

BIBLE TRUTH

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHY WE BELIEVE IT

SALVATION BY BELIEVING

According to the plain teaching in the Bible, a Christian is a believer. A Christian is a saved person. A Christian is a righteous person. A Christian is a person who has received God's free gift, eternal life. A Christian is a saint. A Christian is a new creature in Christ Jesus. We read in Hebrews 10:39: "of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Some one has said a Christian is one who has received Christ into his heart and in whom Christ "re-lives" His life. Another said that a Christian is one who loves what Christ loves and hates what Christ hates. A Christian is the workmanship of God. (Ephesians 2:10).

The outstanding Christian of all times was the apostle Paul. He was greatly honored by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul wrote about one-half the Books of what are generally known as the "New Testament Scriptures." This outstanding Christian said: "For me to live is Christ"; "Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Philippians 1:21; Galatians 2:20).

When a convicted sinner asked the apostle Paul, "what must I do to be saved," Paul replied, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:30 and 31).

This same Paul was directed by the Lord to write: "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness"; "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans 10:4, 9 and 10).

This great apostle, in the Record, did not call believers "Christians." He called them "saints." All through Paul's writings he has stated emphatically and clearly what every person should know, and that is: that the men and women on this earth were, and are, divided into two groups, "dead sinners" and "living saints."

As you read this message, believe this all-important truth and classify yourself. God knows to which group you belong: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." (II Timothy 2:19). Are you a dead sinner or a living saint? You are surely either one or the other.

Of course the only genuine Christian is a "Bible" Christian. Ever genuine Christian believes that the Bible is the Word of God; that all Scripture is God-breathed; that all the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's own inspired Word and every page, paragraph, line and word is for the Christian. Every word in the Bible is for members of the Body of Christ, but not every word about them.

Of course, God gave to the children of Israel, enroute from Egypt to Canaan, a spiritual program quite different from the program which Christ, on earth, and in resurrection, gave to and for members of His Body. The citizenship of these Body-members is in heaven.

The Christ of the Christian said:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” John 6:47
He also said:

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins:” John 8:24.

He also said,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life:” John 5:24

Note again:

“Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent:” John 6:29.

In this Divine Record we read these solemn words:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him:” John 3:36.

Whether we read the words of Christ or those of His apostles, we find the same great foundation truth, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:18.

The words, “shall be saved,” seem to speak of the future. It is true that the full glory of salvation will not be realized by the Christian until he receives his glorified, “resurrection” body and appears with Christ in glory. (Colossians 3:1 to 3 and Philippians 3:20 and 21). But Christ, in John 5:24, said that believers have eternal life. Note these statements in I John 5:11 and 12:

“And this is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son:”
“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Now note what the Lord Jesus Christ instructed the apostle Paul to write:

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved). And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:5 to 10.

The Christian has eternal life. The Christian has been made alive. The Christian has been saved by grace through faith. The Christian’s salvation is not because of what he has done religiously, but because what God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have done. Then the Christian is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling by letting God work in him. (Philippians 2:12 and 13). Note how the saved person helps the Triune God to save the believing sinner:

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. But whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” How then shall they call on Him on Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him, of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:12 to 15.

What should the saint preach to the sinner? He might preach many Bible truths to the sinner but hear this most essential truth:

“But after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a Stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” I Corinthians 1:21, 23 and 24.

Here we have God’s wisdom versus man’s wisdom. Here we have God’s saving message.

Before closing this chapter we want to present to you Romans 5:9 and 10, Ephesians 2:13, and I Timothy 2:4 to 6:

“Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Romans 5:9 and 10.

“But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13.

“God Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” I Timothy 2:4 to 6.

So we learn that “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” for salvation, means to believe the Record in the Bible concerning the Son of God. It means to accept Him as the eternal I AM. It means to go by faith to Calvary and there receive Christ and His once-for-all sacrifice for cleansing, forgiveness and justification. Note Hebrews 10:12 and Acts 13:39:

“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

To be saved means first of all to be saved from the penalty of sin, from the wrath to come. Note I Thessalonians 1:10:

“And to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Yes, God will have all men to be saved. We learn that Jesus Christ on the cross gave Himself a ransom for all men. Let us think of what Christ said before He died:

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” (John 10:17 and 18).

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” “This He said, signifying what death He should die.” (John 12:31 to 33).

Christ laid down His life. He was lifted up on the cross to draw all men unto Himself:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” I Peter 3:18.

Christ took up His life:

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” II Timothy 1:10.

Now as we go to our next chapter let us remember Ephesians 2:10:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

A person must first become the workmanship of God before God will accept that person’s work. There is a great difference between “not of works” and “unto good works.” (Ephesians 2:8 to 10; Titus 3:5 to 8).

Let us also think of these two verses:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that we may believe on the name of the Son of God.” I John 5:13.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13.

God the Father certainly wants His redeemed children to know that they have eternal life, because they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father certainly wants His redeemed children to be filled with all joy and peace in believing.

But let us never forget that there is one who wants no person to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. He is Satan, the god of this age, who is accused of the crime of deceiving the whole world. Revelation 12:8 to 10. Note his devilish and deadly work:

“But if our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” II Corinthians 4:3 and 4.

Think of the folly and tragedy of being lost, in the world having no hope because without Christ. (Ephesians 2:12).

When the dead sinner receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour, when he trusts and rests in the perfect redemptive work of the perfect Christ, he then and there becomes a living saint.

To that living saint God has given this very important message:

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God as those who are ALIVE FROM THE DEAD, And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Romans 6:13).

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK

Concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we read in Acts 4:12; “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” It was this Christ Who uttered the great truth recorded in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

After the dead sinner becomes a living saint, by God’s grace and by faith in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is in a race for an incorruptible crown. (I Corinthians 9:24 to 27). Hear these important instructions in Hebrews 12:1 and 2—“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The risen, glorified Son of God, Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26) and Who is now in heaven with His Father, is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. So we read in Philippians 1:6 this statement: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." This word "perform" is from the same Greek word translated "finisher" in Hebrews 12:2. Both are from the same Greek word translated "uttermost" in Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." This Greek word is also translated "end." Hear John 13:1—"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Christ loved them unto the end. God is able, and Christ is able, to save all the way to the end all who come to the Father through the Son. Note how this wonderful truth is stated in John 6:37, John 17:12 and other verses:

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.

"While I was with them in the world I kept them in My name; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." John 17:12.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38 and 39.

"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." I Corinthians 11:32.

Thus we learn something of the meaning of the statement that the Lord Jesus Christ is both the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

In this connection let us hear this glorious truth in Ephesians 1:6 and 7—"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." The God of all grace accepts the believing sinner in His Beloved Son. And the believer's redemption and forgiveness, by the blood of this Son, is "according to the riches of God's grace." We know something of this, but the full revelation of this is reserved for the glorified saints in heaven in the ages to come. (Ephesians 2:7). Then note Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "All your need," means "all you need." This supply is according to God's riches in glory by Christ Jesus our Lord.

Another truth Christians accept by faith, but very few seem to comprehend, is stated in Colossians 2:9 and 10—"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power."

Yes, all Bible Christians believe that in Christ Jesus dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3).

It was this Christ Who said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou halt sent." John 17:3.

Concerning this Christ we read in Philippians 2:5 to 11 the greatest story of the ages:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a

man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

All Bible Christians believe that the uncreated, eternal Christ was in the form of God before He took unto Himself the form of man: that He was with God in the bosom of the Father; that He was God the Creator of all things. (John 1:1 to 3—John 1:10 and John 1:18). So Christians join with the redeemed ones in Revelation 5:12.

“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

Because Christians believe in the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, they know that He is worthy of all of His titles in the Bible, such as “the Lord of glory,” “the Prince of life,” “the King of glory,” “the Prince of peace,” “Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End,” “Wonderful Counsellor” and many others.

The Father calls Christ, “His Beloved Son,” in Whom He is well pleased. And the Scriptures speak of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as the precious blood. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (I Peter 1:18 and 19).

Hear this interesting statement concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as the Stone:

“To Whom coming, as unto a living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.”

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner.” I Peter 2:4 and 7.

Chosen of God and precious. Hear Christ’s own words:

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner; this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?”

“And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” Matthew 21:42 and 44.

Thus we learn that Christ is the precious Stone, the rejected Stone, the smitten Stone and the smiting Stone.

With these wonderful truths let us read:

“The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, Whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Acts 4:26 to 28.

“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead.” Acts 13:29 and 30.

Thus we see that Christ’s death was neither premature nor accidental. He was not the helpless victim of circumstances in the hour of death. He was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. (Acts 2:22 and 23). He was God’s spotless, slain Lamb, foreordained before the foundation of the world.

Therefore, the words of Christ in Matthew 26:24 and Luke 24:25 to 27:

“The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”

“Then He said unto them O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

So Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture. He was buried and raised from the dead the third day, according to the Scripture. This is the gospel that the sinner must believe to be saved. I Corinthians 15:3 to 6.

Note also Hebrews 9:12:

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Christ on the cross cried, “finished.” Then He came from the grave, went to heaven, and by His blood He obtained eternal redemption. So we read in Romans 8:34—“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.”

Then note I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

So we learn something of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith.

He did appear. (Hebrews 9:26). He doth appear. (Hebrews 9:24). He shall appear. (Hebrews 9:28).

The Christian has been saved. The Christian is being saved. The Christian shall be saved.

THE GRACE OF GOD

Every Christian should know more about the grace of God. We may be sure that if we could ask the apostle Paul to tell us some of his favorite verses, he would include I Corinthians 15:10 and Galatians 6:14:

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which Was with me.”

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

In other verses Paul wrote how he had more right to glory in religion than did any other man (Galatians 1:14 and Philippians 3:4 to 6). But he added:

“Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count then but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” Philippians 3:8 to 10.

Yes, Paul gloried in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. So also did the hymn-writer

“In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o’er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story,
Gathers round its head sublime.”

Concerning the work of Christ on the cross, Paul wrote:

“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.” Colossians 1:20 and 21.

Now think of His other statement in I Corinthians 15:10. What Paul was and what he did was by the grace of God. If you and I are anything spiritually, it is by the grace of God. If we are doing anything worthwhile in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is by the grace of God. Never forget Ephesians 2:8 and 9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” “Not of yourselves.” “Not of works.” “The gift of God.” “By grace.” The Christian does not work to obtain salvation, or to retain salvation. He does not earn it, merit it, or work for it, either before or after he receives it as a free gift of God: “For the wages of sin is death; but the (free) gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23).

Let us consider these several verses:

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” II Corinthians 9:8.

“And unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Ephesians 3:20.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace. which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” II Timothy 1:9.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20 and 21.

“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:7.

In I Peter 5:10 God is called “the God of all grace.” “The God of all grace” is able to make all grace abound for sinner and for saint. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. (Romans 5:20). God is able to do exceeding abundantly above our asking or thinking. This all-sufficient grace of “the God of all grace” was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. The salvation, that is by grace, is not of works. It is God’s doing. It is an eternity of grace; for in the ages to come when God puts on exhibition some sinners saved. by grace, to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now four wonderful verses:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11 to 14.

The grace of God has brought salvation. Never was there more sin on the earth than today, for never were there more sinners to commit sin. The prisons are filled with criminals. The churches are filled with unregenerated, religious sinners. But God’s abounding grace is more than adequate for man’s abounding sin. The vilest, lowest, ungodly sinner, steeped in crime, can be saved by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The most respectable, moral, philanthropic, benevolent, self-righteous church-member steeped in religion, who has not been cleansed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, needs the same grace.

Most saints will not permit God to do for them what He can and will do by His grace and power, if they will let Him. The great majority of sinners will not let God save them by His grace. Only God knows and only eternity will reveal the power and efficacy and value of the precious shed blood of the Son of God. The great majority of Christians will not let God use them as He wants to use them.

Let us think of these statements:

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father.” Romans 8:15.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” (Galatians 3:23).

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” Galatians 5:4.

We quote these verses that we may know the difference between grace in a former dispensation and the dispensation of grace in this age of grace. (Ephesians 3:1 to 11).

God has always manifested His grace toward sinners. But while Israel experienced the grace of God, under the reign of law, they received the spirit of bondage unto fear, not the Spirit of adoption and sonship. They were shut up unto the faith that was afterward revealed.

Christians, who are members of the Body of Christ, during this present age and economy of grace are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). They have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear but of sonship, joint-heirs with Christ. God wants them to be of power and of love and of a sound mind.

No Christian is really of a sound mind, doctrinally or dispensationally, who does not know the difference between grace under the dispensation of law and “the dispensation of the grace of God,” given to Paul for Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1 to 9).

Note John 1:17 and Romans 5:20 and 21:

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” John 1:17.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abound grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20 and 21.

The law and grace entered for different reasons. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus did not become effective during the reign of law, but after the death and resurrection of the

Son of God. (Romans 8:2 to 4). The reign and dispensation of grace not only began after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but after God's religious nation Israel was set aside, which was not until after Saul of Tarsus was converted. What the law demanded grace provides; a righteous standing and righteous living.

The grace of God that brought salvation also teaches the Christian how to live righteously. Let us remember that our Lord wants no Christians to be religious. But He does want all men to be righteous and spiritual. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Christian's righteousness. (I Corinthians 1:30).

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." II Corinthians 5:21.

In Christ Jesus, at the cross of Calvary, is the only place that any one can find that righteousness which the righteous God will accept and approve. The person who finds that righteousness finds the righteousness of God:

"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that Stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a Stumblingstone and Rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." Romans 9:31 to 33.

No one is saved by behaving; but by believing. Christians are not going to heaven, because they behave; but because they believe. But Christians are exhorted to behave as becometh saints (Ephesians 5:3 and 4). It is one thing to become a saint by believing. It is another thing to walk as becometh a saint by behaving. Let us read Romans 4:4 to 6:

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness, Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputed righteousness without works."

Yes, it is true that a person is declared righteous by grace without works (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:28, John 3:24, John 3:20). But it is also true that the highest standard of spiritual behaviour is the "grace" standard, as set forth in such chapters as the twelfth chapter of Romans the fourth and fifth chapters of Ephesians and in the third chapter of Colossians. These are very high standards. Note Colossians 3:1, 5, and 12 to 17:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body; and be Ye thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

Read all of the chapter and then as a Christian, by the grace and power of God, try to live daily up to this high and holy standard, remembering Titus 2:14, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ,

“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

CHRISTIANS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have learned that God will have all men to be saved. We have learned that Jesus Christ on the cross gave Himself a ransom for all. In Hebrews 2:9 it is stated that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasteth death for every man. We have learned that God wants all believers to know that they have eternal life. God wants all believers to be filled with joy and peace in believing. So God wants His children to have a real know-so salvation, and to have the joy of salvation.

When the sinner believes the gospel of his salvation, he is sealed with or by the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13). He is sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30). God's Spirit bears witness with the believer's spirit, that he is the child of God and a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:14 to 17). The word “Christ” is the Greek word, “anointed.” “Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (II Corinthians 1:21 and 22). A Christian is an anointed one, a Christ one. Christ and anointed are the same word. In I John 2:26 to 28 we learn that when the believer receives the anointing, the anointing remains. No one can pass out of Adam into Christ but once. And no one in Christ can pass back into Adam. The Holy Spirit is the believer's earnest, the assurance, of his eternal redemption, which includes the redemption of his body on the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:14). When the believer receives the Holy Spirit at the time he receives Christ and salvation, he receives all of the Holy Spirit.

The three thousand souls converted on the day of Pentecost were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, to receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 to 43). Cornelius some years later received the Holy Spirit while Peter was preaching unto him the message of salvation. (Acts 11:15 and Acts 10:39 to 48). The twelve apostles and some other disciples spent several years with Jesus of Nazareth on earth before the Holy Spirit came down from heaven on the day of Pentecost. (John 7:38 and 39; John 14:17; John 16:7 to 9 and Acts 1:5). Therefore, they had to wait several years to receive the Holy Spirit. The believers on the day of Pentecost did not have to wait several hours, only until they had been baptized with water. In this age of grace no believer has to wait at all after being saved by grace through faith, without water. (Ephesians 2:8 and 9).

