

IN, BY, AND THROUGH CHRIST

Words are mediums for communicating thoughts. Where the same word is used in giving expression to various thoughts, we must judge of the meaning or sense in which it is used in any particular case from the context. This rule applies to the use of the preposition *in* of our English language, and also to its corresponding word *en* in the Greek. As an illustration of this, take the following sentence:

I had my satchel *in* (1) my hand as I went *in* (2) the wrong door *in* (3) mistake, *in* (4) haste to take the train, and determined to be *in* (5) subjection no longer.

In this sentence, the word *in* is used to convey five different thoughts which though correctly stated, might be as well or better expressed by other prepositions. Thus, in the above sentence, the first *in* has the strict or primary meaning of in, while the second might more accurately be rendered *through*, the third *by*, the fourth *with*, and the fifth *under*.

The same is true of the corresponding Greek word *en*; its primary significance is (1) *in*, as, „in thy heart and *in* thy mouth” but *en* is also used as signifying (2) *through*, and (3) *by*, and (4) *with*, and (5) *under*.

This word (*en*) is translated (2) „*through*” in our common translation of the Bible, as the following instances will illustrate: „He casteth out devils *through* [*en*] the prince of devils.” (Matt. 9:34.) „Sanctify them *through* [*en*] thy truth.” (John 17:17.) Also Acts 4:2, Titus 1:3, and 2 Cor. 11:3. It is forcibly translated *by* (3) when the Apostle says, I would stir up your pure minds *by* [*en*] way of remembrance.” (2 Pet. 3:1.) It is, with evident correctness, rendered *with* (4) in Matt. 26:52, „They that take the sword shall perish *with* [*en*] the sword.” (See its similar use, Matt. 20:15, 22:37, and 25:16.) The same word [*en*] is well and properly rendered *under* sometimes, as for instance (Matt. 7:6), „Lest they trample them *under* [*en*] their feet”: and (Rom. 3:19), „What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are *under* [*en*] the Law.”

With the above demonstration of the meaning and use of the word in mind, it must be evident to every reader that the accurate meaning of these little words „*in*” and „*en*” in any case must be determined from the context, and from the general teaching of Scripture. To this we now direct attention in connection with the following texts:

(1) „If any man be in [*en*] Christ, he is a new creature.” 2 Cor. 5:17.

(2) „The dead in [*en*] Christ shall rise first.” 1 Thess. 4:16.

(3) „As in Adam all die, even so in [*en*] Christ shall all be made alive.” 1 Cor. 15:22.

(4) „That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in [*en*] Christ, even in [*en*] him. Eph. 1:10.

(5) „God was in [*en*] Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” 2 Cor. 5:19.

Those who have not noticed that, as above shown, the words *in* and *en* have no less than five significations, or who fail to make use of their knowledge and always give the words *in* and *en* their primary signification, must of necessity be somewhat bewildered by the foregoing texts; and gathering them together they would conclude that finally God, angels, men, devils, and the lower animals, would all be *in* Christ—“new creatures.” And finally when asked, how and in what sense these would ever be *in* Christ, they would doubtless be puzzled for an answer.

In examining these Scripture statements, let us avoid such a stupid and bewildering error, and noting the connecting text, let us rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), applying the proper significance to the word *in* as when reading any other book. By recognizing the foregoing rule, we can readily bring all these texts into harmony with each other, and with all other passages of Scripture.

We start with the unqualified statement that the Scriptures everywhere recognize the Christian Church as Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and being *selected* through faith and obedience through the Christian age—“the acceptable year [epoch] of the Lord”—as the members of or *in the body of Christ*, joint-heirs with Jesus their Head and Forerunner, to the great prize and inheritance of „glory, honor and immortality”—the divine nature. All these are „new creatures.” (2 Peter 1:4.) These alone may therefore properly be said to be *members in* the body of Christ; and they are in all but a „little flock” of „overcomers.” This being true, and we shall give yet further proof of it shortly, it follows that the other texts under present consideration should not be so construed as to nullify and contradict this plain and general testimony, and as we look at them we will find that they do not.

