

JOHN AND THE MYSTERY

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or

THE RELATIVE CALLINGS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL AND THE
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

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Dispensational Truth
The Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner
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THE RELATIVE CALLINGS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL AND THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

The following extracts from a criticism will be sufficient to indicate the serious nature of the charges made, and the call, not for any foolish self-justification before men, or for merely attempting to score off an opponent, but that the high calling of the Church of the Mystery shall not be confused with other callings however attractive they may appear.

Referring to Ephesians 2:4-6, our critic asks :

- `Who is C.H.W. to say that certain Christians are not members of the Body of Christ on the basis of what he *sees* in the world about him? He is thus building on observation and experience, not Scripture'.
- `To rule certain Christians out of the Body of Christ on the basis of our evaluation of them is nothing less than popery'.
- `C.H.W.'s theory requires that a believer must have more knowledge to have a certain position in Christ. This is a form of gnosticism'.
- `C.H.W. has no right to "break up" Ephesians 2:4-6. This passage with John 20:31 completely destroys his theory'.

Finally, referring to John 20:30,31, our critic says :

- `These two verses cancel out all the reasoning C.H.W. has employed to build a case for a so-called "John group" of Christians today'.

While we can read all these charges without feeling greatly moved, so far as anything personal is concerned, we have a keen sense of responsibility to our many readers, and therefore, for the Truth's sake, this series of criticism cannot be treated with reticence. We therefore turn our attention to the testimony of Scripture, to discover what place John's Gospel occupies in the Redemptive Scheme and to abide by what shall be found written.

We have been referred to John 20:30,31, and in some way, not explained, our teaching on John 20:30,31 is supposed to have 'broken up' Ephesians 2:4-6. Let us see these two passages before we go further.

- `And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name'.
- `But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'.

The 'signs' upon which John bases his ministry are eight in number, and are grouped as follows:

The Eight Signs.

- A 2:1-11 THE MARRIAGE. The third day. No wine.
- B 4:46-54 THE RULER'S SON. After two days. At the point of death.
- C 5:1-16 THE IMPOTENT MAN. Pool of Bethesda. 38 years. Sabbath.Sin.
- D 6:1-14 FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND. Many went back (6:66).
- D 6:15-21 WALKING ON THE SEA. Many of the people believed (7:31).
- C 9:1-14 THE MAN BORN BLIND. Pool of Siloam. From birth. Sabbath. Sin.
- B 11:1-44 THE SISTER'S BROTHER. Two days. Lazarus is dead.

A 21:1-14 THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES. The third time. No meat.

If John ministers to the Body of Christ, these especially chosen signs should make that clear, if they do not, either John must be at fault, or the one who would intrude into John's Gospel, the unique revelation of the Mystery.

What connection has this witness of John with Ephesians 2:4-6? 'Life through His name' is basic to all callings, but Ephesians 2 uses terms which are not found in John's testimony anywhere.

Let us honour 'The words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual with spiritual'.

'Quickened together' *suzoopoieo*. This word occurs only in Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13).

'Raised together' *sunegeiro*. This word occurs only in Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12; 3:1).

'Sit together' *sunkathizo*. This seating is 'in heavenly places' and is unique, occurring only in Ephesians 2:6.

Resurrection in John is of 'all that are in their graves' who shall 'come forth' as did Lazarus, who 'heard the voice of the Son of God' (John 5:28,29; 11:43,44). This is by no means identical with the being 'raised together' of Ephesians 2. Let us bring together the seven unique associations found only in Paul's epistles.

The Seven Steps 'with Christ':

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Crucified with Christ | Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6. |
| 2. | Dead with Christ | Col. 2:20. |
| 3. | Buried with Christ | Col. 2:12. |
| 4. | Quickened with Christ | Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13. |
| 5. | Raised with Christ | Eph. 2:6. |
| 6. | Seated with Christ | Eph. 2:6. |
| 7. | Manifested with Christ | Col. 3:4. |

My critic charges me with 'breaking up' Ephesians 2:4-6, and aligns this passage with John 20:30,31. The boot however is on the other foot. We dare not break up this unique sevenfold association of the members of the One Body with their Head for all the teaching in Christendom, and to fail to discern the things that differ between these two passages can only be called blindness, and our critic needs the fulfilment of the apostle's prayer 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know' (Eph. 1:18).

