

## CROSS AND SANCTUARY IN PROPHECY

The two great movements in the concert of salvation are the priest's work as sacrifice and application of the blood. These two movements for Christ are His death on the cross in A. D. 31 and His final work as High Priest in heaven commencing in 1844. Both are absolutely essential in the plan of salvation. We are to have an intelligent understanding of His work in order to appreciate what He has accomplished for us at the cross and what He wants to accomplish objectively in heaven above and subjectively in our own lives. This the Wonderful Numberer has revealed five centuries before the Messiah's appearance in the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9.

Daniel 9:23. "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

What "matter," what vision," is the angel to explain to Daniel? It is a vision that Daniel has already received, for the angel commands him, "Understand the matter, and consider the vision."<sup>1</sup> This vision can be no other than the vision of chapter 8, which the angel was never able to finish explaining to Daniel, because he fainted (Daniel 8:27). All had been satisfactorily explained at that time, except the strange

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<sup>1</sup> In English, we have only one word for "vision" in this chapter. But in the Hebrew, the language of Daniel, there are two words: *chazon* means only a prophetic vision where the prophet sees action that is symbolically meaningful, such as the beasts and the horns. The other word for "vision" is *mareh*, which means literally "an appearance" and refers to what is ordinarily seen of people or of angels. In Daniel 8:1, 2, 15, *chazon* is used to refer to the prophetic action Daniel witnessed of the ram, the he goat, and then the little horn waxing "exceeding great." The second word, *mareh*, is used of the conversation he heard and witnessed of the two heavenly beings (verses 13, 14) when they asked, "How long" would the desolation of the "daily" and the "transgression of desolation" last? The answer came, "Unto two thousand three hundred days . . ." In Daniel 8:26 the angel referred to this, saying, "And the vision [*mareh*] of the evenings and the morning [2300 days] is true." Daniel adds in verse 27, "I was astonished at the *mareh*, but none understood it." In other words, Gabriel explained the meaning of the "*chazon* vision," but did not explain the *mareh* vision of the 2300 days. When he returns in Daniel 9, he says to Daniel: "Understand the matter and consider the *mareh*." Then he proceeds to tell of the seventy weeks. Thus it is clear that the seventy weeks are an explanation of the 2300 days, and belong to them being cleansed. The angel now begins where he left off in chapter 8, verse 26.

word about the “two thousand three hundred days,” and the sanctuary. The angel now begins where he left off in chapter 8, verse 26.<sup>2</sup>

The prophecies in Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 11 outline the rise and fall of world nations and their rulers as they come on the scene of action and disappear. But in Daniel 9 we do not see the onward march of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Some of these nations formed the historical backdrop against which the fate of Judea played out, but Daniel 9 focuses more specifically upon the people of God.

Daniel 9:24. “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”

The word “determined” means in biblical Hebrew to be “cut off.” “Seventy weeks” are therefore cut off of the 2300 days, and are given to the Jews as their last opportunity, as a nation, for repentance.

Each week contains seven days; and 70 times 7 equals 490. Each day is a symbol of a year in Bible prophecy (see Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34); thus, we have 490 years “cut off” of the 2300 years as a special opportunity for Daniel’s people. (The Hebrew clearly says “weeks,” and most scholars see literal years here, thus confirming the year-day application.)

During these 490 years, some wonderful things are to take place: The opening phrase of this prophecy proceeds to list a series of six events, or actions, that are to be accomplished by the end of the specified seventy weeks allotted to the Jewish people. These six actions come in three pairs. The first pair is addressed especially to the people of Judah and describes what they were to accomplish within this time frame of seventy weeks. The second pair describes actions that God would take upon Himself as His own responsibility. The final pair points to the results that would flow from the combination of the previous four actions.

The two actions that were the responsibility of God’s people were opening a righteous society. Like ancient Israel in the wilderness,

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<sup>2</sup> The original Hebrew Old Testament was not divided into paragraphs or even verses as in our modern Bibles. The marking of the verses and paragraphs has been done by the translators as they saw fit. The translators have not always understood the real meaning of these prophecies.

they were to purify the camp in order to prepare conditions which would be right for the Messiah to come.

God's responsibility, as reflected in the second pair of actions in verse 24, was "to atone for wickedness, [and] to bring in everlasting righteousness." Atonement was a central feature of the sacrificial system in the Hebrew sanctuary (see Leviticus 4 and 16). But the atonement mentioned here goes beyond what that system could accomplish. As the book of Hebrews points out, there was a problem with the old system. The problem was that the atonement provided was temporary. A sin was dealt with by offering a sacrifice, but when another sin was committed, it required another sacrifice. Round and round the system went (see Hebrews 7:11; 10:4). But what Daniel 9:24 looked forward to was one great final atonement. That was provided for us by Jesus Christ in His death on the cross. Since that great all-encompassing sacrifice has taken place once for all people, no more ongoing round of sacrifices is necessary (see Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 25; 10:10, 12, 14). It envisions an ultimate atonement to be accomplished with finality by the time the 70 weeks ended. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross in the midst of the seventieth week provides just such an atonement.

