

When Christians left their first love in the earliest days of the history of Christendom, this precious revelation was apparently the first, to become obscured and lost sight of. Then the true teaching concerning the holy spirit in the Assembly became less and less clear, especially while the simple foundation of the truth of justification on the principle of faith alone was also being departed from. These precious truths – by Father’s long-suffering patience and mercy, have been partially recovered in these last days, out of the wonderful treasury of His Word, but never, perhaps, in their pristine freshness and clearness.

It is our objective now, in dependence on our Father’s goodness, and reliance on holy spirit guidance, to do something to recover the blessed truth concerning the “Sacred Secret,” and thus endeavor to be a “good scribe,” bringing out of the Master’s treasures something that is old but yet new, and new but yet old. It will be well at the outset to define our terms, and to have a clear understanding as to

THE MEANING OF MUSTERION

In the Greek, the word *musterion* means a *religious or sacred secret*.¹ The Rotherham Bible has translated *musterion*, ‘sacred secret,’ in nearly all cases. It occurs in the Septuagint only nine times as the equivalent of the Hebrew word *ratz*, which means *to conceal* hence, a secret. It occurs in Dan. 2: 18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47 (twice), and in 4:9, and is translated *secret*. It was the king’s sacred *secret* which had gone from king Nebuchadnezzar, and which no one could tell him, until Yahweh revealed it to Daniel...

Thus, it is perfectly clear and certain that the word *musterion*, as used in the Scripture, is a *sacred secret*. But by the end of the second century after Christ the word *musterion* had acquired an additional use. It was used not only of a sacred *secret*, but of a *secret sign* or symbol. In this sense the Greek fathers employed it to denote any such *sign*, whether of words or actions. They spoke of the offering of Isaac as a *musterion*, *i.e.*, a *sign* or symbol of the *secret purpose* of Yahweh concerning His Son Yahshua Christ. And they used it interchangeably with the words *tupos*, *type*; *sumbolon*, *symbol*, and *parabolee*, *parable*. It has a sense, therefore, similar to these words.

Justin Martyr (A.D. 148) says that in all false religions the serpent was represented as “a great *symbol* and *musterion*” (*Apol.* i. 27). So in his reference to the Paschal Lamb, he says, “the *musterion* therefore of the Lamb... was a *type* of Christ.” Speaking of Isaiah 7:14, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,” he says, “since this refers to the house of David, Isaiah has explained how that which was spoken by Yahweh to David, *in a Secret*, would actually come to pass. Perhaps” he adds, “you are not aware, my friends, of this – that there were many sayings written *obscurely*; or *in parables*; for *secret signs*; or *in symbols*, which the prophets who lived after the persons who said or did them, expounded” (*Trypho*, c. 68).

¹ 3466 μυστηριον *musterion moos-tay'-ree-on*

1) hidden thing, secret, mystery 1a) generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals 1b) a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding 1c) a hidden purpose or counsel 1c1) secret will 1c1a) of men 1c1b) of God: the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly 2) in rabbinic writings, it denotes the mystic or hidden sense 2a) of an OT saying 2b) of an image or form seen in a vision 2c) of a dream

The Mysteries in the Greek World and Hellenism. 1. The Cultic Concept of Mysteries. *Musterion* (*musthrion*) (predominantly plur.) is the term for the many ancient mystery cults whose intensive development can be studied from the 7th cent. B.C. to the 4th A.D. 1Kittel, Gerhard; Friedrich, Gerhard, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2000, c1964.

Secret was practically synonymous with *a symbol*, and yet there was a slight difference. Perhaps *a secret sign* would best express it; and this was the usage of the word when the Revelation was given to John. Hence, in that book, we must give the word this signification. In Rev. 1:20, it is used of “the Sacred Secret of the seven stars,” and in chap. 17:5, 7, it is used of “Babylon.” So that in these things we are to see *a secret sign* of something which they were to represent.

It is remarkable also that soon after this we find the Latin version translating the word *musterion* (in Eph. 5:32) by the word *sacramentum*, i.e., sacrament. From this it is positive that at that time the word *sacramentum* or sacrament meant merely *a secret sign* or *symbol*! It had not then acquired its later theological use; but the word “sacrament” had reference merely to a *symbol*, or a symbolical act, *a secret sign*, showing forth the Lord’s death.

The popular etymologies of the word are therefore all wrong and misleading. If the word (according to Tertullian) had any reference to a military oath, it was only because in the administration of that oath some *secret sign* was given or made which symbolically represented it. It is certain, therefore, that the modern and ecclesiastical use of the word “sacrament” is not only a gross misrepresentation of the truth, but it is founded on ignorance of the history of the word.

- 1) The Greek *musteerion* means *a sacred secret*; and later *a secret sign* or *symbol*.
- 2) The Latin *sacramentum* is used in the Vulgate as the equivalent of *musteerion* in Eph. 5:32, therefore *sacramentum* meant, and means, *a secret sign* or *symbol*.

This gives us the true meaning of the word as used by the Reformers in one of their prayers. When they say “these holy mysteries,” they mean “the special commemoratives of bread and wine,” i.e., these *signs* and *symbols* which are used to “show forth the Lord’s death.” Thus, in our search for truth, two great errors are, at the outset, corrected: - The true meaning of the word *musterion* in the Scriptures is not something that cannot be understood, but something kept secret – a secret sacred truth or sign, revealed to those who are initiated. And the theological word *Sacrament* is not some act of ecclesiastical jugglery, but a simple symbolical act, by which the Lord’s people show forth their Lord’s death. We are now prepared to apply the meaning of the word *musterion*, thus ascertained, to the various passages in the New Testament where it is used.

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II. THE SECRET OF THE INTERVAL

There are several sacred secrets, which are there spoken of; and there is one that is called the “*great* sacred secret.” They are all of them connected with the present interval between the first and second Advent of the Lord Yahshua. That there was to be an interval at all between “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” (Luke 24:26) was not revealed in the Old Testament.

The “sufferings” themselves were not secret; neither was the “glory that should follow.” Both were subjects of Old Testament prophecy. Both are there fully and plainly revealed. And what is very remarkable about those prophecies is this, that while we have many prophecies of the *glory* without any reference to the *sufferings*; we never have a prophecy of the *sufferings* without finding, in the immediate context, a reference to the coming *glory*.

The prophets who prophesied, and all who heard or read their words, were perfectly well acquainted with these two great facts; but they were wholly ignorant as to what interval, if any, should separate them. They knew not whether the “glory” would follow immediately upon the “sufferings” or whether there

would be an interval of one year, or then years, or a hundred, or a thousand years between them. There was nothing to tell them. Hence, they were doubtless perplexed. We are, indeed, told by Yahweh (1 Pet. 1:10-11) that they “enquired and searched diligently as to what, or *what manner of time*, the spirit which was in them did signify of Christ, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow.” But there was nothing that could throw any light on the “manner of time” which should elapse, between the sufferings and the glory. It was clear that they could not be simultaneous. But “what manner of time” could there be between them?

One-way out of the difficulty was to suggest that there would be two messiahs: One, Messiah-ben-Joseph, who would suffer; and another, Messiah-ben-David, who should have the glory. Some think that the question of John the Immerser, in Matt. 11:3, referred to this ancient tradition when he sent two of his disciples to ask, “Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?”

No one could find out “what, or what manner of time” should elapse between “the sufferings and the glory.” It was past finding out. There were riches, which could be explored. Many promises and prophecies connected with Christ could be understood, searched out, traced, and enjoyed by the faithful. The prophets conveyed their readers from hill-top to hill-top, but the valley that lay between could not be explored. Its mines of wealth could not be discovered. Its riches could not be searched. We, who by grace, have been initiated into the great sacred secret, and who have the key to unlock those treasures, can know something about these riches of (or pertaining to) the Christ; but there were other riches connected with Christ that were untraceable – past finding out. Connected with this secret of the present interval, and, indeed, forming part of it, there were, as we have said, several other sacred secrets:

THE DURATION OF ISRAEL’S BLINDNESS (Rom. 11:25)

That blindness was to happen to Israel was no secret. It was plainly revealed in the Old Testament. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah had a glorious vision of Israel’s King preparatory to the solemn mission which he received : -

*Go and say unto this people, Hear on, but do not discern, See on, but do not perceive:
Stupefy thou the heart of this people, And, their ears, make thou heavy, And, their eyes, overspread,
Lest they see with their eyes, And, with their ears, should hear, And, their heart,
should discern and come back. And they be healed. Then said I—How long, My Lord? (Isaiah 6: 9-11)*

“How long?” Yes, that was the great and anxious question of Isaiah. The prophet “searched and inquired diligently as to what manner of time” was signified. “How long?” he asked, shall this blindness happen to Israel? That decree of judicial blindness was pronounced under most impressive circumstances. There was everything, which could add solemnity and importance to the occasion. And when we come to the New Testament we find the prophecy three times referred to: Matthew 13:14 (the prophetic Word of Yahweh), 15; John 12:40 (Isaiah saw Christ’s glory); and Acts 28:26 (“well spoke the Holy Spirit, by Isaiah”).

Israel’s blindness itself was the subject of special revelation, and was no *secret*. It was there revealed that it was to last as long as the land remained desolate. But there was one thing connected with it which was kept secret, and that was afterwards revealed in Rom. 11:25, where, speaking of this blindness, it is written, “For I wish not, ye should be ignorant, brethren, of this sacred secret, lest within yourselves ye be presumptuous, that, a hardening in part, hath befallen Israel, until, the full measure of the nations, shall come in.” Here the sacred secret was revealed, and the answer is at length given to the question “How long?” We are no longer “ignorant” as to the duration of this “blindness in part”; we know its decree was announced, and we know when it will come to an end.

