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). He says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil 1:21-24). These passages have, as we all know,

been much tortured to make them say what they cannot be made to say. What they do say is plain, namely, that the departed in the Lord are with Him -- that to die is gain -- that to depart and be with Christ is far better than to abide in the flesh, in short, that death being ours, we do not pass through it without gain, the intermediate state being an advance on our present happy, though trying, lot.

If death be ours through the cross, and through being identified with the risen Christ, then, (to the praise of God's grace) it may be said that we have title to a part with Him in the resurrection of life, to the resurrection of which His own was the first-fruits. The Word plainly states this title. --

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him (Rom. 6:8). Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept . . . Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

While those who have fallen asleep in Christ are thus to be raised at His coming -- raised in the power and character of His own blessed resurrection, those who are alive and remain will not sleep, showing that death has no real claim on believers, otherwise they would have even then to die to meet the claim.

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain (being changed in the same moment in which the righteous dead are raised) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

And being ever with Him after we are caught up to join Him in the air, we shall, of course, be with Him when He appears, and every eye sees Him. Indeed the Word assures us of this.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

In short, when the day dawns and the Lord comes, death, the dark servant, must stand aside, and the righteous dead will rise in the power of a blessed life, and the righteous living be changed to immortality, -- both be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and go with Him to the Father's house of many mansions, and return with Him when He appears in judgment, and to introduce His millennial reign. As no good reason can be assigned why He may not come at any moment *for* His saints, the proper attitude is to be watching for Him.

I may add that death being our servant, it follows that when it can be of no further service, it will be dismissed forever. In this sense, "the servant abideth not in the house forever." Of Him who rose as the first-fruits it is said, "He dieth no more." He says, "Behold, I am alive for evermore." And are we not to be "like Him"? Is it not said that He will "fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory"? Is not all that is mortal of the saint to be "swallowed up of life," that is, lost in it forever? The Lord, speaking of those

who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," said,

Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

In the moment they are raised or changed, the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory -- is brought to pass as to *them* (1 Cor. 15:54.). Henceforth death has no more power with them. They "reign in life by Jesus Christ," not only for "a thousand years," but evermore; for when the millennial age is closed, and all that may be called time is in the past, the Word assures us

there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former-things are passed away.

He who sits on the throne will "make all things new"; and those who overcome inherit "all things"; and "they shall reign forever and ever."

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

All this, and infinitely more than a feeble mortal can utter, or even conceive, is embraced in the truth that death is ours. Our full blessedness in the heavenly kingdom, when the results of sin are wiped away forever, will be the outcome of the fact that while we were in the midst of these results, they were our servants. Our being with the Lord in glory will tell out forever that all things during our little day of trial were jointly working for our real and abiding good.

Beloved, I would remind myself and you that we are indebted to grace, and to what it has wrought in the Lord's death, for all this. It is not of ourselves, or of works, that we have this blessed portion and this bright prospect. The praise is all due to God and the Lamb. If so, should not our hearts be won by a sight of such love? and ought not our lives to be the outflow of hearts thus won? Oh, beloved, surely every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. He died that death might be ours, and that we might not come into judgment, yea, that we might be holy and without blame before God in love and favor forever. Let us live to Him who thus died for us and rose again. It should be our joy to do this.

Death and the curse were in our cup --

O Christ, 'twas full for thee !

But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,

'Tis empty now for me.

That bitter cup -- love drank it up;

Left but the love for me.

For me Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,

And I have died in Thee

Thou'rt risen: my bands are all untied;

And now Thou liv'st in me

The Father's face of radiant grace  
Shines now in light on me."

## DEATH TO THE UNBELIEVERS

But I trust to say a word on the other -- the dark side of this subject; for whatever has a bright side to the saved has a dark side to the unsaved. It cannot be said to them, Death is yours -- your servant. It has to be said, You are death's -- its servants. They have not availed themselves of the gracious provision of the cross, and therefore they are yet in their sinful standing, with their sins upon them. Hence, death to the unbeliever is a tyrant. The same verse which tells us that "the righteous hath hope in his death" affirms that "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness" (Prov. 14:32). Where is he driven? Not to be with Christ. We have His own word for this. Addressing those who rejected Him, He said, "Ye shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come" (John 8:21). Where does death take the unsaved? The same infallible One answers. After saying that "the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," He said, "The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment" (Luke 16:23, Revised Version). I take this to mean just what it says, notwithstanding the efforts to explain away its obvious sense. And though the wicked will come forth from death and hades, it will be no blessing to them, for they will come forth to judgment. The same great Teacher said, "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," or *judgment*, according to the Revised Version (John 5:28, 29). Thus death, the result of Adam's sin, ends before judgment as to actual sins begins. The unsaved are brought *from death to be judged*. Mark, it is "they that have done evil" who come forth unto the resurrection of judgment. They have not received God's salvation; thus they remain in the flesh or sinful standing in Adam, and the inevitable fruit is "evil." It is in the resurrection-state that they fully meet God face to face as to their sins, and receive the sentence which is due.

