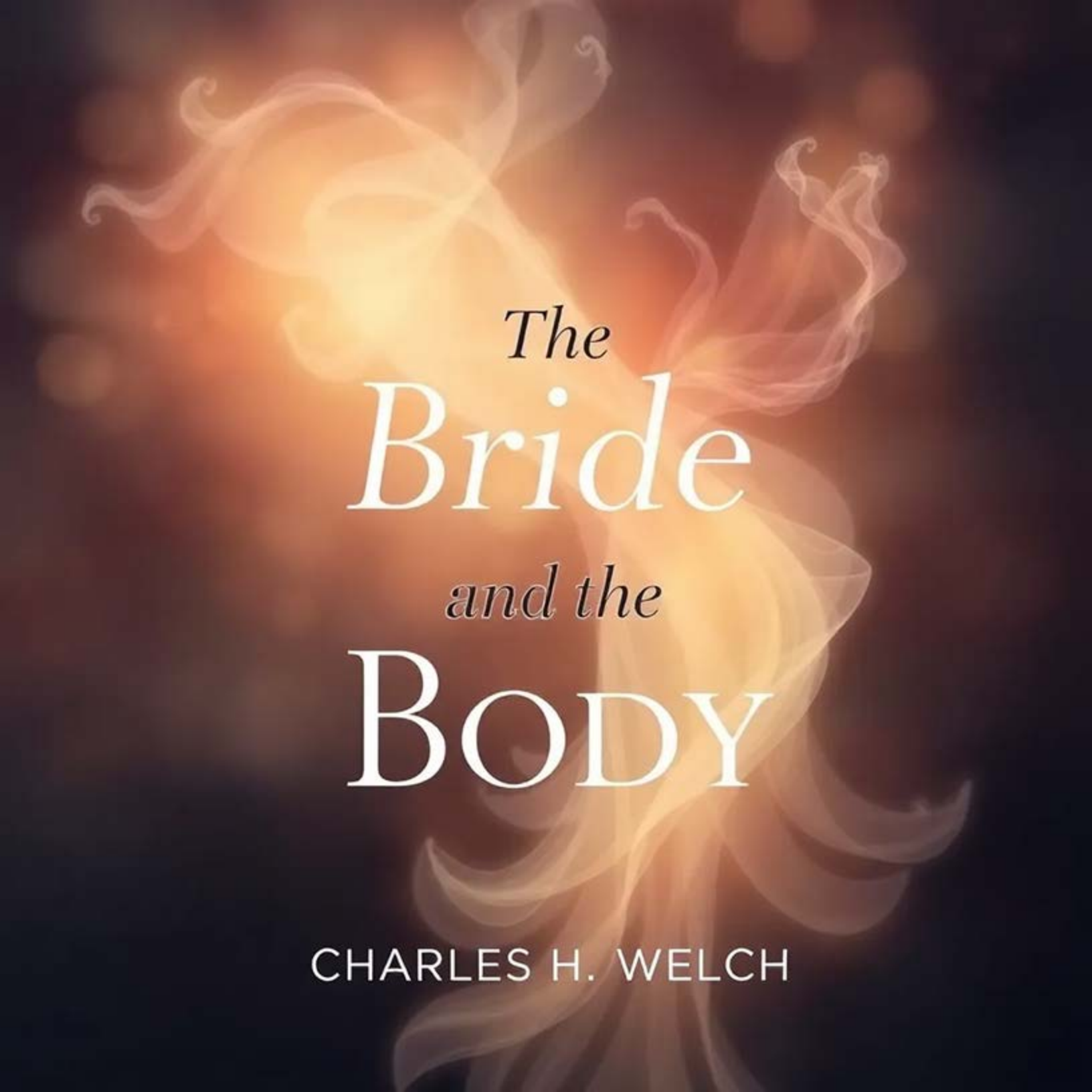

The
Bride
and the
BODY
CHARLES H. WELCH

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The BRIDE and The BODY

by

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Author of

Dispensational Truth
The Apostle of the Reconciliation
The Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner
Parable, Miracle, and Sign
The Form of Sound Words
Just and the Justifier
In Heavenly Places
etc.

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The BRIDE and The BODY

Introduction

The called out company envisaged in the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians is "The Church which is His Body, the Fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22,23). The goal and standard of this church is "the perfect Man" (Eph. 4:13) and the word here translated "man", the Greek word *aner* which occurs over 200 times in the New Testament, can never mean a "woman". Here are some of its occurrences in the New Testament.

"Joseph the HUSBAND of Mary" (Matt. 1:16).

"MEN, beside women and children" (Matt. 14:21).

"John ... was a just MAN" (Mark 6:20).

"Is it lawful for a MAN to put away his wife?" (Mark 10:2).

"If a woman shall put away her HUSBAND" (Mark 10:12).

In Ephesians itself *aner* occurs seven times, twice translated "man" as we have seen, and five times "husband" (Eph. 5:22,23,24,25,33). If the church of the Mystery is "The Bride", how does it happen that the apostle could use as a descriptive title a word that stultifies his very object?

Before prosecuting this aspect of the subject further, we must take a wider view, and seek to place "The Bride" in its Scriptural position, and by so "trying the things that differ" and by "rightly dividing the word of truth" attain not only to a more complete understanding of this most important aspect of Dispensational Truth, but for our own comfort and stability, arrive at a richer and deeper realization as to what is the hope of our own calling.

Just as we can establish by the use of the word "adoption" that there are three spheres of blessing (1) The earth, Romans 9:3-5; (2) The New Jerusalem, Galatians 3:28;4:5,26; Hebrews 12:22,23; Revelation 21:9,10, and (3) Far above all, Ephesians 1:4,5; 2:6,12,16, so we discover from Scripture that there are three companies of believers denominated severally:

(1) The Wife. (2) The Bride. (3) The Body.

Each of these callings is distinct, and to confuse either with the other is fatal to all true exegesis. While we do not believe that anyone who reads this booklet is likely to be a member of the company that comes under the figure of "The Wife", we must acquaint ourselves with this calling in order the better to appreciate the distinction that must be observed between either the Bride or the Body.

The Wife

Let us trace this calling, at least in outline, as it is depicted in the Old Testament. The redemption of Israel from Egypt and the giving of the covenant from Mount Sinai are looked upon as a marriage contract between Jehovah and the people of Israel, and when Ezekiel would call Israel to repentance, he runs over their history, in Ezekiel 16; one of the most terrible chapters in the whole of the sacred volume:

"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations" (Ezek. 16:2).

In verses 3 to 6 the prophet depicts Israel as a new born child, neither "washed", "salted", nor "swaddled at all", and unpitied, and this child was cast out into the open field, "to the lothing of thy person". The Lord is said to have passed by and seen this babe "polluted" in its own blood, and twice over it is recorded that the Lord said "When thou wast in thy blood, LIVE". This call to "live" is indeed an act of grace, and had the record stayed there, Israel as a redeemed nation unlovely and unloved yet given the boon of life, would be for ever indebted to Divine mercy. This however is but the beginning of the Lord's favour. In verses 7-14 this unwanted and unlovely babe is shown as growing up under Divine favour, "I caused thee to multiply", attaining to womanhood, reaching "the time of love" and becoming espoused to the Lord. "I remember ... the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness" (Jer. 2:2), these espousals being indicated in Ezekiel 16:8 by the symbolic act "I spread My skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest Mine". In verses 9 to 14 this intended wife of Jehovah is anointed, girded with fine linen, covered with silk, decked with ornaments, so that it could be said:

"Thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom".

At this point we meet the first ominous signs that the most awful apostasy was imminent:

"And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 16:14).

If only Israel had pondered the significance of the words "through My comeliness, which I had PUT UPON thee", all might have been well, but the record proceeds:

"Thou didst trust in THINE OWN beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications".

In these terrible words we can perceive the temptation and the subjugation of this chosen people to Satan. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel we read of one who also was "perfect in beauty", who also was decked with wondrous ornaments, who betrayed the trust given to him, and who was cast out as profane:

"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty ... thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries" (Ezek. 28:17,18).

So we see that Israel emulated the fallen cherub and became defiled in like manner. The degeneration of this people was rapid and extreme. Words almost too unclean for repetition are multiplied by the prophet as he thinks of the betrayal by Israel of the covenant of their God:

"Harlot", "Images of a man", "Whoredoms", "Thou hast made thy beauty to be abhorred", "The work of an imperious whorish woman", "As a wife that committeth adultery".

Israel are to be judged "as women that break wedlock" (Ezek. 16:38). After many more indictments, among them being comparisons with Sodom and Samaria, the mercy of the Lord breaks through with a blessed "Nevertheless":

"Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant" (Ezek. 16:60).

This everlasting covenant is more fully described by the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah (Jer. 32:40; Isa. 55:3). Jeremiah 32 flows out of Jeremiah 31, and there we read:

"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; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD" (Jer. 31:31,32).

"Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD" (Jer. 3:20).

