

THE  
**Dispensational  
Place**  
OF THE  
**Lord's Supper**

by  
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and stressing the Dispensational point of view.*

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## **PREFACE TO FOURTH EDITION**

In spite of the highly controversial nature of the subject, this pamphlet is still called for after running through three editions. The issue is simple. If the Lord's Supper is a memorial feast of the **NEW COVENANT**, how can they whose blessings belong to a parenthetical dispensation introduced upon the defection of Israel, partake, without disloyalty?

August, 1950

Charles H. Welch

## **PREFACE TO SEVENTH EDITION**

A seventh Edition is now called for, and it is addressed to true "Bereans" (Acts 17:10, 11) who will test what is written here and abide by the teaching of the **Word of Truth**.

March, 1983

Stuart Allen

Unless otherwise stated, Bible passages are King James Version (KJV) based. But, for unknown historic reasons, this item has no 'use of italics, to indicate English words added by the KJV translators, to try to clarify the meaning of the Greek or Hebrew', (as is normal in KJV Bibles, and is © in the UK) - instead 'not identified ...'.

## THE DISPENSATIONAL PLACE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

At the request of many, who have from time to time written to us, we now publish in booklet form the articles dealing with the Scriptural position of, and the believer's attitude towards, the Lord's Supper, which appeared in Vol. 1 of *The Berean Expositor*.

We are conscious that this ordinance (touching as it does things so sacred to the heart of every believer) must not be lightly spoken of, nor easily set aside. It is with no desire to hurt the feelings of any of our brethren that these pages are re-issued. We believe they contain truth upon the subject, otherwise we should not re-publish them. Believing them true, we consider that they will bring liberty from man-made bondage to many others, as we rejoice to know they did (by the grace of God) when originally published.

### MORE PRECIOUS THAN EVER

Let no one think that the glory of the Lord Himself will be dimmed, or that His precious blood and wondrous sacrifice will be thought less of. Facts testify otherwise. The glories of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are seen with fuller eye and deeper love as we go on in the knowledge of His truth as revealed by the prisoner of the Lord. The same precious blood, which was the seal of the New Covenant, is also the great means of our redemption and peace (Eph. 1 and 2), and the ultimate reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth (Col. 1).

May the Lord Himself teach every reader their relationship to Himself, show them the true position of the New Covenant, and the unique position of the church which is His Body, and then give them grace to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

### THE DISPENSATIONAL BOUNDARY

Those of our readers who have followed the arguments put forward in *The Berean Expositor* cannot fail to realize that the re-discovery of the divine dividing line between the earthly kingdom and the Mystery, viz., Acts 28, necessarily carries with it changes in accepted doctrine of a rather drastic nature. What effect has this upon the observance of the Lord's Supper? In order that every reader may be in possession of the chronological order of the epistles, we set out again their order and relation to the last chapter of Acts:

Galatians.

1 Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians.

1 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians.

Romans.

} Pentecostal and transitional period.—  
Earthly kingdom truth and preparatory teaching by Paul for the impending change.

## Acts 28:25-27. The dispensational boundary

Ephesians.	} Prison.	} The Dispensation of the Mystery. — Standard truth for the time.
Colossians.		
Philippians.		
1 Timothy.		
- Titus.		
2 Timothy.	} Prison.	

### The Lord's Supper.

In the first instance we note that we find mention of the Lord's Supper in those Scriptures written before the beginning of this dispensation, but not even a hint of it afterwards. We will not, however, limit ourselves to this argument, although, rightly understood, it is final and conclusive. Let us turn to the Scriptures where we first read of the institution of the Lord's Supper. When was this ordinance instituted? Matt. 26:26-30 supplies the information:

"And as they were eating (*i.e.* the Passover, *see* verses 17 and 19), Jesus took bread (*i.e.* a Passover loaf of unleavened bread), and blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is My body. And He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

### The Lord's Supper and the Passover.

Thus we see that the Lord's Supper is connected with the Jewish feast of the Passover, and by reading 1 Cor. 11: 23-26 we see that henceforth this feast was not merely to remind them of the deliverance from Egypt, but to "show forth the Lord's death till He come," which is further interpreted in 1 Cor. 5:7 by the words, "For even Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed for us." Both Matthew 26 and 1 Cor. 11 tell us that the wine typified the "blood of the *New Covenant* ." What is this New Covenant? Is it connected with the Mystery hidden since the age-times? Is this covenant a secret only revealed now, or is it a matter of Old Testament knowledge? Let us turn to Jer. 31