## TWO RESURRECTIONS

Not only will the resurrection of the unjust differ from that of the just in the character of it, but also in the time of its occurrence. While all are to be made alive by having a resurrection, yet "every man," says the apostle, "in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end." The word here rendered "then" is the same that is rendered "afterward" in the previous part of the passage, and has that meaning.

*Afterward* cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power; for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*" (1 Cor. 15:23-26).

Death will be destroyed in all being made alive in resurrection. Those who are Christ's are raised "at His coming": then, at a subsequent period, designated "the end," death is destroyed, which must be in the resurrection of those who are not Christ's.

We get further light in the twentieth of Revelation. We read,

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

John saw that

the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. -- And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison (and will go forth to) deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth,

and yielding to his deceivings, they meet summary judgment, and he is "cast into the lake of fire." Then comes "the end," when death is destroyed, yet followed by judgment.

I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (Revised Version).

Such is the solemn "end." All beyond is eternity. Such is the dreadful outcome of belonging to death, and remaining under the appointment to judgment; in other words, of remaining in the lost condition by nature, and adding sins thereto. That outcome, God says, is "the second death, even the lake of fire"; and all will come to pass just as He says.

### **SO GREAT SALVATION**

But He who has thus spoken has "found a ransom." His own Son gave His life as that ransom. He went into death's dark raging flood, bearing the judgment in His own blessed person, that, as the ark made a safe passage for Israel through the Jordan, those who accept this salvation might, thereby, be taken beyond the dark river of death and the ocean of judgment, and be brought into a life which these waters can never touch. And the love which has done all this, -- the love which was stronger than death (for it went through it), is ever beseeching all to accept what it has done, with the assurance that the worst one who comes is perfectly welcome, and is at once beyond death and judgment, in a new and blessed life; or, to use the Lord's own words, "hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

But if souls neglect so great salvation, -- if they go on in their own ways, however religiously, and refuse God's Christ, as "the way, the truth, and the life," how shall they escape? Death must come as a police, to hurry them to their prison in hades, to await the coming forth for judgment. And God entering into judgment with them, they cannot escape condemnation, for as man living could be justified

if called upon to answer for his sins; and as they would not have God's gracious way of being cleansed from them, they must answer for them before "the great white throne," and pure justice must then have its course. Oh that men were wise! Oh that they would believe God as to their deep need, and take salvation while mercy lingers! Oh that those who are saved would do more to reach the unsaved! Knowing the terror of the Lord, we are to persuade men. The love of Christ should constrain us.

Call them in -- the weak, the weary,  
 Laden with the doom of sin:  
 Bid them come and rest in Jesus;  
 He is waiting -- call them in.  
 See, the shadows lengthen round us,  
 Soon the day-dawn will begin;  
 Can you leave them lost and lonely?  
 Christ is coming -- call them in.

May God bless His word to us; and may we, during the "little while," walk in the power of the truth that death is ours; manifesting, in our spirit and ways, the life which we have in the risen and glorified One, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

R. Holden

(Bold-faced headings have been added for this edition)

## ***What is the Main-spring that Holds the Saints Together?***

I believe the great buildings and great bodies have been a mistake; indeed I always did. Further, I believe now (although it were always true in practice), the needed dealing with evil must be by the conscience in grace. So Paul ever dealt, though he had the resource of a positive commission. And I believe that two or three together, or a larger number, with some having the gift of wisdom in grace, can, in finding the mind of the Lord, act in discipline; and this, with pastoral care, is the main-spring of holding the saints together in Matthew 18. This agreeing together is referred to as the sign of the Spirit's power.

J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings* 27:327.

## *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

Some of our readers have accepted the verdict of anti-Semites who, by the "Protocols," seek to fasten upon the Jews a plot to dominate the world. Russian Communism is said to be developing the plot, and much is made of the fact that some of the Communist leaders are Jews. In America there is a sharp conflict of opinion amongst Christians, some declaring that the Protocols are genuine, and others emphatically denouncing them as forgeries.

