

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

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BIBLE MESSAGES FOR BEREANS

AN INTRODUCTION TO A NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE

WE ARE sending forth this first edition of Bible Study for Bereans with the purpose, desire and hope that we may stimulate, encourage, or provoke, real, honest, diligent Bible study among the children of God. The profound ignorance of the Bible among church members is appalling.

We earnestly solicit and covet the prayerful cooperation of every spiritual child of God who appreciates God's Grace Gospel and who really desires to receive and search the Holy Scriptures without the fear or favor of man or religious organizations. It is needless and useless to appeal to believers whose denominational loyalty and pride, or preconceived opinions, interfere with honest, intelligent and unprejudiced study of the Word of God. So our Bible study is for Bereans.

In making this statement we think of two verses of Scripture: John 12:43 and Galatians 1:10: "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

It has been repeatedly claimed that more than ninety-five per cent of church members permit church leaders to do their thinking for them, and that ninety-five per cent of their instructors have been so influenced by the traditions of church fathers and by denominational church creeds, that fewer than five per cent of either leaders or followers are willing, if able, to study the Bible with unbiased minds and with open and honest hearts.

Let us ever bear in mind that no servant of the Lord has any new truth to present. Progressive revelation ceased with the close of The Revelation more than 1800 years ago. Since that time, "anything that is true is not new" and "anything that is new is not true", so far as the inspired Word of God is concerned.

No believer, or group of believers, receive any special revelation of Divine truth, or interpretation of truth, as did the holy men of old who were moved by the Holy Spirit to give to us the holy Scriptures. The humblest, most ignorant member of the Body of Christ, the new-born babe in Christ, has just as much of the Holy Spirit as has the most gifted Bible teacher. Men are not led into truth by the Holy Spirit independent of the written Word of God. And most assuredly the millions of church members, who are in doctrinal error, have not been led by the Holy Spirit into the misinterpretation of the Scriptures.

Human systems of interpretation leave us with inconsistencies and seeming contradictions in the Bible with unholy mixtures, which are displeasing to the Lord. All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. But all Scripture must be rightly divided for the true interpretation, appropriation and application.

A SIMPLE PRINCIPLE IN BIBLE STUDY

When we compare the statement I Peter 1:10 with the statement in Ephesians 3:9, we at once see the importance of obeying II Timothy 2:15. “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” We are told in I Peter 1:10 that Israel’s prophets foretold the sufferings and glory of Christ. In Ephesians 3:9 we are told that the “dispensation of the mystery” and the “unsearchable riches of Christ” were hid in God and not made known to Israel’s prophets. All through the Book of Acts and through the Epistles of Peter, Paul, James and John we must differentiate between that which Israel’s prophets foretold would come to pass and that which none of them even hinted would come to pass: “not made known to the sons of men in other ages”; “hidden from generations.” Colossians 1:25 and 26. Ephesians 3:3 to 5.

If there has been no change in God’s program since the Epistles were written to the Ephesians and the Colossians, then this is still the Dispensation of the Mystery, which means the Dispensation of that which had been a Mystery until it was revealed by the glorified Christ to and through His Apostle Paul. For the students of the Word of God, for the members of the Church which is the Body of Christ, there should be nothing mysterious, mystical or hidden concerning the dispensation of grace and the mutual inheritance of Head and members of the Body, made alive together, seated together in the highest heavenlies, constituting the One New Man which God is now making, while His program and purpose concerning Israel have been temporarily abandoned. Ephesians 1:9 to 22; Ephesians 2:4 to 17. Aside from the Divine preservation of Israel in the world today God has suspended His covenants and promises with Israel and the other nations until He shall have accomplished that which He purposed in Christ Jesus ages before He made any covenants, concerning His Nation and their land of promise. II Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 3:11.

Israel’s hope is identified with the sufferings and glory of Christ foretold by Israel’s prophets. That hope will be realized when Christ shall be the Son of man on the throne of His glory. Matthew 25:31. There the twelve apostles will be seated with Him. Matthew 19:28. The Son of man is coming in power and great glory, Luke 21:27 to 31. He will bring about the restitution of all things. Acts 3:21 Moses, Samuel, and all of the prophets, spoke of “these days.” Acts 3:24. “These days” were promised in the covenants. Acts 3:25. At that time Christ will govern from David’s throne. Isaiah 9:6 and 7.

“These days” of grace, “these days” of the Body of Christ, are not “these days” of Israel’s hope, foretold by Moses, Samuel and others. “These day” were foreordained before the foundation of the world, but not foretold by Israel’s prophets.

None of the twelve apostles, in their “Acts” ministry, spoke of these days, They referred to a hope and blessings promised by the pen of David, Joel, Amos, Moses, Samuel, and others. Let us be careful not to confuse prophetic promises with the mystery. Let us not confuse the hope of the Body of Christ with Israel’s hope.

TEST THE THINGS THAT DIFFER

The correct translation of the first command of Philippians 1:10 is, “test the things that differ.” Every student of the Word of God knows that in that Word there are things which differ; but very few of these students seem to know very much about testing the things that differ.

Things in God's Book differ because God's dealings with different people in that Book differed. Intelligent Bible study demands the recognition of the different dispensations in the Bible.

About seven years after the death and resurrection of Christ those apostles who had accompanied with the Lord Jesus from the beginning of His earthly ministry (Acts 1:22) glorified God because then and there God granted repentance unto life to Gentiles. Acts 11:18. Then the leader of those apostles, Peter, said: "Men and brethren" in 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. AND GOD, WHICH KNOWETH THE HEARTS, BARE THEM WITNESS, GIVING THEM THE HOLY GHOST, EVEN AS HE DID UNTO US;"

"AND PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH." Acts 15:7 to 9.

Up to that time it was unlawful for the Jews to keep company with Gentiles. Acts 10:28. Some years later Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, wrote:

"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 10:12.

Then he added:

"BUT I SAY, DID NOT ISRAEL KNOW? FIRST MOSES SAITH, I WILL PROVOKE YOU TO JEALOUSY BY THEM THAT ARE NO PEOPLE, AND BY A FOOLISH NATION I WILL ANGER YOU." Romans 10:19.

"FOR IF THOU WERT CUT OUT OF THE OLIVE TREE WHICH IS WILD BY NATURE, AND WERT GRAFFED CONTRARY TO NATURE INTO A GOOD OLIVE TREE; HOW MUCH MORE SHALL THESE, WHICH BE THE NATURAL BRANCHES, BE GRAFFED INTO THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE." Romans 11:24.

Then later on he wrote:

"THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL, AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE, AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD."

"AND CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHICH WERE AFAR OFF, AND TO THEM THAT WERE NIGH." Ephesians 2:12 and 17.

From these Scriptures we learn that there had been a difference between Israel and the Gentiles. The Gentiles had been "no people", "a foolish nation". Israel was the People of God; His chosen nation. Gentiles were the wild tree; Israel the natural branches. Gentiles were afar off. Israel was nigh. Gentiles had been aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; strangers from the covenants of promise. Concerning Israel, the Scriptures declare:

"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 PROMISES; WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS, AND OF WHOM AS CONCERNING THE FLESH CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOREVER.. AMEN." Romans 9:4 and 5.

"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." Acts 3:25.

In Romans 2:14 we read, “The Gentiles which have not the law.”

Thus we see that there was a difference between Israel and the Gentiles. While the Lord Jesus was on earth He called Israel “sheep” and “children”. He called Gentiles “dogs”. Matthew 15:21 to 27. There is a great difference between children and dogs. But about 25 years later God declared there was no difference.