This marks the transition from a temporary, transitory righteousness to one that is permanent and everlasting. And that is exactly the next action referred to in Daniel 9:24—"to bring in everlasting righteousness." It was by means of the Messiah's death (vs. 26) and by means of the atonement His death accomplished (vs. 24) that everlasting righteousness was made available to the human race. It was this everlasting quality and quantity of righteousness that the transitory round of the sacrificial system could not provide.

Daniel 9:25. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

Now we see the event which marks the beginning of both the 490 years and 2300 years together: "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" at the end of the Jews' captivity in Babylon. When did this "decree" go forth? Fortunately, this actual decree has been preserved for us in the wisdom of God. It is found in Ezra 7:11-26. This decree gives full and complete permission for the restoration of the city and the temple services. It is the only decree

which fulfills the prophecy. The date when this decree was given was the year 457 B. C.<sup>3</sup>

Daniel's prophecy divides the seventy weeks into different portions. The first time period covers sixty-nine weeks (seven weeks + sixty-two weeks) at which time the Messiah, "the Anointed One" (Daniel 9:25), is to come. The noun Messiah comes from a verb which means "to anoint." Thus, literally, a "Messiah" was an Anointed One. Gabriel tells Daniel, "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens'" (verse 25). Sixty-nine weeks is 483 days ( $7 \times 69 = 483$ ). According to the year-for-a-day principle discussed above, each of those days should be understood as a literal year of actual time. Beginning the 483 years in 457 B. C. with the commencement of the seventy weeks, brings us down to A. D. 27 for their ending point (there is no Year 0 in calculating dates from B. C. to A. D.). At this time "the Anointed One, the ruler" is to come.

What does it mean for the Messiah, the Anointed One, to come? What event are we to look for in A.D. 27? Messiah's birth? His death? Something else?

When did Jesus of Nazareth become the Messiah? Since Messiah means "the Anointed One," Jesus became the Messiah, technically speaking, when He was anointed. When was this? He did not have oil poured over His head like the Old Testament kings and priests in Jerusalem. But was there a specific occasion when He was anointed and formally began His public ministry? Yes. This occurred at His baptism by John in the Jordan River when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 3:13-17). God the Father was present on that occasion and marked it by His own pronouncement, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased" (verse 17).

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<sup>3</sup> Of the four decrees mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah regarding the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, the third one, the one Artaxerxes gave to Ezra, is the one that fulfills most closely the specification of the prophecy in Daniel. Ezra 7:8 ties this decree to Artaxerxes's seventh year.

From a variety of ancient documents, we can date Artaxerxes's seventh year to the year that overlaps what we know as 458 and 457 B. C.

We then apply the Jewish calendar to that date and see that Ezra's journey occurred in 457 B. C. This process gives us the date of 457 B. C. for the commencement of the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel 9.

We have established 457 B. C. as the beginning date for Daniel's seventy weeks. Daniel 9:25 goes on to say, "It [Jerusalem] will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble." It is clear from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah that this construction took place in a troubled time. When Ezra returned, he started rebuilding the city, but the western Persian governors soon intervened and got the work stopped (see Ezra 4:7-12). When Nehemiah took up the project anew, his opponents wanted to assassinate him. He resisted their efforts and refused to interrupt his work on the city (see Nehemiah 4). Thus the rebuilding of Jerusalem certainly took place in a troubled time. The prophecy seems to point to some event marking a completion of this first phase of construction in 408 B. C. at the end of the first seven weeks, or forty-nine years (see verse 25).

We have seen that the sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, ended in A. D. 27 with Jesus' baptism. The next questions become: When did the seventy weeks end, and what event marked its termination?

Seventy prophetic weeks equal 490 prophetic days or literal years. Simple addition tells us that if we add 490 years to 457 B. C. we reach A. D. 34. What happened in A. D. 34 to mark the conclusion of the seventy weeks?

The stoning of Stephen, described in Acts 7, is an event that has attracted considerable attention as marking the end of the seventy weeks—both for its theological significance as well as its timing. The final pair of events in verse 24 are results of the first four actions. The first was "to seal up vision and prophecy." The word translated prophecy here is actually the word for "prophet." There would come a time when both vision and prophet would be sealed up. This is in the context of what would happen to the people of Judah. This prophecy would be dramatically fulfilled with the stoning of Stephen (see Acts 7).

