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THE GIFTS AND CALLING TO ISRAEL

"For this cause he [Christ] is the Mediator of the New Testament [Covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament [Covenant], they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." – Heb. 9:15.

THE APOSTLE, we must remember, was addressing Christian Hebrews who were in perplexity in respect to the Law Covenant. That Covenant had existed for more than sixteen centuries, and the Jews had supposed all along that under it they were to be God's favored people and accomplish all the work that was first brought to light in the Covenant made with Abraham. Many of the Hebrews, therefore, after coming into Christ, accepting him as the Redeemer, felt that somehow they must still maintain their relationship to the Law Covenant, its ordinances, etc. The Apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians, attempted to counteract this erroneous theory, which he calls a Judaizing influence. He told them that if any of those who were Gentiles by [R4624 : page 183] birth should in their mistaken zeal and earnestness become Jews by being circumcised, thus coming under the domination of the Law Covenant, they would thereby be indicating that they had forfeited their standing in Christ; and, as he pronounced it, Christ would profit them nothing. – Gal. 5:2.

In his Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul wished the Christian Hebrew brethren to take the larger, broader, truer thought respecting the Law Covenant and everything pertaining to it – its sacrifices, its mediator, its Law. He wished them to recognize it as merely a *typical* Covenant; that it prefigured a New Covenant; that its mediator typified a better Mediator, The Christ; that its bulls and goats of sin-offering typified the better sacrifices by which the New Covenant would become operative, the better

sacrifices being those of the better Mediator – Jesus the Head and the Church his Body.

St. Paul had already pointed out that the privileges of this Gospel Age, so far as the Church is concerned, are chiefly those of sacrifice – that "if we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him; if we be dead with him, we shall live with him"; that we must seek to copy him in self-denial and self-sacrifice and be baptized into his death, if we would share his Kingly honor, his service as the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Millennial Age, to bless Israel and all the families of the earth.

In his endeavor to make this matter plain (Hebrews 9:13,14), St. Paul points out that before the Law Covenant went into effect, it was necessary that blood should be shed; saying, "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Here is a contrast between the institution of the Law Dispensation, the Law Covenant, and the institution of the New Covenant. And the *first* effect of this better blood which is to seal the New Covenant is to cleanse *our* consciences from dead works. The Apostle does not here refer to it as having been for all Israel, but for those Jews who had become Christians but had been bound by the Law previously, that they might see that now the true sacrifice had come; that this was sufficient to satisfy all the claims of Justice and put away from their minds all consciousness of sin, to assure them that all of their sins were thus covered and that they might now render acceptable service to the living God. "And for this same cause [that is, because his blood was sufficient to cancel *all* sin] he is the Mediator of the New Testament." He has not only purged *us* from a consciousness of sin, that we may serve God and become members of the Body of Christ and accept him

as our Advocate and trust in his finished work on our behalf, but he has by the same sacrifice made such an arrangement with God and with Justice as will constitute him the Mediator of the New Covenant for all Israel. The Apostle is not here saying that the New Covenant is operative now, nor that we are *under* this Covenant; quite to the contrary. He is speaking of the Jewish nation, as we shall see.

The remainder of the fifteenth verse (Heb. 9) declares, "By means of death for the redemption of transgressions that were under the first Testament [or Law Covenant], they which are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." We are not, therefore, to consider the ones here "called" as referring to those who receive the High Calling – joint-heirship with Christ, the Spiritual Seed of Abraham – but we are to understand the Apostle here to mean the Jewish nation that was called – all of this Jewish nation who would come into accord with the Divine arrangement. The same Apostle (Rom. 11:27) says, "For the gifts and the calling of God are not to be repented of." That is to say, God having called the Jewish nation to be his peculiar people, having made them definite promises respecting the blessing of all nations, has no thought or intention of abrogating those promises. Every Covenant, every promise that God has ever made and every thing that he has ever done, he has foreknown its full import and its results, and he has done nothing hastily. Israel, therefore, is the nation which he has foreknown to be the one he will use in connection with his work of blessing all of the families of the earth; as the Apostle says (Romans 11:27), "For this is my Covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins."