"At the same time (*i.e.* 'the latter times,' Jer. 30:24), saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of *Israel*, and they shall be My people . . . again I will build thee, . . . O virgin of *Israel* . . . O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of *Israel*. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth . . . for I am a Father to *Israel* . . . He that scattered *Israel* will gather him . . . for the Lord hath redeemed *Jacob* . . . Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of *Israel*, and with the house of *Judah*; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of *Egypt* (hence the connection between the New Covenant, the Passover, and the Lord's Supper) . . . But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of *Israel* (this is God's interpretation of the New Covenant) . . . If

those ordinances (of the sun, moon and stars) depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of *Israel* also shall cease from *being a nation* before Me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of *Israel* for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

### **The New Covenant.**

No one who believes that God *means* what He *says* can help seeing that the New Covenant is related to a greater, though parallel, exodus than that from Egypt, that it is specifically connected with the future gathering of *Israel* back to their land, and that the church of the Mystery of Eph. 3 finds no place therein whatsoever. The opening words of Exodus 20 teach much the same lesson. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Then follows the first Covenant, "which they brake" (Deut 29:25), and, "They have forsaken the *Covenant* of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt" (*see also* Jer. 11: 7,8; Heb. 8; Isa. 11:11, 16).

### **The Lord's Supper and Israel.**

In Matt. 26 the Lord Jesus looks forward to "that day," to His "Father's kingdom"; "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done *on earth*"; "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the *twelve tribes of Israel*" (Luke 22:29, 30). Where in all this is room and place for, or hint of, the church of the Mystery? When we pass the dispensational boundary of Acts 28 we read in Ephesians not of the kingdom of the heavens, nor of the kingdom of the Father, but of "the kingdom of *Christ* and of God" (Eph. 5:5). In Col. 1:13 we read, "The kingdom of the Son of His love," which is in operation *now*, and is entirely distinct from the kingdom that hinges upon the restoration of *Israel*. The kingdom of God includes *Israel*, the Bride, and the one Body.

### **The usage of "covenant."**

The word rendered "covenant" is never used in those epistles that were written after Acts 28 without reference to *Israel*. 2 Corinthians was written before Acts 28. Hebrews, as its title shows, has a message for those of *Israel*. The one reference in Eph. 2:12 refers back to "the time past" when these Ephesian believers were aliens and strangers, or at most but guests, with regard to the "covenants of the promise." No covenant is ever mentioned in relation to the "church which is His Body." There is a promise and a purpose given before the age-times (Titus 1:1-3), but not a covenant, old or new. That is exclusively connected with *Israel*. The New Covenant is God's gracious provision for the very people who failed under the old Covenant.

After the supper we read, "They sang an hymn (the Psalms known as the *Hallel*), and then went out into the Mount of Olives." The Mount of Olives! The last portion of earth which the Saviour's feet trod before He ascended, and

destined to be the first place touched by His feet when He returns to take the kingdom on earth (Acts 1:12; Zech. 14:4).

### **The Lord's Supper and the Earthly Kingdom.**

It seems as though everything has been written and arranged to link the Lord's Supper with this kingdom, and to sever it from the Mystery. Who then has blinded the eyes of believers, and made them more zealous concerning an earthly ordinance, than eager to "know what is the hope of His calling"? Rome has no place for Paul and his doctrine. She has canonised Peter, mutilated the gospel of the circumcision, robbed Israel of their future glory, and finds a stronghold in this ordinance (blasphemously travestied as it is) which belongs to a dispensation past and future. Turning from Matt. 26 let us consider 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

### **Till He come.**

This passage at first sight seems to nullify all that has been said before. For twelve months the words "Till He come" prevented us from uttering a word as to our growing conviction of the dispensational character of the Lord's Supper. We shrunk from touching a subject which appears to deal with the Person of the Saviour, and the loyal affectionate remembrance of His people. We have not arrived at our present conclusions hastily, nor heartlessly, but have sought to know the truth according as it is written. First of all let us consider the statement, "I have received of the Lord." If we turn to 1 Cor. 15:3 we shall read, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received"; or Gal. 1:11, 12, "For I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul continually declared his entire independence of man, both as to his apostleship and his doctrine.

### **No new revelation.**

Many at Corinth were being led away by Judaizing teachers to doubt or deny his office. "Am I not an apostle?" he cries, "Are ye not my work in the Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1). "In nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 12:11). The Apostle immediately follows his words of censure, "I praise you not" (1 Cor. 11:22), with the reminder of his authority, "For I have received of the Lord." There is no warrant to make this statement mean more than the immediately preceding context indicates. The institution of the Lord's Supper was no secret. The Apostle Paul received no further teaching regarding it than could be gathered from the records in the Gospels; he emphasizes his words in this way to help the Corinthian believers to be more ready to listen to his rebukes in relation to their *abuse* of the ordinance.