The second text corroborates the first and the above view when it refers to a

„first” or chief resurrection; for if all are to be *in* Christ as members of his body, why separate the members of one body? Furthermore this text separates and distinguishes between the dead in Christ, and other dead not *in* Christ, and thereby contradicts the idea some have drawn from the third text in the list.

The third text would have been more clear for the average reader had the Greek word *en* been translated *through* or *by* instead of „in” for this is the evident sense: As *by* or *through* the act of Adam our first representative all died, even so by or through the act of another representative shall all be made alive. The one caused the death of *all*, the other causes the re-living or resurrection of *all*. This text has the same significance as another by the same writer (Rom. 5:18,19): „By one man’s disobedience the many [all] were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one shall the many [all] be constituted righteous.”

Besides if we were to attempt to put upon this third text the primary signification of *in*, would it not imply that the dead would get into Christ first and be made alive afterward? And would not this imply an absurdity?

In the fourth text in the above list the word *en* might better have been translated *under* as in the other cases it has been rendered thus, and properly. (See illustrations given.) Jehovah has not only appointed Christ to be the „head over the Church which is HIS BODY” and which is to be associated with him in all his work in the future dispensations, but He also appointed the Christ (including the body) to be head or ruler over *all things*, purposing thus to again bring under one rule all things and beings earthly and heavenly, putting all things under Christ—under his feet or control, excepting only himself (1 Cor. 15:27). Thus understood this text is in harmony with all others, as well as grandly sublime in itself.

In the fifth text the word *en* may be translated advantageously, by either of the words, *by*, *in*, or *through*. The thought is, that Jesus did not form the plan in the execution of which he has had and will have so important a place: for it was Jehovah’s own plan. „God was [operating his own plan] *in* [or *by* or *through*] Christ; reconciling the world unto himself.”

Let it be noticed, moreover, that while „by” suits the third of the above texts, and „under” suits the fourth, and either „by” or „through” suits the fifth, yet none of these can be applied to the first and second. These are sensible and reasonable only when *en* is translated *in*, and understood in its primary sense.

We trust that the above is hereby made clear to all; yet lest any should thus far have failed to note how clearly and forcibly the Scriptures everywhere separate those „in” Christ as body members, or

under the other figure members of his espoused Bride, from the world which is to be blessed after the body or bride is *complete* (Rev. 19:7), and by that bride or body in connection with, and under control of the head, we will cite some Scriptures relative to this point below:—

**THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST,
THE MEMBERS OF IT BEING SELECTED,
DISCIPLINED AND PROVED NOW
FOR FUTURE SERVICE
AND GLORY**

Because of the close relationship of this company, and because of their joint-heirship with Him, as the wife is called by the name of her husband, so these are called by the name of Christ and are the body of Christ.

The entire nominal Church is nominally „the body of Christ,” but only the faithful „overcomers” who take up their cross daily and follow him, are worthy of him, and are really his body (Matt. 10:38), and the names of them he will not blot from the roll (Rev. 3:5); but he will eventually own and glorify them with himself as members of his „body,” his „bride” and joint heir.

The present Christian age has for its special object the selection of this ONE BODY, of which Jesus is the head and chief. And as soon as the last members of this select company are prepared by discipline, etc., they will all be glorified by resurrection power, made like their head, and with him they will enter upon the great and long prophesied work of blessing all the families of the earth. Gal. 3:29.

How any one can read the Scriptures with interest and care, yet fail to see (notwithstanding occasional imperfections of translations) that the Christian Church is separate and distinct in the promises made to it, and in the hopes set before it, and in every sense, from the world, is more than we can understand.