We return to the main question which turns upon the inspired teaching of Scripture as to the place of John's Gospel in the scheme of Redemption. In connection with our quest for an answer, and our discovery of that answer in the parable of Matthew 22, our critic has this to say:

'Assuming to be true what only "seems" to be true, he then builds a system upon it. He thus has a foundation of sand. He looks for a book that seems to fit in to a spiritual condition existing about him. So thinks he has found it in John'.

After what we have already seen, we are not greatly intimidated by these words 'assuming' and 'seems', but are sad to think that anyone who appears to have entered into the blessings of the high calling of God should lower himself to write such things. We most certainly do find our answer in John, and we find it by following the direction given by Christ in Matthew 22. We will turn to that passage and consider its teaching, and leave it to the reader whether we have built on sand or not.

We are fully aware of the danger of building a doctrine upon so figurative a discourse as a parable, but we are also fully aware, that a parable, spoken by the Lord, would be no idle story. The parables of the Tares and of the Leaven, teach positive truth even though couched in highly figurative terms, and so the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son has a right to be heard. This parable pairs with the parable of the Vineyard given in Matthew 21, which concludes with the very dreadful prophetic utterance:

'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. ... He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons' (Matt. 21:38-41).

These words were spoken consequent upon the Saviour's rejection (Matt. 21:42). He spake again by parables, and gave the parable of the Marriage, to clinch His tragic forecast.

The First call. 'They would not come'.

In Matthew 23:37 the Saviour said:

'How often would I ... and ye would not'

the sequel being, as in the parable:

'Your house is left unto you desolate' (Matt. 22:7; 23:38).

Matthew 24:1-3 shows that this reference to the house and city is no figure of speech, but referred to the literal destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. Not only did those who were bidden not come, but they 'slew' those who invited them, as they did Him. This Matthew had already said (21:39). Instead, however, of visiting Israel with wrath and judgment for the murder of the Son of God, the prayer 'Father forgive them' was answered:

'Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage' (Matt. 22:4).

The apostles were commanded to remain in Jerusalem and to preach to those who had 'killed the Prince of life', and could now say 'All things are ready ... But they (Israel) made light of it' (Matt. 22:4,5). The word used here is found in Hebrews 2:3 where this same people are warned of the danger of 'neglecting' or 'making light' of so great salvation, an evident reference back to Matthew 22.

'His merchandise' (v. 5) Gk. *emporion*. This word is significant, and is used in John 2:16 'Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise'.

'Entreated them spitefully' (v. 6). This was historically true. In Acts 14:5 we find the apostles at Iconium being used 'despitefully', and Paul refers to this in 1 Thessalonians 2:2, and in verses 14-16 says in *plain* language, what the Lord said in a *parable*.

'For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost'.

THIS 'UTTERMOST WRATH' REFERS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A.D. 70.

They 'slew them' (Matt. 22:6).

'Behold, I send unto you prophets ... some of them ye shall kill ... Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation ... Behold, your house is left unto you desolate' (Matt. 23:34-38, see also Acts 7:51,52).

To return to the parable, we read:

'But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city' (Matt. 22:7).

`These armies' are also foretold in Luke 21:20. This parable is veritable history in advance.

Those that had been twice bidden to the marriage are now pronounced `not worthy'. So we read:

`Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles' (Acts 13:46).

The matter however did not end with the failure of Israel.

THE INVITATION IS EXTENDED TO THE GENTILES.

`Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage ... and the wedding was furnished with guests' (Matt. 22:9,10).

Earlier the apostles had been commanded to avoid going into `the way (*hodos*) of the Gentiles' (Matt. 10:5), but now the order is reversed `Go ye into the highways (*hodos*) and the Gentiles receive and respond to the invitation. It is here that the Gospel of John comes into the story.