## **Supernatural gifts.**

Let us also consider this, that every one of these Corinthian believers who assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper had some spiritual gift. It was not that a few had gifts, but "every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation" (1 Cor. 14:26). These supernatural gifts were in perfect harmony with the dispensation in which they were given; they were, moreover, equally in harmony with all that we have seen relative to the Lord's Supper.

## **Their cessation.**

Will those who believe that the Lord's Supper is for them, satisfactorily (*i.e.* Scripturally, not traditionally) explain their lack of these qualifications, which were possessed by those to whom the instructions concerning the Lord's Supper were sent? The "gifts" and the Lord's Supper ceased at the close of Acts 28; we search in vain for the faintest allusion to the ordinance in the epistles written after this time. Why should we pick out one item from 1 Cor. 11 and seek to perpetuate *that*, when we are compelled to confess that the very next verses in chapter 12 are written concerning that to which we can lay no claim?

## **Their omission.**

If we read 1 Timothy, we find the Apostle giving Timothy detailed instructions "that he may know how to behave in the house of God." Paul repeats some of his instructions regarding the ministry of women (*cf.* 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Cor. 11:1-17) and yet, although the Lord's Supper is the very next item in 1 Cor. 11, he finds no place for it in his instruction to Timothy. The simple reason is that when the earthly kingdom became in abeyance, everything connected there-with necessarily went with it. Evidential spiritual gifts, the Lord's Supper, the Covenants, all went with the earthly kingdom teaching. The Apostle was then commissioned to set out the new economy. To him was the grace given "to make *all* see what is the dispensation of the Mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God" (Eph. 3:9 R.V.).

## **Repetition and modification.**

This was a revelation of something entirely new, unforeseen, unprecedented, something not found in the Scriptures, but hidden by God away from all ages and generations of people. No one could tell us what was to be observed or omitted except the Apostle divinely appointed and commissioned. He has told us. The epistles of Paul written after Acts 28 contain a complete system of doctrine and instruction for the church of the present dispensation. Where anything that obtained under the previous dispensation was to be repeated, *we are told so*. The repetition of the ministry of women (1 Cor. 11 and 1 Tim. 2) is a case in point. Where a modification or alteration was to be made, *we are*

*informed of it.* The specific statement as to *one* baptism in Eph, 4 definitely sets aside the *two* baptisms (water *and* spirit) which obtained during the Pentecostal period covered by the Acts, and gives us to-day *one* baptism — that of the Spirit. We do not find a catalogue of things which we are *not* to do, for the list would be too great, and the record unnecessary. In the epistles after Acts 28 we have what is necessary for our guidance, comfort, and teaching. We *add* to the Word of God sent to us by the Apostle to the Gentiles at our peril. Those who desire to enter into the blessed realization of the dispensation of the Secret will abide by the revelation of God pertaining thereto. Those who cannot rest satisfied unless they *see* or *do* something, will perpetuate the observance of ordinances, but not without the inevitable consequences that follow “zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”

### **Accompaniments of the Lord’s Supper.**

If we are right to introduce, upon our own initiative, the Lord’s Supper into this present dispensation, why not spiritual gifts, tongues, miracles? Why not be thorough? Apart from the silence of the later epistles, the whole weight of their positive testimony is against the introduction or perpetuation of that which was definitely linked with Israel, the New Covenant, and the earthly kingdom.

Some reader may interrupt here and say, What do you understand by the words “Till He Come”? The Lord has not come, and it seems that until He does we must perforce continue the observance of this ordinance. This passage is so important that we propose devoting a separate study to its consideration, rather than hastily deal with it as one point among many.

### **Omitted in John’s Gospel.**

Of all the Gospels, the one written by John is the one which seems to approach nearer to the truth for the present time than the rest. Nine-tenths of the gospel preaching of to-day is based upon passages from John’s Gospel. The hope and comfort of many a believer are enshrined in the sacred words of John 3:14-17. There are many who might be willing to go so far as to agree that Matthew was indeed Messianic kingdom truth, but, say they, you must leave us John. Is it not striking that the Lord’s Supper, so fully described and enjoined in Matthew, the earthly kingdom Gospel, is omitted by John who above all should have taught it if he had a message for believers to-day. It is not as though the feast does not come into the subject of his writing. It does. John 13 tells of the betrayal and many incidents which took place at that Supper. This omission must not be lightly set aside; it adds its weight to the evidence we seek to bring from the Word on this important subject.

Let not our faith stand in the wisdom of men; let none give up the Lord’s Supper merely because someone has said that it is undispensational. “Search and see,” then act according to the teaching of the Word, and though misunderstanding and censure be our portion here, we shall have the joy of being unashamed in that day, through the endeavour rightly to divide the Word of truth.



