

# Dispensationalism

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[Author's Note: (a) The title of this thesis has been chosen reluctantly. It is not intended by it to imply that those who hold what are here set forth as dispensational beliefs are abnormal or disproportionate in doctrine. This thesis purports to demonstrate that so-called Dispensationalists find the specific meaning of the Scriptures which God intended to impart and are, therefore, by the most exacting proofs found to be both reasonable and normal in their interpretations. This title is suffered only that this discussion may be identified in its relation to various articles others have written on this theme. (b) Much Scripture is cited. Usually the citation is not exhaustive, but serves only to provide one proof text out of the many. For want of space, the Scriptures could not be quoted. The sincere reader is requested to look up each passage; otherwise, the value of this thesis, such as it is, will not be gained.]

A controversy among orthodox theologians over dispensational distinctions is not new. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) wrote: “There is, perhaps, no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein orthodox divines so much differ as the stating of the precise agreement and difference between the two dispensations of Moses and Christ” (Edward's Works, I, 100). But this discussion, as is often the case, has suffered much for want of definition.

The word *dispensation* is twofold in its import: (1) It may refer to a dispensing or an administration, or (2) to an abrogation of standards or existing laws—such are the dispensations practiced by the Church of Rome. It is obvious that the controversy among theologians is concerned only with the former. The word *dispensation* is Latin in its origin, being derived from *dispensatio*—economical management, or superintendence—and has its equivalent in the Greek οἰκονομία, meaning, in this specific usage, *stewardship* or *economy* as to special features of divine government in

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the various ages. To quote the Century Dictionary bearing on the theological import of the word: “(a) The method or scheme by which God has at different times developed his purpose, and revealed himself to man; or the body of privileges bestowed, and duties and responsibilities enjoined, in connection with that scheme or method of revelation: as the Old or Jewish *dispensation*; the New Gospel *dispensation*. (b) A period marked by a particular development of the divine purpose and revelation: as the *patriarchal dispensation* (lasting from Adam to Moses); the Mosaic *dispensation* (from Moses to Christ); the Christian *dispensation*.” The Century Dictionary also quotes one pertinent sentence from BIBLIOTHECA SACRA of sixty years ago: “The limits of certain dispensational periods were revealed in Scripture” (Vol. 45, p. 237). In the light of this material, the definition advanced by the late Dr. C. I. Scofield (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 95), namely, “A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect

to obedience to some *specific* revelation of the will of God,” is hardly entitled to the criticism which is aimed against it.

What men, then, according to these definitions, should be classed as dispensationalists? The answer to this question might be stated in a variety of ways. Three of these may suffice: (1) Any person is a dispensationalist who trusts the blood of Christ rather than bringing an animal sacrifice. (2) Any person is a dispensationalist who disclaims any right or title to the land which God covenanted to Israel for an everlasting inheritance. And (3), any person is a dispensationalist who observes the first day of the week rather than the seventh. To all this it will be replied that every Christian does these things, which is obviously true; and it is equally true that, to a very considerable degree, all Christians are dispensationalists. However, not all Christians, though sincere, are as well instructed in the spiritual content of the Scriptures as others, nor have they seen the necessity of recognizing other and deeper distinctions which do confront the careful student of the Word of God. It should be observed,

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however, that, apart from extremists who are not now under consideration and mere echo men who appear on each side of a controversy and who have not thought through the problems of interpretation, the instructed dispensationalists of all generations have had as good reason for the distinctions they have made as any Christian might present for trusting only in the blood of Christ apart from all Jewish sacrifices. The worthy dispensationalist does not create problems of interpretation; he rather seeks to solve the problems which penetrating study of the text of Scripture imposes. Naturally, to the person who has confronted no problems, the work of the advanced student seems divisive and superimposed. Such misunderstandings obtain in every field of human investigation.

Four misleading apprehensions have been expressed recently by *partial* dispensationalists. A brief consideration of these statements will be made before turning to the constructive message of this thesis.

1. The term “Modern Dispensationalism” implies that Dispensationalism is *modern*. In the recovery of vital truth in the Reformation, dispensational distinctions, like various other doctrines, were not emphasized. The truths thus neglected in the Reformation have since been set forth by devout Bible students, but against the opposition of those who assume that the Reformation secured all that is germane to Systematic Theology. The testimony, already cited, of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) that in his day dispensational distinctions were a living topic of theological discussion indicates the fact that these themes were dominant two hundred years ago. Similarly, a worthy and scholarly research of the Bible with dispensational distinctions in view was made during the last century in England by J. N. Darby, Charles H. Mackintosh, Wm. Kelly, F. W. Grant and others who developed what is known as the Plymouth Brethren movement. These men created an extended literature of surpassing value which is strictly Biblical and dispensational, which literature, however, has been strangely neglected by

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many conservative theologians. The term *anno Domini* is intensely dispensational in itself and, like Augustine’s (354–430) familiar dictum, “Distinguish the ages and the Scriptures harmonize,” can hardly be considered *modern*. Until the distortive

spiritualizing method of interpretation was introduced by the scholars of the Alexandrian School there was no formulated opposition to the simple belief in and understanding of all that the sacred text implies. Abundant evidence for this statement may be drawn from the works of the early fathers, even going back to the *Didache*, which evidence establishes the fact that Chiliasm, with those dispensational divisions which belong to it, was the orthodox faith of the early church, and was far from the heresy that some writers represent it to have been.

2. It has been claimed that Dispensationalism is, in some respects, “illogical” and “leads to disastrous consequences.” No argument against this claim need be advanced here other than to point out that Dispensationalism has now become one of the most firmly established features of Christian education and is the acknowledged source of untold blessings as well as the inspiration to sacrificial service to uncounted multitudes who testify that the Bible became a new and transforming message to them when dispensational distinctions were observed. Like the controversy between Arminianism and Calvinism wherein a very great company have been won from Arminianism to Calvinism and few if any from Calvinism to Arminianism, so, of the vast company who have turned to Dispensationalism very few are known, by the writer at least, to have ever abandoned the new ground they have taken. It is the dispensationalists who are promoting Bible study movements over the whole land and they are the major factor in all evangelistic and missionary activity today. Dispensationalism has always been disastrous to theological dicta that cannot stand the acid test of Biblical proof.

3. A new claim has been recently made by some, namely, “I am a Premillennialist, but not a Dispensationalist.” This

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statement evidently supposes that Premillennialism is a belief in an event which is isolated from all that precedes and all that follows it. The term *Premillennial* conveys the thought that Christ comes *before* the Millennium. In reality Premillennialism becomes a dominating feature of interpretation, since it bears on the whole divine program from its beginning to its end. As well might it be argued that though the sun rises in the morning it will neither be preceded by darkness nor accompanied by light as to contend that Christ will come to the earth again, as the Scriptures relate that coming to all that precedes it and all that follows, without causing the most stupendous dispensational changes.

4. And, finally, it has been contended of late that Dispensationalism is a modern heretical departure from sound interpretation of the Scriptures, and that the scholarly research of dispensationalists (who of all men are most faithful defenders of every cardinal doctrine of the Word of God), should be classified as a form of Higher Criticism. To quote: “Dispensationalism shares with Higher Criticism its fundamental error.” And, again, “In a word, despite all their differences, Higher Criticism and Dispensationalism are in this one respect strikingly similar. Higher Criticism divides the Scriptures into Documents which differ from or contradict one another. Dispensationalists divide the Bible into dispensations which differ from and even contradict one another; and so radical is this difference as viewed by the extremist that the Christian of today who accepts the Dispensational views finds his Bible (the part directly intended for him) shrunk to the compass of the Imprisonment Epistles” (*Modern Dispensationalism* by Dr.

Oswald T. Allis, late professor of Hebrew in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa., *Evangelical Quarterly*, Edinburgh, Scotland, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 24ff).

Though somewhat involved in his expression at the end of this quotation, I believe Dr. Allis is referring only to extreme dispensationalists of which class there are but very few today. He must know that the great expositors of this

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and past generations are and were dispensationalists, and that the above description could in no case apply to them. However, the object in view in bringing forward this quotation is the more serious and intended assertion that "Dispensationalism shares with Higher Criticism its fundamental error." What, then, is this fundamental error to which Dr. Allis refers? It consists, evidently, in the recognition of certain divisions of truth. But Dr. Allis, in common with all Bible students, recognizes *some* divisions in the Word of God. Thus this "fundamental error" consists in the recognition of distinctions which go beyond Dr. Allis' own conceptions. This point is not stressed to embarrass Dr. Allis, but only that this problem may be reduced to its actual dimensions. We believe that a partial dispensationalist has a valid reason for the divisions he accepts; but so has the dispensationalist. And the latter will contend that his reasons for these distinctions which go beyond the range of those of the partial dispensationalist are, to him, just as impelling as are the reasons which support the distinctions which he holds in common with the partial dispensationalist. The dispensationalist's larger view of the structure of the Bible is not due to ignorance, lack of logic, or lack of devotion to the integrity of the Scriptures. To hold to the precise character of the Davidic Covenant is no more "divisive" or akin to Higher Criticism than to hold to the precise character of a grace covenant. The instructed dispensationalist holds to both.

Beyond this extended introductory word, it is not the purpose of this article to be negatively controversial, though some opposing statements must be considered. In the limited space available it is purposed to make a constructive statement bearing on conservative Dispensationalism. In presenting an outline of dispensational fundamentals (one may speak for no other or others than himself), proof for statements made will be drawn from the Word of God. Believing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, no appeal is to be

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made to the creeds, confessions, or doctrinal standards which men have formed.

When good men disagree as to doctrine it is usually due to a fundamental difference in premise. Perfect logic, when built on divergent premises, will usually result in irreconcilable conclusions. The controversy between partial dispensationalists and dispensationalists is due to a wide difference in premise. This difference cannot be stated apart from an extended preliminary analysis.

### **Section I: The Creatures of God Viewed Dispensationally**

The Bible is God's one and only Book. In it He discloses facts of eternity as well as of time, of heaven and hell as well as of earth, of Himself as well as of His creatures, and of His purposes in all creation. The reader of the Scriptures should be prepared to

discover revelation which at times deals with other beings and their destiny quite apart from himself. The Bible presents the origin, present estate, and destiny of four major classes of rational beings in the

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universe, namely, the Angels, the Gentiles, the Jews, and the Christians. Nothing could be more germane to true Biblical interpretation than the observance of this fact that these divisions of rational beings continue what they are throughout their history. The revealed divine program for each of these groups will here be traced in brief.

### **1. The Angels**

The angels are created beings (Ps 148:2–5; Col 1:16), their abode is in heaven (Matt 24:36), their activity is both on earth and in heaven (Ps 103:20; Luke 15:10; Heb 1:14), and their destiny is in the celestial city (Heb 12:22; Rev 21:12). They remain angels throughout their existence. They neither propagate nor do they die. There is no reason for confusing the angels with any other creatures in God’s universe. Even though they fall, as in the case of Satan and the demons, they are still classed as angels (Matt 25:41).