Note the following references:—“There is one body even as ye are called, in one hope of your calling” ... „one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” ... „And He gave indeed the Apostles and the Prophets and the Evangelists and Shepherds and Teachers for the complete qualification of the saints for the work of service, in order to the building up of the body of the Anointed One.” ... „Being truthful, in love we may grow up in all things into him who is the head—the Anointed One—from whom the whole body ... by means of every assisting joint ... affects the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:4-16). Thus the Apostle clearly shows that the work of the Church in the present time is for the completion of the

Church—the body of Christ, as he had already shown (chap. 2:6,7) that after our exaltation with Jesus to heavenly honors God would exhibit „in those ages that should come after, the surpassing riches of his favor, in graciousness on us, in [en] Christ Jesus.” [Rotherham’s translation.]

In the same letter (chap. 1:4-11) Paul tells us of the predestination of this body for this work „according as he chose us in him before founding a world, ... in love marking us out beforehand unto adoption of sons ... according to the riches of his favor which he made to super-abound toward us; in all wisdom and prudence” [i.e., as we could bear it] „making known unto us the mystery of his will” [or plan] „according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him, with a view to an administration [dominion] of the fullness of the seasons—to reunite for himself under one head [or rulership] the all things, in [en—under] the Christ [head and body] the things on the heavens and the things on the earth, in [en—under] Him; in whom also we were taken as an inheritance, being marked out [as a class or body] beforehand, according to a purpose of him.”—Rotherham’s translation.

And in the same chapter verses 21 and 23 we are told that God exalted Jesus above all others, both for the present and all future ages, „and subjected all things under his feet and constituted him a Head above all things for that Church which is His Body—the full development [or completeness] of Him [the Christ] who the all things in all, is for himself filling up.”

How well these statements from one epistle agree with the words of the Master himself, who said, „I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me” [the disciples]. „Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” [The entire previously marked out „Church,” „body,” „bride,” or „brethren” of Christ.] That they all may be one ... that they may be made perfect in one and [as a result of the perfecting of that one body] that the world may know [in that due time] that thou hast sent me and hast LOVED THEM as thou hast loved me. John 17:9,19-23.

We might multiply references to the

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oneness of the Body of Christ (into membership in which, consecrated believers now reckonedly come,) whose worthiness to be of His Body and share his name and coming glory is made to depend upon their faithfulness in suffering with him in this age in which sin and suffering are permitted for the development of this very Body of Christ. But this we leave with the reader to do for himself, merely citing you now to a few illustrations as follows:

Phil. 3:14,21. This refers to the *one body* of many members. „Our inglorious body” as viewed by

the world. Also note Paul's anxiety to be „found in Him,” and at what cost he sought membership in that „body,” and the superior or chief resurrection it will enjoy. Phil. 3:7-11. Also Col. 1:16-18,24-28; and 3:1-4,15. Also compare the account of the completion of the body of Christ by the gathering of the *dead in Christ* together with the last members, alive when their head returns, as given in 1 Thes. 4:16-18 with the account of same in 1 Cor. 15:51-53. Glance also at 1 Cor. 9:24-27 and at Rom. 12:4-6 and Acts 15:14.

Finally, notice also that in the ordinance of Baptism, the consecrated are baptized „into” Christ, by their sacrifice or burial in death with him (Rom. 6:3), and that in the breaking of the „one loaf” in commemorating the Lord's Supper, we signify our knowledge of, and membership in, and fellowship with, the „one body,” now being broken. 1 Cor. 10:16,17.

THE HOPE FOR OTHERS NOT MEMBERS IN THE BODY OR BRIDE CLASS

Elsewhere we have shown from Scripture that in the consummation of God's plan there will be various orders or classes of beings, all fully and completely saved or released from sin and its effects, and all perfectly happy, all in perfect oneness of harmony with their Creator, and hence with each other, and yet as classes and as individuals differing one from another,

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yet each rejoicing in his own station and appreciating it most.