In the days of Paul, and under his ministry, even the heathen received the Holy Spirit because the Lord Jesus died on the cross. (Galatians 3:14). Paul was instructed by the Lord to instruct those saved Galatians to walk in the Spirit, if they lived in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25). All Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; but few Christians permit the Holy Spirit to fully control them.

In Galatians 5:22 to 24 we learn of the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. In Romans 8:4 we learn that those who walk in the Spirit fulfil the righteousness of the law, which is the fruit of the Spirit. In Romans 13:10

we learn that the fruit of the Spirit, love, is the fulfilling of the law. In Romans 5:5 we learn that the love of God is shed abroad in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 5:29 to 32 we are told that the Holy Spirit was witnessing to Israel that God had raised Christ from the dead to be Israel's Saviour. In II Thessalonians 2:13 we read that the believing sinner is chosen by God unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. In I Corinthians 6:9 to 11 we learn that the believing sinner is washed, sanctified and justified by the Holy Spirit, in the Name of the Lord Jesus. From these Scriptures we learn that the believer is sanctified before he is washed and justified. "By the which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10). The person, who has not been sanctified, has not been justified or saved. But of course the sanctified, justified believer is called to a life of separation and service.

The believing sinner is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ at the time he receives the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation as God's free gift. (I Corinthians 12:13). Salvation is God's free gift to the believing sinner. So also is eternal life, righteousness and the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 2:8 and 9; Romans 10:10; Romans 6:23). The believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3). The mighty power of God is available for the believer. (Ephesians 1:19 and 20). There is yet to be a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh; but not in this present "Church" age.

As we compare Acts 8:5 to 16 and Acts 19:2 to 6 with Galatians 3:14 and Ephesians 1:13 and 14 and II Corinthians 1:21 and 22 and I Corinthians 12:13, we learn that during this age of grace after the dead sinner becomes a living saint he never again receives the anointing, the sealing or the baptizing of the Holy Spirit. But the believer is told to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18). In this present age and dispensation of grace it is contrary to sound doctrine to tell a saved person to tarry for the Holy Spirit. Those who were told to tarry for the Holy Spirit were the Lord's disciples before the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven. (John 7:38 and 39; Acts 1:5). Surely earnest prayer is a contributing factor in being filled with the Holy Spirit. Together with such prayer the believer is to study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. (II Timothy 2:15). He is also to worship God in Spirit and in truth. He is also to gather with other saints in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is also to be a faithful ambassador and witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to be a practical Christian in ministering to those in need. He is to put on the new man and put off the old man. He is to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called. He is exhorted to do many spiritual things as he walks in the Spirit and manifests the fruit of the Spirit. The real Spirit-filled believer is described in Philippians 3:3. If the believer does not add other things to his faith, he will be a nearsighted, carnal Christian. (II Peter 1:9 and I Corinthians 3:1 to 5).

The Lord Jesus said, "herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit and so shall ye be My disciples." (John 15:8). Then we read in Acts 11:26 that the disciples were first called "Christians. Therefore, we might say that a Christian is a fruit-bearing-branch abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit is taught in Acts 13:2, Romans 8:26 and 27 and Acts 5:1 to 9, and in other Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ, In God's presence, is the believer's Paraclete. (I John 2:1 and 2). Christ, in John 14:16 and 17, said, "I will send you another Paraclete." So the Holy Spirit is a Person.

No Christian can really please God, unless and until he is controlled by the Holy Spirit, Who, by the Scriptures, guides the Christian into all truth.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In Colossians 1:13 we learn that the Christian has been delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. If the Christian is in the kingdom of Christ, he should learn all that he possibly can, in the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit, concerning that kingdom. It was Christ Himself Who said to Nicodemus, a very religious man, "except a man be born anew, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3 to 7). In I Corinthians 6:9 to 11 we learn that a Christian inherits the kingdom of God. If possible, the Christian should know what he has inherited, what the kingdom of God is. We read in Romans 14:17 that the kingdom of God is not a religious system, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In Colossians 4:11 we read that certain Christians, who were members of the Body of Christ, the Church, were working with Paul unto the kingdom of God. From these Scriptures we learn that the Church, or the Body of Christ, and the kingdom of God are sometimes identical. But again as we search the Scriptures, we learn that the Church, or Body of Christ, was God's secret during the years and centuries that the Old Testament prophets prophesied of great events to come. These prophets foretold the kingdom of God; but they knew nothing, and said nothing concerning the Body of Christ mentioned in Paul's Epistles.

Yes, the Old Testament prophets had much to say concerning the kingdom of God, which was to be established on this earth. Therefore, all Christians should know that there is a difference between the prophesied kingdom of God and the unprophesied kingdom of God.

Let us carefully read the statement concerning Christ and the kingdom of God and what He said concerning that kingdom, in Mark 1:14 and 15: "Now after that John (the Baptist) was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand repent ye, and believe the gospel." The Lord Jesus Christ declared that prophecy was about to be fulfilled. The kingdom of God was at hand. Years later the Lord Jesus, in heaven, revealed truth concerning the Body of Christ, truth never before revealed to any other servant of the Lord. (Ephesians 3:5 to 11; Colossians 1:23 to 28). Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Mark 1:14 and 15, was not saying the Church, which is My Body, is at hand. That Church did not begin historically until after the resurrection of Christ, although it was chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4 and 5, Ephesians 1:11 and Romans 8:28 to 32) .

Let us compare the truth of Mark 1:14 and 15 with the statements in Matthew 21:43 and Luke 21:31. In Matthew 21:43 the Lord Jesus declared that God would take away from Israel the kingdom of God. In Luke 21:27 to 31 the Lord Jesus declared that at the close of the times of the Gentiles, in the midst of universal trouble, He would come back in the clouds with power and great glory and redeem His people Israel, and then the kingdom of God would be at hand. This kingdom of God, which will be at hand when Christ comes to redeem Israel, will be the same kingdom of God that Christ declared to be at hand in Mark 1:14 and 15, and which He said, in Matthew 21:43, would be taken away from Israel.

In Matthew 21:43 the Lord Jesus Christ did not say, "I will take My Church, the Body mentioned in Romans 12:4 and 5 and Ephesians 3:6, from Israel and give it to Gentile Christians or Christian Gentiles." The Lord Jesus Christ is now far above all heavens on His Father's throne. (Ephesians 1:19 to 23 and Ephesians 4:8 to 12). Neither the Father nor the Son is offering

to believing Gentiles the kingdom of heaven which was at hand when Christ was here on earth. (Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 10:7 and 8) .

In many old testament prophecies we may learn that Gentiles are to be saved after the “kingdom” nation is saved under the guaranty of the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant and the new covenant. Those saved Gentiles are to be in subjection to the “kingdom” nation, Israel. When the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23) is preached by the will of God, the nation Israel is in favor with God, and David’s throne is in view. But during this present economy and age of “all” grace God’s message is “the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24). This age and dispensation are distinctively the age and dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles. (Ephesians 3:1 to 5). When Gentiles are saved and become members of the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, they are not in subjection to Israel, as Gentiles will be in the coming kingdom age. All the children of Adam are permitted by the grace of God to become members of the JointBody and joint-heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ, on equal terms, without the subjugation of either Jews or Gentiles to the other. This was not true on the day of Pentecost, when the kingdom message was being given to, all the house of Israel.

All Christians should know that the kingdom, which will be established on this earth when the King comes back to take David’s throne, in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7 and the very definite promise in Ezekiel the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters, is quite different froth the Body of Christ into which believing Jews and Gentiles are received and joined during this present economy of grace. (I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 12:4 and 5; Ephesians 3:6 and Ephesians 4:3 to 7).

In Acts 10:28 we learn that it was unlawful for the messengers of the risen Christ to have fellowship with Gentiles some seven years after the day of Pentecost. In Acts 11:19 we learn that Jewish disciples preached to none but Jews only. In Acts 11:1 to 6 we learn that the Christian Jews condemned Peter for preaching to a Gentile some seven years after the day of Pentecost. Therefore, all Christians should know that there was no Joint-Body (Ephesians 3:6) during those years covered by the first ten chapters of Acts.

Beginning with the second chapter of Acts and closing with the eleventh chapter of Acts the Holy Spirit would teach the Christian that before Paul was sent out with the gospel of the grace of God, God was giving us an outline of His kingdom program, of what is really going to be done when Christ comes back to build again the tabernacle of David and establish His kingdom on this earth, by first redeeming Israel and then bringing the Gentiles from all over the world in subjection to the “kingdom” nation. Read carefully Amos 9:1 to 15 and Acts 15:13 to 18.

All intelligent, Spirit-taught Christians believe in the postponement of the kingdom, the suspension or interruption of the kingdom covenants which guarantee to Israel possession of their land, with their true King David reigning over them. (Amos 9:11 to 15; Isaiah 62:1 to 4 and Jeremiah 23:5 to 8). Such Christians do not disagree as to the fact that this age of grace is a parenthetical period, while the prophesied kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven is in abeyance; but they do disagree as to whether the postponement began with Matthew 23:23 to 39 or after Cornelius was saved at the time Peter used the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

According to Revelation 11:15, the kingdoms of this world shall surely become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever. The kingdom shall first be restored again to Israel. (Acts 1:6). God will send Jesus Christ back to bring about the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19 to 21; Luke 1:67 to 77). Christ said that not one jot or tittle would pass away until all shall be

fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17 and 18). The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:7). But nothing of this will be fulfilled until after the culmination mentioned in Ephesians 4:13. This is not the day of the Prince of peace, but still the day of His rejection. Until the last member of the Body has been baptized into Christ, during this dispensation and age of grace, Satan will continue to be the prince of the world, and this will continue to be this present evil age. Until the Son of man comes to earth there will continue to be wars and rumors of wars, evil seducers will wax worse and worse, and false prophets will continue to bring in the damnable heresy denying the Lord that bought them, and the glorious earthly reign of the King of glory will be in abeyance.

In the Book of Matthew more than thirty times we find the term, “the kingdom of the heavens.” Generally speaking, the kingdom of God, in Mark, and the kingdom of heaven, in Matthew, are identical. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is sometimes—but not always the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not always the kingdom of heaven, mentioned in Matthew. Sometimes in the Scriptures the Church of Christ, His Body, and the kingdom of God are identical. But the kingdom of God, in the Scriptures, is not always the Body of Christ. Try, for instance, to substitute the Body of Christ for the kingdom of God, in Luke 21:31 and 32, and we will see what a great blunder such a substitution would be.

If we keep in mind that the kingdom of God of Mark 1:14 and 15 and Luke 21:31, which is the kingdom of heaven of Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 10:7 and 8, was prophesied by Israel’s prophets and that Jesus Christ was born in the city of David, of the house of David, to take the throne of David and reign over the house of Israel forever (Luke 1:29 to 33), we will know the difference between this prophesied kingdom of God and the unprophesied Body of Christ, the JointBody of Ephesians 3:6, concerning which all of Israel’s prophets were both silent and ignorant. More of this in another chapter.

DISPENSATIONAL BIBLE STUDY

First let us read Romans 6:14: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Here we learn that Christians are not under the law, but under grace. Beginning with the twentieth chapter of Exodus, at the time the Lord called Moses to talk with him on the mountain, God’s old testament people, Israel, were under the law. We are told in Romans 5:12 to 14 that from Adam to Moses neither Jews nor Gentiles had been given the law contained in the ten commandments. Therefore, for about 2500 years there was no law or old testament. We call the law covenant the old testament, because it was made old after Christ died on the cross. This we learn by reading Hebrews 8:9 to 13; II Corinthians 3:9 to 17 and Colossians 2:13 to 17. Note carefully John 1:17 and Romans 5:20 and 21:

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

“Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The law was given by Moses. Moses was eighty years old at the time the law was given. During the first eighty years of his life Moses lived under the Abrahamic covenant but not under the old covenant or old testament. In Galatians 3:14 to 18 we learn that God justified Abram by

faith four hundred and thirty years before the law was added. The offense entered when Adam sinned. The law entered about twenty-five hundred years later; that the offense might abound.

Abounding sin is by Adam and Moses. By Adam the human race is under the law of sin and death and all condemned. (Romans 8:3 and Romans 5:16 to 19; John 3:18). The law given by Moses was the ministration of condemnation and death (II Corinthians 3:7 and 9). By this law all the world became guilty before God. (Romans 3:19 and 20). But grace, righteousness and eternal life came through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Romans 10:4). The Lord Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9). The Lord Jesus abolished death and brought life to light in the gospel. (II Timothy 1:10).

We see then three general divisions in the Scriptures, at least three ages. First, from Adam to Moses, before God gave the law and His religious system to Israel. (Hebrews 9:10). Second, from the giving of the law until the beginning of the reign and age of grace. (Galatians 4:4 to 10). Third, from the beginning of this present age of grace until the realization of the blessed hope. (Titus 2:11 to 14).

After this present age of grace Christ will come as the Son of man to establish His political, spiritual kingdom on the earth and that will be another age. (Luke 21:27 to 32). Then note again Ephesians 2:7 and 1:10: "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus." "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." There will be other ages after the kingdom age.

There was an antediluvian age. We learn in the fifth chapter of Genesis that the age from Adam's sin to the flood was sixteen hundred and fifty-six years. During those years there were no Israelites and no old testament people of God.

As we read the story of Abel, Seth, Enoch and others, who lived before the flood, we know that God had His people, righteous and faithful. But they all died centuries before the law was given, for Moses received the law for Israel more than eight hundred years after the flood. Therefore they were not old testament saints, worshipping God in a portable tabernacle enroute from Egypt to Canaan. They did not enter the promised land to worship God in a Jerusalem temple, to be governed by more than two hundred commandments and prohibitions. Most assuredly they were not under the law, although they were under another law, the law of sin and death. Most assuredly neither the antediluvian saints, nor Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) and Jacob's twelve sons, all of whom lived after the flood, but before the law entered, experienced I Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Certainly no redeemed Israelites, under the reign of law, no matter how righteous or faithful, were baptized by one Spirit into one Body before Christ came unto His own and His own (Israel) received Him not. (John 1:11).

While Jesus Christ was on earth Jews and Gentiles were not baptized by one Spirit into one Body; for Christ plainly stated, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles." (Matthew 15:24 and 10:5). The Holy Spirit was not yet given. (John 7:38 and 39 and 16:7 to 9). Christ was made under the law. (Galatians 4:4). Christians are not under the law. (Romans 6:14).

All that we have said on this subject may help us to understand what Paul meant in I Corinthians 9:17, "a dispensation is committed unto me."

A dispensation may begin with an age and close with an age, but a dispensation is not a period of time. In II Timothy 1:12, in the Greek, Paul calls the dispensation committed unto him, “my deposit.”

Now let us note very carefully Romans 16:25: “Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.”

It would be well to dwell on the facts in this verse until the light really breaks through to fill and thrill your soul. In Romans 2:16 and II Timothy 2:8 Paul also refers to “my gospel.”

For a moment compare Paul’s “my gospel” with Matthew 4:23: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people.” What the Lord Jesus was preaching in Israel’s synagogue was in fulfillment of Isaiah 35:4 to 9 and of many other prophecies. But Paul’s “my gospel” was according to the revelation of God’s own secret which was hid in God and never made known by or to Isaiah or any other of Israel’s prophets.

To know the difference between Christ’s “kingdom gospel” and Paul’s “my gospel” is to know something of the principle of dispensational Bible study.

Receive into your mind and heart these statements of Paul:

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words; Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Ephesians 3:1 to 4.