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) writes:

`St. John, the last (of the evangelists), when he saw that the outward bodily facts had been set forth in the existing Gospels, impelled by his friends (and) divinely moved by the Spirit, made a spiritual Gospel'.

Irenaeus who was born A.D. 98 and knew, personally, Polycarp a disciple of John, unhesitatingly ascribes the fourth gospel to John, and speaks of this belief as universal acceptance in his day.

JOHN and his GENTILE READERS.

Not only is it evident that John had a message to the `world', but it is clear that he envisaged Gentiles who would not be conversant with the every day things of Israel. For example, in chapter 1, he pauses to interpret three well known Hebrew words, Rabbi, Messiah and Cephas (John 1:38,41,42). No Jew needed to be told that Rabbi meant `Master' and that Messiah meant `The Christ'. He speaks of `A feast of the Jews' (John 5:1) and goes out of his way to tell his reader that the feast of dedication was held in the `winter' (John 10:22), which, if he had Israel only before his mind, was quite an unnecessary piece of information. Whereas the rejection of Christ slowly becomes evident as we go through the gospel of Matthew, the rejection of Christ meets us in the beginning of John:

`He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (John 1:11).

Another suggestive fact is that John makes no mention of the New Covenant feast `The Lord's Supper' and `miracles' as such are not spoken of but `signs' are employed instead.

In connection with the thought that John's ministry is especially concerned with gathering from the highways those who shall be the `guests' at the marriage of the King's Son, we remember the first sign took place at a `Marriage' at Cana, where the Lord and His disciples were `guests'. The marriage of Cana is said to have been on the `third day'. In John 1:19-28; 29-34; 35-42 and 43-51 we have four consecutive days, the marriage at Cana therefore being the Seventh Day, and a foreshadowing of the Millennium, with its Marriage of the Lamb.

John, alone of all the N.T. writers speaks of the Marriage of the Lamb, of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and of those who, as guests, were `called' to this Marriage (Rev. 19:7-9). While all four Gospels tell of John the Baptist, as the Forerunner prophesied by Isaiah, it is John alone that says of John the Baptist, that he was `The friend of the Bridegroom', and that `He that hath the bride is the bridegroom' (John 3:29). It is, we submit, no mere assumption, no fishing round for some pretext to support an unscriptural theory, that we see in John's Gospel the fulfilment of the closing words of the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son; and that instead of assuming those who believe John's Gospel and have `life', are, whether they know it or not, members of the Church of the One Body, they are specifically `guests' being called out during Israel's defection since Acts 28.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

The written ministry of John is not to be limited to his gospel, the epistles and the Revelation form a complete whole.

The Gospel

`IN THE BEGINNING was the Word ... In Him was life' (John 1:1-4).

The Epistles

`That which was FROM THE BEGINNING ... which ... our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested ...)' (1 John 1:1,2).

The Revelation

`And I saw heaven opened ... His name is called The Word of God' (Rev. 19:11-13).

`The Beginning of the creation of God' (Rev. 3:14).

Here John uses the unique title of Christ `The Word' in His relationship with the past (John 1:1), the present (1 John 1:1,2), and the future (Rev. 19:11-13).

We ask, where in the whole course of this ministry is there the faintest allusion to the Church which is the One Body? There is most certainly a unity envisaged, but that is an entirely different company.

THE ONE FLOCK (John 10:16).

Matthew's Gospel says:

`Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 10:5,6).

John's Gospel says:

`Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and ... there shall be one fold (ONE FLOCK R.V.) and ONE SHEPHERD (John 10:16).

`Jesus ... must needs go through Samaria' (John 4:1-4).

Here is a unity, composed of two companies of the redeemed, belonging originally to two `folds' but eventually to become one `flock' (R.V.) under one Shepherd. Now there cannot be two such unities set forth as the goal of John's Gospel :

- (1) The One Flock.
- (2) The One Body.