When a person looks into heaven and sees God sitting on His throne and Jesus standing at His right hand, that person is having a vision. People who have visions are, by definition, prophets. At that moment, technically speaking, Stephen was a prophet. But his audience would not hear or accept his vision; they rejected him and stoned him, sealing his lips in death. When Stephen died, the last prophetic voice had spoken to Israel as the elect people of God.

There were four areas of theological significance related to Stephen's martyrdom: (1) the group to whom Stephen gave his final speech—the Sanhedrin, the highest religious body in the land; (2) the

form of his speech—a covenant lawsuit speech like those given by Old Testament prophets; (3) the prophetic nature of his experience at the time of his death when he looked up in vision into heaven itself; and (4) the fact that Paul’s conversion has its roots in Stephen’s death, so that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, takes the place of Stephen the powerful preacher to Israel. For these reasons, Stephen’s death at the end of the seventy weeks can be seen as a highly significant point of transition from the era of Israel as the elect nation of God to the era of the church.

The second half of the final pair of events in verse 24 is the matter of anointing “the most holy.” In ancient times, sanctuaries were anointed as part of the ceremony that commenced their ministry. A good example of this is found in Exodus 40 where the tabernacle and everything in it was anointed with oil to initiate its ministry. Parallel with this action, the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary should have taken place when Christ was inaugurated there as our great High Priest. The earthly sign of this heavenly anointing was the falling of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

This final event of the six listed in verse 24 is the one place in the prophecy of chapter 9 where earth and heaven are connected. The rest of the prophecy concerns events on earth. This link is, therefore, very precious, for it shows us that heaven and earth are very close.

Daniel 9:26. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

These sixty-two weeks, first mentioned in verse 25, follow the first seven weeks and comprise the second interval of prophetic time within the seventy weeks. Thus the sixty-two weeks conclude with the end of the sixty-ninth week of the seventy-week prophecy.

But verse 26 says “after the sixty-two ‘sevens’” (emphasis supplied), thus taking us slightly beyond the end of the sixty-ninth week. In other words, the Anointed One is not cut off right at the point at which the sixty-two weeks end, but slightly beyond that point. The specific use of the Hebrew word for “after” emphasizes this.

Where are we if we are just beyond the end of the sixty-ninth week? The answer is quite evident: We are in the seventieth week. Verse 26 does not specify exactly where in that week the Anointed One is to be cut off. That detail comes up in verse 27.

As we saw earlier, the sixty-nine weeks come to an end in A. D. 27 when the Messiah appeared to officially begin His public ministry. Some-time after the commencement of that ministry He was to be “cut off.” The verb translated “cut off” is used here as a Hebrew idiom which means “to be killed.” To be cut off is to be cut off from the land of the living, to die (see Genesis 9:11). But the verb here is in the passive form, meaning that the Anointed One is not going to die of His own volition; somebody is going to do this to Him. He is going to be cut off, be killed. This stipulation of the prophecy was fulfilled when the religious leaders of Judea conspired with the Roman governmental authorities to have Jesus of Nazareth crucified like a common criminal (see Matthew 27:1, 2).

The next phrase of this prophecy in verse 26 is a short—but difficult—one. The NIV translates it: “The Anointed One . . . will have nothing.” This a good translation because the phrase in the original language has to do with possession. Literally the Hebrew words mean “There shall not be [X] to/for him.” Notice that the direct object is missing from this phrase, as has been indicated by the X in the translation above. The indirect object, him, is present and refers clearly to the Messiah, the Anointed One. But what is it that will not be to or for Him? The NIV, the RSV, and other versions supply the word, thing, making the phrase mean, “There shall be nothing for him.” That would be a prophetic picture of the Messiah’s poverty. Certainly Jesus of Nazareth had few, if any, material possessions beyond the clothes He wore. He Himself said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20).

It may be suggested, however, that there is something more important to God, and His Messiah, than mere material possessions. People are of greater importance to God, than their possessions. In fact, the next phrase of the prophecy in Daniel 9:26 places its stress on people: “The people of the ruler who will come. . . .” Thus it seems that missing word is better supplied by the word, people, than the word, thing. Thus we can translate this phrase: “There shall not be people for him,” or more freely, “No one shall be for him.”

