

Sunday, January 11, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 157  
 Sonship Edification: Precursors to Sonship, Part 3

### Introduction

- A few weeks back, in Lesson 156 we continued our investigation into the precursors of Sonship Edification (SE) by looking at the writings of Charles H. Welch on Romans 8:17. In addition, we began considering G.H. Lang's 1936 publication *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks*. It was observed that Lang's work is ripe with SE concepts and themes particularly in the following areas: 1) the necessity of qualifying one's self to serve in the government of God as an additional issue to justification, and 2) connecting one's level of sanctification with their portion of future glory. Finally, we observed multiple statements that sound like they came straight from the SE lexicon.
- In this lesson, I would like to continue our evaluation of G.H. Lang's *Firstborn Sons* as a precursor to SE by considering his comments on the following subjects: 1) indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 2) translation of Romans 8:17, and 3) meaning of the expression "if so be" in Romans 8:17

### Precursors to Sonship Continued

#### *G.H. Lang Continued*

- Please recall from Lesson 156 that Lang was a Brethren writer from Great Britain. Lang was fully aware that his teachings were different from the "great teachers" of the early Brethren period: "the great teachers of that period restored the proper emphasis to the truth that God is calling the saved of this age to a place in the heavens as the bride of His Son. But they attached to this privilege that certainty of possession which the Word attaches to the possession of eternal life only." (Lang, 215) In short, Darby and other early Plymouth Brethren teachers erred by ascribing to every justified believer a position in the heavenly places, according to Lang. In contrast, Lang mentions N.A. Groves, R.C. Chapman, and Lady Powerscourt among the first generation of Brethren who viewed the first resurrection and its accompanying privileges as something that could be missed. (Lang, 215)

#### *Lang on the subject of the Spirit Dwelling*

- Lang appears to share in common with SE the notion that all regenerated believers are not necessarily indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.
  - **"That initial work of the Spirit which suffices for the regenerating of a sinner, so that he receives eternal life, is not all that is required to incorporate him into the body of Christ;** else believers before Pentecost, and those of the next age, equally with those of this dispensation, would be members of the "body," which the Word of God does not suggest, but rather negates. The apostles were not to Christ as a body until His Spirit indwelt them all at once, uniting them thus to Him and to one another. **Is it the**

**fact that every believer has thus received the Spirit? or is it not rather to be feared that some have been simply regenerated, and know nothing more of His working and nothing at all of His indwelling and infilling?** If we discard preconceived theories and candidly face facts, it would seem that there can be but one answer. . . . But Pentecost stands not for the first quickening by the Spirit, but for the regenerated man receiving power for effective witness to Christ (Acts 1:8), by the Spirit entering into and so dwelling in him that He pervades the heart, filling it with divine wisdom, knowledge, love, and boldness; and controlling the body, using it in speech and other service; and empower for suffering. . . . His statements in both cases are in definite historic (aorist) tenses: “We were all baptized . . . ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit” (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13); and so apply only to the persons addressed. **They are not general assertions concerning all believers, such as are found in connection with eternal life; “the one believing has eternal life (John 3:36).” The baptism is not anywhere stated to be an inevitable accompaniment of saving faith, but rather the contrary is shown, as in the two places in Acts just mentioned. Alas, that wide later experience confirms this. Many believers seem to be living in a pre-Pentecostal state, and it is at least open to question whether such are regarded by God as, or if in fact they are, members of the body of Christ, seeing that His Spirit does not appear to dwell in them, for He neither energizes, nor controls, nor uses them.”** (Lang, 145-148)

- While this argument is not identical with SE’s position on the matter, it is similar in that one can be a regenerated believer but not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Lang goes so far as to question whether or not believers who demonstrate no evidence of the Spirit dwelling in them have been baptized into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13) or have been “sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). How Lang can maintain his belief in the eternal security of the believer while holding these views regarding the Holy Spirit is beyond our ability to comprehend.