## Till He Come.

In the previous pages we considered the relation of the Lord's Supper with the present dispensation, but held over the inquiry into the passage partly quoted in the sub-heading above. 1 Cor. 11:26 says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till He come.*" The natural conclusion upon reading these words is, the Lord has not come, therefore we must continue to observe the Lord's Supper.

Logic operates within certain fixed boundaries. There is a circumstance, not reckoned in this argument, which alters the case completely, viz., the complete cessation of the dispensation in which 1 Cor. 11 found its place. We must remember that we are not at liberty to take a truth revealed at some *later* period back into an *earlier* period in matters of interpretation. To understand the meaning of the words "Till He Come," we must acquaint ourselves with the teaching concerning that Coming, which falls within the boundary line of that particular dispensation. If we *read into* 1 Cor. 11 teaching that was *not revealed*, and which was kept an absolute *secret until some years afterwards*, we must expect to reap a harvest of confusion for our pains.

*There is a word which runs throughout the Scriptures pertaining to the Messianic kingdom and Pentecostal times, which will help us in our studies; that word is in the original tongue the word parousia, and is translated sometimes "coming," sometimes "presence." It occurs 24 times in the New Testament. Seventeen of these occurrences refer to Christ, and the remaining seven refer to others, Paul, Titus, Timothy, Stephanas, and Antichrist (1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; 10:10; Phil. 1:26; 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:9). The first canonical and historical use of the word occurs in Matt. 24 and if we allow the canon of interpretation to be true that the first occurrence of any word supplies the key to its meaning, then most certainly parousia belongs to the earthly kingdom, and not to the Mystery. Let us consider the context of this first occurrence:*

"And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives (inseparably connected with the kingdom on earth, see Zech. 14:4; Matt. 26:30; Acts 1:6, 12, etc.), the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy parousia (coming), and the sunteleia (the 'ending together' of events that culminate in the end) of the age?"

### When . . . Then.

The Apocalypse is the inspired record of the *sunteleia of the age*, and with it the *parousia* is connected. In answer to the question "When," the Lord gives a series of prophetic utterances commencing with the word "Then" (see Matt. 24:9, 10, 16, 21, 23, 30, 40, and 25:1). It must be remembered that the word translated "Then" is a definite mark of time, "*then at that time.*" In Matt. 24:21 we read, "Then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." These words single out this tribulation from any other, consequently Rev. 7:14 refers to the same period, "These are they which came out of *the tribulation, the great.*" This time of "Jacob's trouble" will be brought to an end by the Second Coming of the

Lord. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so also shall the *parousia* be of the Son of man" (Matt. 24:27).

This, connected directly with the false messiahs and false prophets, with their "great signs and wonders," links the passage with 2 Thess. 2, and consequently with the Antichrist. In 2 Thess. 2:8, 9 we read:

### **The wicked one.**

"And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His *parousia* (cf. 'as the lightning,' Matt. 24:27), even him, whose *parousia* (the travesty of the Lord's) is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."

Remember, Satan travesties *truth*. The false messiah's *parousia* is connected with "powers, signs, and lying wonders." Now these powers, signs, and lying wonders are an exact counterfeit of Pentecost, as a reference to the Greek of Heb. 2:4 will show, and go to prove that the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus is that spoken of by Peter in Acts 3:19, 20, connecting it with Israel, the prophet Joel, and the day of the Lord. Matt. 24:29 continues:

### **The Tribulation.**

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the land mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:29, 30).

"Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all tribes of the land shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1:7).

Isaiah, speaking of "the day of the Lord" (Rev. 1:10) in Isa. 13:6-11, says in verse 10:

"For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

See also the following passages, Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:30, 31; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:14, 15; Acts 2:19, 20; Rev. 6:12-17, and again consider the question, *What has all this to do with the church of the Mystery?* Interpreted of Israel, and the earthly kingdom, all is clear; strained to fit the church of Ephesians, all is confusion. In Matt. 24:37-39 we read:

### **The days of Noah.**

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the *parousia* of the Son of man be. For, as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the Flood came and took them all away; so shall also the *parousia* of the Son of man be."

To what do the words "eating, drinking, and marrying" refer, for of themselves these things are right and good? In Exod. 32:6, in connection with the idolatry of the golden calf, we read, "The people sat down to eat and to drink." Further on in the history of Israel we read in Numb. 25:1-3:

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed own to their gods, and Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor."