If therefore we believe that every one who believes the gospel set forth by John is, whether he knows it or not, a member of the One Body, *we cannot stay there*, the unity of John 10:16 embraces `the lost sheep of the house of Israel' and consequently we must extend the membership of the One Body to Matthew's gospel and to the ministry of Peter! We thereby reduce the many and varied distinctions of calling, constitution and sphere that are recorded in Paul's Prison Ministry to an incongruous muddle. While this `one flock' is a blessed unity, it cannot refer to or embrace the Unity of the Spirit as set forth in Ephesians 4.

When we today read John 20:30,31, we do not realise as we should that to believe that `Jesus is the Christ' may not mean to us exactly what John intended by the title. We repeat, that it is our incumbent duty to note the words `which the Holy Ghost teacheth' and compare `spiritual things with spiritual'. Now we are not left in doubt as to the intention of John. In the first chapter he tells us `We have found the MESSIAS' (John 1:41) and `The Messiah', being interpreted is `The Christ'. In the same chapter we read again:

`We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write' (John 1:45),

and the chapter closes with Nathanael's confession:

`Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel' (John 1:49).

John selected the eight signs which form the backbone of this Gospel, in order that it might be manifest that 'Jesus is THE MESSIAH'.

Now it is possible that an objection might be lodged at this point, namely, that 'The Messiah' belongs to Israel, and so cannot be intruded here. But that is just exactly what the passage of Matthew 22 makes possible, and which John 4 illustrates. In Matthew 10, the Lord said:

'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not' (Matt. 10:5).

This prohibition was withdrawn after the second invitation to the marriage was refused, and so we find both the 'Samaritans', 'The Messiah', and the discontinuance of worship either at 'Jerusalem' or 'this mountain' introduced in John 4.

'I know' said the Samaritan woman, 'that Messias cometh, which is called Christ' ... Jesus saith unto her, 'I that speak unto thee am He'. The woman left her water pot and said to the men of the city 'Is not this the Christ?', i.e. the Messiah. Later these men said, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ (i.e. the Messiah), the Saviour of the world' (John 4:25,29,42). Here is the foreshadowing of what John was to spread beyond the confines of Samaria, but the inescapable feature is that we must read in John 20:30,31, not the 'Christ' as interpreted by Paul in his prison epistles (the epistles of 'the One Body') but in the light of these most definite references to the Messiah of Israel, now being preached in all the world, consequent upon Israel's failure. This aspect raises the question 'Can two dispensations run together?' This we will consider later.

EARTHLY THINGS.

At the conclusion of the talk with Nicodemus in the third chapter of John, the Lord summed up His teaching concerning the new birth as 'earthly things', contrasting them with 'heavenly things' which had not been included.

'If I have told you earthly things (*epigeia*), and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things (*epourania*)?' (John 3:12).

Writing to the Philippians, using the same word 'which the Holy Ghost teacheth', Paul spoke of some whose walk was an hindrance, in that they were minding 'earthly things' in contrast with the citizenship in heaven, which should have occupied their thoughts and hope (Phil. 3:19,20). Heavenly things have particular reference when contrasted with earthly things, to the sphere of blessing revealed in the epistle to the Ephesians. *Epouranios* occurs twenty times in the N.T. once in Matthew 18:35 'My heavenly Father', once in John 3:12, eighteen times in Paul's epistles, and never in Peter, James or John's epistles. Five of the occurrences are found in Ephesians in the phrase 'in heavenly places' or 'in high places' and is exclusive to the revelation of the Mystery as revealed to and by the apostle Paul.

We must now make another quotation from our critic who says:

'C.H.W. says "Believers today seem to fall into three groups. He offers no scriptural proof that there are three groups. To others they might *seem* to be a dozen groups"'.

Our brother must have his 'dig'; it does not hurt us. It does not, however, sound like sane and sober criticism. That there are 'Three Groups' we accordingly here and now offer 'Scriptural Proof'.

EVERY FAMILY and THREE ADOPTIONS.