Yet, such is the grace of Israel's God, He says:

"Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth ... for thy Maker is thine husband ... the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken ..." (Isa. 54:4-6).

"Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah (My delight is in her), and thy land Beulah (married) ... as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. 62:4,5).

To this grave departure of Israel, their long period commencing at Acts 28 when they became *lo-ammi* "not My people", and their ultimate restoration when the present dispensation of the Mystery is concluded, the third chapter of the prophet Hosea bears witness:

"Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days ...

without a king, and without a prince, and
without a sacrifice, and without an image, and
without an ephod, and without teraphim:

afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:3-5).

If our theme were the call, the failure, and the restoration of Israel under the figure of betrothal, adultery, and re-marriage, we could multiply the passages already cited. We do not envisage among our readers any who need such elaboration, and take it for granted that the Scriptures make quite plain, that Israel as a nation is in view under this figure of a wife, their Maker being likened to an husband, the old Covenant to a marriage contract, and Israel's subsequent idolatrous associations likened to a woman that breaks wedlock. We there pass to the related subject:

The Bride

The difference between the two companies, Israel as a Wife
and the new company set forth as "The Bride of the Lamb".

In Matthew 13 we have two parables, both dealing with a treasure, but differing from one another as the NATION of Israel differs from the faithful overcoming REMNANT, as a restored WIFE differs from a BRIDE. All Israel is in view in the parable of Matthew 13:44, "The Treasure", whereas the remnant according to the election of grace, a smaller company, is in view under the figure of "one pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:46).

Starting with Genesis 12 we have the inception of the special nation, separated and called to higher glory than any other nation on earth. When this people were redeemed from Egypt, the Lord said to them, "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure (*s"gullah*) unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:5,6). No other nation has ever had such a calling or such a title. Deuteronomy 14:2 reads, "The LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar (*s"gullah*) people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth". Again, in Deuteronomy 26:18,19, we read "The LORD hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar (*s"gullah*) people ... to make thee high above all nations ...". In Psalm 135:4 we read, "The LORD hath chosen ... Israel for His peculiar treasure (*s"gullah*)". In Malachi 3:17 we read of a faithful little band on a day of declension, "And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (*s"gullah*)". The "peculiar treasure" represents the whole nation of Israel, secure in their position by the unchanging character of God. The "Jewels" or the "One pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:46) represent rather those faithful overcomers who honour the Lord in a day of departure.

In the day of Israel's blessing one jewel brighter than the rest will be seen - the remnant of faithful ones who endured throughout the days of Israel's apostasy. This will be considered under the parable of the One Pearl. Psalm 83:3,4 supplies another name for Israel, "Thy hidden ones", which should be considered in connection with what follows.

The next item to notice is the statement, "Which a man finding, HID". The hidden treasure IS HIDDEN AGAIN until the day when both the treasure and the field are claimed. When the Lord Jesus came to this world He limited His ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Israel could never qualify under law to be the treasure; they must be redeemed. They will never be a kingdom of priests by virtue of their own deeds, but solely upon the basis of redemption (Rev. 1:5,6). Up to Matthew 16 the Lord had not spoken of His death, but in verse 21 He hides the treasure, and declares the great price which He is about to pay for its redemption. That death on the cross secured the treasure and the field. There the Lord Jesus gave His all.

In Luke 19:11-27 we have further light upon this hiding of the treasure. Lest any should think by His words that the kingdom was to be set up AT ONCE, the Lord said, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, AND TO RETURN". Thus the second hiding of the treasure is symbolical of the ABEYANCE of the kingdom. The day of MANIFESTATION is coming when the words will resound, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages" (Rev. 11:15). This parable declares that in spite of all opposition God's purpose for Israel and the Kingdom will be fulfilled. This would comfort the hearts of the disciples. They would see how irresistible is the purpose of Him, Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

Thus has God given His answer to the evil one. Satan had hidden his "leaven", but the Lord had hidden His "treasure". Soon the day will come when the Lord will remove the stain of sin and the corruption of the enemy:

soon He will come both to "make up His jewels" and to set up His Kingdom and then shall Israel be a glorious diadem in the hand of their God.

In contrast with this parable of the treasure which symbolizes the whole of Israel, without reference to the individual faithfulness of any one member of that elect nation, we have as we have seen the parable of the Pearl. The very Jews who were "enemies because of the gospel" were nevertheless "beloved because of the fathers", but doubly precious in the sight of God has ever been that believing remnant from Abraham onwards. These are an election from among the elect, and these are dealt with in the parable of the Pearl:

> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13:45,46).

Let us briefly consider the words used in this parable.

MERCHANT- The word is *emporos* in the original, and gives us emporium, and occurs five times in the New Testament, once in the parable, and four times of the merchants connected with Babylon (Rev. 18).

PEARLS- These are mentioned in the New Testament. nine times. Two of the occurrences are in the parable, and five are in the Revelation. The harlot is seen decked with precious stones and pearls (Rev. 18:16), but after her destruction the new Jerusalem, the holy city, is seen with its foundation of precious stones, and every gate a pearl (Rev. 21:19,21). In both descriptions pearls are differentiated from precious stones. Merchants and pearls are connected with the two cities and the two systems, the one being the devil's parody of the other.

The New Testament word for a pearl is MARGARITES. Another word, not found in the New Testament, but closely resembling the Hebrew word translated "rubies" is the word *pinna.* The R. V. margin of Job 28:18 gives "pearls" as an alternative reading. Bochart is very strong in his belief that the Hebrew word *peninim* (rubies) should be translated pearls. The price of wisdom (Job 28:18; Prov. 3:15) and the worth of a virtuous woman (Prov. 31:10) are placed above the value of *peninim* or pearls.

Coming now to the meaning of the parable. Right down the ages since the time of Abraham there has been a faithful remnant. These will form one company at the end, and are spoken of as "holy brethren, partakers of the HEAVENLY CALLING", "who died in faith, not having received the promise". The reader should turn to the following passages before going further, to learn more concerning this remnant according to the election of grace. Isaiah 1:9; 7:3 (Shear-jashub, the name translated for us in 10:21 by the words "the remnant shall return"); Isaiah 11:11,16, Ezekiel 9:4-6; 14:22; Joel 2:32 (compare the remnant on the day of Pentecost); Micah 2:12; Romans 9:27 and 11:5.

The overcomers of the Apocalypse, the 144,000 sealed of the tribes of Israel, the various companies mentioned in Revelation 12:17; 14:1-5; 15:1-3 and 20:4 all seem to be part of this great company denominated by our Lord "The Pearl of Great Price". Pearls are compared with holiness in Matthew 7:6; the partakers of the heavenly calling are called "HOLY brethren" (Heb. 3:1), and "SAINTS of the Most High" (Dan. 7:22). Pearls are compared with wisdom in the Old Testament and Daniel 12:3 tells us that "they that be WISE shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars unto the age and beyond". These wise ones "understand" and "instruct many" (Dan. 11:33); they are subjected to the refining process of tribulation (Dan. 11:35) before they enter their glory. Wherever we see this elect remnant we find tribulation and suffering. The words of the epistles of Peter and James, so full of admonition and comfort to those of the dispersion who believed and who were passing through the "fiery trial", were addressed to this remnant. It is therefore not without significance that a pearl is the product of irritation in the shell of the oyster.

Israel's relationship to God is that of a wife who, being unfaithful, has been put away, but the return of Israel is to be like the taking back of the penitent wife, nay, so great is God's grace and love that He says it will be "as a young man marrieth a virgin", even though in reality it will be the taking back again of an unfaithful wife (see Isa. 62:4,5 and Hos. 2:19,20 etc.). This relationship which includes "all Israel", lies outside the main scope of the book of the Revelation, which is rather concerned with the overcomers, and concentrates on the times of trouble that produce the "Pearl".

After the thousand years' reign, and in connection with the new heaven and the new earth, we read, "And I John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). In verses 9 and 10 we have this fact repeated. The inhabitants of this city are the partakers

of the “heavenly calling”, who, like Abraham, desired a better country, that is an heavenly, and for them God hath prepared a CITY. It was this HEAVENLY CALLING (which must be distinguished from the super-celestial calling of the dispensation of the Mystery), so plainly understood and believed by Abraham, that enabled him to live as a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, a sojourner in the land of PROMISE as in a STRANGE country, content with a tent and no settled habitation, because he looked for A CITY which hath THE foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Such as are children of faithful Abraham, not only according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, such constitute the bride and the pearl, an elect remnant out from an elect nation. Israel viewed as a whole is likened to a treasure and a wife. The remnant (which will include believing Gentiles during the “Acts” period) are viewed as a precious pearl and a bride. We may set this out more clearly as follows:

THE ELECT NATION as distinct from the Nations	THE ELECT REMNANT as distinct from the Nation
A treasure	A pearl
A wife	A bride
Earthly calling, and city.	Heavenly calling, and city.

Once again we see how fully the Lord was meeting the disciples” need, by showing them the way in which God’s purpose concerning Israel was to run its course, and how the very trials and hindrances would be made to contribute to the glorious end in view.