Some will be heavenly or spirit beings, while others will be earthly or flesh beings; and as the Apostle informs us, there will be distinctions or different classes on both of these planes. (1 Cor. 15:38-40.) Among the earthly there will be differences, even as now there is one kind [or order] of flesh of beasts, another of birds, and another of fishes, and chief over and Lord of all these (Psa. 8:5-8; Gen. 1:28) is man. And when all things are brought into perfect harmony with God (all that will not after full opportunity come into harmony being „cut off” from existence), then these classes or orders will each be perfect, yet retain the Creator's originally intended differences from the other classes. Hence, „in the fullness of times,” there will be on the earthly plane perfect fishes, perfect birds, perfect beasts, and over and above them all their king and ruler, perfect man; himself and his dominion restored (by the great Deliverer whom God provided—Christ Jesus and his „bride” or „body”) to the original likeness of his Creator, and to his dominion over all.

And there will be likewise different orders or classes of beings on the heavenly or spirit plane of existence, all likewise perfect and happy and holy, and at one yet differing even as one star differs from another star in position, magnitude, and orbit (1 Cor. 15:41).

Most excellent and exalted above all others, the centre around which all others shall revolve, owning allegiance and rendering loving obedience and service, is the class of spirit beings of the *divine nature*—“far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” Eph. 1:21.

As already shown, Jehovah alone possessed this divine nature originally, but has, because of his fidelity and obedience even unto death, „highly exalted” Jesus our Lord to this sublimely grand position, „so much better than angels,” giving him the heirship and rulership of the universe. And not only so, but God hath promised and will not repent, that the „body members,” otherwise called the „Bride” of Christ, sharers of „the sufferings of Christ” shall share also in his glory, honor and exaltation to the „divine nature,” as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord. (2 Peter 1:4, Rom. 8:17, and 1 Cor. 6:3.) These wait until their foreordained number is complete and made perfect, to enter into the honors and joys of their Lord—to be „glorified together” with him. Rom. 8:17, and John 17:21.

How many different orders or classes of heavenly or spirit beings there are we know not, but one of the lower orders is that of „angels,” only „a little” higher than perfect men (Psa. 8:5), though „far” below the divine order (Eph. 1:21), yet all perfect, all happy, all at one or in harmony.

Another class we know of who will in their powers, etc., be lower than the divine nature, yet spirit beings, probably much on the same plane as „angels,” viz., the large class who, during the present age, made consecration vows, but who through „fear” (Heb. 2:15) hesitated and kept back the sacrifice and failed to suffer with Christ, when to have boldly advocated his teachings would have cost them earthly comforts, honors, ease, etc. These not being „overcomers,” cannot be of the „Bride”—cannot sit with him on the throne of highly exalted dominion. (Rev. 7:9,15; 14:3,5.) Yet, thank God, there is a place provided for these „before the throne.” They cannot have crowns, but they shall have palms, and shall serve God in or through or by means of the temple, though they cannot be parts of that temple which is the body of Christ. And this is a great company, while the temple class, the enthroned class, the crowned class, the body class, the overcomers, the joint-heirs, who shall partake of the divine nature, and receive the great dominion is a „little flock.” Compare Rev. 7:9 and Luke 12:32.

These are the virgin companions who follow the bride and rejoice in her exaltation, and are honored also, though less highly, by the king. See Rev. 19:6,7, and Psa. 45:14.

Thus seen, the hopes of all God’s creatures for restitution and every blessing, is made dependent on Christ Jesus our Lord, and his perfect work—the ransom which he gave. Hence all hopes centre in him, and every blessing and favor of God comes to men in [*en*] or through or by Christ, but in

the sense of having membership in the select body, the Ecclesia (Church)—called „the Christ,” of which He is the Head, only those are in Christ who, after accepting justification as God’s gift at the hands of Jesus the Redeemer, also accept of God’s call to sacrifice with Jesus; joint-sufferers, they are joint-members and joint-heirs with him.

If any man be thus *in* Christ, he is a „new creature”—reckonedly of the „divine nature,” now. And these things shall be actually so, when the time for exaltation and change comes—when the selection of the entire body is completed. „We shall all be changed” and thereafter „we shall be like him” who is „the express image of the Father’s person.”

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