In Ephesians 3:15 we read 'Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named'. This the R.V. corrects by translating *pasa patria* by 'every family', indicating that there will be one family 'in heaven' and another family 'on earth', but all related to the same God and Father. The word 'family' translates the Greek *patria* which is translated 'lineage' in Luke 2:4. Whether Kingdom, Bride, Guest or Body, all have a common lineage, all have 'life through His name'. But just as in human society, the members of any one family may belong to different walks in life, live in different countries and follow different callings, so we discover that there are many *patrias* or families of faith. Here therefore are a number of 'groups' indicated. That there are 'three' and not 'dozens' we now proceed to show from Scripture.

ADOPTION and the `THREE GROUPS'.

Whatever we may think or say, no one who believes that the Word of God is inspired, or who seeks to honour `The Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth' can deny or avoid the testimony of Scripture that there are THREE different `adoptions' related to THREE distinct callings in the N.T. which must be taken into account, whenever we speak of membership of the One Body.

1. The Adoption. Israel, according to the flesh
 (Rom. 9:3-5).
2. The Adoption. Abraham's spiritual seed (Gal. 4:5).
3. The Adoption. The church of the Dispensation of the
 Mystery (Eph. 1:5).

Can we, dare we smudge these distinctions, blot out their unique differences, just to maintain what we can only `assume', namely that the believer of John's Gospel finds his place in No. 3? Romans 9 makes it clear that the adoption there mentioned is, like `the covenants, the giving of the law, the fathers, and the coming in the flesh of Christ', the exclusive privilege of Israel according to the flesh. The adoption of Galatians 4:5 is on a higher plane. Here there is envisaged a calling in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation (Gal. 3:27-29; 4:5-7; 6:15), and a new sphere of blessing hitherto unrevealed, namely `Jerusalem which is above' (Gal. 4:26). As adoption relates to the appointment by Will of the first born son and heir, Hebrews 12:22,23 associates the heavenly calling attached to the faith of Abraham, with the Church of the `Firstborn' and with the `Heavenly Jerusalem'. The third Adoption is found in Ephesians 1:5. Here we are taken UP to `heavenly places' where Christ sits far above all heavens, here we are taken BACK `Before the foundation of the world', and we have an Adoption, *without which membership of the One Body is impossible*. Where, and how, can belief of the Gospel of John warrant an inclusion here?

CHILDREN AND SONS.

The Greek word for adoption is *huiiothesia* `to be placed as a son' not to be born into a family. By believing the testimony of John we can pass from death unto *life*, can become one of the family of *faith*, but there is a difference between being a `child' and being `firstborn son and heir'. The A.V. has not observed the distinction between the Greek words *huios* `son' and *teknon* `child'. John never uses the word *huios* of a believer in any of his writings. He uses it ONCE in a Hebraism:

`While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children (sons) of light' (John 12:36).

This usage is parallel with the title `sons of thunder' (Mark 3:17) or `The son of oil' see margin of Isaiah 5:1. John never envisages the believer as a `son' always as a `child'. This is true of 1 John 3:1,2 and John 1:12 which the R.V. corrects to `children'. The glory of membership of the church which is the One Body is in this predestinated adoption, this place of SONS settled before the foundation of the world, which cannot be read into John's Gospel.

CAN TWO DISPENSATIONS RUN TOGETHER?

The Gospel of John and the Prison ministry of Paul are both in operation today, therefore, say some, they must be really teaching the same thing, for,

`You might as well say that April and May can run together as say that two dispensations can run together at the same time'.

If we believe that a dispensation* is a period of time, then the above objection would be rational, but if we realise that a dispensation (*oikonomia*) is a `stewardship' (Luke 16:4), we can have no such objection. *Oikonomos* is translated `dispensation' in 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 1:10; 3:9 (R.V.); Colossians 1:25, and always indicates a special `economy' or administration. The matter however is put beyond dispute in Galatians 2. There we see that

*For a fuller treatment of the word `dispensation' see the booklet *The Key of Knowledge*.

Peter, James and John recognised quite clearly that just as the gospel of the circumcision had been entrusted to them, so the gospel of the uncircumcision had been committed to Paul, and that just as surely as Peter had been appointed an apostle of the circumcision, so as surely had Paul been commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles, and in recognition of this difference James, Cephas *and John* gave their right hands of fellowship (Gal. 2:7-9). Was John mistaken here?