“THE SACRED SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM” (Matt. 13:11, 35)

It was no secret that the kingdom, so long prophesied, should be rejected; that the King should not be received; that Messiah should be “cut off,” and not then receive the kingdom. All this was a plain matter of Divine revelation. Many prophecies declare this. But what was to happen to the kingdom during the rejection of the King was not revealed; this was kept secret. There can be no kingdom without a king, therefore, while he is away, the kingdom must be in abeyance. In the Old Testament we have the kingdom prophesied. In the Gospels and Acts we have the kingdom rejected. In the Epistles we have the interval between this rejection, and the future setting up of the kingdom in Divine power, judgment, and glory, which is foreshown in the Apocalypse.

In these Epistles we have the interval, but chiefly in its relation to the Church. We do not learn in them what was to happen to the kingdom; the sacred secrets concerning this are not there revealed. It is in Matt. 13 that the Lord Yahshua, in seven parables, describes the course of the kingdom from the first sowing of its seed by the Son of Man, to the final setting up of the throne of His glory; and this without any reference whatever to the Assembly of Yahweh. The Assembly of Yahweh, as we shall presently see, is not the subject of these parables, being itself another sacred secret, emphatically called “the great sacred secret.” These parables concern the kingdom, and we are clearly told why they were spoken, and what was their subject as well as their object.

In verse 10, the disciples came and said unto Him, “Wherefore, in parables, art thou speaking to them?” He answered and said unto them, “Because, unto you, hath it been given, to get to know the sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens,—whereas, unto them, hath it not been given.” Then in verse 34, we read “All these things, spoke Yahshua in parables, unto the multitudes, and, without a parable, was he speaking, nothing, unto them: that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken through the prophet (Ps. 88:2), saying—I will open, in parables, my mouth, I will bring up things hidden from the foundation!”

Hence, in these seven parables, we have the revelation of the sacred secrets concerning the kingdom of heaven; i.e., what would happen in consequence of and after its rejection, and we are told that these things had been kept secret all through the ages. And further, that when the Lord Yahshua spoke in parables, He spoke, not to reveal the sacred secrets to the multitudes, but to hide them; and also that His disciples and we might afterwards understand. It is clear, therefore, that we are not to look for the Body of the Christ in these parables, but that, whatever we may learn from them, we must distinguish between these “sacred secrets of the kingdom” and the “great sacred secret” concerning the Christ and the Assembly.

“THE SACRED SECRET OF INIQUITY” (2 Thess. 2:7)

The rejection of the kingdom would, we are taught, lead up, at the time of the end, to the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), when the Man of Sin will be revealed. He will be manifested in his own appointed season. But we are told also that even now, yea, even when the revelation was given in 2 Thess. 2:7, that the *secret* of lawlessness was already at work. Even now we see this secret purpose working. Lawlessness is already being developed. We see it in the Family, in Society, in the church, and in the State. If we were asked to describe the one great feature, which characterizes our times, we must say it is lawlessness. This is the working of the secret counsel and purpose of the coming Antichrist, whose open manifestation will be the signal for the closing of this present interval, and whose final destruction will usher in the Christ’s Kingdom. For then (i.e., in the days of the seventh messenger when he is about to sound), “then is finished the Sacred Secret (or secret counsel) which Yahweh purposed to fulfill according to the good tidings which He declared to His servants the prophets” (Rev. 10:7).

THE GREAT SACRED SECRET

There are three important Scriptures in which the “great” sacred secret is specially and formally *revealed*. And there are others, which contain definite teaching concerning it, receiving light from it, and throwing light upon it. We will consider each in due order.

PASSAGES, WHICH FORMALLY REVEAL THE GREAT SACRED SECRET

Col. 1:24-28a

“Now, am I rejoicing in the sufferings on your behalf, and am filling up the things that lack of the tribulations of the Christ (*i.e.*, the Christ, of whom the body is composed by the *Ecclesia*, not the personal), in my flesh, in behalf of his body, which is the assembly, Of which, I, have become minister—according to the administration of Yahweh which hath been given unto me to you—ward, to fill up the word of Yahweh, The sacred secret which had been hidden away from the ages and from the generations, but, now, hath been made manifest unto his saints— Unto whom Yahweh hath been pleased to make known what is the glorious wealth of this sacred secret among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of the glory,— Whom we are declaring, admonishing every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom.” In chap. 2:2, the Apostle strives “In order that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, even unto all the riches of the full assurance of their understanding, unto a personal knowledge of the sacred secret of Yahweh,—Christ: In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden away.” Here, we learn that this sacred secret had never before been made known, and that to make it known was to “fully preach the Word of Yahweh.” Hence, today, the Word of Yahweh is not “fully proclaimed” unless the *Great Sacred Secret* be proclaimed.

Rom. 16:25, 26

[Notice that the structure of the epistle to the Romans is an *Epanodos*, i.e. the end corresponds with the beginning; and the opening words are to be compared with the closing words. A remarkable contrast is thus observed: At the beginning, we have “The glad—message of Yahweh,” promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. At the end, “The Sacred Secret”, which had been kept secret since the world began.]

“Now, unto him who hath power (is able) to establish you, according to my glad—message—even the proclamation of Yahshua Christ, according to the revelation of a sacred secret, in age—past times kept silent, But now made manifest (manifested), and through means of prophetic scriptures, according to the command of the age—abiding Elohim, for obedience of faith unto all the nations made known.”

Here, observe, that the same secret is referred to as being made known by a special revelation, and as having been kept in age—past times silent, not a word having been breathed concerning it before. We get here an additional fact: In Col. 1, it was revealed in the first instance to the Apostle Paul. Here it is made known also by “prophetic writings.” There is no article used with either “writings” or “prophets.” These were not the Old Testament writings, because they are only “now... made known.” They are not the Old Testament prophets, because the word is not *prophetōn*, but *prophetikōn*; not the noun but the adjective, and should be rendered “by means of prophetic writings.” These writings were given through the prophets in the early days of the Assembly of Yahweh. The Lord Yahshua had said, “Behold I send unto you prophets” (Matt. 23:34); “I will send them prophets and apostles” (Luke 11:49). This promise was duly

fulfilled, for we read in Ephesians 4:8, 11, “When He ascended up on high He lead captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men...and He gave some apostles, and some prophets...”

[It would take us too far from our subject to go into this question as it deserves. We give the following points as suggestive of further study –

- (1) The existence of such an order of ministry, Barnabas, Acts 4:36; Stephen, Acts 6:10, 15; Agabus, Acts 11:28; 21:10; Silvanus, Silas, and Judas, acts 15:32; Manaen and Lucius of Cyrene, Acts 13:1; Timothy, a “Man of Elohim,” 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17 (compare Deut. 33:1, and 2 Kings 4:7, &c.); the daughters of Philip the Evangelist, Acts 21:8; others, Acts 8:17; 10:44-46; 19:6.
- (2) The exhortations addressed to and respecting these prophets, “Quench not the spirit; despise not prophesying” (1 Thess. 5:20), i.e., Do not suppress or stifle the workings of the spirit in these prophets. “Prophesy according to the proportion of faith,” (Rom. 12:6. Note also the abuse of prophetic gifts at Corinth (1 Cor. 14).
- (3) The examples of prophetic power: Acts 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:18; Acts 13:2; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25; Acts 21:10-14; 1 Tim. 4:1.
- (4) Like Old Testament prophets their great trials were the false prophets (Jer. 5:31). See 1 Cor. 12:3; Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 John 4:1-3.]

In 2 Peter 1:19, we have a reference to “the prophetic word” of these prophets, and a contrast also with the Old Testament prophecy in verse 21. In 3:16, also, it may be these writings, which are referred to.

EPHESIANS 3:1-11

This is the scripture which more fully than any other gives the particulars concerning the revelation of the Great Sacred Secret. “For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Yahshua in behalf of you the nations:—If at least ye have heard of the administration of the favor of Yahweh which hath been given unto me for you, by way of revelation, was made known unto me the sacred secret,—even as I before wrote in brief,—Respecting which ye can, by reading, perceive my discernment in the sacred secret of the Christ,—Which, in other generations, had not been made known unto the sons of men, as it hath, now, been revealed by his holy apostles and prophets, in spirit; — That they who are of the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Yahshua through means of the glad-message,— Of which I was made a minister, according to the free-gift of the favor of Yahweh which was given unto me, according to the energy of his power: Unto me—the less than least of all saints, was given this favor, unto the nations, to announce the glad-message of the untraceable riches of the Anointed One, And to bring to light—what is the administration of the sacred secret which had been hidden away from the ages in Yahweh, who did all things create: In order that now, unto the principalities and the authorities in the heavenlies, might be made known, through means of the Assembly, the manifold wisdom of Yahweh,— According to a plan of the ages which he made in the anointed Yahshua our Lord.”

This is the scripture which more fully than any other gives the particulars concerning the revelation of the Great Sacred Secret. “As it hath, now, been revealed.” This cannot possibly mean, as some have thought, that it had been revealed before in a certain manner, but not in the same manner as it is now. Because it is distinctly and emphatically declared again and again, here and elsewhere, that it had not been revealed at all. “That they who are of the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body (*sussomos*).” *Sussōmos* is a peculiar ecclesiastical word, which occurs only here. It does not mean that there was a body already previously in existence and that others became afterwards in due time members of it. But that these, with Hebrew believers (2:13-15), should form a *joint-body*, being made in Christ – “Of twain, one new man.” (Eph.2:15).

