

**Demonstration of Errors in the New Teaching
as affording opportunity for presenting the Truth.**

7A. THE FOURFOLD GROUP (Continued).

The "New Covenant" So-called.

This deserves special notice, because it would not be possible to conceive stranger things than those, which the exigencies of this remarkable system have forced it to invent on this subject. It is of immense importance to recognise that our own proper christian blessing cannot be lowered to the level of that of the "New Covenant," though, from want of exactitude, many have inconsiderately associated it with nothing higher.

The giving of those who compose the Church to Christ *before* the worlds, our predestination to *sonship*, and what is the fruit of God's *eternal* purpose are infinitely beyond anything secured by the "New Covenant" as Scripture speaks of it. No doubt this ordering of divine counsels by the Persons of the Godhead, and undertaken, if we may so speak, by parties, may, as in Heb. xiii., by way of adaptation, be called the "*Eternal* Covenant," not in the sense of Divine Persons needing to bind themselves, but as something for ever and immutable with regard to us; yet this must not be confounded with the "*New* Covenant." Save as an allusion and accommodation to which the Spirit has condescended for our sakes, the very term "Covenant" is an inferior expression and utterly inadequate to fully convey the glorious eternal purpose and counsel between Father, Son and Holy Ghost ere ever time was. This character of blessing is not contained in what is known as the "Covenants," whether old or new; however largely they have been mixed together in the thoughts of Christians generally, for what is ours "according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (1 Tim. i. 9) is exceeding abundantly above either the one or the other, while Church blessing is connected with no *earthly* covenant whatsoever. We were "chosen in Christ *before* the foundation of the world." The 'New Covenant' on the other hand is in *time*, and is to be made with an *earthly* people, but some 'better thing' is reserved for the *heavenly* people.

A covenant in the Word means the term or terms on which God engages to deal with man or nation under certain specified circumstances. Like the Abrahamic Covenants, all may be made to depend on the Covenanter or Promiser. On the other hand there may be parties to the contract (necessarily so, where there is a mediator) and all made to stand or fall on the obedience of *those* with whom the agreement is entered into, like the *old* Covenant of Sinai, or again everything may be wholly dependent on the Mediator, as in the case of the *New* Covenant which is yet to be made with the two houses of Israel.

The terms of the old Covenant are familiar enough. "If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant *then* shall ye be," &c. "And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken will we do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord" (Ex. xix. 6, 8). Nothing could be more express. The

people distinctly accepted the terms and undertook to obey, while blessing was conditional on doing what was stipulated. But they grievously disobeyed and the failure was complete. It was this total break down of the first covenant which necessitated its displacement by a second, but it would have been useless to have another covenant which was made to rest on the obedience of the people again, hence the New Covenant is solely to hang on the work of the Mediator, while you have only to examine Jer. xxxi to see that it is to be to, and with Israel as emphatically as the old one was; though on distinct and different terms. It says "Not according to the Covenant I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." Accordingly though prophesied of, it is clearly not yet made, and when made, will be with the same people as the old. Hence the *New Covenant* could not be made with us, for the former was not made with *our* 'fathers' and we never had an *old* one.

Have we then no connection with the New Covenant? Undoubtedly we have, but not as being under it. We have to do with the *blood* of the New Covenant, the *spirit* of the New Covenant, and the *Mediator* of it, but the covenant itself is not made with us. Scripture knows of only *one* "New Covenant" in contrast with the "old," and it was to that our Lord referred in the institution of the Supper, namely, the New Covenant of Jeremiah's prophecy chap. xxxi. Till the days of that prophet God's intention to make a New Covenant at all was not revealed, and from then until Christ spoke of it on the night of His betrayal no fresh word had been uttered respecting it. Though the New Covenant was spoken of as certain, still future, "The days come," Jeremiah said nothing about that on which it was to be based or how it was to be ratified. The Lord showed that it would rest on the sacrifice of Himself, and that the blood of it would be His own blood, thus adding to what had been told by the prophet, and intimating the first step in its fulfilment, namely, His blood about to be shed being that by which it was to be ratified.

The Blood of the New Covenant.