As a further instance of two dispensations or dealings of God with different companies, is the fact that at the same time that He, the God of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob gave to Israel the law of Sinai, the nations of the earth were under a different covenant of conscience (Rom. 1:18 to 2:29; Acts 17:25-28).

The last objection that we propose to meet is expounded as follows:

'C.H.W.'s theory requires that a believer must have more *knowledge* to have a certain position in Christ. This is a form of gnosticism'.

It is not given to man to read the thoughts and intents of the heart; only by their fruits can we conclude that any one is or is not in a certain calling, just as we insist that a man must 'believe' before *we can* assume that he is a 'believer'.

KNOWING YOUR ELECTION.

How could the apostle write to the Thessalonians and say:

'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God' (1 Thess. 1:4)?

Would he not lay himself open to something of the same criticism as is levelled at us in the preceding quotation? Paul makes no claim to have had access to the secret Will of God; he tells us that he knew that these Thessalonians were elect because of their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope and because the gospel came not unto them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, and because these Thessalonians became followers of the apostles and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction and with joy of the Holy Ghost (1 Thess. 1:3-6).

In like manner when we meet a believer who makes it manifest that he has no knowledge of the revelation made to Paul as the steward of the Mystery, who not only does not believe the distinctive teaching of the Mystery, but antagonizes it, and berates those who do, then he is one who belongs to a denomination whose creed is contrary to the 'form of sound words' given by Paul (2 Tim. 1:13), who observes ceremonies and ordinances contrary to the injunction of Colossians 2:16.

FAITHFUL as well as SAINTS.

The Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to the Colossians, both instruments for revealing the high calling of the dispensation of the Mystery, is addressed not only to 'saints' but to 'faithful' (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). Faithfulness is personal, and cannot be imputed. If one would attain to any measure of assurance in regard to this high calling, that must be 'the full assurance of UNDERSTANDING'; it must reach out unto Christ, not only as in John 20:30,31 for 'life' but to find in Him:

'All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 2:2,3).

Shall we charge the apostle with 'gnosticism'?

There is such a thing as 'The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ... that ye may know what is the hope of His calling' (Eph. 1:17,18), and the true believer will not be intimidated by such epithets as 'Gnosticism' as he ponders these weighty words of truth.

The mystery of His will is 'made known'

The Mystery itself was 'made known'

The manifold wisdom of God is 'made known'

The apostle's desire was that the Mystery should be 'made known' (Eph. 1:9; 3:3,10; 6:19).

Does it follow that this knowledge automatically comes with the gift of life? Even Peter says 'Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge' (2 Pet. 1:5). Peter desired that his readers should not be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 1:8), he urged them to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, saying:

'... if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. 1:10,11).

Was Peter lapsing into 'gnosticism' ?

John, who wrote against the incipient gnosticism of his day, supplemented his emphasis upon believing, by saying:

'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life' (1 John 5:13).

Shall we charge Paul, Peter and John with 'Gnosticism' because they stress the words 'know', 'knowledge', 'make known' and the like? We do not attain to 'a certain position in Christ' because we happen to know a little more than another, that is an unpardonable perversion, but the knowledge of our calling is the only way that we can be assured ourselves, or that we can be recognized as a fellow member. The criticism we have considered simply draws a red-herring across our path and attempts to frighten us with the word 'gnosticism'.

THE EIGHT SIGNS.

It is evident that whatever John meant by chapter 20:30,31 this gospel of 'life through His Name' is implicit in the eight signs especially selected, and a careful examination of them will make it very obvious that the revelation of the Mystery as entrusted to Paul, the Prisoner of Jesus Christ to us Gentiles, can have no possible place in them. 'Search and See'.

To lift out John 20:30,31, turn a blind eye to the eight signs, and then without the slightest Scriptural warrant to suggest that these verses are on all fours with Ephesians 2:4-6 is self condemned. First let us observe how closely John has associated these signs with a work done and consequent believing, summed up as it is in John 20:30,31.