Discriminating commentators have drawn attention to the slipshod way that many speak of “The Bride of Christ”, and of “The Body and Bride of Christ”. The following extract from the writings of Sir Robert Anderson will suffice to reveal this tendency and its correction:

> “Is the Church the Bride of Christ? Let us begin by correcting our terminology. In the Patmos visions, we read of "The Bride, the Lamb’s Wife" but "The Bride of Christ" is unknown in Scripture ... with the close of the Baptist’s ministry (who is called “the friend of the Bridegroom”), both the Bride and the Lamb disappear from the New Testament until we reach the Patmos vision”.

Again we give another writer’s comments:

> “He (John) speaks of the Lord under the figure of a lamb ... Paul never does, neither does he use the symbol of a bride. Hence the phrase, "The Bride of Christ" is not found in Scripture, and inasmuch as it combines the figures of different writers, its use is to be deprecated” (C. F. Hogg, *The Witness* 1933).

The booklet entitled “The Church which is His Body and The Bride the Lamb’s Wife” published by the Philadelphia Bible Testimony, from which the quotations given above have been taken, concludes its survey with the following words:

> “It is realized that many of the Lord’s people, have for a long time been accustomed to the doctrine of the "Bride" and the "Body" being the same, and that it is taken for granted as truth. However REPETITION of doctrine does not make it truth, that MAKES IT VANITY: ACCEPTANCE of a doctrine by the visible church does not make it truth, that makes for ECCLESIASTICISM: AGE of doctrine does not make it truth, that MAKES FOR TRADITION. The child of God must have an open mind toward the Lord and His Word willing to cast aside the most cherished of teachings if proved untrue by the Word”.

The emphasis on the “Lamb” is significant. In the book of the Revelation the Lord is represented as a Lamb,

(1) As the sacrificial basis upon which all claims to the throne are based (Rev. 5).

(2) Faithfulness even unto death is associated with this title (Rev. 7:14; 12:11; 14:4).

(3) The book of life (Rev. 13:8; 21:27).

(4) Victory (Rev. 12:11; 15:3).

The association of the heavenly city with this special company, turns us back to Hebrews chapters 11 and 12, where we shall see that Abraham, who by Divine election was already part of the “treasure”, voluntarily chose to be

a pilgrim and a stranger, walking by faith, because "He looked for a city which hath THE foundations (i.e. the city of Revelation 21), whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:9-10). This voluntary and overcoming aspect of Abraham's faith is expanded in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, a study of which will throw light upon the peculiar constitution of the company called "The Bride".

We shall discover that the teaching of Hebrews revolves around the exhortation "Let us go on unto perfection", with the alternative of drawing back "unto perdition or waste". The heavenly "city" which Abraham had in view was something over and above the inheritance of the "land", an inheritance he could neither win nor lose, but the heavenly "city" when seen in the light of the inspired type, Esau, and its relation to his attitude to the "birthright" and its resultant forfeiture, ranges the bridal calling with the "Prize" rather than with "Hope". All Israel shall be saved. That is basic, it is the "Hope of Israel" entertained by the "twelve tribes" (Acts 26:6,7). Some out of Israel will go on unto perfection, this is something super-added, it is in the nature of a prize, and could be missed. Let us turn to Hebrews 11 and see how this city comes into the record.

Hebrews 11:9-16

A 9-. By faith. Sojourn in land of promise.
B -9. Tent dwellers.
C 10. FOR he looked for a city.
(SARAH and resurrection).

A 13-. In faith. Died, not receive promises.
B -13. Strangers and pilgrims.
C 14-16. FOR they seek a country.

Abraham, even though he had entered the land of promise, and knew that it was his by the gift of God, did not "settle down", he voluntarily and of purpose remained a "tent" dweller, and those of like faith with himself confessed that they were "strangers and pilgrims".

Tent and City

The outward symbol of the pilgrim is the tent or tabernacle. Before this epistle closes the apostle presses this fact upon the Hebrews in the very solemn terms:

> "Wherefore Jesus also ... suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we SEEK ONE TO COME" (Heb. 13:12-14).

This dwelling in tents was no accident. It amounted to a confession.

> "These CONFESSED that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13).
> "They that say such things DECLARE PLAINLY that they seek a country" (Heb. 11:14).

Merely to become strangers and pilgrims may indicate nothing further than that we are unsociable Ishmaels; these that we are considering exhibited the positive side of the matter also, "they sought" something too.

What the epistle to the Hebrews is to the period before Acts 28, the epistle to the Philippians is to the church of the Mystery. The Hebrews were exhorted concerning the "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6:9), as the Philippians were urged to work out their own salvation (Phil. 2:12); and just as the Philippians were assured that it was God Who worked in them "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), even so the Hebrews were assured that it was the God of peace, Who worked in the believer that which was "well pleasing in His sight" (Heb. 13:21). Paul was confident that God would "perfect" that good thing He had begun in the Philippians (1:6) as in the Hebrews (13:21). Just as the Philippians were exhorted to press toward the mark (3:14) so were the Hebrews exhorted to run the race (12:1-3); and in both epistles a "citizenship" in heaven provides a strong incentive (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:10). In Philippians, attainment of the Prize of the high calling is associated with the "out-resurrection" (Phil. 3:11) with its fellowship of suffering. In Hebrews, we have a "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35) and fellowship in suffering. The callings are NOT the same, the prize before each company DIFFERS, but the

principles are PARALLEL. The tenth chapter of Hebrews ends with a warning concerning drawing back (Heb. 10:38, 39), and this is elaborated in chapter 12, the eleventh chapter with its record of "faith" forming a sort of parenthesis. The warning of chapter 10 is introduced with the words:

> "Knowing ... that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away (as Esau did, as we shall see in chapter 12) therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience ..." (Heb. 10:34-36).

The long list of those who overcame through faith in Hebrews 11 ultimately leads to the supreme example of Christ Himself with which Hebrews 12 opens, and an exhibition of the structure is all that is necessary here to establish this fact.

Hebrews 12:1-4

A	12:1.	Endurance	*hupomone*
		Race set before	*agon prokeima*
		Entangling sin	*hamartia*
B	12:2.	Looking away	
A	12:2.	Endurance	*hupomeno*
		Joy set before	*prokeima*
B	12:2,3.	Consider Him	
A	12:3,4.	Endurance	*hupomeno*
		Striving against	*antagonizo*
		Sinners	*hamartolos*

The emphasis is upon endurance, race and opposition, with the example of the Saviour as the "Captain and Perfecter of faith" ever before the believer as he presses on. The word translated "race" is the same as that translated "fight" in 2 Timothy 4:7 *agon,* which gives us the English word "agony" and re-appears in the words "striving against" as we have indicated in the structure. It is evident that we are no longer dealing with the initial faith which is unto salvation, but that overcoming aspect of faith which should grow out of the original deliverance accomplished by grace.

The Church of The Firstborn

Hebrews 12:5-14 deals with an experience which is common to all the children of God, but at verse 15 the apostle passes from "sons" to "firstborn" and Esau provides a warning concerning the treatment of the birthright, and with this reference to Esau we return to the parallel warning of Hebrews 10:35 "Cast not away".

Hebrews 12:15-25

A	15.	Looking diligently lest	
B	16,17.	Birthright bartered	*Prototokia*
C	18-21.	Ye are not come	Sinai
C	22,23-.	Ye are come	Zion
B	-23,24.	Birthright enjoyed	*Prototokos*
A	25.	See ... Lest.	

Esau, for one morsel of meat sold his birthright (Heb. 12:16). See, said the apostle, that you do not cast away your confidence which hath great recompense of reward, that better and enduring substance which is in heaven awaiting you (Heb. 10:34,35). Immediately following the exhortation of Hebrews 6 to go on unto perfection, the apostle speaks of those who having tasted of the heavenly gift, and falling away, declares that it is impossible to renew them again "unto repentance". This too finds an echo and an explanation in chapter 12, for, of Esau who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage it is written:

"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of REPENTANCE, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:17).

All this leads on to the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ... and church of the Firstborn" (Heb. 12:22,23). The birthright of verse 16 *prototokia* is in view. The word firstborn being *prototokos*. This can be forfeited, or it can be attained. It is unlike initial salvation which can neither be won nor lost. With this Scriptural context we can see that the "Bride", and the New Jerusalem which John saw coming down from heaven adorned as a bride for her husband, represent a company mainly from Israel, but with the overcomers from among the Gentiles, called during the Acts period, which is made up of those who like Moses "refused", "chose", "esteemed", because they had respect unto the recompense of the reward (Heb. 11:24-26). The prize winners of Philippians 3, are the spiritual counterpart in the dispensation of the Mystery, though of course, an entirely different company, and in an entirely different sphere.

Two cities, Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem are set in such contrast with each other in the book of the Revelation, as to make it impossible to interpret the place occupied by the heavenly Jerusalem if we ignore these revealed and intended parallels. Without attempting an elaborate commentary, we believe our purpose will be achieved if we set out some of the most obvious features that are seen to correspond with one another in the description of Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18, and the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 19 and 21.