With this we cannot but have to do, for it is the blood of Christ. There is only *one* shed blood, and were His blood not the blood of the New Covenant, there could be no such Covenant, since Christ is not coming back to give His blood a second time. It was once for all. Accordingly He said "For this is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of *sins* (Matt. xxvi. 28.), "This is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for *many* (Mark xiv. 24), or "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for *you*" (Luke xxii. 20). They all declare the same thing that His blood is the *blood of the New Covenant*. It is fulfilled to this extent and no more. The blood of the Covenant was the *last* thing in connection with the *Old* Covenant. "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said "Behold the blood of the Covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. xxiv. 8) It is, however, the *first* thing in connection with the *New*. Further this decides the true signification of the expression "My blood of the New Covenant," or the "New Covenant in My blood," it means the

blood of its ratification, or as in Heb. ix : 18,19, of its dedication ; so that there is no occasion for any strange constructions being put upon it. It is the first step in its fulfilment and goes no farther than the *blood* of it, the *making* or the *time* of the making of the covenant itself is not mentioned.

But the blood of Christ is not limited to the New Covenant. It is (1) the blood of *remission* ; it is (2) that by which we are made *nigh* ; (3) by which our consciences are *purged* ; and (4) by which we have boldness to enter the *holiest*. It is also (5) the blood of the "Eternal Covenant" and is the basis for the effectuation of the "*eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." With this our special portion is connected. In short the value and efficacy of Christ's blood are infinite. Plain as all this is in Scripture, it seems that an imaginary New Covenant has been without warrant evolved out of the institution of the Supper. One has actually heard it said that the New Covenant was made between God and Christ on the cross.

The Spirit of the New Covenant.

This is the peculiar privilege of the christian. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant, *not* of the *letter*, but of the *spirit*, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii : 6). Be careful to note here that it is the *spirit* of the New Covenant of which Paul was the able minister (not the *letter* of it, which is said to *kill*). Mark it does not say the letter of the *Old* Covenant much less the letter of *Scripture*, but the letter of the *New* Covenant, and of that it is affirmed "the letter killeth." Strange as this may appear at first sight, the Word of God is always right. Of course the *letter* of the "old" kills. "The soul that sinneth it shall *die*," and "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But the *spirit* of that kills as well as the letter, for when the spirituality of the law was applied to what was within the Apostle, he said "when the commandment came sin revived and I *died*" "For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it *slew* me". Then the Word of God never says the letter of *Scripture* kills. On the contrary the Scriptures are "able to make wise unto salvation"; "The *words* that I speak unto you they are *spirit* and they are *life*"; "Thou hast the *words* of eternal life". Paul could not be a minister of the *letter* of the New Covenant being the Apostle of the Gentiles. The letter of the New Covenant is confined to Israel and Judah and the Gentiles would have been shut out. That is why for us, Gentiles, it is said the *letter* of the New Covenant "killeth". The *spirit* of the New Covenant is for Christians the *letter* of the New Covenant, or the Covenant *itself*, is for Israel. The former is heavenly, the latter is earthly. In the case of the *Old* Covenant it *was* the law written on tables of stone, in the *letter* of the New Covenant it *will be* the law written in the hearts of Israel, but in the *spirit* of the New Covenant it is *Christ* written in the fleshy tables of the Christian's heart. This is very blessed because it shows what the "spirit" of the New Covenant really means. As the Apostle says "Now the Lord is that spirit" (ver. 17). It is a Person, the Lord where He now is. Hence the "spirit" of the New Covenant is not

merely the general scope, nor is it the "letter" spiritualised, it is the Lord Himself; the last Adam who is a "life-giving spirit." and therefore it is said the "spirit giveth life," the *spirit* of the New Covenant, observe, the *ministry* of which is special to this time, being what comes out to us where we are from Christ on high; or in other words the subjective effects on and in us *here* of the Lord who is the spirit of the New Covenant being up *there*. These will be found in 2 Cor. iii and iv, under various figures such as a letter or epistle, a likeness, a lantern, a lighthouse, a vessel, a body of humiliation, and a body of glory; and all flowing from the ministry of the *spirit* of the New Covenant, not of the "letter" which is the Covenant itself.