The Eight Signs 2:1 to 21:14.

FIRST SIGN MARRIAGE AT CANA (2:1-12)

'My meat ... to finish His work' (*ergon*) (4:34)

'Now we believe' (*pisteuo*) (4:42).

SECOND SIGN NOBLEMAN'S SON (4:46-54)

'Except ye see signs' (4:48)

'He believed' (*pisteuo*) (4:53)

THIRD SIGN IMPOTENT MAN (5:1-15)

'My Father worketh ... I work' (*ergon*) (5:17)

'Believe on Him that sent Me' (*pisteuo*) (5:24)

FOURTH and

FIFTH SIGNS 5000 FED. WALKING ON SEA (6:1-25)

'This is the work (*ergon*) of God (6:29),

that ye believe' (*pisteuo*) (6:29)

SIXTH SIGN MAN BORN BLIND (9:1-41)

'The works (*ergon*) ... bear witness' (10:25)

'Ye believe not' (*pisteuo*) (10:26)

SEVENTH SIGN SISTERS' BROTHER (11:1-46)

'I have finished the work' (*ergon*) (17:4)

‘That the world may believe’ (*pisteuo*) (17:21)

EIGHTH SIGN DRAUGHT OF FISHES (21:1-14)

The Companion Bible, on page 194 of the Appendix, sets out in full detail the internal correspondence of these eight signs, we give here a shortened version of the first and the last sign.

1. The background of the first sign is Nathanael's diffidence and confession. The background of the eighth sign is Thomas's doubt and faith. Both confessions have a bearing upon John 20:30,31.
2. The place in each case is Galilee, which is called in Matthew's Gospel ‘Galilee of the Gentiles’.
3. In both signs there is a want that is miraculously supplied, either wine or a meal.
4. In both cases either the Lord or His disciples, or the disciples themselves are ‘invited guests’.

Now whoever else may have forgotten the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, Peter and John would have it in mind, for the promised Comforter was to bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever the Lord had said unto them (John 14:26). When, after the eighth sign was finished, the Lord gave Peter his commission ‘Feed My Sheep’ he, remembering the parable of Matthew 22, would think, ‘Here is the fulfilment of the second invitation’, but who is the minister of the call that follows the second refusal of ‘them that were bidden’? His glance fell on John, could it be he? So Peter said ‘Lord, and what shall this man do?’ (John 21:21).

Now, in Acts 1:6,7 we have another question put, and another similar evasive answer. Had the question in Acts 1:6 been ‘Will Israel ever be restored?’ the answer would have been ‘Most surely’ but the question was ‘Wilt Thou AT THIS TIME restore?’ and if the Lord had answered ‘No, for they will refuse the invitation a second time’, it would have made their testimony and suffering foolish and unnecessary. So, although the Lord knew that after the Acts of the Apostles had run its course, and the city and temple had been destroyed, John would enter into the ministry into the highways, it could not be revealed to Peter at that moment. Peter's sheep were not Gentiles. He ministered to the same people that had refused the first invitation. But John was to minister to ‘other sheep’ which were ‘not of this fold’.

The word of the Lord ‘If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me’ started a rumour that John would not die, but at the same time it tied up with a fact that John did outlive all the other apostles and lived to an advanced age. If we are faithful, and abide by the actual teaching found in John's Gospel, we shall be obliged to believe that in that message the Messiah of Israel was seen to be ‘the Saviour of the world’ (John 4:42).

JOHN THE DOOR.

The writer of this booklet, who is accused of ultra-dispensationalism and assuming that John's Gospel does not teach the truth of the Mystery, was brought to a saving knowledge of the Son of God upon hearing the words of John 3:36 faithfully preached.

‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life’.