"That great city". This title is applied to both Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 17:18; 21:10). To see these great cities John was on two occasions "carried away in spirit" into the wilderness to see Babylon, and "to a great and high mountain" to see the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 17:3; 21:10). Babylon is represented as an harlot (Rev. 17:3-5), the heavenly city is likened to a Bride (Rev. 21:9). Both women are represented as being "arrayed" with jewels of gold, precious stones and pearls (Rev. 17:4; 21:11-21). The beast that supports the harlot is seen ascending out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 17:8); the Bride is seen descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:10). Identical language is used in Revelation 17:1 and 21:9, where there came one of the seven angels that had the seven vials which said "Come hither: I will show unto thee (a) the judgment of the great whore, and (b) the bride the Lamb's wife".

"The Kings of the earth" are associated with Babylon in its corrupting influence (Rev. 17:2) but are seen bringing their glory and honour into the holy city (Rev. 21:24). The Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet (Matt. 24:15) is associated with Mystery Babylon (Rev. 17:4,5). The only other occurrences of the word in Revelation are the statements "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the *abominable* ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death", and "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh *abomination*, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:8,27).

The doom of the great city Babylon includes the word "The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee" (Rev. 18.23); whereas, such is the glory of that great city New Jerusalem, that we read "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof". "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle ... " (Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

Two pronouncements repeat a series of solemn "no mores":

"Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found NO MORE at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard NO MORE at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found ANY MORE in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard NO MORE at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine NO MORE at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard NO MORE at all in thee" (Rev. 18:21-23).

Over against this we read:

"There was NO MORE sea" (Rev. 21:1).

"There shall be NO MORE death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be ANY MORE pain" (Rev. 21:4).

"There shall be NO MORE curse" (Rev. 22:3).

The ten kings who receive power as kings with the beast for their brief yet bloody dominion, "make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). When the Lord is revealed riding on a white horse and coming to judge and make war, He is called Faithful and True, and those that follow Him upon white horses, are clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and His name is "KlNG OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16). The A.V. with a keen discrimination has printed in full capitals the "name written" concerning Mystery, Babylon, in Revelation 17:5, the city which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18); and the "name written" of Him Who is Himself the Mystery of God, and King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:16).

Those whose names were NOT WRITTEN in the book of life wonder at the beast (Rev. 17:8) and only those whose names ARE WRITTEN in the Lamb's book of life, shall enter the holy city (Rev. 21:27).

Doubtless a more careful scrutiny, and one which went beyond the English version to the original would reveal further comparisons between these two systems. Sufficient however has been exhibited to prove that here we have, at the end of the age, the two great opposing systems that have been in conflict "from the beginning" (John 8:44), the one, Babylon, the depository and vehicle of all the evil that is summed up in "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7); the other the Heavenly Jerusalem which embodies all the grace and truth that is summed up in "the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16).

So far, we have canvassed the Scriptures in order to discover the standing and calling of that company of believers known as "The Bride", and have distinguished the Bride from that company made up of restored Israel, spoken of as "The Wife" in the Old Testament. We shall miss much that is important for us to know, however, if we do not prosecute our studies further, and consider the teaching embedded in Revelation 21.

As the examination of this passage will call for consideration of several side issues, the reader may be helped by a forecast of the steps about to be taken.

(1) Does the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 21:1 correspond with the creation "In the beginning" (Gen. 1:1)?

(2) What bearing has the word translated "first" in Revelation 21:1 upon our answer?

(3) Will the creation of Genesis 1:1 ever "pass away"?

(4) What is the significance of the association of the new heaven and new earth, with (a) The new Jerusalem and (b) The tabernacle of God?

(5) How is it that while Peter speaks of a new heaven and a new earth, Paul never refers to it?

(6) How comes it that after the wonderful words expressed in Revelation 21:4 "No more death" etc., we find such dreadful words connected with access or exclusion from the new Jerusalem as are written in Revelation 21:8,27; and 22:15?

It is natural as we read of a new heaven and a new earth, to place such a revelation over against Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", and conceive of the whole of the Scripture thus:

In the beginning		At the end
Heaven and Earth created	⎡ The present ⎤ ⎢ world ⎥ ⎣ since Adam ⎦	A new heaven and a new earth

Here, Revelation 21:1 corresponds with Genesis 1:1, the purpose is evident, the movement is simple, and all is satisfactory. The purpose of the ages, however, like the course of true love does not "run smooth". Things are not so simple as that. A malignant spiritual foe continually attempts to frustrate the purpose of God, and the Scriptures exhibit this move and countermove, until the great enemy of truth is no more. The first gleam of light comes from the recognition of the meaning of the word translated "first" in Revelation 21:1. *Protos* means "former of two" and demands another to complete the "pair".

When dealing with Revelation 20:5* we found that this "first" resurrection was the "former" of which the resurrection at the Great White Throne is the "latter" or the member that completes "the pair". So "the former" heaven and earth which pass away, demands that the new heaven and earth shall be the second member of a pair.

At the setting up of the Great White Throne we read:

" ... from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them ... and the sea gave up the dead which were in it" (Rev. 20:11-13).

We need seek no further for "the former heaven and earth" which passed away, or for "the sea" which was to be "no more". It is utterly impossible to think of the primal creation of Genesis 1:1 here; THAT surely will not pass away at the setting up of the great white throne. The former creation can only refer to Genesis 1:3 to 2:3.

We consider next the relationship of the new heaven and new earth with the heavenly city, called here the holy city, and "the new Jerusalem". This city is called "new" in ONE OTHER PLACE, namely in Revelation 3:12 where it is also spoken of as coming "down from heaven" from God. The overcomer whose sphere of glory and of service during the Millennium is to live and reign with Christ for the thousand years, evidently reigns OVER the earth, rather than ON the earth, and experimentally proves the lesson learned by Nebuchadnezzar that "the heavens do rule" in "the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:25,26).

It may be necessary at this juncture to anticipate a difficulty. In each sphere of blessing there will be two classes. Both will "live", but both will not "live and reign". This is exhibited in 2 Timothy 2:11-13. It is possible that "The Bride" will be attended by "the virgins her companions" (Psa. 45:14) who will also have a place in the heavenly city, even as they will who are for ever "with the Lord" in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. While the believer was on earth, and looking forward to this city it was of necessity spoken of as "heavenly", but when the heavenly rule is over, the Millennium having run its course, this heavenly city will descend to the "new" earth; it is then called "The new Jerusalem" and then it will assume another character, not so much as "reigning" over the earth but enshrining "the tabernacle of God" so that He may, at long last dwell among men. Before we deal with this aspect, there is another feature demanding our attention, namely the reason for this association of the new heaven and earth with Jerusalem. It must be very essential to the fulfilment of the purpose, for we not only have it so expressed in Revelation 21:1-3, but we have it in the prophecy of Isaiah also where the new Creation is linked with the earthly Jerusalem. Isaiah, in chapter 65 says:

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

So far all is straightforward, but the prophet continues:

"But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy ... the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isa. 65:18,19).

At the close of this chapter in Isaiah we read words very similar to those found in Isaiah 11.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb ... and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Isa. 11:6,7).
"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock" (Isa. 65:25).

"The asp" and "the cockatrice (or adder)" are mentioned in Isaiah 11:8 and "the serpent" in Isaiah 65:25. "A little child", "the sucking child" and "the weaned child" figure in Isaiah 11:6-8, while an "infant of days" and "a child" are brought into the record in Isaiah 65:20.

While in Isaiah 65:19 there is a parallel with Revelation 21, in that there will be no more weeping nor crying; yet, in Revelation 21 we read "there shall be no more death", whereas in Isaiah 65 we read "the child shall die an hundred years old: but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (verse 20).

The problems that such features raise are partly of our own making, for we have omitted one other feature that is found in both Isaiah 11 and 65:

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* see the booklet entitled *Zion, the Overcomer, and the Millennium* by the same author.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

"They shall not hurt nor destroy IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, saith the LORD" (Isa. 65:25).

If we belittle or ignore this added revelation we must expect to have problems that remain unsolved, but if we give God credit for meaning something by this repetition of the Holy mountain, light may dawn.

Isaiah 2:1-4 tells us that in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains ... and all nations shall flow unto it and be taught His ways.