Ten years ago our friend, Rev. E. Bendor Samuel, a reliable Hebrew scholar, published a pamphlet to prove that the Protocols were a forgery, and we unhesitatingly accepted his verdict, feeling, as we feel now, that the Jews have suffered enough at the hands of their enemies without attributing to them designs for world revolution. But if the Protocols had been genuine, God's chosen nation should not be condemned as a whole for the scheme of a few "Elders of Zion," whoever they are. Let us remember that God has said, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye," and "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee." And yet again "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper."

It is interesting to notice that the great issues of these last days are finding their way into the law courts.

Not long since a well-known author was sued in Canada for plagiarism in a history of the world. The case was eventually carried to the Privy Council in London. The evidence against the author was based on the methods of the Higher Criticism, and the Privy Council definitely ruled that those methods were useless and absurd, and the Council confirmed the judgment of the Lower Courts in favor of the author.

Now the Protocols also have got into the law courts, and we append without comment a report of the case from a morning paper:

Swiss Jewry re-opened at Berne yesterday their two-year legal war to prove the falsity of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which purport to give details of Jewish plans to dominate the world.

Members of the Swiss Nazi organizations, who distributed copies of the documents as authentic, are the defendants. In October last the case was adjourned so that experts might decide whether the documents were forgeries or not.

### *Threat to Withdraw*

Lieut.-Colonel Ulrich Fleischhauser, a German publisher of anti-Semitic literature, appeared in Court yesterday as the Nazis' expert.

Counsel for the defense asked, however, for a further adjournment to enable the Colonel to continue his studies. He said that if the adjournment were



refused, the defendants would withdraw from the case.

The Judge declared that the trial must go on, and he repeated his ruling when the Nazis made another attempt to secure an adjournment on the ground that 10 witnesses had given false evidence.

### **"Assassination"**

Professor Baumgarten, of Basle University, the expert chosen by the plaintiffs, then told the Court that the protocols were bogus.

It was the grossest falsification to attribute to the Jews a plan for dominating the world by means of violence and assassination.

This case -- regarded as the greatest forgery trial in history -- began when the Swiss Jews sought, under the law against immoral publications, to have all copies of the protocols confiscated.

The documents were published in 1905 by a Russian professor, who said they described secret congresses of Jews. Hitler recommends study of the protocols in his book "Mein Kampf."

In the end a verdict, says Reuter, was returned against members of Swiss Nazi organizations, the Court ruling that the Protocols came under the ban of the Berne Canton on circulation of matters offensive to public morals. The Cantonal law provides for the confiscation and prohibition of "works, the form and contents of which are likely to lead to crime or immorality, to hurt the sense of shame, to excite vile instincts and in other ways to cause brutal offence."

The Protocols were first published in 1905 in Russia under the title, "Secrets of the Wise Men of Zion," the book was written by a Russian policeman. It professes to be an account of a secret Council of Jewish leaders on the acquisition by Jews of world power.

A morning paper thus comments on the verdict: That the notorious "Protocols of Zion" are a self-evident forgery has been well known for many years.

Any other verdict than that given by the Berne court yesterday would have been, in the light of the evidence of past history, absurd. But in a world in which so many almost equally startling absurdities are so constantly committed we must be thankful that in Switzerland, at any rate, the light of reason is not yet quenched by the thick darkness of insane prejudice.

*The Advent Witness* 14:127, 132 (1935).

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## ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

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### *Chapter 6.14*

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## *Revelation 20: Is the Rapture Found in this Passage?*

A proponent of posttribulationism A. D. Katterjohn, of Wheaton College, wrote:

THE QUESTION: What passage of scripture CLEARLY teaches that the Lord will come BEFORE the tribulation? Book: Chapter: Verse:

A unitarian might so ask for a scripture that CLEARLY teaches the deity of Christ or the Trinity. Some who believe in the deity of Christ so ask for a scripture that CLEARLY teaches that our Lord is Son in the Godhead from eternity. The trouble is not with Scripture, but with the discernment and state of soul of the one who poses the question and demands a certain mode of expression before he will believe.

One would think, in view of such a question, that there was a "passage of scripture" that "CLEARLY teaches" that the church will be raptured at the appearing. A posttribulationist, G. E. Ladd, told us this:

Nor does the Word explicitly place the Rapture at the end of the Tribulation.<sup>1</sup>

This makes us wonder what the relationship between "CLEARLY" and "explicitly" might be.