While on earth the Lord Jesus said to the twelve apostles, “go not in the way of the Gentiles.” Matthew 10:5. Some years later the same Lord Jesus said to Paul, “I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles.” Acts 22:21. Test the things that differ.

Unto the Twelve was committed the gospel of the circumcision for the circumcision. Unto Paul was committed the gospel of the uncircumcision for the uncircumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. Test the things that differ.

“The law having a shadow of good things to come.” Hebrews 10:1. There is a difference between the shadow and good things to come. Test the things that differ. Israel was judged with respect to meats and drinks and holy days and the sabbath. Exodus 20:1 to 12. Hebrews 9:10. The members of Christ’s Body are not to be judged with respect to any kind of religious ordinances or special days. Colossians 2:13 to 17. Test the things that differ.

The New Covenant Church of Hebrews 2:12 and Hebrews 12:23 was mentioned by Israel’s prophets. Psalms 22:22. The Church, which is the Body of Christ, of Ephesians 1:19 to 22; Ephesians 3:6 to 9, and Colossians 1:24 to 28, was not mentioned by Israel’s prophets. Test the things that differ.

The sufferings and glory of Christ were foretold by Israel’s prophets. I Peter 1:12. The present ministry of Christ, as Head of the Church which is His Body, and Christ in the Gentiles the hope of glory, was a mystery (secret) not made known to Israel’s prophets. Ephesians 3:8 and 9. Colossians 1:25 to 27. Test the things that differ.

The Son of man is coming to Israel with His holy angels, in the clouds, with power and great glory. Luke 21:27 to 33. The members of the Body of Christ are to be called on high to appear with Christ in glory. Philippians, 3:11 to 21. Colossians 3:4. Test the things that differ.

While Christ was on earth in the midst of Israel, and during the “Acts” period, while Israel’s temple in Jerusalem stood, and that Nation remained in their land; while God’s order was to the Jew first, there was a program of signs, visions, miracles, angelic visitations, healings, death judgments and religious ceremonies; but after Paul declared God’s judgment upon Israel, in Acts 28:25 to 28, about 63 A.D., there was a new order, ushering in the signless age of grace. I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20; Philippians 2:2. Is God’s program for today one of grace mixed with signs and religion, or a “signless” age of pure grace and no religion? Test the things that differ.

FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS

How blessed it is to be included in the “US” of this wonderful and most gracious promise. Herein is the guarantee of “all things” to the receiver. The receiver is the believer. The “all things” are added to the Great Gift. The Great Gift must first be received before the “all things” are available. The Great Gift is God’s only Son.

“As many as received Him to them gave He right to become the children of God” John 1:12.

Hear and weigh well these words, if you are a child of God through faith in His only begotten Son

“HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US “ALL THINGS?” Romans 8:32.

Surely our Heavenly Father will not withhold the “all things” from the receiver, if He did not withhold His very best. Do you remember those words of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, the twenty-fifth verse: “Father, thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world?” And although, according to Ephesians 3:17 and 18, God wants His children to comprehend what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, we can not begin to fathom that mutual love that existed between Father and Son before the foundation of the world. If we could begin to measure that infinite love, we could better understand “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” Think of the breadth and length, and height and depth of that little word “so.” Truly Christ on the cross is the measure of God’s love for sinners.

We can more readily accept, and more easily understand, the things that accompany salvation, the “much more,” the “all things,” or “blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ.” “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more.” Romans 5:10. Yes, every child of God can and should claim the “much mores” that he has in Christ.

And let us ever remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35. According to this principle, the Lord Jesus is always more willing to give than we are to receive. “For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.” It was He who said, “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.” John 10:28. But in order that such a gift might be bestowed, God could not spare His own Son. Christ had to be delivered up. He was willing to be delivered up.

As we go back by faith to the bloody sweat of Gethsemane and the horrors, the torture and the shame of Calvary, remember in His own mind and heart it was more blessed to give than to receive. Every child of God can say with Paul concerning the sacrifice of Christ, “Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. Remember those words of that loving Saviour, when He knew that the suffering of death was before Him:

AND THE BREAD THAT I WILL GIVE IS MY FLESH, WHICH I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.” John 6:51

And in the light of all of His gracious promises, and especially with the knowledge of His sacrificial death of shame, shall we deny or doubt His willingness to supply every spiritual need? Shall we ever question His love, or shall we not believe the record concerning Him: “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end?” John 13:1.

Let us praise the Lord in the language of Paul, recorded in Colossians 1:12 to 18:

“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 the Son of His love . . . In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins . . . Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature . . . For by Him were ‘ALL THINGS’ created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ‘ALL THINGS’ were created by Him and for Him . . . And He is before ‘ALL THINGS,’ and by Him ‘ALL THINGS’ consist. . . And He is the Head of the body, the church; Who is the

beginning, and Firstborn from the dead; that in 'ALL THINGS' He might have the preeminence."

What an inheritance! What a redemption! Yea, what a Redeemer! He is before "all things." By Him "all things" consist. By Him and for Him were "all things" created. Then He has the perfect right to have preeminence in "all things."

This Blessed Redeemer of sinners is the brightness, or effulgence, of God's glory, the express image of His person, and upholds "all things" by the word of His power. Hebrews 1:3. Little wonder then that the Father hath appointed His Son Heir of "all things." Hebrews 1:2.

We see not yet "all things" put under Him, but we see Jesus. Hebrews 2:8 and 9. And by Faith we see "all things" put under His feet.

"AND WHEN 'ALL THINGS' SHALL BE SUBDUED UNTO HIM, THEN SHALL THE SON ALSO BE SUBJECT UNTO HIM THAT PUT 'ALL THINGS' UNDER HIM." I Corinthians 15:28.

"All things" belong to Christ by right of creation and by right of redemption. "All things were made by Him and without Him was not any thing made that was made." "The Word was with God; and the Word was God." John 1:1 to 3.

Behold the Blessed Son of God at God's right hand in the heavenlies, "Far above principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come . . . And hath put 'ALL THINGS' under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over 'ALL THINGS' to the church Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Ephesians 1:20 to 23.

Are you a member of the Body of Christ? Are you seated with Him in the heavenlies? If you can say "yes" to the first question, God says "yes" to the second. Think of this matchless grace, this infinite love, or as God expressed it in Ephesians 2:4 . . . "But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us." The Body of Christ is the fulness of Christ. "That they two shall be one flesh." Ephesians 5:31 and 32. You say "too good to be true." No, it is very good; but very true. Because God which cannot lie promised us eternal life before the world began. Titus 1:2. Here is glorious truth for your Christmas meditation and praise

"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 WERE GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." II Timothy 1:10.

And now back to our first verse: "For if God spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

We feel as though we would like to say, "Lord, we believe, help Thou our unbelief." Don't you really love Paul's "my gospel?" Doesn't it suit you better than "strive to enter into the kingdom?" Pure saving grace is so beautiful. Why should any person try to spoil it with religion? I am sure that the devil is very largely to blame, don't you think so? He is quite religious himself; but He does hate the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And surely you will not line up with the devil and frustrate the grace of God with a mixture of law or religion.

"All things" are of God, Who hath reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ." II Corinthians 5:18. And hear the words of Jesus Christ: "All things" that the Father hath are mine." John 16:15. We belong to the Father and the Son. We are God's children and joint-heirs with Christ. The Holy Spirit is indwelling us as the evidence of this relationship. Romans 8:16 and 17. Therefore, God says to His children

“FOR IF GOD SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?”

“FOR ‘ALL THINGS’ ARE YOURS . . . AND YE ARE CHRIST’S; . . . AND CHRIST IS GOD’S.” . . . I Corinthians 3:21 to 23.

