

## **The Parenthetical Gentile Church Theory Unscriptural**

IT is our intention to demonstrate from Scripture that the widely-believed Parenthetical Gentile Church theory is contrary to truth and dishonouring to God. Let us explain what we mean by this theory. The Parenthetical Dispensation upholders say that God's dealings with Israel as a nation terminated temporarily at Christ's first advent, and will not again be resumed until He appears " the second time." Meanwhile, say they, God is dealing with the Gentiles, the "Church" being almost entirely a Gentile one. This "Church" period closes at the second advent, when the national Israel will be restored to God's favour and become the world's evangelising agent during the millennial reign of Christ. We think it will be found that this belief has no foundation in Scripture, and, if so, the sooner it is discarded the better. It is Satan's aim to keep men from the Bible, but, toiled in this, he endeavours to mystify their apprehension of the truth. Thus error is propagated and the advance of righteousness retarded. May God open our eyes that we "may behold wondrous things out of His law."

At the outset, let the true source of this Parenthetical Church dispensation theory be clearly understood. Whence is its origin, and when? It is Papal in its origin, being the deliberate invention of the Jesuit Ribera, of the sixteenth century. (For proof see Guinness's "Rome and the Reformation.") This wily Papist, seeing what a general belief in the historic fulfilment of "Revelation" would lead to, promulgated, and with success, the futurist doctrine of blessing for Israel, which involves a parenthesis in God's dealings with the nation, which parenthesis is the dispensation of the "Church" as the true "Israel of God." Are our "parenthetical" friends proud of the origin of their pet theory? Like so much more that emanates

from Rome, it is contrary to truth, having no place in God's holy Word, and this we hope to show.

It is first necessary to understand the distinction between the two "Houses," viz., the House of Israel and the House of Judah, a distinction writ large in Scripture, but ignored by many Bible-readers. We are not to enlarge on this, as publications dealing fully with the subject can be consulted. We would simply emphasise the fact, that, until the distinction referred to is understood, all endeavours to know the mind of the Spirit on a large portion of the Scriptures will end only in confusion. The two Houses referred to, and noticed in both Testaments, have different histories, and up to a certain time not yet reached, different destinies, and they are never confounded. Yet our friends ignore all this, call all Israelites "Jews," and refuse to believe our testimony to the plain declarations of the Word that they are wrong. "O foolish men, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke xxiv. 25), and that they have spoken plainly on our subject will be seen.

the divorce and redemption of Israel. What do we mean by Israel's divorce? Neither more nor less than what the Scriptures teach regarding it. For the sin of idolatry—spiritual harlotry—God put away and divorced the House of Israel (not Judah), the Covenant having been broken. "...backsliding Israel hath played the harlot" (Jer. iii. 6). "...backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce" (Jer. iii. 8). "...My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them" (Jer. xxxi. 32). "...Lo-ammi, for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hos. i. 9). Surely such language cannot be misunderstood. It is applicable to Israel only, not Judah. The latter House, notwithstanding much wickedness of a like nature, was never discovenanted, being recognised as the "married wife," while Israel was the "barren and desolate one" (Is. liv. i; Hos. xi. 12; Gal. iv. 27). But, though put away by God, Israel was not "cast away" for ever

(Is. xli. 9; Rom. xi. i). In His sight she "justified" herself more than did Judah (Jer. iii. 11), and He promised her mercy and redemption (Is. liv. 8), also a New Covenant (Jer. xxxi. 33), and re-betrothal (Hos. ii. 19). All this the "Parenthetical Church" dispensationalists may agree with, but we come now to the parting of the ways, and we ask the question: Has the promised redemption and re-betrothal of the people of the House of Israel been effected, or is it still future? Our friendly opponents say it is future. Let the N.T. Scriptures decide. Evidently the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus on that first Lord's Day were looking for the fulfilment of the promise of redemption through Christ. "We hoped that it was He which should redeem Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21, R.V.). Had they understood things as did the great Apostle, our Lord had not had occasion to remark on their unbelief, for hear how he (Paul) speaks—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal. iii. 14). "God sent forth His Son ... to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). He knew that redemption for Israel—a redemption little understood, perhaps, by the two—was an accomplished fact. But, notice, the Salvation of Israel was not included in their redemption. The latter was national, the former is an individual thing. Redemption brought Israel into the way of blessing; "Christ hath redeemed us ... that the blessing of Abraham might come..." (Gal. iii. 13, 14). Redemption for Israel, effected by Christ's death, set them free from the "schoolmaster," and gave them the rights of sonship and heirship, by virtue of faith in their Redeemer, through the operation of the Spirit in their hearts (Gal. iii.-iv.). Notice, particularly, that the blessing promised to Abraham and his lineal, multitudinous seed, could not be realised until Christ, the "one seed," should come (Gen. xii.-xviii; Gal. iii. 7-9, 16-29. "... Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). But in these days men would have us believe that Christ transferred the promises to a