The previous chapter gives the record of Balaam, and this throws a lurid light on the prophetic picture of the near future given in Rev. 2:14, 20:

"Thou hast there them who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

"Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

The *parousia* of the Son of Man will take place when this world has become a very pandemonium of licentiousness and uncleanness (see Rev. 3:4; 9:20, 21; 14:4; 21:8, and 22:15, where this fearful sin, done under the cloak of a religious observance, is referred to). Some readers may say, Why refer to this awful subject? Scripture abounds with warnings concerning this characteristic of the end. Spiritism is the present-day forerunner of the counterpart of the days of Noah, even as the "sons of God who saw the daughters of men that they were fair," etc., in Gen. 6 were the cause of the corruption that necessitated the Flood. Let us heed the warning, and have nothing whatever to do with this awful thing. Continuing our study of the use of the word *parousia*, in 1 Thess. 4:15, 16, we read:

### **The archangel (Dan. 12:1, 2).**

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the *parousia* of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

One archangel is mentioned in Scripture, "Michael the archangel" (Jude 9). According to Dan. 12:1 Michael is "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (see also Dan. 10:13, 21). When Michael stands up there shall be

"a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake."

Here we have the connection between 1 Thess. 4 and Dan. 12, where the archangel is directly related to the resurrection (even as Jude 9), and the people

of the earthly kingdom — Israel. James and Peter refer to this *parousia* of the Lord. Those to whom James wrote attended the synagogue (2:2), they were from the “twelve tribes scattered abroad” (1:1). Patience during the time of trouble is the exhortation, “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the *parousia* of the Lord” (v. 7, 8). Peter speaks of the *parousia* several times in his second epistle:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and *parousia* of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty, for He received from God the Father honour and glory” (2 Peter 1: 16).

### “Not.yet” — The present parenthesis.

This passage has reference to the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1). The words “honour and glory” are terms which belong to the Messianic kingdom (see Heb. 2:6, 7, and Psalm 8). They further refer to the consecration of the priest in his robes of “glory and beauty.” “We see not yet . . . but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:8, 9). The “not yet” of Heb. 2:8 was a difficulty which Peter confessed. In 2 Peter 3:1-13 the scoffers are reported as saying, “Where is the (fulfilment of the) promise of His *parousia*?” The Apostle assures his hearers that the non-fulfilment of the promise is not the result of “slackness” on the Lord’s part, it was rather His “longsuffering.” He continues by speaking of the day of the Lord coming “as a thief in the night,” exactly as Paul does in 1 Thess. 4 and 5.

### Peter, Paul, and the postponement.

Peter, however, had to refer his readers to Paul’s epistles, saying:

“Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in *all his epistles*, speaking in them of *these things*, in which there are some things hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:15, 16).

The scoffers knew about the *parousia*; Peter knew of that hoped-for Coming, but he did not understand a great deal of the truth committed to Paul, viz., the dispensation of the Mystery which comes in the “gap” occasioned by the setting aside of Israel, and the *postponement* of “the promise of His *parousia*.” In 1 Cor. 15:22, 23 we read, “Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ’s in His *parousia*.” In 1 Thess. 4 the Apostle had revealed the fact that some would be “alive, and remain unto the *parousia* of the Lord,” which we saw had a connection with Dan. 12 and Israel. Here in 1 Cor. 15 he gives further teaching:

### The last trumpet.

“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 trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound (see 1 Thess. 4:15, 16), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Now "when" this shall take place "then" Isa. 24 and 25:8, 9 will be fulfilled. *Then* "the kingdoms of the world will have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (Rev. 11:15). These words are spoken at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. No trumpet is recorded after this, and so we are justified in speaking of this as the "last trump." If we have to argue that there *may* be another, it suggests that something is wrong with our theology. The effect of the sounding of the seventh trumpet extends to Rev. 20 where we have the first resurrection, the resurrection of those who have gone through the Great Tribulation, and who share the glory of the millennial reign on earth.

Space will not allow reference to every occurrence of the word *parousia*, but the remaining passages will be found to bear out the conclusions we have drawn. So far we have confined our attention to the Gospel of Matthew, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, Peter, James, and Revelation; in other words, we have avoided the special epistles of the Mystery. If we want to learn in what respect the *parousia* is connected with the church of the Mystery, we shall have to consider the references to it in the Prison Epistles. Our space is exceedingly limited for this most important investigation, but we need not be alarmed, for if we patiently read through Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, and Titus, *we shall not find a single reference to the parousia of Christ.*

### **The parousia not the blessed hope.**

*We have found the parousia* connected with Israel, Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, the day of the Lord, everything to link it with the earthly kingdom. Surely we need no further argument to prove that the Second Coming, as taught, believed, and hoped for before Acts 28, in 1 Corinthians, and during the "time of the end," is clearly to be distinguished from "that blessed hope," which lies before the believer during this present peculiar dispensation of the Secret. "Till He come" must refer to this *parousia* Coming; this was the only coming revealed. That Coming, like all else connected with the earthly kingdom, has become in abeyance. It has absolutely nothing to do with the members of the one Body.

