

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1937

BEREANS

“The BEREANS were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11.

Note this mark of nobility. Not only was it the mark of nobility, but the proof of good common sense. Paul wrote his son Timothy: “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7. What a wholesome, spiritual combination. The power and love are altogether essential. But not any more than a sound mind. The Lord needs witnesses and servants who have a sane, spiritual testimony for Him in the day of religious confusion, when “isms” and “schisms” abound in Christendom.

Spiritual sanity is produced by hearing and doing the Word of God. The child of God, who endeavors to carry on a program not intended for members of the Body, although that program may be found in the Bible, and that child may be sincere, zealous and conscientious, will never produce spiritual sanity. The student of the Word of God, who accepts the teachings of some man, or group of men, as final authority, is not sane spiritually. Much religion and tradition, found in church creeds, must be dropped from God’s spiritual program for this period of grace, for members of the Body of Christ, if the Churchmember is to believe and to practice that which will honor the Lord. For example, we all admit that the circumcision and the keeping of the seventh-day sabbath, demanded by God for His servants, in a former period, or dispensation, are not binding upon God’s servants today; in fact, members of Christ’s Body are forbidden to practice and observe and obey many orders and ordinances that God gave to His people in “past ages.”

How sad it is that too many Christians are “sheep-like” and “parrot-like,” practicing and teaching certain Bible truths because their pastors or leaders do. Be a Berean. Be meek. Receive the implanted Word with meekness. Receive the Word with all readiness of mind, if you respect the ability, integrity and spirituality of your teachers; but remember I John 2:27 and Acts 17:11, and know that no one has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit and that no human teacher, however gifted, is final authority in the interpretation and application of Divine Truth. The Word of God itself, rightly divided, is the highest court of appeal. If you are not careful, you may be seduced. We also would warn you against the extreme dispensationalists who today are leading some away from spiritual sanity.

Speaking of “rightly dividing the Word of Truth,” or as we find the original language in Philippians 1:10, “distinguish between things that differ,” let us compare Acts 17:11 with Ephesians 3:8 and 9:

“The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11.

“That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable (not-to-be tracked) riches of Christ . . . And to make all see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Ephesians 3:8 and 9.

Doubtless you see at a glance the difference. When Paul was preaching in Berea (Acts 17:8 to 13) he was reasoning out of the Scriptures. In other words, Paul was quoting certain promises and prophecies from the Old Testament, Prophets or Psalms and showing that Christ had fulfilled them. The Bereans looked up the Bible verses, to check up on Paul; “whether those things were true.” But the Bereans could never have checked up on Paul, if he had preached in Berea the Divine truth he proclaimed in Ephesians 3; for the simple reason that Paul did not find that truth in the Old Testament Scriptures. That truth was received by direct revelation from Christ in heaven. Hence the truth of Ephesians is called, “THE MYSTERY” (secret); “THE UNSEARCHABLE (UNTRACEABLE) RICHES.” This truth had been hid in God, and had not been made known to any one until Christ in heaven gave it to Paul. But why should it now be a mystery? That’s the question. Why is it that God’s servants do not obey II Timothy 2:15 and obey Ephesians 3:9, “make all to see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God?” Let’s do what we can to obey this. What say ye?

STRONG MEAT FOR THE PERFECT

God tells His children, in Hebrews 5:14, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” The Greek word “full age” is elsewhere in the Scriptures translated “perfect.”

There is no doubt whatever that God wants His children to leave the milk diet and feed upon the meat of His Word. But alas! Too many are like the carnal Corinthians, to whom Paul wrote, “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 ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” I Corinthians 3:1 and 2.

Moreover, what some Christians consider strong meat for the full-age, should not be so considered. But when we read Peter’s words in his Second Epistle, we know that the risen Lord committed to the Apostle Paul some spiritual truths which were indeed “strong meat.” Hear Peter’s acknowledgement concerning Pauline truth:

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto 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.

Note that Peter refers to all of Paul’s Epistles.

PAUL’S DISPENSATION

“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to youward (to you Gentiles).” Ephesians 3:1.

In order that we may understand the peculiar ministry of the Apostle Paul and wherein that ministry differed from the ministry of Peter and the Eleven, we should permit the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Paul, to ask us the question: “Have you heard of the dispensation of the grace of God committed to Paul for us?” Then we should search the Scriptures and learn what that dispensation is, how and when Paul received it, and appreciate and appropriate the spiritual benefits guaranteed to us in that dispensation. This may seem to you to be one of the hard-to-be

understood sayings of the Apostle Paul; but if you think this is a hard one, then surely you will think that his statement: in Colossians 1:24 to 27 is almost like the ways of God which are past finding out.

FILL UP AND FULFILL

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 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.”

The truth that Christ gave to this Apostle, who was born out of due season, was to fulfill. He himself was to “fill up” that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in his flesh, for Christ’s Body’s sake. Hard saying, no?

Paul was not deluded. Paul was not conceited. Paul was not egotistical. Paul was not presumptuous. He wrote about one-half of the Books of the so-called New Testament Scriptures, and in them mentioned himself about 1300 times in the first-person pronoun. Moreover, he presented himself as a pattern and an example for members of the Body of Christ.

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” Philippians 3:17.

“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” I Timothy 1:16.

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” I Corinthians 11:1. There is nothing very modest in the claim of Paul, recorded in I Corinthians 15:10, “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 laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.” Who could truthfully say what Paul said after more than thirty years of his ministry of sacrifice and suffering

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” II Timothy 4:6 and 7.

For Christ, Paul suffered the loss of all things: Paul kept his body under. Paul forewent the pleasures and comforts of a home and family. Paul was all day long counted as a sheep for the slaughter. Paul was a spectacle before angels and the offscouring of the earth. Measured by true standards, the Apostle Paul was the greatest man who ever lived on this earth (Christ excepted), and he was also the most hated and persecuted of any man of God who ever lived on this earth: Hear this testimony in Galatians 1:10: “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” Paul never once sought to please men, except as he was obedient to the instructions of the Lord to become as one under the law to win the Jews. Hear one of his last statements: “Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.” II Timothy 2:9. “This thou knowest that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” II Timothy 1:15.

Is it not most significant that it is in this Epistle (II Timothy), in Paul's farewell message, where he magnifies his sufferings, and at a time when he faces death as a martyr, that the Holy Spirit instructs Christians how to understand the Scriptures? "Study to shew thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." II Timothy 2:15.

It is only by correctly dissecting (orthotomeo) the Word of truth, that we can begin to understand Paul's "dispensation of the grace of God" and his dispensation of suffering to fill up and fulfill the Word of God with the "mystery."

In one of Paul's last Epistles the child of God is instructed to make all see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9. Let us learn from the following verses the peculiar call and ministry of Paul.

ACTS 9:15

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

ACTS 14:27

"And when they were come and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

GALATIANS 1:16 TO 18

"To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with Him fifteen days."

GALATIANS 2:7

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was to Peter:"

ROMANS 15:16

"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

I TIMOTHY 2:7

"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."

II TIMOTHY 1:11

"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

EPHESIANS 3:1

"For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

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.”

ROMANS 11:13

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

What is our conclusion after studying these verses? Surely we can learn when God opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles (about 45 A.D.). Compare this with the statement of Christ on earth, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.” (Matthew 10:5.). And then note Paul’s testimony recorded in Acts 22:17 and 21: “And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance.” “And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.” Acts 22:17 and 21.

To whom did Christ commit the dispensation of grace for Gentiles? How did Paul receive His Gospel for Gentiles? “But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Who was Christ’s messenger to the Gentiles? To whom did Christ reveal truth concerning the Body of Christ, the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ and the dispensation of the mystery? Compare Ephesians 3:1 and 2 with Matthew 16:19.

EPHESIANS 3:1 AND 2

“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.”

MATTHEW 16:19

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

We do greatly err when we endeavor to make Peter’s Kingdom keys fit into Paul’s dispensation of the grace of God. We can understand why Paul mentions “my gospel” in Romans 2:16—Romans 16:25 and II Timothy 2:8.

Undoubtedly we have observed that after James, the brother of John, was beheaded (Acts 12:1 and 2) no successor was chosen to keep the number of Apostles twelve. And we shall observe, also, by studying from the thirteenth chapter of Acts through the twenty-eighth chapter that there is no record of the ministry of the Twelve Apostles or of any other man except as they have dealings with the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul is the chief human actor in the last seventeen chapters of Acts. He is mentioned more than 100 times whereas Peter is mentioned very few times.

Moreover it is interesting and significant to observe that the Book of Acts came suddenly to a close before Paul finished his life and written ministry. Hence, Paul’s Epistles are divided into two periods, “The Acts Period” and “His Prison Epistles.”

CHRIST’S PRESENT AND FUTURE KINGDOM

Before we enter into some of the deep truths of the Scriptures, let us compare and contrast a message which Christ, on earth, preached concerning His future kingdom, with a message which He revealed to Paul concerning His kingdom in this age of grace. In this simple study we shall see the absolute necessity of “rightly dividing the Word of truth,” if we are to intelligently understand, interpret and apply God’s truth.

Some time ago I heard a message from a “modernist” preacher, who neither believed in hell nor the gospel of grace. He was preaching on Matthew 25:31 to 45. Very subtly he was condemning the orthodox Christian who believed in the Bible hell and preached salvation by grace without good works. He asked the question: “Why is it that the brethren who believe in hell, and oppose our social gospel, do not preach on Matthew 25:31 to 45?” He emphasized verse 41: “depart from Me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels.” He said, “Here we have one of the plain statements of what they call ‘hell judgment’.” “Why is it that men suffer this terrible punishment?” “It is because they fail to do social service.”

MATTHEW 25:42 TO 45

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”

The question is, how are we to reconcile these words of the Lord Jesus with Titus 3:5 to 7, and Ephesians 2:8 to 10? We quote these verses:

TITUS 3:5 TO 7

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

EPHESIANS 2:8 TO 10

“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.”

God must have some intelligent principle to show His child the way out of such seeming contradictory statements.

Now let us compare Matthew 25:31 to 40 with several other Scriptures.

MATTHEW 25:31 TO 40

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY: And before Him shall be gathered all Nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divided His sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger and ye

took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick and ye visited Me: I was in prison and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

COLOSSIANS 1:12 AND 13

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

EPHESIANS 1:3 AND 4

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

II TIMOTHY 1:9 TO 11

“Who hath saved us, and tailed 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. 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. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

In the “Matthew” Scriptures God has described a kingdom that is to be set up on this earth, when Christ shall come to earth, as the Son of man. Nations are to be rewarded, or judged. The reward will be to enter God’s kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. The blessed are to enter the kingdom for faithful social service. Some others will be delivered into the power of darkness. The Son of man is to be sitting on a throne on earth.

Now observe the contrast. In this day of grace, sinners saved by grace alone have already been made meet, have already been delivered from the power of darkness, have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings. These blessings are in the heavenlies in Christ. Now when were they given? Note carefully again these words: “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.

This is not the kingdom of Matthew 25:31 to 40, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; but a grace and purpose given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Christ was in the bosom of the Father before creation when this grace and purpose was given us.

No servant of the Lord ever emphasized and insisted upon a life of holiness, a life of unceasing prayer, and a life of spiritual activities, more than did the Apostle Paul. He declared that the believer was ordained to walk in good works. But note carefully the order:

“For we are HIS WORKMANSHIP, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10.

Here we note that the believer must be the workmanship of God before he can be the workman for God. A religious person in this age, might feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit

the sick, and those in prison, and still miss entrance into the kingdom of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17.

Paul was the Lord's special ambassador of grace and reconciliation, to tell sinners they could be reconciled to God and become new creatures in Christ by believing that God was reconciled to the world when Christ, on the cross, was made sin. II Corinthians 5:19 to 21. Paul was the most faithful, obedient and fruitful laborer that Christ ever had, and Paul will receive a reward in heaven for his good works. But all of his good works never saved him. He was saved by grace through faith, "not of works." Paul never confused "the dispensation of grace" with "the kingdom of heaven." Neither should we. We will not, if we obey II Timothy 2:15.

ALL THE BIBLE FOR THE CHURCH

Every true Bible Christian acknowledges that all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." II Timothy 3:16. And every member of the Body of Christ knows that God's spiritual program must be the Bible program. But that Christian is far from intelligent or honest, who states that he preaches and practices all that God, in His Book, instructs his people to preach and practice, or who declares that God, in His Book, instructs members of the Body of Christ to incorporate in His spiritual program for that Body, all that is contained in the Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Four Gospels, or even in the Book of Acts.

The great majority of Christians, even among Fundamentalists, do not think seriously and intelligently in the matter of selecting God's spiritual program for the Body of Christ. If they do thus think, they do not put their thoughts into action. They play "follow the leader." And now the recovery of "Body" truth is much hindered by the fact that the Fundamentalists, for the most part, have founded another denomination, "the Independent Baptist Church," and they have established themselves as the high court, with dictatorial powers, as to what may, or may not, be included in God's spiritual program. They refuse to move on with the recovery of God's forgotten truths and they use the boycott upon those who dare to disagree with some of their doctrines and practices, or question their dictatorial authority.

As men of conviction and courage have stepped out from under denominational dictatorship, and have advanced from denominational creeds and programs into the ranks of the Fundamentalists, to go forward with God's truth, even so must Fundamentalists leave Fundamentalists when they see the inconsistencies and the contradictions in their interpretations and applications of the Scriptures. For the recovery of God's truth is more important than the success of any movement or organization of men.

We say they have not spent much time in serious and intelligent Bible Study, because, with others in, their movement, they have arbitrarily and promiscuously, if not capriciously, selected here and there from the Bible for the Church program, for their obedience and practice, certain verses, commissions, forms, ceremonies, ordinances, and doctrines, while they have skipped over, neglected or rejected many others without offering apology, or explanation, or without applying any intelligent Divine principle for such a "snatch-grab" policy. Comparatively few have done the selecting. The others have accepted the selection and have agreed to the eliminations with apparently little questioning.

Now you may be asking that we prove this accusation. We offer the proof by submitting the fact that the leaders among Fundamentalists, as well as the followers, have arbitrarily ignored and eliminated from their written creeds and established program the following commands, commissions, ceremonies, and credentials of Christ and His apostles

Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.” Matthew 10:10 and 11.

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” Matthew 19:21.

“And when He saw them He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed.” Luke 17:14.

“Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:24.

“And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purses.” Mark 6:8.

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest: For He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Luke 6:35.

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.” Luke 6:30.

“And as ye go preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 10:7.

“And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.” Luke 9:2.

“Strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:24.

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” John 13:14.

“And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.” Luke 9:6.

“And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” Matthew 18:34 and 35.

“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 Ghost.” Acts 2:38.

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Acts 2:44 and 45.

“Afterwards He appeared unto the Eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen And He 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 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.” Mark 16:14 to 18.

“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. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all.)” Acts 10:34 to 37.

Now we ask by what Divine authority, upon what Divine principle of Bible study, does any Christian go into Matthew 5, 6, 7 and 8 and select the “Our Father” kingdom prayer and eliminate the kingdom commandments and requirements for the kingdom Gospel, and any other command that the Lord Jesus gave on earth? Is there not some intelligent Scriptural principle by which the child of God may be guided?

Christians, who claim to obey the so-called Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, certainly do not themselves practice or teach others to observe, all things whatsoever Christ commanded them in the Book of Matthew. It will prove very interesting to compare Matthew 18:21 to 35 with Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 2:13 to 16, remembering that the handwriting of ordinances had not been blotted out when Jesus of Nazareth was a minister on earth to Israel. Matthew 15:24; Romans 15:8. Now let us compare Mark 16:14 to 18 with I Corinthians 12:8 to 11:

“Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And He 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 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.” Mark 16:14 to 18.

“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 each man severally as he will.” I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

Referring to the “signs” mentioned in Mark 16:17, some Bible teacher has truly said, that, if a Christian is one who experiences the supernatural phenomena of this verse, there has been no Christian on this earth for more than eighteen centuries.

Then, undoubtedly, we have all observed that these miraculous sign-gifts of the Spirit were all found in the Church of God in Corinth. To these different members of that Body gifts were given. They were, perhaps, the least spiritual of any group of saints to whom Paul wrote. There were carnal divisions and strife among them; yet they had all the gifts. This should be conclusive proof that the sign-gifts, found among church-members in the days of the Apostles, were not the evidence of unusual piety or deep spirituality. Not one of these sign-gifts can be found among the most spiritual Fundamentalists of today. Nor can we prove that the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 are absent today because there are no Christians with as much faith as the Corinthian saints of the first century possessed. Any student of the Scriptures who has carefully studied the Epistles to the Corinthians knows this is not the fact nor the explanation. Moreover, by reading Acts 12, especially verses 15 and 16, we shall learn that there was the same kind of unbelief among the saints in the days of the apostles as is found today. Search out twenty most spiritual Bible teachers today and you will not find among them one of the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12.

What then is the explanation of the absence of signs and sign-gifts in the true Church of God, the Body of Christ today?

Explanation Number One—Some Bible-teachers have tried to lead us to believe that Mark 16:17 to 20 are missing in several of the original manuscripts. But they are found in several of them. This explanation then is, UNINSPIRED.

Explanation Number Two—Other Bible-teachers would have us believe that Christ was saying that signs would follow only the apostles and that they passed away with the apostles. Well, it is true that, so far as the record in the Book of Acts is concerned, with the exception of the miracles performed by Stephen and Philip, either Peter or Paul was present in every instance where signs and miracles and tongues are mentioned. As we read Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:3 and 4, and II Corinthians 12:12, we do learn that signs were the credentials of an apostle. And it is significant that, as to character and the number of miracles recorded in Acts, the Lord had Paul duplicate every miracle performed by Peter; such as healing one lame from birth, pronouncing Divine judgments, jail deliverances, healing all manner of sickness (Acts 15:16 and Acts 19:11 and 12), raising the dead, etc. This second explanation might be accepted if it were not for the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11: “word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues.” The second explanation UNINTENDED (for any but apostles) not accepted.

Explanation Number Three—The fact of spirituality and faith—UNBELIEF.

Explanation Number Four—This is the only Scriptural explanation. Why are not signs found among even the most spiritual saints today? For the very same reason that we do not keep Israel’s sabbath, or practice circumcision, or practice communism, or preach the kingdom gospel, or practice the imposition of hands, and many other things—UNDISPENSATIONAL.

COUNTERFEIT SIGNS

In recent years a wave of fanaticism has spread through Christendom. Among these fanatics there have been numbered many sincere, conscientious Christians who have endeavored to recover and restore for the Church the “tongues,” “visions” and “healing miracles” of the early Church. Divine-healers and men and women with dreams and visions and different tongues abound. Ridicule and condemnation will not remedy the malady. Untold harm is being done to the Church and the Gospel of Grace. What is the corrective and cure? II Timothy 2:15. We call your attention to the corrective ministry offered by several of God’s saints:

THE EXPLANATION OF DR. C. I. SCOFIELD

Dr. C. I. Scofield was an able, spiritual expositor of the Word of God. Many students have been helped by the study of Dr. Scofield’s pamphlet, “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.” However, at the time Dr. Scofield wrote that pamphlet and the notes in his Reference Bible he did not have the light on the Book of Acts that came to him several years later when he gave his unqualified endorsement to a message written by one of his Christian friends.

The Moody Bible Institute has for years been responsible for the printing and distribution of the pamphlet written by A. E. Bishop, entitled "Tongues, Signs and Visions Not God's Order for Today." Dr. Scofield gives his unqualified endorsement to Mr. Bishop's message. And in order to further the sales of the booklet the Colportage Association has printed his unreserved commendation on the first page. It has been because of Dr. Scofield's endorsement that so many have been sold. Therefore, the teaching of Mr. A. E. Bishop concerning the sign gifts, tongues and healing, was the teaching of Dr. C. I. Scofield, in the year 1920.

On page 17 is found this statement:

"THERE IS NO FOUNDATION IN THE WORD OF GOD FOR THE PREVAILING POPULAR DOCTRINE OF 'DIVINE HEALING'."

On page 19 is found this statement:

"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."

On page 5 is found this statement:

"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."

On page 15 is found this statement:

"THE SIGN GIFTS OF I CORINTHIANS 12 WERE OPERATIVE ONLY DURING THE BOOK OF ACTS PERIOD."

When you have read the article from the pen of Mr. George Douglas which was printed in the Moody Monthly, July, 1936, a portion of which we are copying, you will wonder, with others, why the Moody Bible Institute will sell thousands of copies of Mr. Bishop's booklet, with Dr. Scofield's endorsement, and print the message of Mr. Douglas and at the same time condemn the writings of other brethren on the same subject, when the other brethren are not as extreme as Mr. Douglas.

MR. DOUGLAS IN THE MOODY MONTHLY

Those who are familiar with the writings of Dr. E. W. Bullinger will see at once that Mr. Douglas has expressed the exact views of Dr. Bullinger. His message in the July edition, Moody Monthly, is headed

"SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS—A WORD OF WARNING"

By Rev. George Douglas, Cardiff, Wales

"Only as we recognize and understand the place which Israel holds in the divine scheme of revelation, can we read and understand aright the Book of Acts."

"THE GOSPEL, GIVEN TO THE JEW FIRST"

"All enlightened students of Holy Scripture recognize that though Israel has been set aside, it is not forever, and the present dispensation in its earthly aspect is to continue only until

the time comes when the covenant people shall again be restored to divine favor.” Romans 9:10, 11.

“IT IS A COMMON ERROR TO ASSUME THAT THE REJECTION AND CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST WAS THE HISTORICAL CRISIS AT WHICH ISRAEL WAS SET ASIDE.”

“When we come into the Acts we at once discover that a place of repentance was granted to Israel, and a ‘blotting out of sins’ was preached to them through the Messiah whom they had rejected and crucified. Acts 2:14, 22, 36. Doubtless repentance would have brought them ‘times of refreshing’ and ‘the times of restitution of all things’ spoken of by all the ‘prophets since the world began,’ Acts 3:19 to 21. That was the Pentecostal proclamation of the Divine amnesty for the guilty people of Jerusalem, and their answer to it was the stoning of Stephen. Acts 7.

“But that crowning sin of Jerusalem was not laid upon the Jews of the dispersion and so the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution which followed, carried the Pentecostal gospel to them, for in the first period of the Pentecostal dispensation the preaching was ‘to the Jews only.’ And in the second part of the Pentecostal period or dispensation, they still enjoyed a distinctive priority for now it was ‘to the Jew first.’ But in this Christian dispensation, ‘there is no difference between Jew and Gentiles.’”

“When the Apostle Paul arrived in Rome, although as we learn from the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, the church there occupied such a prominent place in his affections, his first care was to summon together ‘the chief of the Jews,’ and it was as a Jew he addressed them, for his words are: ‘our fathers,’ ‘my nation,’ ‘the hope of Israel.’” Acts 28:17 to 20.

“But when they rejected his testimony, he said, ‘your fathers’ (Acts 28:25 R.V.). He now severed himself from Israel, and pronounced the solemn words which sealed their doom.” (Acts 28:25 to 31).

“The simple answer is that in this Book (Acts), we have the Divine record of the Pentecostal dispensation, and that transition period was now ended. And here we notice a very significant fact, which surely can not be said to be accidental, that in the New Testament Books written after the date of Acts 28, there is not a word to be found about Spirit manifestations except as a warning, such as I Timothy 4:1 and 2.” Therefore, we heartily agree with the late Sir Robert Anderson when he says:

“As there were no miracles in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen, there were none in Rome after that solemn ‘Ichabod’ had been pronounced by the Apostle. For the age of miracles was past, with the dispensation to which they belonged; and the Apostle himself entered upon the life of faith beneath a silent heaven. Such is the character of this Christian dispensation; for ours is the blessedness of those who have not seen but yet have believed.”

“WHY PAUL DID NOT HEAL HIS SICK FRIENDS”

“That explains why the Apostle Paul performed no miracles in Rome, did not even speak in tongues. During his first imprisonment in Rome his ‘brother and companion in labor,’ Epaphroditus, lay ill but he exercised no special gift of healing upon him but simply depended upon the mercy of God to restore him to health again (Phil. 2:25 to 20). When on the journey to his second imprisonment another of his beloved friends became very ill, his brief statement concerning HIM is ‘Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick’ (II Timothy 4:20). When Timothy, his ‘own son in the faith,’ was feeling far from well, all the great apostle could do was to send him a simple medical prescription, very likely suggested by Luke who was with him at the time

(I Timothy 5:23). There was a time when a handkerchief carried from his person brought healing and health to the sick (Acts 19:12). But that dispensation was ended.”

“It is only as we understand the dispensational character of the inspired Book which marks the transition period between the gospels and the setting aside of Israel, that we can understand the mystery of the silence of God in this dispensation of grace. All the attributes of God have been fully vindicated and manifested in the person and work of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. God is silent in this age of grace because in the gospel He has spoken His last word of mercy, and the day of wrath is not yet (Hebrews 1:1 to 3; Hebrews 2:1 to 3). The Divine lever for raising men from the dead in this dispensation, is not supernatural signs, or gifts of the Spirit, but the gospel of Christ. Romans 1:16.

“NO LANGUAGE MIRACLES TODAY”

“Miracles in the sense in which the present-day gift of tongues cult craves for miracles, have ceased. There have been none since the apostolic age. Not a single case has ever been heard of in which any representative of the modern ‘Pentecostal’ or ‘tongues’ movement has ever been empowered to preach the gospel in a foreign language. The teaching of the New Testament concerning tongues has nothing in common with the facial distortions and unintelligent twitchings and mutterings of the ‘gift of tongues’ movement of today, with the unseemly and often indecent orgies of hysterical laughter and screaming! God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints, ‘Take heed that no man deceive you’.”

To prove that Mr. Douglas shares with the Editor of the Moody Monthly and the Bible teachers of the Moody Bible Institute the utter confusion and uncertainty that prevails among the Fundamentalists we present the evidence, a later article written by Mr. Douglas and printed in the Moody Monthly, December, 1936. If the facts stated by him in the July Moody Monthly, to prove that the Pentecostal Dispensation is not the present Christian Dispensation are true, most assuredly his message of December is anything but true. The Moody Institute only helps him to keep the readers of the Monthly in darkness concerning Ephesians 3:9.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON

Sir Robert Anderson for some years has been considered, by other spiritual and able Bible expositors, an exegete of unusual ability and he has been quoted frequently by Fundamentalists, in support of their teachings of “Premillennialism” and “Dispensationalism.”

I here quote several statements from Sir Robert Anderson’s book, “The Silence of God.” While the author held rather an extreme view concerning the founding of the Christian Church, yet in my judgment he has the only Scriptural explanation of the absence of signs in the Church of Christ today. And so far as a human author is concerned, I do not know of a greater service the Colportage Association could do than to place a copy of “The Silence of God” in the hands of every thinking Christian in the land.

“MY CONTENTION IS THAT THE ACTS, AS A WHOLE, IS THE RECORD OF A TEMPORARY AND TRANSITIONAL DISPENSATION IN WHICH BLESSING WAS AGAIN OFFERED TO THE JEW AND AGAIN REJECTED.”

“AS INDICATED IN THESE PAGES, IT GIVES THE CLEW TO THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—A BOOK WHICH IS

PRIMARILY THE RECORD, NOT, AS COMMONLY SUPPOSED, OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, BUT OF THE APOSTACY OF THE FAVOURED NATION.”

“IT HAS BEEN FURTHER ARGUED THAT, SO FAR AS THEIR EVIDENTIAL FORCE WAS CONCERNED, THE ‘CHRISTIAN MIRACLES’ WERE FOR THAT FAVOURED PEOPLE ‘OF WHOM, AS CONCERNING THE FLESH, CHRIST CAME.’ AND IF THIS BE WELL FOUNDED WE SHALL BE PREPARED TO FIND THAT SO LONG AS THE KINGDOM WAS BEING PREACHED TO JEWS, MIRACLES ABOUNDED, BUT THAT WHEN THE GOSPEL APPEALED TO THE HEATHEN WORLD, MIRACLES LOST THEIR PROMINENCE, AND SOON ENTIRELY CEASED.”

“THERE WERE NO MIRACLES SEEN BY FELIX, OR FESTUS, OR AGRIPPA; AND AS ALREADY NOTICED, WHEN PAUL STOOD BEFORE NERO THE ERA OF MIRACLES HAD CLOSED. THE MIRACLES OF ACTS 28:8 AND 9 ARE CHRONOLOGICALLY THE LAST ON RECORD, AND THE LATE EPISTLES ARE WHOLLY SILENT RESPECTING THEM.”

“THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR GUIDE, AND NOT THE EXPERIENCE OF FELLOW-CHRISTIANS; AND WHEN THIS IS IGNORED THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES ARE DISASTROUS. THE ANNALS OF ‘FAITH-HEALING,’ AS IT IS CALLED, ARE RICH IN CASES OF MINETIC OR HYSTERICAL DISEASE, BUT ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL WRECKAGE DUE TO FAILURES INNUMERABLE THEY ARE SILENT.”

“AN APPEAL TO ‘THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES,’ IT HAS BEEN URGED, SO FAR FROM SOLVING THE MYSTERY, SERVES ONLY TO INTENSIFY IT. THE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES, MOREOVER, WAS TO ACCREDIT THE MESSIAH TO ISRAEL, AND NOT, AS GENERALLY SUPPOSED, TO ACCREDIT CHRISTIANITY TO THE HEATHEN, AND THEREFORE, AS SCRIPTURE PLAINLY INDICATES, THEY CONTINUED SO LONG AS THE TESTIMONY WAS ADDRESSED TO THE JEW, BUT CEASED WHEN, THE JEW BEING SET ASIDE, THE GOSPEL WENT OUT TO THE GENTILE WORLD.”

For years the Colportage Association has sold Sir Robert Anderson’s books. They have sold many copies of his “Silence of God,” and are still selling them, yet the Institute officials will condemn, disfellowship and boycott brethren who are even less radical. Inconsistent, you say? To be sure. But that doesn’t seem to bother them.

DR. H. A. IRONSIDE

Now we refer to the Dispensationalism of Dr. Harry A. Ironside. In recent years he has contradicted and bitterly opposed truth concerning “the mystery” which he once taught with great joy and zeal. In becoming the pastor of a church, named after a man, in the light of the truth concerning the One Body, he is now practicing the negation of the truth he proclaimed regardless of what he teaches. He, together with several other leading undenominational Fundamentalists, is doing more for the Independent Baptist denomination than their own preachers are doing.

Dr. Ironside has recently written a book entitled “Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth.” I have heard that he expressed regret that he wrote it, but inasmuch as he has not thus expressed himself publicly and is still selling the book, the report may not be true. But the Dr. Ironside who wrote that message is different from the Mr. Ironside who wrote some other books. However you may be the judge and the jury.

DR. H. A. IRONSIDE'S DISPENSATIONALISM

In his book entitled "Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth," (on page 33) Dr. H. A. Ironside speaks of men of God who hold the dispensational views of Brother George Douglas and Brother Harold Wilson and Sir Robert Anderson as "uninspired theorists."

He says, concerning Israel in Acts (page 30):

"In regard to the statement so frequently made that God was giving Israel a second chance throughout the book of Acts, it is evident that there is no foundation whatever for such a statement. Our Lord definitely declared the setting aside of Israel for this entire age, when He said, "Your house is left unto you desolate. Ye shall not see Me again until ye say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." It was after that house was left desolate that the glorious proclamation of Pentecost was given through the power of the Holy Spirit, offering salvation by grace to any in Israel who repented."

"Not once in any of the sermons recorded of Peter and of Paul do we have a hint that the nation of Israel is still on trial, and that God is waiting for that nation to repent in this age."

Concerning the Acts dispensation or transition, Dr. Ironside states on (page 25):

"Personally, I have no objection to the term, "transitional period," if it be understood that the transition was in the minds of men and not in the mind of God. According to God, the new dispensation of the grace of God, other wise called the dispensation of the mystery, began the moment the Spirit descended at Pentecost. That moment the one Body came into existence, though at the beginning it was composed entirely of believers taken out from the Jewish people."

Concerning signs, Dr. Ironside writes on (page 22):

"It is not true that a definite limit is placed in Scripture upon the manifestation of sign gifts, and that such gifts have never appeared since the days of the apostles."

Dr. Ironside, being unable to answer such intelligent exegesis, as the messages by Brother Douglas and Brother Wilson, calls the messengers "ecclesiastical hobby-riders," "Bullinger and his ilk," and he uses much abusive language.

Remember, Dr. Ironside states that, in the mind of God there was not even a transition in the Book of Acts.

We quote from a folder printed by a company of Bible students in Philadelphia:

"Mr. H. A. Ironside in his earlier writings, as quoted, was in harmony, we believe, with the Word of God."

"However, in his articles as published in 1935 in "Serving and Waiting," the official organ of the Philadelphia School of the Bible, and also published in booklet form, Dr. Ironside contradicts his earlier writings concerning the special revelation made known to and through the Apostle Paul."

