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New Covenant

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“The New Covenant is now in force, having been sealed by the blood, the death of Christ.”

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“...the work of The Christ in the inauguration of the New Covenant could not begin until the perfecting of his own body, which is the church. And the first, the initial feature of the inauguration of the New Covenant, is its sealing with the blood, and all of his blood has not yet been shed.”

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19, 23-25; 4:4-7.) This proves exactly what Law Paul referred to, as already shown.

Others, to avoid the force of the Apostle's arguments, divide Moses' Law into moral and ceremonial laws, but wholly without authority, and claim that the ceremonial law passed away, and that the moral law represented in the Ten Commandments is still in force. The Scriptures do not thus divide it; but if they did, we have the Scriptural proof that what our friends call the "moral law" was made an end of by Christ. Thus: When the Apostle wrote to the new Gentile converts respecting the law—determined not to put upon them the yoke of the Law which they as Jews had been unable to keep—and contradicting certain teachers who had said that they "must be circumcised and keep the Law," James remarked incidentally that the law of Moses to which they referred was that "read in the synagogue every Sabbath day:" and we know that the Ten Commandments were thus read. Compare, Acts 15:9-11, 24, 28, 29 and 19-21.

THE NEW COVENANT VS. THE LAW COVENANT

Again, the Apostle repeatedly refers to the Law, which he said had passed away, as the *Covenant* which God made with Israel through Moses. He points to the fact that Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, more favorable every way to the necessities of sinners. He shows that all along, God, by speaking to the prophets of a coming New Covenant, had indicated his intention of superseding the Law Covenant which they had found to be a covenant which condemned them all to death "a covenant of death," because they were unable under the weakness of the flesh to fulfill its just requirements—by some other covenant more favorable to them; and he shows that the New Covenant is now in force, having been sealed by the blood, the death of Christ—"the blood of the new covenant." His logical reasoning is that when the new covenant came into effect, the former or old covenant must of necessity have ceased—must have vanished away entirely.—Heb. 8:6-9-13. Nor are we in doubt as to what constituted that covenant which was ready to pass away: It was the covenant made with their fathers in the day when God took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. (Heb. 8:9.) And it was not merely the ordinances that constituted that covenant; for he expressly tells us that the ordinances (ceremonies) were added to it as incidentals saying: "Verily the first [or former] covenant had also ordinances of service." Then follows a description of the typical tabernacle, its furniture and sacrifices. (Heb. 9:1-20.) These ordinances went with that Law covenant; but that the ordinances and ceremonies were not the covenant itself, is clear, and proven beyond question by Moses' statement of it Deut. 5:1-21. Here he recites the Ten Commandments (and makes no reference to the ordinances which accompanied it) and declares this to be the covenant made with them at Mount Horeb.

Paul further refers to that covenant, now passed away, as the "Ministration of death, written and engraven in stones," which Moses communicated to the people. (2 Cor. 3:7-12.) Thus he shows that the Ten Commandments written in stones was the covenant which was unto death, and which had passed away, giving place to the New Covenant. Paul's further argument here is in harmony and is profitable: He reasons that if God introduced that covenant with so much pomp and glory, he will introduce the new covenant with glory far surpassing its type. Moses' face shone with glory, will not the Christ, of which Jesus is the head and the church the body, be more glorious then? And if the typical must be veiled from the sight of Israel, surely the glory far exceeding that must also be veiled, when the antitype, the New Covenant, is promulgated to the world by the great antitype of Moses—the Christ.

But Paul argues that we (the body of Christ) already, before the coming of our glory, are authorized ministers of this new covenant to every one who now has an ear to hear. We cannot indeed preach to others, nor yet ourselves keep the very letter of that perfect new covenant; for in the present condition of imperfection this is not possible; but we can conform as nearly as possible to its spirit. For the letter of it would condemn us, but the spirit of it is acceptable through Christ; and when that which is perfect is come, that which we can now fulfill only in spirit and intent, we then shall fulfill in its very letter, joyfully.—2 Cor. 3:7-12, 5, 6.