"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

Further, if we do not summarily dismiss the words "as the waters cover the sea" as a strange figure of speech, we might learn more as to the relationship of the New Jerusalem with the New Creation. Ezekiel 47 reveals that healing waters are to flow from the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and that "everything shall live whither the river cometh", and when we learn that it will reach to a place named En-gedi, we know that this river will flow into the Dead Sea. So that we can understand the figure the better, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the river of LIFE shall heal and blot out the DEAD Sea. But this knowledge starts from Jerusalem, and takes time to expand and spread. We now see that both Isaiah and John perceived that what was true in the first case of the New Jerusalem only, was to be the blessed experience of the whole earth ultimately. If the new heaven and earth of Revelation 21 were set over against the primal creation of Genesis 1:1 (where confessedly no thought of Jerusalem old or new can be introduced) we should expect Paul and not Peter to refer his readers to the new heaven and the new earth; for the church of the mystery is associated with the period known as "before the foundation of the world". But the fact remains, whatever the meaning may be, that it is Peter and not Paul who refers his reader to this new creation. Peter in his second epistle (2 Pet. 3) speaks of the day of the Lord, in which "the heavens shall pass away" and "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" and then tells us that this will be followed by the day of God. We must be on our guard when we read the A.V. here; "in the which" of verse 10 is in the Greek *en he*, but "wherein" in verse 12 is *di" hen* "by reason of which" (See R.V.).

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13).

It appears that the Day of God that follows the Millennium and the new heavens and new earth are the same. The same sequence is maintained in Revelation 20 and 21:

The day of the Lord i.e. the thousand years reign (Rev. 20:6).

The fleeing of heaven and earth (Rev. 20:11).

The new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1).

It is to be noted that most ancient manuscripts read "discovered" for "burnt up" in 2 Peter 3:10. While all the host of heaven shall "be dissolved" and "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. 34:4), the earth remains after its baptism of regenerating fire.

Returning now to Revelation 21, we observe that the new Jerusalem is put forward as equivalent with the tabernacle of God. "I saw" new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. "I heard" the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them. This "adorning" as a bride is characteristic of the new Jerusalem for the Greek word *kosmeo* occurs nowhere else in the Apocalypse than in verse 19 where it speaks of the "garnishing" of the foundation of the wall of the city with all manner of precious stones. A reference back to the materials employed in the Tabernacle in the wilderness with its blue, purple, scarlet, linen, silver, brass and gold, will justify the parallel. Again, as we have seen a parallel between the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21 and the earthly city of Isaiah 65, so we shall find that the earthly Jerusalem, when it is restored to favour, will have a foundation of sapphires and all its borders pleasant stones (Isa. 54:11,12). Now if this new Jerusalem which descends to the earth when the new heaven and the new earth replace "the former" and if within its walls "there shall be no death" or pain or crying, we nevertheless find in that new creation, such awful and evil characteristics described in Revelation 21:8,27 and 22:15 as to show that the knowledge of the Lord while perfect and complete within the city, has not yet radiated to the ends of the earth.

The book of the Revelation was not written to cover the whole of the times of the end. It does not describe a resurrection of all the ungodly that have ever lived, neither does it speak of a General Judgment of the Last Day. It speaks consistently of the progress and the blessed achievement of the Overcomer, all else being subsidiary. If we wish to read the character of the very end of the ages, we must leave Peter and John and listen to Paul, where he speaks of a day when there will have come universal submission and when God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28). This "end" is never in sight in the book of the Revelation and to attempt to force it into the closing chapters is to render ourselves incapable of appreciating either the goal of God, or the steps taken to reach it. Nowhere in the whole book of the Revelation can one say "Here" the Son of God can present this kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Such a consummation however "devoutly to be wished" is not in sight. We are still under the limitation implied by the words "Beginning at Jerusalem".

We must now consider the import of the word "tabernacle". The Greek word *skene*, translated tabernacle occurs twenty times in the New Testament. In nineteen of these occurrences it is translated tabernacle and once habitation. The word occurs as follows:

In Matthew, Mark and Luke it is used of "the three tabernacles" so desired by Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration.

In the Acts it is used three times, once of the tabernacle of Molech, once of the tabernacle of witness and once of the tabernacle of David.

The "tabernacle" in Hebrews is either:

(1) The tabernacle pitched by Moses at the commandment of God.

(2) The True Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

(3) The tents in which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were willing as pilgrims to dwell, because they looked for the heavenly Jerusalem, which was also the true tabernacle of God.

The three other occurrences of *skene* are Revelation 13:6; 15:5 and 21:3. We must not assume however that even though the scale is weighted in favour of a reference to the tabernacle in both type and reality, that this is universally accepted. Some have interpreted *skenos* in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4 as of a theatre, and even James, with all his Hebrew leanings, when quoting from the prophet Amos about the "tabernacle of David" has been made to refer rather to "the Davidic scene" thereby repeating in the future the 30 years of his reign, and this passage in Revelation 21 has not escaped, but has been made to read "The scene or area of Divine Activity" instead of "the tabernacle of God".

The Greek word *skene* translated "tabernacle" has come into our own tongue in the form *scene* and is associated both in Greek and in English with the theatre. The Greek theatre was in the open air, and the "tent" soon became, by an easy figure of speech the word used to designate the "stage".

While this is so, there is no warrant for anyone to intrude this change of meaning into the New Testament. The Greek language was in formation long before its adoption as the vehicle for New Testament truth and consequently its words often contained Pagan references.

It seems an extraordinary idea that James of all men should be made to speak of the "stage" or "scene" of David when it is well known that he was quoting from Amos 9:11 in Acts 15, and more strange still that this Pagan idea should be thrust into John 1:14 or into Revelation 21:3.

Let us give an example of the foolishness of seeking in Greek roots a basis for doctrine. The word "interpret" comes a number of times in the New Testament and the Greek word for it is *hermeneuo*. Now this word is derived from the Pagan idea that the god Hermes or Mercury, which is the Latin equivalent, was the god of interpretation, but shall we then adopt such an idea because it is part of Greek Etymology?

However, only a few of our readers will have come under the influence of a teaching which necessitates the kind of treatment of language we have mentioned; and so we pass on to other features of the subject we are considering; namely the place of the "wife", the "bride" and the "body", in the outworking of the purposes of grace.

The creation of the present heaven and earth, is described in Genesis 1:3 to 2:3, and the second day's work is the making of a "firmament" (Heb. "expansion" see margin), and this is called "heaven" henceforward (Gen. 1:8). Isaiah refers to this character of the present limited heavens above us, saying that God "stretcheth out the heavens AS A CURTAIN, and spreadeth them out as a TENT to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22). Here the word "tent" is the translation of the Hebrew *ohel* used of the Tabernacle so many times that Young's concordance does not give the number of occurrences, simply saying "tabernacle freq.". The heavens above us therefore were designed as a Tabernacle for God "to dwell in", the tabernacle in the wilderness being but a shadow or type. Further, when God challenged Job concerning the earth, saying:

"Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?" (Job 38:6).

the word thus translated foundation is the Hebrew word *eden*, a word employed over fifty times by Moses to describe the silver "sockets" upon which the Tabernacle rested (Exod. 26:19). The present heaven and earth therefore is likened to a Tabernacle, but the advent of sin and death at the very beginning made it unfit as a dwelling place for God; THAT is reserved for the "new heaven and new earth".

We now return to Revelation 21 with added knowledge and this is what we find implied in the opening verses. The new heaven and the new earth take the place of the present heaven and earth, created in the six days for the home of Adam and his descendants. The original intention, namely, that this limited creation should be a temporary dwellingplace for God while man grew in knowledge, was rendered impossible by the advent of sin. The cherubim that were "tabernacled" ("placed" in the A.V.) at the east of the garden, and the Tabernacle in the wilderness were prophetic pledges that at long last this dwelling of God with men should be achieved, and in the new heaven and new earth of Revelation 21, we see its commencement. The whole wide earth does not become the dwelling-place of God immediately, that is limited at the first to the New Jerusalem, and to the Holy Mountain, and it is the privilege of the Overcomer and "The Bride" to be thus associated with this phase of the purpose of the ages. We must therefore revise the set-out given on page 19.

"THE PLEROMA"

In the "beginning"	The "Former"	The "New"	Then cometh the "end"
Creation	The present Heaven and Earth.	The new Heaven and Earth.	God all in all.
	Adam to end of Millennium	New Jerusalem to the end	
	Paradise lost	Paradise restored	

Instead of placing the new heaven and earth over against the creation of Genesis 1:1 as we have done in the past, the truth is that the new heavens and earth of Isaiah 65 and 66, of 2 Peter 3, and of Revelation 21, are a renewing of the six days creation, and not a renewing of Genesis 1:1, the "Regeneration", where the Edenic conditions of Genesis are more than restored, for in the former the Serpent found an entry, whereas in the latter he will be removed from the scene. Let us keep every term in its right place and use "In the beginning" to balance "Then cometh the end", reserving the new creation to balance the old creation associated with Adam.

We can well believe that some of our readers may feel that it is impossible to think that when the new heaven and the new earth take the place of the former heaven and earth that such conditions as are indicated in the words of Revelation 21:8 "... shall have their part in the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death", could possibly obtain, and resort to some interpretation that severs the new creation of verse 1 from the remainder of the Revelation.

There is however no legitimate way of thus segregating verse 1, and if the problem is insoluble, it will be far better to acknowledge our ignorance than to handle the word of God deceitfully.