THE BELIEVER’S ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

1. “By Him all that believe are justified from ‘all things.’ . . .” Acts 13:39.
2. “If any man be in, there is a new creation, old things are passed away; behold ‘all things’ are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17.
3. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in ‘all things’ may abound to every good work.” II Corinthians 9:8.
4. “In ‘all these things’ we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” Romans 8:37.
5. “And we know that ‘all things’ work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28.
6. “Giving thanks always for ‘all things’ unto God, the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20.
7. “I can do ‘all things’ through Christ Which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 3:13.
8. “I know how to be abased and I know how to abound: everywhere and in ‘all things’ I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Philippians 3:12.

Let us not misappropriate the promises of God to Israel, or we may be disappointed. As members of the Body of Christ, we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. But all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. The Saviour said to His disciples, “in the world ye shall have tribulation.” To be hungry and abased belong to the “all things” of those who are in Christ. As one Christian said, “I am not, worthy to suffer such persecution for Christ’s sake.”

Then let us not forget that His Divine power hath given us “all things” that pertain unto life and godliness.” II Peters 1:3. So the “all things” that God will freely give to His children, to those who have received His own Son as Saviour and Lord, are not the riches of this world, and not necessarily the material blessings and temporal gifts that are seen. There is not the guarantee to any child of God of material prosperity. To even the most faithful member of the Body of Christ there is no assurance of an abundance of earthly things. On the contrary the Father may withhold from His child many of the comforts of life; even good health. But whatever may be the afflictions, or trials, or temptations, or problems, or obstacles, or other circumstances of life, God is able to make all grace abound. He still says, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” God is able to do exceeding abundant above all we can ask or think. My God shall supply all your need. But He may say, “having food and raiment let us therewith be content.” And the faithful child of God will say, “All things work together for good to those who love God.”

“LET YOUR CONVERSATION BE WITHOUT COVETOUSNESS, AND BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE; FOR HE HATH SAID, ‘I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE.’” Hebrews 13:5.

Let us remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is that Messiah who was to come into the world and, according to the testimony of that woman of Samaria, at the well, He was to tell us “all things.” John 4:25. And within a few moments after this utterance, that Messiah had read the

mind and revealed the secrets of the heart of that sinful woman and she was running through the city crying, "Come see a Man Which told me 'all things' that ever I did." He knows we did when we were sinners and "all things" we have since done. As Peter said some months later, "Lord, thou knoweth "all things" John 21:17.

So we cannot hide anything from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He knows "all things"; for "to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are 'all things,' and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by Whom are 'all things' and we by Him." I Corinthians 8:6.

May our Heavenly Father give us faith to appropriate the "all things" that He will freely give us with His own Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, through Whom we have received God's free gift which is eternal life.

All things are His, and He is mine
I speak of Christ, my Lord Divine
Yes, by Christ all things consist,
Before all things He did exist.
Eternal Word in heaven above,
The object of His Father's love.
Clothed in flesh, to earth Christ came
To show God's grace; His love proclaim.
Christ tasted death for every man,
This was God's redemption plan.
His sinless life Christ freely gave,
And now in mercy God will save
Sinful men of every race,
Salvation's free; 'tis all of grace.
The Lord of glory crucified;
Believing sinners justified.
Death abolished, Christ arose;
Waiting, now till all His foes
Shall be destroyed, His footstool be
Till God's elect His glory see.
At God's right hand the risen Lord
Upholds all things by His own word
Of all things Head, of all things Heir;
And the members of His Body share
His riches and His grace and love
Seated with Him in heaven above.
Joint-heirs with Christ, yes 'tis true
Complete in Christ; all things new
Before all things my Saviour is;
If He is mine, then I am His.
And by His grace and power Divine
All things His, are, all things mine.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD

“BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY, SAVE IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED UNTO ME, AND I UNTO THE WORLD.” Galatians 6:14.

According to the Word of God, Christians are both dead and alive, however paradoxical it may seem. In Colossians 3:3 we have the statement concerning Christians, “Ye are dead.” It is for this reason that they are instructed to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth. In these verses, it is seen that in the mind of God the believer is dead to the things on earth. In John 1:10 is recorded the fact that the Christ Who made all things was in the world and the world knew Him not. The statement is, “the world was made by Him.” “All things were made by Him.” John 1:3. When Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners He came unto His own world and His own Nation received Him not. When He came to be the Saviour of the world He did not find the world as He originally created it. The world as He found it, and as it is at present, is described in I John 2:16, which we quote

“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.”

It was Satan, the Prince of this world, who brought the world to this condition. But in spite of the world’s lustful condition, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And then follows the statement in John 3:17:

“For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Such a world surely was already condemned and deserved the righteous condemnation of God’s Holy Son. But His attitude toward the world is expressed in His words to a woman caught in sin, “Neither do I condemn thee.” God loved the world and sent His Son, by Whom He made the world, to be the Saviour of the world, and not to condemn the world. But the world so hated God that it spurned His love and murdered His Son.

Concerning His own people Christ said, “they hated Me without a cause.” “The world knew Him not.” “Which none of the rulers of this world knew; for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” I Corinthians 2:8. To one ruler the Son of God said, “My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence.” John 18:36. “My kingdom is not of this world.” He had said in John 8:23: “I am not of this world.”

Out of the world the Father gave some believers to Christ. Concerning this little flock He prayed to His Father in theses words:

“I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

“I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” John 17:14, 15 and 16

From these words of the Lord Jesus we learn that His redeemed ones are in the world but not counted by Him as being of the world; having been given to Him out of the world. To them He said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. To them He also said,

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.”

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” John 15:18 and 19

Shortly before Christ uttered these words He had said to His disciples “Now is the Judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” John 12:31. He spoke of His death on the cross. There He was crucified by the world.

Christ was not of this world. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. Christ’s redeemed ones are not of this world. So long as any individual sinner remains in the world and of the world, he is guilty with the world of the crucifixion of the Creator of the world. He is dead in trespasses and sins, condemned and lost. His only hope for justification, and life, and righteousness is faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. By the redemptive work of Christ the believing sinner is delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. To be in Christ’s kingdom, which is not of this world, is to be seated with Him and in Him in the heavenlies. The believer is not condemned; but is accepted in Christ and complete in Him.

In the study of the Epistle to the Galatians we note the three-fold crucifixion of the believer. We quote Galatians 2:20— Galatians 5:24— Galatians 6:14:

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

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

In the sixth chapter of Romans we learn that the believer is crucified and dead to sin. “He that is dead is freed from sin.” Romans 6:7. So God’s Word teaches that the believer is crucified to the law; crucified to the flesh; crucified to sin; and crucified to the world. It is the crucified sinner to whom God speaks in I John 2:15, “Love not the world, neither the things of the world.”

According to the Word of God, the unbeliever walks according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air; and being without God in the world, he is without hope, because he will not receive Christ, the sinner’s only Hope. Ephesians 2:1 and 12.

“Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4:4.

The believer is of God, “and the whole world lieth in the evil one.” I John 5:19. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” I Corinthians 1:21. So most assuredly God does not instruct the sinner, who is in the world and of the world, to love not the world. Whether it be the political world, or the religious world, or the pleasure-seeking world, or the wisdom of this world, the whole world is in the evil one, and is not of God.

The expression “worldly Christian” seems paradoxical, because the Christian is not of the world. “If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” Romans 6:8. The believer is alive unto God through Christ. Romans 6:11. The Christian may abstain from worldly pleasures, such as dancing, card-playing, theatre-going, and have victory over habits that are called immoral habits and still be worldly, even without yielding to the lust of the flesh. The world, that is not of the Father, includes the pride of life. A Christian can be spoiled by a worldly education, discounting God’s statement, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”; by failing or neglecting to heed this warning of God; “Beware lest any man spoil you through

philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.” Colossians 2:8.