But G. E. Ladd could not leave the matter hanging thus. He wrote:

With the exception of one passage, the author will grant that the Scripture nowhere explicitly states that the Church will go through the Great

Tribulation.<sup>2</sup>

So, since there is no explicit placement of the Rapture at the end of the tribulation, he proposed to resolve the whole matter by producing a scripture that “explicitly” states that the church *will* go through the great tribulation. We might as well anticipate a new definition of the word explicit. He said:

However, in one passage, Revelation 20, the Resurrection is placed at the return of Christ. This is more than an inference.<sup>3</sup>

I have gone into this to show the reader the reasoning of posttribulationism, its demands, and what it offers. It is the same kind of reasoning that reads “church” for “elect,” and “church” for “Judah” and/or “Israel,” and “church” for “Israel of God,” etc., etc.

And when all is said and done about the need for CLEAR and explicit statements, it comes down to Rev. 20 where their *assumption* is transmuted into an explicit statement.

What is the assumption? It is assumed that the first resurrection is a point in time, whereas it is a class of persons. Rev. 20 does not place the first resurrection at the appearing -- impossible since the Firstfruits was raised 1900 years ago, the 24 elders were in heaven, glorified, during Daniel’s 70th week, and the two witnesses are raised 3 ½ days after the end of Daniel’s 70th week, but before the appearing -- as is obvious from Rev. 11.

Rev. 20 shows that by the time the millennial reign begins, the totality of the first resurrection is complete. It is neither explicitly stated, nor implied that the rapture, or the first resurrection, occurs at the appearing or after the great tribulation. G. E. Ladd further said:

If a pretribulation rapture is a Biblical doctrine, it ought to be clearly set forth in the Scriptures which prophesy the Rapture of the church.<sup>4</sup>

Here we get “clearly” again. Why not substitute the word posttribulation for the word pretribulation in his statement? But passing by the double standard, note that posttribulationism is neither clearly, explicitly, or implicitly taught in Scripture. Posttribulationism says that Christ will meet us in the air and conduct us to earth. Christ says that He will come and conduct us to where He is now (John 14:1-3; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 16, 28). They explain such passages away and have the temerity to ask for “clear” statements!

The facts are these: Jews, whether saints or not, will pass through the tribulation. It is Jacob’s trouble (Jer. 30; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24). We will not be on earth in the time of it (Rev. 3:10) but rather will have been caught up and

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, p.77.

gone to the Father's house (John 14:1-3; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 16, 28), followed subsequently by coming with Him for the kingdom (1 Thess. 4:13-18). We will come from heaven (1 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 17:14; 19:14), having been glorified, and will be manifested in glory with Him when Christ is manifested in glory (Col. 3:4). Ed.

## Confirm a Covenant

And he shall confirm a covenant with the many [for] one week (Dan. 9:27).

This appears to be a *confirmation of an already existent treaty* of protection for Israel (against the King of the North of Dan. 11, who is the Assyrian of the other prophets). At some point, the coming Roman prince (of Dan. 9:25) will confirm that already existent treaty for a seven year period.

When the treaty will come into existence we do not know. It may be before the rapture; or, there may be a transitional period after the rapture before the opening of the 70th week when the treaty first comes into existence. And even if first made, by whatever power it may be, before the rapture, there still may be a transition period after the rapture. Scripture does not say that the 70th week opens the day after the rapture; nor does it say that it will not.

It seems common to say that in the middle of the week, the covenant is broken. Scripture does not say so. Dan. 9:27 says that "he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." That is, the Jewish sacrifices will be stopped in the middle of the week; but that does not mean the covenant of protection is broken. From other Scriptures we know that a new order of worship will be imposed at the middle of the week, even *the worship of the Triad*:

- **the Beast** (Rev. 13:1-11; the coming Roman prince, head of the revived Roman Empire),
- **the Antichrist** (2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13:12-18; Dan. 11:36-39) and
- **Satan** (Rev. 13:4).

The result is, "because of the protection of abominations [there shall be] a desolator {the king of the North (Dan. 11:40, 41)}, even until the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate {the mass of the Jews} (Dan. 9:27).

Ed.

## *Notes*

**Deepak Chopra, MD**, who is a really a Hindu guru, "In the last eleven years, eight spent serving at the pleasure of the Maharishi Mehesh Yogi and his Transcendental movement, Chopra has written 15 books (translated into 25 languages) on spiritualism and Ayurvedic medicine. Ayurveda is a folk medicine based on ancient Hindu Vedic texts that the Maharisha distilled and then updated in the early and mid-80s to spur waning interest in TM." TM was declared by the supreme court of NJ to be a religion and was therefore prohibited from being taught in NJ schools. The quotation is from the thorough exposure of D. Chopra in "Leader of the Deepak," *The Weekly Standard*, July 1, 1996.