Gentile people "whose were "not" the fathers." "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again" (Acts xiii. 32, 33). There is no ambiguity about these words. The completed work of Christ brought Israel into new and blessed relationship with God. The old Covenant passed away, and for the House of Israel a new and better Covenant took its place.

the new covenant. Our "Gentile Church" adherents have loudly made known that the New Covenant, designed for both Houses of Israel, will come into operation in the Millennial Age, but meantime its beneficiaries are the (believing) Gentiles. Now, we do not deny to such Gentiles as believe the blessings of the New Covenant. They are theirs, as all spiritual blessings are, just as in the old economy those Gentiles were blessed who "took hold" of God's covenant (Is. lvi. 3-8), but to say that to the believing National Israel (not Judah) the New Covenant does not operate now, is to pervert the truth. The Apostle in Heb. viii. 10 quotes Jer. xxxi. in showing that the New Covenant was for Israel, independently of Judah, who, we know, refused salvation by Jesus Christ. He also distinctly says that the Old Covenant was "nigh unto vanishing away" (Heb. viii. 13). But it has not yet vanished away so far as Judah is concerned, this House being still under "the curse of the law." Now, if the Old Covenant did not give place to the New for the House of Israel, all the Apostle's arguments are useless, for although "redeemed," that House is still "under the law," cannot claim Jesus as a Mediator of the New Testament for them, the "transgressions that were under the first Testament "have not been met by "redemption," and they, although "the called," have not "received the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix.). What utter, contradictory nonsense! Yet it is the logical outcome of the teaching that Israel will come under the New Covenant at the Millennium, not before. Now what are the facts? Simply these—that the promises to Abraham's lineal

seed were in the nature of a will or testament, "of no strength at all while the Testator liveth" (Heb. ix. 17). But the Testator (Christ) having died, the testament or will became valid, and to the very people for whom it was designed, for, mark the Apostle's joyful advice, "Having, therefore, brethren (Hebrews) boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood (i.e., the death) of Jesus ... let us draw near, etc.," and this access to God, through their great "High Priest," was the result of their being—then—under the Covenant (v. 16) promised so long before. The same thing is taught in Rom. vii. The people addressed not only "knew the law," but they had at one time been "under it." They were now, a.d. 60, "dead to the law by the body of Christ," and "married to another," i.e., they were re-betrothed to and re-covenanted by their risen Lord in order "to bring forth fruit unto God." They could be made a blessing in fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise (Gen. xii. 2), when, but not before, the death of Christ took place. Let them controvert this who can.

By many the initial mistake is made of confounding the Mosaic conditional and temporary Covenant with the unconditional and everlasting Covenant made with Abraham. The former was made 400 years after the latter, and could not disannul it (Gal. iii. 17). This Abrahamic Covenant of grace—one with the New Covenant for Israel (Heb. viii.)—since both came into operation at the same time— viz., at Christ's death—is therefore being realised now in this Christian dispensation. If otherwise, how could the patriarch's multitudinous, lineal seed, the children through Isaac of both Abraham and Sarah (for both were recipients of the promise, thus excluding in toto the possibility of a spiritual seed), become, as was foretold, the channel of blessing to all nations through the "one Seed"—Christ? (Gen. xii. 3). And in the New Testament, we do not find in a single instance that men, other than those of Israel's race, took the Gospel to the world.

The "parentheticalists" say that the "Church" of this age is a Gentile one. If a few Israelites are added thereto, they are

Gentilised and can no longer claim a standing in Israel. Surely there is something very far wrong here. How, we ask, can conversion to Christ alter a man's nationality? Is a converted Englishman no longer a unit of the English nation? Has a Christian Chinaman denationalised himself by accepting Christ? It were idle to argue thus, yet even such arguments are part of the stock-in-trade of the "parentheticalists." Then, as to the Church being a Gentile one, are they at this late hour of the world's day ignorant of the fact that the New Testament speaks of two different peoples as "Gentiles," viz., the heathen nations and Gentilised Israel (not Judah). The latter were "Lo-ammi"—"not My people" (Hos. i. 9). They "walked in darkness" and "dwelt in the shadow of death" (Is. ix. 2). In short, they had become as those over whom "Thou never barest rule; they were not called by Thy name" (Is. lxiii. 19), that is, they were as the heathen, and as such were looked upon by their brethren of Judah (John vii. 35). They were "among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure" (Hos. viii. 8), hence the applicability of the name "Gentiles" to them as well as to the purely heathen people of that time. Jesus was sent "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke ii. 32). But Israel are called "Gentiles" by St. Paul in Rom. ix. 24-30, for in them was fulfilled the prophecy he quoted from both Hosea and Isaiah. In chap. xi. he mentions the "fulness of the Gentiles," which is a quotation from Gen. xlviii. 19, a "fulness of nations," or Gentiles, being in the O.T. passage applied to Ephraim's lineal seed. The same word occurs in Rom. iv. 17, "I have made thee a father of many nations" (Gentiles). Here the Apostle refers to that part of "all the seed of Abraham" "which is of faith," in contradistinction to "that only which is of the law," viz., Judah. The Epistles to the Corinthians were addressed, amongst others, to a people whose "fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea," etc. (i Cor. x. 1). That to the Galatians to those who had been "redeemed from the curse of the law," "the Israel of