Coming again to the Fourth Commandment we find that while it like all of those commands never was given to Gentiles, but to Jews only, yet belonging to the old covenant it is no longer in force even over the Jews. And while there would be nothing wrong in our observing any day in the week, or several of them as days for the worship of God and the special study of His Word, yet if any one should observe any day to fulfill this part of the Mosaic Law, or with the intent

to merit divine favor and the reward of life, he would be ignoring Christ, and the New Covenant through his blood. So too with all the other nine commandments. To obey them as the Jew did, hoping thereby for everlasting life, is to fail as the Jew failed, only to learn by and by that "by the obedience of the Law shall no flesh be justified"—that no fallen being can keep that Law. To trust to the Law, is to trust to works, for justification, and is useless. Faith in Christ as the fulfiller of the Law and the justifier under the new covenant of every one that believeth, is the only ground of our acceptance with God.

Speaking of the tendency to go back to the Law, Paul says to the Galatians (4:9-11) "I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" [lest my teaching of the New Covenant become useless to you]. After that ye have known God, or rather have been recognized by God [as sons], how can you turn again to the inferior rudiments intended for the world [in the next age], and which now are powerless to help you? Why do you desire to be in bondage again? Your observance of days, and months, and times, and years, indicates that you do not realize your liberty from that old covenant.

In his letter to the Colossians he urges them also, to appreciate and guard their liberty in Christ. He urges, that because Christ had abolished the originally written dogmas [of the Law] nailing them to his cross, therefore you should let no man judge you in food, or drink, or in respect of a festival, or of a new moon, or of Sabbaths, which are but shadows of realities, now coming to pass through Christ.—Col. 2:14-17.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE WEAK BROTHER

In Rom. 14:1-13, the Apostle puts this question in another light. He says we should remember that we are not all alike strong in the faith. Some weak in the faith can see that Christ is our Redeemer, but cannot as yet realize the liberty we have in Christ. For one realizes his liberty in eating whatever agrees with him, while another one who is weak [in bondage] eats vegetables only, lest he should violate some law which he thinks himself under. Each should learn to grant the other full liberty of conscience; the stronger should not despise the weaker, nor should the weaker judge others by himself. It should be sufficient for us to know that God accepts even of the weakest ones. So it is also with reference to the observance of days: One man esteemeth one day above another, while another esteems all days alike. Let each carry out fully the conviction of his own mind.

The Apostle does not teach here as so many suppose from the common translation that each should make up his mind and stick to it right or wrong; nor does he teach that one is as right as the other. On the contrary he urges growth into the full liberty of Christ, but counsels patience and consideration on the part of the stronger for the weaker. He approves of the stronger, and plainly states that the brother who thinks himself under a bondage regarding meat, or regarding Sabbath days, fast days, etc., is the weak brother. But he urges that if such a weak brother observes such a bondage not as an attempt to keep the Law and to justify himself before God ignoring Christ's redemption-sacrifice, but because he thinks that our Lord the Redeemer wishes him to be bound by such ordinances, then the stronger ones should not rail at, or make light of his conscientious weakness, but rather receive him fully as a brother, trusting that discipline and experience and growth in grace and knowledge will gradually bring him to the liberty which others might reach more quickly.

For if the stronger brethren by sarcasm and influence were to force the weaker ones to use a liberty they did not realize, it would be forcing them into sin; for any violation of conscience is sin. So then the weaker brethren must be left to the liberty of their conscience and should be received as brethren, and the truth alone must gradually educate them. So then the body may be full of charity and unity, each one carrying out the convictions of his own mind as to the Lord's will, and each seeking to grow in grace and knowledge out of childhood's weakness into manhood's strength as rapidly as possible, being developed as he feeds upon God's Word.—Heb. 5:13, 14.