They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, and these lusts include the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, which are of this world which is hastening on to the judgment of God by Christ Jesus. Acts 17:31. But in this day of intellectual pride when men and women boasting of their modern scholarship, are heady, high-minded, wise in their own conceits, and presumptuous enough to demand for this twentieth century civilization a modern interpretation of Christianity, contrary to the plain teachings of Christ and His apostles, Christians must be exceedingly careful not to be worldly wise and identified in their thinking with the group of the world included in “the pride of life”

When believers compromise with the world, either as to the wisdom of this world, with its intellectual and religious pride, or in the matter of worldly pleasures, they cannot obey the Word of God in which the believer is instructed to “be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” Philippians 2:15. While the Saviour was on earth He said, “As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.” John 9:5. To His disciples He said, “ye are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14. And while it is still true that this is the condemnation that Light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil and will not come to the Light lest their deeds should be reproved, it is the duty and blessed privilege of the Christian to keep the light of Christ shining in this dark world, never forgetting, that Satan is the prince of the world, the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air, at the head of the rulers of the darkness of this world, and that not one of his prisoners can be delivered from him and his darkness except through that great Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. John 3:17 to 20. John 1:9 and Ephesians 6:12.

“We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” Titus 2:12.

THE NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

One of the favorite verses of Scripture quoted by Christians who have the assurance and joy of salvation is II Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” “If any man.” The message of the Lord Jesus was not to “any man”. “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24. Some months after the death and resurrection of the Son of man, His twelve apostles declared that He had been raised from the dead to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. Acts 5:31. For several years thereafter the Word of God was preached to none but Jews only. Acts 11:19. Even Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, declared that it was necessary that the Jews should have preference over the Gentiles. Acts 13:46. In fact, the Lord turned Paul to the Gentiles because the Jews put His offer of mercy from them; and then the Gentiles obtained mercy through Israel’s unbelief. Romans 11:30. Salvation was sent unto the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy. Romans 11:11.

After the Apostle Paul declared that the Jews’ blood was not upon him, he said, “henceforth we turn unto the Gentiles.” Acts 18:6, Acts 20:26. Then he wrote these words to the churches in Galatia “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but a new creation.” Galatians 6:15. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is

neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28.

“If any man be in Christ”. Any kind of a man or woman. No longer was there any merit or advantage because of race or religion. The only place of advantage, security and blessing was in Christ. The same is true today. God’s Old Testament saints had been “under the law” by God’s commandments. But the Holy Spirit wrote, by the pen of the Lord’s great grace preacher, to the believers in Christ; “ye are not under the law.” Romans 6:14

Even at this present time “there is no difference”; “all have sinned and short of the glory of God.” The unsaved religious man or woman, the unregenerated church-member, the reverend or doctor of divinity who has not been redeemed by the blood of Christ, are all in the same predicament as the vilest heathen of darkest Africa, in the same condition before God as the social outcast and moral pervert, dead in trespasses and sin the world without God (atheist), having no hope, condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18; Ephesians 2:11 and 12; Ephesians 2:1 to 5.

Not in some denominational fold, not in some religious movement, not in some group of people organized to propagate some ethical philosophy or to carry on a program of philanthropy, better government and social uplift, is the individual protected from the judgment and condemnation of God, unless he or she is also in Christ Jesus. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1. In Adam all are dead and all die. I Corinthians 15:22. “If any man be in Christ there is a new creation.”

No unrighteous man shall enter the kingdom of God. I Corinthians 6:9. “There is none righteous, no not one.” Romans 3:10. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ, because Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us. II Corinthians 5:21.

Believing sinners are made accepted in Christ. Ephesians 1:6. Believing sinners are complete in Christ. Colossians 2:10. Believing sinners are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Ephesians 1:3. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13.

All believers in Christ Jesus are one, in one Body, in one hope, because of one faith; and they will all come in the unity of the one faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. Ephesians 4:12. All such believers should recognize one Lord, as the one Head of the one Church which is His Body. Ephesians 4:3 to 6.

The One Head together with the One Body constitute the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15. The members of this One Body, one flesh with the risen glorified Christ (Ephesians 5:31), are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God hath foreordained that they should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8 to 10.

Until the individual is worked upon by God, thereby becoming a new creation in Christ Jesus, he is without hope in the world; condemned, dead in trespasses and sins, lost, headed for that wrath of God which cometh upon the children of disobedience: Out of Adam into Christ, is the most important move for any man to consider, the most important step for any man to take.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” II Corinthians 5:19. Surely such a God is the God of all grace. I Peter 5:10. “God was in Christ”. “If any man be in Christ”. Christ was God and man. God and man met in Christ. God will meet and commune with man in grace and mercy in Christ. God will bless, with all spiritual blessings, every man in Christ. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:3. The believing sinner is dead and his life is hid with Christ in God

and when Christ who is his life shall appear, then shall he also appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3 and 4.

FOLLOWING JESUS AND IN CHRIST

While the Son of God was here in the flesh, He was made under the law. Galatians 4:4. He was a minister of the circumcision to confirm promises which God had made unto Israel by the prophets. Romans 15:8. The price of discipleship in the days of His flesh, was to leave all and follow Him, selling or giving away all possessions. Luke 3:11; Luke 5:11; Luke 5:28; Luke 9:3; Luke 10:4; Luke 11:41; Luke 12:21; Luke 12:33; Luke 18:22; Luke 19:8; Luke 21:2 to 4; Luke 9:61. It required the death and resurrection of Christ to bring in God's reign of grace, the grace of God which hath appeared to all men and to bring salvation.

Surely the careful student of the Scriptures will observe the great difference between kingdom discipleship and grace salvation. God, by the mouth of His Old Testament prophets, told Israel that His Son would come to them from heaven as their suffering Messiah, and also as their glorious King. The fulfillment of all these prophecies meant that Christ would be put to death in the flesh and in a glorified body would sit on the throne of His glory here on earth. This is called "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." I Peter 1:11.

The Old Testament prophets said nothing to Israel about the present position and possessions of the members of the Body of Christ. They had nothing to say about Christ far above in the heavenlies, Head over all things to the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:19 to 22; Ephesians 3:5 and 6. This was hid in God, not made known to Old Testament prophets or to New Testament prophets, until after it was revealed to the Apostle Paul by the risen Christ. Ephesians 3:8 and 9. Colossians 1:24 to 28. This mystery made known is no longer a mystery.

The fact that God would be so rich in mercy and so great in love that He would make alive Gentiles who had been alienated from the life of God, dead in trespasses and sins, and make them to sit in Christ in the heavenlies, accepted and complete in Christ, identified with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and heavenly position and finally to appear with Him in glory, was a mystery, or secret, hid in God from the foundation of the world. Ephesians 2:4 to 10. The New Covenant was foretold. Jeremiah 31:31 to 34. The new Israel was foretold. Isaiah 62:1 to 4. The new heavens and the new earth were foretold. Isaiah 65:17. But the new creations of II Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 2:9 and 10 were not foretold. They were, however, foreordained before the foundation of the world. Romans 8:29 and 30.

When Peter and the Eleven were preaching during the "Acts" period, they could say, "this Scripture must needs be fulfilled;" "this is that which was spoken by Joel," "David being a prophet foretold that Christ would be raised to take his throne;" "Moses, Samuel and all the prophets told of these days;" "to Him give all the prophets witness;" "to this agree the words of the prophets." Acts 1:16; Acts 2:16; Acts 2:30; Acts 3:24; Acts 10:43; Acts 15:15.