There can be no doubt from this scripture that we have not a mere reference to the Gospel. The Gospel was never kept a secret. The good news of salvation through Christ alone, the seed of the woman, was revealed from the earliest times (Gen. 3:15), and it was preached unto Abraham (Gal. 3:8). Neither could it have been the mere fact that the Nations were to be blessed with Israel: for this was never kept secret. The very first blessing that was promised to Israel through Abraham, contained the promise of blessing for the Nations also. "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Again, speaking of Abraham (Gen. 18:18), Yahweh says: "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." Over and over again is this promise repeated (See Gen. 22:18; 26:4, etc.). The prophets of Israel constantly had this as the burden of their message. They told of the time when "all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psalm 72:14).

"Elohim, be favorable to us and bless us,
Cause his face to shine upon us.
That thy way may be known throughout the earth,
Throughout all nations, thy saving help! (Psalm 67:1, 2).

In Romans 15:8, it is distinctly declared that "For I affirm Christ to have become a minister of circumcision in behalf of the truth of Yahweh,—to confirm the promises of the fathers, And that, the nations, for mercy should glorify Yahweh:—even as it is written (not as it hath been kept secret !) "Ps. 18:49: For this cause, will I praise thee among the nations (the heathen), O Yahweh, and, to thy Name, will I sweep the strings." And again He saith: "Deut 32:43a: Shout for joy O ye nations *with* his people"; and again Isaiah saith : "Isa 11:10: And there shall come to be, in that day, A root of Jesse, which shall be standing as an ensign of peoples, Unto him, shall nations seek,—And, his resting-place, shall be, glorious." Such passages might be multiplied, but there is one (Is. 49:6) which very solemnly connects the Nations blessing with the atoning work of Christ : -

"Isa 49:6: Yea he said—It is too small a thing, for being my, Servant, That thou shouldst raise up the tribes of Jacob, And, the preserved of Israel, shouldst restore,—So I will give thee to become a light of nations, That, my salvation, may reach as far as, the end of the earth."

No wonder Simeon said (Luke 2:29-32) : -

Lk 2:29: Now, dost thou dismiss thy servant, O Sovereign, according to thy declaration—in peace;
Lk 2:30: Because mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Lk 2:31: Which thou hast prepared in face of all the peoples:
Lk 2:32: A light for the unveiling of nations, and the glory of thy people Israel.

The Nation's blessing was no more a secret than Israel's blessing. The same word that revealed the one, revealed the other also. It is impossible, therefore, for us to believe that the great sacred secret, specially revealed with so much solemnity, and so formally in the New Testament, referred merely to the Nation's blessing, as such. This was not "hid in Yahweh": this was not "hid from ages and from generations": this was not "in age—past times kept silent": it could not be said of this, "in other ages it was not made known."

Language is useless if such expressions can possibly refer to that which was never hidden; never kept in silence; but was "made known" from the earliest times. No ! This was the great sacred secret : that a people should be taken out from among both Hebrews and Nations, who should with Christ be made (*sussōmos*) a *joint-body* in Christ (Eph. 3:9); a Body of which Christ should be the glorious head in heaven, and His people – the members of that body on the earth – "one new man." This was the great

sacred secret which was revealed to Father's "holy apostles and prophets by the spirit," and which had never entered into the heart or mind of mortal mind, - THE CHRIST.

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THE BODY OF THE CHRIST

This brings us to consider the "great" sacred secret – "The Body of the Christ," "Christ and the Assembly" – Christ, the glorious Head of the Body in heaven, and His people the members of it on the earth. Twice it is called "great" – the "great" sacred secret; in Eph. 5:32 and 1 Tim. 3:16. Not a word was heard of this until it was specially revealed to and through the Apostle Paul. We have considered the three great Scriptures wherein this special revelation is contained.

(1) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BODY.

There are two other scriptures, which further develop the special figure under which the sacred secret is presented, viz., a Body. These are 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12. In the former of these the subject is most completely set forth, in the following manner:-

I Cor. 12:1-11.

A/ 12:1-11 THE ASSEMBLY and the nine spiritual evidences (manifestation) given to it.

B/12:12-17. THE BODY. Its unity.

B/ 12:18-27. THE BODY. Its members.

A/ 12:28-31. THE ASSEMBLY and nine spiritual matters exemplified.

Here in A and A we have the Assembly – while in B and B we have the Body – to illustrate the blessed unity, which exists betwixt Christ and His people. "For, just as, the body, is one, and yet hath many members, but, all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so, also, the Christ;" This cannot of course be Christ Personal; it can be only the Body of the Christ. And how do saved sinners become members of this wondrous Body? Not according to the tenets of a Semi-Pelagian and Arminian Gospel, but according to the Free Grace of our Father: "for in one spirit are we all (*i.e.*, the writer, and the "saints" to whom he wrote, and all of whom it can be said that they are) baptized into one Body,... and have all been made to drink into one spirit." This is the source whence the unity and oneness of the Body springs.

The members of the Body of the Christ are those who have believed Yahweh's testimony (as Abraham believed it), as to their lost condition as sinners, as to the great salvation which is in Christ the Savior; and who have reckoned themselves as having died when He died, and risen again when He rose; thus identified with Christ in His death, resurrection into new life and power. This is the truth, which is bound up with the meaning of "the Body of the Christ." One part of a body cannot die, and the rest of the body go on living: one member cannot be amputated, and yet the body be a complete body. Hence, the expression "in Christ" means to be in Christ's Body. There is no other way of being "in Christ." We cannot be in Christ *personal*, we can be "in Christ" only by being members of His Body. Therefore, if we are "in Him" – when He, the Head, died; then we, the members, must, in the age abiding purpose and judgment of our Father, have died in Him. When He, the Head, rose again; then we, the members, must be risen in Him. If He, the Head, is in Heaven; then we, the members, are seated in the heavenlies in Him.

We must not stop to follow out this wondrous truth, but we must surely be arrested by the thought, and ask, Are all who “profess and call themselves Christians” really members of the Christ’s Body? Have they by faith reckoned themselves to be dead and risen with Christ? Do they all know that having died with Christ they need not die at all? Do you rejoice in the fact that death and judgment are past and over for the members of the Christ’s Body? Are they aware that the end of the Body of the Christ is that the body will be “received up in glory” – to meet the descending Lord? Is this the hope of the great multitude of professors? It is not for us to judge individuals, but this we know as a fact, that the “gathering together with Christ on the clouds” (the, so called “Rapture”) is a truth, which *concerns only the Body of the Christ!*

The day is drawing near when the Body will be completed, and the members gathered together as one. But *now* they are in tribulation. Oh what grief and bitterness and murmuring and discontent is manifested as to the position which the members occupy in the Body! They forget that it does not say, they have been placed “as it hath pleased them,” but it is written, “Yahweh hath set the members, every one of them in the Body, *as it hath pleased Him*” (verse 18). Now, the members judge one another, some they “think to be less honorable” than others. Ah! Foolish thinkers. It matters not what “we think,” but what they are in Yahweh’s esteem. And then, what a precious lesson we lose through our selfishness. We read (verse 26) “if one member suffer all the members suffer with it,” and we restrict this to the mutual sympathy of the members, to the exclusion of the Head. The truth is, He suffered, and we suffered with Him. He is honored, and we are honored in Him. “It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him” (2 Tim. 2:11, 12). And what is more – there is that precious truth in 1 Cor. 12:21. The Head cannot say to the feet, “I have no need of you.” How wonderful that the great and glorious Head in heaven cannot say to the weakest, feeblest, humblest, member upon earth, “I have no need of you.” It is too wonderful for us to comprehend; but so it is, and we can only bow our heads, and worship.

(2) THE GROWTH OF THE BODY.

We read in Eph. 1:22, 23, that this all comes from the Head in heaven. He has been exalted by Father who “gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Assembly which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all,” *i.e.*, all [*the members of His Body*] with all [*spiritual gifts and graces*]. This is exactly what is expressed in 2 Cor. 12:6 “And, distributions of energies, there are, and the same Elohim—who energiseth all things in all.” The Head of the natural body is physiologically the source of all feeling and influence to the whole natural body. The brain is not confined to the head. *The nerves (though slightly different in structure*, the chief difference being that the nerve fibers are insulated by a sheath in the members, but not in the brain) *are the continuation of the brain*, and they keep up a mysterious connection between the head and all the members of the body. And when a member is injured or in pain, a message is at once sent up to the brain, and succor and sympathy are immediately given. It is probably this connection that is referred in those physiological verses, which, whatever be their meaning, we believe to be in advance of human science. It is this which causes the present renderings to be so unintelligible, and which renders their correct translations so difficult. We will try and make it clear by giving our own version. The first is

EPHESIANS 4:16.