The Mediator of the New Covenant.

With this we have also to do. The same night on which our Lord was betrayed, He disclosed to the remnant disciples that His own blood was to be the blood of the New Covenant, but it was not till the Epistle to the Hebrews was written we learn who would be its Mediator, (Heb. vii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24), so that the *blood* of the New Covenant is that of its *Mediator*, and it is with Him, the Mediator Himself, as gone into Heaven, our true blessing is associated.. The New Covenant itself cannot be *made* till the Mediator of it comes *out*, and is sitting on His *own* throne, but the Christian's heavenly portion is bound up with Him gone *in* and while seated on the right hand of God there, His blood being our right of entrance to where He is. The passage from Jeremiah is quoted at length in Heb. xiii, not to apply it to us, which is carefully avoided, for we are not Israel and Judah, but to prove two things, (1) that the prophecy of *another* covenant shows the *first* one faulty, and (2) that a mention of a *new*, makes the previous one *old*, with the obvious conclusion, why then cling to an old and vanishing Covenant? "If the first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Heb. viii. 7). "In that He saith a *new*, He hath made the first *old*." (ver. 13). The object for which the Apostle cited it being thus served, he drops the *New* Covenant to take up in the very first verse of chap. ix, what really prefigured christian heavenly place and privilege, namely, the typical order of the earthly sanctuary which was attached to the *faulty* covenant. Hence it is of exceeding interest to observe what is said. "Then verily the first covenant had *also* ordinances, divine service and a worldly sanctuary, for there was a Tabernacle made &c." (Heb. ix. 1-2). These were types of *heavenly* things, which the New Covenant is *not*. "See thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee on the mount" was the instruction to Moses. Accordingly it was Christ, the Mediator, having entered heaven by His own blood that has secured the present place we hold with God. Ours is the intervening period of heavenly blessing between the doing away of the old and before the New Covenant is made with Israel, but infinitely superior to either, in connection with the person of the Mediator where He has gone; for the Second or New Covenant no less than the first concerns an earthly people in an earthly place not entitling those with whom it is to be made to enter the holiest. Whereas, in contrast with this, we are heavenly, made perfect as pertaining to the conscience, and have boldness to enter therein. It is most serious,

therefore, to misuse the New Covenant (out of its divinely given place) to deprive christians (by reducing it to what is earthly) of what is peculiarly theirs in association with Him who is its Mediator now in heaven at God's right hand and distinctive of the time He sits there.

There is another thing particularly worthy of notice, the difference between the Corinthians-*spirit* of the New Covenant side of the truth and the Hebrews-*Mediator* side of it. Both are the result of Christ Himself in glory, but they are presented conversely. The former is what comes *out* to us here from Him there, the latter is our going *in*—our access to God in the holiest—where Christ the Mediator Himself is. In the “spirit” of the New Covenant we have the *subjective* effects, in the “Mediator” of the New Covenant we have the *objective* privileges; while those who will be really in what is called the “good” of the New Covenant *itself* will *not be Christians* at all but millennial saints. We have the cream of all the New Covenant can give spiritually and a vast deal more besides, though we are not under it.

Having seen what God says, let us now see what the New Teaching says, about the New Covenant.

“He laid down the terms on which He saw fit to be with Israel. That is what the law meant. Then that is the idea in the Covenant. Yes.

Would you indicate the leading thoughts of the Covenant?

I think divine teaching is the first great principle, with righteousness and forgiveness.

We have been largely content with the forgiveness and ignored the teaching.

And yet we are reminded of it every Sunday in breaking bread; in regard to the cup, the Lord Himself said: This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for you.

What is the meaning of that. I don't understand it fully?

I think the blood of Christ in that sense sets forth the New Covenant.

It is there you learn the disposition of God towards His people. That lesson is presented to you afresh every time you come to the Lord's Supper. (American Notes, p p. 36. 37.)

I think the covenant is something about God. God will have you learn His mind and disposition.