What the prophets did say and what the prophets did not say is intimated in Paul's statement in II Corinthians 5:17: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become NEW." "Old things passed." "All things become new." Note in this connection 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." "Christ after the flesh;" "old things passed away." "If any man be in Christ" "all things are become new." The new creation was the

new truth. Here is a change in the Divine program. Note also in the same chapter, verse fourteen: "We thus judge that One died; then have all died." (RV)

Christ was baptized unto death. Luke 12:48 to 51. Believers have been baptized into the death of Christ. Romans 6:3. They are dead with Him; buried with Him; raised with Him; seated with Him. They are in Him. Baptized into Christ. They have put on Christ: Galatians 3:27.

Such glorious truths were not given by Jesus of Nazareth to His Twelve while He was the Man in the midst of Israel in their land, going about doing good, proclaiming His kingdom and performing kingdom miracles. Acts 2:22 and 10:38. The Twelve did not experience this intimate union while on earth as followers of Jesus. The Twelve did not preach such a union with Christ to Israel on the day of Pentecost, or before Paul declared it. The ministry of Peter and his associates, after the death of Christ, is set forth in the Book of Acts, chapters 1 to 12; from the year 33 A.D. to the year 45 AD. After that year Paul's ministry fills the record to Acts 28:31; until the year 63 A.D. He is mentioned more than 120 times in the last half of Acts. Before the council at Jerusalem, recorded in Acts 15:1 to 22, before Paul there decided to take up some important work in connection with the Twelve, he had been preaching independent of them, the message which he had received from no human lips. He conferred not with flesh and blood. His gospel of the uncircumcision, justification by faith, was received from Christ in heaven, while Paul was in Arabia. Galatians. 1:11 and 17; Galatians 2:7 to 9; Galatians 3:8; Acts 13:39. In the Jerusalem temple Christ, by vision, sent Paul far hence to the Gentiles. Acts 22:21. Some time after Paul had finished his work with the Twelve, he uttered these words: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 20:24.

It was undoubtedly very shortly after this declaration of the Apostle, to the Gentiles that he wrote that the God of his age would do everything possible to keep the last sinner from receiving and, believing the gospel of the glory of Christ. II Corinthians 4:3 and 4. And then followed these wonderful new truths recorded in the fifth chapter of II Corinthians in connection with the ministry of reconciliation committed to Paul, and by him to others "Old things passed away;" "know Christ after the flesh no more;" "all things new;" "new creation in Christ."

About the same time Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, setting forth that clear message of grace, "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24), stating that the grace message was at first sent to Gentiles because of Israel's blindness and unbelief. Romans 11:1 to 30. It is in this same eleventh chapter that the Apostle Paul magnifies his office, Apostle to the Gentiles. Romans 11:13. In this Epistle he speaks of the wonderful grace gospel as "my gospel." Romans 2:16; Romans 16:25.

By the way of Jerusalem, Paul went to Rome, after he declared that he would finish his course with joy and testify of the gospel of the grace of God. He was bound in chains for the hope of Israel. Acts 28:20. He had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. But there is no record that he had mentioned the dispensation of the mystery, hid in God from the foundation of the world. Ephesians 3:9.

Undoubtedly he was released from his first imprisonment in Rome; and then was in bonds, prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Gentiles, for the mystery, and to complete the Word of God by making known that Divine secret. Colossians 1:24 to 28; 4:3; Ephesians 3:1 and 2. Committed to him for the Gentiles was the "dispensation of the grace of God" and the task of instructing members of the Body of Christ "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery." Ephesians 3:9. Read how the people of Ephesus and all Asia heard Paul and loved

Paul, and then how they turned away from him because of his revelation of the mystery. Acts 19:10; Acts 20:37; II Timothy 1:15. And alas! Most members today cannot see it, or have no desire to see it. Many of the Christian leaders are doing their utmost to keep their followers from seeing it. They even prefer to go back beyond Paul's double "henceforth" of II Corinthians 5:16, and know Christ after the flesh. They prefer the Sermon on the Mount to the dispensation of the grace of God. They either cry with the modernists, "back to Jesus", or with the Pentecostals, "back to Pentecost". Either is to know Christ after the flesh.

Back to Mark 16:14 to 18 is back to an Israelitish kingdom program. To go back to the kingdom program with the Twelve is to go back to the time and the place when even the most favored servants of the Lord were not "In Christ." In fact, if we go back to the Four Gospels and to the ministry of the Twelve, what will we find back there for the Gentiles who were alienated from the life of God, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, when even the Son of God was Jesus of Nazareth, under the law? There we shall find that Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and that it was unlawful for the Twelve to come to a Gentile, seven years after Christ died. Acts 10:28.

We had better travel with our Apostle Paul into the thirteenth chapter of Acts; then to Acts 14:27, and there bow and give thanks to God as we read these words "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how that He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Acts 14:27. This was about 45 A.D.

When the Twelve knew Christ after the flesh, they knew nothing concerning the Church which is His Body. Even after His death and resurrection they trusted that it should have been He which should have redeemed Israel. Luke 24:21. Some days later they asked Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6. Some days later they preached to Israel that God would send Christ back, if Israel would repent. Acts 3:19 to 21. God will some day restore again the kingdom to Israel and the Twelve will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. They were the Lord's chosen witnesses to Israel. Acts 2:36; Acts 5:31; Galatians 2:7 to 9. They preached the gospel of the kingdom to Israel and healed everywhere. Luke 9:6.

After the resurrection of Christ, He, in person on earth, commanded them to continue this program of preaching and healing. Mark 16:14 to 18. By special vision Peter was permitted to preach to one God fearing, Israel-loving, religious Gentile and his house, the message concerning Jesus of Nazareth, the word which God sent to Israel. Acts 10:36 to 41.

We fail to find in the first twelve chapters of Acts where Peter and the Eleven were preaching justification by faith, or the ministry of reconciliation, or the gospel of the glory of Christ, or where they had anything to say about the one Body of which Christ in the highest heavenlies is Head.

The water baptism which they preached was unto repentance for the remission of sins. The practice of circumcision continued. The Twelve preached in the Jerusalem temple. Acts 5:42. The Jews which believed continued to be zealous concerning the law. Acts 21:18 to 21. The Lord had given to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Kingdom blessings had to be in connection with Israel.

Unto Paul was committed for Gentiles the dispensation of the grace of God. Ephesians 3:1 to 6. He was given the special task of preaching among Gentiles the "unsearchable" riches of Christ. The Twelve did not preach to any one the unsearchable riches of Christ, according to the "Acts" record. In Acts they were not preaching the message of reconciliation or proclaiming the

new creation in Christ. They had not received the same revelations from Christ that Paul had received. They had made no effort to make any one to see the dispensation of the mystery.

Peter declared, even after the close of the "Acts" period, that Paul's teaching included some things hard to be understood. II Peter 3:16. There is not the slightest suggestion in Acts that any of the Twelve preached the wonderful grace message of Ephesians 2:4 to 10. While Christ was on earth, two Gentiles received kingdom blessings of healing because of their great faith, and for other special reasons. Luke 7:1 to 10; Matthew 15:21 to 27. But after the close of the "Acts" period, after God's judgment pronounced upon Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28, all Gentiles could be blessed with all spiritual blessings, not because of extraordinary faith, but because of extraordinary grace. "But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us . . ." Ephesians 2:4. What a difference between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God; between knowing Christ in the flesh and becoming a new creation in Christ!

What perfect satisfaction; what rest And confidence for the soul; what peace of mind and heart just to trust in the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ and know That salvation, from first to last, is all of grace. Redeemed forever by the precious blood of the Son of God. God has made is accepted in the Beloved. In Him we are complete.