### **2. The Gentiles**

As to their racial stock, the Gentiles had their origin in Adam and their federal headship is in him. They have partaken of the fall, and, though they are the subjects of prophecy which predicts that they will yet share, as a subordinate people, with Israel in her coming kingdom glory (Isa 2:4; 60:3, 5, 12; 62:2; Acts 15:17), they, as to their estate in the period from Adam to Christ, are under a sixfold indictment, namely, “without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12). With the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Spirit, the door of gospel privilege was opened unto the Gentiles (Acts 10:45; 11:17, 18; 13:47, 48), and out of them God is now calling an elect company (Acts 15:13). Their new proffered blessings in this age do not consist in being permitted to share in Israel’s earthly covenants, which even Israel is not now enjoying; but rather, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus, they are privileged to be partakers of a heavenly citizenship and glory. It is

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revealed that the mass of Gentiles will not in this age enter by faith into these heavenly riches. Therefore, this people, designated as “the nations,” go on, and at the end of their stewardship as earth-rulers, which is the termination of “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24; cf. Dan 2:36–44), they of that generation, will, at the end of the tribulation period (cf. Matt 24:8–31 with 25:31–46), be called upon to stand before the Messiah King, seated on the throne of His glory (Matt 25:31, 32) here on the earth. At that time, some who are found on the left and who are designated “the goats” will be dismissed into “the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” but those who are found on His right who are designated as “sheep” will be ushered into “the kingdom” prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Matt 25:31–46). The basis of this judgment and its disposition of each of these groups, who **together** represent the sum total of that generation of the Gentile nations, will be meritorious to the last degree. The “sheep” enter the kingdom and the “goats” the lake of fire on the sole issue of their treatment of a third

group whom Christ designates “my brethren.” This context does not bear out the interpretation that this is a description of a last and final judgment when all saved people of all ages are ushered into heaven; for the saved, each and every one, when departing this world are immediately present with the Lord in heaven (Acts 7:55, 56; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23), and who, according to such an interpretation would answer to “my brethren”? The scene is at the close of The Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21) after the removal of the Church from the earth, and at a time when nations will be divided over the Semitic question. The issue is one as to what nations will be chosen to enter Israel’s Messianic Kingdom on the earth. The destiny of the Gentiles is further revealed when it is declared concerning the city which, after the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, comes down from God out of heaven (Rev 3:12; 21:2, 10), that “the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.... And they shall bring the

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glory and honor of the nations into it” (Rev 21:24–26). The term “the nations of them that are saved” could not refer to the Church for her destiny is not earthly, neither is she ever termed “the nations,” nor does she include the kings of the earth in her number. In this same context, the city itself is said to be “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” which is the Church (Rev 21:2, 9, 10). Thus it is disclosed that, in spite of the fact that a dispensation of world rule is committed unto them, that in this age the gospel is preached unto them with its offers of heavenly glory, that in the coming age they share the blessings of the Kingdom with Israel, and that they appear in the eternal glory, they remain Gentiles, in contradistinction to the one nation Israel, to the end of the picture, and there is no defensible ground for diverting or misapplying this great body of Scripture bearing on the Gentiles.

### **3. The Jews**

Whatever Abraham was nationally before he was called of God, it is certain that God set him apart and through him secured a race so distinct in its individuality that from the time of the Exodus to the end of the record of their history they are held as antipodal of all other nations combined. Whatever Abraham’s distinctive physical characteristics may have been, it is certain that his spiritual characteristics were far removed from those of the idolatrous heathen among whom he was reared, and the race which sprang from him through Isaac and Jacob has ever been unique both as to spiritual values and physical appearance.

Following the first eleven chapters of Genesis wherein the first third of human history is recorded and which concern a period when there was but one division of the human family on the earth, the record enters upon the second third of human history which period extends from Abraham to Christ. In a usual edition of the Bible totaling 1,351 pages, 1,129 bear almost exclusively upon this second period, and concern the physical seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. During this extended period there are two divisions of humanity on the earth, but the Gentile is then considered

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only in the light of his relation to Israel. Israel is set apart as an elect nation. Her specific divine favors are enumerated thus: “Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption,

and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom 9:4, 5). Out of the covenants Jehovah has made with Israel, five eternal features are dominant—a national entity (Jer 31:36), a land in perpetuity (Gen 13:15), a throne (2 Sam 7:16; Ps 89:36), a king (Jer 33:21), and a kingdom (Dan 7:14). Though Jehovah reserves the right to chasten even to the extent of scattering His people through all the nations their land being trodden down of Gentiles and their throne vacant for a time, yet His eternal purposes cannot fail. This people are to be regathered and the land will be possessed forever (Deut 30:1–6; Jer 23:5–8; Ezek 37:21–25). Their rightful King, the Son of David, will occupy the Davidic throne *forever* (Ps 89:34–37; Isa 9:6, 7; Jer 33:17; Luke 1:31–33; Rev 11:15). Each of the two major passages on the virgin birth of Christ—one in the Old Testament (Isa 7:14 with 9:6, 7) and one in the New Testament (Luke 1:31–33)—record the prediction, in addition to the virgin birth, that Christ will occupy the Davidic throne forever. Concerning this revelation, it should be observed that the liberal theologian spiritualizes both the virgin birth and the Davidic throne; the partial dispensationalist “shares the fundamental error” of the liberal theologian to the extent of spiritualizing the Davidic throne; while the dispensationalist, believing that no justification can be advanced for so violent a change of method of interpretation within the bounds of an utterance confined almost to one sentence, spiritualizes neither the birth nor the throne. And is it not probable that many theological graduates who in their training were encouraged to spiritualize the Davidic throne have thereby counted themselves justified in spiritualizing the virgin birth or any other feature of divine revelation?

According to very much prophecy, the anticipated

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Messiah would come as a resistless Lion and as a sacrificial Lamb. Peter testifies to the perplexity of the prophets over this seeming paradox (1 Pet 1:10, 11). Isaiah blends the events connected with the two advents into one vast, all-inclusive expectation (Isa 61:1–5), and even the angel Gabriel was not permitted to disclose the fact of two advents separated by the present age, but refers to the events of both advents as though they belonged to one uninterrupted program (Luke 1:31–33). However, to David were given two important revelations, namely, (a) That God’s eternal Son would die a sacrificial death (Ps 22:1–21; 69:20, 21), and (b) that He would occupy David’s throne forever (2 Sam 7:16–29; Ps 89:34–37). David reasoned that if God’s Son was to occupy the throne forever He must first die and be raised again from the dead and thus be free to reign forever. This conclusion on the part of David was one of the most vital features of Peter’s Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2:25–36), in which he is proving that the Lord Jesus is, in spite of His death, the eternal Messiah to Israel. Thus it was disclosed that the Son of David would first die and then be raised again that the Davidic promise of an eternal occupant of David’s throne might be fulfilled. However, it was as definitely predicted that Christ would at His first advent offer Himself to Israel as their King, not in the role of a resistless conquering monarch, as He will yet come (Rev 19:15, 16), but “meek” and “lowly” (Zech 9:9; cf. Matt 21:5). Yet in spite of prediction that Christ would make a pre-Cross offer of Himself to Israel as their King, coming in “lowly guise,” Dr. Allis in his article on “Modern Dispensationalism” (above quoted), refers to the belief which

dispensationalists hold-that Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and that it was rejected and postponed-as a theory characterized by intricacies and impossible. He states that this theory seriously minimizes “the value and centrality of the cross in Bible Revelation” (Ibid., p. 34). Likewise, a Presbyterian preacher of the South has written an article which has been published by a reputable Presbyterian journal also accusing the late Dr. C. I. Scofield of modernistic teaching

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because he seemed to minimize the cross by his advocacy of the theory that the Kingdom was offered to Israel before the death of Christ. These men are Calvinists, yet they are disturbed over the seeming conflict between divine sovereignty and human will. If the ground of their objection to the “postponement theory” stands, then there was no assurance that there would be a Jewish nation until Abraham made his decision to obey God; there was no certainty that Christ would be born until Mary gave her consent; there was no assurance that Christ would die until Pilate so ordered. In the light of two determining facts, namely, that Jehovah’s Lamb was in the redeeming purpose slain from the foundation of the world and that had Adam *not* sinned there could have been no need of a redeemer, why did Jehovah tell Adam *not* to sin? And what would have become of the redemptive purpose had Adam obeyed God? These objections to the so-called postponement theory do not take into consideration the fact of the divinely purposed test involved and the necessary postponement resulting from the failure under testing, the failure itself being anticipated. These are evidently very serious problems for some Calvinists to face. If it be claimed that the birth and death of Christ were predicted and therefore made sure, it is equally true that the pre-cross offer of the earthly Messianic Kingdom to Israel by her Messiah in the days of His “lowly guise” was also made sure by *prediction*. It is equally made sure by prediction that Christ would be crucified, which was Israel’s official rejection of their King (Ps 118:22–24 with 1 Pet 2:6–8; Matt 21:42–45; Luke 19:14, 27; Acts 4:10–12), be raised from the dead (Ps 16:8–10), and ultimately sit on David’s earthly throne and reign over the house of Jacob forever (Isa 9:6, 7; Matt 2:6; Luke 1:31–33). The prophet declared of Christ that He would be “despised and rejected of men,” and John states, “He came unto his own, but his own [Israel] received him not” (John 1:11). The truth set forth in this last passage is of utmost importance. The “rejection” on the part of the nation Israel was not the personal rejection of a crucified and risen Savior as He is now

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rejected when the gospel is refused. It was a nation to whom a Messiah King was promised rejecting their King. They did not say, “We will not believe on this Savior for the saving of our souls”; but they did say in effect, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” This distinction is important since it determines the precise character of their sin.

Two years after their departure from Egypt, God offered to Israel an entrance into their land at Kadesh-barnea. They rejected the offer. God knew they would reject it; yet it was a *bona fide* offer He made to them. Yea, it was in the divine counsel that they would reject, become guilty of that specific sin, and, as a punishment, be returned to thirty-eight more years of wilderness experience. After that, they were taken into the land by His sovereign hand without a question as to their own wishes. He having worked in their



hearts to do His good pleasure, they went in with songs of rejoicing. This history is allegorical, if not typical. The two years of wilderness experience preceding the offer at Kadesh correspond to the six hundred years Israel had been out of their Kingdom when Christ came. The rejection of the divine offer at Kadesh corresponds to the rejection of the King. It was a *bona fide* offer to Israel made by Jehovah in the full knowledge that they would reject it and in spite of the fact that His eternal purpose required them to reject the offer and return to thirty-eight more years of trial. Had the salvation of the world hung on the added years of trial after Kadesh, hesitating Calvinists would shrink back from admitting that the Kadesh offer was ever made, or, if made, was genuine. All would be branded as a theory characterized by intricacies and impossible. The added thirty-eight years correspond to Israel's present condition as a people yet deprived of their land and the blessings of their covenants. The entrance of Israel into the land by sovereign power corresponds to the final restoration of that nation to their inheritance which Jehovah covenanted to them as an everlasting possession (Gen 13:14–17). That Israel will yet be regathered into her own land is the burden of about twenty Old Testament predictions beginning with Deuteronomy 30:3.