*Lang on the Translation of Romans 8:17*

- In seeking to establish a distinction between those who are “heirs of God” (all believers) and those who are “joint-heirs with Christ” conditioned upon suffering “with *him*”, multiple times Lang seeks to retranslate Romans 8:17. Specifically, Lang renders the Greek participle *de* as “but” instead of “and” in front of the expression “joint-heirs with Christ.”
  - “If we are God’s children, we are therefore, His heirs; heirs indeed (*men*) of God, **but** (*de*) joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17).” (Lang, 65)
  - “Romans 8:16-17—“The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also gloried with him.” The latter verse (v. 17) should read, “heirs indeed (*men*) of God, **but** (*de*) joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, etc.” (Lang, 120)

- It is not hard to see why someone wanting to argue for a difference between “heirs” and “joint-heirs” would advocate for the following rendering of Romans 8:17:
  - “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, **BUT** joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.”
- Changing the “and” to a “but” makes arguing that the “if so be” in the second half of the verse is placing a condition upon being a “joint-heir with Christ” in the first easier. This is evident from Lang’s comments at the head of the paragraph following the above quote from page 120, “How clearly this (his retranslation of Rom. 8:17) establishes a condition for being gloried with Christ. . .” (Lang, 120)
- In my paper *Ifs, Ands, and Buts: The Two Inheritance Controversy of Romans 8:17*, I addressed a similar argument in Appendix B (see pages 29-34) being put forth by the supporters of the “joint-heir view” of Romans 8:17. While the supporters of the “joint-heir view” **do not** follow Lang in arguing that the Greek word *de* is MISTRANSLATED in the King James Bible and should read “but,” they do argue that EVERYTIME the Greek words *men* and *de* occur together in the same verse, in the book of Romans, that *de* serves the function of CONTRASTING two different things.
- On September 10, 2013, Brother Matt Stutzman, author of *Heirs of God or Joint-Heirs with Christ?* asked me the following question on the Joint-Heir Group Facebook page regarding the Greek participles *men* and *de*:
  - “Bryan Ross . . . I brought up the Greek participles “men” and “de” that are used in Romans 8:17 back when you were challenging this issue on the basis of the now debunked punctuation argument. I’m not sure if you didn’t understand what I had said in that message, or if you don’t agree with it, or if you are simply ignoring it.

In any case, I’ll restate what I had said there and ask you to give it some thought:

**Those two participles “men” and “de” (G3303, and G1161) are combined together in 13 total verses in the book of Romans. In every case (without exception) the use of these words together in Romans are ALWAYS used to contrast two different things. They are NEVER CONJUNCTIVE.**

Again here are a few examples of this which I believe deserve your honest consideration so long as this discussion is being contested from a basis of Greek:

Quotes Romans 2:25; 5:16; 6:11; 7:25; 8:10; 8:17

**. . . Given that ALL 13 examples in Romans clearly use these *participles* together to contrast two different things, it would certainly be illogical for a person to argue**

**that Romans 8:17 is somehow the lone exception that deviates from the established pattern and precedent.** Wouldn't you agree?"

- More recently in studying for these lessons on the precursors of SE, I was handed *The Reign of the Servant Kings* by Joseph C. Dillow (1992). In reading Dillow's view on Romans 8:17, I ran across the following Greek Participle Argument:
  - "That two contrasting heirships are being discussed seems to be suggested by Paul's use of the Greek particles *men . . . de*. Not readily translatable in English, the sense is something like this, "On the one hand (*men . . .*) heirs of God, and other the other (*de*) joint-heirs with Christ." These particles, when coupling two phrases together, are normally disjunctive and imply a contrast between the items compared, not an equality. **In fact, in every usage of these particles in this way in Romans, they are always contrastive and never conjunctive . . .** In other words, we are all heirs of God, and we will be joint-heirs with Christ if we suffer with Him." (Dillow, 376)
- The obscure and similar nature of this type of categorical argument (ALWAYS vs. NEVER) are so clearly linked that it is difficult to conclude the Brother Stutzman had not read or was unfamiliar with Dillow's argumentation. This conclusion appears even more likely when one considers Brother Stutzman's strong aversion to even considering the underlying Greek text supporting the King James Bible when conducting Bible study (see Stutzman's co-authored *Wrongly Deriding Joint-Heirs with Christ*). Either Brother Stutzman parted ways with his own stated "organic" methodology of Bible study and considered the underlying Greek text or he was aware of this line of argumentation from another source.
- *De* (1161)—is a CONJUNCTION (primary participle) in terms of the part of speech. The Greek word is found 2,870 times in the Greek text supporting the King James Bible. As a CONJUNCTION it can be either ADVERSATIVE (that is expressing contrariety, opposition, or antithesis: for example "*but*" is an adversative conjunction) or CONTINUATIVE. It is important to note that when *de* (1161) is rendered "and" in English it is MOST OFTEN representative of the CONTINUATIVE use of the Greek word. This is evident by noting the definition of the English CONJUNCTION "and" And (conj.)—"And is a conjunction, connective or conjoining word. It signifies that a word or part of a sentence is to be added to what precedes." (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*) This is evidenced by the multiple ways it has been translated into English:
  - But—1,237 times
  - And—934 times
  - Now—166 times
  - Then—132 times
  - Also—18 times
  - Yet—16 times
  - Yea—13 times
  - Moreover—13 times