We have, however, one other passage of Scripture, not yet examined, which will be found very pertinent to the question, and this is found in the closing verses of the prophecy of Isaiah. It will be remembered that in chapter 65, we have already seen that the newly created heaven and earth are related to Jerusalem where, as in Revelation 21, there is to be no more weeping, nevertheless as in Revelation 21 there is in the sequel a reference to sin and death (Isa. 65:17-20). So whatever we may do or not do over Revelation 21 we have not rid ourselves of an identical problem. When we turn to the close of Isaiah 66 we shall find a new creation associated with Gehenna itself.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against Me: FOR THEIR WORM SHALL NOT DIE, NEITHER SHALL THEIR FIRE BE QUENCHED; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. 66:22-24).

We have therefore, the same features in Isaiah as we have in the Revelation, the one speaking of the Jerusalem on the earth, the other of the Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from God. In the one we read of "worship", in the other of a "tabernacle". The solution to the problem may be in the fact that both in the Millennium and in the succeeding Day of God, blessing begins at Jerusalem and from thence extends to the ends of the earth.

They shall not hurt nor destroy IN ALL MY HOLY MOUNTAIN, may contain the answer to our difficulties here. This is on all fours with the scope of the book of the Revelation itself, which is not written from the universal standpoint, but from the very limited standpoint of "Him that OVERCOMETH".

Even that passage which takes us to the "end" and assures us of universal submission, even there we find the Son of God putting down all enemies before it becomes possible for Him to yield up a perfect kingdom that "God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28). So then there are "enemies" to be put down during the day of God.

The "Bride" we can see has an important part to play in the new heaven and new earth, even as a restored Israel will have a reviving mission in the Millennial kingdom, and all such expanding ministries, with their evidences of partial success, lead at last to that perfect day, when "Every knee shall bow" and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. This however lies entirely outside the scope of the book of the Revelation. It is after all a matter of "rightly dividing the word of truth".

Those who have the chart on the *Pleroma* (a series both in *An Alphabetical Analysis*, Part 3, and later in *The Berean Expositor* vol. 41 p. 167) will therefore understand why Revelation 21 seems to be put into correspondence both with Genesis 1:1 and with Genesis 1 and 2.*

One further point. Paradise, or the Garden of Eden in which Adam was placed, belongs to "The present heaven and earth" not to Genesis 1:1. A reference to Revelation 22:1-5 will show that its restoration belongs to the new heaven and earth, of which both the creation of Adam and the creation of Revelation 21 form a pair. The restored wife - Israel - is related to the Jerusalem and the new creation of Isaiah 65. The Bride, the overcomers out of Israel, are associated with the heavenly Jerusalem. The Body of the epistles of the Mystery, is not associated with the new heaven of Revelation 21, but to the "heaven of heavens" the heaven of Genesis 1:1, the heaven that will never be folded up like a tent, but is "far above all" such temporary associations, far above not only "angels" which are linked with the heavenly Jerusalem and the Bride, but with Principalities and Powers and with the "Right hand of God".

We must now leave this great question of the Bride and its associations, to explore the third company, namely "The Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all".

The Church which is His Body

We now turn our attention to the third company, The Body, a company quite distinct in calling, sphere and constitution from either the restored Wife, or the Bride of the Lamb. Before we adduce positive testimony concerning this distinct company, it will be necessary to consider the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12, because there are some who, seeing a reference to a "body" in that

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* The chart opposite is included for those readers who do not possess either of these books.

chapter, have jumped to the conclusion that this too must refer to the one Body of Ephesians and by so doing confuse that which Scripture keeps apart. The opening statement of 1 Corinthians 12 makes it clear that the apostle is speaking, not of the Church which is the Body of Christ, but of "spiritual gifts", which are enumerated in verses 4-11 and again in verse 28. These are not "words which man's wisdom teacheth, but the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13); against which there is no appeal. It was the apostle's intention that the Corinthians should learn something about "spiritual gifts". We have no warrant to revise that intention. The first thing that the apostle does is to divide his subject into two categories, the TRUE and the FALSE (1 Cor. 12:2,3) even as John does in his first epistle (1 John 4:1-3) but he is not thinking of true or false "bodies" but spiritual gifts. Having settled that important matter, he treats of TRUE spiritual gifts in the remainder of the chapter, his theme and treatment being easily exhibited thus:

A 4-11. Diversity in unity.

B 12-27. This diversity in unity illustrated by the human body.

A 28-30. Diversity in unity.

While all the true gifts possessed by the Church were of God, they differed in degree, in manifestation, and in usefulness. Nevertheless the apostle is at pains to insist:

"Now there are DIVERSITIES of gifts, but the SAME spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4).

These he enlarges in the next few verses:

A 4-. There are diversities of gifts

B -4. But the SAME Spirit.

A 5-. There are diversities of administrations

B -5. But the SAME Lord.

A 6-. There are diversities of operations

B -6. But the SAME God.

Then follow nine diverse manifestations of the Spirit - The word of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

"But all these worketh that ONE and the SELFSAME Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:11).

The illustration of the human body, with its many members all working harmoniously together now follows, introduced with the word *kathaper* "just as", "so also is the Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). If these words mean "the church" we should be able to substitute them for the actual words employed by the apostle, and still make sense. Let us try:

"For as the CHURCH is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that CHURCH, being many, are One CHURCH, so also is the CHRIST".

This is not very illuminating certainly, but all is clear if the "body" is seen as an illustration of the sovereign distribution of miraculous gifts.

"The Christ" here, is a title of the church which had received this "anointing". "Ye have an anointing" (1 John 2:27):

"Now He that confirmeth us (i.e. by miraculous gifts 1 Cor. 1:6,7; Heb. 2:3,4) with you in the ANOINTED and hath ANOINTED US, is God" (2 Cor. 1:21)

This is what the apostle was teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12. The disposition of the subject matter is therefore as follows:

A The Body. Illustration - One, yet many members.

B The Anointed

	Spiritual Gifts
B The Baptism	

A The Body. Illustration - eye, hand, head, feet.

The apostle in verse 18 says of the gifts "But now hath God set" and resumes his argument in verse 28 with the words "And God hath set"; the eye, hand, head and feet, giving place now to apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues, of which they were figures; the members of a body. Any reader who possesses one or more of these "gifts" may have a basis upon which to rest his claim to be represented here, but how can an honest believer, who is entirely destitute of any such spiritual gift deceive himself and attempt to deceive his fellows? We note one more feature in this chapter. These gifts are enumerated in a special order:

"God hath set some in the church,

FIRST Apostles,
SECONDARILY Prophets,
THIRDLY Teachers,

... then gifts of healings etc." (12:28).

Whereas in Ephesians 4:11 this order is given:

"He gave SOME, apostles; and
SOME, prophets; and
SOME, evangelists; and
SOME, pastors and teachers;

for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ".

There are three items of importance here:

(1) The One Who gave THESE gifts is the ASCENDED Lord. The "twelve" were appointed on earth (Matt. 10).

(2) The addition of the "evangelist" suggests that a different order of ministry is in view.

(3) There is a notable omission, miraculous gifts in the church are entirely foreign to the epistles of Paul written after Acts 28.

Neither 1 Corinthians 12, nor Romans 12:4-8 can be explained satisfactorily apart from the presence of "spiritual gifts" concerning which the apostle said "I would not have you ignorant" (1 Cor. 12:1). The title of the church "The body of Christ" is unknown outside of Paul's prison epistles, and its introduction elsewhere can result only in confusion. The epistles which use this and similar titles are Ephesians and Colossians, and while both epistles speak of Christ as Head, Ephesians lays stress upon the Body and Colossians lays stress upon the Head. This is but to say that both epistles bring the same truth to light but view it from two points of view. The bulk of the references in Ephesians are found in the practical section (Eph. 4 to 6). The first reference in Ephesians flows out of the revelation that the apostle received of the supreme position occupied by Christ at His Ascension. He is set forth as being:

> "Raised from the dead, and set 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: and 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. 1:20-23).

While "heaven" and "heavenly" are met in other parts of the New Testament, this expression "in heavenly places" *en tois epouraniois* occurs only in Ephesians, and for those who appreciate the note, it does NOT occur in the LXX. From these references, we learn among other things that these heavenly places are "at the right hand of God" (Eph. 1:20); that they are the sphere in which the blessings of the church of the one Body are to be enjoyed (Eph. 1:3); and that it is the extraordinary privilege of this company to be reckoned to be seated together in this glorious sphere (Eph. 2:6). Of no other company is it said that they were chosen in Christ "BEFORE the foundation of the world", and nowhere throughout the whole range of Scripture has a church ever been called:

"The FULNESS of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23).

From this ascended glory "far above all heavens" which enables Him to "fill all things", Christ gave apostles and others for "the building up of the Body of Christ", the goal of which is nothing less than "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:10-13). The first item in the sevenfold unity of the Spirit is "There is one Body" (Eph. 4:4). This church of the one Body was called into being under a dispensation of God, which was given to the apostle for the Gentiles, a dispensation which "completes" the Word of God and which relates to the Mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but which hath now been made manifest through the ministry of the apostle Paul (Col. 1:24-26).