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The death of Christ is neither incidental, accidental, nor fortuitous. It is the central truth of the Bible and the central fact of the universe. It was also in the purpose of God that Christ's death should be accomplished by Israel as their act of rejecting their King. It is also true that they did not and could not reject what was not first offered to them. In the present unforeseen age, which is bounded by the two advents of Christ and properly termed *parenthetical* in the sense that it is unforeseen in the divine program for the Jews as reflected in the prophecies concerning them and not accounted for in the Gentile program of successive monarchies symbolized by the colossal image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the Jews, like the Gentiles, are, as individuals, shut up to the message of the gospel of saving grace through faith in Christ. The age-long Jewish advantage because of divine election is, for an age, set aside and the Apostle declares, "There is no difference." They are as individuals alike "under sin" (Rom 3:9), and as individuals alike in that God is rich in mercy to all that call upon Him (Rom 10:12). This is a new message to Gentiles and equally new to Jews. The divine favor proffered to Gentiles does not consist in offering them a share in the national blessings of Israel, nor does it provide a way whereby the Jew may realize the specific features of his national covenants. Though present salvation is into the Kingdom of God (John 3:3), no earthly kingdom is now being offered to any people. Colossians 1:13 is no exception. Should the present King of Great Britain marry a woman of another nation he would bring her into his kingdom, not as a subject, but as a *consort*. The present divine purpose is the out-calling from both Jews and Gentiles of that company who are the Bride of Christ, who are, therefore, each and every one to partake of His standing, being in Him, to be like Him, and to reign with Him on the earth (Rev 20:4, 6; 22:5). To the nation Israel Christ is Messiah, Emmanuel, and King; to the Church He is Head, Bridegroom, and Lord; the last designation connoting His sovereign authority over the Church. These statements, admittedly dogmatic, are easily verified.

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At the end of this age, Israel must pass through the Great Tribulation, which is specifically characterized as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:4–7; Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21); and, before entering her Kingdom, she must come before her King in judgment. Of this event Ezekiel writes: “I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered.... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me” (Ezek 20:34–38. The entire context should be considered, 33–34. Cf., also, Isa 1:24–26; Ps 50:1–7; Mal 3:2–5; 4:1, 2). Israel’s judgments are likewise described by Christ in Matthew 24:45 to 25:30. That this Scripture refers to Israel is certain from the fact that the Church does not come into judgment (John 3:18; 5:24; Rom 8:1 A.R.V., 20:39), and that the description of the judgment of the nations does not begin until verse 31. It therefore follows that Israel’s judgments are in view in the passage in question. The incomparable Tribulation is ended by the glorious return of Christ to the earth (Ps 2:1–9; Isa 63:1–6; Matt 24:27–31; 2 Thess 2:3–12; Rev 19:11–21); Israel’s judgments, according to the context of Matthew 24:30 to 25:30, follow the glorious appearing of Christ; and the judgment of the nations occurs when He is seated on the throne of His glory (Matt 25:31, 32).

The Day of Jehovah, which extended period occupies so large a part of Old Testament prophecy, begins with the judgments of Jehovah in the earth, above mentioned, and continues on including the return of Christ to the earth and all the millennial glory for Israel and the Gentiles. Zechariah 14:1–21 predicts the beginning of that long period, while 2 Peter 3:4–15 (note in this connection Peter declares “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”) and Revelation 20:7–15 describe the end of that period. The whole extended “day” is characterized by the presence of Christ reigning on the earth with His Bride, by Satan being bound and in the abyss, and by the realization on Israel’s part of all the glory and

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blessedness promised that people in Jehovah’s covenants with them. More space than this article may claim would be required to quote even the major prophecies bearing on this theme (cf. Ps 45:8–17; 72:1–20; Isa 11:1 to 12:6; 54:1 to 55:13; 60:1 to 66:24; Jer 23:5–8; 31:1–40; 33:1–26; Ezek 34:11–31; 36:16–38; 37:1–14; 40:1 to 48:35; Dan 2:44, 45; 7:13, 14; Zech 14:1–21; Mal 4:1–6). These promises are all of an earthly glory and concern a land which Jehovah has given as an everlasting possession to His elect people Israel to whom He said, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jer 31:3). Little consideration, indeed, is given to the confusion or inconsistencies which arise when under a spiritualizing method of interpretation these blessings which are addressed to the elect nation and related to their land and King are applied to an elect heavenly people called out from all nations to whom no land has ever been given, and who are not now nor at any future time said to be subjects of the King. There is no scholarly reason for applying the Scriptures which bear upon the past, the present, or the future of Israel to any other people than that nation of whom these Scriptures speak. The real unity of the Bible is preserved only by those who observe with care the divine program for Gentiles, for Jews, and for Christians in their individual and unchanging continuity.

#### **4. The Christians**

The current and last third of human history, extending from the first advent of Christ to the present hour, is characterized by three widely different classes of people dwelling **together** on the earth. As in the preceding age, all divine purpose centered about the Jew, and the Gentile was in evidence only as he was related to Israel; so in this age the divine purpose centers in the new group which is present, and the Jew and the Gentile are seen only as those to whom the gospel is to be preached alike and from whom this new elect company is being called out by a spiritual birth of each individual who believes to the saving of his soul. The Scriptures addressed specifically to this company are, the Gospel

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by John-especially the upper room discourse,-the Acts and the Epistles. The Synoptic Gospels, though on the surface presenting a simple narrative are, nevertheless, a field for careful, discriminating study on the part of the true expositor. In these Gospels Christ is seen as loyal to and vindicating the Mosaic Law under which He lived; He also anticipates the kingdom age in connection with the offer of Himself as Israel's King; and, when His rejection is indicated, He announces His death and resurrection and the expectation concerning a heavenly people (Matt 16:18) for whom He gave Himself in redeeming love (Eph 5:25-28). An extensive body of Scripture declares directly or indirectly that the present age is unforeseen and parenthetical in its character and in it a new humanity appears on the earth with an incomparable new headship in the resurrected Christ, which company is being formed by the regenerating power of the Spirit. It is likewise revealed that there is now "no difference" between Jews and Gentiles generally either as to their need of salvation (Rom 3:9) or as to the specific message to be preached to them (Rom 10:12). It is seen, also, that in this new body wherein Jews and Gentiles are united by a common salvation, the middle wall of partition-the age-long enmity between Jew and Gentile-is broken down, itself having been "slain" by Christ on the cross, thus making peace (Eph 2:14-18). In fact, all former distinctions are lost, those thus saved having come upon new ground where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but where Christ is all in all (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). The New Testament also records that the individual Christian, being indwelt by Christ, now possesses eternal life and its hope of glory (Col 1:27), and, being in Christ, is possessed with the perfect standing of Christ, since all that Christ is-even the righteousness of God-is imputed unto him. The Christian is thus already constituted a heavenly citizen (Phil 3:20) and, being raised with Christ (Col 3:1-3), and seated with

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Christ (Eph 2:6), belongs to another sphere-so definitely, indeed, that Christ can say of the Christian, "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world" (John 17:14, 16. Cf. 15:18, 19). It is likewise to be observed that since this spiritual birth and heavenly position *in Christ* are supernatural, they are, of necessity, wrought by God alone, and that human coöperation is excluded; the only responsibility imposed on the human side being that of *faith* which trusts in the only One who is able to save. To this heavenly people, who are the New Creation of God (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), is committed, not in any corporate sense but only as individuals, a twofold responsibility, namely, (a) to adorn by a Christ-like life the doctrine which they represent by the very nature of their salvation, and (b) to be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is similarly believed that the Scriptures which direct the Christian in his holy walk and service are adapted to the

fact that he is not now striving to secure a standing with God, but is already “accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6), and has attained unto every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3; Col 2:10). It is evident that no human resource could enable any person to arise to the fulfillment of these heaven-high responsibilities and that God, anticipating the believer’s inability to walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called, has freely bestowed His empowering Spirit to indwell each and every one who is saved. Of this same heavenly company it is declared that they, when their elect number is complete, will be removed from this earth. The bodies of those that have died will be raised and living saints will be translated (1 Cor 15:20–57; 1 Thess 4:13–19). In glory, the individuals who comprise this company will be judged as to their rewards for service (1 Cor 3:9–15; 9:18–27; 2 Cor 5:10, 11), be married to Christ (Rev 19:7–9), and then return *with* Him to share as His consort in His reign (Luke 12:35, 36; Jude 1:14, 15; Rev 19:11–16). This New-Creation people, like the angels, Israel, and the Gentiles, may be traced on into the eternity to come (Heb 12:22–24; Rev 21:1 to 22:5). But, it will be remembered, the Christian possesses no land (Exod 20:12;

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Matt 5:5); no house (Matt 23:38; Acts 15:16), though of the household of God; no earthly capitol or city (Isa 2:1–4; Ps 137:5, 6); no earthly throne (Luke 1:31–33); no earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6, 7); no king to whom he is subject (Matt 2:2), though Christians may speak of Christ as “The King” (1 Tim 1:17; 6:15); and no altar other than the cross of Christ (Heb 13:10–14).

## **Section II: Scripture Doctrine Viewed Dispensationally**

A true religion consists in a specific relationship, with its corresponding responsibilities, divinely set up between God and man.

There is no revelation of any distinctive relation having been set up either between God and the angels or between God and the Gentiles which partakes of the character of a true religion, but God has entered into relations with the Jew which results in Judaism, or what the Apostle identifies as The religion of the Jews (Acts 26:5; Gal 1:13. Cf. Jas 1:26, 27), and with the Christian which results in Christianity, or what the New Testament writers designate as “the faith” (Jude 1:3) and “this way” (Acts 9:2; 22:4. Cf. 18:26; 2 Pet 2:2). Judaism and Christianity have much in common; each is ordained of God to serve a specific purpose. They incorporate similar features-God, man, righteousness, sin, redemption, salvation, human responsibility, and human destiny; but these similarities do not establish identity since the dissimilarities, to be partially enumerated later, far outnumber the similarities. There are remarkable points of likeness between the laws of Great Britain and the laws of the United States, but this fact does not constitute these two nations one.