THE BLINDNESS UPON THE JEWISH NATION IS A MYSTERY

In the 25th verse of the same chapter he informs us that the blindness upon the Jewish nation, until the fulness of the Gospel

Church has come in, is a Mystery. [R4624 : page 184] God is now gathering out only a special few of the Jews and a special few from all nations to constitute the Spiritual Israel, to whom appertain the highest feature of this Abrahamic Covenant or promise; and then, as soon as this Spiritual Israel, which will constitute the Prophet, Priest and King, is complete, the Deliverer – taken from Jew and Gentile – shall come forth. That will be the fulfillment of the promise that "the Deliverer shall come forth out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," for this is God's Covenant with them, with the seed of Jacob; as we read (Jer. 31:31), "After those days, saith the Lord, I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah." This thought is confirmed when we consider the fact that the Gospel Church were not all under the first Testament or first Covenant, but only the Jewish nation.

The trend of the Apostle's argument, therefore, is that Christ, the Mediator of the New Testament, becomes such by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first Testament, or Law Covenant. In other words, the Jewish nation needed to be redeemed in a special manner before God could use it as his channel for blessing the other nations.

Since the Mediatorial work of the Millennial Kingdom is to be accomplished through natural Israel, and since all the families of the earth are to be blessed through them, it follows that nothing can be done until Israel shall have been recovered from their present outcast condition. Then the blessing of the Lord will go forth and the Mediatorial work will be accomplished through natural Israel. We are to distinguish between the work to be done through this nation and the One who will do that work. It will be the Mediator of the New Covenant who will have the power to confer the blessings – the Great High Priest, the Great Prophet, the Great King, the Great Mediator. There could be no blessing outside of this Great One; and this Great One, as the Apostle Paul

and all the other Apostles clearly show, is composed of Jesus the Head and the Church his Body.

THE NEW COVENANT TO BE MADE WITH THE JEWS

No doubt many Jews are now faithless and unbelieving because of the long period of blindness upon them, and perhaps in their hearts are hungering after the promises. When the light of the New Dispensation shall begin to dawn upon the world; when they shall begin to see the resurrected Ancient Worthies as recipients of Divine favor; when they shall see their brethren beginning to be blessed under the ministration of this new Kingdom, then many of the Jews who are now blinded and unbelieving will manifest true faith and be obedient and turn unto the Lord. But we are not to understand that any one will become an Israelite unless he has the faith of Abraham, sincere faith, trust in God, faith that will be manifested by obedience.

Then, as the people of the various nations shall gather themselves to the Lord and seek to come into harmony with him, the way of approach will be by coming into accord with the Holy Nation – God's representative Kingdom in the world – and thus they will come into harmony with the Spiritual Christ, the Great Prophet, Priest and King. Eventually, by the close of the Millennial Age, those who prove faithful will be turned over to God, even the Father. Such will then be fully in accord with Jehovah and fully in Covenant relationship with him.

The New Covenant is not to be made with any others than the Jews, for no others were in Covenant relationship with God. The words "*New* Covenant" seem, therefore, to indicate the repetition of God's favor to Israel under the better Mediator, who will bring the glorious blessings that they had expected under Moses, but failed to obtain because of the inability of Moses to make satisfaction for their sins; for the blood of bulls and goats

could never actually take away their sins. The antitypes of these, the sacrifice of the Lord and the members of his Body, must first be accomplished before this New Covenant with Israel could supersede the old or Law Covenant, which it then will do.

Hebrews 9:16 reads: "For where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." In the case of Moses the death of the Testator was represented by the slaying of the bullock and the goat. In the case of the Antitypical Moses, the death of the Testator is shown in the sacrifice of our Lord and the Church his Body. The ability of Christ to give a Testament or Covenant, or to make a Covenant, should also be seen. As the man Jesus he could not make this Covenant. Why? Because as a man – not spirit-begotten – he could merely have given his human life for mankind and then would have had nothing left for himself; or if he had retained his earthly life he could have established only an earthly Kingdom and never could have given eternal life to any one subsequently. He might have blessed them with wise laws and regulations and improved conditions [R4625 : page 184] over the present time, but never could have given them life and the perfections and blessings that he will be able to give under the New Covenant.