The Apostle again refers specially to the observance of days as a sign of weakness, childishness, and lack of development: He says (Gal. 4:10,11), "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am anxious on your behalf lest my labor for you has been in vain." He recognized by these weaknesses for the things commanded by the Law, an evidence that they were not coming up to the liberty of sons of God, but going backward to the servant condition, to say the least (See verses 6 to 9 and 19 to 31), and he was even fearful that this weakness and failure to realize the liberty of sonship, this subservience to the Law, might lead them to reject the true gospel

blessings that appertained to Messiah and the faithful few, the "very elect."

Whoever realizes that the church is joint-heir with her Lord; that those who now suffer with him shall also reign with him by and by, should have no difficulty in seeing that the death of the church, as the Apostle declares, "fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of The Christ," and that only those who thus have part in the afflictions of Christ will have a share in the glory that shall follow. We are at a loss for words to make this subject more plain than it is already stated in the Scriptures. What we each need is the enlightening of the eye of our understanding, that will enable us to discern "the deep things of God." But the Scriptures assure us that these "deep things" of the "mystery" are only for the Spirit begotten.—1 Cor. 2:10, 13.

This holy Spirit is one of humility and faith and obedience of heart—and, so far as possible, of word and of deed also. We trust that the vow is helping many to get into this attitude, where they will be the nearer to the Lord and thus have the more abundant favor and blessing and enlightenment. One thing to be borne in mind is that our sacrifices would be without merit or value; that it is only because our Redeemer adopts us as his members and imputes his merit to us and counts our sacrifices as a part of his own—only thus does any merit attach to anything that we may say or do or sacrifice.

Whoever sees the above clearly must see that during this Gospel age the branches of the Vine has been in process of development and are a part of it; and that only as they bear the fruit of the Vine will they be retained as members thereof. This picture of the vintage of the church, the One Vine—Christ—the crushing of all the grapes, and the gathering of all the wine, is a picture of the experiences of the whole church.

Another picture of the same thing loses sight of the Vine, and represents our participation with the Lord by the cup itself. Our Lord, after participating of the cup, gave it to his disciples, urging that they drink all of it. That cup of suffering and self-denial has come down to us during eighteen centuries, and is still with us. It is a prophetic cup, representing all the sacrifices and all the sufferings of all the members of the body of Christ, from the Head down to the humblest feet members.

The faithful of the past have participated and the cup has now come to us, and the Master's voice still says, "Drink ye all of it." Soon the last drop of it will be drained and then the sufferings of the church which is his body—the body of Christ—will have been completed. Immediately, through the resurrection, the glorious "change" promised shall follow.

Of that cup of suffering of which the Lord tasted and which he passed on to his followers, and members, he said, "This is the cup of the New (Testament) Covenant shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it." Participate ye all in it. It is not for the world to drink of that cup of the sufferings of Christ. That honor is reserved for his saints. They alone may participate with their Lord in his sufferings. If the blood of the New Covenant be participated in by all the faithful members of the body of Christ, how could the New Covenant itself be sealed until the members of the body had all participated? It would be impossible. Whoever sees clearly that which is a "mystery" to the world must see that the work of The Christ in the inauguration of the New Covenant could not begin until the perfecting of his own body, which is the church. And the first, initial feature of the inauguration of the New Covenant, is its sealing with the blood, and all of his blood has not yet been shed.

This sealing of the New (Law) Covenant has nothing to do with the ransom nor with our justification. We are not justified by any covenant, but by faith in the precious blood of Jesus. Who cannot see that nobody could be justified by faith under the New (Law) Covenant? The Law is not a "new" faith arrangement but a "new" work arrangement. The Old Law Covenant (of works) failed only because its mediator could not render the needed aid. The New Law Covenant (of works) will succeed because it has a "better Mediator," able to restore to perfection, and ability for perfect works, all who will.