"We quote these contradictory statements so that the Lord's people may not be "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," but as the truth is spoken in love, they "may grow up in Him in all things which is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:14 and 15.)"

EARLIER WRITINGS OF H. A. IRONSIDE

"Lectures on Colossians"

P. 68.—“The mystery of the church as the Body of Christ was never made known in Old Testament times, nor yet in the days when our Lord was on earth. We are told distinctly it had been “hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” The divine method of making it known was by a special revelation to the apostle Paul as he tells us in Ephesians 3.”

P. 57.—“It was a special revelation given not to the twelve, but to him as the apostle of the new dispensation.”

“Sailing With Paul”

P. 44—“But this doctrine of the one body is never referred to by any other apostle than Paul. He calls it ‘the dispensation of the mystery’ which he had especially been entrusted with.”

“Mysteries of God”

P. 74.—“To the epistles of Paul alone do we turn for the revelation of this mystery. He was the special vessel chosen to make known the heavenly calling. The twelve were, as we have seen, connected primarily with the testimony to Israel. Paul, as one born out of due time, was selected to be the messenger to the nations, announcing the distinctive truths of the present dispensation.”

LATER WRITING OF H. A. IRONSIDE

“Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth”

P. 30.—“Generally, too, the ground is taken that this revelation was given to him alone, and that the twelve knew nothing of it.”

P. 40.—“The Bullingerites tell us that the mystery was only made known to the apostle Paul, not to other apostles.”

P. 40.—“But is it true that other apostles and prophets had already known of the mystery? It is.”

P. 41—“Was this mystery made known by other servants besides the apostle Paul? It was. The apostle John makes it known in his account of our Lord’s ministry as given in the tenth chapter of his Gospel.”

P. 41—“John, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, had received the revelation of the mystery even before the apostle Paul did.”

“Then what of the apostle Peter? We dare to say this same mystery was made known to him on the housetop of Simon’s residence in Joppa.”

Pp. 41, 42—“The greatest of all the New Testament prophets is Luke himself, and in his book of the Acts, the mystery is plainly made known.”

P. 32.—“Error is never consistent.”

Now, you may be utterly surprised at such contradictions coming from the pen of a man reputed to be an able Bible expositor. And now he is trying to reconcile his two irreconcilable positions, affirming that he believes the truth in both columns.

Some one has used the illustration of the feat of riding two horses; but added, “not going in opposite directions.”

Little hope of the recovery of Body truth for those who follow this leadership. They will never endeavor to make all men see “the dispensation of the mystery” and if they do, they will never succeed.

There is an organization known as “The Independent Fundamental Churches of America.” Their monthly magazine is called “The Voice.” It is edited by some godly, spiritual brethren who are Premillenarians and ‘Dispensationalists up to a certain, or an uncertain, point. In their July number they printed a message written by one of their editors, Mr. Harold Wilson. Although these brethren have uncompromisingly condemned and opposed other brethren who have tried to prove that the program of signs carried on by Christ and His Apostles is not God’s program of today, showing by the rightly-divided Word of Truth that the Kingdom of Heaven Ministry overlapped into Acts, lo and behold, they print the dispensational message, written by one of their editors, in which he states that the same kingdom of heaven dispensation of the Four Gospels ran throughout the “Acts” period and then ceased. We quote this to show that brethren among Fundamentalists are inconsistently groping in the dark for “Body” truth and to encourage all Christians to be “Bereans.”

Now a quotation from the monthly magazine of “The Voice,” the message of the “Independent Churches of America” (I. F. C. A.). Undoubtedly the editor of “The Voice” has approved a message which appeared in the July, 1936, number, written by Harold A. Wilson; the editor. Note these high points in the message in the Voice:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” It was God’s Message, to Israel, during the earthly, ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, AND THROUGH THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE BOOK OF ACTS.”

“The Kingdom is not at hand today, and will not be at hand again until the Tribulation, immediately prior to Christ’s coming to establish that Kingdom, when the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached once again (See Matthew 24:14). It is thus, because healing miracles are credentials of the Kingdom testimony—that Paul’s healing power waned in the closing days of his ministry.”

Mr. Wilson may continue to believe what he wrote in the July Voice, but we dare say he will not be permitted to again express his “dispensationalism” which is more extreme than I personally could endorse.

But now to add to the confusion of the readers, in plain contradiction to the statement of Mr. Harold Wilson, in the Voice, another article appeared in the same magazine as to the cessation of signs. This article was from the pen of Mr. Wendell P. Loveless, the Radio Bible teacher of Moody Bible Institute. Note question and answer:

QUESTION—“WHAT ABOUT THE CLAIM THAT THE SIGNS, SUCH AS SPEAKING WITH TONGUES, MIRACULOUS HEALING GIFTS, AND SO FORTH, CEASED WITH THE CLOSE OF THE ACTS PERIOD, AS THEY WERE FOR THE JEWS ONLY?”

Answer—“The history of the Church in this age proves conclusively that these ‘sign gifts’ did not cease with the close of the ‘Acts period,’ but continued until the middle of the second century, ‘when Christianity having obtained a footing in all provinces of the empire, the miraculous powers conferred upon the first teachers had performed their appropriate office—that of proving to the world that a new revelation had been given from heaven.’” (Quoted in Counterfeit Miracles, by Benjamin B. Warfield).

Now imagine a student at the Moody Institute, buying from the book-store, for study, "The Silence of God," and A. E. Bishop's book, with Dr. Scofield's explanation, and then hearing the explanation of Mr. Loveless and listening to several other theories of the President and the faculty, all condemning the explanations of Dr. Scofield and Sir Robert Anderson, while at the same time they sell the books to the students. What will be the student's stand when he leaves? It is enough to make a "Berean" of him. Or again suppose we accept the explanation of Mr. Loveless, for the absence of signs, and we meet a Pentecostalist or a Divine-healer and wonder-worker. They say and show us from the Bible we are not Scriptural. You reply "wait until I go home and get Dr. Warfield's book." Here you see the folly of such a position. Surely no Berean will accept church history as profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished. The Holy Scriptures are given for that purpose but while obeying II Timothy 3:16, we must likewise obey II Timothy 2:15.

When I was in Minneapolis preaching against the counterfeit dispensational program of signs carried on by Pentecostals, one person after another said, "well, brother, your leading Fundamentalist Baptist preacher in this city has for years permitted in his church building a healer to bless handkerchiefs and send them out to heal the sick." I publicly referred to this, and since that time it is, needless to say, that the Baptist preacher has not highly endorsed me as a Bible teacher. Sometimes he apologetically mentions the ministry of the blessed handkerchiefs and sometimes he enthusiastically endorses it.

I said, concerning the brother, that he is perhaps more consistent than other brethren who place equal emphasis on water-baptism, for blessing handkerchiefs is mentioned in the same chapter of the Bible that records the last water-baptism and the handkerchiefs are mentioned after the water-baptism. Acts 19:4 to 12. Blessed handkerchiefs and water-baptism did belong to the same dispensation. Why not now?

THE TRUE BIBLE CHURCH AND GOD'S SPIRITUAL PROGRAM FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

Every redeemed, justified sinner is a member of the true "Bible" Church. As there is but one true Bible Church there is but one Bible way that a sinner can be redeemed and justified. The Epistle that has more to say about the character, position, sphere of blessing, hope and calling of the true Bible Church than any other Book in the Bible, is Ephesians. In no other Book of the Bible is the way of salvation more clearly presented than in Ephesians.

"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 2:8 to 10.

Here we see that good works are the fruit of salvation and not a factor that aids in the salvation of the believing sinner. Salvation is by grace: without works. Salvation is the gift of God. It is again clearly stated in Titus 3:5 and 6:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

We quote also Romans 3:24:

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

The Greek word “freely” is “dorian,” translated elsewhere in the Scriptures “without a cause.” So we know the one and only way to be saved: by God’s grace and the shed blood of Christ. Surely it is a spiritual crime to mix religion with God’s grace gospel. What an insult to presume to add anything to the finished work of Christ, for salvation. It is God’s free gift.

The one true Bible Church is the Body of Christ. Ephesians 1:19 to 21. Christ is the one Head of that one Church. Every sinner saved by grace becomes a member of that one true Bible Church the very moment that sinner receives Christ, without the formality of “church joining,” religious ceremony or the religious ritual of a group of church officials. The one Divine act, by which the redeemed sinner is placed in the Body of Christ, is called, “baptism.” All true messengers of the true Bible message of grace are agreed that no water-baptism is required to identify the believing sinner with Christ as a member of His Body.

The same Epistle to the Ephesians is clear in its teaching, that there is One Lord, One Body, and One Baptism. Ephesians 4:4 to 7. Members of the Body of Christ may become members of some assembly of men organized and governed by men, but such “assembly-membership” is not essential for membership in the Body of Christ. No church officials have the Scriptural right to demand for membership in their church organization any religious ceremony that is not required for membership in the Church, described in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

THE SPIRITUAL PROGRAM

Before the death of the Apostle John, the Church of Christ was torn asunder with doctrinal disagreements, discord and strife. False prophets, with false doctrines, played havoc with the Church. Not long thereafter professing Christians denied the Deity of Christ and the Gospel of the Grace of God, and the truth concerning the heavenly sphere, calling and hope of the Church was lost in the religious confusion and abounding heresies. Any attempt to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, as ordered in Ephesians 4:3 to 7, has been futile. Soon the doctrine of “justification by faith” was an unknown truth and the churches were well under the control of unsaved religious potentates and politicians.

Beginning with the great reformation, under the leadership of Martin Luther, and other men of God, Christians fought valiantly and sacrificially for the recovery of lost Bible truths, concerning Bible salvation and the Bible Church. Much has been accomplished since the days of Luther. But at the present time “modernism” has been added to “ritualism,” as a menace to the Church. Moreover, the great majority of the members of church-organizations have either adopted the unscriptural program of “modernism,” which is nothing more than “Christianized agnosticism,” or are in such a state of indifference that they are but little concerned about searching the Scriptures to see whether or not they are following the program of men or the program of God. Others are such zealous denominationalists that the Bible must be interpreted by their denominational creeds. They are more interested in “my sect” than in the Body of Christ. All Christians are influenced, hindered, intimidated, or blinded by the traditions of church fathers and denominational leaders.

In the midst of the ritualism, modernism, skepticism, apostasy and indifference of the day, God has many true, faithful, orthodox Christians who love Christ and the Bible. Among them there are aggressive, courageous, sincere leaders, who are earnestly contending for the faith. They are often called “Fundamentalists.”

During the past two generations many of God’s servants have suffered severe criticism, organized opposition and bitter persecution in their earnest efforts to recover some of the blessed Bible truths concerning Christ and the Church which is His Body. They have learned through diligent study of the Bible, that much of the confusion and misunderstanding concerning the interpretation and application of the Scriptures, have been because the dispensational principle in Bible study has been ignored. In fearing disfellowship, criticism and condemnation, some of them have recognized the importance of dispensational divisions, but have lacked the courage to speak out boldly. On the other hand, others have been unwise in carrying dispensationalism beyond the bounds of spiritual sanity. And so the recovery of truth has been a slow process. Many have been helped to better understand the Bible by the writings of John Darby, a faithful servant of the Lord, and his associates, as well as by the writings of Dr. C. I. Scofield, whose “dispensationalism” is Darby’s “dispensationalism.” Dispensationalists have always been unpopular with Christians who boast that they accept all the Bible for the Church.

We have come to the conclusion that “rightly dividing (or dissecting) the Word of truth, in obedience to II Timothy 2:15, is a major operation. Rightly dividing the Word of truth, or even an earnest attempt to do so, certainly divides the brethren. But they are pretty well divided already.

We all know, that, for some reason, the messengers of grace, are not proclaiming and performing the message and program of Matthew 10:7 and 8.

MATTHEW 10:7 AND 8

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

Let us endeavor to answer the why of it by considering a very important question

IS THERE A DISPENSATIONAL GOSPEL FOR A DISPENSATIONAL CHURCH?

Before we attempt to give a Scriptural answer to this question, let us give a Scriptural definition of:

- 1—“The Gospel;”
- 2—“The Church;”
- 3—“A Dispensation.”

THE GOSPEL

Perhaps if God’s children had a clear, definite comprehension of all in the Bible that is included in the term “Gospel,” there would be less disagreement, wrangling and bitterness among them. The Greek “Gospel” is “Euaggelion” and this is the one word always used. This is the word translated “glad tidings of great joy” in Luke 2:10. “Euaggelion” means “good news” or literally “a good message, i. e., “the gospel.”

Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning the Gospel, by which they were saved, “how that Christ died for our sins; was buried and raised the third day.” I Corinthians 15:1 to 4. The Holy Spirit had him write that this was “according to the Scriptures.” The Old Testament prophets spoke aforetime of the work of Christ, which work is called, “the Gospel.”

Note how this fact is stated in Acts 13:29 and 30 and 39, which we quote:

“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.

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Acts 13:37.

In Ephesians 1:13 this Gospel is called “the Gospel of your salvation there the truth is declared that “on believing” (pisteusantes is not after that ye believed) this saving Gospel, the believer is sealed with the earnest of his inheritance, the Holy Spirit; and he is sealed unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30.

In Romans 2:16 and Romans 16:25 and in II Timothy 2:8, Paul writes of “my Gospel.” In I Timothy 1:11 and 12, he writes of the “Gospel of the glory of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.”

In Ephesians 6:19, he writes of “the mystery of the Gospel.”

In I Corinthians 9:12 to 18, he writes of “the dispensation of the Gospel.” (The Gospel is supplied).

In Acts 20:24 Paul calls the Gospel, “the Gospel of the grace of God.”

Many Christians, who are opposed to dividing the Scriptures into different dispensations, dogmatically affirm that there is but one Gospel in the Bible, and ask this question: “was any sinner, from Adam’s day down to the present time, ever saved in any other way than by grace through faith in the redemptive work of Christ?” “Was not Abel saved in this way?”

Abraham had the Gospel preached to him. Galatians 3:8. That Gospel was concerning the coming Christ. Surely there was “good news” for the sinning Israelites in the sin-offerings and peace-offerings which God accepted on the day of atonement as a covering for their sins, in response to their faith. These offerings prefigured the sinless Christ, being made sin on the cross, that believing sinners might be made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. David described the happiness of the man to whom the Lord imputed righteousness without works, even as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Romans 4:3 to 10.

But “the Gospel” is a more comprehensive term than the message for sinful humanity, concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. Is there no other “good news” in the Bible? The believer has been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. Ephesians 1:3. That’s good news! The believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit and is a child and heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. It is his privilege to rejoice daily in the hope of the glory of God and to be conscious of the peace of God that passeth understanding. It would require many hours to list all of the blessings and benefits included in the word “Gospel.” Read Colossians 1:12 to 16.

But only the uninstructed student of the Word of God would be foolish enough to assert that there is no difference in “the Gospel of the circumcision,” which was committed to Peter, and the Eleven, and “the Gospel of the uncircumcision,” which was committed unto Paul. Galatians 2:7 to 9. There is surely a difference between the “Gospel of the kingdom,” preached by John the Baptist and the Twelve (which is to be preached at a future date) and “the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which Paul called “my Gospel.” We quote:

LUKE 9:6

“And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.”

MATTHEW 24:13 AND 14

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 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.” Where is the true servant of the Lord who is really attempting the ministry and program of Luke 9:6?

Again we quote:

MATTHEW 10:5 TO 8

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

Was not this the Gospel program which Christ on earth presented to Israel?

Do God’s servants travel in this manner now? Do they raise the dead and cast out demons? If they preach, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” they proclaim that which is untrue and without God’s sanction and blessing. Is God making any attempt to fulfill. Luke 1:67 to 77 and deliver Israel from Gentile political authority? This was “good news” for the Nation Israel and will yet be “good news” for that chosen race. “All Israel shall be saved.” Romans 11:26. Do we endure unto the end in order to be saved by grace: God’s gift?

Let us bear in mind that the national blessing of Israel and the guarantee of that people, under the terms of the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 to 35, are always in the mind of Jehovah in “the Gospel of the kingdom.” The King on the throne of David is included in the Gospel of the kingdom.

Can we not see that it is our misconception, or rather, limited conception, of the word “Gospel,” and all that it stands for, that accounts for much of the lack of unity among God’s people? The things that accompany salvation differ in God’s Book with different ages, but salvation by the blood of Christ belongs to all ages.

By the pen of Paul, the Holy Spirit pronounced the anathema of God upon any man or angel who preached to the Gentiles in Galatia a Gospel other than the grace of Christ. Galatians 1:8 and 9. This included mixing in the kingdom gospel or the mixing of the law with the message of grace. This, Paul called the leaven which would leaven the whole lump. Galatians 5:9. This forbidden mixture frustrates the grace of God and causes the individual to fall from grace. Galatians 2:21 and 5:4.

God is jealous for His Gospel of grace by which a sinner is saved, and has made it a spiritual crime to mix any religion, law or works with it. “If by grace, then it is no more works;” but if it be of works, then is it no more grace.” Romans 11:6.

How we should continually praise God that nothing need be added to faith in the finished redemptive work of Christ, for the individual sinner’s salvation; and even the faith is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8 to 10. Christ entered once into heaven with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for sinners. Hebrews 9:10 to 12. Christ put away sin. Hebrews 9:26. Christ abolished death. II Timothy 1:10. Nothing has been left undone. Redemption is the perfect work

of the Triune God. It is all of grace. Oh sinner, what good news this is, salvation without religious activity, ritual, ordinance, or ceremony, without striving or begging. It is the free gift of God, through Christ.

But that is only part of the Gospel. As a new creature in Christ the believer, who is dead with Christ, is raised to walk in newness of life, to seek those things which are above, where Christ sits in the heavenlies. The believer is to be filled with all joy and peace in believing. He is God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that God hath before ordained that he should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10.

For this life, service, ministry, victory, joy, peace, love and all the good works, "my God shall supply all of your need." "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19. "Now unto Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work." II Corinthians 9:8.

The mighty omnipotence of God, the power that raised Christ from the dead and placed Him where He is in the heavenlies, is available to every trusting saint who has been raised up, seated in the heavenlies, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in and with Christ.

All of this is "Gospel" good news. All of the blessings and benefits, the hope and calling of the Pauline Gospel, which are peculiar to this age, not foretold by the prophets of Israel (as was the Gospel of the Kingdom program concerning Israel's hope and redemption and Gentiles blessed under Israel's kingdom glory) is called the "Mystery of the Gospel." Ephesians 6:19 and 20.

THE BIBLE CHURCH

Now as to the question, "which is the true Bible Church?" We are confronted with a perplexing, difficult question, which is causing much controversy among real students of the Word of God. We can say that there is a division among the people, because of this. Let us say, first of all, that our task of answering this question will be somewhat simplified if we realize and acknowledge several facts.

FIRST. That the Old Testament (or the Covenant that God made old by the death of Christ on the cross) was made with Israel nearly 2,500 years after Abel was declared righteous by faith without religion. Therefore we do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, when we teach that Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem and Abram were governed by the Old Testament (Covenant). Galatians 3:19 declares that the Old Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore we must conclude that the redeemed of the Lord, from Abel to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were not members of "the Old Testament Church." Even Moses was 80 years old when God took Israel by the hand, led them out of Egypt, and made the Covenant with them at Sinai. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35. Hebrews 8:7 to 11. Exodus 20:1 to 15.

SECOND. That the New Covenant (Testament) was made (and is yet to be fulfilled) with the House of Israel. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35 and Hebrews 8:7 to 11. Under the guarantee of this Covenant, "all Israel shall be saved". Romans 11:26. The New Covenant guarantees Israel's national redemption, although not all individual Israelites. Ezekiel, chapters 36 and 37. The Nation Israel is yet to experience a glorious redemption under the peaceful reign of their true King David in the land that God swore to give them as an everlasting possession.

Although this future age may be called “the kingdom age,” or the establishment of the kingdom of the heavens on earth, or the millennium; nevertheless there is a true sense in which The elect of God, in the coming kingdom age, will constitute “the EKKLESIA of God.” Surely we have as much Scriptural authority for calling redeemed Israel “the New Covenant (Testament) Church,” as there is for calling Israel under the law (from Moses to the death of Christ) “the Old Testament (Covenant) Church.” And they were called “the EKKLESIA of God.” Nehemiah 13:1. This leads us to the consideration of the third fact.

THIRD. That the word “Church” has no definite meaning unless qualified and described. The word “Church” is really from “Kurios,” meaning “the Lord.” But the Greek “Kurios” is never translated “Church.” Every time the word “church” is found in the Bible it is, in the Greek, “EKKLESIA.” This noun is from the Greek verb meaning “to call out.” In the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures (the Septuagint) “EKKLESIA” is found about 50 times. In Acts 19:32, 39 and 40 the Greek “EKKLESIA” is translated “assembly.” Thus we see that a mob of angry sinners, gathered in the public-hall, was called “the EKKLESIA.” In Acts 7:38 we read concerning “the EKKLESIA in the wilderness.” The word “EKKLESIA” in the Old Testament Scriptures is generally translated “congregation.” By comparing Hebrews 2:12 with Psalms 22:22 we learn that “congregation” in the Old Scriptures is translated “church” in the New. Hence the absolute necessity of qualifying the particular “EKKLESIA” to which we refer.

We have observed that the “congregation” of Psalms 22:22 is the “church” of Hebrews 2:12. We have also observed that the “congregation” (Ekklesia) of God” is mentioned in Nehemiah 13:1. In Acts 7:38 we read of “the church in the wilderness.” In Acts 20:28 we read of “the Church of God,” which He purchased with His own blood. Pray tell, what sinner any time, under any covenant, was not saved by the blood of Christ? In Ephesians 1:19 to 22 we read of “the Church, which is His Body.” We might ask the question, “what is the difference between “the church in the wilderness,” “the Church of God,” and “the Church, which is the Body of Christ?” We have seen that word “Church” may be either a general term or have a most specific meaning.

Several times the Apostle Paul declared that he (as Saul) persecuted the Church of God. Galatians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Philippians 3:6. According to Galatians 1:18 to 23, there were “churches of Judea” in Christ when Saul was playing havoc with the Church and wasting it. In every Scripture where the word “church” or “churches” is used, either singular or plural, the Greek word in every instance is “Ekklesia.” It is impossible to prove that “the Church which is Christ’s Body” had its historical beginning on the day of Pentecost, because Paul declared that he persecuted “the Ekklesia of God.” Sanballat persecuted “the Ekklesia of God” in the days when the Jews were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. Again it cannot be proved that the Body of Christ had its historic beginning on the day of Pentecost, because the risen Jesus said unto Saul, “why persecutest thou Me?” Acts 9:3 and 4. In Matthew 25:40 we learn that in the kingdom age those who mistreat the brethren of Christ mistreat Him. There is not one single Scripture to prove that the Church of God began on the day of Pentecost. And yet some significant things happened with the advent of the Holy Spirit that day.

In Matthew 23:1 to 3 the Lord speaks of those who sat in the seat of Moses. While Christ was on earth the Jews were observing the various feasts and offering the sacrifices, instituted under the law given to Israel by Jehovah. Most of those Jews, including many of their priests, rejected Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah and Son of God; some accepted Him and believed. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:11.

To some of them who believed on the Lord Jesus while He was on earth He said, "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20. To some of them He said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupted." Luke 12:32 and 33. In John 4:39, we read that many of the Samaritans believed on Christ and, in verse 41, many more believed. In John 7:31, "many of the people (Jews) believed on Him."

In Acts 1:15, we read that 120 disciples were in the upper room after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in the other Scriptures we have learned that many who believed in the Lord Jesus were not numbered with the 120. Undoubtedly many believers were some distance from Jerusalem when the day of Pentecost was fully come. When did all these believers become members of the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood? Were they not members of some Church of God before the day of Pentecost? Whether or not they had been baptized by one Spirit into one Body is another matter; but surely they had been called out by the Lord; and therefore, they were the "called-out," the "EKKLESIA of God."

I think we shall prove that only by inference and implication can we state that the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 began on the day of Pentecost or after Acts 28:28. Many a Christian who has been dogmatic for years concerning some Bible doctrine in the light of more Scriptural evidence has had to acknowledge that his dogmatism was founded on conjecture instead of fact.

Let us look into the Scriptures in which we find the word Body, referring to the Church. The Greek word is "soma" and never used by the Twelve, only by Paul. It was used for the first time in I Corinthians.

ROMANS 12:4 AND 5

"So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one oil another. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office"

I CORINTHIANS 10:17

"For we, being many are one bread, and one Body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

I CORINTHIANS 12:12 TO 14

"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. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many."

I CORINTHIANS 12:18, 19 AND 21

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the Body as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the Body?" "But now are they many members, yet but one Body."

I CORINTHIANS 12:22 TO 25

"Nay, much more those members of the Body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the Body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our

comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the Body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”

I CORINTHIANS 12:27

“Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular.”

EPHESIANS 1:23

“Which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

EPHESIANS 2:16

“And that He might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

EPHESIANS 3:6

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promises in Christ by the Gospel.”

EPHESIANS 4:4

“There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.”

EPHESIANS 4:12

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.”

EPHESIANS 4:16

“From whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

EPHESIANS 5:23

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the Body.”

EPHESIANS 5:30

“For we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

COLOSSIANS 1:18

“And He is the Head of the Body, the Church, Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.”

COLOSSIANS 2:19

“And not holding the Head, from which all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”

COLOSSIANS 3:15

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body; and be ye thankful.”

Before we consider the question of what began on the day of Pentecost, I believe that every humble, spiritual, unprejudiced (there may be some) student of the Word of God, who will carefully study Galatians 1:11 to 2:9, and acknowledge that Peter and the Eleven knew nothing of the gospel which Paul preached to Gentiles until “fourteen years after,” will also acknowledge that before that “revelation” trip to Jerusalem (about 17 years after Pentecost (Galatians 2:1 and 2) not one of the Twelve knew that he was in the Body of I Corinthians 12:13.

Well, let us be honest, intelligent and humble enough to acknowledge that the Church of God mentioned in Acts is not necessarily the one Body of Ephesians 4:5 (Compare again Hebrews 2:12 and Psalms 22:22). Now as to what began on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, after a few questions and remarks, we shall submit some comments made by different brethren, all of whom are dispensational and Premillenarians of the Plymouth Brethren school of interpretation.

Now these questions:

1. Are members of the Body of Christ under Divine orders and obligation to preach the message and practice the program presented by Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost?
2. What dispensation began on the day of Pentecost?
3. What church began on the day of Pentecost?

Before we consider the first part of Acts 2, let us examine these verses:

ACTS 2:38 AND 39

“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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

ACTS 2:43 TO 47

“And fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles, And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.”

THOSE ADDED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

“The same day there were added about 3,000 souls.” Acts 2:41. “And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:47.

ACTS 2:44 TO 46

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.”

While it is true that most of the manuscripts omit the word “Church” in ACTS 2:47, yet the Church of God was there, and while the disciples had entered into a new experience on that day of Pentecost, there is nothing to suggest that the Church to which the 3,000 were added, had its historic beginning on the day of Pentecost. But the fact is, that those who were being saved were added to the Church. The 3,000 were added to that company of believers that existed before the 3,000 were added.

The Plymouth Brethren, and other companies of Christians, who have insisted that the Lord’s Supper should be observed every Sunday, have tried to prove it by the statement contained in ACTS 2:45. But they have never tried to preach or practice the division of property, in accordance with ACTS 2:44. When we compare the instructions to the little flock, in Luke 12:32 and 33, concerning the sale of their property and the disposition of the proceeds from the sales, with Acts 2:44 to 46, it certainly looks as though it is the same kingdom flock with the same kingdom program. Certainly communism, as practiced in Acts 2:44 to 46 and Acts 4:34 and 35, is not God’s program for the Body of Christ. Moreover, the message of baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, in Luke 3:16; Mark 1:4; Matthew 3:1 to 6, is very much the same as the message of Acts 2:38. “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” This is not the message for today. It seems inconsistent on the part of grace preachers today to teach that the dispensation of the mystery and the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost, a Jewish feast day, and still refuse to preach Acts 2:38. Certainly in that message water baptism was a requirement for receiving the Holy Spirit. And while it cannot be proved that believers, on the day of Pentecost, were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22, if they were, they had to receive water baptism to become members of the Body of Christ, according to Acts 2:38. But no sinner saved by grace today, is required to be baptized with water to become a member of the Body of Christ. Hence some change has taken place at some point along the line.

The same is true concerning conditions of salvation in Mark 16:16, “he that believeth and is baptized.” The baptizers, among grace preachers today, without Divine authority, reverse the order, and preach “he that believeth and is saved, shall be baptized.”

It is interesting to compare Matthew 10:5 and Matthew 15:26 and Matthew 15:24 with Romans 10:12 and I Corinthians 12:13.

MATTHEW 10:5

“These Twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.”

MATTHEW 15:26

“But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to dogs.”

MATTHEW 15:24

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

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.”

I CORINTHIANS 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

When Paul wrote to the Romans and wrote to the Corinthians about 25 years after Christ died, there was no difference between Jew and Gentile, they were both baptized by one Spirit into one Body. But before Christ died, when the Gentiles were dogs, there was a difference and Jews and Gentiles were not baptized into one Body by One Spirit. “The Holy Spirit was not yet (given).” John 7:39.

MORE THAN ONE PENTECOST IN ACTS

“When the day of Pentecost was come.” Acts 2:1. This day of Pentecost came fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. Christ became the firstfruits of them that slept. I Corinthians 15:20. The feast of Pentecost was an Israelitish feast and the date was fixed fifty days after Israel’s feast of firstfruits. Leviticus 23:9 and 15 and 16. More than twenty-five years after the Pentecost of Acts 2, Paul wrote that a veil was still upon the hearts of Israel, who remained under the law. II Corinthians 3:15. For more than thirty years after Christ died on the cross Israel carried on their Old Testament religious program, with their high-priest in authority. Acts 23:1 to 4. Their temple stood, and they continued to observe their annual feasts.

Although Christ pronounced His terrible judgment upon Israel and Jerusalem before His death, the awful judgments of Matthew 23:31 to 39; Matthew 22:7, and Luke 21:20 to 24, were deferred for nearly forty years, and then their city was burned and multitudes fell by sword, fire and pestilence. Because of the prayer of Christ on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” (Luke 23:34), God’s wrath was withheld for years while Israel had another opportunity to repent.

The “generation of vipers”, the “serpents” of Matthew 23:32 and 33 were tenderly and affectionately addressed as “children of the prophets” some months later. Acts 3:21 to 26. Their murder of the Prince of Life would be forgiven, if Israel would repent, because of the prayer of Christ on the cross and because of the two facts mentioned in Acts 3:17 and 18—Israel’s ignorance and God’s foreordained plan and purpose to have his Son die for sin. Even the high priest had told this purpose without realizing the significance of his utterance. John 11:47 to 51. Israel never enjoyed greater liberty or more favors, under Rome, than they did during the “Acts” period: during the thirty years after Christ pronounced His Divine judgment upon Jerusalem and Israel. The desolation pronounced by Christ in Luke 21:20 to 24 (the days of vengeance) was postponed until after the period covered by the Book of Acts.

In Acts 20:16 it is recorded that Paul was very eager to reach Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. This was a quarter of a century after the “Acts 2” Pentecost.

In general, what is called “the dispensationalism of the Plymouth Brethren” has been accepted as the standard for Fundamentalists, who are Premillenarians. According to this standardized interpretation, the Body of Christ had its historic beginning in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, and then and there the dispensation of grace was ushered in and the same dispensation has continued right down to the present time. The dispensation of grace, which began on the day of Pentecost, will end abruptly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, by the coming again of Christ to rapture the Church. These Premillennialists, of the Plymouth Brethren school of interpretation, agree that the Body of Christ was not foretold by Israel’s prophets and therefore

was a “mystery” or “secret” during the days of the prophets and while Christ was on earth. And yet, strange to say, some of them preach the signs of Old Testament prophets as signs for the Body of Christ, in “the dispensation of the mystery,” which was unknown to any of those prophets.

In teaching the suspension, or interruption, of God’s covenants, guaranteeing to Israel their King and kingdom, these Plymouth Brethren “dispensationalists” teach that the kingdom is in abeyance and therefore the Body of Christ is a parenthesis; that is, the period of time from the day of Pentecost until the rapture of the Body of Christ, is a parenthetical age. If all of this is true, then why is not the spiritual program of the Book of Acts God’s program for the Church today, inasmuch as it has been one uninterrupted dispensation for about 1,900 years? Some tell us, that God was carrying on two purposes during the “Acts” period. While he was offering the kingdom to Israel, He knew they would not accept the King, therefore He began on the day of Pentecost to build the Church of Ephesians, in accordance with Matthew 16:16 to 19. These teachers have arbitrarily dropped the signs, visions, tongues and gifts, of the Church of the “Acts” period and elected to cling to water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, without offering explanation, apology or sound exegesis.