The subject is “the building up of the Body of the Christ” (verse 12), “unto a man of full growth” (verse 13), that the members “may, in love, grow into him in all things,—who is the head, Christ Out of whom all the body—fitly framing itself together, and connecting itself, through means of every joint of supply,

by way of energising in the measure of each single part—secureth the growing of the body, unto an upbuilding of itself in love.” “fitly framing itself together, and connecting itself, through means of every joint [haphē] of supply;”. The Greek word 860 ἀφή *haphē haf-ay’*, a touching, Lat. *Junctura*, occurs only here and in the other passage (Col. 2:19). It is not a “joint,” but a *nexus*, or connection, by which supply is passed on from one organ to another! And not so much the parts in contact, not so much the actual touching of the parts as the mutual *relation* between them. Galen (second century, B.C.) says the body “owes its compactness partly to the *articulation (arthron)*, and partly to the attachment (*sumphusis, symphosis*).” Aristotle (A.D. 356) speaks of two kinds of union, *contact* and (*symphusis*) *cohesion*. So that it is the *contact* between the various parts which conveys the necessary supply, with special reference to the *adaptation* and mutual sympathy and influence of the parts in contact. Aristotle speaks of this as *patheetika (full of feeling, or sensitive)*, and we have tried to express it all by the word “*sensation*.” The other passage is:

COLOSSIANS 2:19.

“The Head, from which (or from Whom) all the Body through the junctures and ligaments being bountifully supplied, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of Yahweh,” *i.e.*, the increase wrought by Father. “Ligaments”. Galen uses the word generally to denote any connecting muscles, or tendons, and of ligaments properly so-called. It is not merely *unity*, which is taught here, but *growth*. This is the ultimate result of the intermediate processes. The origin of all is Yahweh, who hath given Christ to be the Head over all things to this wondrous Body. Christ, the Head, is the *source* of all, but the members of the Body are made and used as deliverers of spiritual communication and spiritual power in their mutual relation to Him and to one another. The discoveries of modern physiology both give and receive light from the marvelous accuracy of these divine words. But the words of Yahweh here are connected directly with spiritual truth. He goes on at once to teach the important truth and to draw the practical conclusion in the next chapter (Col. 3).

“If ye died with the Christ,” why are ye subject to the ordinances of man? Why do you allow men to bind you with vows and pledges and badges, saying to you, “Touch not, taste not, and handle not”? All these things perish, as man’s commandments and doctrines perish. And if this be so, if ye died jointly with Christ from the elements of the world; if ye were raised (not *have been raised*) jointly with Christ, what follows? Why then, as the Head of the Body is in heaven, the members of the Body are there “in Christ.” Our aims, and mind, and thoughts, will be heavenly not earthly. For (I say it again) “ye died” and you are now, as to your standing before Father, living in another sphere, and on another plane where all is spiritual. Carnal rules and ordinances do not enter into the growth of this Body at all. All is spiritual, heavenly, and age-abiding.

[There is nothing that so exposes the awful design of the slanderer that the blasphemous assumption of the Church of Rome. He has indeed travestied this great *musterion* in making the Pope the visible *head* of a visible body, of which the “faithful” are the visible *members*. Thus completely nullifying and perverting this precious truth. At the Annual Conference of the “*Catholic Truth Society*” held at Bristol, September 9th, 1895, and reported in the *Daily Press* the following day, Cardinal Vaughan spoke on the subject of *Reunion*, of which so much has of late been said. His point was that there was no such thing as Reunion short of “Corporate Union” which that Church of which the Pope is the *head*. It would not do, he showed, merely to agree in so many points of doctrine, but “it is simply a question of the fundamental and essential constitution of the Church.” He further defined the matter when he said, “It was a constitutional, “Corporate Union” of *the head and the members*. Re-union, then, must mean a return to the visible union which formerly existed, when there was but one united *body* under one visible *head*.” Any thing short of this he declared to be only “confusion of thought.” “It is best to be perfectly frank and definite.” He

added. Yes, but how awful is the subtle nature of this blasphemous travesty. See more details of this Roman faked *Re-union* in the last *Paper*.]

THE END OF THE BODY.

And if this be the *growth* of the Body, what of its end? What will be “the man of full growth?” When will this Body be completed and what will happen? The natural end of the natural body is *dissolution*: Will that be the end of this Body? What is its revealed end? It is all a matter of Revelation.

The sacred secret of the Body has so far been revealed, as to its *place* in the purposes of Father, as to its *constitution*, and as to its *growth*. And now, as to its *end*, another special revelation is needed; and it is given. It flows naturally from its relation to Christ as shown in Col. 3. Seeing that the members died jointly in Christ, and rose in Christ, our life is in Christ. Though we may fall asleep our “life is hid with Christ in Yahweh.” Therefore, the next thing is “when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested in glory” (Col. 3:1-4). It was impossible to be otherwise, inasmuch as the Head and members cannot be separated. Hence, the sacred secret is revealed in 1 Cor. 15:51: “Behold, I show you a Sacred Secret,” *i.e.*,

“BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A SACRED SECRET!”

What is it? “We shall not all sleep.” What? And, inasmuch as it is in store for men—once for all to die, but after this, judgment” (Heb. 9:27)? Must we not die? No! blessed be Yahweh. It is not necessary! The members of the Body were judged with the Head, and were “crucified with Christ,” and therefore there is no reason why they should ever die at all, and no reason why they should ever come into judgment (Rom. 8:1). They may “fall asleep,” but “not all.” But whether alive or asleep, “we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51-57). “But we do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are falling asleep,—lest ye be sorrowing, even as the rest also, who are without hope; For, if we believe that, Yahshua, died, and rose again, so, also will, Yahweh, bring forth with him, them who have fallen asleep through Yahshua; For, this, unto you, do we say, by a word of the Lord,—that, we, the living who are left unto the Presence of the Lord, shall in nowise get before them who have fallen asleep; Because, the Lord himself, with a word of command, with a chief-messenger’s voice, and with a trumpet of Yahweh, shall descend from heaven,—and, the dead in Christ, shall rise, first, After that, we, the living who are left, together with them, shall be caught away, in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:—and, thus, evermore, with the Lord, shall we be! So then, be consoling one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:13-18) Oh! What a blessed truth to be initiated into. Well, may He say, “Behold I tell you a sacred secret.” “I would not have you ignorant” of it. This, then, is the end of the Body of the Christ on earth. “The man of full growth” is formed; the Body is complete, and when it becomes completed, it is received up in glory!

We have already considered the three great passages, which reveal it. But there is a fourth, and it sums up the whole round of doctrine contained in the revelation of it, with special reference to the end of the Body of the Christ.

1 TIMOTHY 3:16

GREAT IS THE SACRED SECRET!

The R.V. gives “He who” in the text, and rightly says in the margin, “The word *God*, in place of *He who*, rests on no sufficient ancient evidence. Some ancient authorities read *which*. This is our belief. We believe that the original word was *Ho*, *which*, neuter, to agree with the word *musterion*, which is also neuter. Then some scribe, not understanding the sense added, an “S,” thus turning it into *hos*, which made it *masculine*, *who*, or *He who*, though the sense is thus made more obscure. Finally, some later scribe put a little mark in the “O,” thus making it into *Th*, and making the two letters *ThS* and abbreviation of the word *Theos*, *God*. A *microscope* reveals the fact that the little mark in the “O,” in the Alexandrine MS. Is in different ink, and was evidently added by a later hand. This, we believe, to be the evolution of the reading, and that originally it was simply “O,” *which*.

This passage is generally taken of Christ *personal*. But if read, as we submit it ought to be read, of Christ *mystical*, then in the six sentences we have the whole truth, concerning the Body, revealed. The place occupied by the Revelation of the Sacred Secret in 1 Tim. 3:16 will be best understood by the important position it occupies in contrast with the “Sacred Secret of Iniquity.” When viewed in the position given to it in the Epistle, the two central numbers, E and *E*, the two Mysteries or Secrets of God and Satan, are seen to stand in solemn and awful opposition.

THE STRUCTURE OF 1 TIMOTHY

A/ 1:1-2. Benediction.

B/ 1:3-20. Doctrine.

C/ 2-3:13. Discipline.

D/ 3:14-15. Intended visit and interval.

E/ 3:16. The Sacred Secret of Godliness.

E/ 4:1-2. The Sacred Secret of Iniquity.

D/ 4:13-16. Intended visit and interval.

C/ 5-6:2. Discipline.

B/ 6:3-21-. Doctrine.

A/ 6:-21. Benediction.

We have what is true of Christ *personally*, of course; but we have more; we include what is true of the *members* as well, if we take it as referring to the Body of the Christ – the Head and the members.

What is it?

1. “MANIFESTED IN FLESH.” True of the members, and true of the Head (Rom. 1:3).
2. “RIGHTEOUS IN SPIRIT.” True of Head, and members as set forth in Rom. 5:12-8:39.

3. “VISABLE TO MESSENGERS.” This is explained by Eph. 3:10, where we are told that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenlies, Yahweh is making known His manifold wisdom by means of the Assembly.
4. “PROCLAIMED AMONG NATIONS,” not merely Christ personal, but the Body of the Christ, is now proclaimed, “made known to all nations” (Rom. 16:26), “made known among the Nations” (Col. 1:27), preached “among the Nations” (Eph. 3:8).
5. “BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD.” It is made known “for the obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26) [*i.e.*, faith-obedience].
6. “TAKEN UP IN GLORY.” If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together, also with Him” (Rom. 8:17). “For whom He justified, them HE also glorified” (Rom. 8:30).

This then is the end of the Body of the Christ, as it was of Christ personal. The members are waiting to be “Taken up in Glory,” as the Head was. This is our hope, our “blessed hope.” So that waiting for Yahweh’s Son from heaven is part of our Christian position. It enters into the very foundation of our standing in Christ. It is not the mere study of prophecy, which may, or may not, be taken up by Christians as an “extra subject,” but it is the warp and woof of our Christian standing in Christ. The three pairs of statements may be thus contrasted: Nos. 1 and 2. Though manifested in the “flesh,” we know what it is to be “justified” as to the spirit. Nos. 3 and 4. It is being made known to messenger beings in heaven above; and it is being proclaimed to men on earth beneath. Nos. 5 and 6. By grace, we believe the wondrous testimony now while in the world, and we are waiting to be

“TAKEN UP IN GLORY.”