In the 1970s I had said that eastern religion, through the word "holistic," would ride on the back of Western nutritional findings -- for its penetration and validation. PTP has available the pamphlet, *Occult Healing*.

**Liberals' lying** and character assassination is so gross, in the present political scene, as to vastly overshadow conservatives' lying. Scripture says,, "Lie not one to another." Now, coming to spirituality, no Christian ought to lie. And in attacking faithful Christians, loose brethren reflect characteristics of the political liberals. The things that are said and done are appalling. The mind seems to get under the power of some fog that distorts perception, resulting in even accusing others of lying when it is they themselves are the guilty who do it. How do you account for this frightening phenomena? Hypocrisy and chameleon-eating is carried on, disguised as spirituality.

We must remember that we are drawn to be like what we defend. If we defend the flesh (often done under a liberal guise), we will have to do it in fleshly ways -- or did you think holiness defends the flesh? A common way to do that is to reverse the charge against the flesh and place the charge back on to the objectors, meanwhile considering oneself as tolerant and caring and faithful.

**"Save me from commentators."** So said J. N. Darby in *Notes and Comments* 5:389, regarding commentators on Scripture.

### **Some Principles by Which the Lord Will Judge at the Judgment Seat.**

The point of departure is the point at which recovery is made.

A moral stream does not rise above its source.

The mere passage of time does not change the character of a moral action.

Fellowship with leaven leavens a person.

Let everyone that names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

## *The Handwriting in Ordinances*

And you, being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together with him, having forgiven us all the offences; having effaced the handwriting in ordinances which [stood out] against us, which was contrary to us, he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross: (Col. 2:13, 14).

Concerning the word *handwriting*, a footnote in JND says, "Handwriting, obligation to which a man is subject by his signature." It has been thought that the ordinances were nailed to the cross. That is a mistake. We do not read: 'effaced the ordinances which [stood out] against us.' This last would have meant that the law was nailed to the cross and is gone. How would the law get off the cross again for the future Jewish remnant to be under it, or written in the hearts of Israelites in the millennium? The phrase "handwriting in ordinances" does not mean the same thing as "ordinances." The handwriting refers to *obligation*, and from *that* the sentence of judgment when broken. The truth is that *the law is not dead*, but the Christian is dead. God has dealt with the obligation and sentence of judgment in the death of Christ. We Christians are crucified with Him. Christians are dead and out of the sphere of the law, though if we were Gentiles, we never were under the law. W. Kelly said:

One cannot therefore be quickened together with Christ without having one's trespasses, yea, *all* (for if not all, none) forgiven. The guilt which a broken law charged on the conscience is gone by an act infinitely more glorifying to God than the . . . Had you to do with the law? The mighty work of Christ has entirely delivered from it. The sentence is blotted out . . . <sup>5</sup>

Rom. 6:8 teaches us in express terms that we have died with Christ. Moreover: now we are clear from the law, having died in that in which we were held (Rom. 7:6).

Here the Scripture states it: it is we that have died. I am not aware that a Scripture has been produced that states that the law has died -- though some think what amounts to that idea. There are Scriptures, such as the one at the beginning of this article, that some think teaches some such thing, but it is read into the text. Likely, they need better understanding of the removal of the first man's standing from before God, the standing which the law addressed -- and that this terminated God's testing of man. By crucifixion with Christ and resurrection with Him, we are in a new position before God that the law does not address. The law is left where it was; we are removed from its sphere by death, and brought into the new through quickening together and resurrection with Christ -- and reaching on in Ephesians (2:6) to being seated in the heavenlies, *in Him*.

Ed.

## ***The Darby Disk***

This is a CD-ROM, compiled by L. J. L. Hodgett, of England. The CD-ROM contains all of J. N. Darby's writings available in book form, plus about a book's worth of articles not in the *Collected Writings (34 vols)*. The CD-Rom also includes the *Synopsis (5 Vols.)*, *Notes and Comments (7 vols.)*, *Notes and Jottings (1 vol.)* and his translation.

The CD-ROM is copyrighted, as is the ISYS search program that is included.

I have been using this product and can say that I am *very* impressed with the searching capabilities. You may ask for individual words or phrases and do Boolean searches, etc., including asking for 'something like \_\_\_\_.' The price is \$125.00 postage paid. Since they have to be imported, there might be a delay if we are out of stock.

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