### **Why give up the ordinance?**

We believe that some of our readers will welcome a further word or two upon the deeply important subjects of the Lord's Supper, our present position, and future hope.

We may express the feelings of many in language like this. We have followed the line of teaching set forth in this booklet, and have felt that there is truth in the position therein advanced. We see more clearly than ever the distinction between the earthly sphere of redemptive operations — the Messianic kingdom, and the heavenly sphere — the church of the Mystery. We, moreover, feel that the Lord's Supper does undoubtedly belong to that period when Israel was still a nation, and when these earthly kingdom hopes were still possible of fulfillment, yet we are reluctant to give up this sacred ordinance. May we not still continue to drink the wine, and break the bread in loving memory of the Lord

Jesus Christ, and His atoning mercy? Moreover, it is certainly a fact that in the epistles of Paul written after Acts 28 the Apostle does not speak so much of Christ's Second Coming as the hope of the church, but of the believer's manifestation with Christ "in glory" (Col. 3:4; Titus 2:13, 14), yet all this seems so intangible, so vague, that we seem to have let go the reality to grasp the shadow.

### Scripture or sentiment.

Let it be clearly understood that all whose thoughts are echoed in the above words have our deepest sympathy. We would not cause a moment's pain to one believer in our Lord if it could be avoided. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," saith the Scripture, and if any are wounded by the contents of either the past, present, or future issues of this little witness, it is only because the writer would seek to point readers to the truth of the Word, which Word is likened to a sword that pierces, a hammer that breaks, and a fire that burns, as well as the bread and water of life, and the healing balm for our souls. In the first place, we must not shrink back from obedience to the Word of God simply because we do not see where it leads, or what the goal may be. If we follow the written Word we shall of necessity be led in the way of truth, but we must also be prepared to "walk by faith, and not by sight."

### Nevertheless . . . I know whom I have believed.

We must have the same faith that was so signally manifested in Abraham, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out . . . obeyed." Now notice the character of this obedience of faith, "And he went out, *not knowing* whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). Abraham did not go out blindly, for he knew that the Lord had spoken, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Some have had "ears to hear" what the Word of the Lord has said. They have sought to act according to that Word. The result is that the bonds of human tradition have been severed. They find that "the truth has made them *free*"; free to believe *all* that God has said, free to desire to act according to the testimony of our Lord through Paul, His prisoner, the chosen Apostle of the Secret — the dispensation of infinite grace to the Gentiles. They find that many of their former friends are left behind, that the writings of beloved teachers are of little help, that they can enter into fellowship with the Apostle who said, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14). It should be no cause for wonder that those who have thus stepped out should, for a while, be like Abraham who knew not whither he went.

"One thing we know, that whereas once we were blind, now we see"  
(John 9:25).

"One thing have we desired of the Lord, that will we seek after"  
(Psalm 27:4).

"One thing we do, forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth  
unto the things before, we press goalward" (Phil 3:13, 14).

Like the blind man in John 9, we may not be able to answer all the queries and quibbles of the Pharisees, but no arguments on their part, nor failures on our own, can alter the fact that whereas once we were blind, now we see. Like the Psalmist, our goal is the Lord in His Temple. Not a Temple made with hands, but heaven itself where our citizenship is, and from whence we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this body of our humiliation, that it may be transfigured unto the likeness of the body of His glory (Phil. 3:20, 21).

### **The Lord glorified.**

An infallible test for doctrine has always been its attitude to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He shall glorify Me" is the Lord's witness to the Holy Spirit's teaching. Our forgetting of things behind has made us relinquish ordinances, dogmas, hopes, fears, and many God-given commands and promises, *which we have seen were never addressed to us*, but our appreciation of the Son of God, our love unto Him, our view of the grandeur and majesty of His heavenly throne, His present and future glory as raised "far above all," His position as Head of the church which is His Body, all these things have become magnified as we have stepped over the boundary line of Acts 28 into the epistles of the "fulness."

### **Milk v. meat.**

Our own position has also changed from that of babes to that of full-grown men. The things which pertained to the days of childhood are forgotten, and found to be unnecessary and a hindrance. The "milk" of the Word has been exchanged for the "strong meat" (*cf.* 1 Cor. 2, 3; Heb. 5:11-14) of the Mystery, which was hidden away from all past generations.