(*Fifth Paper, Things to Come, Jan. 1896, 2(7):116-117*)

V.- OTHER PASSAGES RELATING TO THE GREAT SACRED SECRET.

We have now considered the four important passages which contain the revelation of the great sacred secret, viz., Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1: 24-27, and 1 Tim. 3:16. But there are other passages, which refer to it and throw light upon it. Some writers treat these as all referring to so many different secrets; but we shall see that they all refer to and throw light upon that which is called THE GREAT SACRED SECRET (except of course those we have already considered, connected with the Present interval, the Kingdom, Israel’s blindness, and the Sacred Secret of Iniquity.)

(1) EPHESIANS 1:9-11.

Here we read how the same grace which has wrought redemption and forgiveness for His people, has also caused us to abound “in all wisdom and knowledge.” What is this wisdom? – “making known to us the sacred secret of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him,—For an administration of the fullness of the seasons, to reunite for himself (under one head) the all things in the Christ, the things upon the heavens, and the things upon the earth, in him: In whom also we were taken as an inheritance, according to the purpose of him who energiseth all things according to the counsel of his will...” Here we have the great sacred secret and its purpose referred to, and in verse 22 we are told how “the Elohim of our Lord Yahshua the Anointed One, the Father of glory...did put, all things, in subjection beneath his feet. And gave him to be head over all things unto the assembly, [*the members of that Body*] who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing, in the heavenlies, in Christ” (verse 3).

(2) EPHESIANS 6:19.

Here the Apostle's supplication is "that, unto me, may be given discourse in the opening of my mouth, with freedom of utterance, to make known the sacred secret," *i.e.*, the doctrine of the Body of the Christ, which is the great sacred secret and the great subject of the glad message. It was especially the good news revealed to and made known by Paul according to what he calls "my glad message" (Rom. 16:25). The glad message – the good news of a Savior for lost sinners – was (as we have already seen) never a secret. It was "preached before unto Abraham" (Gal. 3:8), and all the saints of Yahweh rejoiced in it. But the good news concerning the Body of the Christ was kept secret, and then became, and could be called, Paul's special glad message to be made known among all nations. It is the good news of the Body of the Christ. Hence, in 2 Cor. 4:4, it is called "the glad-message of the glory of the Christ," *i.e.*, the glad message of the Christ's glory. Father highly exalted Him and gave Him to be the Head of the Body. This is now "the great sacred secret of the glad message."

(3) COLOSSIANS 2:2.

Here it is called "*Yahweh's Secret*," *i.e.*, the secret, which Yahweh purposed, and kept in silence through times eternal and in His own good time made known. He prays for these Colossian Saints that they "In order that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, even unto all the riches of the full assurance of their understanding, unto a personal knowledge of the sacred secret of Yahweh,—Christ: In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden away." That is to say, all the treasures of divine wisdom are contained in the *Sacred Secret* – *i.e.*, the Body of the Christ. This is the sacred secret, which, according to

(4) 1 TIMOTHY 3:9,

We are to hold, as the essence of "the Faith." "Holding the Sacred Secret of the faith in a pure conscience." Here again the great secret of Christ's Body is the central object of the Christian Faith. These are all passages which refer to the great sacred secret, but there is one other which is full of instruction for us,

(5) 1 CORINTHIANS 2 AND 3.

The condition of the Corinthian saints was such that they were not spiritually fitted to receive instruction in this wondrous truth. When the first epistle was written to them, the apostle explained this to them, and says: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the *Sacred Secret* of Yahweh. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Yahshua Christ, and Him crucified." Instead of declaring to them the Sacred Secret, he had to confine himself to the simplest truths of the Glad Message. He preached only a crucified Savior. He could not declare all the great truths involved in a risen and glorified Savior. He had preached "the Glad Message of the grace of Yahweh," but he could not proclaim "the glad message of the glory of the Christ." The reason why he "could not", he now proceeds to explain.

"And, my discourse, and what I proclaimed, were not in suasive words of wisdom...Wisdom, however, we do speak, among the full-grown," or that are *initiated*. This word was the technical term for those who were initiated into the ancient and wrong heathen "mysteries", or "the wisdom of this world." I could not speak "wisdom" to you, he says, "howbeit we *do* speak wisdom to those who are initiated into it," "yet not the wisdom of this age,...but we speak the wisdom of Yahweh in a (concerning the) sacred secret, even the hidden wisdom which Yahweh ordained before the ages unto our glory (*i.e.*, with a view to our

glory).” Here is again a reference to the great sacred secret, which had been hidden in Yahweh, and ordained by Him before the ages. “None of the rulers of this age knew” about it, he says, for “it is written eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which Yahweh hath prepared for them that love Him. But Yahweh hath revealed *it* unto us by His spirit.”

These words are usually taken in a general sense, such as teaching that the man of the soul cannot receive spiritual things. This fact is perfectly true, of course, as is definitely stated elsewhere and further on. But it is not what these words say here. These words have a special reference to the “hidden wisdom,” *i.e.* the Sacred Secret, and what is stated here is, that no human being ever dreamed of it. It never entered the head or heart of mortal man. “UNTO US, IN FACT, HATH YAHWEH REVEALED THROUGH THE SPIRIT.” Then he goes on to explain what is the essence of a secret, in verses 10 and 11, and argues that as no one can tell what a man’s secret is unless He has been pleased to reveal it. And this He has done, as verse 12 states: - “But, as for us,—not the spirit of the world, have we received, but the spirit which is of Yahweh,—that we might know the things which, by Yahweh, have been given in favor, unto us:— Which we also speak—not in words taught of human wisdom, but in such as are taught of *the* spirit, by spiritual words, spiritual things, explaining.” Why? Because the next verse goes on to explain that “But, a man of the soul, doth not welcome the things of the spirit of Yahweh, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot get to know them, because, spiritually, are they examined;”

“Spiritual words, spiritual things, explaining”: the three words which follow have been variously rendered and interpreted. In the Greek they are *pneumatikois, pneumatika and sunkrinontes*. The first word is in the *dative case, masc., plural* “to spiritual [persons].” The second word is in the *accusative case, neuter, plural*, “spiritual [things],” and the third word is peculiar. The A.V. and R.V. render it “comparing,” but the R.V. margin suggests “*combining*” or “*interpreting*.” It occurs only here and in 2 Cor. 10:12 in the New Testament, and means literally to separate and compound anew; hence *to explain* a thing, as is done when one takes it to pieces and puts it together again; *to explain by comparing* one thing with another; or *to compare with a view to explaining; to expound, make known, declare*. It is used in Numbers 15:34 of those who had caught the man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, and it says: “they put him in ward because it was not *declared* what should be done to him.” The word in this sentence is used to represent the word “declared.” Hence, it means *to declare, make known, explain, or expound*. The words here mean simply this, that we speak the words “which the holy spirit teacheth, declaring spiritual things to spiritual persons.” Westcott and Hort, in their Greek Text, preserve an ancient reading, but not being supported by the other MSS., they put it in the margin. It is *pneumatikos*, spiritually; and would read, “declaring spiritual things in a spiritual manner.” Then chap.3:1 comes in, taking up the thought where it was left in 2:1, “I, therefore, brethren, have not been able to speak unto you, as unto men of the spirit, but as unto men of the flesh—as unto babes in Christ: With milk, have I fed you, not, with meat; for, not yet, have ye been able; —nay! Not even now, are ye able, For ye are yet fleshly. For, whereas there are, among you, jealousy and strife, are ye not, fleshly, and, after the manner of men, walking? For, as soon as one beginneth to say—I, indeed, am of Paul! and another—I, of Apollos! are ye not, men?”

The great central truth of the whole argument is that these Corinthian Christians were taken up with “Bodies” of men, as we now call them, and they were therefore totally unfitted to receive the truth of the “one Body” of the Christ. While they were putting the members in the place of the Head they were carnal and not spiritual, and therefore not in a position to have the truth concerning “Yahweh’s Sacred Secret” declared to them. Hence, when the Apostle went to Corinth he determined not to go beyond the simplest elementary gospel teaching, to feed them with milk, to proclaim a crucified Savior; for they were not in a condition to hear about the glorified Savior – “the glad message of the glory of the Christ,” and all the glorious things which are freely given to us of Father, and which He has prepared with a view to their glory, the glory of the members of the Body in Christ, their glorified Head in heaven.

VI. – PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS.

When once we have grasped the great sacred secret of the Christ, we have a key to open several other difficult subjects, which have been made difficult and dark through the shutting out of the only light that could explain them. Many false notions have sprung up, as the necessary consequence of having lost the truth of the Sacred Secret.

[“WHY WAS THE SECRET KEPT?” IS DR. BULLINGER’S BELIEF AND IS SOMETHING TO MEDITATE UPON AND SEEK GUIDANCE FROM OUR FATHER TO SEE IF HIS BELIEF IS ROOTED IN THE WORD OF YAHWEH. HIS THEORY WOULD HEIP IN EXPLANING WHY JOEL 2 WAS QUOTED IN ACTS 2, “THE SUN, SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND, THE MOON, INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE DAY OF YAHWEH,; BUT ON THE OTHER HAND THE EKKLESIA IS METIONED IN ACTS 2:47 AND PAUL TOLD HOW HE PERSECUTED THE EKKLESIA OF YAHWEH IN I COR. 15;9, WHICH HAPPENED BEFORE HE WAS CONVERTED.]