You get two things in this chapter (Col. i) viz, the New Covenant and reconciliation. “In Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell”—that is one statement. —“And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself”—that is the other statement (p. 38)

The New Covenant sets forth that by which God proposes to affect you, viz, by divine teaching. (p. 49)

If you look at a verse in Rom. v. you will find it says: And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Again, But God commendeth His love towards us in that while, we were yet sinners Christ died for us, &c. Thus the simple principle of the New Covenant with regard to us is the love of God shed abroad in the heart. (p.p. 141-2).

The difficulty with me is to see how it is a Covenant.

It is God's disposition toward you, and that is love. That is His Covenant. (166).

The Spirit of God is not incarnate as Christ was, but dwells in the Saints, and hence the habitation is formed and when you get that you get the New Covenant. (p. 158)

The Old Covenant was the law, the New Covenant is Christ. (Truth for the Times. Part xv. p. 76)

No one can read these quotations without perceiving that you have here something called the “New Covenant” of which Scripture knows nothing. Behold the number of things which it is misconceived to be and every one wrong!

1. **Divine Teaching.** The New Covenant is said to consist of this. It is asked "Would you indicate the leading thoughts of the Covenant? The reply is "I think divine teaching is the first great principle with righteousness and forgiveness." Strange as it may appear, this statement seems to have been accepted without question or the need of comparing it with Scripture so much as supposed. When, however one takes the trouble to refer to the inspired account of the only New Covenant recognised in God's Word as given in Jer. xxxi. and quoted in Heb. viii. he finds, what? Can you believe it? Not a syllable about "teaching" except to say that there is no need of *any*. "And they shall *teach no more* every man his neighbour." That is to say, what you are led to understand as the "first great principle" is not there at all, for the real New Covenant when made by and by is to be characterised by a special kind of knowledge which dispenses with teaching entirely and takes away the necessity for it. Nor is this all. You do not find a word about "righteousness" any more than about teaching. The reign will be distinguished by righteousness when the *Kingdom* of the Son of Man is established and His blessed rule prevails but it is nowhere stated as one of the characteristics of the New Covenant. As usual what is not there is inserted and what is there is left out. The *only* feature *correctly* given is "*forgiveness*." This is how it reads: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *New Covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, 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 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 sins no more" (Jer. xxxi. 31-4). The chief features, therefore, are (1) the *law* written in their *hearts*; (2) the *knowledge* of the Lord so as not to require "teaching"; and (3) *forgiveness*, a very different story from what is here misrepresented, the last only being as is "written."

2. **The Disposition of God** is another thing which this New Covenant is called. "I think the Covenant is something about God. God will have you learn His mind and disposition." Again, "The difficulty with me is to see how it is a Covenant." It is answered "It is God's disposition towards you and that is love. That is His Covenant." Is love a Covenant? God is love. Is God the New Covenant? Is "God so *loved* the world" a Covenant? Are the inimitable parables of Luke xv anything like the terms of a Covenant? No one with the slightest sense in his soul of the vastness and infinitude of God's love would dream of using language so unworthy of what is unutterable. You could not formulate your mother's love, much less God's. What kind of *love* then, would that be, which could be put into a Covenant? The Spirit of God would never lead anyone to imagine aught so incon-

grous. Law meant "terms" and a "covenant," but, "we are not under law but under grace." The very meaning of grace excludes "terms." Grace that has conditions is not grace. It is the free, unconditional, unsolicited, favour of God towards those who do not deserve it. That is His disposition.