A complete religious system provides at least seven distinctive features, all of which are present both in Judaism and in Christianity. These features are: (a) An acceptable standing on the part of man before God; (b) A manner of life consistent with that standing; (c) A divinely appointed

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service; (d) A righteous ground whereon God may graciously forgive and cleanse the erring; (e) A clear revelation of the responsibility on the human side upon which divine forgiveness and cleansing may be secured; (f) An effective basis upon which God may be worshipped and petitioned in prayer; and (g) A future hope.

## **1. An Acceptable Standing on the Part of Man Before God**

Whatever may have been the divine method of dealing with individuals before the call of Abraham and the giving of the Law by Moses, it is evident that, with the call of Abraham and the giving of the Law and all that has followed, there are two widely different, standardized, divine provisions, whereby man, who is utterly fallen, might come into the favor of God.

### *a. Divine Grace Upon Israel*

Apart from the privilege accorded proselytes of joining the congregation of Israel—which seemed to bear little fruitage—entrance into the right to share in the covenants of blessing designed for the earthly people was and is by

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*physical* birth. It was no vain boast when the Apostle declared of himself that he was “of the stock of Israel” (Phil 3:5), nor is there any uncertain generalization in the statement that Christ “was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom 15:8). The national blessings of Israel are recorded thus: “Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came” (Rom 9:4, 5). Though they went down into Egypt a family, they came out a nation and Jehovah redeemed them as a nation unto Himself both by blood and by power. It was not an individual redemption since it was not restricted to that generation; but Israel remains a redeemed nation throughout all her history. On the human side, the passover lamb saved the physical life of Israel’s first born. On the divine side, the lamb, as an anticipation of God’s perfect Lamb, gave Jehovah freedom to redeem a nation forever. That Israel was already in Jehovah’s favor is revealed in Exodus 8:23; 9:6, 26; 10:23. The redeemed nation became Jehovah’s abiding treasure (Exod 19:5; Deut 4:32–40; Ps 135:4). What Jehovah has covenanted to His elect nation is one thing, and what He covenants to individuals within that nation is quite another thing. The national entity has been and will be preserved forever according to covenant promise (Isa 66:22; Jer 31:25–27; Gen 17:7, 8). The individual Israelite, on the other hand, was subject to a prescribed and regulated conduct which carried with it a penalty of individual judgment for every failure (Deut 28:58–62; Ezek 20:33–44; Matt 24:51; 25:12, 30). The national standing (but not necessarily the spiritual state) of each Israelite, was secured by *physical* birth. Some of that nation did by faithfulness attain to more personal blessing than others of the nation (cf. Luke 2:25, 37), and some gloried in their tribal relationship (cf. Phil 3:5); but these things added nothing to their rights

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within their covenants, which rights were secured to each and every one alike by *physical* birth.

### *b. Divine Grace Upon Christians*

The heavenly people, whether taken individually from either Jewish or Gentile stock, attain immediately by faith unto a standing as perfect as that of Christ, which standing is secured by a *spiritual* birth and all the saving operations of God which accompany it. They are individually redeemed by the blood of Christ; born of the Spirit into a relationship in which God becomes their Father and they become His legitimate sons and heirs—even joint-heirs with Christ. Through the regenerating work of the Spirit they have Christ begotten in them (Col 1:27), and receive the divine nature which is eternal life (Rom 6:23). They are forgiven all trespasses to such a degree that they will never come into condemnation (Col 2:13; John 3:18; Rom 8:1, A.R.V.), and justified forever (Rom 3:21 to 5:11). They died in Christ's death (Rom 6:1–10); they rose in Christ's resurrection (Col 3:1–3); and they are seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6). By the baptizing work of the Spirit they are "joined to the Lord" (Rom 6:1–7; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27) and, being thus *in Christ*, their standing before God is no less than the perfection of Christ in whom they are accepted (2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:6). Being *in Christ*, they are *one* in each other in a mystic union which is both incomparable and incomprehensible—a unity like that within the blessed Trinity (John 17:21–23). They are already constituted citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20). These blessings are not only as exalted and spiritual as heaven itself and eternal, but they are secured apart from all human merit at the instant one believes on Christ to the saving of the soul.

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## **2. A Divinely Specified Manner of Life**

Quite apart from the revealed will of God as recorded of earlier ages, the Bible sets forth at length three distinct and complete divine rulings which govern human action. None of these rulings are addressed to the angels or to the Gentiles as such. Two are addressed to Israel—one in the age that is past, known as the Mosaic Law, and the other the setting forth of the terms of admission into, and the required conduct in, the Messianic Kingdom when that Kingdom is set up in the earth. The third is addressed to Christians and provides divine direction in this age for the heavenly people who are already perfected, as to standing, in Christ Jesus. Since the Bible is God's one book for all the ages, it should be no more difficult to recognize its references to yet future ages than to recognize its reference to completed past ages. These three rules of life do present widely different economies. This is evident both from their distinctive characteristics as set forth in the Word of God and from the very nature of the case. As to the nature of the case, it may be said, that the divine administration in the earth could not be the same after the death of Christ, after His resurrection, after His ascension and the inauguration of His present ministry, after the advent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and after the *ad interim* disannulling of Judaism, as it was before those events. Nor could the divine administration be the same after the removal of the Church from the earth, after the regathering of Israel and the restoration of Judaism, after the judgment of the nations, after the binding of Satan, and after the seating of Christ at His second advent on David's throne to rule over the whole earth, as it is now before those events occur.

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The Mosaic system was designed to govern Israel in the land and was an *ad interim* form of divine government between that gracious administration, described in Exodus 19:4, and the coming of Christ (John 1:17; Rom 4:9–16; Gal 3:19–25). It was in three parts, namely, (a) “The Commandments,” which governed Israel’s moral life (Exod 20:1–17); (b) “The Judgments,” which governed Israel’s civic life (Exod 21:1 to 24:11); and (c) “The Ordinances,” which governed Israel’s religious life (Exod 24:12 to 31:18). These provisions were holy, just, and good (Rom 7:12, 14), but they carried a penalty (Deut 28:58–62) and, because they were not kept by Israel, they became a “ministration of death” (Rom 7:10; 2 Cor 3:7). The Law was not of faith, but of works (Gal 3:12). It was ordained unto life (Rom 7:10), but because of the weakness of the flesh of those to whom it made its appeal (Rom 8:3), there was, as a practical result, no law given which could give life (Gal 3:21). The Law did, however, serve as the παιδαγωγός, or child-conductor to lead to Christ—both immediately as Christ was foreshadowed in the sacrifices, and dispensationally, as described in Galatians 3:23–25. Though almost every intrinsic value contained in the Law system is carried forward and incorporated into the present grace system, it still remains true that the Law as an *ad interim* system did come to its end and a new divine economy superseded it. No more decisive language could be employed on this point than is used in John 1:17;

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Romans 6:14; 7:2–6; 10:4; 2 Corinthians 3:6–13; Gal 3:23–25; 5:18. These Scriptures should not be slighted, as they too often are, by those who would impose the Law system upon the heavenly people. It is useless to claim that it was the judgments and ordinances that were done away and that the commandments abide, since it is “that which was written and engraven in stones” which is said to have been “done away” and “abolished” (2 Cor 3:11, 13). Nor is the situation relieved for those who claim that the Law has ceased as a means of justification; for it was never that, nor could it be (Gal 3:11).

The heavenly people, by the very exalted character of their salvation being “made” to stand in all the perfection of Christ (Rom 3:22; 5:1; 8:1; 10:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:22; Eph 1:6), have no burden laid upon them of establishing personal merit before God since they are perfected forever in Christ (Heb 10:9–14); but they do have the new responsibility of “walking worthy” of their high calling (Rom 12:1, 2; Eph 4:1–3; Col 1:1–3). No meritorious system, such as was the Law, could possibly be applied to a people who by riches of divine grace have attained to a perfect standing, even every spiritual blessing *in Christ Jesus* (Eph 1:3; Col 2:10). It is to be expected that the injunctions addressed to a perfected heavenly people will be exalted as heaven itself; and they are (cf. John 13:34; Rom 6:11–13; 2 Cor 10:3–5; Gal 5:16; Eph 4:30; 5:18). Similarly, as these requirements are superhuman and yet the doing of them is most essential, God has provided that each individual thus saved shall be indwelt by the Holy Spirit to the end that he may, by dependence on the Spirit and by the power of the Spirit, live a supernatural, God-honoring life—not, indeed, *to be* accepted, but because he *is* accepted. Those who would intrude the meritorious Mosaic system into this heaven-high divine administration of superabounding grace either have no conception of the character of the meritorious Law, or are lacking in the comprehension of the glories of divine grace.

The third administration which is contained in the Bible is that which is designed to govern the earthly people in

relation to their coming earthly kingdom. It is explicit, also, as to the requirements that are to be imposed upon those who enter that kingdom. This body of Scripture is found in the Old Testament portions which anticipate the Messianic Kingdom and in large portions of the Synoptic Gospels. The essential elements of a grace administration—faith as the sole basis of acceptance with God, unmerited acceptance through a perfect standing in Christ, the present possession of eternal life, an absolute security from all condemnation, and the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit—are not found in the kingdom administration. On the other hand, it is declared to be the fulfilling of “the law and the prophets” (Matt 5:17, 18; 7:12), and is seen to be an extension of the Mosaic Law into realms of meritorious obligation which blast and wither as the Mosaic system could never do (Matt 5:20–48). These kingdom injunctions, though suited to the conditions that will then obtain, could perfect no one as men in Christ are now perfected, nor are they adapted as a rule of life for those already complete in Christ Jesus.

These systems do set up conflicting and opposing principles, but since these difficulties appear only when an attempt is made to coalesce systems, elements, and principles which God has separated, the conflicts really do not exist at all outside these unwarranted unifying efforts; in fact they rather demonstrate the *necessity* of a due recognition of all God’s different and distinct administrations. The true unity of the Scriptures is not discovered when one blindly seeks to fuse these opposing principles into one system, but rather it is found when God’s plain differentiations are observed. The dispensationalist does not create these differences as he is sometimes accused of doing. The conflicting principles, in the text of Scripture, are observable by all who penetrate deep enough to recognize the essential features of divine administration. Instead of creating the problems, the dispensationalist is the one who has a solution for them. If the ideals of an earthly people for long life in the land which God gave unto them (Exod 20:12; Ps 37:3, 11, 34; Matt 5:5) does not articulate with the ideals of a heavenly people who as to the

earth are “strangers and pilgrims” and who are enjoined to be looking for and loving the imminent appearing of Christ, the problem is easily solved by the one whose system of interpretation is proven rather than distressed by such distinctions. A plan of interpretation which, in defence of an ideal unity of the Bible, contends for a single divine purpose, ignores drastic contradictions, and is sustained only by occasional or accidental similarities, is doomed to confusion when confronted with the many problems which such a system imposes on the text of Scripture, which problems are recognized by the dispensationalist only as he observes them in the system which creates them.