Three Spheres of Blessing

The three companies of believers denominated "The Wife", "The Bride" and "The Body" are related to three spheres of blessing:

First Sphere. THE EARTH. Subject of the Old Testament and part of the New Testament. Israel dominant.

Second Sphere. NEW JERUSALEM. Subject only of part of the New Testament. Both Jew and Gentile here as the seed of Abraham.

Third Sphere. THE MYSTERY. Subject of the "prison epistles" only, Gentiles especially emphasized.

Israel as the restored Wife will inherit the earth and does not figure in the Apocalypse. The Bride made up mainly of Israel who walked by faith, and of Gentiles associated with them during the Acts (see 2 Cor. 11:2), will inherit the heavenly city. The church of the one Body made known only through the ministry of Paul as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, inherits the position far above all where Christ sits at the right hand of God. That there are intermediate callings, such as those who are invited as "guests" of the marriage of the King's Son, and those who are the virgin companions of the Bride we readily admit, but these do not alter the clear-cut divisions that the Scriptures make as indicated above. It is not possible, within the limits of this booklet, to attempt an exposition of every occurrence of "The Body" in Ephesians and Colossians, but what is possible we are under an obligation to try, and there are two passages which call for consideration, and which, if rightly understood, will provide a key to the interpretation of all the rest. The two passages are:

(1) The one Body in relation to the middle wall and the New Man (Eph. 2:13-18).

(2) The same Body in relation to the new calling and constitution of the church under the new dispensation of the Mystery (Eph. 3:1-9).

The Body and the Middle Wall

Let us first of all exhibit the structure of Ephesians 2: 1-22 omitting necessarily a wealth of detail, but concentrating upon the essentials of the chapter:

Ephesians 2:1-22

A	DOCTRINAL	**a**	1-3.	ONCE	world, flesh.
		b	4.	BUT GOD	Mercy. Love.
		c	5-10.	MADE ALIVE	together
				RAISED	together
				SEATED	together
A	DISPENSATIONAL	***a***	11,12.	ONCE	flesh, world.
		b	13-18.	BUT NOW	Nigh. One.
		c	19-22.	CITIZENS	together
				FRAMED	together
				BUILDED	together

In the doctrinal section of this chapter we have such terms as “dead”, “trespass”, “sin”, “disobedience”, “wrath”, “made alive”, “save”, “faith” and “walk”. NOT ONE of these terms appears in the dispensational section; there the position of the Gentile is set forth as one of “distance” rather than death. He needs to be “made nigh” rather than saved, the enmity exhibited and destroyed is not the enmity of sin, but occasioned by “ordinances”.

In this second section we find stressed the DISPENSATIONAL DISABILITY OF BEING A GENTILE, irrespective of character or deeds. Let us concentrate our attention, therefore, on this section which speaks of “the Body”, and first of all observe the structure in its simplest outlines:

The New Man
Ephesians 2:11-19

A 11,12. In time past
B ALIENATION
A 13-18. But now
B RECONCILIATION
A 19 No longer
B FOREIGNERS

The alienation of the Gentile is placed in contrast with the covenant nearness of Israel, and this will be seen clearly if the two passages of Scripture that emphasize this are placed side by side:

Israel	*Gentile*
Dispensational Superiority	*Dispensational Disability*
No reference to personal character. Romans 9:3-5	No reference to personal character. Ephesians 2:11,12
A Acc. to FLESH *KINSMEN*	A Gentiles in the FLESH
B Israelites	
C Adoption	B Without CHRIST
D Glory	
E Covenants	C ALIENS
E Law	*C* STRANGERS
D Service	
C Promises	*B* Without HOPE
B Fathers	
A Acc. to FLESH *CHRIST*	*A* Godless in the WORLD

While Israel “in the flesh” had covenant blessings, the Gentile “in the flesh” was a hopeless alien. In the mercy of God, the time had come for the salvation of God to be “sent” to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28) without relationship or dependence upon Israel, and a new constitution is envisaged in the creation “of the twain one new man”. We must ascertain to whom the term “the twain” refers. This is a variant of the recurring expression “the both” that comes in Ephesians 2:14, 16 and 18:

Ephesians 2:14-18

A He is our PEACE	A RECONCILED to God
B The BOTH one	B The BOTH One Body
B The TWAIN one	*B* The BOTH One Spirit

A So making PEACE *A* ACCESS to the Father

It is evident that the "peace" here, even as the "enmity", is not related to the individual's sin, but the dispensational alienation of the Gentile as such. "The Both" refers to the Jew and the Gentile in their new relationship, consequent upon the breaking down of the middle wall of partition.

The Middle Wall

What is implied in this figurative use of the Middle Wall? Josephus, speaking of the Temple as it stood in his day, tells us that it consisted of an outer square some six hundred feet wide, and a second inner area, which he describes as follows:

> "On advancing to the second (court of the) temple, a stone balustrade was thrown around it four feet and a half high, and withal beautifully wrought, and in it stood pillars at equal distances proclaiming the law of purity, some in Greek and some in Roman letters, "that no alien might pass within the sanctuary"" (*Wars of the Jews* v, v, 2.).
>
> "Such was the first enclosure, and not far from it, in the middle, was the second, ascended by a few steps and encompassed by a stone balustrade for a partition, which prohibited by inscription any alien from entering, under penalty of death" (*Antiquities* xv, xi, 5.).

In 1871 one of these inscribed stones was discovered by M. Clermont Ganneau, built into the wall of the *Via Dolorosa*, Jerusalem. The original is in the possession of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and a cast is exhibited in the British Museum, the translation of the inscription being as follows:

> "No one, being a foreigner, may enter into the enclosure around the holy place. Whosoever is apprehended will himself be to blame for his death which will certainly follow".

During the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles, this barrier stood and the problems to which the differences between Jewish and Gentile believers gave rise, caused the calling of the council at Jerusalem, as is recorded in Acts 15. The "ordinances" associated both with the middle wall and the enmity that was destroyed, refer to the "decrees" by that council and passed on to the churches (Acts 16:4). "Decrees" and "ordinances" here are both translations of the same Greek word. The new company thus brought into existence, is NOT AN EVOLUTION of the position obtaining while the middle wall stood, with a few improvements made in order that the position may become more tolerable. It is an absolutely NEW CREATION. The word translated "make" in Ephesians 2:15 is the Greek word *ktizo* "create". This word occurs in Ephesians as follows:

A 2:10. CREATED ... unto good works.
  B 2:15. TO CREATE in Himself of the twain ONE NEW MAN.
A 3:9. CREATED all things. God.
  B 4:24. CREATED ... THE NEW MAN.

When the New Man of Ephesians 4:24 can be looked upon as an improvement, an evolution from the past, anything other than a brand new creation, it will be time to consider such a possibility in Ephesians 2:15.

The reconciliation of Ephesians 2 is dispensational in character. The enmity that is there annulled arose out of the position occupied respectively by any Jew and any Gentile. The most villainous Jew was nevertheless a member of a covenant race, and the most upright Gentile was a member of an alienated people. In the newly created New Man, the Jew who believes and the Gentile who believes, meet on absolutely equal terms, a position never before experienced since the call of Abraham. One of the evidences of the difference in privilege that obtained during the Acts is illustrated by the attitude of Peter to Cornelius. Peter told Cornelius to his face that he was classed among "the common and the unclean", and we can hear the shocked tones of the remonstrance of Acts 11:3 as we read the words:

"Thou WENTEST IN to men uncircumcised, and didst EAT with them".

The "decrees" of Acts 15 which palliated these differences, emphasized the existence of the middle wall. The full and complete unity of the One Body could not be brought into existence until this middle wall was "abolished", and now, those reconciled "in one body" to God, have access "in one spirit" unto the Father.

We must now pass to the second passage which speaks of the complete and new equality that is the outstanding characteristic of the One Body under the terms of the "Mystery".

What is a "Joint-Body"? (Eph. 3:6).

Much controversy and confusion has arisen out of the failure to discern between "The Mystery" and "The Mystery of Christ" in Ephesians 3:4-8 and the structure of this passage will help to distinguish between them.

Ephesians 3:4-8

Two mysteries and two ministries
d 4. Mystery of Christ
e 5. Apostles and Prophets (*plural*)
f 5,6. The Mystery **g** In spirit (*sphere*)
h[1] Joint-heirs
h[2] Joint-body
h[3] Joint-partakers
g In Christ (*sphere*)
e 7,8. Paul alone (*singular*)
d -8. Unsearchable riches of Christ

The subject matter of the Mystery of Christ is capable of comparison, for the apostle says: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, AS IT IS NOW revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. 3:5). The subject matter of the Mystery is not capable of similar comparison, for of this he says, "The mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1:25-27). If these two statements of the apostle speak of the same thing, then we must admit a contradiction in the Scriptures. The A.V. has veiled the teaching of the apostle by translating the Greek word *genea* "ages" in Ephesians 3:5 and "generations" in Colossians 1:26. The moment these translations are made to agree, the distinction between the two mysteries becomes apparent:

"The mystery of Christ" WAS made known in other GENERATIONS,

"The mystery" was NOT, for it was HID from ages and from GENERATIONS.