(I) WHY WAS THE SACRED SECRET KEPT?

But first let us ask, why was the great doctrine of the “Sacred Secret” ever kept secret at all? Why did Father hide it in Himself, so that no one could possibly discover it till He chose to reveal it? The reason is clear. Had it not been kept secret, the Hebrews would have had a reason for their rejection of Christ again in the Acts of the Apostles! They could have pleaded that they were only fulfilling the prophecies, and would have lost at once all their responsibility. True, the rejection of the Messiah was foretold, but there was not a word about their rejection of the renewed offer of the King and the Kingdom, which was made authoritatively after the Ascension. In Acts 3:18 the holy spirit, by Peter reminds the nation how “Howbeit, Yahweh—what things he had before declared, through the mouth of all the prophets, for his Christ to suffer,—did thus fulfill!” There was an end of the matter, so far as Old Testament prophecies were concerned. Christ had suffered, but now, as to His entering into His glory, and fulfilling all the prophecies concerning that glory which was to follow, - what of these? What hindered their fulfillment? Why should there be delay in their accomplishment? The condition had been laid down in Lev. And Deut. And reiterated all through the Prophets that “Repentance” – that *National Repentance must precede National Blessing*. The call goes forth therefore in the very next verse (19). “Repent ye, therefore, and turn,—unto the blotting out of your sins; to the end that in that case, there may come seasons of refreshing from the face of Yahweh, And he may send forth him who had been fore-appointed for you—Christ Yahshua: Unto whom, indeed, heaven must needs give welcome, until the times of the due establishment of all things, of which Yahweh hath spoken through the mouth of his holy age—past prophets.”

The question is, ‘Was this most formal offer merely a mockery?’ Suppose they had obeyed that call and repented, and turned to Yahweh, Would not the times of refreshing have come from His presence? Would He not have sent Yahshua Christ? And in that case, Would not all that He had spoken by His prophets have been fulfilled? True, Christ had suffered; the Heavens had received Him, but not for ever; only “until” Israel should repent, and turn to Yahweh. Can we believe that this offer so formally and solemnly made was *unreal*? We cannot so believe. Israel was responsible before Yahweh for the rejection of that offer; but, had the consequence of their rejection of that offer been previously made known, such responsibility would have been impossible. Therefore was the secret purpose of Yahweh hidden in Himself: therefore was it kept secret during times eternal; and not until Israel had definitely refused to repent, and thus, rejected the offer to send Yahshua Christ from Heaven, not until then, was the sacred secret of Yahweh revealed.

We must never adopt any system of interpretation, which would have necessitated that rejection of the Messiah by Israel. Had the great sacred secret been revealed before, they would have been compelled to reject the Messiah, and they could not have been held responsible for that rejection.

[Note: This would not have affected the fulfillment of the Seventy Weeks of Dan. 9. All would have gone forward; and before the actual “times of refreshing” would have come the “time of Jacob’s trouble”; and before the sending of Yahshua Christ would have come the revelation of Antichrist, as there foretold; to say nothing of the shortening of the days provided for in Matt. 24:22 and Rom. 9:28.]

Their present administration with all its sufferings, is in consequence of that rejection, and Father is righteous in all His acts.

(2) A KEY TO OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

The second consequence which flows from the doctrine of the Sacred Secret is this: Had Israel obeyed the call in Acts 3:19-21, and the Lord Yahshua had been sent, there is not a prophecy in the Old Testament or in the Gospels which would not have been fulfilled! This is a great truth and an important principle far-reaching in its results. It tells us that the Gospels are the *conclusion* of the Old Testament history, and not the commencement of the Assembly of Yahweh teaching; except of course, so far as Christ crucified is the foundation of *all* blessing, whether for Creation, for Israel, or the Assembly of Yahweh.

The Gospels are a record of the rejection of the Messiah on the part of Israel, and not a record of the foundation of the Assembly. This exposes the follies of those who seek to apply the Sermon on the Mount to the Assembly of Yahweh and the world during this present administration; and who would build up “the New Theology” on “the teaching of Yahshua,” instead of on the teaching peculiar to this administration. It reveals to us the mistakes and errors of those who go back to the historic Gospels to preach the “Come- to-Yahshua Gospel,” instead of preaching the Glad Message from the Pauline Epistles, which are specially given to the Body of the Christ for its teaching and Glad Message preaching. Those who adopt the former plan are those who generally more or less ignore the latter. It explains the cause of the difficulties of those who seek to derive from the Acts of the Apostles a system of “Church Government,” while that book records the history of the transitional period between the rejection of the Messiah by Israel, the rejection of Israel by Yahweh, and closes with the solemn recital of Isa. 6:9, as to Israel’s judicial blindness, and the great declaration, “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of Yahweh is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

It seems impossible for us to fix the date of the revelation of the Sacred Secret to Paul, or to say in what part of the Acts it should be placed. From 2 Cor. 12:1-7 it would appear that “the abundance of the revelations” was given “fourteen years before.” This was written about A.D. 60, and fourteen years before would bring it to A.D. 46, which would synchronize with the important dispensational chapter, Acts 13, where we have the solemn epoch-marking words pronounced to the Hebrews, “And Paul and Barnabas, speaking boldly, said—Unto you, was it necessary, that the word of Yahweh should first be spoken: seeing ye are thrusting it from you, and, unworthy, are judging yourselves of the age-abiding life, lo! we turn unto the nations;” (*verse 46*). The Nations, as such, had been brought in and blessed long before this. But now, a special work connected with the Sacred Secret was about to be commenced, as is clear from *verse 1*, where “Barnabas and Saul” had been separated by the Holy Spirit Himself (it is Yahweh Himself), for the work “whereunto (He says) I have called them” (*verse 2*). There can be no doubt that the Acts of the Apostles (as man calls the book) records the transitional history between the rejection of the Kingdom, and the setting up of the Body of the Christ.

(3) THE TRUE PLACE OF PENTECOST.

It also removes another popular tradition that the Assembly of Yahweh dates from Pentecost! It is only a traditional interpretation on the part of man, and is destitute of any authority unless it can be proved to be so from the Word of Yahweh.

Had Israel repented in response to the call in Acts 3:18, 19, then, What about Pentecost? What would it have been then? Had Christ come in His glory in “the Day of Yahweh,” then, What about Pentecost and the Assembly of Yahweh? The fact is that then Joel 2 would have been (completely) fulfilled, for there Pentecost is distinctly declared to be the ushering in of the day of Yahweh.

“And it shall come to pass, afterwards, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters, shall prophesy,—your old men, shall dream, dreams, your young men, shall see, visions; Moreover also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids—in those days, will I pour out my spirit; And I will set forth wonders in the heavens, and in the earth,—blood, and fire, and columns of smoke: The sun, shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,—before the coming of the great and awful day of Yahweh. And it shall come to pass, whosoever, shall call on the name of Yahweh, shall be delivered” Joel 2: 28-32).

In Acts 2 (the first part of) Joel was therefore fulfilled. The preliminary events before the Day of Yahweh then took place. Everything was in readiness, and hence in Acts 3, as in Matt. 3 the call went forth, Israel “Repent.” When the King had come it was “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” But they refused to repent, and rejected the Kingdom. Now, once again, on the (new) ground of (the) Atonement (already) made, the call goes forth in Acts 3, and it is the same as before – “Repent” – that the King may be sent (back to you, oh rejecters of him!) Again they refuse to repent, and reject the King. Thus the Acts of the Apostles, is (for the Hebrew Nation) like the Gospels, a historical record of the rejection of the King and the Kingdom by Israel, and this explains how it was that Yahweh rejected Israel for a season, while He revealed and made known His sacred secret purpose concerning the Assembly of Yahweh.

Pentecost thus is shown to have nothing whatever to do with the Assembly of Yahweh; and all the modern talk about “Pentecostal blessing,” and “Pentecostal enduement,” etc. etc., and the awful heresy of the Pentecostal league’ are all based on a scripture which does not refer to the Assembly of Yahweh at all; and those who so base it are those who so greatly neglect the teaching of Yahweh in the Pauline Epistles, which are expressly given for the guidance, teaching, blessing, and building up of the Body of the Christ. All that Christians need of teaching concerning the work and power of the holy spirit is fully contained and revealed in the Epistles, which are written for that purpose.

(3) RIGHTLY DIVIDING OR STRAIGHT CUTTING THE WORD OF YAHWEH.

We thus have a fourfold Key for the interpretation of the Old Testament, the Four Gospels, the Acts, and the Apocalypse. *We are not* (when *interpreting* Scripture) *to read into it that which was the subject of subsequent revelation!* This principle cannot be over-estimated in its power to clear our understanding of the Word of Yahweh. Why is there so much confusion in reading the Word? Why are there so many conflicting opinions? Why so many “schools of thought,” and divergent “views?” It is because we do not “rightly divide” the Word of Yahweh (2 Tim. 2:15). That Word is, “the Word of Truth,” and this is why we are bidden to “rightly divide” or “skillfully handle” it. If therefore we fail thus to divide it, it is impossible for us to have “truth”; and we cannot fail to have error.