### **Israel, and the New Covenant.**

Let us consider afresh some items of these deeply important things. The connection between the Lord's Supper and the New Covenant is established in Matt. 26:28. We are not left in doubt as to the meaning of this New Covenant. The very latest reference to it is found in Heb. 8, and there its distinctive Jewish and kingdom bearing is fully set forth. The house of Judah and the house of Israel are unequivocally set forth as the subjects of this New Covenant, and its relation to the reinstating of Israel and Judah as the people of God is as clearly taught in Heb. 8 as in Jer. 31. That the New Covenant of 2 Cor. 3 is the same as that of Jer. 31 and Heb. 8 is clear from the evident allusion to Jer. 31 in 2 Cor. 3:3. We find no covenant, old or new, in Paul's epistles written after Acts 28. The Lord's Supper was instituted on the night of the Passover, which commemorated the exodus from Egypt. The Lord's Supper was a pledge and seal of the New Covenant promise to lead a redeemed Israel into the promised land under grace, not law.

Under the old Covenant, Israel had to do with the law written on tables of

stone (2 Cor. 3), "which covenant they brake" (Jer. 31:32). The New Covenant has to do with a sacrifice of infinitely greater worth than the blood of bulls, goats, or lambs; it leads no more to Sinai, and tables of stone, but forward to the inheritance of the land according to the original unconditional covenant made 430 years before the giving of the law (Gal. 3:17), and to the time when the law of God shall be written upon the fleshy tables of the heart (Heb. 8; 2 Cor. 3).

### **The church and redemption.**

The church of the Mystery (or Secret) is as certainly redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as were the believers of the dispensations past. We love Him because He first loved us. We can enter into the Psalmist's word of praise, the prophet's glowing vision, and the preacher's burning zeal without transgressing the bounds of our inheritance. May we not drink the wine, and break the bread, simply out of loving memory of Him? Dear fellow-believer, it is not a question of love or remembrance. Surely, when we consider what He has done, what grace has accomplished, we need no symbols to keep alive our love or stimulate our hopes; if we do, we have not attained to that position laid down in the epistles of the Mystery, which is entirely "in heavenly places in Christ." The Apostle exhorts the believer thus, "Set your affections (or minds) upon things above, not on things on the earth, for ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). This is the divine answer to the words of Col. 2:20, "Wherefore, if ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" What can it mean by the words, "as though living in the world"? We are living in the world, and many times are forcibly reminded of it. It is explained by Col. 3:3, "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." This is the ground of the present position, whether it be ecclesiastically, dispensationally, or doctrinally considered, all is on resurrection ground, in heavenly places in Christ. All that pertained to the flesh is dead and buried.

### **Shadows or substance.**

Fellow-believer, if you died with Christ, why are you subject to ordinances? What place can these have on resurrection ground? During a period of types, shadows, parables, and symbols, water, wine, and bread could set forth clearly the blessed teaching of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord. The picture book is fitting in the hand of the child; it is not a seemly manual for the full-grown man.

### **Ordinances, divine and human.**

The burden of Col. 2, which has been aptly called "The Christian's Charter of Liberty," may be exhibited thus:



## Col. 2:8-23.

*Doctrine and instruction consequent on having died with Christ.*

A 8. Caution.

B 9, 10. Christ the Head. The fulness of God.

C 11-15. Divine ordinances done away in Christ.

A 16-18. Caution.

B 19. Christ the Head. The increase of God.

C 20-23. Human ordinances done away in Christ.

Divine ordinances (*e.g.* circumcision) have received their fulfilment in Christ. Our circumcision is "made without hands." Human ordinances, such as "touch not, taste not, handle not," and all the multifarious rules and regulations of religion, have no power over one who has died with Christ. The ordinances of Believer's Baptism, and of the Lord's Supper, while directly connected with faith, were also directly associated with the flesh, and things seen, in a marked manner. The believer, who has entered into the fulness of the gospel as proclaimed in Ephesians, wherein he sees that he has been quickened, raised from the grave of sin, and seated with Christ in the heavenlies, will not need reminders every week of the debt he owes.

### Full faith and appearances.

We must realize that we cannot disassociate the Lord's Supper from its typical character, and its dispensational connection with earthly kingdom promises. Nicodemus loved the Lord, or he would not have brought the spices to embalm His body, for by so doing he exposed himself to the hatred of the Sanhedrim. Nicodemus would have loved the Lord better, and with far more reality, if he had believed the Lord's words that He would rise again *third day*. The others might have said that Nicodemus did not love the Lord so much had he refrained from sharing in the offices of the *dead*, but he would really have loved his Lord the more if he had believed in and waited for His *resurrection from the dead*. So with ourselves, we love the Lord none the less because we set our affections on things above. Our fellow-believers may chide us with coldness, but what of that! Our joy is not resting in the approbation of the most saintly; our joy is found in Him, and His approval. We know that if we rightly divide the Word of truth we shall be workmen who will have no need for shame in that day, although much misunderstood in man's day.