Here again we learn of God’s own holy secret. This secret was God’s secret, purposed in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, before Adam was created. (Ephesians 3:11; II Timothy 1:9; Romans 8:28 to 31; Ephesians 1:11).

This deposit was given to Paul by the risen glorified Christ. It was for Gentiles. It was not given by the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit to any other servant of the Lord before it was revealed from heaven to the apostle Paul. To Peter and his fellow-apostles (Peter with the Eleven—Acts 2:14) was given the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18; Acts 1:8; Matthew 10:5 to 23; and the keys of the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 16:16 to 19).

All of these orders were given to the Twelve while Christ was on earth. According to Acts 15:7, God permitted one mouth of the twelve mouths to preach to a company of Gentiles. That was Peter’s mouth. (Acts 10:34 to 48). But after that note the agreement between Paul and Peter: “And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me (Paul) and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9.

All of this is so different from Ephesians 3:1, Romans 15:16, Romans 11:13, Acts 22:21, I Timothy 2:7, I Timothy 1:11 and Ephesians 3:8 and I Corinthians 3:10:

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” Ephesians 3:1.

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentile; ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:16.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

“And He said unto me Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” Acts 2:21.

“Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and verity.” I Timothy 2:7.

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” I Timothy 1:11.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” I Corinthians 3:10.

In Philippians 1:10, in the Greek, the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Paul, instructs Christians to test things that differ. Even the babe in Christ should know the difference between Peter, using the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to let the God-fearing, Jew-loving, worshipping, praying Cornelius into the kingdom, and Paul, with the gospel of the grace of God given him by special revelation from Christ (Galatians 1:11 and 12; Acts 20:24), preaching the message of Romans 10:7 to 13 to admit believing heathen into the Body of Christ.

It takes no profound student of the Scriptures to test the difference between Peter’s message to Cornelius in Acts 10:34 and 35 and Paul’s “all grace” message of Romans 4:4 and 5:

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:4 and 5.

Now make the test. Again compare Peter’s message to Israel, in Acts 2:38, with Paul’s message to the heathen in Ephesians 2:8 and 9:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” ACTS 2:38.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

Could Peter have truthfully said on the day of Pentecost, “not of yourselves,” “not of works,” when he ordered them to be baptized for the remission of sins? Make the same test with Mark 16:10, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” with Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

Paul had not yet laid the foundation of I Corinthians 3:10, upon which Christians are to build together with him, at the time Peter preached Acts 2:38 to those who killed the Prince of life. (Acts 3:12 to 19; Acts 2:22 and 33). To no other people was Acts 2:38 preached. There was something in the Pentecost message for the far-off Israelites of Daniel 9:8 and Acts 2:39.

In connection with this truth it is interesting to note this question in a pamphlet by A. E. Bishop and Dr. C. I. Scofield:

“Is it the Spirit of God or Satan who turns the eyes of sincere Christians back to Pentecost and away from the goal placed before them in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians?”

This pamphlet is called: “Tongues, Visions, Signs not God’s Order For Today.” It is published by the Moody Colportage, Chicago. They have published and distributed this printed message for about twenty-five years, seven editions, many thousands.

Who or what causes Christians to turn back to Pentecost instead of on to the goal set before them in Paul’s Epistles, written after he reached Rome and became the prisoner of Jesus

Christ with the mystery, the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles? It sounds rather cruel to say it is Satan, as suggested in the Moody pamphlet. But the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with the blunder. Satan may have something to do with it. But perhaps Dr. H. A. Ironside has written the better explanation:

“The bulk of professing believers know little or nothing. Unquestionably the onus of blame rests upon the guides, who professing to be Christ’s ministers, are anything but the stewards of the mysteries of God.” Preachers would not find it so easy to go on confusing the people of God, if there was real exercise of conscience among those who are content to be styled the laity, and who seldom read the Bible for themselves and endeavor to rightly divide the Word of truth.”

It is because of the awful appalling ignorance on the part of Christians. Here is another statement from the pen of Dr. Ironside: “Christ’s ministers are to be stewards of the mysteries of God, not merely preachers of what people so often call the simple gospel.” “Dispensational Bible study is eminently Scriptural.” This too is from Dr. Ironside’s pen. Now let the Scriptures speak

“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for a time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the Word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of case have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” Hebrews 5:11 to 6:1.

“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men I Corinthians 3:2 and 3.

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given him hath written unto you; As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” II Peter 3:15 and 16.

“Sturdy to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15.

We shall consider these truths in another chapter, but now by way of summary:

Noah lived before and after the flood; therefore, under two different dispensations.

Israel lived before and after the law was given by Moses; therefore, in two different dispensations.

The dispensation of grace for Gentiles did not begin either when Peter used the keys of the kingdom for all the house of Israel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36) or when God chose one mouth (Peter’s) to speak to Cornelius and his household. (Acts 15:7).

Christians are to be established by Paul’s “MY GOSPEL,” the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery hid in God from before the world began.

Now note again Ephesians 3:8 and 9 together with Colossians 1:24 to 26:

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church: Whereof I am made a

minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God.”

Until another chapter we leave with you these truths, strong meat for the full aged. The dispensation which the risen glorified Christ revealed to Paul for us is called “the unsearchable (unprophesied) riches of Christ,” because it was God’s own holy secret not revealed to other men in other ages. The dispensation of the mystery, committed unto Paul, was different from the keys of the kingdom, or the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, committed unto Peter, or from any other dispensation committed to any other prophet or apostle.

Note Matthew 19:28:

“And Jesus said unto them, 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.” Matthew 19:28.

The twelve apostles are yet to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This will be under a different dispensation, administration, or economy, during the coming kingdom age.

So God is to have other dispensations following the culmination of this age as stated in Ephesians 4:13: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13.

Let us not be deceived by Satan or by preachers who are not stewards of the mysteries of God. Let us not look back to Pentecost for God’s spiritual program for this present age of grace, but to Paul’s Epistles.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

All Christians should know that they have been reconciled to God. The great majority of Christians do not understand the dispensational aspect of reconciliation. By this we mean that they do not know the very important significance of the truth in Romans 11:15, that reconciliation was sent to Gentiles when and because Israel was cast away. All Christians, who are Premillenarians, know that salvation was sent to the Gentiles when Israel fell. “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:11. But these Premillennial Christians are by no means agreed as to when Israel fell. They should be helped much in setting the time of this dispensational change by Acts 13:46

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

These were solemn and significant words which the Lord directed the apostle Paul to speak to Israel. Mark well this statement, “lo we turn to the Gentiles.” A great turning point is here indicated.

Presently we shall refer to the radical change marked in the eleventh chapter of Romans, the change to God’s unfavorable attitude toward Israel and His favorable dealings with the Gentiles.

But now note Romans 5:10 and 11:

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Here we learn that alienated Gentiles were reconciled to God through the blood of Christ. By the Lord Jesus Christ we have received the reconciliation. Keep in mind that this was when and because Israel was cast away. In Romans 11:1 and 2 we read that God hath not cast away His people Israel. In Romans 11:15 we read that Israel was cast away. But the two Greek words translated “cast away” are different words with different meanings. Perhaps the truth of Romans 11:25 and 26 will help us to understand this: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” What kind of blindness to Israel? Neither total nor permanent. Israel has a glorious future; but while this glory is postponed the Gentiles are profiting by what we might call Israel’s misfortune. It was well for the Gentiles that God sent blindness upon Israel. Romans 11:5 to 11.

Note again Romans 11:11—“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Two Greek words, quite different in meaning, are translated “fall” in this verse. The second is elsewhere translated “trespass.” Through Israel’s trespass salvation was sent to Gentiles. And again we say it is so important to know when God first sent that salvation to Gentiles, because of Israel’s trespass. When we learn the time of this radical change we shall be able to decide which commission Christians are to obey in this age of grace, whether Matthew 28:19 and 20 or II Corinthians 5:18 to 20. Note carefully both of these commissions.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world

“And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

Now let us remember the agreement between Paul and Peter, in Galatians 2:9—“And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me (Paul), they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Let us also remember Ephesians 3:1 and 2 and 3:8 “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.” “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Also Romans 11:13 “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

The apostle Paul was a special ambassador. He was not one of the twelve apostles. The Twelve are yet to sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel: but Paul is not to occupy one of those thrones. (Matthew 19:27 and 28). The twelve apostles were with Christ on

earth from the days of John the Baptist and were eyewitnesses of His resurrection. This was necessary to qualify to be numbered with the Twelve. (Acts 1:22). Matthias qualified to take the place of Judas. Paul could not have qualified. Paul did see the resurrected Christ; but as one born out of due season. (I Corinthians 9:1 to 3; I Corinthians 15:8 and 9). Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, was the one unbeliever on earth who saw Christ after He was raised from the dead. Note Paul's testimony in Galatians 1:11 and 12—"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I never received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Paul was the ambassador of reconciliation. He was THE apostle to the Gentiles. (Romans 11:13). Peter preached to some Gentiles and Paul preached to many Jews; but Paul's distinctive ministry was to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:8.

The so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 was given to eleven men and given before the ascension of Christ. The messenger of the Lord, under that commission, was to do three things; and all three must be done, if the commission is faithfully obeyed "disciple," "baptize," "teach them to observe all things commanded by Christ." Now compare this with the words which Christ spoke to Paul after His ascension. Acts 26:16—"To make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." And also keep in mind Paul's words, "Christ sent me not to baptize." (I Corinthians 1:17).

If Christians, during this age of grace, are working under the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, what right has any minister of Christ to teach or believe that laymen can obey part of the commission, disciple, but the rest of the commission, the baptizing, must be done by the clergyman? When a Christian woman leads some person to Christ and calls that "discipling the nations," if she is working under the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, she has Christ's authority to finish the ministry by baptizing and then teaching the baptized convert to observe what Christ taught His disciples. But in thinking of what He taught them let us think of their question in Acts 1:6—"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They knew nothing of the dispensation of grace, and the Body of Christ, and the message of reconciliation. To bring into this age of grace, for the obedience and practice of members of the Body of Christ, much of what Christ taught in Matthew would frustrate the grace of God and prove contrary to sound doctrine.

The commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 was given before Israel was set aside. The commission of II Corinthians 5:18 to 20 was given after Israel was set aside.

Christ ministered to two Gentiles of great faith while He was here in the flesh, as the minister of the circumcision. (Romans 15:8). The record of the one Gentile is found in Matthew 15:21 to 26 and Mark 7:22 to 28. The record of the other Gentile is found in Matthew 8:5 to 15 and Luke 7:1 to 12. To the first of these "great faith" Gentiles, Christ said, "let the children first be filled." To the second He said, "the children shall be cast out." The children, of course, were Israel. In the recorded ministry of the twelve apostles, in the first chapters of Acts, the children were being filled and not cast out. (Acts 3:26; Acts 5:29 to 32). During those chapters the twelve apostles were not preaching the gospel to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. They, were not preaching reconciliation to Gentiles, because Israel was cast away. Note Peter's own words, some years later after Pentecost, "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts 10:28. Not one of the Twelve said, in those years after the resurrection of Christ, what Paul said to Israel later on. "It

was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves, unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46). Peter did say to Israel “Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from His iniquities.” Acts 3:26.

Peter said some other very significant things to Israel.

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But these things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” ACTS 3:17 to 19.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Acts 5:29 to 32.

And in this connection note Matthew 12:31; Luke 23:34 and Acts 7:56

“If ye sin against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven you.”

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.”

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots.”

“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

Israel sinned against the Son of man. That sin was pardonable. The Son of man prayed for Israel’s forgiveness. The death of Christ at the hands of Israel was inevitable and according to God’s determinate counsel and foreknowledge. (Acts 2:22 and 23; Acts 3:18). In Acts 3:17 we learn that Israel’s sin against the Prince of life was through ignorance, and therefore God turned first to those who killed Christ. Christ was standing as the Son of man in heaven. If Israel would repent, God would send Him back. The Son of man was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Saviour. This was the witness of the Holy Spirit. If Israel sinned against the Holy Spirit it would not be forgiven then.

Israel sinned against the Holy Spirit. (Acts 7:51; Acts 13:45; Acts 18:5). What happened? Israel fell. What else happened? Salvation and reconciliation were sent to the Gentiles. Peter in Acts 3:19 to 21, said to Israel, repent and God will send Christ to you. In Ephesians 2:1 to 6 Paul taught that Gentiles, who repented, were raised up where Christ is, in the heavenlies. Quite a difference!

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” John 1:11.

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?” Matthew 21:42.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46.

“For as ye (Gentiles,) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.” Romans 11:30. “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15.

Here we have the story, Christ came unto His own. He came to save individual Israelites and to deliver Israel from Gentile domination and subjugation. (Luke 1:67 to 77; Luke 19:42 to 46). His own received Him not, as national Deliverer, Messiah and King, although many individual Jews did receive Him as Saviour. The builders rejected the Stone. After His death God continued to fill the children first. Israel rejected the Lord before His incarnation, in His incarnation, and in His resurrection. It was not at the time of this second rejection that reconciliation was sent to Gentiles, but after the third mutual rejection by the Lord and Israel. This was some years after Pentecost.

For the understanding of God's "grace" program, dispensationally there is no more important verse than Romans 11:30—"For as ye Gentiles in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their (Israel's) unbelief." This is very simple language, and God's will concerning His children is that they should not be ignorant concerning this all-important truth. (Romans 11:25). Why did the Gentiles receive mercy? Because of Israel's unbelief. When? Certainly not up to the time the eleven apostles and others condemned Peter for preaching to one splendid religious Gentile by the name of Cornelius. (Acts 11:1 to 5).

We leave these interesting facts with you. After Paul, in Acts 13:46, said to Israel, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles," there is no record of any of the missionary journeys of the twelve apostles or their spiritual activities in the remaining chapters of the Book of Acts. Only two or three of the twelve are mentioned in the last sixteen chapters of Acts, and that is because of their dealings with Paul. In the last sixteen chapters of Acts we find the record of several of Paul's missionary journeys; in fact, those sixteen chapters give us the life and ministry of Paul and those who had dealings with him.

Remember this other all-important and most significant fact. When Judas died a successor was chosen to keep the number of apostles. "twelve." (Acts 1:21 to 26). When James died, no successor was chosen. (Acts 12:1 and 2). Twelve no longer needed. But twelve were needed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14), and while Peter was using the keys of the kingdom. Twelve is the number of Israel. One is the number of the Church which is the Body of Christ. Remember the twelve apostles are to continue their ministry with Israel (Matthew 19:27 and 28) after the making of the One New Man (Ephesians 2:15).

Let us know our commission:

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." II Corinthians 5:16 to 21.

In another chapter we shall see how the new creation and reconciliation are linked together.

RECONCILIATION . . . THE NEW CREATION . . . IDENTIFICATION

The Christian is God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:10). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." (II Corinthians 5:17). "And all things are of God. Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." (II Corinthians 5:11). "Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ; And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:5 and 6). "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3 and 4). "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." (Colossians 3:3 to 10). "And they two shall be one flesh: This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." (Ephesians 5:31 and 32). "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; so also is Christ." (I Corinthians 12:12). "So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Romans 12:5). "That there should be no division in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." (I Corinthians 12:25).

The Scriptures quoted above speak volumes to the Christian. The glorious doctrine and experience of "identification" is linked to the doctrines of "reconciliation" and "the new creation." We read in Ephesians 2:14, that Christ is the believer's peace, that Christ hath made both one; "To make in Himself of twain one new man . . . That He might reconcile both (Jews and Gentiles) unto God in one Body by the cross." (Ephesians 2:15 and 16). "There is one Body . . . one Lord . . . one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4 and 5). Until the Christian knows that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, during this age and dispensation of grace, is building one Body, by one baptism, that He is making one new man, reconciling all believers in one Body, by the work of Christ on the cross, that Christian cannot walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called, as he is instructed to do in Ephesians 4:1.