ABRAHAM'S THREE WIVES

Abraham had three wives; Sarah, his original spouse; then later, Hagar, Sarah's maid, whom she urged upon him as a supposed assistance to God in the carrying out of the covenant, after a long delay and waiting; and third, after Sarah's death, Abraham took Keturah to wife, and by her had many children, whereas by the primary wife and by the maid, but one each. The Apostle's language justifies us in considering this matter allegorical or typical. The holy Spirit, through St. Paul, tells us that Sarah represented the essence of the original Covenant and that Hagar represented the Law Covenant. He explains that the Jewish people were in bondage under their Law Covenant and therefore the antitypes of Ishmael, Hagar's son, and

that these were cast out from divine favor, even as Hagar and her son were cast off from Abraham's family by divine instruction, and to make the type complete. The Apostle introduces this lesson to show us that the Covenant of Grace, under which the Gospel church is developed, has nothing whatever to do with the covenant of the law; that the two were separate and distinct.

Hagar's child might indeed appear to be the child of Sarah for a time, but it was not; even as Sarah's child, Isaac, was in no sense Hagar's son. The Apostle's argument is, "So, then, brethren, we, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise"—the original Covenant, and not children of the Law Covenant. Similarly, we fancy, the Apostle, if writing today to those who claim to be under the New Covenant, represented in the type by Keturah, would tell them plainly, "You cannot be children of two covenants, children of two mothers." If you are children of the Keturah Covenant in any sense or degree, you cannot be the children of the Sarah Covenant; and if you are children of the Sarah Covenant, then in no sense or degree can you be the children of the Keturah Covenant, or New Covenant—which is not yet in existence.

"CHILDREN OF THE OATH"

The original covenant with Abraham, typified by his wife Sarah, is the one which God bound with an oath, and which the Apostle describes in Hebrews 6:13-20 and which he calls "the hope set before us in the Gospel" and our "anchor sure and steadfast within the veil." We, then, are the children of the oath of God, the children of "the promise." Our begetting promise, through Christ, to the New Nature, is wholly different from the promise by which the Jews were begotten, as the house of servants; and wholly different also from the promises by which restored Israel and all the families of the earth will be begotten to human nature through restitution processes, as the children of the Keturah Covenant.

What is the difference between the promises by which we came into the family of God and the promise by which others may come into the family of God hereafter? We answer, The differences are very great indeed. God will not deal with the world directly during the Millennium. He has committed all things to his Son, and the Son, in harmony with the divine program during this Gospel age, has been accepting as his "members" such as the Father has "drawn" to him, granting them the spirit of adoption and thus bringing them into new spirit relationship. No such promises will prevail in the begetting of other children of God, the "other sheep which are not of this flock." These children of the oath, or children of the promise of God, are the special "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, as the Master declares.

On what basis, different from that of the world, are these acceptable to God? We answer that the world will be accepted only when they reach actual perfection, under the processes of restitution at the close of the Millennial age. The Father will have no dealing with the world until, mankind being perfect at the end of the Millennium, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Then men will fall into the hands of the living God; but be perfectly secure, because of their perfection, if they are at heart loyal to God and the principles of his government.

Jesus Christ (and his bride and joint-heir) will stand as "Mediator between God and men" during the Millennium. All of mankind's communications and relationship to God must come to them through Messiah, and all of God's dealing and relationship with mankind will be in and through the Messiah. How different from that is the dealing of God with the church of this age, "Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise." These are "drawn" by the Father, as Jesus declares, "No man can come unto me (now), except the Father which sent me draw him," and whoever cometh unto me, drawn by the Father, I will in no wise reject. (John 6:44) Some of our Lord's followers were drawn to him of the Father before he had completed the sacrifice for sins at Calvary, and others have been drawn throughout the Gospel age; as the Apostle declares, "Even so many as the Lord your God shall call." (Acts 2:30) Here is a reversal of the Divine purpose. The Gospel church, under the Abrahamic Covenant arrangement, are drawn to the Son by the Father, "Given unto him." The world in the next age the Father will not draw, but the Lord Jesus will draw them to himself. "If I be exalted, I will draw all men unto me." And even after the Son draws them unto himself, he must as the Mediator keep them unto himself until he shall have instructed them, disciplined them, and made their knees to bow and their lips to confess, and taught them the necessary lessons and brought them back to all that was lost, before the Father will have anything to do with them—at the close of the Millennial age.