It is THIS mystery which Paul claims to have been made exclusively to him:

> "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you ... even the mystery" (Col. 1:25,26).

The fact that the apostle uses the title "the sons of men", in Ephesians 3:5, to indicate those to whom a partial unveiling of the mystery of Christ was made known, seems intentional in order that the higher type of ministry "His holy apostles and prophets" should be thereby seen to advantage. The A.V. makes the words "by the Spirit" follow the reference to the apostles and prophets, as though to teach us how the revelation was made known to them. Yet the universal witness of the Scriptures is so definite that "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" that one may pardon a moment's indecision and ask why it seemed necessary for believers like the Ephesians to require this information.

Immediately we refer to the original we read *en pneumati* and our mind travels back to the same two words with which chapter 2 closes, there translated "through the Spirit". We note the four occurrences of the phrase *en pneumati* in Revelation 1:10; 4:2;17:3; 21:10, and also see an intended contrast between the SPHERE "in spirit" of Ephesians 2:22 with the realm indicated in the same chapter as "in the flesh" and "in the world". So, when we come to the end of Ephesians 3:5, we must allow the words *en pneumati* to stand as a heading of the newly revealed constitution of the church defined as "joint-heirs" etc., which is balanced at the close by the words *en Christo Jesou.* This correspondence we have indicated in the structure.

An illustration of the use of a word to introduce a new section of a book is provided by Daniel 2:4:

"Then spake the Chaldeans to the king IN SYRIACK".

If this simply means that the Chaldeans spoke their native tongue, there seems little reason for the information, for generally Hebrews speak Hebrew, Chaldeans speak Syriac, Greeks speak Greek. When, however, we discover that the remainder of the chapter, together with every chapter up to the end of chapter 7 is written not in Hebrew but in Syriac, we realize that it was not to tell us that the Chaldeans spoke their native tongue, but that a new section of the prophecy here commenced. So in Ephesians 3:5 "In Spirit" governs the statement that follows. That statement we must now consider:

"That IN SPIRIT the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6 Author's translation).

We are here immediately faced with a problem of interpretation. The one prefix *sun* "together with" is used three times, *sunkleronoma, sussoma, summetocha*, yet the A.V. translates these three words FELLOW-heirs, OF THE SAME Body, and PARTAKERS. In one word *sun* is translated "fellow", in the next word it is rendered "of the same", and in the third case it is not translated at all except it be in the prefix "part". Moffatt translates by co-heirs and co-partners, but falls down over *sussoma*, rendering it "companions", which is very wide of the mark. We must preserve the threefold emphasis upon "with", and the R.V. gets over the difficulty by rendering the three words "fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers" which while it has the merit of preserving the three occurrences of the preposition *sun*, adds to the apostle's words the word "member" which is questionable. Rotherham, in his *Emphasized New Testament* reads "joint-heirs and a joint-body and joint-partakers", which translation is found also in J.N. Darby's translation. Possibly this is as near to the original as our English language will permit, but even so, the translation sets us a problem, for WHAT IS a joint-body? The essential characteristic of a "body" is that it has many members, each differing from the others in function and in importance. Such a body can provide an analogy for a spiritual company, and this analogy is employed by the apostle in 1 Corinthians 12. The ancients who were not limited to the English language, have nevertheless found a difficulty to express the Greek word *sussoma* adequately. Jerome renders the word in the Latin Vulgate by *concorporates* and says:

"I know that in Latin it makes an ugly sentence. But because it stands in the Greek, and because every word and syllable and stroke and point in the Divine Scriptures is full of meaning, I prefer the risks of verbal malformation to the risk of missing the sense".

We believe all true Bereans will endorse these sentiments. One expositor has used this word "concorporate" but the word is not in common use:

"In relation to the Body the members are "in corporate", in relation to one another they are "concorporate", that is sharers in the one Body" (J. Armitage Robinson D.D.).

Here then, with the advent of the dispensation of the Mystery, a church came into existence, so different from any that had gone before, as to call for the coining of a word, and the figure which that word conjures up in the mind is that of a body never seen or known on earth. No one has ever seen a body in which every member was on absolute equality with any other, but we have already been reminded that this body is only possible "in spirit". Nothing like this can be discovered before the Middle Wall* went down, and that wall was not removed until Acts 28. In the flesh, Israel can brook no peer (cf. The Olive Tree in Romans 11). Only in the Spirit can such an equality be possible.

Another correction is called for when using the A.V. Ephesians 3:7 reads, "Whereof I was made a minister" and the commencing of a fresh verse with these words, may prevent the reader from realizing that they are an integral part of the preceding passage. It is not the full truth to say that in this new company the Gentiles are joint-partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel, and stop there. The complete statement is that the Gentiles were joint-partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel WHEREOF PAUL HAD BEEN MADE A MINISTER. When writing later to Timothy, the apostle adds a similar rider; he does not simply say to Timothy:

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* Middle Wall - see Ephesians 2:14

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead" (2 Tim. 2:8),

that would be a salutary word indeed, for without the resurrection all are without hope. Paul was more incisive and exclusive, what he did say was:

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL: WHEREIN I SUFFER ... unto bonds" (2 Tim. 2:8,9).

The same Saviour and the same resurrection provide Peter's Gospel with blessed assurance of the fulfilment of the promises made to David concerning his THRONE (Acts 2:24-30). The same Saviour and the same resurrection takes us "far above all ... thrones" as we have seen in Ephesians 1:19-23. The Gentile members of this "Body" do not inherit or share "promises", they share on equal terms "His promise", and that found in the gospel entrusted *to Paul alone*. These believers do not share the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33). These joint-partakers do not take to themselves the promise of Acts 2:39. These fellow-heirs do not inherit the promises made unto the Fathers, and which were confirmed during the earthly ministry of Christ (Rom. 15:8). They are concerned with "the promise of life" which antedates the beginning of the ages (2 Tim. 1:1,9; Tit. 1:2,3). The seal which they have received is "the Holy Spirit of promise" not "of the promises" (Eph. 1:13) for they were, while in the flesh, "strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12). The teaching of Ephesians 3:6 is *not* that the unequal partnership that existed between the Jewish believer and the Gentile believer has been exchanged so that the Gentile now enters into the promises, originally held so exclusively by the Jew, in equal terms. No, the teaching is that a new promise is brought to light, a promise that Abraham never knew; a New Man has been created and into that new company and concerning that one new promise no one has precedence over another. The membership of this Body is "concorporate" and the partaking of the promise found in that Gospel preached by Paul the prisoner, is a "joint-partaking". The new company, as Paul wrote to the Colossians, is "a new man" and it is "created", not evolved from the period covered by the Acts:

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

It is sometimes used as a "proof" that the church must be the Bride because the word *ekklesia* is feminine. Only ignorance would use such a feature, which mistakes gender in grammar for sex. *Kephale* "Head" is also feminine. In French La Table is feminine - so should we speak of "her" and "she"? - need we continue?

Most of our available space has been occupied with stating the doctrine of the One Body, with little or no emphasis upon the corresponding practice that should ensue. This aspect we can only touch upon, but however slightly this is done, its importance is great.

(1) In Colossians chapter 2 the apostle deals with the danger of allowing ANYTHING to come between the believer and his Lord. Whether it be "philosophy" or "the rudiments of the world" or whether it be the perpetuation of God-given ordinances which have been rendered obsolete by the coming of Christ (Col. 2:14-17), these are but shadows, the body (or as it means here the substance) is of Christ. The first responsibility therefore is to "Hold the Head" (Col. 2:19).

(2) We have also a responsibility toward fellow-members of the one Body. We must not only "Hold the Head", we must comfort one another in the light of this fact, "we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). We hold the Head, "from Whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

(3) The walk that is worthy of the high calling of the Mystery places first and foremost, the keeping of the "Unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:1-3). In this unity the Risen Lord is central; faith and hope are ranged on either side, but the first feature in this unity is "one Body". It appears that we cannot fully or truly entertain the "one hope" of our calling, or hold the "one faith" or even honour the "one Lord" if we are uncertain regarding the unique character of the new constitution brought into being in the dispensation of the Mystery. We can say no more, but we are glad that we have had space enough left to stress the exceeding preciousness of "these three" exhortations.

(1) Hold the Head.

(2) Consider fellow-members.

(3) Keep the unity of the Spirit.

* * * * * * *

Now that you have read this booklet you will most likely want to learn more concerning that blessed Hope of being seated with Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenly places "far above all" - the destined sphere of the Church which is His Body (Eph. 1). For this we recommend one of the following Hardback books:

IN HEAVENLY PLACES (431 pages)
A study of the epistle to the Ephesians.

THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING (245 pages)
A study of the epistle to the Philippians.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD's PRISONER (292 pages).
This covers the apostle Paul's ministry, and the last revelation of the ascended Christ enshrined in Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and 2 Timothy.

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