THE SUFFERINGS AND THE GLORY OF CHRIST

In the New Testament Scriptures the Lord Jesus Christ, by noun and pronoun is mentioned nearly seven thousand times. The same unique, supernatural story of this One, whom God, in Isaiah 9:6, calls Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, is woven into every part of those Scriptures. In them is recorded His unity and equality with God, His sinless life, His Divine utterances, His miraculous works, His death (in fulfillment of Scriptures), His burial, His resurrection, His ascension, His exaltation to God's right hand and His many promises to return to earth in glory.

For our study let us get this four-fold vision of the Lord Jesus Christ,

1. Hanging on the cross.
2. Standing at God's right hand.
3. Seated in the upper-heavenlies.
4. Sitting on the throne of His glory.

1—Luke 23:33:

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left."

2—Acts 7:55 and 56:

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, 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."

3—Ephesians 1:19 to 23:

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;

And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church,

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

4—Matthew 25:31 to 36:

“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 divideth 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 unto 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.”

As we search the Scriptures concerning Christ on the cross, Christ standing at the right hand of God, Christ seated in the upper-heavenlies and Christ sitting on the throne of His glory, we are immediately reminded of the statement found in I Peter 1:11, “searching what, or what manner of “time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” Peter had not forgotten the rebuke of the resurrected Christ, as recorded in Luke 24:25 and 26; “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophet have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

It is quite interesting to observe that the same Apostle Peter, in the same first chapter of his first epistle, declares that Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world to be the slain Lamb of God.

So then we know that the suffering of Christ on the cross was not only in fulfillment of the Old Scriptures, but that He was delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Acts 2:23. Israel and Rome, in nailing the Son of Man to the tree, “were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy (God’s) hand and counsel determined before to be done.” Acts 4:27 and 28. Right before the Saviour went to Calvary to die He said, “the Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.” Matthew 26:24. So it was after they had fulfilled all that was written of Him that they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulchre . . . But God raised Him from the dead.” Acts 13:29 to 31. Christ died for our sins, “according to the Scriptures.” Christ was raised the third day, “according to the Scriptures.” I Corinthians 15:3 to 5.

After the Son of Man, on earth, had been associated with Peter and His other disciples for several years He told them that He was going to die and be raised the third day. Luke 18:31 to 33. “And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” Luke 18:34. The Lord Jesus had spoken to them very little about His death on the cross; but He had spoken to them very much concerning the throne of His glory, concerning Himself as King and His kingdom. It is not difficult to appreciate their bewilderment and perplexity, for truly all of us have done much thinking in our endeavors to

understand how Jesus could have been born of Mary to be both a King on David's throne and the foreordained Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary.

That Jesus was for a little while made lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He should by the grace of God taste death for every man, is definitely and clearly stated in the Bible. Hebrews 2:9. He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Hebrews 9:26. That Jesus was born of Mary to be a reigning King on David's throne, the Word of God is just as definite and clear. Luke 1:29 to 33. He was born to establish on earth that Kingdom which was prophesied since the foundation of the world. Luke 1:67 to 73. So then we cannot avoid this question; "if the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were inevitable, that the foreordained will of God might be accomplished and the Scriptures from Moses and in all the prophets might be fulfilled, how could Christ have offered to Israel, in good faith, a literal earthly kingdom?"

It is not so difficult to understand how Jesus can and will come again, as the Son of Man, and sit on the throne of His glory, as King, as He surely must. If the Old Testament Scriptures contain the promises of the infallible and omnipotent God, and if His gifts and calling are without repentance, then God must, by Christ Jesus, restore the kingdom to Israel, give to them their land, and by the earthly reign of David's Seed bring about the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Matthew 19:27 and 28. Luke 21:27 to 34. Acts 3:19 to 21 Acts 15:15 to 18. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. Ezekiel 36:25 to 35. Ezekiel 37:24. Amos 9:11 to 15 Neither is it difficult to see that no prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures could have prevented the return of Christ from heaven to take the throne of His glory on earth at the time Peter gave God's message to Israel contained in Acts 3:14 to 24. or when Stephen saw the Son of man standing. The Old Testament Scriptures were not fulfilled when Christ sat down in heaven to be Head of the Church which is His Body. That Christ was to be seated far above in the upper-heavenlies as Head of the Body, was known to God before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:3 and 4. II Timothy 1:9. But so far as the sons of men in other ages were concerned the present position, relationship and ministry of the risen and seated Christ was a secret Ephesians 3:1 to 9. It was hid in God. It was hidden from men. Colossians 1:24 to 28. It was quite significant that the Son of man was standing in Acts 7:55 and 56.

Thus far in our study we have learned that the Son of man died on the cross, according to the Scriptures, and that He was foreordained from before the foundation of the world to be the slain Lamb of God. We have also observed that He is to sit as a King on the throne of His glory for the judgment of nations, at which time He will bless, with a place in His Father's Kingdom. those who have ministered to the needs of His brethren. This kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world. The King and the kingdom were prophesied by all the holy prophets since the world began. Luke 1:70. Acts 3:21. The Son of man, as King; will be on the throne of His glory, according to the Scriptures, though not foreordained. We next saw Christ, as the Son of man, standing at the right hand of God. He was willing and ready to return as King to sit on the throne of His glory, first restoring the kingdom to Israel, and then bringing about the restitution of all things.

Let us not confuse the past ministry or future ministry of the Saviour with His present position, relationship, and ministry He is seated in the upper-heavenlies. He is the Head of the Body. During this particular age God is making a New Man of Israelites and Gentiles. Ephesians 2:13 to 17 These members of the Body of Christ are not, and could not be, those who are to be blessed when the King shall sit on the throne of His glory; for those nations are to be blessed with an entrance into His Father's kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world—

for ministering to the brethren of the King—whereas, the members of the Body of Christ were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world; and are saved wholly and solely by grace, without works; and are already in the kingdom of the Son of God’s love; and have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:3 and 4. Ephesians 2:8 and 9. Colossians 1:13 and 14.

Thus, we see the great blunder of confusing the position and ministry of Christ as King on the throne of His glory, with the position and ministry of Christ as Head of the Church, which is His Body.

THE PROGRAM OF THE BOOK OF ACTS, LESSON 1

There is no more interesting study in all of the Bible than the study of the Book of Acts, generally called the Acts of the Apostles. While there is much that can be gleaned by even a superficial study of that Book, yet it is one of the most difficult portions of the inspired Word of God to understand.

When the student has read the first two chapters of Acts he has been taught that something new has begun with the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon and into the disciples gathered in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. With the close of the second chapter, the student also has learned that the Lord has added to the little company of believers, three thousand. In the closing verse of the fifth chapter there is recorded concerning the leaders, “daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” In the meantime, in addition to the three thousand, it is recorded in Acts 4:4 that “many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” Thus we see that within a few months the new movement was well under way. Now the question arises, what was the new movement? In Galatians 1:13 is recorded the confession of the Apostle Paul, whose name was Saul, at the time he was converted. His confession was, “I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.” He wrote a similar confession to the Corinthians “am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” I Corinthians 15:9.

In the light of this confession of the Apostle Paul, no one can prove Scripturally that the new movement was not the Church of God. Even those who insist that the Church of God existed before the Day of Pentecost must acknowledge that that Church had a new beginning on the Day of Pentecost after the Holy Spirit came down from heaven.

Now we ask this question to provoke the student to prayerful, serious, thoughtful study: granted that the Bible teaches clearly that there was a new beginning of the Church of God on the Day of Pentecost, with the opening of the Book of Acts, can we not state with Scriptural authority that there was a new beginning of the Church of God with the close of the Book of Acts?