Now the Pentecostalists are very much disturbed because Fundamentalists will not adopt the “Acts” program of repentance, baptism for remission of sins, the imposition of hands for Holy Spirit baptism, tongues, miraculous healings and visions. They have thrown tradition to the winds and they cry “back to Pentecost and apostolic power.” They say, if the Church began on the day of Pentecost and the same dispensation of grace, in which we now live, began on that day, we must look to the Scriptures, Acts 2, 8 and 19 for our Church program. In their zeal, but delusion, they seriously attempt to carry on in accordance with Acts 19:2 to 7.

The Plymouth Brethren dispensationalists have no Scriptural corrective. They offer only ridicule—which is neither a just nor an adequate antidote for the fanaticism and counterfeit movement which is bringing reproach upon the Church of Christ and causing many sincere people to fall into the snare and delusion of an undispensational religious program, while the gospel of grace is frustrated, corrupted and perverted. “If any man preach any other gospel (than the grace of Christ) let him be anathema.” Galatians 1:8 and 9.

While the Lord is using the rod of “fanaticism” in an effort to cause the “Plymouth Brethren” Fundamentalists, which includes the teachers in our leading Bible Schools, to stop, consider, and correct their “dispensationalism,” another group of brethren are offering the extreme dispensational teachings of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and Mr. Chas. H. Welch as a cure for both “Pentecostalism” and “Plymouth Brethrenism.” But the remedy is worse than the malady. They declare that the Body of Christ of Ephesians and Colossians did not have its historic beginning until after Acts 28:28; if indeed it began before Paul declared, in Philippians 3:14, that he was pressing toward the mark.

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

They declare that the Body of I Corinthians 12:13, was a separate, distinct and different Body from the Body which is mentioned after Acts 28:31. Therefore, the Body of Romans 12:3 to 5 is not the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22. Perhaps, or perhaps not, the members of the “Acts” period Church were transferred into the new Body. This was optional with all except any of the Twelve Apostles. None of the Twelve ever became members of the Body of Christ, according to

this extreme teaching. They furthermore state that the Church of God, or Body, during the “Acts” period, was an “Israelitish Kingdom Church,” looking for the parousia (personal presence) of Israel’s Messiah to save them from the great tribulation and lead them into the realization of Israel’s hope, the Holy Land or the heavenly Jerusalem. They claim that, as members of the Body of Christ, we should not now wait for the coming of the Lord, as did the Corinthians, Thessalonians, Philippians and all the saints during the “Acts” period. They have turned the Mystery, which they say did not begin until after Acts 28:31, into such mysticism that they neither understand it, nor are able to make others understand; and still they claim to be custodians and dispensers of profound spiritual truths unknown to other dispensationalists.

WHAT IS A DISPENSATION?

Before we look into the Word for an answer to this question, let us look at these several verses of Scripture in which we find the word “dispensation.”

I CORINTHIANS 9:17

“For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.”

EPHESIANS 3:1 AND 2

“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:”

EPHESIANS 3:9

“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 created all things by Jesus Christ.”

EPHESIANS 1:10

“That in the dispensation of the fullness 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:”

COLOSSIANS 1:25 AND 26

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid for ages and generations, but now is made manifest to His saints:”

It has seemed strange and ridiculous to some Christians that other Christians have divided the Bible up into different dispensations. And some of those who object to such divisions have not been passive and indifferent, but have vigorously protested and quite frequently bitterly opposed such a principle for the correct understanding of the Bible. All who divide the Bible into different dispensations quote as their authority, II Timothy 2:15, “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” Perhaps some of the so-called “dispensationalists” have gone too far; but on the other hand, most of the “anti dispensationalists,” who have not gone so far, in their opposition and condemnation of others, have condemned their own inconsistency. We say this, because, in all their church creeds and practices, they acknowledge the “Old Covenant dispensation” and the “New Covenant dispensation.” They make no effort whatever to obey hundreds of commands

which Jehovah gave to Israel, under that first Covenant, which He has made old, for the reason that they are not binding upon members of Christ's Body. They, therefore, do not practice what they preach concerning "dispensationalism." In the light of Romans 6:14, Galatians 3:24 and 25 and Colossians 2:11 to 17, how dare any servant of the Lord put any member of the Body of Christ under the Old Covenant? "Ye are not under the law." "No longer under a schoolmaster."

Note this plain Divine command for members of the Body of Christ: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." Colossians 2:16. What would have happened if some zealous preacher had proclaimed this message to the Israelites enroute to Canaan, or established in that land under Jehovah and commanded to observe the sabbath and feast-days or suffer the penalty of death? What would have happened if the twelve apostles had preached Colossians 2:16, or Romans 6:14, to Israel while Jesus of Nazareth was on earth? The answer is found in Matthew 8:4; Matthew 5:17 and Matthew 23:1 to 3.

This immediately suggests that all Scripture must be studied, as to whether it is Divine truth, given before or after the law was nailed to the cross, when Christ became the end of the law for righteousness. Romans 10:4 and 5.

In the light of Matthew 10:5, Acts 22:21, Acts 14:27 and 21:25, it should be obvious that the student must consider whether Divine truth was given before or after Acts 14:27. Read the several verses mentioned and note these facts: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles." "I will send you far hence unto the Gentiles." "He had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." "As touching the Gentiles which believe we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing."

Again, suppose that after God had said to Abraham, "the uncircumcised man whose flesh is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut from his people; he hath broken My Covenant," (Genesis 17:14), some sincere Bible-teacher, believing there was no advantage to circumcision, had preached to Abraham's seed the message of Paul, in Galatians 5:2 and Galatians 6:12.

GALATIANS 5:2

"Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

GALATIANS 6:12

"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

What would have happened to that teacher? Undoubtedly he would have been stoned to death. Why does God commend a servant, in one Bible period, for preaching against a command given by Him to be kept during another Bible period, or suffer terrible consequences?

When the Israelites, under Joshua, King Saul, or King David, destroyed, with their weapons of war, thousands of Gentiles, they were in the will of God. When King David decapitated Goliath, he was as much in the will of God as is the preacher today when he preaches the Gospel. But let any Christian, or group of Christians, attempt to exterminate the Lord's enemies today; the anathema of God, and the wrath of the law would be upon him. Why? Different periods. Well, suppose some other servant of the Lord desires to answer "different dispensations?" As we shall see, the Scriptures do not teach that a "dispensation" is necessarily a measure of time.

What teacher of the Word would be unwise enough not to abide by the clear divisions that God has marked in His own Book? Now observe these divisions

1. "From Adam to Moses-when there is no law." Romans 5:12 to 14.
2. "The law was added till the Seed (Christ) should come." Galatians 3:19.
3. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Galatians 3:24, 25. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Colossians 2:14. "In that He saith, A New Covenant, He hath made the first Old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Hebrews 8:18.
4. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10:34. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18.
5. Note the "from henceforth": "And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." Acts 18:6.
6. Note the "until": "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. "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." Romans 11:25. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, and verily, I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, UNTIL the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Luke 13:25. "Whom the heavens must receive, UNTIL the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21.
7. Note the "now:" "Wherefore I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest to His saints." Colossians 1:25 and 26.

Let us be honest and admit that we must be "dispensationalists, if we are to apply God's own principle for Bible study, and apply the truth to our lives.

If all Scriptures were studied by all Church-members in the light of Romans, Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy, and thus intelligently interpreted, appropriated and applied, the Church would be delivered from ritualism, modernism, fanaticism, and all its religious enemies.

Two great fundamental blunders have been made by most Postmillenarians, who are always opposed to any dispensationalism but their own. They divide the Bible into two dispensations, "the Old Testament" and "the New Testament." But their blunder is, that they begin the Old Covenant with the first of Genesis, when God begins it 2500 years later. Jeremiah 31:32 and 33; Exodus 20; Galatians 3:19. No one from Adam's day until Moses was 80 years of age was under the Covenant of Sinai, for the simple reason that Moses was 80 years of age when the law entered, about 2500 years after the offense entered. Romans 5:20. God declares from "Adam to Moses" there was no law. So far as the Covenants are concerned, all Postmillenarians acknowledge that the Abrahamic Covenant is still binding; but that the Old Covenant has been abolished and is dead. Therefore, by their own arguments Abraham was not an Old Testament

character. Neither were Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah and Shem. And think of any one who has studied the Book of Matthew and followed the Twelve up to Peter's statement in Acts 10:28, teaching that the New Covenant began with the first Chapter of Matthew! Read again Matthew 23:1 to 3 and I Corinthians 9:20.

Now let us suppose again. Suppose a very sincere, spiritual anti-dispensationalist should invite to his church an evangelistic party of three, to conduct an evangelistic campaign. The head evangelist would say to the pastor, "we are certainly glad that you are opposed to "dispensationalism," and "take the whole Bible." "We thoroughly agree with you." "We believe that the New Testament program, carried on by Jesus and His Apostles, is God's program for today, and we shall so conduct ourselves while in your church." Well, "Amen," says the preacher, "glad to know that you are sane in your preaching and interpretation of the Scriptures."

The first night arrives and the workers declare that during their stay with the people, they are going to emphasize those first great commands the Lord gave to His disciples, that great kingdom message He gave them to proclaim. "We shall preach here:"

1. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand, Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses. Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, not yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." Matthew 10:7 to 10.
2. "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Matthew 5:40 to 42.
3. "And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Luke 6:34 and 35.
4. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupt." Luke 12:33.
5. "Strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24.

Of course the slogan of the evangelist would be "back to Jesus;" and of course, he would use a red-lettered New Testament, emphasizing what Christ said on earth in red ink and what He spoke through Paul, concerning the Body of Christ, and the Gospel of the grace of God, in black ink.

The preacher might accept that part of the program in which the Christian workers agree to freely give their services. But what success would the workers have when they tried to persuade the church-members to lend their money to those who could not, and would not, pay them back? How would the preacher and his congregation react when they turned to the preacher and said, "now, brother, you are the shepherd of the flock and you set the example for all your flock to follow; 'sell all that you have;' 'give to him that asketh of thee:' 'agree with thine adversary quickly'?"

When these sincere, "anti-dispensational" evangelists attempted to raise the dead and cleanse the lepers, and heal the sick, and cast out demons, they would make themselves the laughing-stock of all the congregation. Perhaps it would be more like it was stated by the

confused preacher, who declared if we only had the faith, we could “cast out the dead and raise the devil.”

The most spiritual of the flock would have to acknowledge that the evangelists were preaching strictly a Bible message. But they would say, “something is wrong.” What it is? They are completely out of harmony with God’s will as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 3:1 and 2 and all through the Epistle to the Ephesians. They might be sincere; but sincerely wrong.

Well, let’s imagine that the preacher would be gracious enough to permit the messengers to finish several messages. Then the three would say to him, “Now, brother, we have the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11: one of us has the gift of discerning of spirits; one of us the gift of healing; and one of us the gift of miracles. Would it be all right with you if we exercise those gifts in the meeting tonight?” The result would be utter confusion, in the preacher’s mind and utter confusion in the meeting, if he gave his consent to the proposition.

Such an experience would be enough to make a “dispensationalist” out of any Christian preacher. But let’s don’t go too far with “dispensationalism.” How far is too far? We must go far enough to see what has become of the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 and the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, without having to appeal to church history. We must go far enough to show from the rightly divided Word of truth why no grace preacher does, or should follow the order of Acts 19:2 to 7,

- 1—water baptism;
- 2—imposition of hands;
- 3—Holy Spirit baptism;
- 4—speaking with tongues.

Surely obedience to II Timothy 2:15 is imperative in this day of religious confusion.

“Back to Jesus,” is also the slogan of the modernist, who rebels against Paul’s message of grace, or we should say Christ’s message of grace, given by special revelation to Paul, for this age. The Pentecostals cry “back to Pentecost” and when they get back there they are helpless and can’t do anything about it; so they carry on a counterfeit Pentecostal program. Why? Because this is not the “Pentecostal” dispensation. Pentecost was a Jewish feast day, and had nothing to do with the inauguration of the dispensation of the mystery. Ephesians 3:9. The intelligent student of the Word of God, will go “back to Jesus” and he will go “back to Pentecost” and “back to Genesis.” But his slogan will be “on with Paul,” and he will study all of those Scriptures in the light of Pauline truth. But he will not advocate a red-lettered New Testament for Bible-students. If there is anything that should be in red letters today, it is the truth Christ spoke through Paul, “the dispensation of grace” and “the dispensation of the mystery.” But all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, correction, reproof and instruction in righteousness. The differences among Christians are not “inspirational,” but “dispensational.”

Now the question:

WHAT IS A DISPENSATION?

The word “dispensation,” is found four times in the New Testament Scriptures: I Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2 and Colossians 1:25. In each instance the Greek word is “oikonomia.” This Greek word is made up of the Greek word “oikos,” meaning “a home” or “house,” sometimes translated “household,” as in I Corinthians 1:16; and the Greek word “nomos,” translated “law.” From this Greek word “oikonomia” we get our word

“economy.” The same word, in Luke 16:2 is translated “stewardship.” The same word, in Titus 1:7, is translated “steward.”

The word, in Galatians 4:2, is translated “governors.” Especially let us note the word in I Peter 4:10, in which verse we learn that every Christian is to be a “steward” of the manifold grace of God. Here we learn that a “dispensation” is committed to every believer.

In Ephesians 3:9, the word “fellowship,” is the same Greek word, “oikonomia.” “To make all men to see what is the DISPENSATION of the mystery.” It is this command that has troubled many students of the Word of God; that is, to know exactly what is implied in the term, “the dispensation of the mystery (secret) which had been hid in God from the beginning of the world.” Certainly we cannot make others see what it is, until we see it. There is not only perplexity and uncertainty, but much controversy in Fundamentalists’ circles, over this command of Ephesians 3:9.

The Greek, “oikonomeo” is the verb, and means to manage or administer the affairs of a home. Therefore, “oikonomia” might well be translated, “administration.” Undoubtedly the Holy Spirit had this in mind in the expression contained in Ephesians 3:9, “the administration of the mystery.” Let us acknowledge the difference between “the mystery,” or the different phases of “the mystery,” and “the administration of the mystery.” The same Greek word is used in I Corinthians 4:1 and 2, “stewards” of the mysteries of God. Paul was no less the steward of the mystery, when he wrote Corinthians (I Corinthians 2:7 and 8) than when he wrote to the Ephesians and Colossians. However, after Acts 28:31, there was a new and different administration of the mystery.

Again read I Corinthians 9:17 . . . Ephesians 3:1 and 2 Colossians 1:24 to 27 . . . Ephesians 3:8 and 9 and Ephesians 1:10: Note in Ephesians 3:6, the expression, “same Body” is in the Greek “sussomos” which means “joint Body.” We quote Ephesians 3:5 and 6: “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.”

Note carefully the language in Ephesians 3:5. This joint Body was not the subject of prophecy. Israel’s Old Testament prophets were both ignorant and silent concerning this Body. We quote also:

COLOSSIANS 1:25 AND 26

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, and now is made manifest to His saints.”

If the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would put believing Jews and Gentiles in a joint Body was unknown to Israel’s prophets, it was surely unknown to Joel. Hence, what happened when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, was not to put the believers in the joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6. Read Joel 2:32 and note these words in Acts 2:16: “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Note carefully these words: “in the last days.” This refers to Israel’s kingdom, the last days when Israel would enjoy national redemption, occupy their land, and be under the peaceful reign of their Divine Messiah and King. If we, as members of the Body of Christ, receive the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy and by receiving the fulfillment of that promise we are baptized into the Body of Christ, then the kingdom which began on the day of Pentecost, is the Body of Christ if that Body

also began there. Moreover Israel and the Church, which is Christ's Body, are identical. And we have been in Israel's last days ever since the day of Pentecost. How could the "last days" of Israel, foretold in Joel's prophecy, have been the first days of the Body of Christ, about which Joel knew nothing and wrote nothing?

Again we read that in Christ Jesus and in His Body there is neither Gentile nor Jew. Colossians 3:11. Galatians 3:28. God is giving any kind of a sinner, Jew or Gentile, the opportunity to be saved by grace wherever that gospel is preached.

EPHESIANS 3:1 AND 2

"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."

EPHESIANS 3:5 AND 6

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel."

EPHESIANS 3:8 AND 9

"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 created all things by Jesus Christ."

GALATIANS 2:1 AND 2

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also, And I went up by revelation and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

GALATIANS 2:6 AND 7

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter."

Do we not see in these Scriptures that Paul did not communicate the gospel of the uncircumcision to Peter until at least fourteen years after Paul was converted? Therefore, cannot we say, dogmatically, that Peter, in the first fifteen chapters of "Acts" did not preach Paul's gospel to any one? Can we not, with equal dogmatism, say, that Paul certainly did not tell Peter about "the dispensation of the grace of God," "the dispensation of the mystery," and "the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ" one moment before he instructed him in the gospel of the uncircumcision, when he went by revelation to Jerusalem "fourteen years after?" Get the fact and meaning of the "fourteen years after."

What meaneth all of Paul's talk about "the mystery;" that is, "the secret not made known to Israel's prophets?" This secret was made known to Paul and Peter learned it from Paul, and some of its phases were, Peter declared, "hard to be understood." II Peter 3:16.

In the original Greek text, in II Timothy 1:12, Paul calls it "my deposit."

By carefully comparing and studying these Scriptures, we can see that the word “dispensation” does not mean a period of time. In I Corinthians 9:17, Paul was not stating that a period of time was given to him, but a ministry and a message. In the Greek of II Timothy 1:12, he spoke of a “partheke:” literally a deposit which was committed unto him. However, there are generally time limits to a dispensation. “The law dispensation was added till.” Galatians 3:19. The law dispensation entered at Sinai and was abolished after the death of Christ. Therefore the law dispensation was a temporary dispensation. We must acknowledge that, as there was a difference between the law and the administration of the law, so is there a difference between the mystery and the administration of the mystery.

It is interesting to compare the expressions, “the fulness of the Gentiles” in the mystery of Romans 11:25 and 26, with “the dispensation of the fulness of times” in Ephesians 1:10. Undoubtedly there is the time limit in the first Scripture. In the second, the dispensation will be after man has been given his last opportunity to be saved under any dispensation, if not after Ephesians 2:7, “that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD

We quote again:

EPHESIANS 3:1 TO 3

“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 words.”

It has been truly said that Colossians and Ephesians should be studied together; for if one is not the compliment of the other, surely each is the Divine commentary on the other.

It has also been pointed out that Colossians was perhaps written a short time after Ephesians and that Colossians 2:2 teaches that, not only had Paul received the revelation of the mystery long before he became the Lord’s prisoner in Rome, but he had made it known, otherwise his words in Colossians 2:2 are meaningless. “The full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father, and of Christ.” We have no way of knowing all that Paul preached before Acts 28:28 in his oral ministry, not recorded in his written ministry. And certainly we are not to say dogmatically that Paul had told everything concerning the truth of the mystery before he reached Rome, because of the statement in Acts 20:27: “for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” Certainly he had not made it known to the Corinthians, though he had mentioned it. I Corinthians 2:7 and 8. To use modern language, they were like ninety-eight percent of Christians today: “they couldn’t take it.” There are some differences between the counsel of God (Hebrews 6:17) and the eternal purpose of God given in Christ Jesus before the world began. II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 3:11.

Of this we are sure; that, so far as Paul’s written ministry is concerned, there are truths revealed in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus and II Timothy (his Prison Epistles) not revealed in his earlier writings. Not only is there a decided advance in truth, higher truth, but indications that a radical change had taken place, in accordance with I Corinthians 13:8 and 13: “done away,” “now abideth.” But let us not be guilty of the blunder of those who follow Dr. Bullinger and Mr. Welch, teaching that there is nothing of God’s eternal purpose set forth in Romans, because Abraham is there mentioned. We might say, that it is not mentioned in Paul’s last Epistle, because there he calls Christ the Seed of David. II Timothy 2:8. The eternal purpose

of God is mentioned in Romans 8:28, and the context in that Chapter proves that the truth contained in Romans is the truth of Ephesians.

As to the grace gospel, Romans 3:24 to 28 is as clear a grace message as is Ephesians 2:8 to 10; and surely the instructions to members of the Body of Christ in Romans, Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15 are binding upon every member of the One Body mentioned in Ephesians 4:5. Neither is it optional with the individual saint, who has been erroneously taught that he is not a member of the Body mentioned during the "Acts" period, whether or not he obeys the instructions of Romans and Galatians.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

It is because of such faulty exegesis that the disciples of Dr. Bullinger and Mr. Welch are discarding the Lord's Supper. They state that this ordinance (never called an ordinance in the Bible) was for the "Abrahamic Covenant," "New Covenant" Church, or Body of the "Acts" period for believers who were waiting for the coming of the Lord to deliver Israel from the great tribulation. That it was suddenly interrupted with the revelation of the mystery and the beginning of the new Body, the Body of the mystery. That it will be instituted again after the Body is complete and the Lord again starts the kingdom dispensation, with the Israelitish Kingdom Church program, the same as was carried on during the "Acts" period. Of course, with such faulty reasoning, they must conclude that only believing Jews took the Lord's Supper and then only on the day of Passover; as the Lord's Supper was a continuation of the Passover, with wine instead of lamb; or perhaps both. I Corinthians 11:26 states, "ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." They teach that He was to come, but He didn't. We must accept His intended act for the act: and postpone the Lord's Supper during this dispensation of the Body of the mystery. According to this theory, it should read, "after He come." Moreover, if the Supper was to be taken till Christ's "parousia," to deliver the tribulation saints, Christ, Paul, or some prophet, should have told us that saved Jews and Gentiles, baptized by one Spirit into one Body, all one in Christ, identified with the risen Lord, members one of another, will be taking the Lord's Supper during the several years of Jacob's trouble, to indicate their hope of deliverance.

Is it any wonder that brethren, who rule the Lord's Supper out of this dispensation on such unsound exegesis, ultimately rule out Christ as the believer's High-Priest, Advocate and Intercessor, and keep on ruling out until they have left only part of Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and II Timothy? Yes, for some of them are now teaching that Ephesians 2 is parenthetical and Paul was not in the Body of Christ when he wrote Philippians, for he had not yet pressed into the Body of the Christ "far above all." God's admonition is, beware of such teaching and such teachers.

Some rule out the Lord's Supper, because the judgment signs of I Corinthians 11:29 and 30 have ceased. Compare the language of I Corinthians 11:23 and I Corinthians 15:3 to see that Paul received the gospel and the Lord's Supper for Jews and Gentiles in the same manner. The signs that accompanied the gospel (Romans 15:19) ceased after Acts 28:28. Does that prove that that was the end of the gospel? Just as sensible as to say that the Lord's Supper ceased because the signs ceased. It is just as great a sin today to lie to the Holy Spirit as when Ananias did. But no death judgments. Shall we therefore lie to the Holy Spirit?

Paul plainly states that his authority for the Lord's Supper was from the risen Christ. He plainly states that that risen Christ sent him "not to baptize." I Corinthians 1:17. Let us never be foolish enough to say that the Lord's Supper and baptism are the ordinances of I Corinthians

11:2. The Greek word is “traditions” and has no reference to either water-baptism or the Lord’s Supper. The Holy Spirit would not link together a baptism, that is all over in five minutes, with a memorial that is to be observed “as often as ye eat and drink.” The Lord knows there is very little worship in our assemblies today. The Lord’s Supper is no ordinance, neither is it an obligatory religious ceremony to be rigidly enforced upon believers at some set time, under penalty of excommunication or discipline. But no one has offered any sound Scriptural exegesis for its elimination. If we eliminate it because of the mention of the New Covenant, we must eliminate our salvation and blessings in Hebrews 10, because all these are on the grounds of the blood of the New Covenant.

By comparing the gospel of the grace of God, in Romans 3:24 to 28, we shall find the same gospel as is presented in Ephesians 2:8 to 10. But when we compare the dispensation of I Corinthians 9:17 to 22, with the dispensation of Ephesians 3:1 and 2, and study both in the light of Ephesians and Colossians, we shall certainly recognize different dispensations of the gospel of grace. Paul, in Colossians and Ephesians, is certainly not telling any one to become one under the law to win Jews, as he did in I Corinthians 9:20. In Philippians 3:4 to 10, Paul condemns the very stand which he took during the “Acts” period, when there was one order for the Jews that believed and another order for the Gentiles that believed; at the time when he circumcised Timothy, but forbade the circumcision of Titus. Read Acts 15:19 to 28, Acts 2:24 to 28, Acts 16:3, and Galatians 2:2 to 5.

Concerning “the mystery” of Paul’s Prison Epistles, it is mentioned in Romans 16:25, but in no Pre-prison Epistle is the mystery clearly declared and emphasized as it is in Ephesians and Colossians. Moreover, Ephesians is addressed to members of the Body of Christ more than to a local assembly. If “the mystery” is truth not foretold by Israel’s prophets and not promised in the Israelitish Covenants mentioned in Romans 9:3 to 5, surely the “mystery” truth had been revealed to Paul at the time he wrote Galatians, Romans and I Corinthians.

To teach, as some teachers are teaching, that during the “Acts” period the believing Gentiles were governed by Israelitish religion, whereas thereafter they were not, is to manifest a profound ignorance of facts.

On the other hand, to teach that “the administration of the mystery” was not a changed administration, after Paul’s declaration in Acts. 28:28: “be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it,” is also a manifestation of profound ignorance.

Since Paul wrote Ephesians and Colossians and II Timothy, Gentiles have occupied a unique place with high and holy privileges in the economy of God, never known in any period of time.

But let us remember Romans 11:20 and 21: “Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”

THE OUTCALLING OF GENTILES

Acts 15:14

Now let us carefully read Acts 15:14 to 17, and then ask some questions:

“Simeon (Simon Peter) hath declared how God at the first (for the first time) did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name;

“And to this AGREE THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS, as it is written.

“After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

“That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”

Question Number 1: “What is it that agrees with the words of the prophets; the fact that Israel’s Messiah will return and build again the Tabernacle of David, or that during this day or age of grace God is taking out from among the Gentiles some saved people to constitute the Church which is Christ’s Body?

“Now, carefully ponder this question in your mind and heart; for right here we have a Scripture, the interpretation of which has not only caused division and controversy among Postmillenarians and Premillenarians; but has caused some very undesirable divisions and ungracious controversies among Premillenarians. Now, all Premillenarians are agreed that many of Israel’s prophets foretold that Christ would come to build again the tabernacle of David; and moreover all Premillenarians believe that Christ will surely come back, as the Son of man and regather Israel and rebuild the tabernacle of David. But nearly all Premillenarians are agreed that Israel’s prophets were both ignorant and silent as to the Body of Christ.

Most Premillenarians interpret Luke 1:32 and 33, and Luke 1:67 to 77, and Matthew 4:17, to mean that Christ did come and propose to Israel the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David; but when Israel’s rulers said, “we will not have this Man to reign over us,” the King was rejected, and God then decided to postpone the kingdom until the King went to heaven, by the way of the cross and the open sepulchre, and comes back in the clouds with His holy angels in power and great glory, in accordance with Luke 21:20 to 33.

Now, the Postmillenarians object strenuously to what they term, “the interruption of the covenants” and “the postponement of the kingdom.” They declare that the program of the Lord, during the first eleven chapters of Acts, and then on to this present time, was and has been the fulfillment of Amos 9:11 to 15. They must see that Israel has not been planted in Canaan, in fulfillment of Amos 9:14 and 15. But they declare that beginning with the resurrection of Christ, Amos was fulfilled in this order:

1. The tabernacle of David was rebuilt. Acts 2:29 to 32.
2. The remnant from Israel was saved. Acts 2:5. Acts 2:41 and Acts 4:4. And Acts 11:19.
3. Then beginning with Acts 10, in accordance with Acts 11:18 and Acts 15:7, by special command from the Lord, Peter was directed to begin a ministry with the Gentiles, who for the first time were called out, in agreement with Amos 9:12. So they declare that the program of Acts 15:13 to 18, got underway on the day of Pentecost and has continued without interruption down to the present time.

They do not seem to be disturbed over the plain contradiction of such a program stated in Ephesians 3:5 and 6 and Colossians 1:25 to 27, in which Scriptures it is clearly stated that the joint-Body of saved Jews and Gentiles was never prophesied by Amos or any other prophet.

Now as to the general interpretation of Acts 15:13 to 18 taught by the majority of Premillenarians, they too seem to have overlooked the fact that their explanation of Acts 15:14 is contradictory to Paul’s declaration in Ephesians 3:5 and 6 and in Colossians 1:25 to 27. However, many of these brethren persuade themselves that they have eliminated the contradiction by teaching that the truth of Acts 15:16 and 17 was foretold by Amos; but not the truth of Acts 15:14. They say that Amos prophesied that Christ would come and build again the tabernacle of

David; save the remnant of Israelites; and then, by the gospel of the kingdom, Gentiles would be saved. They say, “to this agree the words of the prophets,” does not refer to verse 14. But Peter and James proclaimed God’s purpose during this age, Acts 15:14, concerning which Amos and the other prophets were ignorant and silent. Of course if the out-calling of the Gentiles, mentioned in Acts 15:14, is the Church, which is the joint-Body described in Ephesians 3:5 and 6, the mystery of Colossians 1:25 and 26, the prophets were indeed ignorant of it and said nothing about it.

But it seems from the reading of Acts 15:14 and 15 that the visiting of the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name did agree with the words of the prophet. The truth of Acts 15:14 is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Acts 15:17. We quote Amos 9:12; “All the heathen (Gentiles) which are called by My Name.”

Now, let us search the Scriptures to ascertain whether or not the out-calling of Gentiles, mentioned in Acts 15:14 referred to the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 3:5 and 6.

First, let us observe that about the time Peter and James made the declaration of Acts 15:14, Peter and James agreed to confine their preaching to the circumcision with the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:9. Just for a few moments quietly, prayerfully and spiritually compare Acts 15:14 and Galatians 2:9 and answer this question: “Why, after proclaiming that God’s purpose was to visit the Gentiles did Peter and James agree not to go to the Gentiles?” Strange and inconsistent is it not? Something wrong, you say. To be sure there is. But it is not God’s Word. It is man’s blunder and misinterpretation.

Second: Let us observe that after Peter and James declared God’s purpose for this age was to visit the Gentiles to take out from among them a people for His Name, Paul declared “to the Jew first.” Romans 1:16. God has not been visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name ever since Acts 15:13 to 18, but visiting Jews and Gentiles for some years thereafter, and then Gentiles and Jews after Acts 28:31.

The program from the day of Pentecost until God chose by the mouth of Peter that the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel (Acts 15:7) was under the direction of Twelve Apostles. It was a “Kingdom of Heaven” program. It was in fulfillment of the Scriptures. “To this agree the words of the prophets.” But let us bear in mind these facts; that, after the death of one of the Twelve (Acts 12:1 and 2) the spiritual activities of the Twelve, or the Eleven, are not recorded: that the Eleven were to preach the circumcision gospel to the circumcision (Galatians 2:9); that, so far as we have any record not one of the Twelve, during the first fifteen Chapters of Acts (or thereafter in the “Acts” period) preached outside of the Land of the Jews and so far as there is any record in Acts, Peter preached to only one company of Gentiles.

DR. SCOFIELD’S NOTES

Premillenarians have generally followed the Plymouth Brethren interpretation of Acts 15:13 to 18. This is the interpretation given in the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible. Turn to his notes on Acts 15:13 to 18. Read this note at the head of these verses: “The outcalling of the Gentiles agrees with the promises to Israel.” Well, most assuredly if this outcalling of the Gentiles agrees with the promises to Israel, and if the joint-Body of Ephesians 3:5 and 6 was never promised to Israel, the two outcallings must be different outcallings. But note the foot notes of Dr. Scofield

Dispensationally this is the most important passage in the N.T. It gives the Divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next.

- (1) The taking out from among the Gentiles of a people for His Name, the distinctive work of the present, or Church age. The Church is the ECCLESIA the “called out assembly.” Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost. The Gospel has never anywhere converted all, but everywhere has called out some.
- (2) “After this (viz. the out-calling) I will return.” James quotes front Amos 9:11, 12. The verses which follow in Amos describe the final outgathering of Israel, which the other prophets invariably connect with the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (e.g. Isaiah 11:1, 10 to 12; Jeremiah 23:5, 8).
- (3) “And will build again the tabernacle of David.” i.e. re-establish the Davidic rule over Israel (II Samuel 7:8 to 17; Luke. 1:31 to 33).
- (4) “That the residue of men (Israelites) may seek after the Lord.” (cf. Zechariah 12:7 and 8; 13:1 and 2).
- (5) “And all the Gentiles,” etc. (cf. Micah 4:2; Zechariah. 8:21 and 22). This is also the order of Romans 11:24 to 27.

Now, after you have carefully studied Dr. Scofield’s notes on Acts 15:13 to 18, turn to his notes on Ephesians 3:5 and 6, and I believe you will admit that there is a contradiction. This is the same contradiction that is being preached today by Premillenarians of the Plymouth Brethren school of interpretation. We quote from Dr. Scofield’s Bible concerning Ephesians 3:6:

“That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery (Romans 9:24 to 33; Romans 10:19 to 21). The mystery ‘hid in God’ was the Divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing—the Church which is His, (Christ’s) Body,’ formed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12 and 13) and in which the earthly distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (Ephesians. 2:14 and 15; Colossians 3:10 and 11). The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold but not explained by Christ (Matthew 16:1), was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the Church.”