It was after the radical change stated in II Corinthians 5:16 that these glorious doctrines of reconciliation, the new creation and identification were clearly revealed in the Scriptures. Note II Corinthians 5:16: "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." With this let us understand the great change stated in Romans 10:12, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Just compare this with Matthew 15:21 and 26, and you will say, "what a difference" . . . "what a great change." Now note Romans 10:6 to 8: "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above)? Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring Christ up again from the dead): But what saith it? (the righteousness of faith)? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." Most assuredly this was not true while Jesus Christ was here in the flesh. Not one of the twelve apostles was at that time to preach the salvation message in the next verse. Romans 10:9 . . . "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Note in Luke 18:31 to 36, that after the twelve apostles had preached the gospel for two years they did not understand or believe Christ when He told them that He would be put to death and then be raised from the dead. Compare the gospel message of Romans 10:9 and 10 with the gospel message of Matthew 10:5 to 8. What a tremendous difference!

Thus all Christians should know that only as they enter into the knowledge of the principle of progressive revelation can they, understand these blessed doctrines that we are

considering. This is true concerning the foundation truth, salvation by grace, without works or law or religion. As we develop “grace” from the Book of Matthew to the last Epistle of Paul, II Timothy, we learn that, with each succeeding message in order of the period covered by the message, there is less religion and law and more grace. In the sixty-eight chapters of Matthew, Mark and Luke the word “grace” is not found in connection with the sinner’s salvation, whereas in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans grace is found more than twenty times. The middle-wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was standing while Christ was on earth, in the flesh, under the law. (Galatians 4:4). But in Romans there is no difference; there is salvation by grace for Jews and Gentiles, without the practice of Judaism, without the law and without religion. The baptism for Israel in John 1:31 and the “identification” baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 are altogether different.

No Christian has Scriptural right to read water baptism into the sixth chapters of Romans or into Colossians 2:12.

GOD INSTRUCTS CHRISTIANS “TO TEST THINGS THAT DIFFER”

Christians, who are interested in the deeper truths of the Bible. the strong meat for those of full age, want to know whether there is a difference between “the new birth” of John 3:3 to 7 and “the new creation” of II Corinthians 5:17. Certainly the one was taught while Jesus was known after the flesh, and the other when He was no longer thus known. On earth Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, and while here He was sent only to the circumcised offspring of Abraham. (Romans 15:8; Hebrews 2:16 to 18; Matthew 1:1; Matthew 15:24; Acts 2:22; Acts 13:23). Many of Israel’s prophets had prophesied concerning Israel’s new birth. The Lord Jesus, while on earth, was peculiarly interested in that part of the human race that descended from Adam by the way of Abraham. Therefore, Christ, as the Seed of Abraham, was circumcised. (Luke 2:14 to 39). Christ ministered under the Abrahamic covenant, and the law covenant, to the seed of Abraham. To the other children of Adam, Christ said, “it is not meet to give the children’s bread to the dogs.” (Matthew 15:21 to 27). In Romans 10:12, thirty years later, “no difference between the children of Adam by way of Abraham and the other children of Adam.” Something had happened. What happened? The seed of Abraham would not receive the Word of God, so Paul said, “we turn to the other children of Adam, not Abraham’s seed.” (Acts 13:46). In Romans 1:16 to 31, we learn how, why and when God gave up the Gentiles. In Romans 11:1 to 33, we learn how, why and when God gave up the Jews. When God gave up the Gentiles (Genesis, 11 and 12), He took up with Israel, His one great nation. When God gave up the Jews, He took up with the Gentiles, who were “no people,” a people alienated from the life of God. (Romans 10:19; Ephesians 4:18). These heathen were dead in trespasses and sins. (Ephesians 2:1 to 5 and Colossians 2:13). The Holy Spirit told them, through Paul, that religion could not in any way change them spiritually; that they needed the new creation. (Galatians 6:15). They did not need religion. They needed life. There is no life in religion; only in a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus on earth referred to both the believing and the unbelieving Jews as “the children of the kingdom.” (Matthew 8:12). To one of the outstanding religious children of Abraham, Nicodemus, the Lord Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” Christ spoke in the plural to that religious Jew who represented His nation. When Christ returns to earth as the Son of man Israel is going to experience the new birth.

Therefore, the Scriptures seem to teach that there is a difference between the new birth for the children of Abraham and the new creation for the children of Adam who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. (Ephesians 2:11 and 12). Surely a heathen, alienated from the life of God, dead in sins, was like the earth that was void and without form when God re-created it. God made those dead heathen, alive by His grace and power. They were not required to practice Israel's religion. They were God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. (Ephesians 2:10). They were saved by the washing of regeneration, without striving to enter at the gate, without struggling with the sermon on the mount, without practicing the ethics of Jesus, without the deeds of the law; but freely by God's grace and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Titus 3:5 to 8 and Romans 3:24 to 28).

After God set aside His religious nation, the time of reformation of Hebrews 9:10 came; and since that time both Gentiles and Jews have been saved by grace through faith, without religion either before or after salvation. God's "covenant" Israelites were required, to be both righteous and religious. Members of Christ's Body are made righteous, by receiving the righteousness of God, as God's free gift. And then they are forbidden to be religious. But they are exhorted to fulfill the righteousness of the law by walking in the Spirit (Romans 8:4); for they are ordained to walk in good works (Ephesians 2:10). It is no simple study to progress from Matthew 1:1 to Philippians 3:1 to 10 and to mark the exact time when God separated righteousness completely from religion and brought Christians to the experience of Philippians 3:3. Read it. In much of the Book of Acts there was a transitional period, during which some of Israel's religious program was carried over from a former dispensation, as we learn in Acts 21:24 and 25 and I Corinthians 9:20 to 24. The baptism required in Acts 2:38 was altogether different from the "identification" baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4. Acts 2:38 had no place in the "grace" gospel to heathen.

Paul wrote concerning Adam and Christ when he wrote to the Corinthians and the Romans more than twenty-five years after Christ died to redeem them that were under the law. (I Corinthians 15:20 to 26 and Romans 5:11 to 21). Paul mentions Adam, in Romans 5:12, in connection with "reconciliation" and "the new creation"; and then takes up "identification" in the sixth chapter. We may be sure that the Holy Spirit is not responsible for the chapter break between chapters five and six.

Now think of the significance of the "wherefore" that connects Romans 5:11 with Romans 5:12:

"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation. Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered the world and death by sin." Now note verse 19 . . . "For as by one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One (Christ) shall many be made righteous." Abraham here receives no special mention; he is just one of the all sinners by and in Adam. No special priority rights for God's religious nation, Israel. They are all, like the Gentiles, condemned in Adam. The only hope of all the children of Adam is to pass out of death into life (John 5:24; Colossians 2:13; Ephesians 2:5), by passing out of Adam into Christ; thus becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus. Note carefully . . . "Reconciliation: wherefore as by Adam." The doctrine of reconciliation is here first presented with the two men of the Bible, the first man and the Second Man (I Corinthians 15:41 to 47). By Adam, sin, condemnation, alienation and death. By Christ, righteousness, justification, reconciliation and eternal life. Adam was disobedient unto death. Christ was obedient unto death. Adam brought the thorns and the curse. Christ wore the thorns and bore the curse. Adam left the garden of Eden. Christ went into the garden of Gethsemane. Adam hid behind the tree from God.

Christ was hid from God on the tree (Calvary) when darkness was upon the earth. Because of what Christ is and what He did, is now doing, and will yet do, God declares that where sin abounded, grace is much more abounding. (Romans 5:20). Alienated sinners are reconciled by simple faith in the perfect work of the perfect Christ. (Colossians 1:20 and 21). (II Corinthians 5:18 to 21).

So with the first mention of “reconciliation,” Adam and “the new creation” and the believer’s “identification” with the crucified, dead, buried, risen and ascended Christ, are mentioned. These three doctrines are inseparably connected, as the Christian is inseparably united to the risen, glorified and coming Christ. When God created Eve out of Adam, God called their name “Adam.” (Genesis 5:2). Therefore said Adam, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined, as one flesh, to his wife. (Genesis 2:24). Adam had no mother. He did have to leave God when he was sent out of paradise. Paul referred to Adam’s statement, in Ephesians 5:31 and 32, and said, I refer to Christ and the Church, one flesh. Christ left His Father and His mother and went to Calvary to reconcile believing sinners, who are baptized into His death, burial and resurrection by a baptism not made with hands. What Christ is yet going to do for and with His Church is stated in Ephesians 5:26 to 31. God has condemned the old man, the first man, and all that pertains to that old creation. Christ is the Head of the new creation. The Church and Christ are one flesh. The Church is the filling-up of Christ. “So also is Christ.” (Ephesians 1:19 to 23 and I Corinthians 12:12). God is making a new man. (Ephesians 2:15). This is a great mystery, the Church with Christ, one flesh, one new man. It is doubtful if any of these blessed truths were known by the twelve apostles in their recorded “Acts” ministry.

Until the clear revelation, in the Scriptures, of this glorious mystery, this ministry of reconciliation, this doctrine of the new creation and the doctrine of identification, there were divers baptisms, signs and signgifts in God’s spiritual program and then they gave place to the signless and religionless dispensation of grace as outlined in Paul’s last Epistles. We call your attention to these interesting statements in the pamphlet of Mr. Bishop and Dr. Scofield.

“For some years after Pentecost the Church was exclusively Jewish, clinging to their rites and ceremonies, the converts sometimes receiving the Holy Spirit subsequent to their conversion, by the imposition of apostolic hands (Acts 8:14 to 17).”

“This was an overlapping of the former and present dispensations AS SOME YEARS ELAPSED BEFORE THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE TOOK ITS NORMAL COURSE.”

“A careful study of the Epistles, especially of the latest Epistles of Paul, give the normal course of the Church during the present dispensation.”

(The above quotation from A. E. Bishop’s pamphlet “Tongues, Signs and Visions, Not Gods Order For Today”; endorsed by Dr. C. I. Scofield; published and distributed by the Moody Colportage Assn.)

During that overlapping “Acts” period, God’s order was “to the Jew first” until the radical change mentioned in Romans 11:11 and 15. During that transitional period the disciples of Christ were led by signs, trances and visions. There were miraculous healings, miraculous jail-deliverances, earthquakes, Christians spoke in tongues. But during that period Christians had very little, if any, of the New Testament Scriptures, in written form. God permitted one order for believing Jews and another order for believing Gentiles until the pronouncement of Acts 28:25 to 28. Read Acts 21:24 to 28.

NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Every thinking, spiritual, Bible-studying Christian has been puzzled, if not worried, about the truth revealed in I Corinthians 12:28: “And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”

The Epistle to the Corinthians was written after the historic beginning of the Church of the Mystery, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6. This we may learn by comparing I Corinthians 2:6 to 8 with the first three chapters of Ephesians. If God set in the Church Christians with those sign-gifts, by whose order and when were they removed from the Church? Those gifts were not exercised by the Corinthians, because of their great faith. Let us read concerning the Corinthian Christians:

“And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” I Corinthians 3:1 to 3.

“Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong: Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.” I Corinthians 6:7 and 8.

We would not conclude from these statements, or from other statements in Paul’s two messages to the Corinthians, that the Corinthians were of great faith or that they were unusually spiritual, but for the most part quite the contrary. But read now I Corinthians 12:8 to 11:

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the Word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”

The carnal Christians at Corinth exercised all of the gifts of the Spirit, but we repeat that it was certainly not because they were exceedingly spiritual or because they had extraordinary faith. In the fourteenth chapter we learn that there was considerable confusion which was not of God, when they spoke with tongues. God was not pleased with their confusion, but they did speak with tongues in spite of confusion. They had the gifts; several gifts.

Now let us compare I Corinthians 13:8 and I Corinthians 13:13:

“Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (be done away); whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

With these two verses, let us study carefully concerning the apostle Paul and Divine healing:

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons and the diseases departed from them.” Acts 19:11 and 12.

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” I Timothy 5:23.

“Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed

after you all and was full of heaviness because that ye had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” Philippians 2:25 to 27.

“Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” II Timothy 4:20.

Why did not Paul heal Epaphroditus, Timothy and Trophimus, all faithful saints, as he healed the multitude with aprons and handkerchiefs? He wrote his Epistles to Timothy and to the Philippians after he wrote, “now abideth faith, hope, and love.” One of the final statements of Paul was, that a faithful saint was left sick.

After Paul wrote “now abideth faith, hope and love,” and that certain things would pass away, little mention was made of the sign-gifts, but more than one hundred times the three words “faith,” “hope” and “love” are found in Paul’s Epistles.

We call your attention to several other statements in that pamphlet which the Moody Bible Institute has published and distributed for more than twenty years. The title of this pamphlet is “Tongues, Signs and Visions, Not God’s Order For Today.” This printed message is endorsed without reservation by Dr. C. I. Scofield.

“There is a corrective passage in God’s Word for every error, every heresy, every delusion, every hobby, every fanaticism, and every unbalanced position.”

“A careful study of the Epistles, especially of the latest Epistles of Paul, which give the normal course of the Church during the present dispensation, would dismount all from their hobbies, eliminate the last vestige of Judaism from their lives and teachings, and would adjust things in general, placing secondary things in their place and first things where they belong.”

“It is not true that healing is as much the will of God for every Christian as salvation is for the unsaved. Some of the choicest of saints by the elective will of God, have been patient sufferers for years upon sick beds.”

“There is no foundation in the Word of God for the prevailing popular doctrine of “divine healing.”

“In contrast with the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12, limited to a portion of the believers and operative only during the Book of Acts period, let us note the non-sign gifts of Ephesians 4:10.”

“The fact that the Bible does not give a hint of the manifestation of the sign-gifts after the close of the Book of Acts, must carry convincing evidence to the careful student who compares Scripture with Scripture, that they have been retired.”

“If we give heed to this fact, it will be easy for us to see later on why God, Who is sovereign in the giving of signs, afterward retired completely the sign gifts.”

“Is it the Spirit of God or Satan who attempts to revive the sign gifts that were divinely retired after having fulfilled their purpose?”

Ponder well these all-important statements and then let us consider these statements with Mark 16:17 and 18: “And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

Keep this in mind, “the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 were operative only during the ‘Acts’ period.” The signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 followed the apostles and deacons, Stephen and Philip, and other disciples during some of the years covered by the Book of Acts.

How true it is that every attempt to revive the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18, or the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 results in confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace, as stated by Mr. Bishop.

As some man of God has truly said, “if the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 are the credentials of a Christian, no Christian has lived since the last apostle (John) died.”

During those years when God was confirming prophesied, inspired Truth and revealing new Truth, all to be included in the Holy Scriptures, it was necessary that certain Christians should exercise such gifts as “the discerning of spirits,” “wisdom” and “knowledge,” to safeguard the Word of God. Then tongues were for a sign and were to cease, or pass away. Likewise, the gift of knowledge and prophecy.

When the abiding gifts were bestowed upon the members of Christ’s Body, as revealed in Ephesians 4:7 to 12, they were for the perfecting (readjusting) of the saints, so that no saint would be a child tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:14). If there are any Christians who are tossed to and fro today, it is those Christians who are trying to revive the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, trying to convince themselves and others that what God put in the Church, according to I Corinthians 12:28, would be in the Church today, if Christians were as spiritual and as faithful as those first century Christians. The normal course of the Church is set forth in Paul’s latest Epistles.

“Sign” Christians should read I Corinthians 3:1 to 3 concerning the carnal babes or children with I Corinthians 13:11—“When I was a child”—“When I became a man.”

The Holy Scriptures have been completed. The “mystery,” which Christ revealed to the apostle Paul, completed the Word of God. (Colossians 1:24 to 27). That glorious revelation was the capstone of Divine Truth.