HOW THE LORD BECAME A TESTATOR

In order to be a Testator and give eternal life to the world, it was necessary that our Lord should carefully follow the Plan that God had arranged: First, by his own obedience he should demonstrate his loyalty to God and receive life on the divine plane as his reward; second, that then, by taking up his human life which he did not forfeit in anywise, he should have that human life and its rights to give to Israel and through them to all mankind. He is thus a Testator. He is thus one who bequeaths something to others. He bequeaths it not while he is alive, as a gift, but he gives it as a Testator, as that with which he parts in

death. So our Lord Jesus, as the Great Mediator of the New Covenant, will give to mankind the human rights and privileges to which he had a right by virtue of his perfect obedience to the Divine Law. He invites us, not to share those rights with the world, not to come under his Mediatorial reign and be sharers in restitution privileges, but, according to the will of God, to do something else, viz., to join with him in becoming Testator, to lay down our lives and thus be sharers with him in the spirit of his great work, that we may also share with him in the actual features of that work during the Millennium.

The very first difficulty encountered is that we, unlike him, have not perfect bodies that we could give as perfect sacrifices; hence God's arrangement for those who have this sacrificing attitude of mind is that they may be dealt with by the Lord Jesus and that he may, as their Advocate, impute to them his merit, his restitution rights, to make up for, to off-set, their blemishes and imperfections, that they may offer unto God a sacrifice that would be pleasing. We see that he does not give to these who are now called, either the Mediatorial blessings of the Millennial Age or the restitution conditions which that Mediatorial reign will confer. He gives to them that which will serve his purpose for them much better; viz., an *imputation* of his merit for past sins, to allow their [R4625 : page 185] sacrifice to pass the Divine propitiatory satisfactorily. Even then their sacrifice would prove imperfect and unsatisfactory because of inability to carry it out to a completion, did he not continue to be their Advocate. With every blemish and imperfection that is unwillingly theirs they can go to him as their Advocate and obtain mercy and have the cleansing from all sin through the merit of his sacrifice.

THE JEWS "WILL OBTAIN MERCY THROUGH YOUR MERCY"

Thus we see the great Testament which is in Christ's blood and to which he refers, saying, "This is my blood of the New Testament." Instead of applying that blood of the New Testament to the world or to Israel, he applied it first for the Church. It must all pass through the Church, so to speak. "Drink ye all of it"; be ye all sharers in my cup, for unless ye are sharers in my cup, ye cannot be sharers in my life. It is his cup; and he gives us a share of it. We are not worthy to have any direct dealings with the Father, but the Father, nevertheless, had us in mind from "before the foundation of the world," as the Apostle says. (Eph. 1:4.) Hence we are not to understand the Mystery – the selection of the Church, the Body of Christ – as being an amplification of the original Divine Plan, but merely the carrying out of a part of that Plan not previously disclosed or revealed.

So, then, it requires all of the Gospel Age for the Church of Christ to drink of his "cup" and be "baptized into his death." When the last member shall have drunk of this cup and shall have been baptized into his death, and shall have finished his course, then all the sufferings of the Priest, Head and Body, will have been accomplished – the sufferings to which the Lord refers through the prophets as "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow." The sufferings began with the Head and have continued all the way down to all the members of the Body; and as soon as these sufferings shall have been finished The Christ will be crowned with glory, honor and immortality beyond the vail.

When we drink of this cup of the New Testament – his blood or sacrificed life – we have communion [participation] in the death of Christ. (I Cor. 10:16,17.) We are also to be participants in his special life on the divine plane (I John 3:2), and thus sharers

with him in this work of making the Testament, or Covenant, which will go to Israel and through Israel to the world. This is further admitted by the Apostle in Romans 11:25-28. Speaking of the time when Israel shall be recovered from their sins, when the Deliverer, The Christ, Head and Body, "shall come forth out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob," when God will make his Covenant with them and take away their sins, the Apostle adds, "They shall obtain mercy through your mercy." – Rom. 11:31.

This will be the mercy of God operating through Jesus and the mercy of Jesus operating through the Church. So it will be God's mercy in one sense; it will be Jesus' mercy in another sense; and it will be the Church's mercy in a third sense. This mercy will go to the Jews. What mercy is this? It is this New Testament. How? Through the death of the Testator, Christ the Head, and the Church the Body. And what will Israel get by this Testament or Will? The earthly life and earthly rights which The Christ laid down in sacrifice; all will go to Israel. All those rights to life eternal, and all those things lost in Adam and redeemed by Christ, will go to Israel alone – in fact, to none of them but Israelites, indeed. So during the Millennial Age it will be necessary for all mankind to come to these people of God to get eternal life and to share in this Testament or Will of Christ – in order to become Israelites indeed, that they may thus be heirs of this Will, which gives eternal human life and all the earthly rights which Jesus had and sacrificed, and which he imputed to us, and allowed us to join in sacrificing together with him.

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