Now the question: did, or did not, the outcalling of the Gentiles in Acts 15:14 agree with God’s promises to Israel? If it did—and it did according to Acts 15:15—then it was not the Body of the Mystery.

You will observe in the notes quoted, Dr. Scofield states that in Paul’s writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the Church. Then we ask, whether or not the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the Body of Christ is in the first ten chapters of Acts? What doctrine is stated in Acts 15:13 to 18? Dr. Scofield clearly states that the Church (Body) was a mystery so far as the Old Testament prophets were concerned, and, inasmuch as he admits that Acts 15:13 to 18 was told to Amos, therefore, Acts 15:13 to 18 was no mystery. How then could it refer to the Body of Christ?

After we have quoted again from Dr. Scofield’s Bible, his notes concerning the “last days,” mentioned in Acts 2:17, we shall again consider these verses in Acts 15, which Dr. Scofield declares to be, dispensationally, the most important verses in the New Testament. We shall endeavor to show that they refer to Israel’s “last days,” rather than to the “first days” of the Body of Christ. We quote the Acts 2:17 notes:

“A distinction must be observed between ‘the last days’ when the prediction relates to Israel, and ‘the last days’ when the prediction relates to the Church (I Timothy 4:1 to 3; II Timothy 3:1 to 8; Hebrews 1:1 and 2; I Peter 1:4 and 5; II Peter 3:1 to 9; I John 2:18 and 19; Jude 17 to 19). Also distinguish the expression ‘the last days’ (plural) from ‘the last day’ (singular); the latter expression referring to the resurrections and last judgment (John 6:39,40,44 and 54; John 11:24; John 12:48). The ‘last days’ as related to the Church began with the advent

of Christ (Hebrews 1:2) but have especial reference to the time of declension and apostasy at the end of this age (II Timothy 3:1; 4:4). The 'last days' as related to Israel are the days of Israel's exaltation and blessing, and are synonymous with the kingdom-age (Isaiah 2:2 to 4; Mic. 4:1 to 7) They are 'last' not with reference to this dispensation, but with reference to the whole of Israel's history."

It is obvious that, if Joel (Chapter 2:28 to 33) knew nothing about either the "first days" or the "last days" of the Body of Christ, he did not prophesy concerning them. Therefore, his prophecy concerning the "last days," mentioned by Peter on the day of Pentecost, had to do with Israel's kingdom, and not with the Body of Christ. A careful perusal of all of the chapters of Joel should convince even the superficial student of the Scriptures that the entire prophecy is concerning Israel restored to Divine favor and planted in Canaan.

Now, we ask again, if the Pentecostal event, recorded in Acts 2, was to happen in Israel's "last days," foretold by Israel's prophet Joel, and if the Body of Christ was a secret not revealed to, or prophesied by, Joel and other prophets, did the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6 begin on the day of Pentecost? Today, Bible expositors, among Fundamentalists, especially Premillennialists, teach that Israel's "last days" mean Israel's great tribulation and the millennium. They affirm that God is holding in abeyance Israel's national redemption and kingdom until the Body of Christ has been completed and raptured. Some of them, contrary to their own dispensational teachings, are quoting from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah and others, to prove that we are in the "last days" of the Church (Body); when in the very next sermon, they will dogmatically affirm that not one of these men said anything about the Body, because it was a mystery. Some do teach that already we are in the "last days" of the Church; but not in the "last days" foretold by Israel's prophets. They quote II Timothy 3 and I Timothy 4. They teach that these are the "last days" of the Body on earth, in the dispensation of grace; and, in another message, they preach that the dispensation of grace began on the day of Pentecost, which, they declare, was the first day of the Body of Christ, the beginning time of the dispensation of the mystery of Ephesians 3:9. God would have all men to see this dispensation, but, on account of such contradictions as we find in Dr. Scofield's notes, concerning Acts 15 and Ephesians 3:6, which is the same contradiction and confusion of thought taught in our Bible Schools, and by our Fundamentalist leaders, these teachers will never make any one to see "the dispensation of the mystery." They surely cannot make others see what they cannot see, and what they have obscured by their contradictions and mixtures of Divine truth.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT HAND

Now, let us carefully consider several statements of Jesus of Nazareth when He was on earth, a minister of the circumcision to confirm promises that God had made to Israel (Romans 15:8) and to fulfill the Scriptures. Let us keep in mind that Christ came to fulfill the Scriptures; in general, to present Himself as King with the kingdom of heaven program (Matthew 3:2 and Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15), to be the Stone rejected by the builders and to take the kingdom from the Israel of His days, and give it to others (Matthew 21:42 and 43); and to be put to death and arise the third day. Matthew 26:24. Luke 24:46 to 48. Acts 13:29.

When we ask, "what would have happened if Israel had received Jesus as King," or, "why, if Christ came the first time to establish His kingdom, in accordance with Luke 1:67 to 77 and Luke 1:32 and 33, and Matthew 3:2, He did not do it, inasmuch as God works all things after the counsel of His own will?" We may find some satisfaction in the answer given in John 11:47

to 52 and Luke 13:34 and 35 and Luke 19:42 to 44. “Because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.” But again we read John 12:39 and 40; “therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them.” and we say with God’s servant, “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. This Paul quoted after the statement concerning Israel’s unbelief in Romans 11:30: “For as ye in times past have not believed God, ye have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”

We ask this question time and again: if Christ’s death and resurrection were inevitable, and had to occur before His kingdom could be established on earth, did He, in good faith, offer the kingdom to Israel before His death? Read Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15 and 1:34. Then note the message Christ sent to John the Baptist when John asked this question: “Art Thou He that should come?” Luke 7:19 and 20. Read Christ’s reply to John the Baptist in Luke 7:22:

LUKE 7:22

“Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.”

Now let us read Isaiah 35:4, concerning the coming of Israel’s King to deliver Israel from her enemies. Messiah, the King, was to come to Israel with deliverance. What was He to do? Compare the miracles of healing in Isaiah 35:5 and 6 with the miracles of Luke 7:22. He was to give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb and make the lame to walk.

Now again, concerning John the Baptist and the kingdom. Compare Malachi 4:5 and 6, Luke 1:16 and 80 and Matthew 17:10 to 13.

MALACHI 4:5 AND 6

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

LUKE 1:16 AND 80

“And many of the children of Israel shall He turn to the Lord their God.”

“And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of His shewing unto Israel.”

MATTHEW 17:10 TO 13

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew Him not, but have done

unto Him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spoke unto them of John the Baptist.”

It is easy enough to look back now and see that Christ did not restore the kingdom to Israel, but had we lived in the days of His flesh, and heard the truth proclaimed in Luke 1:16 to 80, and the messages of Christ and His Apostles, we too would have joined with them in their question of Acts 1:6: “wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?”

When Israel’s Messiah comes again to restore the kingdom to Israel. Israel will be in the Holy Land, under the Roman government, and if Malachi 4:5 and 6 and Joel 2:28 to 33 and Amos 9:11 to 15 are to have a more complete fulfillment, Elijah will come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Although Luke 21:20 to 23 states that the destruction of Jerusalem, in the year 70, was the days of vengeance in fulfillment of Scripture, we must know that the tribulation of Matthew 24, and Israel’s deliverance therein recorded, has not taken place.

In the fulfillment of Matthew 24, there will be the fulfillment of Joel, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:16 to 21 and Acts 3:19 to 21 and Acts 3:24. We quote these verses:

ACTS 2:16 TO 21

“And this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in the heavens above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

ACTS 3:19 TO 21

“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: And He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto Lord: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

ACTS 3:24

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

Note again Dr. Scofield’s note on Acts 2:16 and we quote his notes on Acts 3:19 to 21 and Matthew 3:2.

Acts 3:19 to 21—“The appeal here is national to the Jewish people as such, not individual as in Peter’s first sermon (Acts 2:38 and 39) There those who were pricked in heart were exhorted to save themselves from (among) the untoward nation; here the whole people is addressed, and the promise to national repentance is national deliverance: ‘and He shall send Jesus Christ’ to bring in the times which the prophets had foretold. The official answer was the imprisonment of the apostles, and the inhibition to preach, so fulfilling Luke 19:14.”

Matthew 3:2—“The phrase, kingdom of heaven (lit. of the heavens), is peculiar to Matthew and signifies the Messianic earth rule of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. It is called the kingdom of the heavens because it is the rule of the heavens over the earth, (Matthew 6:10). The phrase is derived from Daniel, where it is defined (Daniel 2:34 to 36, and 44; Daniel 7:23 to 27) as the kingdom which ‘the God of heaven’ will set up after the destruction by ‘the stone cut out without hands’ of the Gentile world-system. It is the kingdom covenanted to David’s seed (II Samuel 7:7 to 10 ref.); described in the prophets (Zechariah 12:8 note) and confirmed to Jesus the Christ, the Son of Mary, through the angel Gabriel. (Luke 1:32 and 33.)

In all of these Scriptures there has not been one word concerning this present dispensation of grace, the dispensation of the mystery, or the Body of Christ.

We must conclude, that, in the Scriptures, from Matthew 3:1 to Matthew 16:20, and in Acts 1 to Acts 10, including the declaration of Peter and James, in Acts 15:13 to 18, we find a pattern of what is to take place in the coming of the King to establish the kingdom of the heavens. Let us bear in mind that the Twelve Apostles, in that kingdom age, are to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. That, during the beginning of that period, the gospel of the kingdom is to be preached (Matthew 24:13 and 14). Let us remember also that the Twelve had the keys of the kingdom of the heavens. Matthew 16:16 to 18.

It is difficult to disprove these facts with the Scriptures. But it cannot be proved by the Scriptures that the program of the coming kingdom dispensation will correspond to the spiritual program carried on by Paul in his ministry to the close of the Book of Acts and as set forth in his “Acts” Epistles: Galatians, Romans, Corinthians and Thessalonians. Let us remember that God did not send Peter to Cornelius with the gospel, to provoke Israel to jealousy, as He sent Paul to the Gentiles. Cornelius confessed that Israel’s God was the true God. Cornelius worshipped that God and loved the Jews and gave alms to them.

THE ACTS MINISTRY OF THE TWELVE AND PAUL

There are some unpleasant controversies, and some very ungracious criticism among Bible teachers because of the disagreement in fixing the historic beginning of “the Church” called “the Body of Christ.” All who have already studied the question, as to when the Body had its historic beginning, have come face to face with some real problems. Perhaps, as we continue the study of the “Acts” ministry of the Twelve and Paul, we shall get more light on the subject.

First, let us submit some of the theories that have been accepted by those who play “follow the leader.” Remember the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Acts 17:11. Be a Berean. The Postmillenarian, who divides the Bible into two dispensations, teaches that the present Bible Church, or Body of Christ, to which Christians belong, began in the days of Abel. The same Church, although it has undergone changes of covenants and administration, has continued right down to the present day. Their theologians, however, do teach that somewhere along the line, the Church changed from “the Old Testament Church” to “the New Testament (Covenant) Church.” Generally they fix this change as having taken place while Christ was on earth; while many of them fix it with the death of Christ. It is needless to say that they are opposed to the interruption, or suspension, of any covenants at the time Israel rejected Christ and crucified Him, and, therefore, they reject all teachings concerning the postponement of the kingdom. They teach from Romans 2:29 and Romans 9:6 to 8; Galatians 6:16 and Romans 11:17, that the Body of Christ is “Israel,” “Spiritual Israel.” Of course, with such an interpretation, they must, and do, spiritualize many prophecies concerning the

restoration of Israel in the Holy Land, and the kingdom reign of Christ as set forth in such passages as Isaiah 9:6 and 7; Luke 1:32 and 33 and Matthew 25:31 to 44.

The Postmillenarians, and also most Premillenarians, of the “Plymouth Brethren school of interpretation,” have the Old Testament begin 2500 years before it actually began. Abel was not under the covenant which God made old at Calvary. Hebrews 8:7 to 13. Abraham never lived a day under the Old Covenant, which was added 430 years after Abram was declared righteous by faith, 430 years after God made the covenant with Abram, the uncircumcised Gentile. Galatians 3:17 and 19. “From Adam to Moses” “when there is no law.” Romans 5:13. The Postmillenarian agrees with all Premillenarians that the Old Covenant, entered into at Sinai, was abolished at Calvary. II Corinthians 3:7 to 16. Colossians 2:12 to 16. Hebrews 8:13. But all are agreed that the Abrahamic Covenant is either operative now or shall be in the future. Hence the Abrahamic Covenant is not the Old Covenant and Abram was not an Old Testament character. There were no Old Testament saints from the day of Adam’s fall until Moses was 80 years of age, at which time the law (the Old Covenant) entered that the offense might abound. Romans 5:20.

As there was no Old Testament until God took the children of Israel by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, there was no Israel until about 1700 B. C., when seventy souls out of the loins of Jacob (Israel) went down to Egypt. Exodus 1:5.

Then we ask; “were Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah and Shem, who lived before the flood, Israelites, or members of the Church which is Christ’s Body?” It is not so difficult to ask questions as it is to answer them, but it should not require much intelligence to answer these questions. There were no Israelites before the flood or for some centuries thereafter. Of course Israel means “prevailing with God” and every saint under all covenants may prevail with God. And, of course, the record of Hebrews 11 connects Abel with Abraham, Israel, Moses, David and concludes with the statement “that they without US should not be made perfect. Hebrews 11:40. Here Abel was linked up with Paul and his contemporaries.

All Bible-teachers teach that the Old Covenant saints were saved by the blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:15. The Postmillenarians teach that the Old Testament saints belonged to the One and Only Bible Church and that all saints will reach the same eternal resting place. They quote not only Hebrews 11:40, but Ephesians 1:10 and I Corinthians 15:22 and 23.

HEBREWS 11:40

“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

EPHESIANS 1:10

“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.”

I CORINTHIANS 15:22 AND 23

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ’s at His coming.”

Therefore, antediluvian saints, and the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who were not Old Testament saints, and Moses, with all the Old Testament saints, and all the New Testament

saints, all belong to the same Church, whether that Church be called "Israel" or "the Body of Christ." Moreover, we are all headed for the Heavenly Jerusalem; and none of Abraham's natural seed are going back to Canaan to live in that land under Christ on David's throne.

This explains why there is so little genuine fellowship between zealous Postmillenarians and zealous Premillenarians even though both are strictly orthodox as to evangelical truth.

THE TRANSFER OF SAINTS

According to the teaching of Postmillenarians, there was a time some where along the line, after the birth of the Lord Jesus, when the Old Testament dispensation ceased and the New Testament dispensation began, whether or not the change was gradual or abrupt. Therefore they must believe that all Old Testament saints who were alive when the change came, became members of "the New Covenant Church." This, with them, was a change of covenants rather than the change of Church. We might use as examples, Simeon and Joseph of Arimethea, both of whom were Old Testament saints, waiting for the kingdom of God. Luke 2:25 to Luke 23:51. Nicodemus might also be considered.

But the point is, that somewhere along the line there was a transfer of living Old Testament saints, into the New Testament Church, the Body of Christ. Of course, according to the Postmillenarian teaching, the transfer must have taken place in heaven at the same time, for the saints who had died under the Old Covenant, were alive spiritually, though physically dead. But, perhaps, in the light of Ephesians 4:8 and 9, they would teach the transfer of those whose spirits had gone to God, took place after the death and resurrection of Christ.

Of course, the intelligent Postmillenarians, in the light of Matthew 15:20 to 27 and John 7:38 and 39, would not teach that while Christ was in the Holy Land with Israel, there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles (Romans 10:12) and that the believing Jews and believing Gentiles were one in Christ, not under the law, baptized into His death, and seated with Him in the heavenlies, because they had all, by one Spirit, been baptized into one Body. Galatians 3:23 to 28. Romans 6:3. Colossians 2:11 to 16. I Corinthians 12:13. Ephesians 2:6 and 7.

THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN PREMILLENARIANS

But now as to the teaching of the Premillenarians, who follow Mr. Darby's dispensationalism, as did Dr. Scofield, and as do our leading Bible schools. With very few exceptions all these brethren teach dogmatically that "the Church of God" and "the Body of Christ" are one and the same; and that that Body, the dispensation of the grace of God, and "the dispensation of the mystery," began fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. The few exceptions are those who teach that the Body began when Christ breathed the Holy Spirit into the Apostles. John 20:22. But they are all agreed that there are two saved companies in the Bible, Israel and the Church. With them, the expression "the Church" means one thing, the Body of Christ, which began on the day of Pentecost. Although they subdivide the Scriptures and God's government of His people into a number of different dispensations, yet they speak of two general divisions, namely, "the Old Testament" and "the New Testament." They teach that Christ, on earth, was offering to the Nation Israel the Messianic kingdom foretold by the prophets. But they admit that although His own received Him not, some believed and were saved during the earthly ministry of Christ. John 1:11 and 12. Luke 10:20. They declare, however, that any saints who died while Christ was on earth, including John the Baptist, were not members of the Body of

Christ at the time of death. They make no attempt to give a name to the company of saints who were saved before God made His Covenant with Israel at Sinai. They have overlooked, in their “dispensationalism,” the sphere of blessing of such saints as Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah and Shem. When pressed, they will acknowledge that they were not Israelites. Many of them will acknowledge that they were not Old Testament saints; therefore, they were not members of the Old Testament Church. They certainly were not members of the Body of Christ. And as they are not going to the Holy Land to share Israel’s earthly glory and blessing, and as they are not going to the heavenlies to share Christ’s glory with the Body of Christ, where are they to be?

Some of them see that their reasoning is faulty, but they comfort themselves by saying, the Judge of all the earth will do right. And to add to their perplexity, they too turn to Hebrews 11 and see Abel in the fourth verse, identified with US in the fortieth verse. If asked if the saved Israelites who died in the period from 1700 B. C. to the day of Pentecost, will be raised when those in Christ are made alive at Christ’s coming (I Corinthians 15:22 to 24), they say, “yes.” If asked if they are to have the same kind of resurrection glorified bodies as the members of the Body of Christ will have, they reply “yes.” They even teach that the twenty-four elders of Revelation 4 and 5 are the Old Testament and New Testament saints, raised from the dead together.

But then to the next question, they have no answer: “how can the resurrected Israelites, who are to have glorified bodies, like the bodies of the members of the Body of Christ, the Lord’s heavenly people, go to the Holy Land and share the earthly blessings with the Israelites who are to be alive when the Son of man comes to establish them in Canaan to enjoy millennial earthly blessings. These latter are to live on earth, eat and drink. Again I confess, it is much less difficult to ask questions than to answer them.

But let us bear in mind that these “Plymouth Brethren Premillenarians” teach that there was a transfer of saints to the Body of Christ. Of course, with their teaching, there had to be: that is, the Israelites, whose names were written in heaven, while Christ was on earth, were not, during that period, members of the Body of Christ, for the simple reason that the Body did not at that time exist. According to this “dispensationalism,” the one hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15, were saved before the day of Pentecost, but until that birthday of the Church of God they had not been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.

Now, perhaps, you have asked this question: if two members of the same family were saved while Christ was on earth, the one lived until after the day of Pentecost and the other died before the day of Pentecost, will they enjoy different blessings in the hereafter? They will, according to the teaching of the “Plymouth Brethren Premillenarians.”

Now, we are not criticizing these Premillenarians for having a transfer to the New Testament Church or the Body of Christ, for, we must of necessity have such a transfer, no matter what particular dispensationalism we teach. But again we state, that we cannot agree with these brethren who teach that “the dispensation of the mystery,” peculiar truth for Gentiles from the Apostle to the Gentiles, began on a Jewish feast day, before the door of faith had been opened up to the Gentiles. Most assuredly the same Body (Sussomos), the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, did not begin on the day of Pentecost. Not one of the Twelve, in any of their recorded oral ministry, or Epistles, once called the Church, “the Body.” This term is found only in the writings of the Apostle Paul.

As we go on to the consideration of the “dispensationalism” of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and Mr. Chas. H. Welch, we again are eager to know where the Plymouth Brethren will have the antideluvian saints in the ages to come, and where they will have the Israelites who were saved

before the birth of Christ. A Post millenarian asked a Premillenarian, “if Abraham is the father of us all (Romans 4:16 and 17), will the father be separated from his children in heaven?” In other words, Abraham was neither an Israelite nor an Old Testament saint. He was declared righteous as an uncircumcised Gentile. Romans 4:9 to 12. With what company of the Lord’s redeemed will he be?

DR. BULLINGER AND MR. WELCH

We are dealing with the dispensational teaching of these brethren in other messages in this volume, but we here present a few of their doctrines concerning the Church of God, the Body of Christ, and the dispensation of the mystery, so that our readers can understand why their disciples are called “ultradispensationalists” or propagators of “hyperdispensationalism.”

They teach, that there are two different Bodies in, what are called, the New Testament Scriptures. However, they affirm that the Scriptures which mention the second Body, should not be called the New Testament Scriptures (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus and II Timothy); for the members of the Body of Christ, mentioned in Ephesians and Colossians, were not New Testament saints; and members of the Body of Christ today, do not participate in the blessings of the New Covenant, which is for Israel, and not for the Church of the mystery. This New Covenant Church existed from Acts 2 to Acts 28:31, and therefore that Church of the “Acts” period, was an Israelitish Church, enjoying a hope and a calling different from the hope and calling of the Body of the “Post Acts” period. The “Acts” period Church was the Body mentioned in I Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 12:3 to 5, but not the Body of Ephesians 4:5. The hope of the Church of the “Acts” period was the same coming of the Son of man that the Lord Jesus preached to Israel in Luke 21:27 to 33 and Matthew 24. Therefore the hope of the “Acts” period Church was “the hope of Israel.” The expectation of some was to go to Canaan and some to the heavenly Jerusalem, although the brethren have not yet decided which “some” were going one place and which “some” to the other.

This “dispensationalism,” which today is being called “Bullingerism,” supposes three spheres of blessings, two of which are Israelitish; the terrestrial (Canaan), and celestial (the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21 and 22) and the supercelestial for the Body which has existed since the close of the “Acts,” “Far above all heavens.” Ephesians 4:10. Beginning with the day of Pentecost, their division is, “the Pentecostal dispensation” (Acts 2 to Acts 28:31) and “the dispensation of the mystery” since Acts 28:31. The Church of God of the Pentecostal dispensation, all during the “Acts” period, carried on an Israelitish Kingdom program, such as will again be carried on after God has brought to a close “the dispensation of the mystery.” The rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, an Israelitish hope for tribulation saints, pertains, in no way, to members of the Body of “the dispensation of the mystery.” We are dealing with this elsewhere in detail in this pamphlet.

In this program, of course, it is doubtful if any of the Twelve Apostles ever became members of the Body of Ephesians and Colossians. If one did, all did; and James died about twenty years before the Body began. Acts 12:1 and 2. Even his brother, John, who lived for thirty years after Paul died, was not a member of the Body of Christ mentioned in Paul’s prison Epistles. Some of these brethren express their doubt as to the relation of the Twelve to the Church, which is His Body.

We see why this is called “hyperdispensationalism” and why it is not considered sound exegesis, or sane Bible teaching. We can see at once that if the admonitions and instructions

given to saints in Galatians, Romans, Thessalonians, Corinthians and in Paul's "Acts" ministry were for members of a Body of Christ with an entirely different hope and calling, and not for the Body of Christ of this "Post-Acts" dispensation, it is optional whether we accept or refuse such instructions as Romans Chapters 8, 12, 13 to 16, Galatians 5 and 6 and the spiritual instructions of any and all of Paul's "Acts" ministry.

The teachers of this special "dispensationalism" teach that most of the members of the "Post-Acts" Body, who were alive when Paul received and revealed his new revelation in the Roman prison, had been saved with the New Covenant gospel during the "Acts" period, and for a time they had been members of the New Covenant Church. But that after Acts 28:31, they were not New Testament saints: because the New Testament Church suddenly ceased, and with the beginning of the "dispensation of the mystery" a new Body began. The program of the "New Testament Church" has been in abeyance since Acts 28:31, after Israel was set aside, and will be again inaugurated after this dispensation. One critic declared that one of their inconsistencies is, that they should begin the Body after Jerusalem was destroyed; after Paul died. This was his answer to their explanation of the word "fulfill" or "complete" in Colossians 1:25; for after Paul wrote Colossians surely what happened in the year 70, the destruction of Jerusalem, was in fulfillment of Scripture. Luke 21:20 to 24.

But now as to their transfer. They too must teach that there was a transfer of saints from one saved company into the Body of Christ. This transfer must have taken place after Acts 28:28. Some of their teachers affirm that all of the members of the Pentecostal Church of God, who were alive when Paul revealed the mystery concerning the second Body, were transferred into that Church. Of course, this means that the saved Gentiles or Jews in Corinthians, Philippians or Romans, who died before Acts 28:31, went to one heaven, and the saved ones in the same assemblies, who died after Acts 28:31, went to another heaven. They do so teach. However, some of them teach that it was optional with the believers in the "Acts" Church, whether or not they were transferred. Yes, if they had the desire and the spiritual discernment. No, if not.

Perhaps this is what has disgusted so many of God's children with dispensationalism.

In their attempt to prove that the Body of the mystery could not have had its historic beginning as long as the kingdom offer was being extended to Israel, these brethren argue that, inasmuch as the Jews in the Holy Land for several years had the kingdom offered to them (the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began; Acts 3:21), it was but just and equitable that the same offer should have been extended to the Jews scattered through Asia and Europe. Therefore, as the Lord sent Peter and his associates to witness to the Jews in the Land, He sent Paul to witness to the Jews outside of the Land. They seek to prove, by I Thessalonians 2:16, Acts 17:3 and Acts 17:7, that Paul was presenting the kingdom message and program to Israel, and by him the Lord was assuring Israel that He was waiting to come back to take David's throne the very moment they would repent. We quote the three verses mentioned

I THESSALONIANS 2:16

"Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

ACTS 17:3

"Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

ACTS 17:7

“And these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is ANOTHER KING, ONE JESUS.”

They declare that this kingdom offer was valid until God’s judgment was announced in Acts 28:25 to 28; and that during the thirty years of this kingdom program and offer, Christ was Israel’s High Priest and Advocate, in the heavens, but after the judgment pronounced in Acts 28:25 to 28, He abdicated so far as His High Priesthood was concerned; and after that He ascended to a higher place in heaven, even “far above all heavens.” Ephesians 4:10. Ephesians 1:21.

They quote Acts 15:7 and Acts 22:17 and 21 to prove that Peter preached to the Gentiles in the land and Paul preached to the Gentiles out of the land.

ACTS 15:7

“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the GENTILES BY MY MOUTH should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”

ACTS 22:17 AND 21

“And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance.”

“And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

ROMANS 11:13

“I am the Apostle to the Gentiles.”

They declare that they both presented to Gentiles the kingdom program, with the offer of membership in an Israelitish Kingdom Church; and that Paul went right on with the same program and gospel to the Gentiles, out of the Land, that Peter preached in the Land.

It must be admitted by any intelligent, careful, unprejudiced student of the Book of Acts that Peter’s message, in Acts 3:19 to 21 and the declaration in Acts 15:13 to 18, quoting Amos 9:11 to 15, had to do with Israel’s national redemption and their occupation of Canaan under their true King David. This much is admitted by some of the “Plymouth Brethren” dispensationalists, who explain matters by teaching that God was carrying on two programs, offering the kingdom to Israel; but being omniscient, and knowing that they were going to reject the kingdom offer, He began the Body of the mystery on the day of Pentecost. This seems hardly possible; for surely membership in the Body of Christ is more to be desired than a place in the earthly kingdom of Christ. And if Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was in that Body, he would have advised the Israelites to reject the kingdom offer and become a member of the Body. Would he have offered a place in the Kingdom to other Israelites after he had been placed in the Body of Christ?

But now, concerning the teaching of Dr. Bullinger and Mr. Welch, that Paul went on with Peter’s kingdom program and message, offering Jews and Gentiles membership in an Israelitish Kingdom Church until the close of Acts, the Epistle to the Galatians shows the folly of their every argument. There is not the slightest suggestion in one verse of Galatians, Romans or

Corinthians, all written before Acts 28:25 to 28, that had the Nation Israel repented, the saved Gentiles would have gone to Canaan under Christ on David's throne: as was offered in Acts 3:19 to 21. This, these brethren call, "the hope of Israel," which was the hope of the "Acts" Church, described in I Corinthians 12:13, Romans 12:3 to 5 and Galatians 3:25 to 29. Think of teaching that these Gentile saints were headed for the tribulation, the tribulation rapture and a home in the land of Canaan!

In Corinthians, Paul was an able minister of the New Covenant. II Corinthians 3:6. But he was also preaching the Gospel of Glory. II Corinthians 4:3 and 4. He was also preaching the Gospel of the Uncircumcision and the Message of Reconciliation. He also had the dispensation of Ephesians 3:1 and 2 committed to him. I Corinthians 9:13 to 23. Note verse 17. He was preaching foreordination and predestination and had a superabundance of revelations before Acts 28:28. II Corinthians 12:1 to 8. He needed no revelations to reason out of the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ. He needed not the revelations of II Corinthians 12:1 to 8 and Galatians 1:11 to 18, if he was preaching to Gentiles Peter's message. Think of the risen Christ giving Paul special revelations to tell him that saved Gentiles were to share in Israel's Kingdom hope

It was Peter who had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and used them during the "Acts" period. It was Paul who had "the dispensation of the grace of God" and he carried on the program among the Gentiles during the "Acts" period. Again compare Ephesians 3:1 and 2 with I Corinthians 9:13 to 24.

The extremists have blundered concerning the "Acts" ministry of the Twelve and Paul; as have the Plymouth Brethren: both claiming that Paul went right on, during the "Acts" period, with Peter's grace message to the Gentiles. However, they reach entirely different conclusions as to what this proves concerning the birthday of the Church which is His Body.

In the light of I Corinthians 13:8 to 13, and by the careful study of Paul's prison Epistles, we must see that there was a radical change in God's spiritual program after the statement of Acts 28:28: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." The "sign" age or the program of sign-gifts and Israel's priority rights ceased. The dispensation of the mystery was then mentioned. Ephesians 3:9.

As there was a change with the close of Paul's ministry, recorded in the Book of Acts, there was a change with the close of Peter's ministry, recorded in "Acts." If the Body began in Acts 2, or in Acts 28, and if Peter became a member of that Body, all of the Twelve were transferred into that Body. Then the transfer must have taken place before James died. Acts 12:1 and 2. There is no proof that the Body of Christ began historically in Acts 2, or after Acts 28. But there was a radical change after Peter had preached to Cornelius, when his message with the kingdom keys was no longer recorded and Paul took the chief place. Read again Galatians 2:7 and 8.

GALATIANS 2:7 AND 8

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was to Peter: (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.)"

Note this important decision about the time James and Peter declared God's purpose in visiting the Gentiles. Then why didn't they continue to visit the Gentiles? Because the program changed.

The blunder in dispensationalism is carrying the kingdom of heaven program in Acts beyond the record of the spiritual activities of the Twelve Apostles.

ACTS 15—AMOS 9

If Acts 15:14 is God's purpose for this age that purpose is in fulfillment of Amos 9:11 to 15 and the Body of Christ was foretold and that Body is to be placed in Israel's Land of Promise. Surely Peter and James, in Acts 15:13 to 18, stated that they were declaring God's program of Amos 9:11 to 15. If Paul went on with Peter's program his talk about the mystery was all idle talk. God's purpose in Acts 15:13 to 18 is not God's purpose expressed in Romans 8 and 12 and Galatians 3, any more than it is God's purpose expressed in Ephesians 2 and 13. To begin the Body of Christ after Acts 28 is a more serious blunder than to begin it with Acts 2.

ISRAEL'S UNPARDONABLE SIN

WHY PAUL TURNED TO THE GENTILES

The unpardonable sin, mentioned in Matthew 12:32, was committed by the Nation Israel. Individual Gentiles today do not sin against the Son of man. Let us first compare Matthew 12:32 with Ephesians 2:4 to 8 and Ephesians 2:17.

MATTHEW 12:32

“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

EPHESIANS 2:4 TO 8

“But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly place in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew 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.”

EPHESIANS 2:17

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

Here we note that Israel would be forgiven, if Israel sinned against the Son of man; but not, if they blasphemed or sinned against the Holy Spirit. In the case of the Gentiles saved by grace, they had been dead in sins. All of their sins were unpardoned, but none of them

unpardonable. When they were made alive by grace, all their sins were for ever put away. No individual Gentile ever committed the unpardonable sin of Matthew 12:32.

Israel sinned against the Son of man. The Son of man was crucified; delivered by Israel to Pilate. Hear the prayer of Christ on the cross. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. Then note what was preached.