The Bible is principally “prophecy,” “the fulfillment of prophecy,” and “the mystery,” which was not prophesied. Then we find the “searchable” and the “unsearchable” riches of Christ. (Acts 17:11; Ephesians 3:8). Signs had a place in Paul’s “confirmation” ministry, and then passed away.

Concerning God’s revelation of Truth, we know that anything that is true, is not new; and anything that is new, is not true. That has been true since the Lord completed the Word of God with the mystery and the last Book in the Bible given by inspiration and revelation. With the Bible completed sign-gifts were unnecessary. We walk not by sight but by faith. Blessed is the man that hath not seen, yet hath believed. Always recognize the principle of progressive revelation. We quote again from the Moody pamphlet:

“After repeated study of the Epistles written after Paul’s arrival at Rome, I am convinced that in them is found a curative teaching for all of the present-day delusions and fanaticisms found among many of the most sincere saints in the Church.”

Now again considering the sign-gifts, many Christians who are not interested in visions or tongues, are perplexed as to what they should believe concerning the healing of the sick by faith. All Christians should believe in Divine healing, although some disagree most heartily with those who contend that the sign-gifts are still in the Church and would be in manifestation everywhere, if God’s people were in a healthy spiritual state and exercising faith to that end, (Moody pamphlet p. 5). Christians know that God is omnipotent and can therefore heal the bodies of His children.

We quote several other statements from the “Moody” pamphlet:

“It is reasonable to expect miracles in our Father’s family. God often performs them, but they are sovereign. Because God heals once or frequently is no guarantee that He will always heal. Because He heals one is no proof that He will heal all.”

“Even in the Jewish Christian Epistles we find no indication of the continuation of the sign-gifts. The prayer of faith that always saved the sick (James 5:15) is not the exercising of the sign gift of healing.”

Sane, spiritual Christians believe in special, or elective, Divine healing, but reject the teaching of general physical healing in the atonement of Christ. If this were true, the return of Christ would not be necessary for the redemption of the body, and saints would never die. But the death rate of saints and sinners alike will continue to be one apiece until the Lord Jesus Christ comes. Some Christians have failed to read and believe the last five verses of the fourth chapter of II Corinthians, and Romans 8:23.

In reading the healing message in James, let us remember that James wrote to Israel concerning their “synagogue” meetings (James 1:1 and 2:2) and always study James in the light of Acts 15:19, the words of James about Christian Gentiles, Acts 21:18 to 26, the Jewish religion of James, and Galatians 2:9, the Jewish ministry of James. We find no record where oil was put on Christian Gentiles or where Christian Gentiles were told to use oil. And certainly women are not elders.

Christians pray, “give us this day our daily bread,” then they work all day and go buy the bread. In very special cases God has miraculously provided bread for those unable to work for it or buy it. Christians should use the same sanctified common sense in the matter of healing and believe II Corinthians 4:16 and 17 and Romans 8:28, not forgetting I Timothy 5:23 and Romans 8:23. And especially II Timothy 4:20 with Ephesians 3:20.

And then this final word for those who desire to speak in tongues, wholesome words, to be read with I Corinthians 13:8 and Ephesians 4:14.

“Yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” I Corinthians 14:19.

“Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.” I Corinthians 14:34.

If the women were taken out of the “tongues” movement today it would cease to move. Tongues belong to the childish things that full aged Christians should put away.

Let us accept as sound teaching, what is written in the “Moody” pamphlet; that the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 were operative only during the “Acts” period. But never let us be so foolish as to say that our heavenly Father does not heal the bodies of His children in this age of grace.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

Religious ceremonies or ordinances, like the sign-gifts, have no place in God’s present “grace” program, in the dispensation of the grace of God, called “the dispensation of the mystery.” (Ephesians 3:1 and 2 and 3:9). The word translated “ordinances,” in I Corinthians 11:1 and 2, is the Greek word meaning, “traditions.” And in the light of I Corinthians 1:17, we may be sure that the apostle Paul was not referring to water baptism when he wrote concerning the traditions. Paul’s own, plain words were, “Christ sent me not to baptize.”

If we will carefully and prayerfully compare I Corinthians 11:2 with I Corinthians 15:1 to 4, we will learn that the Lord Jesus Christ instructed the apostle of the Gentiles concerning the Lord’s Supper in very much the same manner that He revealed the salvation message, the gospel,

to him. Read with these verses Galatians 1:11 and 12, that Paul received his “grace” gospel from Christ in heaven, by revelation. He received the Lord’s Supper in the same way.

The Lord’s Supper is a memorial, in which members of the Body of Christ are to remember the once-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and look forward to His glorious appearing to take His Church to be with Him in glory. No intelligent, Spirit-taught Christian will accept the theory of “transubstantiation” or “consubstantiation,” or believe that there is any saving value in the bread and wine, or any special significance when served by some religious potentate of special order. Christians are told to remember the death of Christ until He shall have come, (I Corinthians 11:26). He has not yet come. Christians, who know the Scriptures and love the Lord Jesus Christ, will remember His death and resurrection at all times, and will ever join with Paul in glorying in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and look for that glorious appearing of Christ. (Galatians 6:14 and Titus 2:13) .

We have translated the Greek word in I Corinthians 11:26, “shall have come.” There are certain brethren, who teach that there has been no need for the Lord’s Supper, since the Scriptures were completed with the mystery. They teach that the Lord’s Supper had a place in God’s spiritual program during the years between Pentecost and the judgment of God pronounced upon Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28. They say that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, mentioned in I Corinthians 11:28, was the hope of Israel, “the parousia.” They say that because there was reference to “the new covenant” in the Lord’s Supper, and because the Body of Christ is not “the new testament” Church, members of that Body are not to sit at the Lord’s Table. They teach that the hope of the members of the Body of Ephesians 3:6 is not “the parousia,” but the blessed hope of Titus 2:13, the glorious appearing of Christ. They differentiate between the blood “of the new covenant,” or “in the new covenant,” of I Corinthians 11:23 to 26, and “the blood of Christ,” mentioned in Ephesians 2:13. They, therefore, teach that the Church of God, Which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28), was a Church different from the Church, Which is Christ’s Body, mentioned in Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Colossians 1:25 and 26.

Most of these teachers, by the same reasoning or lack of reasoning, teach that there is no Mediator between God and the members of the Body of Christ, because such members are one flesh with Christ (Ephesians 5:31 and 32) and Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant. (Hebrews 12:24). When asked concerning I Timothy 2:4 to 6, where Christ is called the one Mediator between God and men, they say that First Timothy was written during the “Acts” period, whereas Second Timothy was written after the close of that period.

They contend that the Church of the “Acts” period was an Israelitish Church, with a kingdom message and program, before the dispensation of the mystery (Ephesians 3:9) was ushered in. They say that God not only changed His spiritual program after the pronouncement of Acts 28:25 to 28; but thereafter a new Church, the Body of Christ, began historically; and that the hope of that new and different Church was different from the hope of the members of the Church mentioned in I Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 12:4 and 5, the Church of God of Acts 20:28.

Of course, this means that when Paul wrote to Timothy his First epistle, Timothy was in a “kingdom” Church, with an Israelitish hope; and when he wrote to Timothy his Second Epistle, Timothy had been transferred into a new and different Church, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6.

The answer to this fallacy is found in I Timothy 6:14 and II Timothy 4:1 and 8, where we learn that Timothy’s hope was the same in both Epistles.

This extreme teaching has led some Christians away from sound doctrine and has turned many Christians in disgust, away from sane Scriptural dispensational Bible study, which is so essential to understand and enjoy the Bible.

Now, we quote several statements from the pen of a servant of the Lord. Every Christian should believe these true statements copied from the pamphlet to which we have referred, printed and distributed by the Moody Bible Institute:

“Also after careful restudies of the Book of Acts and of the Epistles written before its close, I am convinced that those who contend for a purely kingdom dispensation covering the Book of Acts period are as much deceived by Satan as are those who contend that the sign gifts are still in the Church and would be in manifestation everywhere if God’s people were in a healthy spiritual state and exercising faith to that end.”

“For some years after Pentecost the Church was exclusively Jewish, clinging to their rites and ceremonies, the converts sometimes receiving the Holy Spirit subsequent to their conversion, by the imposition of the apostolic hands. (Acts 8:14 to 17).

“There is no foundation in the Word of God for the prevailing popular doctrine of ‘divine healing’.” “It is not true that healing is as much the will of God for every Christian as salvation is for the unsaved. Some of the choicest of saints by the elective will of God, have been patient sufferers for years upon sick beds.”

“A careful study of the Epistles especially of the latest Epistles of Paul, which give the normal course of the Church during the present dispensation, would dismount all from their hobbies, eliminate the last vestige of Judaism from their lives and teaching, and would adjust things in general, placing secondary things in their place and first things where they belong.”

“Is it the Spirit of God or Satan who attempts to revive the sign-gifts that were divinely retired after having fulfilled their purpose? Every widespread attempt to revive them has, without exception, resulted in confusion divisions, injury and disgrace.

“Is it the Spirit of God or Satan who turns the eyes of sincere Christians back to Pentecost and away from the goal placed before them in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians?”

“In the latest Epistles of Paul not only is it noticeable that the sign gifts are nowhere in manifestation, but a different order is brought forth by the Holy Spirit for the correction of prevailing hobbies and fanaticisms.” (A. E. Bishop in Tongues, Signs and Visions, Not God’s Order For Today.)

Mark well the first and the last quotations. This is sound doctrine. So also are the all-important sensible statements in the other quotations. The careful, Spirit-led, intelligent student of the Scriptures knows that God did change His spiritual program after the close of the “Acts” period; but no Bible teacher has offered any sound exegesis to eliminate the Lord’s Supper from that new program.

The extreme dispensationalists offer, as proof, that the Lord’s Supper ceased after the pronouncement of Acts 28:25 to 28 upon Israel, the fact that the “sign” judgments of I Corinthians 11:27 to 32 did not fall upon those who unworthily partook of the Lord’s Supper after the close of the “Acts” period.

By this same reasoning, or lack of reasoning, we could prove that the saving gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 ceased when Paul reached Rome, because the signs ceased.

Compare again the language of I Corinthians 11:23 and I Corinthians 15:3. This saving gospel and the Lord’s Supper were given by the same risen Christ to the same apostle Paul.

Now note the words of Paul in Romans 15:19: "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ:"

It was true that the Jews required a sign (I Corinthians 1:22) and that water baptism was introduced as a sign to the Jews (John 1:31): but signs and water baptism also accompanied the gospel of Christ preached by Paul to the heathen during the "Acts" period. Even the carnal Corinthian saints exercised the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:3 to 11. It is true, as we quoted from the "Moody" pamphlet, that God changed from a "sign" program to a "signless" program in Paul's latest Epistles. But the gospel of grace did not cease, because signs ceased. Neither has any valid proof been presented by the extreme dispensationalists to prove that the Lord's Supper ceased because "sign" judgments ceased.

Moreover it is the height of folly to try to eliminate the Lord's Supper by applying Hebrews 9:10 and Colossians 2:14 to 16. God imposed these religious things upon Israel. Ignorant men, but not God, imposed them upon Christian Gentiles during the "Acts" period, as we may learn by reading the Epistle to the Galatians. The Lord's Supper in no way is touched by these verses. Think of the folly of the teaching of some of the most extreme "ultra dispensationalists," who say that Christian Gentiles did not observe the Lord's Table, only Christian Jews, as the Lord's Supper was the continuation of Israel's Passover.

There have been many abuses of the Lord's Supper and considerable confusion and disagreement as to what kind of bread and what kind of wine to serve and as to who is to minister at the Table and when. But until it can be proved that "till He shall come" mean something else, Christians should believe that the Lord's Supper is not a religious, compulsory ordinance, but a memorial to be cherished in those who glory in the cross of Christ and look for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There has been bitter controversy and anything but love engendered because of certain brethren who have forced the meaning of the words, "breaking of bread," to mean the Lord's Supper and thereby prove that Christians are to gather at a certain time in a certain manner on Sunday to sit around the Table. Most of these brethren call Sunday, "the Lord's day," without any Scriptural authority. Not a few of their leaders have made the Lord's Supper a legal religious ceremony, almost making the symbols the objects of worship.

Theoretically these special brethren have taught the truth that in the Body of Christ the membership should not be divided into clergymen and laymen; that ecclesiastical rulers are not to be lords over God's heritage. But, for the most part, their practice has been the negation of what they claim to believe; for many of their rulers exercise such lordship that those under them are troubled with that old malady "fear of men." (Galatians 1:10 and 2:10 to 13).

Unfortunately the great majority of church-members are so steeped in tradition and are so influenced and controlled by sectarian prejudices that it is next to impossible for them to be like the noble Bereans of Acts 17:11, and learn by searching the Scriptures under the infallible teaching of the Holy Spirit, that such titles as cardinals, archbishops, fathers, clergymen, reverend, doctors of divinity are unscriptural, that many of the religious practices in the Christian churches are contrary to sound doctrine. Most religious Christians cherish their sectarian traditions far above any desire to obey Ephesians 4:1 to 14. Every Christian would be wise to study all Scripture in the light of Ephesians 4:1 to 14.

If Christians would study all of these unscriptural religious doctrines and practices in the light of the fourth chapter of Ephesians, they would find that liberty of the Spirit which the risen Christ wants His Body-members to enjoy. We first quote Ephesians 4:7 to 13.

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things); And He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:7 to 13.

After receiving the truth for our obedience and practice, let us also believe and faithfully obey Ephesians 4:1 to 6:

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One faith, one Lord, one baptism, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one Head and one Lord of the one and only Church recognized by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church of the Mystery, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6.

We have elsewhere in these messages referred to the erroneous teaching that laymen are permitted to evangelize sinners, under the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, but that clergymen must finish the task and do the water baptizing. The evangelizing can be done in the home, they teach and practice, but for some reason the water ceremony must be a public religious exhibition. This too is the theory of some religious men, but not sound Bible doctrine. Neither is it sound Bible doctrine to teach that clergymen, and not laymen, must serve the bread and wine at the Lord’s Table. There is not a line of Scripture to prove that a Christian must be ordained and become a “reverend” before he can baptize a fellow-Christian or serve the bread and wine to and through others, to Christian laymen. There are Scriptures which give certain spiritual qualifications for elders but they are not to be lords over God’s heritage.

May the blessed Lord deliver us from tradition, human theories and sectarian prejudices and cause us to be of power and love and a sound mind in obedience to II Timothy 1:7.

A HEART TO HEART TALK CONCERNING WATER BAPTISM

If, in the consideration of any doctrine in the Bible, the Christian should be a true Berean, searching the Scriptures to see whether these things be true, he certainly should be in the consideration of the doctrine of water baptism. In this connection I want to quote several statements from the writings of outstanding men of God. First, from the pen of Dr. H. A. Ironside:

“A brother who believes quite differently to me on baptism may have far more fervent love for the Lord Jesus than I. Together with we can enjoy sweetest fellowship, while respecting each other’s conscience as to a question that has provoked much strife in the Church.”

Note again these statements in the “Moody” pamphlet concerning God’s religious program during the years covered by the Book of Acts:

“Is it the Spirit of God or Satan, who attempts to revive the sign gifts that were divinely retired after having fulfilled their purpose? Every widespread attempt to revive them has, without exception, resulted in confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace.”

“Is it the Spirit of God or Satan, who turns the eyes of sincere Christians back to Pentecost and away from the goal placed before them in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians?”

From these true statements we learn that the sign-gifts, found in the early Christian Church, served their purpose and then God retired them. Religious men, who try to revive them, are responsible for much of the confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace among God’s people. The Spirit of God never turns a Christian back to Peter and Pentecost for God’s spiritual program in this age and dispensation of grace. This is true concerning the sale of property and the surrender of the proceeds, as recorded in Acts 2:44 to 46, the supernatural miracles of that day, with tongues and wonders; and it is also true concerning the message and significance of water baptism as preached and practiced in Acts 2:38; “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Looking away from the Pentecost to the Christian’s goal, in Paul’s last Epistles, as suggested by Dr. Scofield in the “Moody” pamphlet, we most assuredly find no such message and program as we find on the day of Pentecost. We find quite a difference between the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and the gifts of Ephesians 4:7 to 13. We find quite a difference between the two baptisms on the day of Pentecost and the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. As the sign-gifts were operative only during the “Acts” period, so also were some of the baptisms of that period.