God " (Gal. vi. 16). The Ephesians were God's " heritage " (i. n, R.V.). They had been " Gentiles in the flesh," " aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," etc. (ii. n, 12), and they were enjoined to " no longer walk as the Gentiles " (iv. 17). The Philippians were the true "circumcision," the Apostle assuring them that he, too, was of the House of Israel—not Judah—for he was of Benjamin, the tribe added to Judah temporarily and for a special purpose (Phil. iii. 5; i Kings xi. 13). The Colossians also were "circumcised" in Christ, not in the flesh, as were the Jews; and they had been freed from "carnal ordinances" by the cross of Christ (ii. 13, 14). The Epistle of James is addressed "to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion," while Peter wrote to the "elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion," these sojourners being then located in the very countries which were the scene of the Apostolic labours, or to which certain of the Epistles were sent (i Peter i.). But the crowning proof that the "Church" is not a Gentile one with believing Israelites added, but on the contrary, a purely Hebrew Church, with Gentile accretions, is found in St. Paul's figure of the good olive tree (Rom. xi.). This tree is as to its root, stem, and branches Israelitish (Jer. xi. 16). Branches, viz., Judah and Levi, were, through unbelief, broken off, and a wild olive branch (Gentiles) grafted in their place. But the tree remains what it ever was—Israelitish—and the wild graft remains a wild graft, although partaking of the "root and fatness " of the tree, which is living and fruitbearing. Where, then, is the boasted Gentile Church? Why, these Gentile grafts may themselves yet be excised (v. 22). In any event, those branches that, through unbelief, were "broken off," are yet to be grafted in again, for "all Israel shall be saved" (v. 26). I So then the Church of God in this age is the Church or congregation of Israel, with others "gathered" into it (Is. lvi. 8), and this Church is the bride, the lamb's wife, being one with her who, under a former dispensation, God was pleased to call "His wife," "His spouse," "His beloved" (Is. liv. 1; Cant. v. 1; Rom. ix. 25). We would emphasise this, for here also the

"parentheticalists" are away from the truth, because away from the Word. Some of them go so far as to say that God has two wives, one Israelitish, the other Gentile. Others say that "the tender and close relationship existing between God and His people of old" was merely an "illustration" of what exists between Christ and His Church now. If this is true, then the illustration and the thing illustrated are one and the same, for, as we have seen, the same parties to the same transaction appear in both dispensations. Let Scripture explain Scripture, and teach us the truth. Why should we seek to be wise above what is written? Israel's redemption saw the beginning of the accomplishment of Amos ix. 11,12. The Apostle said so, for God had begun "to take from (among) the Gentiles, where they had been 'sifted' (Hos. viii. 8; Amos ix. 9), a people for His name." The fallen tabernacle of David was being re-built (Acts xv. 16; Matt. xvi. 18), and God was again "raising up" the tribes of Israel. The "kingdom of God," having been taken from Judah (Matt. xxi. 43), was being given to that only nation fitted by God Himself to receive it, the fruit-bearing nation of Ephraim-Israel. Further, the redemption of Israel meant, as we saw, re-betrothal, and a renewal of the marriage bond (Rom. vii. 4). They were " espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ," who, as the second Adam, raised from the sleep of death, claimed her as His own." We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. v. 30), not a mystical, spiritual body, mark you, for "a spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke xxiv. 39). Who but the lineal seed of Abraham can literally claim to be of the same "flesh and bones" of Him who "took hold of the seed of Abraham .... made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 16)? St. John, in vision, saw the Church of God as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, coming down from heaven, and it was Israelitish, not Gentile, for it was New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi.; Gal. iv.), "prepared and adorned," glorious and radiant. And in the light of that city the saved nations (Gentiles) shall walk. They are saved through and blessed everlastingly with redeemed Israel.

“Thou (Israel) shalt surely clothe thee with them all .... and bind them on thee as a bride doeth” (? her jewels, vide Ixi. 10).  
“The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto Thee” (Is. xlix. 18; ps. xlv. 14).

WE HAVE SHOWN FROM SCRIPTURE that the House of Israel became as Gentiles, was divorced and put away, was re-betrothed and re-married, and is under the New Covenant as the Church of the living God. Hence it follows that in God’s dealings with Israel there is no parenthesis, and although believing “Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel” (Eph. iii. 6), the so-called Parenthetical Gentile Church theory is a mere figment, a distortion of truth, and a dishonour to God.

“Who is blind but my servant, and deaf as my messenger that I sent? Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears .... let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified, or let them hear and say it is truth “ (Is. xliii. 8-10).

Natal.

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