All Scripture is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16), but all Scripture is not of primary application to a particular person or class of persons which the Bible designates as such. All Scripture is not of the angels, nor is it of the Gentiles. In like manner, all Scripture is not addressed to the Jew, nor is it all addressed to the Christian. These are obvious truths and the dispensationalist’s plan of interpretation is none other than an attempt to be consistent in following these distinctions as to the primary application of Scripture as far as, and no farther than, the Bible carries them. However, all Scripture is profitable, that is, it has its



moral, spiritual, or secondary application. To illustrate this: Much valuable truth may be gained from the great body of Scripture bearing on the Jewish Sabbath; but if that body of Scripture has a primary application to the Church, then the Church has no Biblical ground for the observance of the first day of the week (which she certainly has) and she could offer no excuse for her disobedience, and her individual members, like all Sabbath breakers, should be stoned to death (Num 15:32–36). In like manner, if all Scripture is of primary application to believers of this age then they are in danger of hell fire (Matt 5:29, 30), of unspeakable plagues, diseases and sickness, and by reason of these to become few in number (Deut 28:58–62), and to have the blood of lost souls required at their hands (Ezek 3:17, 18). Moral and spiritual lessons are

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to be drawn from God's dealing with Israelites quite apart from the necessity being imposed upon Christians to comply with all that a primary application of the Scriptures specifically addressed to Israel would demand. Of the believer of this age it is said that, "he shall not come into judgment" (John 5:24), and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1, A.R.V.). These latter promises are disannulled by diametrically opposite declarations if all Scripture applies primarily to the Christian. Arminianism is the legitimate expression of this confusion and the would-be Calvinist who ignores the plain distinctions of the Bible has no defense against Arminian claims.

### **3. A Divinely Appointed Service**

Service for God is an essential of any true religion. In the case of Judaism, service consisted in the maintenance of the tabernacle and temple ritual, and all tithes and offerings went to the support of the priesthood and their ministry. In the case of Christianity, service faces outward with its commissions to preach the gospel to every creature and includes the edification of the saints.

### **4. A Righteous Ground Whereon God may Graciously Forgive and Cleanse the Erring**

Any religious economy which is to continue must provide a ground upon which God is righteously free to forgive and restore those who fail. Being possessed-as all are-of a fallen nature, there is no possibility of anyone continuing in right relations to God who is not ever and always being renewed and restored by the gracious power of God. In the case of Judaism, God forgave sin and renewed His fellowship with them on the ground of His own certainty that a sufficient sacrifice would be made in due time by His Lamb. In the case of the Christian, God is said to be propitious concerning "our sins" (1 John 2:2), and this because of the fact that His Son has already borne the penalty (1 Cor 15:3), and because of the fact that Christ as Advocate now appears for us when we sin (1 John 2:1). No more comforting truth can

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come to the Christian's heart than the assurance that God is now propitious concerning "our sins."

## **5. A Clear Revelation of the Responsibility on the Human Side upon Which Divine Forgiveness and Cleansing may be Secured**

This aspect of this theme offers opportunity for several misunderstandings. In a general way, it will be recognized by all that the requirement on the human side was, in the Old Testament, the offering of an animal sacrifice, while in the New Testament, following the death of Christ-which event terminated all sacrifices-, divine forgiveness for the believer is conditioned on confession of sin which confession is the outward expression of an inward repentance. All this is natural and reasonable. However, certain complications arise when these obvious facts are considered in their relation to other phases of truth.

It is important to observe that in the Old Testament ages no provisions were made, so far as Scripture records, for Gentile needs. We recognize that Abel, Noah, Job, and Melchizedek sacrificed offerings for sin, yet no form of doctrine is disclosed regarding these offerings. On the other hand, the Jews, being a covenant people, were, when injured by sin, given the sacrifices as a basis for divine forgiveness and as a way back into those blessings and relationships belonging to their covenants. It must be observed that the sacrifices never constituted a ground for the entrance into the covenants, which ground was already secured by their physical birth, nor was any sacrifice the ground of personal salvation. On the contrary, the sacrifices for Israel served to provide a ground for forgiveness and restoration of covenant people. The parallel in Christianity is the provision through the death of Christ whereby the Christian may be forgiven and cleansed. Judaism required an animal sacrifice; Christianity looks back to the sacrifice already wrought. The only parallel in Judaism of the present salvation of an unregenerate person is the fact that the Jew was physically born

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into his covenant relations. The personal salvation of a Jew in the old order is a theme which is yet to be considered.

## **6. An Effective Basis upon which God may be Worshipped and Petitioned in Prayer**

Under this heading we observe that the basis of appeal on which the Old Testament saints prayed was that of their covenants. A study of the recorded prayers will disclose the fact that they plead with Jehovah to observe and do what He had promised He would do. The ground of prayer in the New Testament after the death, resurrection, ascension of Christ, and the descent of the Spirit, is that the new approach to God is in the *name* of Christ. Being *in Christ*, the believer's prayer arises to the Father as though it were the voice of Christ, and it is granted for Christ's sake. That this is new is indicated by the word of Christ when He said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name" (John 16:24). By this statement all previous forms and appeals are set aside and the new appeal is established which is as immeasurable as infinity itself. We read, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23).

## **7. A Future Hope**

Judaism has its eschatology reaching on into eternity with covenants and promises which are everlasting. On the other hand, Christianity has its eschatology which is different at every point. Some of these contrasts are:

a. The future of this life. In the case of Israel, the thing to be desired was long life “in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,” whereas the Christian’s hope is the prospect of the imminent coming of Christ to take away His Church from the earth. This he is taught to wait for, and he is told that he should love Christ’s appearing. He has no land, nor has he any promise of earthly things beyond his personal need. In those Scriptures which warn Israel of the yet future coming of her Messiah, that nation is told that they should “*watch*” for His coming since that coming will be unexpected (Matt 24:36–51; 25:13). Over against this

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and for the same reason, the Christian is told to “wait” for his Lord from heaven (1 Thess 1:9, 10).

b. Intermediate state. One passage reporting the words of Christ is about all that Judaism reveals as to the intermediate state. This is found in Luke 16:19–31. The rich man is in torment, while the beggar is in “Abraham’s bosom.” The latter is a strong Jewish conception and in contrast to the revelation that when the Christian departs this life he goes to be “with Christ which is far better” (Phil 1:23; cf. 2 Cor 5:8).

c. Resurrection. Judaism contemplated a resurrection for Israel. In Daniel 12:1–3 we read that, following the Great Tribulation, Daniel’s people will be raised from the dead. Some are to be raised to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt. Rewards are also promised, for those “that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” That this refers to Daniel’s people is clearly indicated in the context. Martha, voicing the Jewish hope, declared that her brother would be raised again in the resurrection at the last day (John 11:24). And in Hebrews 6:1–3, where Judaism’s features are named, the resurrection of the dead is included. The doctrine of resurrection for the Christian is in two parts: (a) He has already been raised and seated (Eph 2:6), and, having partaken of the resurrection life of Christ and being positionally in the value of all Christ has done, is said to be already raised from the dead (Col 3:1–3), and (b) should he die, the believer’s body is yet to be raised, and this at the coming of Christ for His own (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 4:16, 17). The believers will also be rewarded for faithfulness in service.

d. Eternal Life. All consideration of the doctrine of

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eternal life, whether of one age or another, must distinguish between mere endless existence and the impartation of that life from God which is as eternal in every aspect of it as is the Author Himself. No human being can ever cease to exist; even death, which appears to terminate life, in due time will be dismissed forever (1 Cor 15:26; Rev 21:4). Quite apart from the indisputable fact of the endless character of human existence, is God’s gracious bestowment of eternal life, which eternal life is a vital part of the eschatology of Judaism as it is a vital part of the soteriology of Christianity. A very clear and comprehensive body of Scripture bears on eternal life as related to Judaism. However, it is there contemplated as an *inheritance*. The doctrine as related to Judaism is

found in well-identified passages: (a) Isaiah 55:3 (cf. Deut 30:6) in which context the prophet is calling on a covenant people to enter fully into the blessings which Jehovah's covenants secure. In the midst of these is this promise that "your soul shall live." (b) Daniel 12:2 where the context, as seen above, relates to the resurrection of those who are of Judaism, some of these are to be raised to "everlasting life," and some to "everlasting contempt."

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The "life" is no more their possession in this present existence than is the "contempt." (c) Matthew 7:13, 14, which passage is found in that portion of Scripture that defines the terms of admission into, and conditions life in, the earthly Messianic Kingdom; which kingdom occupies the supreme place in the eschatology of Judaism. The passage imposes the most drastic human effort as essential if one would enter the narrow way that leads to life. The life is at the *end* of the path and its price is well defined by the word ἀγωνίζομαι (better translated *agonize*) as used by Luke (13:24) when this saying of Christ's is reported by him. (d) Luke 10:25–29, in which passage the lawyer asks as to how he may inherit eternal life and is told by Christ in the most absolute terms that eternal life for him is gained by the keeping of that contained in the Mosaic Law. (e) Luke 18:18–27, where it is likewise reported that a young ruler made the same inquiry, namely, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and to this sincere man our Lord quoted the Mosaic Commandments; but when the young man declared that these things had been kept by him from his youth, Christ did not chide him for falsehood but took him on to the ground of complete surrender of all he was and all he had as the way into that

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state which Christ termed "*perfect*." (f) Matthew 18:8, 9, which passage presents the alternative of entering life—a future experience—maimed or halt, or entering "everlasting fire" or "hell fire." That a Christian, already possessing eternal life and perfected as he is in Christ, could not enter heaven maimed or halt when his body is to be like unto Christ's glorious body, or into hell fire after Christ has said that he shall not come into judgment and that he shall never perish, is obvious indeed. Over against this extended body of Scripture bearing on that particularized yet future form of eternal life which, being a feature of Judaism, is related to the earthly Kingdom, is another body of Scripture far more extensive which declares that eternal life for the Christian is an impartation from God and is the gift of God (John 10:28; Rom 6:23); it is a present possession (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:54; 20:31; 1 John 5:11–13); and it is none other than Christ indwelling (Col 1:27), and the imparted divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). The receiving of eternal life will be for Israelites, as it is in the case of the Christian, as a feature of salvation itself, and salvation for Israel is, in Romans 11:26–32, declared to be after the present age—purpose of the fullness of the Gentiles which is now accompanied by Israel's blindness (verse 25), and at the time when "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer," Who shall "turn away ungodliness from Jacob." This, Jehovah says, "is my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins." Isaiah anticipates the same great moment of Israel's salvation when he predicts that a nation shall be born "at once." The Hebrew word פֶּעַם from which the words *at once* are translated means, as a time measurement, *a stroke*, or *the beat of a foot*.