Yes, water baptism has created much strife in the Church. Every attempt to revive the sign-gifts found in the early Church has resulted in confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace. What spiritual, obedient child of God wants to create strife, or confusion, or divisions, or injury or disgrace among Christians? Perhaps Mr. Darby was thinking of this when he replied to a Christian’s question, “what do you hold concerning water baptism”? “I hold my tongue.” Can we clear up the confusion by holding our tongues?

Water baptism has created more confusion, divisions, injury and strife among evangelical Christians than all other doctrines combined.

Speaking of strife, some weeks ago a well known Lutheran preacher, with a nation-wide hook-up, broadcast a message, heard by perhaps several million listeners. He is a faithful, loyal servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and wants to obey Christ’s commands. In the broadcast of God’s Word that I heard this Lutheran preacher quoted Mark 16:16, to prove that both faith and water baptism are essential to salvation, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” He then remarked, “baptism alone will not save” . . . “it is faith and baptism” . . . “faith alone will not save” . . . “it is faith and baptism.” Was not this man true to God’s Word? Did not God say, concerning Christ, “this is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him?” Did not the Almighty, Divine Christ, in resurrection say to eleven apostles, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?” He certainly did not say “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.” Christ said certain signs would follow believers.

Within a few days after this message, Mark 16:16, was broadcast by this faithful Lutheran preacher, a Baptist preacher spoke in the pulpit of the largest Fundamental church in this country. He referred to the message of the Lutheran preacher and said his teaching concerning water baptism was heresy; but added the preacher, “I am no Bullingerite.” This critic of the Lutheran preacher did not do what the Lutheran preacher did do; he did not give any Scripture to prove his theory concerning water baptism. He also forgot the words of another, that

a Christian may disagree with him on water baptism and love the Lord Jesus more fervently and together they can enjoy the sweetest fellowship together. This is a nice religious platitude, if there is such a thing, but it just doesn't work. Most religious Christians will not enjoy sweet fellowship with other Christians who disagree with their water baptism theories. The theories of the Lutheran Christians and the Baptist Christians are as far apart as the two poles.

Trying to revive the sign-gifts of the early Church has created confusion, divisions, disgrace and injury. Nothing has been used more successfully by Satan to create discord and hatred among Christians than water baptism. And no one does any more hating than do the zealous immersionists who teach, from Romans 6:1 to 6, that the water ceremony is a witness to the world that the old man of the believer is dead and buried. It must be the old man that hates, not the new man. Of course, if the baptism in Romans 6:3 to 6 is water baptism, then the Lutheran preacher preached the truth when he preached "water regeneration," for the baptism of the sixth chapter of Romans is certainly efficacious and meritorious and makes a new creature out of the believing sinner. Unless and until Christians get together on the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, the confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace will continue.

Before we consider Mark 16:14 to 18, let us carefully study Hebrews 9:10 and John 1:31. From these Scriptures we learn that in Israel's old testament religious program baptisms had a very prominent place. The words translated "washings," in Hebrews 9:10, is "baptismos." Then we learn, in John 1:31, that John the Baptist came baptizing with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. If Christians are to practice water baptism today, in this age and dispensation of grace, they know that it is not because it is one of Israel's divers baptism and it is not to manifest Christ to Israel. It is also true that ninety-nine percent of Christians do not know why they were baptized or why they believe that water baptism has a place in this age and dispensation of grace. There are about fifteen different theories, and they are very different. One baptism is a requirement for Christian unity. (Ephesians 4:1 to 7).

Here are several most important truths that every Christian should know in connection with the question, "to be or not to be baptized with water." These truths are copied from the writings of one of the outstanding evangelical Christians and able Bible teachers of this generation, Dr. H. A. Ironside:

"Let the reader not fall into a mistake very commonly made today. The kingdom is not the Church (Body)."

"That water baptism is not, properly speaking, a Church ordinance, I also admit and teach, because, unlike the Lord's Supper, water baptism had a place before the Church began, and will have one after it (the Church) has been taken to heaven."

Then this man of God adds, that the message of Peter on the day of Pentecost, "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins," was never preached by Paul to the Gentiles. This is sound teaching. He also wrote that the water baptism, which Jesus Christ received from John the Baptist, was not Christian baptism, but was a shadow of Christ's baptism on the cross. Hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the shadow of the cross, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke 12:49 to 52). Let us keep in mind this all-important fact; that when Jesus Christ died on the cross He was baptized; that was His baptism. That baptism is the believer's baptism. (Galatians 2:20). In Romans 6:3 we learn that Christians have been baptized into the death of Christ. Every intelligent, Spirit-taught Christian knows that no man can baptize his fellow-man into the death of Christ; that such a baptism must be like the circumcision of Colossians 2:11, "not made with hands." If the circumcision of Colossians 2:11 is "made without hands," the baptism of Colossians 2:12 is "made without

hands.” This is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Christ’s “death” baptism is the believer’s baptism by grace.

Whether or not it is Satan, or ignorant leaders, who cause Christians to turn back to Pentecost instead of toward the goal for the Christian in Ephesians and Colossians, two of Paul’s prison Epistles written after the close of the “Acts” period, we should not be caught in the trap; but should know the difference between the one Divine baptism in Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12 and the water baptism for the remission of sins as taught and practiced by John the Baptist and by Peter at Pentecost, also the outpouring of the Spirit, in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy on that Jewish feast day, in the second of Acts, when Peter preached concerning all the house of Israel. (Acts 2:36). To Peter, Christ gave “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 16:16 to 19). To Paul, Christ gave “the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles.” (Ephesians 3:1 to 8). A great difference.

It is certainly sound doctrine to teach that water baptism had a place in Israel’s kingdom program before the historical beginning of the Church, Which is Christ’s Body, and will have a place in the coming kingdom age and program, after the Church has been raptured. It is also a fact that the twelve apostles did not receive Christian baptism. If water baptism has any place in this present age and economy of grace, it certainly has not the same significance and meaning that it had when Peter and the Eleven were baptized with John’s baptism, when the Twelve were preaching to Israel before and after the death of Christ, or that it will have after the Church is taken to glory. When Paul was baptized, as Saul of Tarsus, that water baptism was kingdom baptism: “Arise and be baptized washing away your sin.” (Acts 22:16). This is not the significance of water baptism in this present age of grace. John the Baptist said, “I am come baptizing with water, that Christ might be made manifest to Israel.” (John 1:31). This certainly is not why one member of the Body of Christ baptizes another member with water. Every intelligent, Spirit taught member of the Body of Christ today teaches that no one should be baptized in or with water until that one too has become a member of the Body of Christ. They are all agreed that water baptism is not essential for salvation, for membership in the true Bible Church, or for entrance into heaven. The one who is to be baptized with water must first be a saved member of the Body of Christ. But then they add their religious traditions and say that baptism is necessary for something else, although they are not agreed as to what that something else is, and they offer no Scripture proof for the requirement. They only contribute to the confusion, the divisions, the injury and the disgrace. And they are much disagreed as to what is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, whether it is man’s work or God’s. But surely they should all agree that “one” does not mean “two.” Just think of the stupidity of any supposed-to-be spiritual Christian reading the work of man into Ephesians 4:5.

The Presbyterians and some of the members of the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches teach that water baptism is the seal of the new covenant, as circumcision was the seal of the old covenant: and therefore, water baptism, by sprinkling, takes the place of circumcision. One of their experts on this subject, Dr. Albatross Pieters, acknowledges that no one can find a positive statement in Scriptures that little children, not old enough to exercise intelligent faith in Christ, should be baptized. But says he, “it is taught by implication.” Other Christians do not like this implication. Then these “sprinkling” Christians do not like the implication that Romans 6:3 to 6 teaches that a believer should be buried in water to witness to the world that the believer’s old man has been crucified and buried. Then the Christians, with this burial ceremony, do not like the implication that the children of Christians should be immersed, because it is stated in I Corinthians 10:1 to 4 that the children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the

Red Sea. Christians bring on that confusion and disgrace, mentioned in the “Moody” pamphlet, by trying to prove something by implication.

Water baptism is not the seal of the believer’s salvation. The Holy Spirit is. (Ephesians 1:13 and 14). If water baptism takes the place of circumcision, then little girls should not be baptized, for they were not circumcised. According to Galatians 3:8, Romans 4:7 to 9, and Galatians 2:7, if water baptism takes the place of circumcision, then Gentile believers should not be baptized, only Jews; for Abram was called and justified in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of the uncircumcised Gentiles. The true circumcision are believers described in Philippians 3:3. During the ten years from Mark 1:1 to Acts 10:28 no man received water baptism who had not first received circumcision.

We shall presently refer to Romans 6:3 to 6, but as to the Israelites, who, with their little ones, were baptized unto Moses by the two great miracles which God performed by the hand of Moses, as we read the thirteenth to the fifteenth chapters of Exodus we learn that it was the ungodly Egyptians who were baptized into death in that sea, but all of the Israelites crossed on dry land. Therefore, if members of the Body of Christ are to have a baptistery in their religious buildings because of I Corinthians 10:1 to 3, they should not have any water in it. Here we have more of man’s theories and traditions to confuse the Christians and here we see why all Christians should be true Bereans and search the Scriptures to see whether these things be so. Many of us know of the unpleasant controversies among the brethren divided into “believers’ baptism” camp and “household baptism” camp.

The Presbyterian president of a leading Bible Institute teaches that a believer can be buried with several drops of water as well as in a tank or a river, and therefore a sprinkled believer is a buried believer.

But the zealous immersionists have a controversy with that brother. They will not accept such a theory for one moment. But no Christians have any more controversies than do the immersionists among themselves. If you know of the long-standing feud between the Disciples (the Christians) and the Baptists, you know real confusion and disgrace. The Disciples believe and teach that water baptism by immersion is absolutely necessary for salvation, to get into heaven, while the Baptists call this, “heresy.” The Baptists demand immersion for membership in the local, visible church organization. Others say, it also is a witness to the world. But offer not one Scripture. You see what is meant by confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace.

The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is for unity.

There are in this country about five million church-members, including Lutherans, Disciples (Church of Christ) (Christians), and several other denominations, who believe and teach “water regeneration that water baptism is essential for salvation. There are many more than this number in the Catholic denomination, who have been taught that christening with holy water removes original sin. The Lutherans and Disciples cannot fellowship together, because he Disciples insist that water baptism must be by immersion and that no one can be saved by “sprinkling” baptism. So saved Lutherans and saved Disciples, all in the same one Body, are divided by water.

But virtually all Christians, who teach water regeneration, are opposed to the teaching, “once saved always saved,” that is, the eternal security of believers. They teach that after a person is saved by faith and water baptism, that person can lose his or her salvation. According to their water theory, the person helped to obtain salvation by submitting to water baptism. Then of course he or she must hold on to that salvation by doing something as they continue to believe. If the person once saved loses his or her salvation because of the lack of good works or

religious doings, then surely that person is unsaved again. What must that person do the second, or third or fourth time? The answer is Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." So of course the person who loses his salvation should be baptized again with or in the water, and he should be re-baptized every time he loses his salvation. The only way for one to be sure that he is eternally secure in such a doctrine is to live in a submerged submarine. Who is to be the judge as to just how many good deeds the believer must do, or how many evil deeds he must refrain from doing, to be sure that he is holding on to salvation? Then the Disciples ask the Lutherans, if faith and water are both required for salvation, and a person cannot be saved by one without the other, how can a little baby become a Lutheran Christian by water baptism, without faith?

Of course, all of this teaching of both denominations is contrary to the "grace" message in Romans 4:4 and 5 and II Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:5 to 8 and Ephesians 2:8 to 10. In all of these salvation messages we learn that the believer's salvation does not depend upon any merit, good works or religious deeds, but is altogether, wholly, by God's grace; that the believer does not, and cannot earn salvation or pay for it, either before he is saved or after he is saved. This proves that it is more than important to recognize the development of grace in the principle of progressive revelation. Remember the question in the Moody pamphlet, "is it the Spirit of God or Satan who turns the believer back to Pentecost away from the goal in Ephesians and Colossians?"

Only as we move from John 1:31, John's water baptism, to Luke 12:49 to 52, Christ's death baptism, to Acts 8:5 to 15 where Philip preached Christ and baptized with water and then Peter and John came later to impose hands for the Holy Spirit baptism, then to I Corinthians 1:17, Paul's statement, "Christ sent me not to baptize," and then to Ephesians 4:5, the one baptism, will we be delivered from the awful "baptism" confusion and disgrace that has existed for many years and which today is creating more hatred and lying and name-calling among Fundamentalists than any other one thing. As we eliminate the "transitional period" sign-gifts by the principle of progressive revelation, so also "sign" water baptism.

The intelligent, Spirit-led Christian will neither join in the slogan, "back to Pentecost," or "let's follow the program of Jesus with a red-lettered testament," but will say, "on to perfection." (Hebrews 6:1 to 3) (Ephesians 4:12 to 14). What is the Christian's goal, according to the "Moody" pamphlet and according to sound Bible doctrine?

The prison Epistles of Paul. Only as we study and apply and interpret all other Scriptures concerning water baptism and all other doctrines in the light of Paul's prison Epistles, will we be workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Think of intelligent Christians remarking that they followed Christ in baptism!

In this message we have referred to an able, outstanding, gifted Bible teacher. Something has happened to him. We would put to him the same question Paul put to the Galatians, "ye did run well, who did hinder you?" That man, in four of his splendid written messages, held the prison Epistles of Paul before Christians as their goal. But now he is doing what that unfortunate California football player did a few years ago. You know what he did in his dazed condition. He grabbed the fumbled ball and ran in the wrong direction, toward the wrong goal. His team-mates and almost all of the spectators in the stands yelled and yelled to stop him; but he stopped too late. This illustrates what our brother is now doing. He is running back to Pentecost, in his later written messages, away from the Christian's goal, in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. Not only is he running toward the wrong goal, but backwards. But most of his teammates are not trying to stop him. They are cheering and encouraging him and with him, they too are running

backwards, away from the goal. In his excellent books he wrote truthfully that the dispensation of the mystery did not begin until Israel had been given every opportunity to receive or reject Christ in resurrection. And to the Epistles of Paul alone must we turn for this truth. You cannot reach a goal running in the opposite direction. Our brother is one of the outstanding ball-carriers for the Baptist Fundamentalists and they are surely running interference and doing some real blocking for him and “together they are interfering with the recovery of God’s truth for this age. He now writes that “the dispensation of the grace of God,” mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 4, and “the dispensation of the mystery (Ephesians 3:9), revealed to the apostle Paul by the risen Christ, began on the day of Pentecost. He says that the Pentecost Church was the Church of purity and power and faith. If that is so, and Pentecost is our goal, then let us join those who call themselves Pentecostalists and commend them for their stand against all tradition, as they cry, “back to Pentecost” and “the full gospel,” including baptismal regeneration, miracles, healing, tongues and visions. But even the Pentecostalists balk when it comes to the sale of property, and putting the money in a common treasury. (Acts 2:42 to 45) (Acts 4:32 to 35). This brings us to the consideration of the so-called great commission.

THE MATTHEW AND MARK COMMISSIONS

Let us now consider the so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, and with it the commission of Mark 16:14 to 18:

To the Eleven (Matthew 28:16) . . . “Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations baptizing them in (into or unto) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

Let us always read with this, Matthew 24:13: “But he that shall endure unto the end shall be saved.”