- Nevertheless—11 times
  - For—4 times
  - Even—4 times
- There are 112 verses in the New Testament that contain the Greek words *men* (3303) and *de* (1161) in the same verse. How the word *de* (1161) is rendered in English is determined by each individual occurrence, not by an arbitrary rule. In other words, the determinative factor in whether *de* (1161) is ADVERSATIVE (“but” in English) or CONTINUATIVE (“and” in English) is the sentence structure of each verse. This is clear when one considers how *de* (1161) is rendered in English in these 112 verses:
    - But—69 times
    - And—47 times
    - Other—19 times
  - There are seven examples where the conjunction *de* is translated in both the adversative (“but”) and continuative sense (“and”) within the same verse. The translators of the King James Bible knew the difference between the two uses of the Greek word and thus rendered it accordingly in English given the sentence and thought structure of each verse:
    - Acts 14:4; 22:9; 27:41
    - Romans 8:10
    - I Corinthians 9:25
    - II Timothy 1:10; 2:20
  - My point in Appendix B of *Iifs, Ands, and Buts*, was not to argue that the English word “and” can NEVER be used to contrast two different things but that the combined usage of the Greek words *men* and *de* in the same verse DOES NOT MANDATE that *de* is being used to “contrast two different things” in the book of Romans or anywhere else in the New Testament. The Greek word *de* when rendered “and” in English can be used to CONTRAST two different things; it was NEVER our assertion that it COULD NOT. The usage of the word “and” can be either ADVERSATIVE (i.e., establishing a contrast) or CONTINUATIVE (i.e., connecting things together in a sequence) depending upon the context in which it is used. The meaning and usage of “and” needs to be determined by an investigation of each individual occurrence not an unfounded overarching rule.
    - Romans 9:21
  - The textual FACTS in Romans 8:17 are that the Greek word *de* occurs two times within the verse and is rendered “and” both times in the King James Bible.
    - “And (*de*) if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and (*de*) joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

- Why would one argue that the second occurrence of *de* should be rendered and/or read as ADVERSATIVE (contrasting two things) while the first occurrence is allowed to stand with a rendering and/or reading this is CONTINUATIVE? In short, if such a rule exists (the existence of which has not been proven) why is it not applied to the first occurrence of *de* at the beginning of verse 17 as well as the second? The answer is simple, rendering/reading the second occurrences of *de* as a CONTRAST makes it easier to argue for the conditional nature of joint-heirship and reigning with Christ, i.e., it fits the paradigm being asserted. If the purposed rule were consistently applied to the first occurrence of *de* it would be establishing a contrast between those the children of God in verse 16 and those who are heirs of God in verse 17, thereby negating the assertion that all believers are heirs of God. Rather than seeking to establish arbitrary and unfounded rules should not one's interpretation of a passage be subject to the TEXTUAL FACTS and not the other way around?

*Lang on the meaning of the expression "if so be" in Romans 8:17*

- Lang appeals to multiple reference works including Alford, Dean, Robinson, as well as Bible translations by the likes of Darby to support his notion that "if so be" places a condition upon joint-heirship and a believer's future glorification with Christ.
  - "Alford thus translates and comments: "IF AT LEAST (see above on verse 9, *eiper*, provide that, not since, which would be *epeiper*) we are suffering "with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him: i.e., 'if (provided that) we are found in that course of participation in Christ's sufferings, whose aim and end, as that of His sufferings, is to be gloried as He was, and with Him.' But the *eiper* does not regard the subjective aim, q.d. 'if at least our aim in suffering is to be gloried,'—but the fact of our being partakers of that course of suffering with Him, whose aim is, wherever it is found to be found, to be glorified with Him (Alford's italics)." The reader will note the italicized words "wherever it is found," implying that there may be those who are not found suffering with Him. The learned Dean adds, "The connection of *suffering with Christ*, and being glorified with Him is elsewhere insisted on, see II Tim. 2:11; I Pet. 4:13, 5:1."

Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown implicitly reject the rendering "since" by translating "provided we be suffering with Him." So also Darby (New Translation) renders "if indeed we suffer." Moule explicitly condemns it (Cambridge Bible for Schools), and so does Bloomfield, who quotes Crellius as follows: "it was but just that they who wished to be partakers with Christ in his glory, should also be partakers of his sufferings."

Robinson (Lexicon) accepts the sense "since," but even so it is not fair to quote him thus as has been done: "The Greek word rendered, if so be, implies an acknowledged and recognized fact, or as Robinson says, 'assumes the supposition to be true.'" For what Robinson says is that *eiper* "assumes the supposition to be true, *whether justly or not*" (Lang's italics). For the sake of argument or illustration a supposition may be assumed to be true, but where *eiper* is used it is open to question whether the assumed fact is fact or only an assumption." (Lang, 120-121)

- Lang appears to be sifting these “competent” scholars for an explanation of “if so be” that will fit his preconceived notion of the verses meaning. The Greek word *eiper* appears six times in the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek text supporting the King James Bible. Of these six occurrences of *eiper* in the New Testament it is variously translated as follows: “if so be that” 3 times (Romans 8:9, 17; I Corinthians 15:15), “if so be” 1 time (I Peter 2:3), “though” 1 time (I Corinthians 8:5), and “seeing” 1 time (II Thessalonians 1:6). Given the FACT that the King James translators variously rendered *eiper* with the English words “though” and “seeing” proves the notion that *eiper* carries the sense or force of “since”, as suggested by Robinson. Consider the following definition of the English word “seeing:”
  - Seeing—“This participle appears to be used indefinitely, or without direct reference to a person or persons. “Wherefore come ye to me, *seeing* ye hate me?” Genesis 26. **That is, since, or the fact being that or thus; because that.**” (*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*)
- Robinson’s definition of *eiper* as quoted by Lang “assumes the supposition to be true, whether justly or not” is consistent with the notion of a first class condition in both English and Greek. The FACT is, *eiper* or “if so be” in English is a condition, the question is what TYPE of condition is it. In Romans 8:17 the Greek word *eiper* is followed by a verb in the indicative mood (the indicative mood is used to make factual statements or pose questions), i.e., “suffer with.” This is true in both Greek and English. Even the Oxford English Dictionary acknowledges a variety of different TYPES of conditions expressed by the English word “if.” When “if” is followed by the indicative mood “the speaker expresses no adverse opinion as to the truth of the statement in the clause; it is consistent with his acceptance of it” according to the Oxford English Dictionary. In contrast, “the subjunctive after “if” implies that the speaker guards himself from endorsing the truth or realization of the statement; it is consistent with his doubt of it.” (The subjunctive mood is the mood used to show a wish, doubt, or anything else contrary to fact.)
- In Romans 8:17, Paul is not saying maybe the Romans are joint-heirs and maybe they are not, we have to wait and see how it turns out, in a subjunctive sense. Rather, he is stating the FACT that the Romans “suffer with him” on account of the previously established FACT of having been made “joint-heirs with Christ.” Both “if” and “if so be” in Romans 8:17 are first class conditions and serve the function of taking the truth and certainty of the aforementioned thing and applying it to what is about to be said. In other words, “if this first thing (which we both know and agree about) is true, then this second thing is just as true.” In short, one cannot suffer with Christ unless and until they have been joined to him. In other words, being joined to Christ is a prerequisite to suffering with him not the other way around.

### Works Cited

Dillow, Joseph. *The Reign of the Servant Kings*. Schoettle Publishing Co: Miami Springs, FL, 1992.

Lang, G.H. *Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks*. Samuel Roberts Publishers: London, England, 1936.