On the other hand, the Christian is saved when he believes and that salvation is related only to the first advent of Christ.

e. The covenanted Davidic kingdom. This, the most extensive and important feature of the eschatology of Judaism, occupies so large a place in the discussion which this whole thesis presents, it need be no more than mentioned here. That form of interpretation which rides on occasional similarities and passes over vital differences is displayed by

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those who argue that the Kingdom of Heaven, as referred to in Matthew, must be the same as the Kingdom of God since some parables regarding the Kingdom of Heaven are reported in Mark and Luke under the designation, *The Kingdom of God*. No attempt is made by these expositors to explain why the term *Kingdom of Heaven* is used by Matthew only, nor do they seem to recognize the fact that the real difference between that which these designations represent is to be discovered in connection with the instances where they are not, and cannot be, used interchangeably rather than in the instances where they are interchangeable. Certain features are common to both the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God, and in such instances the interchange of the terms is justified. Closer attention will reveal that the Kingdom of Heaven is always earthly while the Kingdom of God is as wide as the universe and includes as much of earthly things as are germane to it. Likewise, the Kingdom of Heaven is entered by a righteousness exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20), while the Kingdom of God is entered by a new birth (John 3:1-16). So, again, the Kingdom of Heaven answers the hope of Israel and the Gentiles, while the Kingdom of God answers the eternal and all-inclusive purpose of God. Such contrasts might be cited to great lengths, but the important objective has been gained if it has been made clear that there is an eschatology of Judaism and an eschatology of Christianity and each, though wholly different as to details, reaches on into eternity. One of the great burdens of predictive prophecy is the anticipation of the glories of Israel in a transformed earth under the reign of David's Son, the

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Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. There is likewise much prediction which anticipates the glories of the redeemed in heaven.

### **Section III: Dispensationalism in the Light of Divine Grace**

When contemplating more specifically the precise character of each divine economy, it is essential that the nature, extent, and scope of God's grace shall be carefully estimated. At least three aspects of the doctrine of grace are involved, namely:

#### **1. The Divine Freedom to Act in Behalf of Sinful Men**

Unlike His wisdom, power, and glory, which could be

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manifested in creation, the grace of God could be manifested only as there were fallen beings toward whom He could be gracious. It is difficult to believe that the exercise of

this so essential part of His nature would be suppressed forever, or that, when it is expressed, it would not be on a plane as perfect and as worthy of Himself as are all His works. In verses 4 and 5 of the context of Ephesians 2:1–10, which context is the central passage of the Bible on divine grace, three closely related words appear—*mercy*, *love*, and *grace*. A distinction is here indicated: *Love* is the affection or compassion of God for sinners; *mercy* is that in Him which devised and provided a redemption through the death of His Son; while *grace*, in its outworking, is that which God is free to do on the ground of that death. God might love sinners with an unutterable compassion and yet, because of the demands of outraged justice and holiness, be precluded from rescuing them from their righteous doom. The essential revelation contained in the gospel of our salvation is this fact that God is now free within Himself to act in grace toward sinners through the death of Christ for them. Since no other freedom to act in behalf of sinners has been secured, it is to be concluded that all God has ever done or will do for sinful men is wrought on the sole basis of Christ's death. Even though Christ has died and God is thus free to act in grace, the question as to whether He does little or much for men will be determined only according to His sovereign purpose. This freedom He will always exercise as He has exercised it in past ages.

## **2. The Divine Purpose in This Age is an All-Satisfying and Complete Demonstration of Grace.**

As stated above, whatever God has done in behalf of man in any age, being based on the death of Christ, is a manifestation of grace; but the present unforeseen age is unique in this that its divine purpose is, to a distinguishing degree, the supreme demonstration of God's grace. Had this distinction been observed, a number of misunderstandings relative to dispensational truth would have been obviated. Because it is

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believed that this age is peculiarly one of divine favor does not militate against the belief that God's grace is abundantly exercised in all other ages. Proofs that this is an age in which God is manifesting His grace are many indeed. Two of these will suffice: (1) In Matthew 13:1–50 the present age is in view under seven parables. They treat of a divine economy when "the field is the world," which breadth of view did not obtain from Abraham to Christ. Three elements are to be distinguished in these parables, namely, (a) that which is good, designated as "wheat," "good seed," the "pearl of great price," and the "good fish"; (b) that which is evil, designated as "tares," evil "birds," "leaven," and "bad fish." And (c) the "treasure" hid in the field, which so evidently refers to Israel, as the "pearl of great price" so evidently refers to the Church. Thus three elements appear in this description of the present age, namely, that which is good, or the heavenly people; that which is evil, or the unregenerate masses; and the earthly people, Israel. Two New Testament passages add much to this revelation. In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 it is disclosed that the Restrainer, whom many expositors agree is the Holy Spirit, goes on restraining until He is taken out of the way. This important passage records the fact that the Spirit, who is ever-omnipresent but specifically resident in the world in this age, will leave the world. However, according to John 14:16, 17, the Church in which He now dwells cannot be separated from Him. Thus it is demonstrated that the age-purpose is not the cessation of evil, but rather the completion of the Church. This truth is even more clearly presented in Romans 11:25 where, Israel's present blindness (Isa 6:9, 10; Matt 13:14, 15; John

12:40; 2 Cor 3:14, 15) is declared to continue until the “fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” “The fulness of the Gentiles” is a designation which is explained in Ephesians 1:23 as “The church which is His body.” Thus we observe that of the three elements which characterize this age, neither Israel’s program, nor a victory over evil is the purpose of this age, but that each of these is waiting *until* the Church is called out. (2) In Ephesians 2:4–10 it is directly stated that

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salvation, as now provided through Christ, is secured by faith alone, with the purpose in view that in the ages to come God may by means of it “shew the exceeding riches of his grace.” Of three motives assigned to God for His present saving grace (Cf. Eph 2:10; John 3:16), the fact that by the present exercise of saving grace He will make a demonstration to all intelligences of the “*exceeding riches*” of His grace, is that which surpasses all else in the measure in which God is greater than man. Of no other age—those recorded in history or those anticipated in prophecy—could it be said that its primary divine purpose is the making by God of a specific demonstration, all satisfying to Himself, of His grace. Likewise, in no other age could it be said that those who are saved are “accepted in the beloved”; yet this very acceptance, which is divine favor drawn out to infinity, is said to be “to the praise of the glory of his grace” (Eph 1:6). It may be concluded that the present primary age-purpose of God is the demonstration of His grace, which belief in no way precludes one from recognizing the gracious acts of God in all other ages. What worthy Bible expositor has ever contended for aught else than this concerning the grace of God?

### **3. God’s Grace in Covenant Form**

Whatever God declares He will do is always a binding covenant. If He in no way relates His proposed action to human responsibility, the covenant is properly termed *unconditional*. If He relates it to human responsibility or makes it to depend on a coöperation on the part of any other being, the covenant is properly termed *conditional*. It may be contended that there is no unconditional, or conditional, covenant which God has made; but it must be admitted that, contemplating these propositions even hypothetically, they do represent principles which can in no way combine. A covenant which is unconditional cannot be conditional and a conditional covenant cannot be unconditional. While all the covenants God has made with men cannot be treated here, it is essential that these fundamental elements in the divine economy shall be emphasized.

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#### *a. An Unconditional Covenant*

Because of the fact that human obedience is indirectly related to some aspects of the unconditional divine covenants, confusion seems to exist in the minds of certain writers. It is identically the same confusion which hinders many from recognizing the present marvels of salvation by grace and prompts men to get the “cart” of human works *before* the “horse” of faith, or, in some instances, the horse is *in* the cart or even *under* the cart as fancy dictates.

As before stated, whatever God does for sinful man on any terms whatsoever, being made possible through the death of Christ, is, to that extent, an act of divine grace; for

whatever God does on the ground of Christ's death is *gracious* in character, and all will agree that a divine covenant which is void of all human elements is more gracious in character than one which is otherwise. These distinctions apply only to the divine side of any covenant. On the human side—a theme yet to be considered—, there is no exercise of grace in any case; but the human requirements which the divine covenant imposes may be either absolutely lacking, or so drastically imposed as to determine the destiny of the individual. When any person becomes the beneficiary of God's unconditional, unalterable promise apart from any consideration of human merit, his obligation for righteous conduct becomes that of *adorning*, or *walking worthy*, of the position into which the covenant has brought him. If God has made a covenant declaring what He will do providing man does his part, it is conditional and the human element is not one of walking worthy of what God's sovereign grace provides, but rather one of *being* worthy to the end that the promise may be executed at all. When the covenant is *unconditional*, God is limited as to what He will do only by the knowledge-surpassing bounty of His infinite grace. When the covenant is *conditional*, God is restricted by what man is able or willing to do. As an efficacious appeal, the obligation to walk worthy, though in no way conditioning the sovereign purpose, secures more normal and spiritual response than all the meritorious

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systems combined. The human heart is far more responsive to the proposition couched in the words "I have blessed you, now be good," than it is to the proposition couched in the words "Be good, and I will bless you." The element of human conduct thus appears in each form of the divine covenant but in such a manner as to render one to be *unconditional* and the other *conditional*.

One further distinction is essential before turning to an evaluation of three unconditional covenants, namely, God's unconditional and sovereign dealing with Israel is to the end that they are an elect nation. As to the nation as an entity, it is said, "For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance" (Rom 11:29). And this context cannot be of any other than national Israel. But this national election does not extend to every Israelite. That it does not, the Apostle proves in Romans 9:1–24. On the contrary, the individual Israelite, when under the Mosaic Law, was, as to his personal blessing, under a secondary, meritorious covenant with gracious provisions in the animal sacrifices for the covering and cure of his sins and failures. In sharp distinction to this, the Church is, as to her corporate whole, an elect people also (Rom 8:30; Eph 5:25–28), but her election and sovereign security is extended to each and every individual in that body (John 5:24; 6:37; 10:28; Rom 8:1, A.R.V.). While Israel *anticipated* much of her blessings, the Church now *possesses* "every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus" (Eph 1:3; Col 2:10). Distinction should also be made between the blessings and privileges within the covenants and the terms of admission into the covenants. In the case of the Israelite, entrance into the covenants was by *physical* birth; while in the case of the Christian it is by *spiritual* birth. The gospel terms upon which a Christian has entered into a

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grace relationship with God are no more a part of the believer's positions than the physical birth of an Israelite was a part of the covenants under which he lived. The unconditional covenants to be considered are:



### (1) *The Abrahamic Covenant*

Though in part it was repeated to Isaac and Jacob, the full detail of the Abrahamic covenant as given to Abraham is found in five passages of Scripture, namely, Genesis 12:1–3; 12:7; 13:14–17; 15:5–21; 17:1–8. This covenant provides for a blessing to extend to all the families of the earth; it provides for one great nation—Abraham’s seed after the flesh—; it deeds a vast territory to that nation as an everlasting possession; and assures a personal blessing to Abraham himself. The feature of this covenant which concerns the land is amplified by the terms found in the Palestinian covenant (Deut 28:63–68; 30:1–10) and, while the everlasting possession of the land is declared, other Scriptures reveal that there were to be three dispossessions of the land and three restorations. It is also evident that the nation to whom this land is deeded is now, as a divine chastisement, suffering the third and last dispossession of the land; but will, in the faithfulness of Jehovah, be returned to her land never again to be removed from it. The Abrahamic Covenant, aside from that portion which is addressed to Abraham personally, could be executed only as Jehovah in sovereign power commands the destiny of all future generations of the human family. Thus, since any human terms which might have been imposed could apply only to individual men and to their own generation, the covenant is, of necessity, *unconditional*; and the statement of it incorporates not one human condition, but rests altogether on the oft-repeated sovereign “I will” of Jehovah. Added to all this, the ratification of the covenant as described in Genesis 15:5–21 is most significant. In response to Abraham’s appeal for a ratification, Jehovah instructs Abraham in the preparation of the carcasses which when half was put over against half formed a passageway between, through which the covenanting parties passed; but

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Abraham is depressed into a very deep sleep while Jehovah, in the appearance of a burning lamp, passes through *alone*. The reason for this is that Abraham covenanted *nothing*; it is the ratification only of Jehovah’s sovereign oath (Gen 26:3).