This is a picture of rejection, not poverty. And this rejection takes place at a particular time, at the time when He was to be cut off. This is not a general rejection floating freely in time; it is a specific rejection occurring at the time of His death. This rejection was fulfilled in the experience of Jesus of Nazareth. When He went to the cross,

He did so because the religious leaders and the tide of public opinion had turned against Him. The fickle crowd turned away from the popular enthusiasm they had displayed in favor of Jesus earlier during the final week of His ministry (see Matthew 21:1-11). Now, with equal enthusiasm, they shouted in favor of the death sentence against Him (see Matthew 27:20-26). His own disciples who stood about the foot of the cross did not understand what this was all about. Even after the cross they murmured, "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). At the time of Jesus' death, "no one was for him."

The next phrase of the prophecy in Daniel 9:26 shifts the focus from the Messiah to the Jewish people and what will happen to them. "The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." Verse 26 begins with a prophecy of Jerusalem's reconstruction and ends with a prophecy of its re-destruction! Enclosed within these two historical poles and their extension in prophetic time lies the career of the Messiah. After that career was over, at some later point not specified, the city was to revert to ruins like those which Nebuchadnezzar had left behind when he conquered Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

The Romans accomplished this re-destruction of the city when they conquered and destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Visitors to the city today can still see the results of the Babylonian destruction of 586 B. C. in the archaeological garden on the eastern slope of Mount Ophel. Those same tourists can see the effects of the Roman destruction in A.D. 70 in the archaeological excavations around the southern retaining wall of the temple complex and in the archaeological museum nearby known as the Burnt House. These remains give vivid evidence of the destruction prophesied by Daniel. It can also be seen on the Arch of Titus in Rome where the booty taken from Judea, including the lampstand, or Menorah, from the sanctuary is depicted in sculpted stone relief.

Who are the "people of the ruler [or "prince," Hebrew: *nagid*]" who carried out this destruction? The Romans clearly destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70, so it has been suggested that this verse refers to the Roman people, or army, and that the "ruler" must refer either to the Roman general who led the army against Jerusalem or to the Caesar who ordered the attack. The final phrase of verse 26 amplifies the picture of that war and its consequences. "The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been



decreed.” The figurative language of a flood is a very apt description for the way the Roman army finally flowed into Jerusalem to conquer it. The Roman army will overflow Jerusalem and its temple like a flood. Jerusalem’s northern wall was always the weakest of its defenses because there were valleys on the other three sides of the city. It was at this northern wall that the Roman troops finally penetrated the defenses bringing desolation that is still well revealed today by the archaeologist’s spade.

Daniel 9:27. “And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.”

It begins with two more statements about the work of the Messiah and then shifts back again to the work of Rome, the desolater. Verse 27 makes two predictions concerning the Messiah. The first states, “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’” This does not refer to the inception of a new covenant; it refers instead to an attempt to strengthen the everlasting covenant already in existence. When Hebrew writers wanted to refer to the inception of a new covenant, they used the verb “to cut” to express that action. “To cut” a covenant was to make a covenant. But that is not the verb used here in verse 27. It says, instead, that the covenant would be “confirmed,” meaning “made strong,” or “strengthened.” The verb used here is related to the Hebrew word for “a strong man,” a “warrior.”

Jesus was the true messenger of the covenant. Unfortunately, His hearers did not fully accept this great view of what Israel might have been under the Messiah’s covenant leadership. It was this failure to grasp all that God was holding out to them that caused Jesus to weep bitterly over Jerusalem during the last week of His earthly ministry (Matthew 23:37-39).

The second prediction of Daniel 9:27 foretold the end of the sacrificial system. Physically, the temple and its offerings came to an end when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70. But that is not what this phrase of the prophecy is talking about because it gives a time frame for the end of the sacrifices and offerings that does not extend to A.D. 70.

Who is the one putting an end to these sacrifices and offerings? The antecedent to “He” is the Messiah Prince, not a Roman ruler. True, the Romans caused the direct physical cessation of the temple and its sacrifices by their destruction of the temple in A. D. 70. But even more important was the spiritual end of the sacrifices in the

theological sense that they were no longer necessary after the death of Jesus. He Himself was the Passover lamb (see 1 Corinthians 5:7). With His death, the type of all of the Old Testament sacrifices met their antitype. They were no longer necessary. God signified this by rending the veil in the temple at the time that Jesus died (see Matthew 27:51). Thus, in the sense of Daniel 9:27, the sacrifices came to an end in A. D. 31 when Jesus died on the cross.

One question that arises here is: When did Jesus die? He died in the midst of the final week which we have dated to A. D. 27-34. Thus the mid-point of that week is A. D. 31.