Now Mark 16:14 to 18:

To the Eleven (Mark 16:14): “And He (Christ in resurrection) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”

With this “Mark” commission let us read first the agreement between Peter and Paul, in Galatians 2:9: “And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me (Paul), they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen (Gentiles) and they unto the circumcision (the Jews).” Surely we know that if Peter and his fellow-apostles were to go unto the Jews, they were not going to preach the gospel to every creature in the world. But now Colossians 1:5, 6 and 23, the words of Paul, to whom Christ said, “get out of Jerusalem; I will send you far hence unto the Gentiles (Acts 22:17 to 21).” “The gospel which is come unto you, as it is in all the world” . . . “the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” Shortly after Paul wrote these truths to the Colossians, the end of his earthly career came. But what about the end of Matthew 24:14, . . . “And this gospel

of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” What end?

The “end” mentioned in Matthew 24:14 did not come at the time Paul had preached the gospel to every creature under heaven. The end, mentioned in Ephesians 4:13, will come before the end mentioned in Matthew 24:14 or 24:13. The end of Matthew 28:19 and 20 is not the culmination mentioned in Ephesians 4:13 and Titus 2:13. One is the end of this present dispensation of grace, the other is the end of Israel’s tribulation. Paul was not sent to preach “the gospel of the kingdom” to heathen, according to Acts 20:24, but “the gospel of the grace of God.”

Why did such outstanding men of God as Mr. John Darby, Dr. William Pettingill and Dr. James M. Gray, and many others, teach that the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 is not God’s program or message for this age of grace? Because they knew, what any intelligent student of the Word of God should know; that the twelve apostles remained in the land of the Jews, so far as the “Acts” record is concerned, and they believed what Christ said in Matthew 10:23, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.” If the twelve apostles, in Matthew 28:19 and 20, were to preach the gospel of grace to Gentiles all over the world, they were miserable failures, disobedient servants of Christ. The great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 has to do with Israel and the Son of man. In Acts 15:7 Peter explains that his one mouth, of the twelve mouths of the twelve apostles, was chosen by God to preach to Cornelius and his friends. This with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And then, according to Galatians 2:9, an agreement was reached, whereby Peter and his associates went to the Jews. How could twelve Jews remain in the land of the Jews (Acts 8:1; Acts 15:1 to 19 and Acts 21:18 to 28) and preach to all the heathen all over the world? The gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Peter, the gospel of the uncircumcision unto Paul. (Galatians 2:7).

It is little wonder that Christians, who do not know the difference between the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision, do not know the difference between the commissions of Mark 16, Matthew 28, and the commission in II Corinthians 5:18 to 20. Since the day that John Darby, that great leader and Bible-teacher, went forth with truth concerning the Body of Christ and the blessed hope of that Body God has expected Mr. Darby’s followers to continue in the recovery of lost truths. But instead most of them have gone the other way. Two of their outstanding leaders recently filled a bath-tub with water and immersed parents and believers in that tub and called it “household baptism,” while they claimed they were working under the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, which their own founder taught was not for the dispensation of grace. Some of these men of God, and others, who claim to be “grace” preachers, should know that this religious water ceremony has no place in God’s program and message of grace. Some of them do know, but they have exchanged conviction for convenience; just anything to take away the offense of the cross.

Think of the many, many Bible-teachers and preachers, who have revised and abridged Mark 16:14 to 18. They preach what the Bible does not say, “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized, and no signs shall follow.” This is neither intelligent nor honest. But they must thus corrupt the Scriptures to support their unscriptural water baptism theory. Most of the immersionists among the non-sectarian Fundamentalists preach this changed order, although they say that salvation is by grace, without water baptism. “But,” they say. But what? But the saved person should put on some old clothes and old shoes and go into a tank of water or down to the pool, creek, river or lake and be submerged in the water to witness to the world that he has put on the new man and put off the old man; that his old man has been crucified; that by

believing he was baptized into the death of Christ, buried and raised to walk in newness of life. But the world must know this by his watery grave. This is quite modern, and surely quite fantastic; and there is not one verse of Scripture to support the teaching. Where is the believer's new man while he and his old man are under the water? Surely the new man should not be buried.

The Scriptures tell the believer how to prove that he is a new creation; that he has been raised to walk in newness of life. Read it in Romans 6:7 to 19 and in Colossians 3:1 to 17. A believer proves nothing to the sinner by putting on old clothes and going under the water. And our Lord has nothing to do with some of the baptismal scenes when women are immersed. The believer is to put on the new man, not once-for-all in a tank of water, but every day. If he puts to death the deeds of the flesh and proves that his members have been crucified with Christ by yielding them every day to God, as those who are alive from the dead, sinners will believe that he has experienced Romans 6:3 to 6. If he quits his lying about his fellow-Christian and is really baptized with the love of Christ, the world will be convinced that the change mentioned in Romans 6:3 to 6 has taken place. May God deliver us from the religious water ceremony that has covered up the glorious doctrine of identification, and made as many Christians carnal as any one thing.

We have just heard from a missionary in the heart of Africa, in a territory where the missionaries from nine different sectarian groups are working, and every one of them is teaching the heathen something different about water baptism. The poor heathen are as confused as the Christians at home; and that surely is some confusion. And yet some of our leaders among the Fundamentalists say that water baptism is a splendid testimony for the unsaved heathen to see. Which one, sprinkling for regeneration, sprinkling for children of the covenant, sprinkling to take the place of circumcision, immersion for salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or immersion as a burial ceremony? Every one of these different interpretations are given in that Africa mission field. The Quakers are also doing a good work right in the same field and say that all of the others are wrong as to their water baptism teaching.

If the Church of the Lord Jesus is working under the commissions of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18, who is right the Baptist and Plymouth Brethren, who change the order to read, "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized," or the Disciples (Campbellites) who leave the order as Christ gave it, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?" Of these two, the Disciples are right.

But again who is right, the Disciples who preach, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and no signs have followed since the apostles died," or the Pentecostals, who say, "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," and they preach, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and these signs shall follow them that believe, tongues, serpents, healing and the full gospel?" The Pentecostals are the only consistent group of all the groups, if the Church in this age and dispensation of grace is to work under the commission in Mark 16:14 to 18 and Matthew 28:19 and 20.

Speaking of the commission in Matthew 28:19 and 20, nothing would more frustrate the grace of God than to teach members of the Body of Christ, in this age and dispensation of grace, to observe all that Christ taught His eleven apostles, according to Matthew 28:20. Their question in Acts 1:6, "wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel," proves that they did not know the first thing concerning the Body of Christ and the dispensation of the grace of God. It is difficult to understand how any intelligent student of the Scriptures can read Ephesians 3:1 to 4

and then believe that Paul worked under the commissions of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18.

Water baptism was to manifest Christ unto Israel. (John 1:31). Signs and miracles were to manifest Christ unto Israel. (Acts 2:22). John baptized but performed no miracles. Christ performed miracles but did no water baptizing. Beginning with the announcement by Christ, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17), until the announcement by Paul that reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles, because Israel was cast away (Romans 1:15), water baptism and signs were together. There is not one mention of water baptism where there is not a supernatural demonstration, or some sign or some Jewish feast, day or ceremony in the same chapter. When Cornelius was baptized he spoke in tongues. (Acts 10:41 to 48). In the chapter in which is recorded the baptism of Lydia, we read of her worship on the Jewish sabbath. In that same sixteenth chapter of Acts is recorded the baptism of the Philippian jailer, and with that baptism an earthquake. In Acts 18:7 to 12 we read of Corinthians who were baptized. There are not only Jewish things in that same chapter, but in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 we read that those baptized Corinthians performed many miracles. Is it not strange that some zealous “water baptism” Christians prove their theory with Acts 18:8 to 11, but wholly ignore the miracles by the same people in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11

Then in Acts 19:2 to 6 we read the last Bible record of water baptism, and there we find that following baptism, those twelve men received the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands and then spoke with tongues and then Paul healed the sick with handkerchiefs and aprons. The consistent “water baptism” Christians are those who contend as earnestly for imposition of hands, signs, tongues, healing and visions as they contend for the water baptism.

Which would cause you to rejoice more, if one member of your family was raised from the dead or another member was buried alive in water? The same Christ Who told His apostles to baptize, told them to raise the dead. (Matthew 10:6 to 8). On the authority of Christ I have the same right to raise the dead as has some other preacher to baptize.

Honest and intelligent Christians will acknowledge, after a thorough study of the Scriptures, rightly divided; that any exegesis that will eliminate the signs and sign-gifts will likewise eliminate water baptism. They stand or fall together. On the authority of God’s Word, Christians have the same right to speak with tongues, lay hands on the sick, anoint with oil, raise the dead, bless handkerchiefs and aprons for healing. expect miraculous jail-deliverances, that they have to baptize fellow-Christians with water. And the careful student of the Scriptures knows that the twelve apostles were not members of the Body of Christ when they were baptized with water. Neither were the three thousand whom they baptized on the day of Pentecost. Most of the people whom Christ healed were not Christians. The general order was, that He healed their bodies first and saved them from sin afterward. There were just a few exceptions.

Now in closing let us consider Luke 12:50, Romans 6:3 and 4 and Ephesians 4:5:

First, the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the shadow of the cross: “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.” Luke 12:50. Here we see that the crucifixion or death of our Lord Jesus Christ was called His baptism.

Now Romans 6:3 and 4: “know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Now Ephesians 4:5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

Three glorious doctrines are connected in Paul's messages, "reconciliation," "the new creation," and "identification." With the first mention of "reconciliation" (Romans 5:11) we have the record of "by Adam" and "by Christ" (Romans 5:12 to 21), that is the "old creation" and the "new creation." The "new creation" is mentioned in connection with "reconciliation" in II Corinthians 5:16 to 21. Note the great change indicated in II Corinthians 5:16 and if you will diligently search the Scriptures, you will learn that no mention is made of water baptism after the mention of "Adam," "reconciliation" and the "new creation."

What a pity and a shame that any Christian, who claims to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, will ruin the glorious doctrine of identification by reading any religious ceremony of man into the sixth chapter of Romans! There is only one baptism in Romans six, and that baptism makes a living saint out of a dead sinner. That "death" baptism makes the "death" baptism of Christ efficacious for the believer. Without any one of the dozen or more water baptism ceremonies practiced by religious Christians, the believer, the very moment he is saved by grace, is baptized into the death of Christ, buried with Him, by baptism, raised to walk in newness of life, seated with Christ in the heavenlies, baptized into His Body, joined to Christ, one Spirit one flesh, risen to seek those things which are above. The Scriptures are clear as to how the believer is to witness this great change to the world. Read Romans 6:12 to 23)—and every line in the third chapter of Colossians.

There are some religious Christians, who read "water" into Galatians 3:27, "for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The Christians, who read water into this verse, are of several different groups of religious Christians, the "water regeneration group" and the "water witness" group. One group teaches that a miracle takes place when the believing sinner goes down under the water. They teach that he is born of the water. The water mixed with the dead sinner's faith makes him a living saint. The Bible plainly teaches that the men and women on this earth are divided into two groups, "dead sinners" and "living saints."

Now, let's use a little common sense and answer this question: if there had been any merit in water baptism, if it had helped to the any sinner, do you suppose that the greatest of all soul-winners; (Paul), who preached continuously for eighteen months in Corinth, would have said that he didn't know whether or not he had baptized more than four or five persons and he really thanked God that he had baptized but very few of them (I Corinthians 1:14 to 17)?

Then concerning Galatians 3:27, the "water witness" Christian, who read "water" into the verse have a different interpretation. One of their outstanding leaders uses this illustration. He said, "a soldier in the United States Army must be accepted by Uncle Sam before he dons his uniform. But then he not only puts on his uniform, but he is proud to wear and witness to the whole world that he is soldier in Uncle Sam's army." "So," said he, "the one who receives Christ, is expected to be a soldier, and to prove to the world that he a Christian, he puts on his uniform, water baptism."

Such a theory is repudiated by a true Berean. From two to two hundred sinners may see the believer receive water baptism and unlike he soldier who walks about in his uniform the baptized believer cannot walk about in a tank of water. He puts on and puts off his uniform in very short order and if water baptism is the uniform to witness to the world that he is a Christian he should wear some kind of a sign saying, "I have been baptized with water."

God wants every Christian to put on a spiritual armor but not a religious uniform. Christians are to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ and fight the good fight of faith. They are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against Satan. Water baptism will not help them one whit in that fight, for very many of his religious servants have received water

baptism. The Christian's uniform is Ephesians 6:11 to 20 and the "new man" of Ephesians 4:24 to 30; and Colossians 3:5 to 17.

Just as foolish is the "water baptism" Christian explanation of Noah's baptism in I Peter 3:21. The one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the baptism of Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3 and 4, all that the believer needs for heaven on earth.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL

According to I Corinthians 4:1 to 3, Christ's ministers are supposed to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. Every faithful minister of Christ will help other Christians to obey Ephesians 3:9, "And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God."

Every Christian should see and help others to see this glorious truth. But according to I Corinthians 3:1 to 4, this truth is not for carnal Christians. According to Hebrews 5:9 to 6:1 and I Peter 2:1, this truth is rather strong meat for the babe in Christ. Of course, it is more than a mystery to the natural man, no matter how wise or religious he may be:

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." I Corinthians 2:6 to 8.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ." I Corinthians 2:14 to 16.

The wisdom of God in a mystery was God's secret until His glorified Son revealed it to the apostle Paul. It was ordained to the glory of members of the Body of Christ before the world began. Note how this is stated in Ephesians 1:3 and 4 and 11—II Timothy 1:9 and Romans 8:28 to 31:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the it world that we should be holy and without blame Him in love." In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also

justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified find. What shall we say then to these things: If God be for us who can be against us?"

Here we learn of God's grace and eternal purpose purposed in Christ before the world began (Ephesians 3:11). God knew all about it. God foreknew, predestinated, called, justified and glorified. But God did not reveal His eternal purpose to His prophets and servants in other ages and generations. (Colossians 1:25 and 26; Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:5).

The administration of this Divine eternal "grace" purpose was given by revelation to the apostle Paul by the risen Christ. This is the message of Ephesians 3:1 to 4.

In Roman 11:25 the Holy Spirit says to the Christians, "I would not have you ignorant of this mystery." In order that Christians should not be ignorant of "the dispensation of the mystery," also called "the mystery of God's will" in Ephesians 1:9, and "the mystery of the gospel" in Ephesians 6:19 and 20, the Holy Spirit would have every Christian read, believe and obey Ephesians 1:17 to 23:

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; And hath put all things under His feet, and have given Him to be Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

Christians are taught some very important truths in these verses. Here we learn that special, definite prayer is to be offered by Christians, if they are to have the eyes of their understanding enlightened to know "the mystery of God's will," "the hope of His calling;" "the exceeding greatness of God's power" with respect to Christ far above principalities and powers in the heavenlies.

Is it because of the failure on the part of Christians to pray for this spirit of wisdom and revelation that there is such universal, appalling ignorance concerning the most glorious truth for Christians in all the Bible? For some reason not three per cent of the outstanding Bible teachers, including the leading Premillenarians among the Fundamentalists, seem to know the first thing concerning "the dispensation of the mystery," which the Lord wants all Christians to see. If you have not prayed the prayers of Ephesians 1:17 to 23 and Ephesians 3:14 to 20, why not begin today?

The Lord wants Christians to know the difference between the gospel for sinners and the gospel for saints, so that Christians might walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called (Ephesians 4:1) and know how to behave in the House of God, the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth, without controversy. a great mystery. (I Timothy 3:15 and 16).

The Lord wants all Christians to see "the dispensation of the mystery," not merely a few. Why? "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Note this most carefully, spiritually and prayerfully.