ACTS 2:36

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

ACTS 5:29 TO 32

"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 Ghost Whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

The Son of man had to go as He went.

MATTHEW 26:24

"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."

ACTS 3:14 TO 17

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, Whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given Him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

If Israel would repent God would send the Son of man back to Israel in accordance with all the promises made to that Nation by all their prophets.

ACTS 3:19 TO 21

"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. And He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began."

ACTS 3:24 AND 25

"Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

Now carefully note Acts 5:29 to 32.

Fact 1. God exalted Jesus Christ.

Fact 2. To give repentance and forgiveness to Israel (not to Gentiles).

Fact 3. The Holy Spirit was God's witness.

Christ had to die that the Holy Spirit might come. The Son of man had to go, to provide redemption for those under the law and those not under the law. And Israel would be forgiven if they sinned against the Son of man. But if they sinned against, resisted, or blasphemed against the Holy Spirit what would happen? Read Acts 13:40 and 41.

Now note:

ACTS 7:55 AND 56

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

And:

ACTS 7:51

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

The Son of man, against Whom Israel sinned, was standing in heaven. He had prayed for Israel's forgiveness on the cross. God was willing to forgive all if Israel would repent. But woe unto them, if they resisted the witness of the Holy Spirit concerning the resurrection of the Son of man. This they did. But even Stephen prayed for their forgiveness. Acts 7:60.

Now we quote:

ACTS 13:45 AND 46

“But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and BLASPHEMING. 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 18:5 AND 6

“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves and BLASPHEMED, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”

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.”

ROMANS 11:17 TO 20

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root, thee. Thou wilt

say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear.”

Now the question: “when did Israel commit the unpardonable sin?” The unpardonable sin was blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. Matthew 12:32. In Acts 5:32, we read that the Holy Spirit was a witness; witnessing that the crucified Son of man, against Whom Israel had sinned, had been raised from the dead. In Acts 2:36, we read that God had made the Jesus, Whom Israel crucified, both Lord and Christ. In Acts 7:51, Israel resisted the Holy Spirit. In Acts 13:45 and Acts 18:6 Israel blasphemed the Holy Spirit. The language of Acts 18:6 shows, that, up to that time Paul was a watchman to the house. of Israel, in obedience to Ezekiel 3:18 and 19. When Israel blasphemed, Israel committed the sin of Matthew 12:32; which sin was not to be forgiven. Because Israel put it from them, Paul turned to the Gentiles. The Gentiles obtained mercy through Israel’s unbelief. Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:19.

As we look into several Scriptures in this connection, we are provoked to more diligent study to ascertain and explain why there is a seeming contradiction. First, we note that, in the so-called great commission, the Eleven were told to disciple all nations. Matthew 28:19 and 20. Then what need was there for a subsequent, separate, special, different commission for the Apostle Paul? Galatians 1:11 and 12; Galatians 1:16 to 20. Why did not Paul go to the Gentiles, under the orders of the great commission, rather than for the reason declared in Acts 13:46, 18:6, Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:30; that is, because Israel committed the unpardonable sin; blasphemy and unbelief?

BEWARE—CONDEMNED ALREADY

And again we look into Acts 13:40 and 41 and compare them with John 3:18:

ACTS 13:40 AND 41

“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets. Behold, ye deceivers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

JOHN 3:18

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

If they were condemned already, then why tell them to beware of a judgment of Israel right ahead.

We have doubtless tried to reconcile John 3:16 with Matthew 15:24.

JOHN 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

MATTHEW 15:24

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

If Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, how could there have been a “whosoever” message of salvation for Gentiles, when Jesus of Nazareth was in the midst of Israel, a minister of the circumcision? Acts 2:22 and Romans 15:8. The answer must be that John 3:16 was not preached until after Acts 5:31, or until after Peter preached to the first Gentiles the message of Acts 10:43.

ACTS 10:43

“To Him gave all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

It is therefore the opinion of many Bible students that John 3:16 to 18 was not preached by Christ before His death in 33 A. D., but stated by the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle John some years later. Unless such is the fact, we have a plain contradiction of truth in Matthew 15:24 and John 3:16.

As we apply John 3:18 today to both Jew and Gentile, we say, “he that believeth not is condemned already.” But note in Acts 13:40 and 41, the condemnation, recorded in Habakkuk 1:5, had not fallen upon Israel in the year 41 A. D. This was the judgment of a nation on earth not of individual Gentile believers.

In all of these matters, let us be Bereans and search the Scriptures, rather than follow in the trail of those whose interpretations would make the Bible contradict itself. There are no contradictions in the Bible when the Word is correctly understood and rightly divided.

THE HENCEFORTHS

We call your attention to the “henceforths” in:

ACTS 18:6

“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from HENCEFORTH I will go unto the Gentiles.”

II CORINTHIANS 5:16

“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.”

“Henceforth I go unto the Gentiles.” “Henceforth we know Christ no more after the flesh,” that is, His kingdom gospel and kingdom teaching and Kingship differs from Paul’s gospel of grace and ministry of reconciliation and mystery for the Gentiles. Both of these “henceforths” marked a decided turning point in the ministry of Paul; as did also Acts 28:25 to 28.

The judgments of Luke 21:20 to 24, Matthew 22:7 and 23:31 to 39 were deferred until after the judgment of Romans 11:8 and Acts 28:25 to 28 was pronounced upon the Nation Israel.

ROMANS 10:21

“But to Israel He saith, ALL DAY LONG I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”

Now an interesting question: “how long was ‘ALL DAY LONG’?” It began in Exodus 13. When did it end? At Calvary or with the end of Acts, or with the destruction of Jerusalem?

Israel committed the unpardonable sin. No Gentile, dead in trespasses and sins, can commit the unpardonable sin. He can remain in unbelief, with all of his sins unpardoned, or he may receive Christ, and appropriate, by faith, His precious blood, and have all of his sins pardoned.

What happened to Israel about 70 A. D.? What Christ said would, in Matthew 22:7. Israel is today where Christ, in Luke 21:24, said Israel would be.

Now in closing, read this and ponder it in your heart:

ROMANS 11:21

“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.”

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY NOT MADE KNOWN UNTIL ISRAEL COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

In the light of the foregoing, can we not see the utter fallacy of having the dispensation of the mystery begin even before God sent salvation to the Gentiles because Israel committed the unpardonable sin? Some dispensationalists declare that the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery began on the day of Pentecost, some time before Paul was saved. Answer: Perish the thought. The mystery had not even been revealed when Saul became Paul.

THIS MYSTERY—THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES

The Times of the Gentiles

It is neither God’s desire nor God’s fault that the great majority of His children are ignorant of this mystery revealed in Romans 11:25 to 32. He does add, in verse 33, “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!” However, the language of the preceding verses are quite explanatory.

We note two reasons why God is going to do certain things with and for Israel:

1. “For this is My Covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” (Romans 11:27).
2. “For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance,” (Romans 11:29).

Now let us note the mystery, or secret, concerning Israel’s present punishment and future redemption and blessing, in Romans 11:25 and 26, and compare with Luke 21:24, concerning the present and future of Jerusalem and the land of the Jews.

ROMANS 11:25 AND 26

“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 Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

LUKE 21:24

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

Here the present condition of Israel and Jerusalem is clearly declared. And most certainly no student of the Word of God could read these Scriptures and not understand that there is a future for both Israel and Israel's land. “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Did not God, through Abraham, give all the land of Canaan to Israel as an everlasting possession? Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:14 to 18; Genesis 17:8.

Let us prayerfully read these promises of the God Who confirmed the Covenant with Abraham with an oath. Then read:

AMOS 9:14 AND 15

“And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord, thy God.”

Theologians have established their creeds and outlined their religious Church programs and are working in opposition to the program of God. It behooves every Christian to fall in with the plan of God; to know His purpose with Israel and the Church which is His Body.

In what language could the Lord more clearly tell to us His future plan for Israel than He has told us in Ezekiel 34:11 to 16 and Ezekiel 36:16 to 32 and Ezekiel 37:21 to 28. Sit down and prayerfully read these Scriptures and permit no religious leader or theologian, however Scholarly, to alter or corrupt or misinterpret these plain statements of God concerning the future of Israel. We quote several of the verses mentioned:

EZEKIEL 34:12

“As a shepherd seeketh out His flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered: so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.”

EZEKIEL 36:24 AND 28

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”

“And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people and I will be your God.”

EZEKIEL 37:21, 24 AND 28

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.”

“And David My Servant, shall be King over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes and do them.”

“And the heathen shall know that I, the Lord, do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

As we read in Romans 11:27 and 29 why God is yet to deal in mercy with Israel, we have the “why” again declared in:

EZEKIEL 36:21 AND 22

“But I had pity for Mine Holy Name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God: I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but FOR MINE HOLY NAME’S SAKE, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went”

EZEKIEL 36:32

“Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.”

In order that we might have an intelligent understanding of God’s gifts and calling concerning Israel, we should carefully read the Abrahamic Covenant, in Genesis, Chapters 12, 13, 15, 17 and 22; the Davidic Covenant in II Samuel 7:8 to 17, and in Isaiah 9:6 and 7; and the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 to 35. In these three Covenants the Nation Israel, with new hearts and God’s indwelling Spirit, has the Divine guarantee of the peaceful possession of Canaan under the government of the Prince of Peace.

Surely the babe in Christ should know that this had nothing to do with the present relationship and ministry of the risen Christ to the Church which is His Body.

Surely the secret, or mystery, of Romans 11:25 and 26, understood, will help us somewhat to understand the mystery of Ephesians 3:1 to 9, and Colossians 1:25 to 27. God wants all Christians to see what is “the dispensation of the mystery.” God does not want any believer to be ignorant of the mystery of “Israel’s blindness,” and “all Israel shall be saved,” and concerning “the fulness of the Gentiles.”

First, let us consider the statement concerning Israel and Jerusalem in Luke 21:24: “Israel led away captive among all nations”. “Jerusalem under authority of Gentiles until ‘the times of the Gentiles’ be fulfilled.”

We have been told by men, who have given much thought and study to the subject, that the Jews today speak more than 300 languages, and, although one Nation, they are to be found in every nation under heaven. And let us bear in mind that on the day of Pentecost there were gathered in Jerusalem Jews from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5. Jerusalem is still under the feet of the Gentiles. This is the age of Gentile supremacy and headship, in both political and spiritual government, all in accordance with God’s edict. Israel was chosen by God to be the head of nations, not the tail. Deuteronomy 28:13. What meaneth the statement of Jeremiah 30:11: “I will make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee (Israel); yet will I not make a full end of thee.” (Revised Edition).

The Gentile world-powers have tried in vain to assimilate the Jew, but God foretold the futility of all such endeavors. Numbers 23:9. The Gentile world-powers have tried in vain to annihilate the Jews. But God also predicted that failure. Haman made a desperate effort to

exterminate the Jews in the days of Queen Esther. But Haman went to the gallows and the Jews were spared. Esther 7:10.

In the last chapter of Jeremiah, and the last chapter of II Kings, God has given us the record of the beginning of “the times of the Gentiles,” politically. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem about 600 B.C. That was the end of the kings of Israel and Judah until “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Christ was born under the world rule of the fourth great Gentile power, prophesied in Daniel 2 and 7 and 9. Christ was born “King of the Jews.” Matthew 2:2. Christ was born King of Israel. John 1:49. Christ was born to take David’s throne. Luke 1:29 to 33. Christ died as “King of the Jews.” Matthew 27:29; John 19:19. Christ was raised from the dead to take David’s throne. Acts 2:29 to 32. Christ is coming back to take David’s throne. Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

After the times of the Gentiles, politically, began with the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem, God permitted the Jews to retain spiritual authority and the government in His religion until the time of another conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by Rome about 70 A. D.

The Lord Jesus on earth plainly declared that no one but the Jews knew what they worshipped, because salvation was of the Jews. John 4:22. Many of the Persians became Jews. Esther 8:17. The proselytes of Acts 2:10 were Gentiles converted to the religion of the Jews. “What advantage hath the Jew? . . . Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Romans 1:1 and 2.

What oracles of God were not committed unto the Jews? It has been claimed by some, but not proved, that Luke was a Gentile. But this is quite doubtful inasmuch as all of the Bible was written by Israelites.

Even the Apostle to the Gentiles, who addressed thirteen Epistles to the Gentiles, was an Israelite, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, who had profited more than any other Jew in the Jew’s religion.

Many attempts were made to put Paul to death, but he was the chosen vessel of the risen Christ to fulfill the Word of God, with the mystery. And until the revelation had been received from Christ in heaven by Paul, and recorded by him, no one could touch him. Colossians 1:25 and II Timothy 4:6 to 11. When he finished his course and wrote the last word in II Timothy it was about time for “the times of the Gentiles” to have a second start. Within a year or two the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem, in fulfillment of Matthew 22:7. Luke 21:20 to 24 was fulfilled, and since that time Israel has been where Christ said Israel would be and the Gentiles have had governmental authority over Israel and spiritual authority in the Church of Christ.

Strange, is it not, that the Gentiles could have nothing to do with writing the Bible; that there were no Gentile apostles; and yet for more than 1800 years Gentiles have been the head and Israel the tail? This order is not to continue indefinitely.

“The times of the Gentiles” are to be fulfilled. “The times of the Gentiles” will come to an end with the coming of Israel’s King. Then “all Israel shall be saved.” Let us note these statements: Romans 15:8; Galatians 4:4; Matthew 15:24; Romans 9:4 and 5; Mark 7:27; Matthew 8:12; Matthew 22:7 and 8; Matthew 21:43 and Acts 3:26.

ROMANS 15:8

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

GALATIANS 4:4

“But when the fulness of the times was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

MATTHEW 15:24

“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

ROMANS 9:4 and 5

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promise.”

MARK 7:27

“But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.”

MATTHEW 8:12

“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

MATTHEW 22:7 and 8

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith He to His servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.”

MATTHEW 21:43

“Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

ACTS 3:26

“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.”

It is significant that God’s prophet, who foretold Israel’s subjection to Gentile political authority, was Isaiah, and God spake to Israel, through Isaiah in these words:

ISAIAH 6:9 AND 10

“And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand, with their heart, and convert and be healed.”

It is significant that these verses were quoted by Israel’s Messiah and King after He had presented all of His Divine claims and credentials. John 12:40. But even after He pronounced judgment upon Israel and declared He would send His army and destroy those murderers and burn up their city (Matthew 22:7) He gave them more than thirty years of grace before He put into the mouth of Paul the same judgment pronounced by Isaiah and by Christ Himself

ACTS 28:25 TO 28

“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed after that Paul had spoken one word. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers. Saying, Go unto the people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

The student of the Word of God who misses the significance of Acts 28:25 to 28, the third pronouncement of Isaiah 6:9 and 10, after Israel had committed the unpardonable sin of Matthew 12:32, misses one of the most important dispensational keys to the Scriptures.

That Divine judgment pronounced by Paul brought to an end the Book of Acts except the brief statement of Acts 28:29 to 31. Why did the Book of Acts end before the acts of Paul ended? Paul lived several years after the Book of Acts ended. And many careful students of Paul's ministry have observed quite a difference in God's spiritual program, as presented by Paul in his Epistles written after the Acts 28:31, generally called, “Paul's Prison Epistles,” and believed to be, Philippians, I Timothy, Philemon, Titus, Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy. In these Epistles “the mystery” is mentioned 12 times, but not one mention is made of any advantage or priority rights of the Jews. Neither do we find any mention of “visions,” “miracles,” “signs,” “tongues,” and “water baptism.” While Christ was on earth the order was “to the Jew only.” Matthew 15:24. From the day of Pentecost (about 33 A.D.) to the salvation of Cornelius (about 41 A.D.) God's order was, “to the Jew only.” Acts 11:19 and 10:28. Beginning with Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, and up to Acts 28:28, God's order was “to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles.” Romans 1:16, Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:5 and 16. After Acts 28:31, God's order was “to the Gentiles and also to the Jews.” Ephesians 2:17. This is God's order today. We are still in “the times of the Gentiles” politically and spiritually. Note “the times of the Gentiles” in connection with three conquests of Jerusalem:

- 1—about 600 B.C. under Nebuchadnezzar;
- 2—about 70 A.D. under Titus and the Roman soldiers;
- 3—the battle of Armageddon, still to come.

Read Zechariah 14:1 to 3. As the two past conquests of Jerusalem marked the beginning of “the times of the Gentiles,” politically and spiritually, the next conquest of Jerusalem will mark the end of “the times of the Gentiles.”

Then “all Israel shall be saved.” This is My Covenant when I shall take away their sins. Romans 11:27.

JEREMIAH 31:34

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.”

Read all about it in Jeremiah 30:10 and 11 and Jeremiah 30:18 to 23. And the chapter closes with Jeremiah 30:24: “The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until He have done it, and until He have performed the intents of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.”

Carefully note this most gracious Divine promise:

JEREMIAH 50:20

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.”

Now the statement, “all Israel shall be saved” has troubled many students of the Scriptures. In the light of Romans 2:8 and 9, and many other Scriptures, we know that unbelieving Israelites, in this age of grace will not be saved. And many Israelites will be in the tares of Matthew 13:30. But God speaks of the salvation of the remnant of the people. Isaiah 11:11 and 16; Isaiah 37:32; Isaiah 46:3; Jeremiah 23:3; Jeremiah 31:7; Jeremiah 39:9; Micah 5:8; Micah 7:18; Zephaniah 2:9; Zephaniah 3:13; Zechariah 8:12.

So we believe that “all Israel” refers to the remnant; but it is national deliverance.

By comparing Luke 20:35: “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage,” with Matthew 24:11 to 39, it may be quite difficult to explain how saved Israelites of past ages, who have died and who will come forth with resurrection bodies, can go to the Holy Land and dwell with Israelites in bodies of flesh and blood who will be planted in the land, to there dwell in peace and safety during the millennium. Amos 9:11 to 15. But because we cannot understand or explain all the details of Israel’s coming glory, we are not to reject the fact of such plain statement of Romans 11:26: “all Israel shall be saved.”

IS THE CHURCH ISRAEL?

Because of the statement of Romans 11:17, it has been taught by many Christians that the elect remnant of Israel, according to Romans 11:7, remained “Israel,” and therefore the Gentiles grafted in among them became “Israel.”

ROMANS 11:17

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree.”

There are brethren who teach that the Church of God, mentioned in Acts, was the Body, mentioned in Romans 12:3 to 5, and an Israelitish Church: that the ax was laid to the root with Acts 28:28, and Israel was cut down. Then and there God began a new Divine movement, an entirely different Church, the Body of Christ, mentioned in Ephesians 1:19 to 22, with a new and different hope, calling and destiny. There were changes in the program and a new Divine order but there is no Scriptural proof that an entirely new Body began. The Postmillenarians, who endeavor to prove by Romans 11:17, that the Church of today is “Israel,” offer, in confirmation of their proof, the Israelitish Covenant of Hebrews 8:7 to 11, and all of the spiritual benefits and blessings recorded in Hebrews 10:10 to 20, which they rightfully affirm are claimed by every member of the Body of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile. Their question is, if the Gentiles were grafted in with believing Israelites and Gentiles receive benefits from the covenant made with Israel (Hebrews 8:7 to 11) is not the Church Israel?

We are quite sure that the Holy Spirit did not refer to the salvation of the Body of Christ, mentioned in Romans 12:3 to 5, when He said, “all Israel shall be saved.” The “all Israel” of

Romans 11:26, is an entirely different company of saved people from the saved company of Romans 12:3 and 5. Romans 11:26 is not telling us that all members of the Body of Christ shall be saved. That is no mystery. That is a self-evident fact.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL—“NONE OTHER THINGS”

Some of the extremists, who are today being denominated “hyperdispensationalists,” in their determination to have a new church begin after Acts 28:28, present as proof the words of the Apostle Paul, recorded in Acts 26:22 and 23 and in Acts 28:20. We quote these three verses:

ACTS 26:22 AND 23

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying NONE OTHER THINGS than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles.”

ACTS 28:20

“For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I am bound with this chain.”

Now the argument is, that, if Paul declared, as late as 62 A.D., that he had said “none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come,” then certainly he had not said a word about “the mystery” and “the Body of Christ,” for Moses and the prophets never said that the Body of Christ should come. Moreover, inasmuch as the Body of I Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 12:3 to 5 had been described by Paul before his utterance of Acts 26:22 and 23, therefore the “Body” mentioned in I Corinthians and Romans, could not be the mystery, mentioned in Colossians 1:25 to 27 and in Ephesians 1:19 to 22. Such argument is not only faulty, but it is both illogical reasoning and unsound exegesis.

These extremists declare that Paul’s declaration concerning his bonds for “the hope of Israel” is confirmatory proof of their contention concerning the “none other things.” If Paul, in Acts 28:20, was a prisoner for “the hope of Israel,” and, in Colossians 4:3 and Ephesians 6:19 to 21, was a prisoner for “the mystery,” “the hope of Israel” and “the hope of the Body of Christ” must be entirely different.

First, let us say, that all grace preachers, who are Premillenarians, believe and teach that Israel (some remnant of Israel) will yet be planted in Canaan, in accordance with Amos 9:11 to 15, and many other prophecies. That phase of “the hope of Israel” was declared by God’s Messenger when John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus were born. Luke 1:32 and 33 and Luke 1:67 to 77. That hope was undoubtedly implied in the first declaration of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2 and Matthew 4:17. Undoubtedly the Lord plainly taught, in Luke 21:20 to 32 and in Matthew 24 and 25, that He is coming back to restore the kingdom to Israel and plant His people in the land given to them in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Moreover, if language has any meaning, the blessing and hope expressed in God’s offer by Peter to Israel, mentioned in Acts 3:19 to 21 (Acts 3:24) was the kingdom hope of Israel; that

is, the hope of deliverance from Gentile authority and the peaceful possession of the Holy Land under the reign of Israel's true King David.

Let us note the similarity of language in Acts 3:21 and Luke 1:70:

ACTS 3:21

“Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.”

LUKE 1:70

“As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.”

But to teach that the salvation and position of believing Jews and Gentiles, as described in Galatians 3:26 to 29, members one of another in the same Body (Romans 12:3 to 5), baptized into one Body (I Corinthians 12:13), identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection by a Divine baptism not made with hands (Romans 6:1 to 9), indwelt by Christ, the hope of glory (Romans 5:2; II Corinthians 13:5) and in Christ, new creations (II Corinthians 5:17), sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:23), waiting for the return of Christ and the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:23), all means that the hope of the members of the Body of Christ, during the “Acts” period, was Israel's “Holy Land hope,” is contrary to fact and sound doctrine.

In Paul's Gospel of grace, given to him by the risen Christ, wholly independent of “the kingdom of heaven” dispensation given to the Twelve, Paul made it plain that believing Gentiles were in no way obligated to practice any part of Israel's religious program. Paul was not even sent to baptize. I Corinthians 1:17. Baptism is a very important part of the Kingdom program. Acts 2:38. Matthew 28:19 and 20. Mark 16:15 to 18. The Epistle to the Galatians and the first five chapters of Romans is proof positive, to the intelligent student of the Word, that Paul was not preaching “the kingdom of heaven” gospel to Gentiles in his Acts Epistles. Paul never once suggested in these Epistles of grace, that the hope of the saved Gentiles was to go to the Holy Land, to be in subjection to the Nation Israel, during the millennium, as saved Gentiles will do in the coming kingdom age. God's future purpose is declared in Ephesians 1:10. We quote this verse: “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.”

Now carefully note these two spheres—“in Heaven” and “on earth.” No three spheres are here mentioned: “terrestrial,” “celestial” and “supercelestial.” Israel' has the Divine promise of an inheritance and blessing on earth; earthly glory. The Body of Christ has the promise of a heavenly glory. Because of this difference we can speak of two hopes, “the hope of Israel” and “the hope of the Body of Christ.” Inasmuch as Israel might be called “the Church” and the Body of Christ is called “the Church,” we should use the term “the Body of Christ” or “the Church which is His Body.” Everything that we have mentioned above as to the position, blessings, benefits, message and hope of the Body of Galatians and Romans, applies also to the Body of Ephesians and Colossians. In fact most of the members of the “Post-Acts” Body of Christ became members of that Body during the “Acts” period. Philippians 1:5 and 6 is the positive proof against any theory of two Bodies.

Surely the one baptism of Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27, is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12. It is the one Divine baptism of “mystery” truth that places

the believing sinner in the mystery Body. It placed believing sinners there during the Book of Acts. Galatians 1:11 to 17 is proof positive that Paul was not working under the kingdom commission and keys which places believers in Israel's kingdom hope. Matthew 16:16 to 18; Matthew 28:19 and 20. The gospel of Romans 3:24 to 26 is no kingdom gospel, but the same gospel as Titus 3:5 to 7; Ephesians 2:8 to 9; II Timothy 1:9 and 10. The teaching that saved Gentiles, during the "Acts" period, were saved by a kingdom gospel, and became members of an "Israelitish Kingdom Church," is truly fantastic speculation, rather than sane exegesis.

While every spiritual, intelligent and obedient student of the Word earnestly desires "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery" (Ephesians 3:9), such theories and fantasies as are being presented by extreme dispensationalists today, will by no means aid in the recovery of the mystery truth; but will rather have the tendency to retard the endeavors because of the fallacies, inconsistencies and contradictions in the reasoning, or lack of reasoning, of those who claim to be the pilots. I have read with patience, and at first with much interest, all of these arguments. Moreover, I have listened, as a Berean, to many of their oral messages; but to my mind they only add confusion to the already difficult task of understanding Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:25 to 28.

WHAT WAS THE HOPE OF ISRAEL TO WHICH PAUL REFERRED

We quote several verses bearing on this subject:

ACTS 23:6

"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the HOPE and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

ACTS 24:15

"And have HOPE toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust"

ACTS 26:6 AND 7

"And now I stand and am judged for THE HOPE of the promise made of God unto our fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which HOPE'S sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews."

ACTS 26:22 AND 23

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

Now before we look into these Scriptures, we call your attention to the fact that the brethren, called "hyper-dispensationalists," teach that Matthew 24:30 and 31, and I Thessalonians 4 and I Corinthians 15, all record the hope of tribulation saints, "the hope of Israel." We quote:

MATTHEW 24:30 AND 31

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

I THESSALONIANS 4:16 AND 17

“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.”

I CORINTHIANS 15:51 AND 52

“Behold, I shew you a mystery, We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Because “trumpet” is mentioned in these three Scriptures and “angels,” in Matthew and I Thessalonians, the brethren, whose theories we are examining, teach that all of these Scriptures deal with the same aspect, or phase, of the second coming namely, “the hope of Israel,” the parousia (presence) of the Lord Jesus Christ. They declare that “the last trump” of I Corinthians 15:52 is “the last trump” of Revelation 11:15, which is to be sounded for Israel in their tribulation, in connection with the coming of the Son of man to deliver His people and to usher in the millennium. They declare that “the hope of Israel” is the parousia of Christ and the hope of the Body of Christ is the epiphaneia (from phaino) of Christ; and that the Scriptures never confuse the two. But we call attention to I John 2:28, which we quote: “And now, little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear (phaneroo), we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (parousia).

These teachers, with the theories of an “Acts” Body and a “Post Acts” Body, teach that John wrote the Gospel and his three Epistles, before Paul wrote Colossians; that is, before Paul finished the Word of God with the Mystery. Colossians 1:25. They attempt to prove this by the word “fulfill” in Colossians 1:25. They doubt very much whether or not John was a member of the Body, mentioned in Colossians, at the time he wrote, or even at the time of his death, about thirty years after Paul died. Of one thing they think they are sure, that John’s Gospel, his three Epistles, and the Revelation were written before Paul wrote Colossians.

Moreover, they declare that John was a minister of the circumcision and did not write truth directly applicable to the members of the Body of Christ. Therefore, they claim that members of the Body of Christ do not have Christ as an Advocate, as declared in I John 2:1 and 2. It is even doubtful with some of them if members of the Body of Christ are to confess their sins, inasmuch as they have no Advocate, no High Priest, and no Intercessor. They have something far better, a supercelestial hope and position, and, being united to Christ, and part of Him, they need no Advocate or Priest. But the same union that is described in Colossians 3:1 to 4 is the union of Romans 6:1 to 14.

The refutation of this unsound teaching is found in these facts:

First, the coming of the Lord to change the bodies of believers, in I John 3:1 to 4, is the same as the coming (out of heaven) of the Saviour in Philippians 3:19 to 21, to change the bodies of believers.

Second, the parousia and the phaneroo of the Lord are used synonymously, in I John 2:28. If John's Epistle sets forth the hope of the so-called "Israelitish Kingdom Church," and Philippians 3:19 and 20 sets forth the same hope, therefore the hope of Philippians 3:19 and 20, Titus 2:13, and Colossians 3:1 to 4, is identical with the hope of I Thessalonians 4.

Perhaps we can get help on the study of the rapture of Thessalonians by observing that the original Greek text shows the correct translation of II Thessalonians 1:10 "when He SHALL have come to be admired of His saints," The words, "Behold, I shew you a mystery (a secret)." in I Corinthians 15:51, is proof that the rapture of I Corinthians is not the gathering of the Lord's elect from the four winds, mentioned in Matthew 24. The occurrence of the Greek "parousia" is therefore not final proof as to the tribulation rapture of saints.

But now, to the "none other things" and "the hope of Israel." Acts 26:23 is the explanation of Acts 26:22: "That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:23) This is in accordance with I Corinthians 15:2 to 4 and Acts 13:29 and II Timothy 2:8. Christ died and was raised from the dead according to Israel's Scriptures. Israel's hope was in a coming Messiah. Israel's hope was a resurrection. They knew from the Old Testament prophets that there would be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. But they were instructed in Hebrews 6:1 and 2 to go on to perfection, leaving certain doctrines: one of which was resurrection of the dead. They were to advance from resurrection of the dead to I Thessalonians 4, and to the mystery, and I Corinthians 15:51, the resurrection from the dead. Note the perplexity when Christ mentioned resurrection FROM the dead. Mark 9:10.

If John's Gospel set forth Israel's hope, that Christ was Israel's resurrection and life, John 11:25 and 26, then the truth of John 11:25 and 26 is the truth of I Thessalonians 4:16 and 17 and the truth of Titus 2:13 and Philippians 3:19 to 21 and I John 1 to 3; for Christ is our life and resurrection.

JOHN 11:25 AND 26

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though He were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

It is interesting to study John 20:9. To paraphrase Paul's statement of Acts 25:22, about which there has been so much discussion, he was simply saying, "I am only preaching concerning the death and resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, that which Moses and the prophets foretold." All Israelites should believe this. The unbelieving religious Jews were angry all the way through the Book of Acts when any of the apostles preached that Christ had been raised from the dead. Israel's hope was resurrection. Israel's resurrection hope was centered in their Messiah, His death and resurrection. Israel's stumbling-block is declared in Luke 24:21: "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." Israel wanted national deliverance from Gentile political authority rather than resurrection from the dead. Note Christ's answers:

LUKE 24:25 AND 26

“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?”

LUKE 24:46 AND 47

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

A careful study of resurrection of the dead and resurrection from the dead will give light on our study.

To state that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, Romans and Galatians only such things as had been prophesied, shows an ignorance of the contents of those Epistles. Paul's defense of his grace message, in Galatians 1:11 to 2:11, should convince any student of the Word that the program presented in Galatians was not a part of the kingdom of heaven program, foretold by Israel's prophets. The ministry of reconciliation, in II Corinthians 5:17 and Romans 5 and 6, and the truth of Romans 8, was never foretold by Israel's prophets. The truth of the Body of I Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 12:3 to 5, was not made known to, or by, Israel's prophets. Nor was the Divine baptism of the believer in that Body, or their identification with Christ, made known by Israel's prophets. Romans 6:3 to 12 and Ephesians 2:6 and 4:5.

Truly, Canaan was Israel's hope. Paul, in Acts 28:20, was not referring to Canaan, but to resurrection. If he were referring to Canaan, then, most assuredly, he was not including Gentile believers in the Body of Romans 12:3 to 5 in that hope. Therefore, the Body of Romans 12:3 to 5, was not an “Israelitish Kingdom Church,” the members of which were headed for the tribulation, waiting for the parousia of Christ, to place them in the Holy Land, the hope of Israel.

Undoubtedly this hope was included in the program of Acts 15:13 to 18, in fulfillment of Amos 9:11 to 15. But Galatians 1:11 to 16, Galatians 3:26 to 29, Romans 6:3 and Romans 12:3 to 5 were not in fulfillment of Amos or any other Israelitish prophet any more than was Colossians 1:25 to 27. We are by no means contending that there was no more to “the mystery,” for which Paul was in bonds, in Colossians 4:3 and 4, than what was included in “the hope of Israel” expressed by Paul, in Acts 28:20. But we do most dogmatically affirm that Paul did not primarily have Canaan and Israel's kingdom in mind, in Acts 28:20, but the hope of resurrection as he expressed before the Roman judges in Caesarea.

LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED . . . THE CHILDREN SHALL BE CAST INTO DARKNESS

While Jesus of Nazareth was on earth He may have ministered to some Gentiles, but He plainly told His Apostles not to go to them. Matthew 10:5. In Matthew we are told of the two Gentiles to whom Christ did minister while on earth, the Roman man (Matthew 8:1 to 12) and the Greek woman (Matthew 15:20 to 26). We must not confuse the Samaritans of John 4 with Gentiles. Note the distinction in Matthew 10:5.

In the presence of one Gentile Christ said, “let the children (Israel) first be filled.” In the presence of the other Gentile Christ said, “the children shall be cast into darkness.” Matthew 15:20 to 24. Mark 7:24 to 29. Matthew 8:12 and Luke 7:1 to 10. Note in the record concerning

the Roman Gentile of Luke 7:3 to 6, that this man loved Israel, built them a synagogue and approached Christ through Israel's elders.

For an understanding of the Lord's message of salvation to Jews and Gentiles there is perhaps no more interesting, significant and instructive portion of the Scriptures than the story of the Lord Jesus and the Greek woman, recorded in Mark 7:24 to 30 and Matthew 15:21 to 28. Every student of the Word of God should carefully and prayerfully read these two accounts and diligently study them for the meaning which the Holy Spirit has in them for our instruction and edification.

We have in Mark 7:26 this statement, "the woman was a Greek." To that woman, the Lord Jesus said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:24. The Greek woman did not belong to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Therefore, to her the Lord Jesus was not sent. But some years later the Lord Jesus had gone back to heaven, and He called and appointed an apostle to go to the Gentiles. Acts 22:21. That apostle wrote, "I am debtor to the Greeks." Romans 1:14.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He was Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God in the midst of Israel. He was a minister of the circumcision to confirm God's promises to Israel. He was born to take the throne of David. Acts 2:22; Romans 15:8; Luke 1:29 to 32. He rode into Jerusalem as King of Israel, but Israel would not receive Him as King. Certain Greeks, desired to see the King but He would not gratify their desire. To those Greeks He sent word that He must first be the corn of wheat to die and be raised. John 12:20 to 27.

To the Greek woman, the Lord Jesus said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." Here we see that the Lord Jesus referred to His own people, Israel, as "the children" and to the Greeks as "the dogs." At first thought it would seem to us that the Lord was rather unkind and unmerciful to the woman; but we can better understand His plain speech when we read the history of the Gentiles in the first chapter of Romans. According to that same Divine Record, the Gentiles were "no people," "a foolish nation," "the wild olive tree." Romans 10:19 and Romans 11:17. But in this same Divine Record there is recorded the glorious good news for the Gentiles. They obtained mercy because of the unbelief of the children. Romans 11:30. Therefore we find in Romans 10:12 that the Gentiles' position, in the year 60 A. D., was entirely different from the Gentiles' position when Jesus of Nazareth was on earth. When He was here they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise; dead in trespasses and sins; without Christ, without God; and having no hope in the world. Ephesians 2:1 to 12. The Lord Jesus called Israel "children;" the Greeks, "dogs." What a great difference there is between children and dogs. But about 20 years later, God declared, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." Romans 10:12. "Both Jew and Greek baptized by the same Spirit into the same body." I Corinthians 12:13. As we read these last two statements we should be sufficiently interested in the change and development of God's program and purpose to see what took place between the year of Christ's message to the Greek woman and the year Paul wrote, "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." In this study let us emphasize these words of the Lord Jesus to the Greek woman:

LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED

What did the Lord mean by these words to the Greek, "let the children FIRST be filled?" Mark 7:27. I think we have a very definite answer to this question in Paul's message to a company of Jews, about the year 45 A. D., which was some 15 years after the Lord Jesus had

met the Greek woman. After the Apostle Paul had faithfully presented Messiah's claims to Israel, the Jews opposed him and rejected the Lord Jesus once more. Whereupon the Apostle Paul uttered these words, recorded in Acts 13:46, which we quote: "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." Then followed the salvation of a multitude of Greeks. Acts 14:1.

Now let us carefully note the Lord's statement, by the mouth of Paul, in Acts 13:46. He said to the children, "It was necessary that the Word should first be spoken to you." We can see that that was in accordance with Mark 7:27; as was Acts 3:26 and Romans 1:16.

Romans 11:7 tells this truth concerning Israel in the Book of Acts, "the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE CAST INTO DARKNESS

During the Book of Acts period the children were being filled first. But with the close of Acts they were cast into outer darkness, the blindness of Acts 28:25 to 27.

It will help us as we enter into the study of the Book of Acts to keep in mind the two statements of Christ spoken in the presence of the two Gentiles whom He blessed and to study the two statements in the light of Christ's prayer on the cross and His message by the mouth of Peter and the Eleven, recorded in Acts 3:14 to 26.

We observe that in the 23rd chapter of Matthew, the Lord Jesus, rejected by His own Nation, called them "serpents" and pronounced the judgment of desolation upon them. But in the message of Peter, recorded in the closing verses of the 3rd chapter of Acts, the same serpents and vipers were addressed very affectionately and tenderly, in great mercy, "ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant." Then the Lord added, "Unto you FIRST." Acts 3:25 and 26. Now it is easy to understand "Unto you first," in the light of Mark 7:27: "the children must first be filled." But it is not at all easy to understand, "Unto you first" in the light of the 23rd chapter of Matthew. In Mark 7:27, Israel were children. In Acts 3:25 they were children. In Matthew 23:33 they were a generation of vipers, serpents. Why should serpents have preference over dogs? The answer is the prayer of Christ on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Then followed that message of mercy in Acts 3:12 to 26. We quote Acts 3:17 and Acts 3:25 and 26:

ACTS 3:17; 25 AND 26

"And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you FIRST God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities."

Can we not say, therefore, that we could never understand the ministry of the Twelve Apostles and Paul to Israel, during the Book of Acts, if we accept the teachings of those who would have us believe that Israel was set aside when Christ was delivered to Pilate to be crucified? Surely the kingdom was not taken away from Israel until some years after Pentecost.

Let us read and compare, Matthew 16:20 with Acts 2:36, Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5. In these Scriptures, quoted from Acts, we learn that the Twelve Apostles and Paul were doing just what the Lord forbade them to do in Matthew 16:20. They were testifying to Israel that Jesus

was the Christ. What is the answer? The answer is, because of the prayer of Christ on the cross, God postponed judgment and made a new offer to His Nation Israel which was not the offer of the Body of Christ, which later began historically.

SERPENTS AND DOGS

Whom did the Lord Jesus call “dogs?” Whom did the Lord Jesus call “serpents?” Whom did He call “a generation of vipers?” If you had to be called a “dog” or a “serpent” by the Lord, which would be your choice? Most people rather like dogs, although they would resent being called “dogs.” But most people hate “serpents” and would feel injured and very much insulted if they should be called “serpents.”

In Mark 7:26 to 28 we read that the Lord Jesus called Greeks, “dogs.” In Matthew 23:32 to 39 we read that two years later, the Lord Jesus called His own people, the Jews, “serpents.” At the time He called the Greeks, “dogs,” He called the Jews, “children.” He said to the Greek, “let the children first be filled.” Mark 7:27. The “children” of Mark 7:27 are the “serpents” of Matthew 23:33. They again become the “children” of Acts 3:25. How strange; “children” changed to “serpents” and then back to “children.” Herein is a most interesting study.

If a preacher should use for his text Romans 1:16, “for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek,” and should paraphrase the last phrase to read “to the serpent first and also to the “dog,” he would be accused of being sensational. But he most assuredly would be using the language of the Lord Jesus, whose gospel he would be preaching. If the preacher should thus call the Jews, “serpents,” and the Greeks, “dogs,” as the Lord Jesus did, and say, “to the serpents first,” and also “to the dogs,” he would raise the question in his own mind and in the minds of his hearers; “why should “serpents” have preference over “dogs?”

After the Lord Jesus Christ called Israel “serpents” and a “generation of vipers,” because they hated Him without a cause and would not receive Him as King, they added to all of their offenses their greatest crime: they desired a murderer and they killed the Prince of Life. Acts 3:14 to 18. If they were “serpents” before the murder of their Messiah, what were they after that terrible crime? Were they worse than serpents? No indeed, they were “children” again. Acts 3:25. How strange! What grace! What mercy! How we have misinterpreted the Word of God!

Surely the study of these verses will convince us that Israel was not set aside, as the nation of God, when the Lord Jesus said unto them, “your house is left unto you desolate.” This study will instruct us as to why Peter said to the whole house of Israel, “unto you first;” why Paul said unto the Jews, “it was necessary that the Word be spoken unto you first;” why “unto the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Acts 3:26—Acts 13:46—Romans 1:16. This comparative study will also tell us why Paul, until Israel was finally set aside, said, “unto the Jews I became a Jew.” I Corinthians 9:20. By it we should also learn why the Twelve Apostles, for years after the death of Israel’s Messiah, remained in Jerusalem; and why the Jerusalem temple remained standing for the worship of the Jews. Acts 8:1—Acts 21:18 to 28—Acts 22:17 to 21. And why the Son of man in heaven was standing in Acts 7:51 to 58.

Now for the several verses from which we have quoted and another very important verse, Luke 23:34.

MARK 7:26 TO 28 (year 32 A. D.)

“The woman was a GREEK, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED; for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the DOGS. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs.”

MATTHEW 23:24—23:33—23:38 (33 A. D.)

“Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.”

“Ye SERPENTS, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

LUKE 23:34

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

ACTS 2:36

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

ACTS 3:17—3:25 AND 26 (33 A. D.)

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

“Ye are the CHILDREN of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”

“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 13:46 (year 46 A. D.)

“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.”

Now after we have carefully read these verses, let us study them together with several other Scriptures which we quote:

ROMANS 10:12 (year 60 A. D.)

“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.”

ROMANS 11:7 AND 8—11:11—11:17—11:30

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.”

“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.”

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree; wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree.”

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”

ACTS 28:25 TO 28 (year 62 A. D.)

“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”

By carefully studying these Scriptures, which we have quoted, we learn several facts. First: Let us compare Mark 7:27, the words spoken by Jesus to the Greek woman, about 32 A. D., with Romans 10:12, the statement of the Apostle Paul, about 60 A. D. According to Paul’s statement, “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.” According to the statement of Jesus there was quite a difference. The Jews were called “children” and the Greeks were called “dogs.”

Again we learn, in the year 32 A. D., the Lord called the Jews “children,” and in the year 33 A. D., He called them “serpents.” Then after His death and resurrection He instructed the Apostle Peter to again address them as “children.” Surely the question must arise in the mind of any thinking student of the Word of God, why the Jews were called “serpents;” and then, after they had added to their other sins, “killing the Prince of Life,” why they should be called “children.” The explanation is found in the words of Peter, in Acts 3:17, “God wot that ye did it through ignorance.” Surely we have overlooked the importance and significance of the prayer of Christ on the cross, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” That prayer was answered. This is why those who killed the “Prince of Life” were again called “children.” As long as they were addressed as “children” they were first. Therefore, in Acts 3:26, Peter said “Unto you first.” That was late in 33 A. D. About 46 A. D. Paul said to the Jews, “Unto you first.” Acts 13:46.

The third fact that we learn from the Scriptures quoted is, that God did not leave the house of Israel desolate until after He pronounced the judgment of blindness upon them. This judgment is recorded in Romans 11:25 and 26. But the blindness was not sent until the year 62 A.D. according to Acts 28:25 to 28. Then Israel was set aside.

Thus we can see the great blunder of those who teach that the words of Jesus, “your house is left unto you desolate” meant that the judgment fell when Christ died, and that Israel was then and there set aside as a nation. If that were true, they would have remained “serpents” and they would not have been addressed as “children” in Acts 3:25. Neither would they have continued to enjoy priority rights, during the Book of Acts period, over the Gentiles; for “dogs” would have had equal rights with “serpents.”

Although the Lord Jesus pronounced the judgment in Matthew 23:33 to 39, it was 27 years later that the Lord stated in Romans 11:17 that some of the branches were broken off. As long as God delayed the judgment pronounced by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 22:7, Matthew 23:38 and Matthew 21:43, as long as He permitted the Nation to remain in Jerusalem and have daily access to their temple there, as long as He witnessed to them by the Twelve Apostles in the land and permitted Paul to become a Jew to them as He witnessed out of the land, just so long

was God dealing with the Nation Israel. Their house was not left unto them desolate when the Lord Jesus died; but some years later.

As long as the Twelve and Paul, in the Book of Acts, addressed Israel as “brethren,” the judgment of Matthew 23:31 to 39 had not fallen upon that Nation. The awful judgment of Matthew 22:7 did not fall until about 70 A. D. Let us then study “your house is left unto you desolate” in the light of Luke 21:20 to 24. “The desolation is nigh.” When? “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies.” Luke 21:20. Surely this was not on the day of Pentecost, but nearly forty years later.

JUDAS, MATTHIAS AND PAUL

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

We submit for our prayerful and careful consideration several Scriptures, so that we know why a successor to Judas had to be selected, when Judas died; why no successor was chosen to take the place of James, when he died; and to repudiate the unsound doctrines concerning Paul having been the Lord’s choice to succeed Judas.

ACTS 1:25

“That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.”

Now the question: “Did Judas go to his own place or did Matthias go to his own place?” Some teach that Judas went to a specially prepared place, and, inasmuch as he was called, “the son of perdition,” and the Antichrist is called “the son of perdition” (John 17:11 and II Thessalonians 2:3), Judas is to some day come out of his own place and be the Antichrist. Well, Judas may, or may not, have gone to his own place: but Matthias went to “his own place” in fulfillment of Psalms 69:25.

ACTS 1:16 and 17

“Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.”

ACTS 1:20 to 26

“For it is written in the Book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. Beginning from the baptism of John, that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord, Which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen. That he may take part of this ministry, and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

Now from the Scriptures that follow we shall learn that the Apostles' selection of Matthias was God's choice.

ACTS 2:1

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all WITH ONE ACCORD in one place.”

ACTS 2:14

“But Peter, standing up WITH THE ELEVEN, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.”

ACTS 2:43 AND 46

“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles.”

“And they, continuing daily WITH ONE ACCORD in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.”

ACTS 12:1 AND 2

“Now about this time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James, the brother of John with the sword.”

Now some facts about Paul's unique apostleship

I CORINTHIANS 15:5 AND 8

“And that He was seen of Cephas, and then of the Twelve.”

“And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

GALATIANS 1:17 TO 22

“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them WHICH WERE APOSTLES BEFORE ME; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.”

GALATIANS 2:7 TO 9

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter: (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship: that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision:”

ROMANS 16:25

“Now to Him that is of power to establish 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.”

ACTS 8:1

“And Saul was consenting unto His death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad, throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES.”

ACTS 22:17 TO 21

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste and GET THEE QUICKLY OUT OF JERUSALEM: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me. And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

EPHESIANS 3:1 AND 2

“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.”

We learn from these Scriptures:

First, that Scripture had to be fulfilled in the selection of a successor to Judas.

Secondly, that that successor had to be a man who had been a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth for more than three years before His death (from the ministry of John the Baptist) and an eye-witness of His resurrection. Matthias qualified and was chosen. I Corinthians 15:5. Paul could have qualified according to I Corinthians 15:8; but he could not have qualified according to Acts 1:21 and 22.

Third: inasmuch as the Twelve continued in one accord, filled with the Holy Spirit, for many months before Saul was saved, Matthias was the Lord’s choice to take the place of Judas.

Fourth: that when Judas died a successor had to take his place; but when James died some years later, there was no need for a successor.

Fifth: that when the great commission of Matthew 28:19 to 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18 was given, there were only eleven Apostles. However Peter could not give God’s Pentecostal message to “all the House of Israel” until the number had been increased to twelve. Acts 2:36. (Note that twelve apostles, in the coming kingdom age, are to sit on twelve thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30).

Sixth: that God required twelve apostles until after He, for the first time, granted salvation to uncircumcised Gentiles (Cornelius—Acts 11:14 and 15); but when James died; no successor was chosen to keep the number twelve.

Seventh: another interesting and significant fact we may learn by studying Acts, Chapters 13 to 28, that no record is made in those 16 Chapters of the spiritual activities of Peter and the other original apostles, except where they had dealings with Paul, in Chapters 15 to 21.

Eighth: That the Twelve remained in Jerusalem; but Paul was told to get out of Jerusalem.

Ninth: that Paul did not get his authority, message, or commission, from the Twelve, or from Christ on earth, but by revelation from Christ in heaven.

Tenth: that Peter was the Lord's servant to Israel, with the gospel of the circumcision; and that Paul was His messenger to the Gentiles, with the gospel of the uncircumcision and the dispensation of the grace of God, the ministry of reconciliation, with "my gospel" and with the "dispensation of the mystery." Paul, qualified as an apostle; as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Hear his own testimony:

I CORINTHIANS 9:1 AND 17

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?"

"For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."

II CORINTHIANS 12:12

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and many deeds."

II TIMOTHY 1:1 AND 11

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."

"Whereupon I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

Thus we see, that while Peter is the chief human actor in the first eleven chapters of Acts, and Paul is the chief human actor in the last sixteen chapters of Acts, Paul was not Peter's successor, or the successor of Judas, or of any other man. Paul was the chosen, specially appointed apostle of the risen Christ to a unique ministry not given to any other man, except as it was passed on in accordance with II Timothy 2:2.

II TIMOTHY 2:2

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men; who shall be able to teach others also." Matthias was an apostle in fulfillment of Scripture; Paul one born out of due season.

The Romanists worse than blunder when they teach apostolic succession beyond Matthias. The Fundamentalists do greatly err not knowing the Scriptures, when they teach that Paul, rather than Matthias, took the place of Judas. Many of them do not so teach. In the light of the Scriptures quoted, and the declaration of James and Peter, in Acts 15:13 to 18, after which declaration the record of the ministry of James and Peter in the "Acts" ceases, we must conclude that "twelve" is a significant and symbolic number. We must conclude that the ministry of the Twelve, with the keys of the kingdom, even including the message to the household of Cornelius the Gentile, was different from Paul's "dispensation of grace" to the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 and 2 and I Timothy 1:11.

In rightly dividing the Word of truth, we should certainly know the difference between the commission and ministry of the Twelve and those of "the Apostle to the Gentiles."

TELL NO MAN THAT HE WAS JESUS THE CHRIST

We submit for your thoughtful consideration what seems to be contradictory orders from the Lord.

JOHN 20:31

“But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.”

MATTHEW 16:20

“Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.”

In the first Scripture God earnestly desires that every one should read the Divine Record, the incontrovertible evidence that Jesus is the Christ, so that eternal life might result from the faith.

In the second Scripture the order is explicit; the language is clear: “Then charged Jesus His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.”

First, let us ask this question, “did the disciples keep the charge and obey the order?” They did, until—Until when? Until the risen Christ, in Acts 1:8, said “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Then what was their message? “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36. And they continued testifying that Jesus was Christ. Were they testifying contrary to the will of God? Certainly not. But they were most assuredly disobeying the plain word of Matthew 16:20, “tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.”

And how about the Apostle Paul? Read Acts 9:20; Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5. We quote:

ACTS 17:3

“Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus Whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”

Was not Paul’s testimony in strict disobedience to Matthew 16:20, “tell no man that Jesus was Christ?” Unless we can prove from the Scriptures that the Lord rescinded His charge of Matthew 16:20, we must decide that the Twelve and Paul were disobedient to the plain command of Jesus when they testified that He was Christ, or Messiah. This cannot be proved by the Scripture without proving that God gave the Nation Israel another chance, after Christ’s resurrection, if indeed He gave to Israel a message that might be called a national message, offering the opportunity and privilege of receiving Jesus as Messiah and King before His death. We learn that while on earth Jesus of Nazareth was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, with the message “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 10:5 to 8 and Matthew 15:24). Now read His lamentation after His rejection: “if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes. For

the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee; and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” (Luke 19:44 to 44). The Lord Jesus on earth was offering something more than salvation to individual Israelites. He was offering something to His own Nation.

If there was any one truth that the Lord Jesus and His Apostles were trying to get to Israel, up to the thirteenth Chapter of Matthew, up to Luke 12:32 to 52, it was the fact that “Jesus was the Christ.” But for some reason, a sudden halt! Make no further effort; was His order. And after the sudden halt, no more credential signs and no more water-baptism recorded in Matthew and Luke, that is, after Matthew 16:20 and 21—after Luke 12:48 to 52. But hear the prayer of Christ on the cross: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” It was by this prayer the order of Matthew 16:20 was rescinded. Then what do we find? More signs—Another testimony that Jesus is Christ—And water baptism.

MARK 16:15, 17 AND 18

“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 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.”

ACTS 2:36

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

ACTS 2:38

“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 2:43

“And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.”

Let us see how these miracles and water baptisms are linked (as signs) to Israel.

JOHN 5:36

“But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.”

JOHN 20:31

“But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.”

ACTS 2:22

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know.”

JOHN 1:31

“And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved; put on exhibition or display; manifested, where? In the midst of Israel. How? By divers miracles. Now the significance of John’s baptism. “I came baptizing with water that Christ might be manifested to Israel.” In every chapter of the Bible, where there is a record of water baptism, there is another Jewish sign, or some kind of a supernatural demonstration, or Divine visitation? “What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” Mark 16:14 to 18. There is the record of miracles in the Bible even after the last record of water baptism. Compare Acts 28:8 and 9 with Acts 19:1 to 7.

Perhaps we have failed to observe the full import of the words that immediately follow, “tell no man that Jesus is Christ.” “FROM THAT TIME FORTH.” Matthew 16:21. Yes, we have said that the Book of Matthew is divided dispensationally with Matthew 4:17: “FROM THAT TIME Jesus began to preach, And to say; ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’.” and Matthew 16:21: “FROM THAT TIME FORTH began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go into Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

We have said that the dispensational change was taking place in Matthew when Jesus left the land of the Jews to tell the Gentile woman about “the children” and “the dogs.” Matthew 15:20 to 27. But let us go somewhat deeper into the subject. Surely the Holy Spirit has marked the change in Matthew with the expressions in Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 16:21, “from that time.”

Now let us examine the dispensational change in Luke.

We quote:

LUKE 1:32

“He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.”

LUKE 1:68

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people.”

LUKE 1:71

“That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.”

LUKE 2:14

“Glory to God in the highest, and ON EARTH PEACE, good will toward men.”

LUKE 12:49 TO 52

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished! Suppose ye that

I am come to give PEACE ON EARTH? I tell you, Nay, but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.”

Were ever such contradictory facts recorded in one Book? Peace on earth? Yes. Peace on earth? No. Compare Luke 2:14 with Luke 12:51. Carefully note these facts: Christ on David’s throne—Israel delivered from Gentiles—A Divine kingdom with Israel enjoying her earthly glory (Luke 1:33) and peace on earth. Note these contradictory facts: Christ baptized into death on the cross; Israel delivered to Gentiles for judgment; the Divine kingdom postponed; no peace on earth; not even within the single household. Note carefully the “FROM HENCEFORTH” (Luke 12:52). This corresponds with the words in Matthew 16:21, “from that time forth.” In Matthew 16:21 Christ must go to the cross for His death baptism. In Luke 12:50 Christ must go to the cross for His death baptism.

When we appropriate and apply the truth of Romans 6:3 and 4, we shall see that believers too have gone on from John’s water baptism to Christ’s death baptism. After Christ announced His death baptism in Luke 12:50, there is no more record in Luke of any water baptism. After Acts 19:1 to 5, the last Scriptural record of water baptism, the believers went on to death baptism. This death baptism is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

When we come to Acts 2, we find that the message, and Divine program, is starting anew: Christ has been raised from the dead to take David’s throne (Acts 2:29 to 33). God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:36. This is for all the House of Israel. The charge of Matthew 16:20 has, therefore, been rescinded. The prayer of Christ on the cross did it. Israel has a new start. “Repent, and God will send Christ back for the restitution of all things.” Acts 3:19 to 21. Water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins and signs are back. Mark 16:14 to 18. Acts 2:38 and 43.

Note the similarity in the message of John the Baptist to Israel in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and Peter’s message to Israel on the day of Pentecost. Both preached baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins: to be followed by Holy Spirit baptism. Compare Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:4 and 8, Luke 3:3 and 1:16, John 1:31 to 33 with Acts 2:38.

Note the final record, in Acts 28, of Paul’s testimony to Israel and then what happened? “Paul called the chief of the Jews together.” Acts 28:17. “Persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.” Acts 28:23. Then no more record of testifying to Israel that Jesus was Christ, and hence no more record of signs and water baptism.

But “the dispensation of the mystery” salvation sent to the Gentiles but no longer “to the Jew first.”

NATHANAEL AND BAR-JESUS

At the time the Lord Jesus began His public ministry He met an Israelite whom He very much admired. His name was “Nathaniel.” About fifteen years later the Apostle Paul met an Israelite; but for him he had no admiration. His name was “Bar-Jesus.” Nathanael means, “the gift of God.” Bar-Jesus means “the son of Jehovah-Saviour.” So both of these Israelites had splendid and significant names.

I am sure if we study carefully the Bible stories of these two man, we shall learn that God has in them a lesson for us. The Lord's dealings with Nathanael are recorded in John 1:47 to 50, which we quote:

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.”

Paul's dealings with Bar-jesus are recorded in Acts 13:6 to 12.

Which we quote:

ACTS 13:6 to 12

“And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him And said, O full of all subtilty (guile) and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.”

Nathanael came from under the fig tree. The fig tree speaks of the Nation Israel. Nathanael was an Israelite in whom there was no guile. We have learned that his name means “the gift of God.”

Inasmuch as we are to study these two Israelites in the light of Romans 11:25 and 26, let us read one of the verses that follow: “The gifts of God are without repentance.” Romans 11:29. We quote also the other two verses referred to:

ROMANS 11:25 AND 26

“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 Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

Here we note that the Nation Israel is to be saved. That Nation is to be saved when the Deliverer, the Son of Man, comes. Luke 21:27 to 31. That Nation is to be saved, because the gifts of God are without repentance.

1. God has promised the national deliverance and restoration of His chosen people, in several covenants.
2. He promised them the land of Canaan. Genesis 17:5 to 15; Amos 9:11 to 15.

3. He promised them a Kingdom and a King to reign over them in that land. II Samuel 7:11 to 15; Isaiah 9:6 and 7; Ezekiel 36:24 to 34 and Ezekiel 37:24 to 34. By the prophet Jeremiah,
4. He promised to make a new covenant with them and to give them new hearts. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35.

When the Lord fulfills these covenants and all Israel shall be saved, it will be because God has promised to give them all these blessings; and His gifts are without repentance. Redeemed Israel is to be "Nathanael," "The gift of God." Then all Israel will be as Nathanael was. Israel's Messiah said; "behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." When the Lord fulfills the second covenant He will remove all the guile from Israel.

But where is Israel in the meantime? The answer is in the story of Bar-jesus. Bar-jesus had a good name, "the child of Jehovah Saviour." Israel was the child of Jehovah-Saviour, created by Jehovah for His glory. They were to be the Lord's messengers and witnesses to the nations and turn them to Him. But instead, they did what Bar-jesus endeavored to do with Sergius Paulus: he endeavored to turn him away from the Lord. What happened to Bar-jesus? The very same thing that has happened to the Nation Israel. Paul said to Bar-jesus, "thou child of the devil, full of all subtilty." This word "subtilty" is the same Greek word as the word translated "guile." Thus we see the contrast between Nathanael and Bar-jesus. In Bar-jesus all guile. In Nathanael no guile. Bar-jesus represents Israel until the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. They shall then say to that Sun of Righteousness, "Thou are the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Then in Israel will be no guile. Ezekiel 36:25.

In Matthew 8:1 to 12, we have the words of Jesus, in which He predicted that the children of the Kingdom would be cast into darkness; and the Gentiles would come in. That is what took place when Paul preached to Bar-jesus; Paulus came in. To Bar-jesus, Paul said, "thou shalt be blind, not seeing, the sun for a season." Israel today is blind, in darkness; but it is only for a season. Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. When He comes Israel's blindness shall be removed. In the meantime, we are living in the day of Gentile favor while Israel is set aside. In Acts 13:46 the story is told. Paul said to Israel, "seeing ye have put it from you we turn to the Gentiles." The Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:30. Israel is, in this age, "Bar-jesus;" in the coming age Israel will be "Nathanael."

Israel was definitely set aside nationally about 63 A. D.

We quote God's judgment:

Acts 28:25 to 28:

"And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

God will yet have a new Israel. Isaiah 62:1 to 4. But not during this age. During this age God is making One New Man of sinners saved by grace. Ephesians 2:11 to 18.

This is the period of special Divine favor upon the Gentiles. Surely there is a dispensational lesson for us in the fact that Saul's name was changed to "Paul" at the time the

first Gentile turned to the Lord as the result of his preaching. Compare Luke 7:1 to 10, Acts 10:1 and 2 and 22 and Acts 13:6 to 13 and note that the first Gentile to whom Christ on earth, preached was a Gentile official, who lived in Israel; that the first Gentile to whom Peter preached was a Gentile official who loved Israel and the first Gentile to whom Paul preached (as far as we have any sure record) was a respectable Gentile Roman official from whom Paul received his name. Such a change of name must have meant a change in God's plan and program.

ADAM AND CHRIST—RECONCILIATION

Many times Christ, on earth, and His Twelve Apostles, spoke of Moses, David and Abraham; but they made no mention of Adam. The only time his name is mentioned in the Four Gospels, is in Luke 3:38. Adam's name is not mentioned in the Book of Acts or in any of the writings of any of the Twelve. They were ministers to the circumcision concerning promises God had made to Abraham, Isaac, Moses and David. The first of these promises was made to Abram about 2100 years after Adam sinned. God made no promises to the Nation Israel by Adam.

The message of Paul was for all the descendants of Adam. In I Corinthians the Holy Spirit directed Paul to write concerning Adam and Christ; the first Adam and the last Adam; the first man of the earth earthy and the Second Man (the Lord) from heaven. I Corinthians 15:43 to 48. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Corinthians 15:22) All humanity dead in Adam. Those who belong to Christ to be made alive at Christ's coming. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." (I Corinthians 15:24).

Then in II Corinthians 5:17 is the verse concerning the new creation in Christ: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Then, follows this message of reconciliation, "And all things are of God, Who hath RECONCILED us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry 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 5:18 to 21.

Peter and the Eleven had preached repentance and restitution to those who were protected and preserved under the Abrahamic Covenant. But they had not preached reconciliation and the new creation. They did hear from Paul fourteen years after Paul's conversion, (Galatians 2:1 and 2) the gospel of the uncircumcision, which identified the Gentiles, to whom Paul preached, with uncircumcised Abram. Galatians 3:6 and 8; Romans 4:7 to 10; Galatians 2:1, 2 and 7. It was one thing to show believing Gentiles that Abram was the father of all, because he was declared righteous in uncircumcision; (Romans 4:11 to 17): but it was another message to show that all unbelievers were identified with Adam, dead in sins; that all believers, including both Gentiles and Jews, identified with Christ, were dead to sin. This is the message of reconciliation and the new creation in II Corinthians 5:14 and 15: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. (or have died) " "And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto Him Which died for them, and rose again."

This is the conclusion of the argument in Romans 5. How unfortunate and deplorable that a chapter-number divides the two chapters, 5 and 6. Note this statement: "Knowing this, that our old man is (was) crucified with Him." Romans 6:6. The old man had his origin in one who lived and sinned long before uncircumcised Abram left Ur of the Chaldees. In Romans 6, the believer is dead with Christ (Romans 6:8); dead to sin (Romans 6:2); baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:3); those that are alive from the dead (Romans 6:13). The argument is found in Chapter 5, the story of the two men of the Bible, the first man and the Second Man. And the word, "atonement," in 5:11, should be "reconciliation." Atonement is a mistranslation. Atonement does not fit into Paul's message of grace, for Gentiles who have been alienated from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18. Sin and death and the old man, the old creation, began with Adam. Righteousness and eternal life, the new creation, come with Christ. Believers' sins, under grace, have been forever put away.

The Twelve Apostles had very limited knowledge of the dispensation of the grace of God. The Lord revealed to them that Christ had been crucified and raised to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give unto Israel repentance and remission of sins. Acts 5:31. What they learned concerning the "dispensation of grace" and "the ministry of reconciliation" they learned from Paul. Do not forget the message of Paul which Peter called, "some things hard to be understood." II Peter 3:16.

Again Paul referred to his ministry of reconciliation in Colossians 1:20 and 21: "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 in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled."

In the face of many contradictory Scriptures, some have interpreted the "all things" of verse 20, together with John 12:32 and I Corinthians 15:22, and I Timothy 2:3 to 7, to mean that, in due time, (with the passing of more aeons), "all things" will be reconciled: hence the doctrine of "universal reconciliation." Salvation is God's gift to believers. There are no Scriptures to prove that the sinner who dies in unbelief, and thus leaves this world, will, in some other world, believe. Here is God's Word:

JOHN 3:36

"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."