I am sure that every serious intelligent and faithful Christian is more concerned as to what God has to say than with man’s comments, and yet we do thank God for the light on His Word which we have received from the helpful ministry of every able human teacher. In my own Bible study, I know of no one man whose teaching has meant more to me in the understanding of the Bible than the beloved Dr. C. I. Scofield, who departed several years ago to be with the Lord, after a most faithful and fruitful ministry.

Not long before Dr. Scofield was called to meet the Lord, he commended, without reservation, this statement of one of his co-laborers:

“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.”

That statement is found on page 5 of a little booklet, (Copyist’s note: A copy of A. E. Bishop’s book, “Tongues, Signs and Visions” can be found on this CD.) containing the message of a faithful servant of the Lord, A. E. Bishop. On that same page the writer stated that those who contend that the sign gifts are still in the Church are deceived by Satan. We quote six other statements in the same printed message, all endorsed, without reservation, by Dr. Scofield:

“From Romans 9 to 11, it is evident that Israel was set aside nationally before the close of the Acts. That the Jew is in the forefront right down to the end of the Acts cannot be disproved.”

On page 12 the writer stated,

“Jewish rites, vows and ceremonies were in vogue among the truly regenerated even down to the close of the Book of the Acts period. But the Epistles unfold grace, and reveal light for the elimination from the Church of the last vestige of Judaism.”

On page 15 the writer stated that the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were “operative only during the Book of the Acts period.”

On page 17 he stated,

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

On page 19 he stated,

“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 21 the writer stated,

“After this clear revelation of the mystery hid in God from all ages, removing the Jew from the position of superiority . . . which kept the Jew in the forefront right on to the close of the Book of the Acts.”

These facts are not true either because they were written by Mr. Bishop, or heartily endorsed by Dr. Scofield. Both of these men were very humble and able servants of the Lord, and neither claimed any monopoly of the Holy Spirit, or special revelation as to the interpretation of any special Scripture. Neither of them would want any child of God to believe his statements unless they could stand the Berean Scriptural test. We repeat one of the statements; “that the Jew is in the forefront right down to the end of the Acts”, cannot be disproved.

With whom does the Book of Acts begin? It begins with a company of Galilaean Jews. These Jews had been with Jesus of Nazareth before His death and were now waiting for the advent of the Holy Spirit They spoke to Jews on a Jewish feast day. “There were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.” Acts 2:5.

How does the Book of Acts close, thirty years later? We quote Acts 28:17, “And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together; and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.” 28:23—“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” 28:29—

“And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.”

Thus we see that the Book of Acts opened with a message from Peter and the Eleven to a company of Jews in Jerusalem; and closed with a message from the Apostle Paul to a company of Jews in Rome. The events recorded in the second chapter of Acts took place in 33 A.D. The message of Paul in Rome was delivered in 63 A.D. So the Book of Acts period covered about thirty years. It was in the year 45 A.D. that the Apostle Paul spoke these words; in a Jewish synagogue in Asia, to the Jews “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46. Several years after that declaration, Paul was in the City of Corinth, in Europe, again preaching, to Jews, in a Jewish Synagogue, and in the year 54 A.D. spoke these words: “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. It is apparent; however, to anyone who will carefully read the last ten chapters of the Book of Acts that even after both of Paul’s pronouncements the Jew was kept in the forefront right on to the close of the Book of the Acts. Referring to the statement quoted above from the pamphlet, “Jewish rites, vows, and ceremonies were in vogue among the truly regenerated even down to the close of the Book of the Acts period;” how true that is. We call your attention to the many references in the Book of Acts to things Jewish. In the Book of Acts, the word Abraham occurs 8 times; Moses occurs 19 times; Isaac occurs 4 times; Jacob occurs 7 times; the fathers occurs 28 times; the sabbath occurs 9 times; Israel occurs 21 times; Jerusalem occurs 60 times; Judaea occurs 13 times; the temple occurs 24 times; synagogue occurs 23 times; circumcision occurs 9 times; the law occurs 22 times; David occurs 11 times; vision occurs 12 times; miracle occurs 8 times; priest occurs 27 times; tongues occurs 5 times, and signs 8 times.

According to Acts 11:19, during the first years after Pentecost, the preaching was to Jews exclusively. Up to the year 41 A.D., according to Peter’s testimony, recorded in Acts 10:28, it was unlawful for come unto a Gentile. However, in that year the Lord caused the disciples, in spite of the Jews’ prejudice, to glorify Him, for granting repentance unto a respectable, God-fearing, Jew-loving, religious Gentile who lived in their land. In the year 41 A. D. the household of Cornelius heard the message of Christ and they were saved. It was because Cornelius feared God and worked righteousness. Acts 10:35.

Eighteen years after the conversion of these Gentiles the Apostle Paul said to a company of disciples in Ephesus, “I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.” Then some months later this same Apostle Paul appeared before the Sanhedrin in the presence of Israel’s highpriest. We quote here Acts 23:1 to 5: “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day. And the high-priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high-priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”

Carefully consider these words concerning the high-priest in the light of Paul’s statement written in his Epistle to the Romans the same year: “Ye are not under the law.” Romans 6:14. Was Paul guilty of duplicity? Why did he apologize, on the basis of the law, to the high priest? Was the high-priest the servant of God, in spite of the fact he did not believe that Jesus was

Israel's Messiah, twenty-seven years after the death of the Saviour? Did God recognize high-priest after the veil in the temple rent when Christ died on the Cross?

Now this most important question "Were all of the twelve apostles, and the Apostle Paul, and all of the elders and disciples out of the will of God because they carried the law and a part of Israel's program on through the Book of Acts?"

And another question: "Is the program of the Book of Acts the program of Church of God for today?" If not all program of Acts, how much of the program of Acts? Who has the wisdom or discernment to select or reject certain parts of that program for the practice of the members of the Body Christ? If the Book of Acts was the program of the Church, and is not now, why?

A conscientious, earnest Christian said a few days ago; "My, but I'm mixed up, and I don't want to reject anything that the Lord has for me, but it is so difficult to know what to accept and what to reject in the program of the Church for that period covered by the Book of Acts; and so few Fundamentalist Bible teachers can give me any light."

The Book of Acts is truly a book of signs and wonders. There are the cloven tongues of fire on the Day of Pentecost, followed by the speaking with tongues. In the third chapter is recorded the miraculous healing of the man lame from his mother's womb; and in the 28th chapter is recorded the miraculous escape of Paul from the venom of the serpent, followed by the miraculous healing of Publius. Acts 28:8. Between the second chapter and the twenty-eighth chapter are recorded many miracles and signs, including visions, supernatural judgments, jail deliverances, raising the dead, earthquakes, and divine manifestations and Visitations, revelations and tongues. Hebrews 2:4—"God also bearing them witness; both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will."

Was not the whole program of the Book of Acts in accordance with the commission of Christ as recorded in Mark 16:15 to 18? Hear it: "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 demons; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

All during the Book of Acts period signs and divers miracles followed. During that thirty-year period Paul wrote I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, Galatians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians and Romans. In Romans 15:19 he referred to signs. He called those signs the signs of an apostle. II Corinthians 12:12. He thanked God that he spake in tongues. I Corinthians 14:18. In that same Epistle, I Corinthians, he included tongues, healing and miracles among the signs that followed believers. I Corinthians 12:4 to 9. So most assuredly signs followed.