Recent extended arguments have been advanced in an attempt to prove that since the human element appears in a covenant, there is no such thing as an unconditional covenant. The ineffectiveness of these arguments lies in the failure of the writer to distinguish between that form of conduct which belongs to one already secure in all that the covenant provides, and, on the other hand, the direct conditioning of Jehovah’s faithfulness upon human rectitude. The Abrahamic Covenant is sealed by the rite of circumcision, which seal can be no more than the individual’s personal recognition of what Jehovah has promised. Failure thus to recognize Jehovah’s covenant imposed a penalty on the individual, but did not alter Jehovah’s covenant reaching out to the nation and to all families of the earth. The charge Jehovah makes against the offender is not that he hath broken *our* covenant, but, rather, “he hath broken my covenant” (Gen 17:14). It has also been asserted that the Abrahamic Covenant was made conditional upon Abraham’s faithfulness. Only two passages might thus be misconstrued. Genesis 17:9–14 does not present a condition restricting Jehovah’s “I will” to Abraham’s conduct. It rather instructs Abraham as to the manner of life which becomes one for whom Jehovah undertakes so much. In like manner, Genesis 26:5 is not addressed to Abraham, but is rather Jehovah’s declaration to Isaac extending to him the sovereign, unconditional covenant made to his father Abraham. Isaac is admonished to live a faithful life under the

covenant “because” of the example of his father. In this connection, the exact reading of Genesis 18:17–19 is significant. In this context Jehovah says: “Because I have known him [as a factor in my gracious purpose] to the end [or result] that he [Abraham] may command his sons and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice

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and judgment; that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham [in personal blessing] that which he hath spoken of him.” In the contemplation of these important issues, two outstanding, qualifying facts should be observed: (1) No human element appears in any feature of the Abrahamic Covenant as it is announced by Jehovah, and (2) that both Abraham’s position in Jehovah’s covenant to him, and Abraham’s imputed righteousness (Gen 15:6) are secured to him apart from meritorious works. Romans 4:1–22 declares that Abraham’s blessings both as to imputed righteousness (verse 10) and his position as “heir of the world” (verse 13) were wholly secured *before* he was circumcised. Thus, also, it is asserted that, in contrast to the “works principle” which the Mosaic system introduces, Jehovah gave Abraham the inheritance contained in the Abrahamic Covenant by “*promise*,” namely, what He alone did *promise* by an oath to do (Gal 3:13–18). All of this bears vitally on the present offers of salvation by grace which are not by *works* (Eph 2:8, 9), but by “*promise*” (Gal 3:22. Cf. Rom 4:23–25; Gal 3:9). Thus the Apostle Paul declares that to intrude the element of human works into the Abrahamic Covenant, or as a ground of that righteousness which was imputed to Abraham, is to intrude *works* into the present plan of salvation by grace. To do this is no small error indeed; for it makes the promise of “none effect” when God has made it “sure” (Rom 4:13–16). In the light of all these revelations, what subtle Arminianism infests the doctrine of those who claim that Jehovah made His covenant with Abraham on the ground of the fact that Abraham was one who “obeyed my voice, kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen 26:5). The Abrahamic Covenant is *unconditional*, else, by such logic as only the Apostle could use, a passage like Ephesians 2:7–10 becomes null and void.

## (2) *The Davidic Covenant*

Second Samuel 7:16 with its context records the covenant Jehovah made with David. David’s own interpretation of it is written in 2 Samuel 7:18–29 and in Psalms 89:20–37. This

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Covenant, without imposing the slightest obligation upon David, does bind Jehovah with an oath (Acts 2:30) to the perpetuity of the Davidic House, the Davidic Throne, and the Davidic Kingdom. Again, Jehovah reserves the right to chasten the sons of David, but with the express declaration that the covenant cannot be abrogated (2 Sam 7:13–15; Ps 89:30–37). This covenant is unconditional, even into eternity to come. It declares what Jehovah in grace will do for David and all who share in the Davidic blessings. The Covenant is of an earthly throne related to a people whose expectation is earthly. There is no evidence that David foresaw an earthly throne merging into a spiritual reign; yet David was given a perfect understanding concerning the divine purpose which the Covenant designated. Nor is this kingdom and throne established in heaven. It is established on the earth when the Son of David returns to the earth (Matt 25:31, 32. Cf.

19:28; Acts 15:16, 17; Luke 1:31–33; Matt 2:2). In the light of the unqualified statements of the Scriptures, is it not pertinent to inquire whether, had Jehovah intended to establish a Davidic throne and kingdom on earth with David's Son as the eternal occupant of that throne, He could have employed language with any more clearness and precise meaning than that He has employed to set forth the Covenant made with David?

### (3) *The Gospel of Divine Grace*

Many worthy expositors combine the present offers of salvation, as being the outworking of the New Covenant made in Christ's blood (Matt 26:28), with the long predicted New Covenant yet to be made with Israel (Jer 31:31–40; Heb 8:8–13; 10:16, 17), and on the ground that the term *New Covenant* is used of both and because it is believed that the term is broad enough to include all that God accomplishes directly through the blood of Christ. However, there are such important differences between that which God is doing for the heavenly people as over against that which He will yet do for Israel and the Gentiles on the earth in the

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Kingdom age, that the two, even though they might be parts of one grand whole, are better considered separately.

As cited above, the absolute unconditional character of the Abrahamic Covenant and the fact that all that Abraham received was by *promise*, concerning which Abraham did no more than to *believe*, is declared by the Apostle to be the norm or pattern of the saving grace of God for the believer of this age (Rom 4:1–25; note vss. 23–25; Gal 3:13–29). According to this norm and in exact harmony with its every feature, the Christian's salvation and safe-keeping, which is in the sphere of the very perfections of Christ, are vouchsafed to him on the most absolute unconditional promises (cf. John 5:24; 6:37; 10:27–30; Rom 3:21–5:11; 8:1, 28–39; Eph 1:3–6; Col 2:10). Faith is itself the opposite of works, since its essential element is confidence in what Christ has done and can do; but, as has been seen, the condition of entrance into a relationship is no part of the relationship itself. The very fact that present salvation is declared to be to the end that a full demonstration of the exceeding riches of divine grace may be wrought out, necessitates its being altogether a work of God and, therefore, unconditional.

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### (4) *The New Covenant for Israel*

A new covenant for Israel is anticipated in Jeremiah 31:31–40; Hebrews 8:8–13; 10:16, 17. This is not to supersede the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants which continue forever, but is put over against that Mosaic Covenant which Jehovah declares that Israel “broke” (Jer 31:32) and in which they “continued not” (Heb 8:9). The contrast is emphatic, and in no respect more so than in the fact that the Mosaic Covenant was subject to human conditions concerning which Israel failed, while the new Covenant for that people is declared in the most explicit terms to be *unconditional*. We read: “After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I

will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer 31:33, 34).  
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Deuteronomy 30:1–10, the execution of all that this Covenant promises is related to the return of Christ, in Romans 11:26, 27 to the Deliverer who “comes out of Sion,” and in Jeremiah it is related to the eternal existence of the nation Israel (31:35–40). No human condition can be forced into this great declaration of Jehovah’s as to what He will yet do for Israel, nor can it be demonstrated that such promises have ever been fulfilled for Israel, nor that they even remotely apply to the Church.

The theological term, “The Covenant of Grace,” is not found in the text of the Scriptures. From the literature bearing upon it, it is to be concluded that it is believed by many that all that God does for the benefit of man from the fall of Adam to the end of time is incorporated into one “Covenant of Grace.” This supposed covenant, though not identified as to its beginning, course, or ending, is seldom declared to be unconditional. In considering this theological conception, it is well to observe that any covenant in which God is free to act on the ground of Christ’s death has the element of grace in it, and any covenant which publishes God’s sovereign declaration as to what He will do for sinful men apart from their merit or demerit is specifically a *grace* covenant. The term *The Covenant of Grace* implies that there is but one such covenant, whereas the Scriptures, as above demonstrated, present various, wholly independent, and diverse covenants which are both sovereign and gracious to the last

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conceivable degree. Grace on the part of the First Person, secured and made righteously possible by the Second Person, and administered by the Third Person, has been and must continue to be the attitude of the Triune God toward lost men until the divine purposes in grace are realized. If the term, “The Covenant of Grace,” refers to an agreement of the Three Persons of the Godhead between themselves as to the part each would assume in the plan of redemption, as some contend, such an agreement is conceivable, but is not clearly revealed in the Scriptures. If, as others contend, this covenant refers to the abiding purpose of God to act toward sinners in grace, it can be classed as a covenant only in so far as a purpose of God can be considered to be a covenant. If this latter conception is accepted, it must be conceded that the working out of this one abiding purpose is expressed in various, diverse, and wholly independent ways.

#### *b. A Conditional Covenant*

The phrase *The Covenant of Works* is another theological conception which by some is claimed to be an agreement between God and Adam concerning Adam’s conduct in the Garden of Eden, and, since Adam’s failure secured the ruin of the race, all are included in the condemnation. However, man still has an inherent obligation to be in character like his Creator, and in one subsequent covenant, at least, which God has made with man, the human element is such as to determine the entire course of the covenant’s blessing. This latter covenant is conditional, and though of the same nature as the covenant with Adam, is wholly separate from and independent of it.