As time went on he became aware of the great central teaching of Romans 5 to 8, and became in some degree conformable to that mould of doctrine into which he had been delivered (Rom. 6:7 margin). As further time went on the distinctive teaching of Ephesians laid hold of heart and mind and he became consciously and experimentally a member of the body of Christ. This position he did not learn from John or from Romans, but these Scriptures were nevertheless Divinely appointed steps that led to the realisation of his calling. Inasmuch as membership of the One Body is a matter of the Father's choice made ‘before the foundation of the world’ he was a member of the One Body even while *unrepentant* and in total ignorance - *but God alone knew that*. Only as faith was manifest and knowledge was attained could he or those about him be assured of that position. He had heard ‘earthly things’ but had not stayed there; John's Gospel proved a door through which by grace he passed on to appreciate the ‘heavenly things’ of Ephesians.

We shall serve no good purpose in continuing this defence, and we refrain from any attempt to analyse our critic's reason for taking the stand that he has done. We can only hope that the perusal of some of the evidences here brought forward, may lead others too to see their title deeds to a calling that is indeed ‘Far above all’.

Scriptural proof has been given to show:

1. The dispensational place of John's Gospel.
2. Its 'Calling' - Guests of the Marriage of the Lamb.
3. Its relationship to the family of faith.
 - (a) 'children' not 'sons'.
 - (b) No place in either of the three 'adoptions'.
4. That the words of Ephesians 2:4-6 are a precious heritage of the Church of the Mystery, and find no place in the writings of John, either in Gospel, Epistle or Revelation.
5. We have 'assumed' nothing, but have provided Scriptural proof for each so-called 'theory'. And here we can confidently rest.

Some have jumped to the conclusion, that when John says, 'Of His fulness have all we received' (John 1:16), that this is the same fulness that is revealed in Ephesians and Colossians.

John, however, makes his meaning plain, for he adds 'even grace over against (*anti*) grace', and proceeds to explain, 'For the law, (which had the type and the shadow) was given by Moses, but grace and truth (i.e. antitypical grace, the substance not the shadow) came by Jesus Christ'.

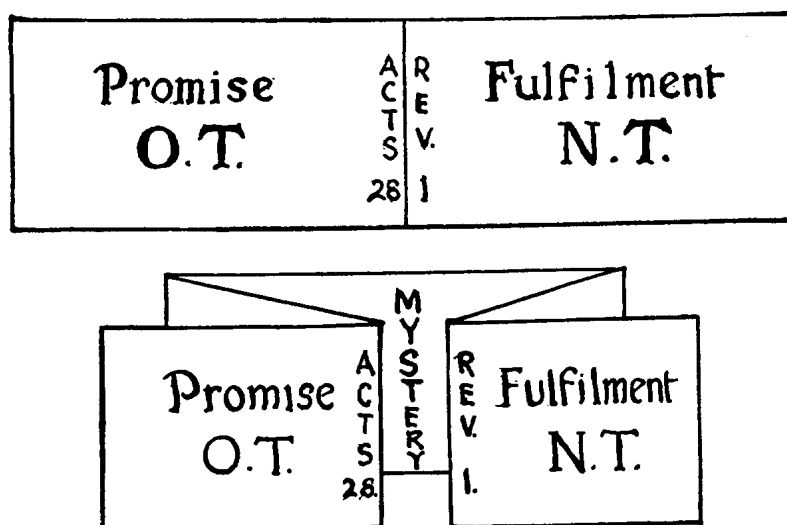
The twelve occurrences of the name MOSES in John's Gospel alternate between this emphasis upon the 'true' or antitype, and the testimony of Moses, to Christ. The reader might be interested to work this theme out, by using the accompanying outline:

MOSES in JOHN'S GOSPEL.

A 1:17	The law and the truth.
B 1:45	The Christ. Moses did write.
A 3:14	As Moses. The truth (3:16).
B 5:45,46	He wrote of Me.
A 6:32	Moses gave you not the 'true bread'.
B 7:19,22,23,26	The very Christ?
A 8:5	The law. The writing in the dust.
B 9:28,29	Moses or Christ !

The accompanying chart may be of interest and stimulate further comparative study (see next page).

For a positive exposition of John's Gospel the interested reader is referred to the book *Life Through His Name* published by the Berean Publishing Trust.



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