We must “rightly divide” off the Old Testament, Gospels, (some parts within) Acts, and the Apocalypse from the teaching concerning the Assembly of Yahweh. We must not read Assembly of Yahweh’s-truth into the Old Testament. We must not read teaching concerning the “Sacred Secret” into the Gospels and Acts. If teachers had always thus divided the Word, we should never have confused Israel with the Body of the Christ, or the Kingdom with the Body of the Christ. We should never have put the “extension of Christ’s Kingdom (to Israel)” for the spread of the Glad Message (by the Assembly of Yahweh). We should never have taken “the glad-message of the Kingdom of Heaven” as being synonymous with “the glad-message of the Grace of Yahweh;” or have supposed that the former is being, or could be, preached now, thus perverting Matt. 24:14. We should never have taken Matt. 24 as referring to the Assembly of Yahweh; or have supposed that the Assembly of Yahweh would be on the earth during the great Tribulation therein described. We should not have based our Missionary effort on Ps. 2:8 or Matt. 28:19, 20, for we should have seen that “the great Commission,” as it has been called, was obeyed by those to whom it was first given (see Col. 1:6, 23; Rom. 10:18; Titus 22:11), and will be completely fulfilled in the time of Matt. 24:14. The commission for the Assembly of Yahweh’s Missionary effort must be drawn from the Epistles, which are specially written for the Body of the Christ’s guidance and instruction, and not from the Gospels or any Scripture prior, at least, to Acts 3. We are not speaking of Missionary labor in itself, but only as to the Scriptural ground on which it should, or should not be based.

The closing verses of Mark would never have been mutilated by all its various readings had they not been wrongly taken for the Assembly of Yahweh-teaching (only). It was, we believe, the difficulties created by thus interpreting the verses that led to the rejection of the passage rather than to the rejection of the false principle of interpretation. The fact being that the Commission in verse 18 *was* obeyed by those to whom it was given, and the signs predicted did (indeed) follow in those who believed. The Church afterwards took this Commission as specially given to itself to carry out, and not seeing those specific signs following, questioned the genuineness of the Scripture, which predicted them, rather than its own wisdom in thus misapplying it. Kingdom-Truth in the Sermon on the Mount would never have been taken as Assembly of Yahweh-teaching, and thus Infidels and the world would have been deprived of one their readiest weapons against the Word of Yahweh.

The Church would never have been put into the Judgment of Matt. 25, which concerns only Gentile nations; and says nothing at all about resurrection. For even Infidels can plainly see (as the majority of (the blinded-by-religions) Christians cannot) that a judgment based on works can have no connection with a Assembly whose standing is in grace. The truth, instead of being “rightly divided” dispensationally, is thus made to become a source of error; and things, which differ and are each true in their proper place, are robbed of all their meaning by being confounded together. We should have had clearer views of the Apocalypse, and have seen that it referred to the setting up of the rejected Kingdom with power and in judgment after the Body of the Christ shall have been removed; and that the end of the the Body of the Christ being revealed in 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess.4, it could have no part or place on the earth during the events which take place in “the day of Yahweh.”

We should not go to the Gospels or Acts for passages concerning the Parousia of Christ, as “the hope of the Body of the Christ,” while in the Epistles alone is that coming set forth as the Body’s hope. We should never have substituted “a happy death” for “that blessed hope.” We should never have made the *death of man* our goal, instead of the *appearing of “Christ, our Life”* (Col. 3). We should never have taken dissolution (in death) instead of Ascension as our hope (1 Thess. 4), and then we should never have been driven to use Hymn-Books as the source of Christian Epitaphs, instead of the Pauline Epistles. We should not have confounded the special Revelation of that resurrection which is connected with the Sacred Secret in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15, with what is known as “the First Resurrection.” The first Resurrection was, as we have shown, no secret. The Old Testament clearly reveals it, and it would have taken place just the same (as it will yet take place), had Israel accepted the offer in Acts 3:18, 19, and had there been no

Assembly of Yahweh at all. The one is quite independent of the other, and they would never have been confounded, had the truth of the “Sacred Secret” been discerned.

We should not have taken the “breaking of bread” in the Acts of the Apostles, and exalted into the place of the Lord’s Supper, had we seen that it has nothing to do with a *Church* ordinance; or had we known that it was and remains till to-day, the common and universal Hebrew idiom for partaking of an ordinary meal together. We should never have taken John 6, as containing teaching as to the Lord’s Supper, which had not then been instituted, but, seeing that such an interpretation of the Gospels is incompatible with the doctrine of the Sacred Secret, we should have studied that Scripture afresh, and scientifically in the light of figurative language, and have seen that the figures of *Metonymy* and *Enallagé*, and their Hebrew idiom as to eating and drinking, clearly explain it as referring to that spiritual receiving, partaking of, and “inwardly digesting” of Christ and His words as the bread or support of spiritual life.

And, as to the Lord’s Supper itself, have we not fallen into many errors, “not discerning the Lord’s Body (*i.e.*, the Assembly of which Christ is its Head)?.” See 1 Cor. 11:29. For “the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of the Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16.) This must refer to the Assembly “Body of the Christ”, as the next verse goes on to explain – “Because, one loaf, one body, we, the many, are, for we, all, of the one loaf, partake.” That is to say the bread or loaf, which we break sets forth our communion *not* with Christ personal (which is the source of all the errors connected with the Lord’s Supper), but the communion and fellowship of all the members of Christ’s Body. The one loaf setting forth the fellow-partnership of all the members with one another and with Christ the Head of the Body in glory, with whom we hope shortly to be, and hence “as oft as we break that bread, we “show forth the Lord’s death till He Come.” This is what is meant by “discerning the Body.”

These and many other mistakes would never have been made – had the true doctrine of the Great Sacred Secret been preserved and held by the Body of the Christ; and had “the Word of the Truth” been consequently rightly divided.

(*Seventh Paper (Concluding Chapter), Things to Come*, March 1896, 2(9):154-156)

VII. THE BODY AND THE BRIDE.

There is another error, which the doctrine of the Sacred Secret corrects, though there is certainly some little excuse for its having been so generally entertained, and that is, the identification of “*the Body*” with “*the Bride*.” We have already seen that had Israel repented and turned to Yahweh (Acts 3:18, 19), there is not an Old Testament prophecy which would not have been fulfilled (at that time). But the “Bride” *is* the subject of Old Testament prophecy. Therefore, had Israel repented, and there had been no Assembly of Yahweh, there would still have been *the Bride* according to the prophetic word. Many are the prophecies of the Bride in the Old Testament, and hence some who cannot ignore this fact and yet cling to the *modern* idea of the Body being the Bride, believe they are, or will be, *Two Brides*: the Bride of Yahweh and the Bride of the Lamb... The Bride in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea, is Israel, or at any rate the elect of Israel; those who were “partakers of the heavenly calling” in Israel. We read in –

Isaiah 54:5, 6

“For, thy husband, is, thy Maker, Yahweh of hosts, is his Name,—And, thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, The Elohim of all the earth, shall he be called. For, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, hath Yahweh, called thee,—Even the wife of youthful days, in that thou wast rejected, saith thy Elohim.”

See also verses 7, 8.

Isaiah 62:4, 5

“Thou shalt be termed no longer—Forsaken, Nor shall, thy land, be termed any longer, A desolation, But, thou, shalt be called, Hephzibah[[" My delight is in her"]], And, thy land, Beulah[[" married"]], —For Yahweh hath found delight, in thee, And, thy land, shall be married. For, a young man, marryeth, a virgin, Thy sons, marry thee! And, the bridegroom, rejoiceth, over, the bride—Thy Elohim, rejoiceth over thee.”

“Thy sons marry thee!” A slight change in the vowel points, gives the reading *thy great or royal Restorer* or *Builder* (by the figure of *Enallage*, plural for singular) instead of “thy sons.” Sons, moreover, were the builders of families (Gen. 16:2; 30:3; Deut. 25:9; Ruth 4:11, etc.)

Jeremiah 3:14

“Return, ye apostate sons, Urgeth Yahweh, for, I, am become your husband,—therefore will I take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and will bring you to Zion;”

Hosea 2:16, 19-20

“And it shall come to pass, in that day, Declareth Yahweh, that she will call me Ishi[[" My husband"]], and will not call me any more., Baali[[" Mine owner"]]. . . And I will take thee unto myself, unto times age-abiding,—yea I will take thee unto myself, in righteousness and in justice, and in lovingkindness, and in abounding compassion: Yea I will take thee unto myself, in faithfulness,—So shalt thou know Yahweh.”

These and other passages clearly prophesy that an election of Israel shall be the Bride. Had, then, the call in Acts 3:18, 19 been obeyed, these prophecies must have had their fulfillment, quite irrespective of any Assembly of Yahweh. Here again we come upon the solution of another great difficulty:

THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

They are a great burden to Expositors of New Testament Truth. And what to do with them is one of the commonest questions and difficulties, which arises in the mind of the Bible-student. That there has been an elect body all through the Old Testament history we have abundant evidence. While all the promises to Israel as a nation, were earthly, there were always those who lived “by believing (he wrote “faith”)” and “died in believing (he wrote “faith”),” and were “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb. 6:1). These looked for no earthly portion, but they looked forward with a heavenly hope to a heavenly blessing. “These all died in believing (he wrote “faith”), not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country... a better country, that is an HEAVENLY: Wherefore Yahweh is not ashamed to be called their Elohim; for He hath prepared for them A CITY.” (Heb. 11:13-16) – And of Abraham it is said “he looked for a CITY, which hath FOUNDATIONS, whose builder and maker is Yahweh.” (v. 10).