### Loss and gain.

Again, many feel the loss of 1 Thess. 4 very keenly. O that they may feel the "gain" of Phil. 3 as Paul did. As a Pharisee, and after his conversion, Paul believed that the dead would be raised, and that Messiah would come in glory to take the Messianic kingdom. He believed that the archangel Michael would stand up for Israel during their time of trouble, and that there would then take place the resurrection mentioned in Dan. 12. There is only one archangel

mentioned in Scripture, and his name is Michael. He is always connected with Israel (Dan. 10 and 12). "The archangel of 1 Thess. 4 is Michael, and the resurrection there mentioned is the same as that of Dan. 12. 1 Thess. 5 connects it with "The day of the Lord." Paul willingly gave up all these things, and many other hopes which he had entertained after his conversion. When he had the Mystery revealed to him he could gladly "count all things but loss" for the things which were before.

Is it nothing that our hope is related to His glory? Is it to be despised that soon we shall exchange these bodies for bodies like unto that of the glorified Lord? Is there nothing "tangible" in a "citizenship in heaven"? Is the promise "vague" that when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, we shall be manifested *with Him* in glory? Did Abraham, Issac, and Jacob suffer so much because of the promise that they should inherit the earth, and shall we speak of "the inheritance of the saints in the light" as something not worthy of comparison? We are all so much of the "earth, earthy" that we do not really enter into "the calling wherewith we have been called." The traditions of the ages have so blunted our feelings, and blinded our eyes, that we cannot perceive "what is the hope of His calling." By our attitude we are in reality asking, "What *is* the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the holiest of all"? If our eyes have been enlightened, then we may say the prayer of Eph. 1:18-20. The Lord will make plain the hope, and the riches of the glory.

Daniel (Dan. 10), Isaiah (Isa. 6), Job (Job 42), Paul (Acts 9), and John (Rev. 1) all testify to the exceeding greatness of the heavenly vision. We must not expect to apprehend all at once the things for which we have been apprehended by Christ (Phil. 3). We want no "word battles." The Apostle in Phil. 3:15 says:

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (full grown, initiated), be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

### **A matter of obedience.**

We have no commission to "strive." With meekness and gentleness we seek to teach the truth as far as we see it. We seek grace to be patient, to bear up under evil, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, peradventure God will give them a change of mind unto the knowledge of the truth. We can no more have two baptisms, if the Lord says to us in the sevenfold unity of the Spirit that there is but one. We can no more observe "Days" or "Sabbaths"; we can no more observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Day of Atonement, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, for all these things have passed away. So also the Lord's Supper. Instituted to look back (as the Passover looked forward) to the One who shed the blood of the New Covenant, it has its place in the dispensation of the earthly kingdom. The Lord's Supper is to the New Covenant what the Passover Feast was to the Jew under the old Covenant, and first typical deliverance. Those who are "children of faithful Abraham," whether Jews or Gentiles, are looking for the same inheritance as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose affections, or minds, are connected with the earth and

its blessing; these may, with some show of consistency, perpetuate the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but those who have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, who died with Christ, and who have been raised and seated together with Him, whose hopes are not linked with a renewed earth, but with a new heaven, whose citizenship is not in the new Jerusalem which "comes down out of heaven," but is in heaven itself, whose destiny is not to sit upon thrones, judging Israel or the nations, but to show in the ages to come, unto principalities and powers in the heavenlies, the Lord's wonderful grace to them, these will find Christ to be their *all*, without the aid of type or symbol.

### **Faithfulness or usefulness.**

It is pleasant and refreshing to meet together with the Lord's people. The temptation to remain silent on these things is great. Do we show our love to Him who gave Himself for us by participating in a feast over which we begin to feel uneasy? Do we value opportunities of service above faithfulness? The Lord does not accept our service in this way. Let us be willing to limit our sphere of so-called service if it is to be at the expense of faithfulness. Let us be willing to "go out, not knowing"; let us be willing to suffer the loss of the fellowship of believers; let us be content to be misunderstood and misrepresented. He is with us; He knows; He sees the heart; men only see the outward appearance. Though all forsake us, we may say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed."

With some readers the problem is one of inability to see the teaching of the Word. With these we cannot argue; we pray that if they be otherwise minded, the Lord will show even this unto them. With others, however, it is not so much the inability to *see* the truth, as to *do* it. "If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them." Our hope is bound up in the heavenly glory of the Lord. Our life is hid with Christ in God. Our walk, our service is on resurrection ground. Brethren, let us stand fast in the faith, and stand fast to the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Let us not appoint us a captain to return to bondage; let us go up, and possess the heavenly inheritance by faith, and walk in harmony therewith.

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