REVELATION 21:8

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The reconciliation of Colossians 1:20 and 21, the Chapter of the mystery, is the reconciliation of Romans 5 and II Corinthians 5. Therefore, that Christian who teaches that the mystery was not revealed, even in part, to and by the Apostle Paul, until he became the prisoner of the Lord in the Roman prison, greatly errs, not knowing the Scripture. Those who emphasize the fact that the mystery is that which does not pertain to the covenants which God made with Israel should be informed that the "reconciliation" message was purposed by God, in Christ, long before God made covenants with, and concerning, Israel.

It is likewise true that the Christian who teaches that Paul's reconciliation message was the same message of repentance and remission that Peter preached in Acts 2:38 greatly errs, not knowing the Scripture. However unimportant the difference may be, there is a difference between the "new birth," under the Covenants, and the "new creation" in the reconciliation message.

Beginning with the circumcision of Abram, when, at the age of 99, his name was changed to Abraham, spiritual blessing, apart from the ordinance of circumcision, was unknown up to the day that uncircumcised Cornelius received the message whereby he was to be saved, because God was going to make unclean Gentiles clean. Circumcision, (from 1893 B.C. to 41 A.D.), was always a God-required ceremony and an important condition for Divine blessing. It was on the grounds of circumcision that men enjoyed fellowship in the congregation of the Lord.

Paul's revelation of the uncircumcision gospel produced somewhat of a revolution. He went to Jerusalem, by revelation, to break the news to those who were Apostles before him. This was "fourteen years after." Galatians 2:2. It was either 14 years after the 3 years of Galatians 1:18 or 14 years after he was saved. Up to the time of that revelation, it was kept secret, and hence it was a mystery (secret), as was the reconciliation.

Thus we see the folly of teaching that Peter gave the dispensation of grace, the grace gospel, and the ministry of reconciliation, a good start on the day of Pentecost, continued it for seven or eight years, obeying the great commission by discipling the Gentiles, and then suddenly dropped out of the Book of Acts, and that Paul carried right on with the same program from where Peter left off. Galatians 2:7 to 9 is the refutation of such an argument.

To be sure, Peter and the Eleven preached grace. But there is a difference between "grace in a dispensation" and "the dispensation of grace." Ephesians 3:1 and 2. There is also a difference between Peter's repentance message and Paul's reconciliation ministry. Note Peter's words concerning Jesus of Nazareth's doings on earth (Acts 2:22 and 10:38) and compare with II Corinthians 5:16.

ACTS 2:22

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

ACTS 10:38

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devils: for God was with Him."

II CORINTHIANS 5:16

"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."

We might understand something of the meaning of these words, by observing that in Paul's thirteen Epistles to the Gentiles, he never referred to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth on earth in any details. Paul made no reference to His kingdom parables, or Christ's miracles or doings on earth. He began with the death and resurrection of Christ. It is one thing for Gentiles to seek the Lord and to do works of righteousness, as did Cornelius: the message of the seeking

Lord in II Corinthians 5:20 is another. Paul did not preach to Gentiles the words of Peter, recorded in Acts 10:35. Compare Acts 10:35 with Titus 3:5 and 6.

II CORINTHIANS 5:20

“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.”

This is in accordance with Romans 5:11, “there is none that seeketh after God.” In the case of Cornelius, as it shall be in the kingdom salvation of Gentiles in the age to come, Gentiles seeking the Lord. Acts 15:13 to 15.

The Twelve and the other redeemed Israelites were perplexed concerning a message for the entire human race, the seed of Adam, that took them back prior to the days of circumcised Abraham and God’s covenant and oath with him.

Note the order of Paul’s messages:

1. The Faith which he once destroyed (This was the message of the Twelve). Galatians 1:23.
2. The Gospel of the uncircumcision which he communicated to those at Jerusalem, by revelation after 14 years. Galatians 2:1 to 9 and Galatians 3:6 to 8.
3. The Gospel of the reconciliation, which was preached with the uncircumcision gospel. Galatians 6:15.
4. The “dispensation of the mystery.” “THE MYSTERY and “THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY” were not always identical.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MYSTERY

In Paul’s prison Epistles, I Timothy, Philippians, Titus, Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians and II Timothy, we find the word “mystery” about twelve times. The word “mystery” means a “secret.” Note these facts concerning “the mystery,” in Ephesians 3:1 to 6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26 and Colossians 4:3.

First, It was a special revelation to Paul.

Second, It was not made known to the sons of men in other ages.

Third, It was hid in God from the beginning of the world.

Fourth, It had been hid from ages and from generations.

Fifth, Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ in bonds for the mystery (for Gentiles). Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

At once we should acknowledge, as all intelligent students of the Word of God do, that the secret, given to Paul by special revelation from heaven, was different from anything that the Twelve Apostles had preached; for their message was in fulfillment of Israel’s Scriptures; to confirm promises that God had made to Israel by Israel’s prophets. It was something different from the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18. It was something different from Peter’s message to Cornelius; for if that was sufficient light and Divine authority, there would have been no necessity for the superabundance of revelations which Paul had given to him by the Lord. Moreover Paul would not have been so presumptuous and egotistical as to refer to “my deposit” and “my gospel”, or use all the “I’s” and “me’s” that he used in declaring the special authority given him by revelation. He magnified his office as the Lord’s messenger to

Gentiles and disclaimed any authority or information received from those who were apostles before him. Romans 11:13 and Galatians 1:11 to 2:11. Paul preached a message of confirmation and a message of revelation.

Any one should be able to study carefully the oral ministry of Paul, in the Book of Acts, and compare his written ministry in his Epistles of that period with his prison Epistles, and inventory the additional facts concerning the mystery mentioned in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and II Timothy, that is, truth not found in the Divine record previous to Acts 28:31. But who is able to dogmatically affirm that we have the record of all that Paul said before Acts 28:31, concerning the mystery, when we know that we have no record of at least 900 words out of every 1,000 that Paul spoke or wrote?

The ministry of reconciliation is in the very heart of the mystery of the gospel. Colossians 1:20. This reconciliation message is in II Corinthians 5:16 to 21, and in Romans 5:11 to 20. We learn in I Corinthians that Paul could speak certain things concerning the mystery of the gospel “to them that are perfect.” (I Corinthians 2:6). In the verses following we learn that this was “in a mystery”, “ordained before the world.” To say that Paul did not receive the revelation of the mystery before the close of Acts, is to speak in darkness. But who can say that Divine revelations to him had ceased when he said, “I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God?” Acts 20:27.

Certain gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:8 to 13 were given and exercised so that “we be no more children.” In I Corinthians 13:11, Paul admitted that Christians, during the “Acts” period, were children. From this we should recognize the change from a child to a man, and advance in truth.

In this connection there are brethren who follow the dispensationalism of Dr. Bullinger and Mr. Welch, and state that the word in Ephesians 4:12, translated “perfecting”, should be “readjusting.” We quote it, using their word: “For the READJUSTING of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.” The Greek word is “katartismos” and may be translated “adjusting” or “fully qualifying.” Their argument is, that a complete readjustment of the saints had to take place after Acts 28:31, because they had been transferred from an Israelitish Kingdom Church into a new Body of Christ.

There is but little doubt that there was somewhat of a change in God’s spiritual program and order after Acts 28:31, and most assuredly a change in administration. But when did Christ ascend to heaven and give the gifts to men? Surely not after Acts 28:31. The Holy Spirit put in the words of Ephesians 4:8: “wherefore He saith,” quoted from Psalms 68:18, to safeguard from the “far above” teaching of the hyperdispensationalists. Note, this quotation is in connection with the words in Ephesians 4:10, “far above”, about which there is so much mystical extreme teaching today. The teaching of these “extremists” is, that the “far above” of Ephesians 1:21 and Ephesians 4:10, has nothing to do with the heavenly calling of Hebrews 3:1, or the heavenly image of I Corinthians 15:49. This very deep secret has been made known to a very small and very special, exclusive group.

We repeat, that there is high and heavenly truth made known in Ephesians and Colossians not made known in any Epistle Paul wrote prior to Acts 28:31. But there is not one suggestion that a new and different Body, with a new sphere of blessing (supercelestial), began after Acts 28:31.

As we have stated in another message in this pamphlet, the Epistle to the Galatians is the refutation of the claim that the saved Gentiles in the Church of the “Acts” period were under obligation to practice the religious program given them by Israel. They were not even required to

submit to circumcision, given long before the law and religion were given John 7:22). The Gentiles were linked up to uncircumcised Abram, who was justified long before the law was given (430 years later). Galatians 3:17 and 19. How childish then to teach that after Acts 28:31, the saved Gentiles were delivered from Israel's religious program. They were all one before Acts 28:31. Galatians 3:26 to 29. Romans 12:3 to 6. These brethren, who thus teach, are so fearful that they might be called "Abraham's seed." Abraham had no seed when he was Abram, and our relation is to uncircumcised Abram. Romans 4:9 to 16. Galatians 3:6 to 17. We are blessed with the blessing that he received, in uncircumcision. The natural seed of circumcised Abraham is different. Isaac was not born until after Abraham was circumcised.

During the "Acts" period the administration of the circumcision gospel for Israel, the uncircumcision gospel proclaimed by Paul, the ministry of the reconciliation, in fact, all authority over spiritual affairs in the Body of Christ, was in the hands of Israel. All of the apostles and prophets, with Divine authority, were Israelites. Some Gentile fellow-labourers worked under the authority of Paul. While there was neither Jew nor Gentile in the one Body, positionally, there was, so far as authority was concerned.

After the judgment of Acts 28:28, "salvation is sent to the Gentiles," a new "times of the Gentiles" began; not politically governmental, but spiritually governmental. This has continued to this day. During these years Israel has had no priority rights or privileges, as expressed in Romans 1:16 and Romans 3:1 to 4. The method of authority is stated in II Timothy 2:2. Not a new Body began after Acts 28:31, but a new dispensation of the mystery; that is, a new administration no longer under Israelitish apostolic authority, or authority of Jewish believers.

Certainly there are new phases of truth mentioned. For instance, we quote literally Ephesians 3:6: "That the Gentiles (nations) should be JOINT-HEIRS of the JOINT-BODY and JOINT-PARTAKERS of his promise in Christ by the gospel." We acknowledge that it is more than unfortunate that this verse is not correctly translated from the Greek, in the authorized version. Three times we find in that verse the prefix "sun" or "sus," meaning "union" or "joint." There was a union in Romans 12 and Galatians 3; but the Holy Spirit certainly added that prefix to emphasize the change that is indicated by the fact that Gentiles are sometimes mentioned before the Jews in Paul's prison Epistles.

Then the question is asked, "how about the statement in Paul's Prison Epistles, that our hope and calling were purposed in Christ before the foundation of the world, and is called God's eternal purpose in Christ; whereas Peter and the Eleven referred to a purpose "spoken by the prophets" "since the foundation of the world?" Ephesians 3:11 . . . Ephesians 1:3 and 4 . . . II Timothy 1:9 . . . Titus 1:2 . . . Acts 3:21. Who would deny that there is a difference? But Paul referred to this eternal purpose in I Corinthians 2:6 to 8 and in Romans 8:12 to 28.

Note the orders of God's programs. In the synoptic Gospels God's order was "to the Jew only." Matthew 15:24. Matthew 10:5. Acts 2 to Acts 10, "to the Jew only." Acts 11:19. After Paul began, in Acts, "to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." After Acts 28:31, "to the Gentile and also to the Jew." By comparing I Corinthians with Ephesians, we can certainly see that the sign-gifts of I Corinthians were to pass away; and they did. And, even the superficial student of the Word of God should see that there were several baptisms during the Book of Acts and "one baptism" in Ephesians 4:5; although there is the plain statement of Paul, in I Corinthians 1:17, that, even during that earlier period, Christ sent him not to baptize. Saul was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins; but that was some years before the risen Christ revealed the gospel of the uncircumcision and the ministry of reconciliation to him. Saul was saved long before he received the revelation of reconciliation and the mystery.

Then some one asks, if we drop signs and water-baptism, because they are not mentioned in the Prison Epistles, why not drop the Lord's Supper, which is not mentioned in them? The Lord's Supper is to be observed "till He come." I Corinthians 11:26. The feast that is to be observed after Christ comes to Israel, in accordance with Luke 22:15 to 20, has nothing to do with the memorial given to saved Gentiles and saved Jews in the Body to observe till the Lord come. There is a great difference between "after He comes" and "till He come."

Moreover, there are many things mentioned in Paul's earlier Epistles as in Romans 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15, not mentioned in his Prison Epistles, which are most certainly binding upon members in the Body described in Ephesians and Colossians. Moreover, Colossians 2:12 and Ephesians 4:5 specifically deal with the spiritual baptism which supersedes other baptisms. And I Timothy 5:23, Philippians 2:26 to 29, and II Timothy 4:20 prove that the signs ceased. "The day of Christ," of Philippians 1:6, and "the coming of Christ," out of heaven, of Philippians 3:20 and 21, and the day of His coming in II Timothy, all refer to the same coming of Christ found in Corinthians and in I Thessalonians. Therefore, we have no scriptural authority for dropping the Lord's Supper.

We do have a sacred obligation to "make all see what is the dispensation (administration) of the mystery." This we will be able to do, if we study Luke 21:24 with Romans 11:25 and see that a new Gentile movement began after the Divine judgment of Acts 28:28.

TRACTS

The Tracts on Following Pages

Dear Friends

On the next few pages we submit copies of several different tracts which we are printing in large quantities. We earnestly covet your diligent cooperation in the distribution of these messages—Send 50 cents or one dollar for an assortment and write for prices, thousand, or more. Please remember also—our special offer—20 of our books, assorted—\$1.00.

J. C. O'HAIR,
1011 Wilson. Ave., Chicago, Ill.

FIFTEEN HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE WILL DIE—UNLESS—

Do you know that 100 years ago there lived on this earth about 800 million people who are now dead? Unless something happens to stop this dying, more than fifteen hundred million now living will have died within another 100 years. Medical science may bring about many more temporary cures and prolong human life for a little while; but until the Creator wills to intervene to call a halt on death, the death rate will continue to be one a piece. The story of every member of the human race can be briefly told: "he was born," "he lived;" "he died."

There is more to this story. It is told in God's Book. According to that Book death does not end all. According to that Book, there is no end.

Death is no respecter of persons. It takes its toll in all lands, from all races and from all ages. Many are going to die within the next hour. Some people who publicly joke about death, when alone think very seriously about the matter; and although they try to forget it, there are

times when the serious thinking brings to the mind of the individual, this very personal question: "When will my time come?"

However, it must be admitted, that the great majority of people live as though they had no soul, no responsibility to a personal God. Some act as though they never expected to die, and many more with no thoughtful consideration of God's statement, "it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment."

Here is a wonderful statement concerning the death of the only sinless Man Who ever lived on this earth:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 3:14 and 16.

Another wonderful truth concerning this sinless Man is told in II Timothy 1:10: "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." What good news for the dying human race! This Divine Man has abolished death. He has destroyed him who had the power of death, the devil. He has delivered them who trust Him from the fear of death. He has brought life (eternal life) to believing sinners. Believing sinners have the guarantee of incorruptibility. They will be brought to triumphantly shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Hear the gospel:

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." I Corinthians 15:2 to 4.

Christ died. He was sinless. "The wages of sin is death." Christ died for sin. Not His Own sin. But for ours. Christ is coming back to put an end to physical death. He will call unbelieving sinners to experience the judgment of the second death. Hear this Divine message, it is God's truth: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:14 and 16.

Christ is coming to give incorruptibility to all who have received Him as Saviour. He died to deliver us from the wrath to come. He is now the resurrected Man in Glory. He is coming to raise the righteous dead in glorified bodies, and to take, without dying, all who are His at His coming. Think it over seriously and then do something about it.

Receive Christ as your personal Saviour. For every individual it is either the cross of Calvary or the second death.

You must meet Christ here as Saviour or hereafter as Judge.

DID THE KING DO RIGHT? HE ABDICATED FOR LOVE.

Opinion is very much divided on the subject. Some admire and some condemn King Edward for what he did. He left his royal throne; he abandoned his seat of honor. He voluntarily went into exile. He was willing to be despised and rejected of men. He was willing to make himself of no reputation. He was willing to be counted dead by members of the royal family.

Why? He declared it was because of love. He surrendered his dominion over the greatest kingdom on earth; because of love.

In the judgment of others, the one who was the object of his love may have been altogether unworthy of such a sacrifice. But the king has made the sacrifice. It was his love; and not the love of his critics. Surely the one whom he loved and for whom he made such a great sacrifice will love him and show her appreciation and gratitude for the king's great sacrifice.

I wonder if you have seriously meditated upon the profound truth told in these statements:

HEBREWS 1:8

“But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:5 TO 10

“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.”

ISAIAH 53:3

“He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not.”

II CORINTHIANS 8:9

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.”

I JOHN 4:9

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

I TIMOTHY 6:15

“Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

Here the story of the great love of a greater King is told, in God's Book. The Lord Jesus was born as King. He died as King. He is coming back to take the throne of glory on earth. Matthew 25:31 to 41. He is now the glorified and exalted One on the Father's throne in heaven. He is yet to be proclaimed “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” and rule this earth with a rod of iron.

He voluntarily left His throne to go to a cross of shame. He was indeed despised and rejected of men. He was an exile. In John 17:5 He spoke of the glory He had with His Father in heaven. He was crowned with thorns. “He loved us and gave Himself for us.” Yes; it was love! Divine love! Perfect love!

Sinners were the object of His love. His love for us caused Him to temporarily abandon the throne of His glory and suffer unspeakable sorrow. But the King will take those who love Him to share His eternal glory. Are you one who loves this King and Saviour?

There is but one way from earth to heaven; and that is faith in the crucified, resurrected and glorified Christ.

LET ME TELL YOUR FORTUNE

Some people are optimistic and some are pessimistic. Some people are courageous, confident and full of hope, even when conditions are unfavorable, circumstances unpleasant and immediate prospects unpromising. Others are full of despair, fear and worry, even in the midst of far more favorable and pleasant circumstances. We say, "it all depends upon the person's makeup."

But honestly, do you suppose that you would be happier, if you knew your future? Your answer is, "that depends upon what the future is." Perhaps there are brighter days and more prosperous times ahead for you. If you could be assured of a future of health, wealth and happiness on this earth, how long could you expect to enjoy such temporal blessings? Would you be willing after ten, twenty, or thirty, or forty years of such enjoyment to calmly put your head on your pillow, thank God for all your temporal blessings and tell Him you are ready to leave them and pass on into the other world? "Into the other world!" Although billions of others have passed on, this passing on will never cease to be a strange experience, an anxious hour, a very serious transition. Can we speak of this solemn exodus as a "home-going?" Are you interested in your eternal home? You surely ought to be.

Now we are indeed dealing with the real future of the human race. More than 4000 years ago a son of Adam asked the very same questions that have been asked by hundreds of millions before and since that man went the way of all the earth.

Question 1.

"But man dieth and wasted away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Job 14:10.

Question 2.

"If a man die shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Job 14:14.

When I die where will I be? If I die, shall I live again? What fortune-teller can answer this interesting, important and soul-stirring question?

Some one has said that a humble Christian, on his knees, can see farther into the future, than the most intelligent and gifted statesman on his tip-toes. Why? Because the humble Christian believes in the more sure word of prophecy, contained in God's Book, the Bible.

When the Son of God was here on earth, God spoke from heaven in this language and spoke these words: "This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. HEAR YE HIM." Matthew 17:5.

Hear ye Him! Hear Christ!

JOHN 10:11 AND 17

"I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

JOHN 12:31 TO 33

"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 14:1 TO 3

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also.”

JOHN 11:25 AND 26

“Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

After reading these words of life from the heart and the lips of the Son of God, Who died to save sinners from eternal, perdition and take them to eternal glory, read this question: “And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” I Peter 4:18.

Tell your own future! Where will you spend eternity? Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people! No human remedy for sin will avail. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31.

FLIRTING WITH DEATH.

Some time ago I stood in the midst of crowd of people who watched a man scale the wall of a very high building. He gradually ascended to the top by placing fingers and toes in mortar-joints, resting a moment as he reached the window sills of the several floors, until he finally lifted himself over the cornice to the roof. Then he made his bow to the gazing and amazed audience. It was a “thriller.” He called himself the “human fly.” Several months later I read in the paper that the “human fly” had fallen to his death in an attempt to duplicate his dangerous feat.

You have read of the plunge to death of the daring bicyclist, riding from one high building to another on a tight wire; or the dare-devil parachute jumper, or high diver. Perhaps you remember the man who went to his sudden death over the Niagara Falls in his death-proof barrel. There have been many other foolish men, who for money, notoriety, or on a wager, have suddenly departed for eternity.

How many different methods suicides have employed. Many of us remember McSweeney, the Irish martyr, who refused food and water until he was pronounced dead. His attendants tried to tempt him with the finest foods; but he resisted unto death. Some called him an heroic martyr; others called him a fool.

If a man is a fool for committing physical suicide, how about the millions who are committing spiritual suicide? Before they commit suicide is it not true that they are already dead? According to God’s Book, man, by nature, is a sinner, dead in trespasses and sin. He is afflicted with a fatal spiritual disease. Already dead in trespasses and sins, he is headed for two more deaths. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Hebrews 9:27 and 28. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15 and 16.

“The wages of sin is death” is God’s declaration. But the very same verse declares, “the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. When the Lord Jesus was on earth He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” And again He 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.” Then He voluntarily gave His life on the cross that believing sinners might live. The good news for sinners is stated in these words: “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” I Corinthians 15:2 to 4. “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.

God’s Book plainly declares that a perfect redemption has been provided for any sinner who will receive Christ as his own personal Saviour. That Book also tells us that the sinner who receives Christ as Saviour will not only be made alive, but “When Christ Who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:4.

God’s Book surely records the “death” notice. The sinner, who refuses God’s mercy, despises God’s grace, spurns God’s love and rejects God’s Love-gift (His only begotten Son) must suffer the sorrows of the second death.

Surely the sinner, who is so careless and indifferent as to procrastinate in making this most important decision, is exceedingly unwise. The sinner who refuses the free gift of eternal life and leaves this world headed for perdition, is not only flirting with death, but he is a fool of the first order.

Hear these solemn words of the life-giving Christ:

“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. “And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” John 5:40.

Come to Christ for life, or die in your sins. Which shall it be? God help you right now to make the wise decision.

HOW TO HAVE A GOOD TIME

HEALTH—RICHES—FAME—PLEASURE

If you could choose and possess only one of the four, which would be your choice? Doubtless your answer is, “Health.” You might have good health without much pleasure. But you could not have real pleasure, if you were in poor health. But now make this choice: if you could have two only, which of the two would you choose? It would be rather difficult to pass up the riches, wouldn’t it? Health and riches. Because perhaps you might buy happiness, or even a certain amount of fame, with riches. But many rich people are so miserable that they commit suicide. Do you think that the majority of rich people are happy?

Of course, there are very many people who would say, “give me good health and a good time and you can have your riches and fame.” The world is filled with pleasure-seekers, who admit that the pleasures of this world do not really satisfy the soul. Others declare that true happiness comes from an unselfish life, spent trying to please others. Think of the price in sacrifice, scheming and money that some pay for fame. Was that author not right when he said, “the path of glory leads but to the grave?” Was another right when he said: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of

God abideth forever.” I John 2:16 and 17. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” I Timothy 6:9 and 10.

There is a very interesting story about a certain rich man in Luke 12:17 to 21. He heaped to himself great riches, and then hear what he said and what happened: “And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:19 to 21.

Solomon had unlimited wealth and wisdom: more than any other man, works that caused the world to wonder. Yes, Solomon had wealth, wisdom, works, women and wine. But what did he say? “All is vanity.”

Perhaps all of us have thought time and again of the question of the Saviour: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” We love to meditate upon that beautiful thought which He expressed concerning the lilies: “Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?” Luke 12:27 and 28.

Then He added this command: “But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Luke 12:31. Then read, with this command, this blessed truth: “But My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19. All of God’s promises are yea and Amen in Christ.

We came into this world naked; and thus we shall leave it. The only true riches are those which we can take with us into the presence of God; spiritual riches, which are eternal. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal.” II Corinthians 4:18. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Hebrews 6:10.

There is a difference between “the pleasures of sin for a season” and “the joy of salvation,” which is eternal. There is a difference between earthly possessions and that inheritance laid up in heaven, which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

This eternal redemption has been obtained for us by the Lord Jesus Christ Who died for our sins and went back to heaven where He now is at God’s right hand.

“Whosoever will may come and take the water of life freely.” God longs to give you eternal life, if you will take your place at the cross of Calvary as a lost sinner.

THE END OF RELIGION.

There are more religions in the world now than there have ever been. There are hundreds of different religions in India and Africa. There are several hundred religions in the United States. Most people are naturally religious. But most people do not permit their religion to interfere with their sinning. Even if they desired otherwise, religion could not keep them from sinning. Although religious sinners are restrained from certain immoral habits, there is no cure

for sin in even the best of all the religions of the world. Religious endeavors frequently lead to self-righteousness, which is as much sin as is adultery or drunkenness or stealing.

We say that sin is human weakness: sin is a short-coming; missing the mark. But what is the mark? What does it mean to come short? Every intelligent man, whether religious or not, acknowledges that the only adequate, perfect code of ethics, by which a thought or word or deed can be judged right or wrong, is the law, which was given to man 3400 years ago; the ten commandments. No intelligent man will think of challenging the perfection of that perfect law. The one who would accept that challenge to perfectly obey that perfect law would display profound stupidity. The greatest of all the commandments contained in the law was stated by the only One Who ever perfectly kept all ten of them. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, strength and soul, and thy neighbor as thyself." If this is the greatest of all the commandments, and sin is the transgression of the law, then the greatest sin is to transgress the greatest commandment. All are guilty before God. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." "By the law let every mouth be stopped and let all the world become guilty before God."

All religions, except one, followed by men during the past 6000 years, were established by a very religious creature who is accused of deceiving the whole world. He is called "the Prince of the world;" "the god of this age." It is truthfully said concerning him that he is transformed into an angel of light.

The one exception is the religion that God gave to Israel at the time He gave that people the ten commandments. "Thou shalt;" "Thou shalt not;" was the program for poor sinful humanity for 1500 years. It was under that law that the Sinless Man was made. He came to earth and lived among this people. He lived their religion and kept the perfect law without offending in one point. But spite that, His own people had Him nailed to the cross. Such was the treachery, malice and crime of the religious law-keepers. They were sabbath-keepers and were zealous concerning the law; but they killed "the Prince of Life."

Then note what became of their religion:

COLOSSIANS 2:14

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

GALATIANS 3:13

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Curseth is every one that hangeth on a tree."

HEBREWS 7:19

"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of the better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."

ROMANS 10:4

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Christ is the END OF THE LAW for righteousness. The law and religion were inseparably united. The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross brought law and religion to an end. God's declaration is, the law has been abolished; sin has been put away; and death is abolished. II Timothy 1:10.

The sacrifices of shed blood, under the law, took care of the sins of the penitent lawbreakers until Christ went to Calvary to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Pray tell, why do people get a good religious feeling when they smell, or touch, or feel religious things? There is as much difference between religious reformation and reckoned righteousness as there is between hell and heaven. Christ died to save religious sinners from religion as well as from sin. God has removed all religion from His spiritual program, declaring

that Christ is our righteousness. I Corinthians 1:30. Righteousness is all that is required as a passport to heaven.

There is not one particle of righteousness in religion. Joining the church never saved any sinner. There'll be no religious people in heaven. Christ is the end of religion for righteousness to every one that believeth. Christ is our righteousness. Christ is the world's superlative and urgent need. Believers are accepted and complete in Christ. God says so. Receive Him as your Saviour right now.

THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION ONLY GOD KNOWS

What's the use of worrying about the future when there is plenty of trouble right now? And what can we do about it? It is somewhat like Mark Twain's remark, "What's the use of talking about the weather: nothing can be done about it?"

We must admit, with the statesmen of different nations; that there seems to be a state of universal unrest, anxiety, suspicion and dissatisfaction. Between certain large nations, something more than distrust, rivalry and jealousy exists. There is real mutual enmity. Each one is saying, "I'll be ready to settle this dispute with blood-shed just as soon as I get some more ships, planes, tanks, trained men and children; some more guns, shells, destructive poisonous gases, etc., stored up. The general verdict seems to be that two nations cannot begin their deadly work of destroying property and human lives without involving all of the world. Now, you will admit, that this is far worse than unpleasant chatter. It is an honest-to-goodness serious matter. If fifty percent of what some very wise statesmen predict is coming to pass, the outlook is rather gloomy. The question has been frequently asked, "Can the world survive such an international catastrophe as seems to be inevitable?"

Well, the citizens of this country are somewhat calmed and consoled by the pledges of politicians to keep us out of the approaching world struggle by a policy of strict neutrality. It sounds well, anyway. The question is, how can the country maintain international relations and continue to prosper by international trade agreements and maintain a "hands off" attitude with the rest of the world at war, especially with the envious attitude of nearly all large nations toward this nation? The answer is, "Only God knows."

What a truth, "Only God knows!" Yes, God knows all about the future of America, Europe, Asia and Africa. He also knows all about the future of each and every individual in these nations.

ACTS 15:18

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

II PETER 1:19

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

The trouble is, that the great majority of people will not take heed. They will not believe the statements contained in God's Book. For example, do the politicians who govern the people believe these solemn words; that is, that there will be a fulfillment of this prophecy:

LUKE 21:15 TO 27

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven

shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

And again we quote:

MATTHEW 24:7 AND 8

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. And these are the beginnings of sorrows.”

MATTHEW 24:21 AND 22

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

How can we expect politicians to believe that such conditions will prevail when the great majority of religious leaders, or so-called Christian teachers of the Bible, treat them as idle tales, and condemn as pessimists and fanatics those faithful servants of the Lord who do sound forth God’s truth and solemn warnings?

If you are following in the footsteps of these unfaithful messengers, it might be well to stop long enough to read these words of the Lord:

“Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Matthew 15:14.

It will be an awful ditch, and once you get in, it will be impossible to get out. Only God is holding civilization together. He has a Divine purpose for humanity in this age, namely: to have individual sinners out of every nation to be saved from the wrath to come, “The longsuffering of God is salvation.”

There is to be a time of great sorrow on this earth, the collapse of civilization. Evil seducers are to wax worse and worse. But thank God; this will not endure for ever. It will be brought to an end by the coming of the Prince of Peace, Who will establish on the earth God’s kingdom, ushering in the Golden Age. He will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

But how will that benefit you, sinner friend, if in the meantime you leave this world without faith in Christ, to wake up in eternity, to suffer the sorrows of the second death? “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. “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.”

Take your place at Calvary’s Cross as an unworthy sinner! Just be saved by faith in the Man Who suffered and died for you!

NINETY-THREE MILLION MILES AWAY.

On a hot summer day we feel as though the sun were not very far away, but astronomers tell us that the distance of the sun from the earth is 93,100,000 miles. Also they tell us that its mass is 334,500 times that of the earth. They also tell us that some of the heavenly planets are farther away than the sun.

Now, of course, you and I cannot prove or disprove the veracity of their statements. But many thinking men have such confidence in these scientific students of planets that they ask us

to believe in the accuracy of their measurements. Scientific investigation has convinced them that at times the planet Mars is 141 million miles from the sun.

If astronomers are correct concerning the distances between the earth and these heavenly bodies, we might wonder why they cannot tell us how far it is from earth to the heaven where Christians expect to go.

Christians are going to the heaven where their Saviour came from. Hear His Own Words:

“I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.”

John 6:38.

Just before Christ went to the cross to die for you and me, so that God might save us by grace, He said:

“In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:2 and 3.

Hear again these most remarkable, but truthful, statements concerning Christ: “But this Man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:12.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true: but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24.

“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.” Hebrews 9:12.

God’s Word tells us that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died that believing sinners might go to heaven, is a glorified living Man at His right hand. Here is God’s own Word:

“He that descended is the same also that ascended up FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS, that He might fill all things.” Ephesians 4:10.

As we depend upon men of science to tell us that the moon is 238,840 miles from the earth, that the sun is 93,100,000 miles from the earth, and to measure the distance to Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and other heavenly bodies, let us depend upon the infallible God to tell us about heaven and how to get there. Astronomers may err, but not God. For surely we do not want to reach the eternal home of the unsaved. That place is also described in God’s Book.

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8.

Christ is above all heavens, in glory. Sinners saved by the grace of God, by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, will spend eternity in heaven. Those who are enroute to heaven should be constantly engaged in good works; but good works will never get any sinner into heaven. The believing sinner’s passport to heaven is faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. God so declares.

Why not decide right now to go to heaven? Eternal redemption has been obtained by Christ. Believe God’s Word and receive Christ right now.