Now when we turn to Rev. 21:9, we read that one of the seven angels said to John: “Hither! I will point out to thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great CITY, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from Yahweh, having the glory of Yahweh; and her light was like unto a stone most precious,” etc. (Rev. 21:9-27). What are we to understand but that this “CITY,” – which is declared to be the “BRIDE, the Lamb’s wife,” is the city for which all those who were partakers of the Heavenly Calling looked; and that these elect saints of

the Old Testament will form the BRIDE. This “Holy Jerusalem” may contain the Assembly of Yahweh or Body of the Christ, as well as the Bride, inasmuch as “the Yahweh Elohim of Host, and the Lamb, are the Sanctuary of it” (Rev. 21:22), and “the Lamb is the light thereof.” But it is not necessary on this account that we should *identify* them. The “Lamb” is the special title of the Lord Yahshua in relation to Israel, and the elect of Israel, and especially to the Bride (see Rev. 19:7-9 and the Parables of Marriage, and the Marriage-Supper in the Gospels).

It will also be noted that the names “ON the GATES of the city (*i.e.*, the *visible* parts of the city)”, are “the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.” (Rev. 21:12), while the names “IN the FOUNDATIONS (the *invisible* parts of the city) are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (*ver.* 14).” This again carries us back to the Gospels (Matt. 19:28), to the solemn words of the Lord Yahshua in answer to a specific enquiry as to the portion of the Twelve Apostles: “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Here in Rev. 21 we have the Regeneration (the new heaven and the new earth), we have the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. We ask, what has this to do with the Assembly of Yahweh – the Body of the Christ? And has it not to do only and solely with the Holy City and with the BRIDE of the Lamb? The promise of Christ to the Twelve Apostles has never been abrogated; and, we ask, what are we to do with it, if the Apostles form part of the Body of the Christ? The Assembly of Yahweh is part or the Body of the Christ, the Bridegroom; but the Apostles, by a comparison of Matt. 19:28, with Rev. 21:14, form part of the BRIDE.

This effectually disposes of the figment of “Apostolic Succession,” which would never have been seriously entertained had not the truth connected with the Sacred Secret been lost. And we ought to note that while the Twelve Apostles are thus separated off from the Assembly of Yahweh, the Apostle Paul was specially raised up to a special and different position altogether, and is identified with the Sacred Secret. In harmony also with this is the teaching of

EPHESIANS 5:25-33.

Christians in their selfishness, attempt to rob others of their place as the Bride, and thus lose their own still “better” place as part of the Bridegroom. “Verily they have their reward”! The Bride and the Bridegroom, though in a sense one, are yet surely distinct. And it is clear from all the scriptures relating to the Sacred Secret, that the members of the Christ’s Body are not the Bride, but part of the Bridegroom Himself; whereas the elect Old Testament saints will form the Bride. See Isaiah 12:6 “Make shrill thy voice and sing out, thou inhabitress of Zion,—That, great in the midst of thee, is, the Holy One of Israel.” In Rev. 22:3, we read “The Throne of Yahweh and of the Lamb shall be in it.” Of the glory of this Holy City other scriptures speak. See Is. 60:3, 14, 19, 20; Rev. 21:23, 24, 27; Is. 54:11-12. This is referred to again in Is. 4:5, when Yahweh shall have purged away the filth of the daughters of Zion, it is added “beyond all this glory there shall be the *Chuppah*, or the *marriage canopy*,” mentioned elsewhere only in Ps. 19:5 and Joel 2:16; and referring to Isa. 62. The *Chuppah* is the bridal canopy beneath which the nuptial ceremonies are performed to this day. True, the Apostle might address the saints concerning his desire to present them “As a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2). But this no more declares that the Body of the Christ is the Bride of Christ than that the Apostle himself was their father (1 Cor. 4:15); or that he was their mother (Gal. 4:19). In one case he spoke of the painful anxiety of a mother; in another of the loving care of a father; while, in 2 Cor. 11:2, he spoke of the jealousy of the friend of a bridegroom. The “Sacred Secret” was a totally different thing.

So, in Eph. 5:28, 29, the argument is that husbands “So, ought the husbands *also* to be loving their own wives, as their own bodies,—he that loveth his own wife, loveth himself, No one, in fact, ever yet hated,

his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it,—even as, the Christ, the assembly, Because, members, are we of his body;” i.e., AS Christ loves His own Body, the Assembly; so ought husbands to love their own selves, because they and their wives are “one flesh.” Thus “the great sacred secret” is employed as an argument as to the reciprocal duties of husbands and wives. In neither case is it said that the Assembly IS the wife, or that Christ IS the husband. But that AS Christ loves His Body (the Assembly), SO husbands ought to love their bodies (their wives). What is clear and certain is that the Assembly is the Body of the Christ Himself, and that the members of that Body being “in Christ” (as members of His Body), are PART OF THE BRIDEGROOM, and cannot possibly, therefore, be the Bride herself.

It is a remarkable example of the perversity of Expositors, who while they hold that the Bride is the Assembly of Yahweh, persist in interpreting the parable of the ten virgins, as though the Bride’s attendant “Virgins” are also the Assembly. Though who ever heard of an Eastern Bride going out “to meet” the Bridegroom! The Virgins, “her companions,” went, but not the Bride. So our (wrong) expositors can hold whichever of these two positions they please, but, clearly, they are not entitled to hold them both. The “Bride” *must* be distinct from “the virgins her companions that follow her.” If we rightly divide the Word of Truth we see that the Body of the Christ is neither the one nor the other, and that the subsequent revelation of the “Sacred Secret” cannot be read into either Psalm 45 or Matt. 25, which are perfectly clear as they stand, and must have been capable of a plain interpretation to the first hearers or readers of those words, quite apart from the truth subsequently revealed.

The Great Sacred Secret was “hid in Yahweh.” It does not say it was hidden in the Scriptures, but “hid in Yahweh” Himself. There can be therefore no *types* of it in the Old Testament, inasmuch as types *teach*, and were meant to teach doctrines. But if truths and doctrines, which are elsewhere clearly revealed in the New Testament, can be *illustrated* from the Old Testament, that is quite another matter. The *illustration* and *application* of Old Testament Scripture to the Assembly of Yahweh is quite lawful and profitable, so long as it is kept distinct from *interpretation*. It is one thing to see an illustration of the Body of the Christ in the Old Testament; but it is quite another thing to say that that is there revealed, which Father distinctly declares *was not revealed!*

GENESIS 24

Has been, for example, widely taken as typical of the Christ and the Church. Isaac is taken as the bridegroom, and Rebekah as the Church or the bride. True, the chapter *is illustrative*, but not of the Body of the Christ. The bridegroom and the bride were both “ready” before either was called to the marriage. The bride was found in *the house of Abraham’s brother*. Very special injunctions were given that she was not to be of “the Canaanites.” “But,” said Abraham to Eliezer, “thou shalt go unto *my country* and to *my kindred* and take a wife unto my son Isaac... thou shalt take a wife for my son *from thence*.” Great emphasis is placed on these important conditions in verses 3, 4, 7, 37, 38. Abraham and Nahor were brothers, and by Isaac’s marriage with Rebekah, and Jacob’s marriage with her brother Laban’s daughters, Leah and Rachel, the *whole house of Nahor* was absorbed into the family of Abraham! *Gentiles* were expressly shut out when this typical wife was chosen, and Isaac on receiving his bride took her at once “into his mother Sarah’s tent,” thus forming the ground of the type as expounded in Gal. 4:21-31.

Rebekah therefore represents, not the Assembly or the Body of the Christ, but that great cloud of witnesses (the Old Testament saints), who in the old dispensation sacrificed, as she did, all worldly advantages for the Lord’s sake. It is for these He is preparing that “city which hath foundations,” and of which He Himself is the divine architect. And truly, it is said of these, “if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out (as Rebekah came) they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore Yahweh is not ashamed to be called

their Elohim; for He hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:15, 16). “These all having obtained a good report through faith (believing), received not the promise, Yahweh having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (verses 39, 40). Now, we maintain, that this “better thing” cannot be the same as the good thing. The comparative term distinguishes between two things, and necessitates the existence of *two*. The one, as the Bride, will have a good place, a grand place, a place of honor and glory as the Lamb’s wife in the holy Jerusalem, but the Body of the Christ, will have “some better thing,” a position of greater glory and honor, as part of the Bridegroom Himself.

It is for this consummation that the members of His Body now wait. We are, by the wondrous position which grace has given us, necessarily cut off from all “bodies” which are of human origination, and from all Ecclesiastical organizations. We do not seek to restore corporate testimony, for no such restoration of what man had ruined, was ever promised. The corporate failure is complete. There is no authority in the Word for re-establishing it, and all attempts to do so have ended in disaster, and in a widening of the breach between brethren. The “unity of the spirit” is now only *subjective*. There is no such thing as an *objective* unity of the spirit, which we can “join.” The real truth of the “Sacred Secret” received into the heart raises the members of the Body far above all human plans and hopes of union or Re-union. It takes us up at once into the heavenlies, seats us there with Christ, so that like Him we are “henceforth expecting.”

Hence, we are not concerned with prophecy as such, as a mere subject of study. To look for Christ’s appearing is the very essence of our Christian standing. It is the very breath of the Christian’s life. We “wait for Yahweh’s Son from heaven,” and long for Him to appear so that we may be

“RECEIVED UP IN GLORY.”