A conditional covenant is formed when God, to any degree or in any form whatsoever, makes His blessings to depend on human faithfulness. At first thought it might seem to some that, since various major covenants, above cited, reach out in unconditional promises and provisions to Abraham's seed both physical and spiritual, and to all the families of the earth, that there could be no sphere left in which any conditional covenant might be formed. It will be observed,

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however, that the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants, which reach out to Israel and the nations for all time to come, do not, beyond certain men—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, David's immediate sons, and David's Greater Son, Christ—enter into any personal or individual issues; but concern the larger entities of families, thrones, kings, and nations. This fact necessitates the recognition of a sphere wherein God deals with individuals as to their personal conduct. This He did with individual Jews and this He does with individual Christians. His attitude toward a nation or corporate body is one thing, whereas His requirements of the individual within these groups is quite another thing.

Again, a distinction should be observed between the basis on which God placed individual Israelites as to personal conduct, and the basis on which He places the Christian. The national covenants with Israel do not extend to the individual; they guarantee the perpetuity of the race or nation and its final blessing. When under the Mosaic Law, the individual Israelite, it will be seen, was on an unyielding meritorious basis. Over against this, the divine purposes for the whole Church as a body do extend to the individual believer and each and every one predestinated will be called, and each and every one called will be justified, and each and every one justified will be glorified (Rom 8:30). God will present each one faultless before the presence of His glory to His own exceeding joy (Jude 1:24). The believer's motive for right conduct grows out of the fact that he already *has* an eternal heavenly calling and a destiny which sovereign grace has designed and will execute to infinite perfection. Thus, in like manner, the Mosaic Law, even if observed, never had the function of creating Israelites; it was given as a consistent rule of life to those who were Israelites by physical birth. As has been seen, the blessings proffered to the individual Israelite under the Law were in two classifications: (a) For faithful observance of the Law which included the remedial value of the sacrifices, they were promised immediate prosperity and tranquility. This truth appears in almost every statement of the Mosaic Law, and

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nowhere more clearly than in Deuteronomy 28:1–62 where both the blessings and curses which the Law imposed are set forth. (b) For faithfulness under the Law they were promised a share in the future glories which Jehovah, with unconditional sovereignty, covenanted to the nation. Not every Israelite will enter the earthly kingdom (Ezek 20:33–44; Matt 24:46–51; 25:1–13, 14–30). Nor will every Israelite have right to eternal life (Dan 12:2; Matt 7:13, 14; Luke 10:25–28). Since human faithfulness of whatever degree could never be the exact compensation or exchange for the values of eternal life or for unending blessings in the kingdom, there is a very large measure of divine grace to be seen in the salvation of the elect earthly people.

The conclusion is that blessing under the Mosaic economy was conditioned on individual faithfulness to the Law. This economy formed a secondary covenant which was meritorious in character-secondary in the fact that it was restricted to the problems concerning the individual's conduct and in

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no way compromising the primary covenants which determine the destiny of the nation. In contrast to this, the Christian, while given a rule of life which is in no way meritorious, though his faithful service will win a reward or divine recognition (1 Cor 3:12–15; 9:19–27; 2 Cor 5:9–11), is both as to his personal salvation, like the corporate whole to which he belongs, secure and safe and destined to eternal glory from the moment he believes.

The Mosaic Covenant of works, which Micah perfectly epitomized (6:8), was an *ad interim* economy. It was preceded by a peculiar divine freedom and reign of grace by which they had reached the very heart of God (Exod 19:4), and it came to its determined end with the death of Christ (John 1:17; Rom 3:21; 6:14; 7:2–6; 8:3, 4; 10:4; 2 Cor 3:7–13; Gal 3:19–25). It is true that Jehovah had determined the Law as the rule of life for the Israelites, yet it is equally true that they embraced this Law and assumed their part in a conditional covenant when they said, “All these things will we do” (cf. Rom 9:30–33); and it is significant that to this people who before had been drawn to the heart of God, found Him, after their consent to this covenant, hid behind an unapproachable fire and surrounded by blackness and darkness (Exod 19:8–25; cf. Heb 12:18–24). They found themselves standing on a covenant of works, but without the requisite merit. The gracious provisions for healing and restoration that were in the sacrifices became their only hope.

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The rule governing the conduct of Israelites is in two principal divisions, namely, that which obtained from Moses to Christ, or the Mosaic Law, and that which determines entrance into and conditions life within the yet future kingdom on the earth. The terms of admission into the Kingdom as set forth in Matthew 5:1 to 7:27, are, in reality, the Mosaic requirements, intensified by Christ's own interpretation of them. The contrasts which He draws between the former interpretation of these laws and His own interpretation (Matt 5:21–44) does not tend to soften anything in the interests of grace, but rather binds with greater legal demands than any unaided person in the present age can hope to achieve. Why are the plain injunctions of Matthew 5:39–42; 10:8–14; and 24:20 so universally ignored today if it is not that it is so generally recognized that these injunctions belong to conditions obtaining in another age? Will not the exalted demands of the Sermon on the Mount be more easily obeyed when earthly conditions are changed as they will be? The Church will be removed and Israel advanced to a position above all the nations of the earth with Jehovah's Law written in their hearts and the Spirit poured out on all flesh. Satan will be bound and in the abyss; the present world-system will have been destroyed; the bondage of corruption now resting upon creation will be lifted; and Christ as the glorified Son of David will be reigning on David's Throne out from Jerusalem and over the whole earth. The effect of that reign will be that righteousness and peace shall cover the earth as waters cover the face of the deep. These conceptions are drawn from a vast body of Scripture which could have no other meaning than that

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which is here set forth. When these great issues which are so definitely related to Israel are applied to the heavenly people as some apply them there are insuperable conflicts created in doctrine which lead one to inquire (and the questions will be confined, in the main, to the problems that arise from the careful consideration of but one book of the Bible):

1. As a title, what is the meaning of the designation, *The Christ*?
2. Why was Christ born of the Davidic line?
3. Is such a birth essential if His Kingdom is spiritual?
4. Why should He be designated “The King of the Jews”?
5. Was the ministry of John the Baptist in anticipation of a spiritual kingdom?
6. Why was the Kingdom message restricted to Israel?
7. What is the “hope” of Israel?
8. Into what kingdom does any man enter by personal righteousness?
9. Are the Heavenly People referred to as “the meek” who are to inherit the earth?
10. How can Matthew 5:7 be reconciled with Ephesians 2:4, 5?
11. How can Christians who according to John 10:28 are safe in Christ be in danger of the hell fire mentioned in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30?
12. Will a Christian, who is promised a glorious body like unto Christ’s resurrection body (Phil 3:20), nevertheless enter heaven “halt” and “maimed”? (See Matt 5:29, 30; 18:8, 9.)
13. What is the doctrinal relation between Matthew 5:17 and Romans 15:8, 9?
14. Can Matthew 5:20 be reconciled with Titus 3:4–7?
15. How can the difference between Matthew 7:21–23 and John 6:29 be accounted for?
16. How can Matthew 10:32, 33 be reconciled with Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:12, or 1 John 2:1, 2?

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17. How can Christ appear as prosecutor in Matthew 10:32, 33 and as defender in 1 John 2:1, 2?
18. How can Matthew 7:1, 2 be reconciled with John 5:24?
19. Why is the “golden rule” of Matthew 7:12 related to “the law and the prophets”?
20. Are Christians referred to as “children of the kingdom” in Matthew 8:12; cf. 24:50, 51; 25:30 ?
21. According to the context, what kingdom is in view in Matthew 6:10?
22. Is Matthew 6:14, 15 to be reconciled with Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13, and 1 John 1:9?

## **Conclusion**

These questions with the problems they develop might be multiplied many times and extended to all parts of the sacred text. Dispensationalists do not create these problems nor do they invent the right divisions of Scripture. For the

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dispensationalist, these so-called problems are not only solved, but, because of the distinctions which the problems demand, the problems become a part of the overwhelming evidence that his method of interpretation is according to truth. Those who pursue an idealism as to the unity and continuity of the Bible, which idealism is built upon and sustained only by occasional or accidental similarities, must, if sincere, face the problems their method of interpretation generates. The limited array of evidence as to God's specific purposes which this thesis presents is sufficient to demonstrate that Dispensationalism, even though it does recognize the divine age-purposes and does departmentalize the message of the Word of God according to its obvious divisions, does also discover the true unity and continuity of the Bible. The outstanding characteristic of the dispensationalist is the fact that he *believes* every statement of the Bible and gives to it the plain, natural meaning its words imply. This simple plan has changed the Bible

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from being a mass of more or less conflicting writings into a classified and easily assimilated revelation of both the earthly and heavenly purposes of God, which purposes reach on into eternity to come. He is saved from working at cross purposes with God, and the exposition he gives of the Scriptures, like the uncompromised gospel he preaches, is blessed to the multitudes who are attracted by his understandable message. There is a reason why churches are filled, souls are saved, and the interest in missionary work thrives, where the whole Bible, with its vital distinctions is faithfully preached. Agreement cannot be accorded to recent writers who accuse the faithful Bible expositors and evangelists of this and past generations of being *modernists*, and only because they stand for that form of doctrine and recognize those distinctions which are invariably discovered when the whole Bible is considered and believed and when it is given its plain and reasonable interpretation. The situation which necessitates the writing of

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this thesis serves to demonstrate the wide doctrinal differences that may exist between supposedly orthodox men. A crisis is evidently being reached concerning the issues which have long separated expositors from theological theorists, and this distinction does not imply that the expositor does not know Systematic Theology, for usually he does know it well; however, he builds his theology directly upon the Word of God and is in no bondage to the opinions of men.

At the beginning of this thesis it was stated that the doctrinal differences herein discussed are due to the fact that the two schools of interpretation involved stand on widely divergent premises. The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved, while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved. Why should this belief be deemed so incredible in the light of the facts that there is a present distinction between earth and heaven which is preserved even after both are made new; when the Scriptures so designate an earthly people who go on as such into eternity; and an heavenly people who also abide in their heavenly calling forever? Over against this, the partial dispensationalist, though dimly observing a few obvious distinctions, bases his interpretation on the supposition that God is doing but one thing, namely, the general separation of the good from the bad, and, in spite of all the confusion this limited theory creates, contends that the earthly people



merge into the heavenly people; that the earthly program must be given a spiritual interpretation or disregarded altogether; and that there is nothing in eternity but heaven and hell. The advocates of this interpretation oppose every earthly feature of the divine program. They disregard or ignore the earthly covenants and promises; they spiritualize or vaporize the vast body of Scripture bearing on the Davidic Throne and Kingdom; they present no specific reason as to why Christ was born as the Son of David; and they recognize no earthly glory or purpose in His second advent. According to

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their system, Christ comes again to end the world, but, unfortunately for these conceptions, the world does not end then or ever.

May the number, already vast indeed, of those who *believe* the Bible and are subject to its plain teachings continue to increase!

Lewis Sperry Chafer