THREE GREAT WORLD JUDGMENTS

Undoubtedly there was a terrible Divine judgment visited upon the earth between the fall of Lucifer and the creation of Adam. God does not give us the facts in detail. However, God does

tell us in His Book of these other great world judgments: 1-The Flood; 2-Christ on the Cross; 3-The White Throne Judgment.

THE FLOOD

In Genesis 7:8 and 9 we are told of God's judgment in the destruction of all flesh, by the flood. This judgment came from God because of man's wickedness. We have little conception of the awful fear and suffering of man in that day of Divine judgment, when all outside of God's specially prepared ark met their doom. Something of the story is told in Hebrews 11:7 and II Peter 2:15 which we quote:

"By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.

THE CROSS OF CALVARY

God has provided another judgment proof ark for sinful humanity. But the great majority prefer to remain outside of the ark; and have their part in a Divine judgment far more terrible than the flood judgment. Read this Divine record concerning the judgment of the world at Calvary: John 12:27 and John 12:30 to 32:

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."

"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."

In I Corinthians 2:7 and 8 we read that if the rulers of this world had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. "They killed the Prince of Life," Acts 3:16. But Christ was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Christ died for the sins of the world. What an awful judgment was visited upon God's holy Son! Why? It was sin; my sin and your sin. Hear this message of grace, in John 3:18:

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Also hear this Divine message in John 3:36:

"He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

THE WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

Christ died on the cross that God might be just and the justifier of all who accept the judgment of the world visited upon Christ in the hour of His death. What must the individual suffer, if that individual refuses to accept Christ as sin-bearer. Let God's Word answer:

"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained; wherefore He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:31.

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:29 to 31.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,” Revelation 20:11 to 15.

Surely every individual, who refuses or neglects this great salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is a fool. Procrastination is worse than dangerous—Decide this very moment.

DOES CHRIST HEAL PHYSICAL DISEASES?

Christ is alive in heaven. He is the same Christ Who spent about thirty-three years on this earth. When He was here He healed “all that were sick.” Matthew 8:16. He cleansed the lepers; opened the eyes of the blind, gave speech to the dumb; gave hearing to the deaf, and healed all manner of diseases. These miracles were to convince Israel that Jesus was the true Messiah. Acts 2:22.

Now the question is, does Christ have less power, as the glorified Christ in heaven, than He had when He was here on earth; or does He have less interest in sick folks?

When He was here among men His healing was not limited to His disciples. He did not command that the afflicted ones become His disciples before He healed them. Some time after He had healed the blind boy, He asked him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” The boy answered, “Who is He, Lord?” John 9:36.

Several days ago I looked into the face of a faithful child of God, a woman who lay in great agony on a hospital bed. She tried to cover with a smile the expression that told of intense suffering. Perfect trust in Christ and no complaint; although she had suffered most of the time for ten years. She was a true, faithful, loyal servant of Christ. There was no unbelief in her heart; but faith and love; real love for Christ. Many saints had prayed for her recovery, or relief. Today I received word that this woman of faith had departed to be with Christ.

Many who do not understand the Divine purpose of God in the “sign” healings of Christ and His Apostles, are led into skepticism by their questioning; especially when they read in God’s Word that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”

Several weeks ago one of our “radio-preachers” had, as a “guest-preacher,” a man of God who has for years been teaching that physical healing for God’s children is included in the atonement Christ made on the cross. The “radio-preacher” explained to the audience that his “guest-preacher” was a sick man and could not preach as frequently as they would like to hear him: he had to conserve his strength. He looked and acted as a sick man and he is still sick. However, the “radio-preacher” went right on every day telling his radio audience that Christ heals physical diseases. This is what shakes the faith of many.

Peter healed all the sick that came to him. Acts 5:14 to 17. Paul healed the sick. Acts 19:11 and 12.

During the days of the apostles, the gift of healing and other miracles were found among the most carnal Christians. I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and I Corinthians 3:1 to 8.

Temporarily signs were for both Jews and Gentiles. Romans 15:16 to 20.

But the time arrived when God set aside the Nation Israel. “The Jews require a sign.” I Corinthians 1:22. With this “setting-aside” the signs, wonders and miracles, mentioned in Hebrews 2:3 to 5, ceased. After that God heard and answered prayer in behalf of a sick saint, Epaphroditus. God had mercy on him and those who were in need of his ministry and raised him up. Philippians 2:25 to 30. Since that time God has had mercy on many of His servants and raised them up from sickness, in answer to prayer, with and without the use of oil, inside or outside.

But this is so different from the “sign” healings of Christ and His apostles, or the gift of healing bestowed upon members of the Body of Christ, as late as 58 A. D.

Timothy was an unusual saint as to faith, obedience, courage and usefulness. He had “oft sicknesses.” He was told to take a material remedy. I Timothy 5:23. This was after credential “signs” and “sign gifts” had ceased. In Paul’s Epistles, written after Israel was set aside—the words, “signs,” “miracles,” “healing,” “tongues,” “visions,” are not to be found.

Paul was a sick man. He gloried in his infirmities. II Corinthians 12:10. He declared that the outer man was rotting thoroughly. II Corinthians 4:16. He declared that Christians groaned and were burdened because they needed a different body. Romans 8:23; II Corinthians 5:1 to 4. He spoke of the believer’s body as a body of humiliation. Philippians 3:20 and 21. Paul left, at Miletus, sick, a very faithful saint. II Timothy 4:20.

Paul wrote fourteen epistles. Many, many times he declared that Christ died for sin; but never once did he suggest that Christ died for sickness. Of course, if prayer is answered in behalf of a saint and God in mercy raises up that saint, answered prayer is on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ. In that sense only, is physical healing in the atonement.

Atonement is not a word found in Paul’s message to Gentiles. Romans 5:11. Should read “reconciliation.”

When a sinner accepts the redemptive work of Christ he is saved forever. He may die the next hour from sickness or accident. He may live some years in good or poor health. If healing of the body were in the atonement, incorruptibility, or immortality, would belong to the believer without the return of Christ. With His return perfect bodies will be received. He may come today.

While saints await Christ’s return, the death rate of saints and sinners will continue to be one a piece, whether we have physicians or surgeons, or employ any one, or all, of the different psychical, religious, faith or spiritual healings. This is the day of grace when sinners are not cursed with physical afflictions as they were under former dispensations. Thank God for good physicians. Consult them. Use physical remedies. Pray earnestly for strength and restoration of health and believe Romans 8:28. But let no religious man or woman convince you that you are out of the will of God, because you are sick. Many of God’s choicest saints are invalids.

WHAT IS HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM?

One of the seeming contradictions in the Scriptures that has troubled many of God’s children we find in the statements recorded in Ephesians 4:5 and Mark 1:8, “There is one baptism;” and the message of John the Baptist, “I indeed have baptized. you with water, but Christ shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Spirit.” Why the translators have written sometimes “HOLY GHOST” and sometimes “HOLY SPIRIT,” we do not understand. The Greek word is

always the same. In Mark 1:8 and Acts 1:5 two baptisms are mentioned. But Ephesians 4:5 declares that there is one baptism.

Again, it has troubled even the able Bible expositors to explain why the Israelites, who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost, were instructed to be baptized with water before they could receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) whereas, in the case of Cornelius, his water baptism followed his Holy Spirit baptism. Acts 10:44 to 48; Acts 11:14 and 15. In the case of the people of Samaria, they received water baptism several days before they received Holy Spirit baptism. This we will learn by carefully reading Acts 8:10 to 17. This same order prevailed with the certain disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus, after 55 A. D. This experience is recorded in Acts 19:1 to 7.

Inasmuch as we have in Acts 19:1 to 7 the last Bible record of any baptism with water, we should carefully study Paul's message and the order therein recorded. The statement that they went into the synagogue, in Acts 19:8, seems to suggest that these disciples were Jews. Paul asked them this question: "Believing (Pisteusantes) received ye the Holy Spirit?" Acts 19:2. He did not say, "HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?" as it is translated in the Authorized Version. He used the Greek participle. In Ephesians 1:13, the same Greek participle is used. There we learn that the Gentiles, believing (pisteusantes) received the Holy Spirit. Now, back to Acts 19:1 to 7; and note the order: first, baptism with water; second, imposition of hands; third, Holy Spirit baptism; fourth speaking with tongues.

No grace preacher today preaches or practices this order. On the contrary, they are dogmatic in their statement that the sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, is saved by grace through faith alone; that no water baptism is required for salvation or for membership in the Bible Church, the Body of Christ. They contend that the only baptism necessary is a Divine baptism not made with hands. Surely this is the teaching of Colossians 2:11 and 12. And to read any water into Colossians 2:12 is unsound exegesis. Moreover, the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 must be the baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4, and Galatians 3:27. If water baptism is in any way implied in either of these verses, then water baptism is essential to salvation; and should be received before the believer can receive salvation or become a member of the Body of Christ.

Even zealous immersionists agree that all "sprinkled" saints have been buried in baptism. This is to admit that the burial is not water. Again, if believing Gentiles today receive the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, then surely we are in the "last days," which days began on the day of Pentecost. Joel 2:28 and 29; Acts 2:16 to 19. And if this is true, then the Church is "Israel," and all of Paul's teaching concerning the Body of Christ, as the mystery, is meaningless. However, Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and his other Prison Epistles, in which there is no mention of "tongues," "visions," "signs" and "miracles," is the answer to all unscriptural "Holy-Spirit-Baptism" teachings of the day.

Surely, it is inconsistent, in the light of the plain declaration of Ephesians 4:5 (one baptism) to hold on to Israel's water baptism, and eliminate the "signs," "tongues" and "visions." "And I knew Him not; but that He (Christ) should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John 1:31.

The very moment the believing sinner is saved by grace, through faith in the shed blood of Christ, he is sanctified (Hebrews 10:10; I Corinthians 6:11). The very same moment he becomes a member of the Body of Christ: he is identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, by a Divine baptism. He receives the only Holy Spirit baptism that he will ever receive. (Galatians 3:13 and 14; II Thessalonians 2:13).

Read carefully II Thessalonians 2:13 and note that sanctification precedes salvation. Tongues have ceased and have no place in this age of grace. "Walk in the Spirit." "Be filled with the Spirit."

What believer, knowing he has been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (Ephesians 1:3) would be seeking the second blessing?

THE JEW AND THE CHRISTIAN

WHAT DO THESE FEEBLE JEWS?

We call the Bible the Christian's text-Book; and so it is. But did you know that the word "Christian" is found but 3 times in the Bible and the word "Jew" 288 times? Is that because the Old Testament Scriptures deal with the Jew and there is much more of the Old than the New? Note this fact: the word "Jew" occurs 197 times in the New Testament Scriptures and only 88 times in the Old.

The favorite Book of most Christians is the Gospel of John. In that Book the word "Christian" is not to be found; but the word "Jew" occurs 70 times. The word "Jew" is found in the Book of Esther 53 times.

The Book of Acts has been called the history of the beginning of the Christian Church. In that Book the word "Christian" is found only once (Acts 11:26); but the word "Jew" occurs 79 times.

We might well ask the question: "Whose text-Book is the Bible, the Christian's or the Jew's?"

WHAT DO THESE FEEBLE JEWS?

Or let us consider again that question asked 445 years before Herod asked the question, "where is He that is born King of the Jews," "WHAT DO THESE FEEBLE JEWS?" will they fortify themselves? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish? Nehemiah 4:2.

This question was asked at a time when the Jews had undergone years of indescribable humiliation and terrible punishment. It had been ordained and ordered by their own Jehovah, because of sin. Something of their predicament may be learned by reading the closing Chapters of II Kings and Jeremiah and the Book of Esther. The Book of Esther describes their awful peril in Persia. The story is told in brief in Esther 3:6: "Haman sought to destroy all the Jews." It almost happened. But it didn't. Why? Read Jeremiah 30:11 and you will learn why every monarch, who has attempted to destroy "all the Jews," has failed. I quote the revised—"I will make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee." There's another fact stated in Numbers 23:9. God's Book there declares that the "Gentiles (nations) can never assimilate the Jew. In Jeremiah 30:11, God's Book declares the Gentiles (nations) can never annihilate the Jew.

There are more than 300 million professing Christians and not more than 17 million Jews. The Jews are not popular with most Christians. But don't forget the feeling is mutual. In these days of fresh anti-Semitic movements, we might well ask, "what do these feeble Jews?" "Will they fortify themselves?" "Will they revive the stones out of the rubbish?" Every thinking person must admit that they are doing something out of the ordinary. They are very conspicuous and influential in commercial, financial and political circles, to say nothing of their prominent

part in giving worldly amusements to those Gentiles who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

But the ordinary things the Jews are doing are not to be compared with the extraordinary things they are going to do. The supernatural preservation of the Jew is one of the most convincing proofs of the inspiration of the Bible. The Jews, for some centuries, were considered feeble, but not in recent years; and certainly not today. Ask Hitler and some of our big Gentile business men. The Jew has an earthly future foretold in God's Book.

Way back in ancient times, God declared that the Jew, when scattered among the Gentiles, would be called a "Shenee." Deuteronomy 28:37. 1 Kings 9:7. II Chronicles 7:20. When Pilate was determined to let Christ escape crucifixion unto death, he said to the Jews, "I find no fault in Him." "Shall I crucify your King?" John 19:6 and 15. The Jews answered, "We have no king but Caesar." John 19:15. Read what King Caesar did to them and their city in 70 A.D. Exactly what their King Jesus had foretold.

MATTHEW 22:7

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

LUKE 21:24

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Again note what Pilate did and said "He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this Just Person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

They chose Caesar in preference to their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, Who fulfilled the Jewish Scriptures, as to the time, manner and place of His birth, Who came with the Divine credentials of Isaiah 35:4 to 6 and the ministry of Isaiah 61:1. They invoked the blood of Christ upon the heads of their children. The children are not making any effort to get from under the judgment. How blind they are after all these years of Christianity and grace! Are Christians to blame? The Jews cried for Caesar. They are to have Caesar again and some more blood upon their children.

After the indignation prophesied in Zephaniah and Jeremiah 30:5 to 11, and by the many other Jewish prophets, the Jews are destined to national redemption and a glorious earthly inheritance.

ZECHARIAH 12:10

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

REVELATION 1:7

"Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

The Son of God was truly born of the Virgin Mary, as the King of the Jews. Although He came to be the Saviour of the world, He lived on earth with the Jews, taking His place as a worshipping Jew. John 4:24.

Now God divides the world into "the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God." I Corinthians 10:32. "The Church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28.

After Christ's death He ascended to heaven and through Paul He started a new movement. It is this new Divine movement that has puzzled the Jew. His Scriptures told of the Messianic Kingdom, but not of the Church of this day of grace in which believing Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ. It has also puzzled most Christian preachers, who mix Israel's kingdom gospel with Paul's grace gospel, and they are not much help to the blind Jews or their own half-blind Church members.

The Man Who was crowned with thorns, as King of the Jews, was indeed the Lord of Glory. He is alive in heaven. He is coming back. For either Jew or Gentile there is no escape from the eternal wrath of God except through faith in the Son of God Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

When the Son of man comes to redeem Israel the Jews will recognize Him as the Messiah rejected by their fathers—But that will be too late for the Jews who in the meantime have passed on to suffer the sorrows of the second death.

WHICH IS THE TRUE CHURCH?

WILL THE LORD JESUS COME AGAIN?

No intelligent person should attempt to answer either of these two questions without first consulting the Bible. Surely the true Church is the Bible Church. And the Bible, which describes the true Church, declares in plain language, more than 100 times, that the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Head of the true Bible Church is coming back. Of course, this will not answer either question to the satisfaction of the skeptic, or the infidel, or the religious person who gets his answer from some priest or preacher instead of obtaining for himself information from the same Bible from which the priest or preacher is supposed to get his information.

Therefore, in seeking for an answer to our questions our appeal is, "what saith the Scriptures?" The Scriptures declare that the Bible Church, for this age in which we live, is "the Body of Christ." Ephesians 1:19 to 22. Moreover, the Scriptures declare that there is one and only one Body. Ephesians 4:4 and 5. The Scriptures declare that the members of this one Bible Church are human beings who have been redeemed by the grace of God and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8 and Ephesians 2:13. The Scriptures declare that every sinner saved by grace, is "in Christ;" has been baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ by a Divine baptism, not made with hands. Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:26 to 27. In all these Scriptures there is not one word about "joining a church." The very moment any kind of a sinner receives the Lord Jesus Christ, as his Saviour, he is immediately identified with the crucified and resurrected Christ; baptized into the one and only one true Bible Church, which is "the Body of Christ." Therefore, the true Bible Church is primarily a Divine organism.

Now the matter of becoming identified with an organization or a denominational church is a different matter. All of God's redeemed people should be identified with as assembly made up of those of like precious faith. However, joining such an assembly is not a Bible requirement for membership in the Body of Christ.

In this day of grace Christians should not be divided into clergymen and laymen. There is not one verse of Scripture supporting the program of any organization which follows a man as the head of the church. There is no pope, no cardinal, no arch-bishop, no high-priest on earth in the true Bible Church. Therefore, the church which recognizes these ecclesiastical dignitaries is

not the Bible Church. There is not a line in the Bible about candles, holy-water, incense or religious garments for people or preacher in Christ's Church.

There are more than 300 sects and denominations in the country. In many of them there are members of the true Bible Church; but they are not members of the true Bible Church because they have joined these sects. The Bible Church is not a sectarian church. It is the Body of Christ. There is one Body, one Head, one faith, one hope, one baptism.

Paul asked, "is Christ divided?" He also declared "there be no schism (division) in the Body." He declared "we who are many are one Body." Romans 12:4 and 5. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28. The Lord Jesus, on earth, said, "all ye are brethren and call no man your father on earth; for one is your Father." Matthew 23:9. But religious people prefer to follow religious leaders. Members of Christ's Body have eternal life: God does not want them to have religion.

Members of Christ's Body are told to wait for Christ to come from heaven. Corinthians 1:7 and 8. I Thessalonians 1:10. Philippians 3:20 and 21. Titus 2:13, I John 3:2 and 3.

No truth is more clearly presented, more emphatically stated than is the Divine fact that the same Lord Jesus Christ, who died to save sinners from the wrath to come, is now the glorified Son of God in heaven, the Head of the Church, and that when He appears every member of the Body of Christ will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3 and 4. The Lord knows all that are His and will know where to find them when He comes.

The coming of Christ is called "the blessed hope," "the purifying hope." He said, "if I go I will come again." Read concerning His second coming in Luke 21:27 to 33, Acts 1:11, Hebrews 9:28, Hebrews 10:37, Revelation 1:7, II Thessalonians 1:7 to 11, Jude 14.

When Christ will come no one knows: but could it not be today? Where is any truth more clearly stated than in these verses: "The Lord Himself shall descend—the dead in Christ shall rise first—then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord—so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Are you in the true Bible Church, redeemed by the blood of Christ from sin and religion? Are you ready for the Lord's coming?

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

THE END OF THE WORLD

"You can't scare me, talking about the world coming to an end," said a sinner to a Christian worker. "My grandmother used to talk about that, and Jesus hasn't come yet."

It is true that many people have talked about the second coming of Christ, and the end of the world. The Saviour Himself had much to say about His return to earth when He was here the first time. Once His disciples went to Him and said, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matthew 24:3.

Christians down through the centuries have been asking for the signs of the Lord's coming and wondering just what "the end of the world" means. "When shall these things be?" Things are happening today; momentous things, if not significant things. Mussolini is determined to "out Caesar" any of the ancient Caesars and to have a Roman Empire that will surpass in grandeur the ancient Roman Empire; and according to Daniel 2, that Empire is to be revived. The Jews are going back to Palestine and they are gradually making the desert to

blossom. There are several hundred thousand Jews in and around Jerusalem; and more eager to go. Men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The rich are heaping together their riches in the last days. A great apostacy is sweeping over the land. Modernism, nothing more than Christianized agnosticism, is fast getting control of the Christian Churches. And as spiritual, or religious, anarchy is being fostered and disseminated by the Liberals in the Christian Church, political and social anarchy and demonism, under the subtle leadership of Stalin, and other Bolsheviks, is being carried to the uttermost parts of the earth. Therefore, lawlessness is abounding, and the stage is being set for the reign of the Lawless One of II Thessalonians 2:3 to 11. So we are told that there are "signs," "signs," "signs," everywhere; and the Lord will soon be here.

First, let us bear in mind that the expression, "the end of the world," should read, "the end of the age." In the Bible this age is called, "this present evil age." Galatians 1:4. In the Bible Satan is called, "the god of this age." The Bible tells us that this age and the reign of Satan will come to an end. This end will come when the same Jesus, once here, shall come again. The Bible says so: and that is sufficient for any true believer.

"THIS SAME JESUS, WHICH IS TAKEN UP FROM YOU IN HEAVEN, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO INTO HEAVEN." Acts 1:11.

This is rather clear language: is it not? In the same clear language the fact of the second advent of Christ is stated in many other verses of Scripture.

The Saviour was very much in earnest when He made the statement, recorded in Luke 21:27 "AND THEN SHALL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY." Emphasize the words "AND THEN." And study the signs mentioned in the immediate context. Before that statement the Saviour asked the question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. The language in the Greek indicates that He will not find faith when He comes as the Son of man. It is His coming, as the Son of man, that is to be preceded by political as well as heavenly signs. His coming, as Son of man, is for Israel's deliverance, and for judgment of the nations. The Lord Jesus Christ is not the Son of man to the Church, which is His Body. The Church surely does not want to overlook any signs that would tell of the near coming of the Lord Jesus to take believers to appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3 and 4. But members of the Body of Christ, well taught in the grace message will be looking for Christ, and not for signs. The Lord's coming for His Body clues not depend upon what Mussolini will do in Italy or Stalin, in Russia.

The Son of man is coming to execute judgment upon the ungodly and vengeance upon all who obey not the gospel. Jude 14 and 16 and 2 Thessalonians 1:3 to 9.

The coming of the Lord is called, "the blessed hope." Titus 2:13. It is the purifying hope. 1 John 3:2 of 4.

"OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN: FROM IN WHENCE (OUT OF WHICH) ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY." Philippians 3:20 and 21.

The time of Christ's coming no human being on earth knows. There is no way of fixing any date. That is exactly what God does not want His children to do. But can you say that He will not call His redeemed ones to glory this very day? He may? Be always ready.

Some day the blessed Son of God, Who died on the cross, will take the throne of David, and rule, with a rod of iron over this earth. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. It will be a reign of righteousness, equity and peace. Politically, there is no other hope for enduring peace. In the meantime there is

no peace in the human soul that refuses to accept by faith the redemptive work of the Son of God on the cross.

REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION

WE PRAY YOU IN CHRIST'S STEAD, BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD

You will find a message in this pamphlet on "Reconciliation." If we, as believers, are true ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will acquaint ourselves with this wonderful ministry which has been committed to us, given in detail in II Corinthians 5:10 to 21. What good news we have to proclaim to sinners! What a privilege and a responsibility! What a spiritual crime to be numbered with the many Christians who are mixing religion with reconciliation! God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. On the cross Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. "We persuade men." "We beseech sinners." "We pray, 'be ye reconciled to God'."

How different from telling sinners to get down and agonize and beg God to be reconciled to them, praying the publican's prayer. Reconciliation from God to man is an accomplished fact. Eternal life is God's free gift to any and all sinners who will believe God and receive Christ. Salvation is all by grace, all of grace. Righteousness cannot be earned or purchased by the best man on earth: it is not for sale. Righteousness has been provided by and through the redemptive work of Christ. It is available for you, sinner. Believe the good news. Believe that Christ took your sins to Calvary and the grave. Receive Him as your own personal Saviour. In reconciliation God is seeking the sinner.

"Repent..... repentance"... is found about 30 times in the Four Gospels. The word is very prominent in the early part of Acts. "Reconciliation" is mentioned, the first time, about 60 A.D., in Romans 5:11. The word is—verb, "kattallasso"; noun, "kattallage." "Allasso" means "to make different"; "to change." In Ephesians 2:16, "apokatallasso" is used: also in Colossians 1:20 and 21. "Kattallasso" or "kattallage" is used in II Corinthians 5:18, 19 and 20—Romans 11:21—Romans 5:10—5:11.

The word "reconciliation" in Hebrews 2:17 is an entirely different word, a Jewish word: the same word as "propitiation." The word translated "atonement" in Romans 5:11 should be "reconciliation." "Atonement" does not fit into Paul's reconciliation ministry for Gentiles.

Referring to the spiritual crime of mixing religion, or Israel's repentance message, with Paul's "Reconciliation" message, now think of preaching to the unsaved, in this day of grace, "Repent the kingdom of heaven is at hand; bring forth fruit meet for repentance," or "repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." A multitude of preachers are doing this very thing, frustrating the grace of God, perverting the grace gospel and subverting souls, making them religious instead of spiritual.

When Peter and the Eleven were preaching "repentance," in the early part of Acts, it was to "ye men of Judea," to "ye men of Israel," "men and brethren" to "all the house of Israel." One exception, Cornelius and his friends to whom God granted repentance unto life. Acts 11:18. To Israel Peter preached, "repent and God will send Christ back from heaven for the restitution of all things." Acts 3:19 to 21. "Repentance and restitution." To whom—"Ye are the children of the covenant." Acts 3:24 and 25. Israel's covenants went back to Abraham. Paul's "Reconciliation" message, for the world, went back to Adam. It was concerning the new creation, and the believer's identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. II Corinthians 5:13 to 17.

Romans 6:1 to 8. Note the word “reconciliation” three times in Romans 5:10 and 11 and the “wherefore” about Adam in Romans 5:12; and then what follows concerning the two men, Adam and Christ. Read on into the sixth chapter concerning the old man crucified with Christ. What did this have to do with the message of repentance under Israel’s covenants? Israel came from Abraham. To Israel belong the covenants. Romans 9:4 to 6. The whole world came from Adam.

Compare Acts 5:31, with II Corinthians 5:19 and Colossians 1:20 and 21: “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.” Acts 5:30 and 31. Pray where does the world of Gentiles get in on such a message as Acts 5:30 and 31? But some 25 years later . . . “Reconciling the world unto Himself” (II Corinthians 5:19) “to reconcile all things unto Himself.” (Colossians 1:20).

For some reason the prefix “apo” is used with “katallasso” whenever it is used after Acts 28:31. “Apokattallasso”—“fully reconciled.”

Let’s stick to grace and not be guilty of mixing Israel’s covenant repentance with Paul’s ministry (and our ministry), of “Reconciliation.” What say you?

MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

“YOU WHICH WERE AFAR OFF—AND TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH”

It is very interesting and instructive to study in the Bible the expression “Far Off.” Sometimes those who are “afar off” are the scattered Twelve Tribes of Israel. When this people is referred to as the “far off,” generally the geographical distance is suggested, sometimes the spiritual condition of the Jew. But sometimes the “afar off” refers to the Gentiles. This “afar off” measures their distance from God and spiritual blessings. If we would know just how “far off” from God the Gentiles were before Christ sent Paul to them, we may have that information by reading the first two chapters of Romans. Then we can better understand what the Holy Spirit means when He states that the Gentiles were alienated from the life of God; that they were dead in trespasses and sins; that they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers of the covenants of promise; that they were in the world, having no hope, because they were without Christ and without God (atheos . . . or atheists). Ephesians 2:1 and 2 . . . 2:5 and 2:11 and 13.

After this black past of the Gentiles, this very dark history, of a ruined and condemned people, we find one of those blessed “But God’s” in the Bible. “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ (by grace are ye saved.) Ephesians 2:4 and 5. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who some times were “afar off” are made “nigh” by the blood of Christ.” The whole story is told in this second chapter of Ephesians; hopeless, dead, sinful, condemned sinners, made alive; saved and brought as nigh to God, positionally, as Christ Himself; all by grace, and the precious blood of Christ.

The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh to God. Hebrews 7:19. Christ on the cross is that better hope. “And having an High Priest over the House of God, let us draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” Hebrews 10:21 and 22.

THE FAR OFF IN EPHESIANS 2:17 AND IN ACTS 2:39

“And came and preached peace to you which were “afar off,” and to them that were “nigh.” Ephesians 2:17. It is clear here that the “afar off” are the Gentiles and “them that were nigh,” the Jews. Geographical distance is not here considered.

But how about Acts 2:39? “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are “afar off,” even as many as the Lord our God shall call?” If the Holy Spirit here had in mind the Gentiles, it is strange Peter, about eight years later, declared that it was not lawful for him and other Israelites to go to the Gentiles. Acts 10:28. If Peter and the Eleven were instructed in the so-called great commission to preach to Gentiles when the risen Lord said, “disciple all nations” (Matthew 28:19), we have several questions to ask:

1. Why was it necessary for Peter to have a special housetop vision of unclean creatures to authorize him to preach to one respectable, God-fearing, Jew-loving, praying, benevolent, religious Gentile? Acts 10:2 to 22.
2. Why did the other eleven apostles and saved Israelites condemn Peter for preaching to this uncircumcised proselyte? Acts 11:1 to 4.
3. Why did Paul have to receive special appointment to go to the Gentiles; and then go to them, because Israel put the message of Christ from them; for Paul wrote that the Gentiles obtained mercy, because of Israel’s unbelief? Acts 13:46. Galatians 1:11 and 12; 16 to 20. . . Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:17 to 19 and Romans 11:26 to 30.

Let us study the “far off” in Acts 2:39 in the light of the following Scriptures, all of which refer to scattered Israelites, “far off” from Jerusalem, and may of them “far off” from God. Isaiah 6:12, Isaiah 43:6, Isaiah 57:9 and Isaiah 60:9 . . . Jeremiah 2:5 . . . Ezekiel 8:6 and Ezekiel 22:5 . . . Zechariah 6:15 and Daniel 9:7.

Read Daniel 9:7.

“O Lord righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day: to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near and that are “far off,” through all the countries whither thou hast driven them.”

To which of the “far off” people did Peter, on the day of Pentecost refer, to the “far off” Gentiles of Ephesians 2:17 or to the “far off” Israelites?

NOW ABIDETH FAITH—HOPE—LOVE

I CORINTHIANS 13:13

Let us emphasize the “Now” in I Corinthians 13:13. “NOW abideth faith—hope—love; but the greatest of these is love.” There are several “nows” that should be emphasized as denoting dispensational changes. Study II Corinthians 5:16; Ephesians 3:5; Philippians 1:5 and Colossians 1:26. In these Scriptures we shall catch something of the significance of the “nows.” In I Corinthians 13, we note the contrast concerning certain gifts mentioned in verse eight, and the great gift mentioned in verse thirteen, “the greatest of these is love.” In I Corinthians 12:31 the Holy Spirit commands “covet earnestly the best gifts.” And then in chapter 13 He shows the more excellent way: “the love way.”

Now for the contrast:

I CORINTHIANS 13:8

“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, THEY SHALL FAIL: whether there be tongues THEY SHALL CEASE; whether there be knowledge IT SHALL VANISH AWAY.”

I CORINTHIANS 13:13

“And NOW ABIDETH faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.”

Carefully note the beginning and the ending: “Love never faileth;” “the greatest of these is love.”

In I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 are enumerated some sign gifts of the Holy Spirit such as: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.” These gifts were exercised by the different members of the Church of Corinth. Many of them were quite carnal and very much lacking in that greatest of gifts, LOVE. But they had all the “sign gifts.” They were not, like believers in other cities, visited by Paul, known for their great faith. So let us be taught that they were not intrusted with special gifts of the Holy Spirit, because they were faithful and spiritual. The very contrary was the fact concerning their spiritual state.

Now why is it that we might select one hundred of the most spiritual, faithful saints of today; men far more spiritual than the first-century Corinthians, and not find in one of them one of the “sign gifts” of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11; although they might be full of faith, hope and love. They have coveted the more excellent way. But the explanation is “prophecies, tongues and knowledge (mentioned in the “sign gifts”) shall pass away. This is the meaning of the Greek words, “fail” and “cease.” Then these gifts were to remain only temporarily with the Christians of the first century. In I Timothy 5:23 and II Timothy 4:20, we find the record of two faithful saints who were sick some years after Paul wrote I Corinthians 13:8: “shall be done away.” Timothy and Trophimus were not healed by a saint who had the gift of healing (I Corinthians 12:9). In fact, they were not healed at all. Timothy was told to take a remedy for his prolonged illness. Trophimus was left sick, without healing. A great change! Yes. “Now abideth faith, hope and love.”

After Paul wrote I Corinthians, he wrote II Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, I Timothy, Philippians, Titus, Philemon, Colossians and II Timothy. In these writings not one mention is made concerning any member of the Body of Christ having the gift of healing, tongues or miracles. But about two hundred times we find “faith,” “hope” and “love.” Note how the three are linked together in Ephesians 4:1 to 5: “Forbearing one another in love;” “one hope;” “one faith.”

In I John, written that believers might know that they have eternal life, (I John 5:13), there is no mention of the “sign gifts.” But more than thirty times the exercise of love is one of the proofs that the believer has eternal life.

“NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE; THESE THREE, BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.”