3. **The Lord's Supper** is even made out to consist in teaching the "New Covenant" as a lesson. It is said "And yet we are reminded of it (teaching) every Sunday Morning in breaking bread; in regard to the cup, the Lord Himself said, This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for you." It is asked "What is the meaning of that—I don't understand it fully?" The reply was. "I think the blood of Christ in that sense sets forth the New Covenant. It is there you learn the disposition of God towards His people. That lesson is presented to you afresh every time you come to the Lord's Supper." Take particular notice of the "New Covenant" you have here. It is something which it is the special function of the Lord's Supper to teach, and the lesson said to be presented to you every time you come there, is called "the disposition of God towards His people," and *that* is what you are seriously asked to believe is the New Covenant of Scripture, as if such were the meaning of the New Covenant spoken of by our Lord in the words of the institution! Is "teaching" that of which the breaking of bread reminds us every Lord's day? Think of "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood" signifying for a Christian "teaching!" Then, does he not find out how God is disposed towards him till he goes to the Supper? Is to learn the disposition of God toward us the purport of the Supper? One, who does not already know that, ought not to be there. The very notion of "lesson" mars the beauty and intent of the Lord's desire, and the nature of the privilege that is ours in answering to it. Imagine the heartlessness of making a schoolmaster of the Lord's Supper and reducing that incomparable memorial of Him and His precious death to a question of teaching and learning lessons! Could there be a sadder mis-appreciation of what was in His heart when He said "This do in remembrance of Me?" Beside the whole point of the Supper is missed in making it a question of the disposition of *God*, for it is not God or His love that is presented in it, but *Christ* and *His* love. Much as there is of *God* and the commendation of His love in other aspects, it is not so from the Supper point of view. There is the body and blood of *Christ*, there is the *Lord's* death, and the remembrance of the *Lord*, but no mention of *God* in that connection. The entire train of thought is wrong. So far from the Lord's Supper meaning the "learning of God's disposition" that, already in the realised consciousness that we are loved by God as He loves His Son as well as loved by the Son as He Himself is loved, it is the prized and cherished occasion of our hearts' deepest affections going spontaneously out to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us, while we remember Him *when* and *where* He stood *alone* as well as in that which *stands alone* in the history of eternity. Bear in mind further, that there is only one "New Covenant" first made known by Jeremiah the Prophet. To that and that alone our Lord alluded, a fact which is certain from Heb. viii, because the Apostle, in order to prove there is a New Covenant at all, has to quote Jer. xxxi.

4. **The Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ bodily** is also said to be the New Covenant; thus, "You get two things in this chapter (Col. i), viz: the New Covenant and reconciliation. In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell" is one statement; "and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself" is another statement." Read the chapter. Not a trace of "Covenant," old or new, is to be found in it. To call "In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell" the New Covenant is inconceivable. The fulness of the Godhead has lost its meaning for any one who could entertain a thought so derogatory to, and unworthy of, its limitless magnitude, not to mention the utter incongruity of "covenant" to the very scope and purport of Col. i. Can sober christian men accept such a distortion of the truth?

5. **The Love of God shed abroad in our hearts** is further affirmed to be the New Covenant, in these words, "The simple principle of the New Covenant with regard to us is the love of God shed abroad in the heart." Where is the divine warrant for such a statement? Examine the verse (Rom. v. 5) "And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us," and you find (1) "hope" there, also (2) the "love of God," and (3) the "Holy Ghost," likewise (4) the "shedding abroad of that love by the Spirit," but not a whisper about the "New Covenant" Why not accept and bow to the passage as the Spirit of God has written it? What the verse does tell of is the indwelling of a Divine Person, God, the Spirit, bringing God's own love into our hearts. Think of calling this the New Covenant!

6. **The dwelling of the Spirit in the Saints** is likewise said to be the New Covenant, as follows, "The Spirit of God is not incarnate as Christ was, but dwells in saints, and hence the habitation is formed, and when you get that you get the New Covenant." It is surely known that it is the Spirit's dwelling *with* or among the saints that makes them the habitation of God, His dwelling *in* them makes them members of the body of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost. Is the "habitation" of God synonymous with the "New Covenant" so that, as here alleged, "when you get" the one "you get" the other? Nay. The habitation is one thing, the New Covenant something totally different.

7. **Christ Himself** has even been called the New Covenant. "The Old Covenant was the law, the New Covenant is Christ." Now Christ Himself is the *spirit* of the New Covenant, and also the *Mediator* of it, but He is never said to be the New Covenant *itself*. Moses was the Mediator of the Old Covenant, but he was not the Covenant. Neither is Christ the New Covenant. It is wrong and visionary.

Finally, we appeal to every godly soul who loves and reveres the truth, to say if "divine teaching," "God's disposition towards us," "the Supper," the Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ bodily," "the Love God shed abroad in our hearts," "the Spirit's dwelling in saints now," or "Christ Himself," is, or can be accepted, one or all, as the New Covenant of Scripture? Seven different things and not one of them according to the Word!

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