Have you thought of God's will in the matter? God wants the Church to show something to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, to these forces who are at war with Christians

(Ephesians 6:11 to 14) What? The wisdom of God in a mystery which was ordained to our glory before the world was. (I Corinthians 2:6 to 8). The manifold wisdom of God.

Let us think of these great facts. Christ through death destroyed him who had the power of death, the devil (Hebrews 2:14 and 15). Christ said that the coming of the Holy Spirit would be proof that the prince of this world was judged (John 16:7 to 10).

Now note Colossians 2:15: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." By His death, resurrection and ascension Christ spoiled principalities and powers. By God's mighty power Christ has been raised far above all principalities and powers to fill all in all. Christians wrestle against these principalities and powers in the heavenlies, (Ephesians 6:11 to 14), although they have been raised up and are seated in the heavenlies in Christ and there blessed with all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 2:6 and 1:3).

Satan does not want Christians to understand "the mystery of the gospel." Religious rulers who are running sectarian churches in competition with God, Who is building one Church, do not want Christians to obey Ephesians 3:9. The mystery is God's death-blow to all sectarianism and religious Christianity. Satan and the religious leaders of Paul's day joined together to get Paul in jail because Paul made known God's secret which had to do with Satan's principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Note Paul's testimony

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak:" Ephesians 6:19 and 20.

"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Colossians 4:3 and 4.

"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound." II Timothy 2:7 to 9.

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made, Known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few word; Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ:" Ephesians 3:1 to 4.

If you are a Christian answer this question: "if you had not been prejudiced by a religious Christian leader, what truth is clearly taught in these testimonies of Paul?" You see that Paul was in jail for preaching very special Divine Truth, made known to him by very special revelations; that Paul was much concerned about having boldness and an open mouth and open doors to proclaim the glorious truth. Then we see that religious Christians were ashamed of the "all grace" message and of Paul, the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles. The Lord wants you, Christian friend, to help open doors of utterance to open your mouth and speak boldly this "mystery of the gospel." Some Christians, who have compromised for a good position, are trying to secretly sneak up on their religious hearers with the message, but they are not meeting with much success. "Boldly" is God's way.

After all these centuries conditions have not changed much, except in this country we have a "Bill of Rights" to keep us out of jail for making others to see "the dispensation of the mystery." The religious Christians today hate the mystery as much as did the religious rulers in Paul's day. So also does Satan. These religious men, as well as Satan, are highly pleased that

comparatively few Bible-teachers are obeying Ephesians 3:9. But they do unite with little mercy and much hatred, in their persecution of the comparatively few. They condemn, malign, ostracize and disfellowship them with real hatred and malice. In their ignorance they join with the mob in the cry of “Bullingerism.” They are as ignorant concerning “Bullingerism” as they are concerning “the mystery,” and that is some ignorance. They do know however that either of them will take away their religious water ceremony which they cherish far more than any desire to know the most glorious blessed truth for saints in all the Bible.

Why does Satan so hate the mystery? Well let us read Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Revelation 12:9; Revelation 20:2 and 3 and Revelation 20:14.

In these Scriptures we learn that the anointed cherub was cast down from the mountain of God into the heavenlies above the earth, that he will yet be cast out of the heavenlies on to the earth, as the Dragon, then to the bottomless pit, then to the lake of fire.

In his political activities Satan is the prince of the world, and what he is able to do is recorded in Luke 4:4 to 8. Satan hindered saints. (I Thessalonians 2:18; Acts 5:1 to 10). Satan, as the prince of the power of the air, works in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:1 to 3). Satan, as the serpent, through his subtlety beguiled Eve. (II Corinthians 11:1 to 3). Satan can and does transform himself into an angel of light and has preachers of righteousness even preaching Jesus. (II Corinthians 11:13 to 15; II Corinthians 11:3 to 6). Satan takes advantage of saints through his devices (II Corinthians 2:11). Satan, as the god of this age, blinds sinners. (II Corinthians 4:3 and 4). The course of Satan is down, down, down, down, down; from the mountain of God to the lake of fire. Already he has been cast down from the mountain of God. He is now the ruler of world darkness in the heavenlies, having under him principalities, powers and dominions. He will yet be let down to earth after Christ is filled up by having the last member of His Body added, after the glorified bodies of every member of the Body, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shall have passed right through Satan’s domain in the heavenlies. After his awful reign of terror on earth Satan will go to the bottomless pit; then to the lake of fire.

Note again Ephesians 1:20 to 23:

“Which He (God) wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Why do Christians seem to make these plain statements so difficult to understand? Pause until you understand them.

With these verses note Genesis 5:2 and 3; I Corinthians 12:12; Genesis 2:23 and Ephesians 5:31 and 32:

“Male and female created He then; and blessed them and called their name Adam in the day when they were created.” (Genesis 5:2).

Consider this prayerfully. God called their name “Adam.” This is most significant. Adam was a figure of Christ. (Romans 5:14).

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, having many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

Consider this prayerfully—So also is Christ.

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of My flesh: She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave His father and mother, and shall cleave unto His wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Genesis 2:23 and 24.

“For this cause shall a man leave His father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” Ephesians 5:31 and 32.

Christ is far above all principalities and powers. The mighty power of God, which placed Christ there, is for Christians. (Ephesians 1:19 and 20). The “Church of the Mystery” is the filling-up of Christ. Concerning Adam and Eve, God called their name “Adam.” Concerning Christ and the Church, God will call their name “Christ.” They two shall be one flesh. Note Ephesians 2:15 and 4:13.

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain, One New Man, so making peace:”

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”

Here we learn of the One New Man and the Perfect Man, Christ. Do you see what God proposes to accomplish during this present parenthetical age and economy of grace? Do you see the stature of the fulness of Christ? Do you see the culmination, the Perfect Man God has not only set aside Adam, the first man, and established Christ latest, the Second Man, the Last Adam, but He has raised Christ and His Church far above Satan’s present heavenlies, even to the place in the mountain of God which Satan once occupied, if not higher. Christ is far above all heavens (Ephesians 4:10). Christians are identified with Christ, raised up, seated in the heavenlies in Christ. Satan is very much displeased with all of this and because Christians do not obey Ephesians 6:11 to 20, Satan takes advantage of them and they help him in his work of opposing those who are obeying Ephesians 3:9.

Just to think of the stupidity of Christians who read Matthew 28:19 and 20 with Ephesians 3:1 to 11, and then say, Paul carried on God’s “grace” program under the great commission.

Now in closing compare Matthew 4:23; Acts 20:24 and Ephesians 6:19 and 20:

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God in Israel’s midst, by miracles. (Acts 2:22). He was a minister of the circumcision, with a prophesied, confirmation ministry. (Romans 15:8). He was born to be Israel’s Saviour. (Acts 13:23). He was sent only to Israel, and He sent His twelve apostles only to Israel. (Matthew 15:24 and 10:5 and 6). He was made under the law. (Galatians 4:4 and 5). He was made like unto His brethren, of the seed of Abraham, of the seed of David, to make reconciliation for Israel, and to reign over the house of Israel on the throne of

David, and to deliver Israel from Gentile domination. All of this is taught clearly in Hebrews 2:16 to 18; Luke 1:29 to 33 and Luke 1:67 to 77.

Then Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel's Saviour, to give to Israel the sure mercies of David. (Acts 5:29 to 32; Acts 13:30 to 35). Christ was raised from the dead to take David's throne. (Acts 2:27 to 33). Because the death of Christ was inevitable and according to God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge, (Acts 2:23; Matthew 26:24; Luke 24:22 to 27; Acts 4:25 to 29; Acts 3:18 and Acts 13:29), Christ prayed to His Father to forgive Israel for their sin against the Son of man. (Luke 23:24; Matthew 12:31 and 32). God was willing to forgive and forget, on the grounds of ignorance, (Acts 3:17 and Acts 3:26), if Israel's rulers would repent.

Read that wonderful parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21:33 to 46, and note the Lord's doing in Matthew 21:42. Read Acts 7:51 to 60 after the rejected Stone was put to death by the builders. Again Israel, in their land, rejected God's offer. They killed Stephen. Like Christ on the cross, Stephen prayed to God to forgive Israel. When Israel, out of their land, rejected the sure mercies of David, Paul said to Israel, "It was necessary that the Word of God should FIRST have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, WE TURN to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46).

Israel's sin against the Son of man was pardonable. Israel's sin against the Holy Spirit's witness concerning the resurrected Son of man was unpardonable. (Acts 5:42; Acts 7:51 to 53; Acts 13:45 and 46; Acts 18:5 and 6).

Then something happened. With the exception of the elect remnant Israel was blinded. Romans 11:5 to 11. Then the Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel's unbelief. Paul went out to the heathen with the gospel of the grace of God: so different from the gospel of the kingdom. No one was ever saved, or ever will be saved, except by the gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4: "Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised:" That was all "according to the scriptures" and in fulfillment of prophecy. (Acts 13:29 to 31; Acts 26:21 to 23; Luke 24:41 to 46).

But now note Colossians 1:24 to 27: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church; Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill (complete) the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints; To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

A great difference between Jesus of Nazareth, a Man in the land of the Jews with miracles for Israel, (Acts 2:22), and Christ in the Gentiles, the hope of glory.

Before Christ came to earth the prophets foretold (Acts 26:22 and 23) the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. (I Peter 1:11 to 13). They foretold that Gentiles would be saved and be in subjection to Israel in God's kingdom program. But no prophet of Israel foretold God's "all grace" program during this present parenthetical period or said anything concerning the "Church of the Mystery," the JointBody of Ephesians 3:6.

So we learn that the Bible is "prophecy," "the fulfillment of prophecy" and "the Mystery." The mystery completes the Word of God, is the capstone of Divine Truth.

Paul was not in jail for any truth that fulfilled prophecy. He would undoubtedly have been released from the Roman jail, if he could have proved by Israel's Scriptures what he was preaching, but he could not, for it was a secret hid in God from before the foundation of the world. Paul was the very first servant of the Lord to receive it.

So let us not confuse “the mystery of the gospel,” according to God’s eternal purpose—but not prophesied—with the gospel of salvation for sinners, according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of prophecy.

This will help us to understand Ephesians 3:8:

“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles, the UNSEARCHABLE riches of Christ.”

The word “unsearchable” is from the Greek word meaning “track” or “step” and means “untraceable.” That is, Paul’s message concerning “the mystery” was truth that could not be traced in prophecy or the fulfillment of prophecy.

Remember this fact, no Christian, who teaches that the Church is working under the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, or who teaches that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is “water,” is making any effort to make others see “the mystery.”

The setting of the mystery is in an eternity of grace and predestination.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our work, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” II Timothy 1:9.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified; them He also glorified.” Romans 8:28 to 30.

“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Ephesians 1:11.

“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 2:7.

Is it any wonder Paul wrote:

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:20 and 21.

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me:’ I Corinthians 15:10.

THE SPOTLESS LAMB AND THE SPOTLESS CHURCH

BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

In Ephesians 1:20 to 23 we learn that Christ is far above and that He is Head over all things to the Church, Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Now note very carefully in this same chapter, verse four:

“According as He hath chosen us in Him (Christ) BEFORE the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame.”

Then in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, verse thirty-two, we learn that Christ and the Church are one flesh. In this same fifth chapter we read that Christ gave Himself for the Church;

“That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish:”

Let us emphasize several wonderful facts:

1. The Church is the filling-up of Christ.
2. The Church and Christ are one flesh.
3. The Church, Which is Christ’s Body, was chosen before the foundation of the world.
4. The Church is going to be presented to Christ, without spot, without wrinkle and without blemish.

This truth in Ephesians, concerning Christ and the Church, is called “the mystery of God’s will;” “the mystery of Christ,” “the dispensation of the mystery, hid in God from the beginning of the world,” “God’s eternal purpose:” “And make all see the dispensation of the mystery.” (Ephesians 3:9). “An inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will:” (Ephesians 1:11).

What God and Christ are going to do for and with the Church in the ages to come (Ephesians 2:7) was predestinated before the foundation of the world, so it will all be according to God’s eternal purpose. So the spotless Church of the Lord Jesus Christ was foreordained from before the foundation of the world and when presented to the Lord Jesus Christ it will be without wrinkle and without blemish, a glorious Church. Note the order in Romans 8:28 to 31, “Whom He foreknew, He predestinated, He called, He justified and He glorified.”

Why is all of this called. “the dispensation of the mystery (secret)?” Because it was God’s own holy secret not made known by or to any servant of the Lord until Christ, in heaven, revealed it to the apostle Paul, after Israel had rejected Christ in resurrection, as we read in Acts 13:30 to 46, Acts 18:5 and 6, and Romans 11:5 to 8, Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:30.

God has another program for the earth and humanity, a kingdom prepared FROM the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34; Acts 3:21; Acts 15:18). This kingdom was prophesied by all of the holy prophets since the world began. Samuel and all of Israel’s prophets spoke of these days. Acts 3:24. But this prophesied kingdom is different from the “Mystery” Body.

Truly the Prince of peace will come to this earth. He will be the same Son of man who visited Israel and declared that Israel knew not the time of her visitation. Luke 19:41 and 44. He will redeem Israel and establish through Israel God’s prophesied kingdom on this earth. Luke 21:27 to 33. This kingdom which will be established when the King comes back to earth was prophesied but not predestinated. The Body of Christ, which God is now edifying, was predestinated but not prophesied.

When the Lord of glory was crucified He was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. He was predestinated to be the spotless Lamb to die as He died and when He died. (Acts 2:22 and 23; Acts 3:18 and I Peter 1:18 to 20 and I Corinthians 2:6 to 8). Christ also died according to the Scriptures, in fulfillment of prophecy. (I Corinthians 15:3 to 5 and Acts 13:29).

“A Lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” (I Peter 1:20).

The Lord Jesus Christ was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death. (Hebrews 2:9). When He was going as a Lamb to the slaughter He said, “for this cause came I unto this hour.” (John 12:27 to 32). His death was neither premature nor accidental. He was not the helpless victim of circumstances in the hour of death, not merely a martyr, but God’s foreordained Sin-bearer. As Christ is going to present the Church unto Himself a glorious

Church, not having spot or blemish, He presented Himself to God, for us, a Lamb not having spot or blemish. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for the Church, Which is His Body.

It was first made known that Christ loved Israel and gave Himself for Israel. He was born to be Israel's Saviour. (Acts 13:23; Hebrews 2:14 to 18; Matthew 15:24; Acts 5:30; Acts 1:11; John 1:11). Christ was also raised from the dead to be Israel's Saviour. (Acts 5:31 and 32; Acts 13:30 to 35; Acts 2:27 to 34). When Israel rejected Christ in incarnation, He said, "This is the Lord's doing and it is the Father's will and it is marvelous in our eyes." (Matthew 21:42; Matthew 26:39; Luke 24:46 to 48; Luke 24:26 to 28). This rejection of Christ, in incarnation, was according to God's eternal purpose and had to be, in God's great plan of redemption. (Acts 3:18). Therefore, on the cross Christ prayed His father to forgive Israel's pardonable sin. (Luke 23:34 and Matthew 12:30 to 32; Acts 3:14 to 17). But Israel's rejection of Christ, in incarnation, did not bring Israel's fall and the beginning of the dispensation of the mystery on the day of Pentecost, the historic beginning of the Church (Body) without spot.

When Israel rejected Christ in resurrection Paul might have well said, "this is the Lord's doing also and it is marvelous in our eyes." He did not; but he did say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." (Romans 11:33 and 34). The Gentiles had been cast away; given up by God, except for a few kingdom proselytes. (Romans 1:18 to 29). They were alienated from the life of God. (Colossians 1:20 and 21; Ephesians 4:18). But when Israel fell by rejecting Christ, in resurrection, the Gentiles obtained mercy (Romans 11:30), were reconciled to God. (Romans 11:15; Colossians 7:21). Then God ushered in His foreordained dispensation of grace: the Body began.