The final statement of this entire prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 comes in the last half of verse 27. "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Following the literal word order, the original Hebrew of this prediction states: "Upon the wing of abomination [shall come] the desolater, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." "Upon the wing of" should be seen as an idiom which means to follow closely. In other words, the abominations come first, followed quickly by the desolation. The desolation was caused by the Roman army after its conquest of Jerusalem. The abominations were those things going on in Jerusalem preceding its destruction and desolation. As the Roman troops broke through the northern defenses of the city, one contingent of Judean troops retreated into the very temple building itself. It was a strong, substantial structure and therefore made a good final fortress. This required the Roman soldiers to attack the temple building even though their general wished to spare it. In the ensuing fight, the temple caught fire and burned. It was never God's purpose that His temple would be turned into a fortress for fighting in war, and to do so introduced the ultimate in secular abominations into that holy space. After that abominable course of action came the destruction and desolation, exactly as the prophecy described.

But the Romans themselves were not to go unpunished either. God permitted these events to occur because the people of Judea forsook His divine protection by their rejection of the Messiah. The Roman troops were, therefore, instruments of God's judgment at the time.

Now the Romans were permitted to carry out the same kind of judgment upon Jerusalem, but Rome, too, was to be judged. That was also the message of some of the other prophecies of Daniel—

that Rome would have its day upon the stage of history, but like the other powers that preceded it, Rome would also fall (see Daniel 2:40-44; 7:7, 8, 23, 24; 8:25). Thus the title of Gibbon's famous work of history, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, actually illustrates the fulfillment of the final prophetic statement in Daniel 9.

When Gabriel came to Daniel in 9:23 and told Daniel that he had come to help him understand the "vision," he used the word *mareh*. The vision Gabriel was referring to was Daniel 8:14 (Dan. 8:26). "Unto two thousand three hundred days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The seventy week of Daniel 9 were to be cut off of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. The language of Daniel 9:23 thus gives a more specific date to the time period of Daniel 8:14. Daniel 8 indicates that it was to begin in general during the Persian period, and Daniel 9 pins down the beginning date as 457 B. C. Adding 2,300 evenings-mornings, or days, to 457 B. C. on the basis of the year-for-a-day principle, those 2,300 years extend to the year A. D. 1844.

This points us to the time when the great cosmic Day of Atonement commenced. The complete sacrificial atonement occurred with Jesus' death upon the cross in A. D. 31. The application of His blood as our great High Priest for the "blotting out of sin" commenced in 1844. Daniel 9 points us to the completed sacrificial atonement. Daniel 8 points to the blood applied in the heavenly sanctuary to make an end of sin.

In the Old Testament priestly paradigm the sacrifice for sin was offered day-by-day. Sin was transferred from sinner to sanctuary by the blood of animals thus symbolizing God taking the responsibility for it. Forgiveness of sins was truly given by God to the penitent. Annually the Day of Atonement involved the whole congregation following their representative high priest—Aaron—making an atonement for the sin in the sanctuary and the people. The people were most interested in the clearing of sin from the house of the Lord. They participated by sending by faith their sins into the sanctuary by virtue of the blood of animals representing the future Messiah. The people were keenly involved in the vindication of God's name and the triumph of His gospel in their lives. It was for His honor and glory that the Day of Atonement was to bring them into harmony without any intervening sin disrupting their communion.

We likewise are now living since 1844 in a more heightened state of alert. Jesus has already given His life's blood as the complete sacrificial atonement for sin. Now as High Priest in the heavenly

sanctuary He makes application of that blood to cleanse the heavenly places. That necessitates a cleansing of His people who follow Him in His high priestly work. They are most concerned for His honor and vindication through this final phase of atoning working. They want to see an end of sin so that His gospel may triumph in their lives. They enter into heart sympathy with Him for the salvation of sinners. With Him they seek to draw souls to His cross and point them to their saving Mediator.

This unique understanding of Seventh-day Adventists regarding the cross atonement and the cleansing atonement of the sanctuary is the Third Angel's Message. It is Jesus' gift to the world. It will prepare a people for His second coming. It is the culmination of the promise God gave to Abraham in the everlasting covenant. It preserves the objective work of Christ on the cross two thousand years ago as a legal forensic act. The objective, priestly work of Christ, is a true, real-time sanctuary in heaven which is polluted with the sins of people on earth. This is a transcendent reality.

The subjective cleansing from sin of God's people is the other reality. The Holy Spirit is the cleansing agent sent by Jesus from the heavenly sanctuary. The Spirit is the water which issues forth from Jesus empowering the penitent soul and imparting the mind or character of Christ. But there is no absorption of the divine into the human. The Spirit remains independent of the believer. Yet, the mystery of godliness is that we may be so united with Christ through His Spirit, that by the soul's independent freedom of choice he may cooperate with the Divine. The Saviour's character is imparted.