Now, this question: What process of elimination is the Christian to employ today to separate the "signs following" from water baptism. Certainly the Lord joined them together. And He joined them both with the Gospel of the Kingdom. Let us read of the Lord upbraiding the Eleven with their unbelief and the hardness of their heart when He commissioned them, according to Mark 16:14, to 18, and then consider thoughtfully their command to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." Compare these words with Acts 20:24, concerning the gospel of the grace of God, twenty years later. Do you think the Eleven knew anything about the Gospel of Grace when they preached to none but Jews only? Acts 11:9. And surely, they did not preach the Gospel of the Grace of God; in its purity to Cornelius. And if they were preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, then while they were preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, would not the "Kingdom" prayer have been in order, "thy kingdom come?" How

can any man claim to be an intelligent exegete of the Word of God, and eliminate from the program of the Body of Christ, the so-called Lord's prayer, on the basis that it was a Kingdom prayer, and retain water baptism, although acknowledging that it was a Kingdom ordinance?

Here is a most proper question: "If the program of signs and supernatural visitations and demonstrations, found in the four Gospels and all during the Book of Acts period, including the Pauline Epistles of that period, did not cease with the close of the Book of Acts period, are there any true Christians today?" We must admit that there are none with those "sign" credentials; none who witness their salvation with gifts from above similar to those that accompanied salvation during the period covered by the Book of Acts. What a sad and pitiable spectacle one can behold today among poor ignorant, deluded, sincere believers here and there who are futilely endeavoring to perpetuate the signs of Christ's and His first disciples. Their delusion is one of Satan's instruments to wreck Fundamentalism.

Today, as never before, Christians are thoughtfully seeking for the Scriptural curative for this fanaticism, but when they learn the cure, they are as afraid of the cure as they are of the disease, because they are the victims of the traditions of men and fettered by the religious ceremonies imposed by historic Christianity. They are afraid to sail out into the beautiful stream of pure and unadulterated Grace, and Body truth for this age. Many are finding the antidote in the Messages of the Lord given to and through the Apostle Paul after he reached Rome, in which Messages there is a marked absence of signs and miracles and Jewish ceremonies; and much about the revelation of the Mystery which was hid in God, hidden from men, not made known to any of Israel's prophets, or any other prophets before Paul reached Rome, after the Book of Acts was closed. Truly there is just as much Scriptural authority for saying that Church of God had a new beginning with the close of the Book of Acts period as to say that it had a new beginning with the opening of the Book of Acts.

The Fundamentalists who say that the company of saved Gentiles, to whom Peter and James, in the presence of Paul and Barnabas, referred in Acts 15:14 and 17, gathered into the same Church of God, as were the company of saved Gentiles, to whom Paul referred in Ephesians 3:1 to 9, are charging the Holy Spirit with contradiction. Peter and James said of the former company that their salvation into the Church, to which they were gathered, was the subject of Prophecy; that they were being called out with a company of elect Jews, in accordance with the ninth chapter of Amos. Acts 15:14 and 17. Whereas Paul plainly declared that the position of the saved Gentiles, mentioned in Ephesians 3:6, was wholly unknown to Amos or any other Prophet of Israel. What about the contradiction? Did Paul contradict Peter, or are the great majority of Fundamentalists mistaken? The latter, we may be sure, is a fact.

If we insist that Peter and Paul spoke of the same Church of saved Gentiles there is a plain, undeniable contradiction in God's Word. And no Christian believes that there are contradictions when the Word of Truth is rightly divided.

If the Church of God today, the Body of Christ, is to be delivered from "fanaticism"; if Fundamentalism is not to be wrecked by Pentecostalism and similar counterfeit movements and delusions, the Fundamentalists must wake up and apply the one and only curative to rid the Body of Christ of the so-called tongues and signs and visions which are so prevalent, by teaching that the program of the Church today, concerning signs and gifts, must be found this side of the twenty-eighth chapter of Acts and that all truth must be studied in the light of Body Truth.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

It should be obvious that there can be no unity to keep so long as some members of the one Body insist on the sign gifts of the Book of Acts period while other members of the same Body ignore them, without giving a good and sufficient Scriptural reason for so doing. And truly those members who cling to the sign gifts and water baptism are more consistent than those members who cling to the water without the signs; for in the Book of Acts there are two baptisms with the signs, and after the Book of Acts, one baptism and no signs.

Any intelligent student of the Word of God knows that Body truth is not to be found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There are many truths in those four Records: that can and should be applied to the life of the individual member of the Body of Christ. But the subject of those four Records is the King and the Kingdom rather than the Head and the Body. Those four Records are at least 98 per cent Jewish, yes more than 98 per cent. Is not the Book of “ Acts 80 per cent, or more, Jewish? Is not the subject of the King and the Kingdom carried through the Book of Acts rather than the truth concerning the Head and the Body? Most assuredly there is as much Scriptural evidence that the same Kingdom truth, that is the subject of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is carried through the Book of Acts as that the same Church of God that is dealt with in the Book of Acts, is the subject of the Apostle Paul in his messages written after he reached Rome.

If the Body of Christ, dealt with in those closing Epistles, is identical with the Church which began on the day of Pentecost, where can be found the Scriptural explanation of that most radical change that took place in the program of the Church of God after the period covered by the Book of Acts ceased?

It is our Christian duty to join with the Pentecostalist, in an earnest endeavor to recover for the Church today the entire “Book of Acts” Church program, or recover for the Church today the “Body” truth that has been lost since the close of the first century; for it is in that revealed Mystery that the risen Lord has given, with the dispensation of the Grace of God, the only intelligent Scriptural explanation of the cessation of signs, and “that which is in part,” which was God’s order during the Transition period covered by the Book of Acts, in which Book we have learned there were nearly 400 Jewish expressions. Why the absence of those things Jewish in Paul’s closing epistles?

Who authorized any preacher or teacher of the Word to select from the Book of Acts period that part of the early Church program that may please the particular assembly or group of Christians with which he is identified and wholly ignore the signs; ceremonies and gifts that may seem to them objectionable or unnecessary? A strange process of elimination this. Such arbitrary rejection or selection of God’s established order will be practiced only by the sheeplike, who do their thinking by proxy. True Bereans will submit the entire program of the Pentecostal, or Book of Acts, Church to the test of the final truth revealed by the risen Christ to and through the Apostle Paul.

Little wonder that some have believed that the Red-letter New Testament is a work of Satan to hinder Christians from going on with the risen Christ and Paul to perfection rather than going back to Jesus under the law. And on to perfection means beyond the twenty-eighth chapter of Acts; for although Christ by His death on the cross made provision for the abolition of the law dispensation, there was an overlapping of the law and kingdom all through the Book of Acts.

Perhaps you are among those who have elected to drop tongues, healings, visions, casting out demons and other signs and miracles and just hold on to water baptism. Be sure you have

Scriptural authority for putting asunder that which God hath joined together. Surely the Lord is trying to get the ear of Fundamentalists today to recover for the Church, Body truth; and more and more. He will use the rod of fanaticism to bring them to their senses. Let's wake up before it is too late. There are many preachers who know the truth for this age, but their desire for popularity or doors opened by men, that is, some personal advantage, keeps them silent. In the meantime behold the wreck going steadily on .

Shall we suffer with Paul? In Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and Colossians 4:3 we learn that Paul was in jail for this truth; so we can afford to suffer, if we can only get it to God's people.

GOD REMEMBERS NOT—GOD FORGETS NOT

The God of the Bible is omnipotent. Man looketh on the outward appearance; God looketh into the heart. According to the estimate of some men, God has looked into the hearts of more than twenty billion individuals. God has an infallible record of all of the thoughts, words and deeds of all who have ever inhabited the earth. These thoughts, words and deeds have either been righteous or unrighteous. There are two kinds of righteousness; "self-righteousness" and "God-righteousness", or "human righteousness" and "Divine righteousness." In God's Divine ledger, the righteous acts of the, self-righteous are posted on the debit side; the righteous acts of the "God-righteous" are posted on the credit side. But what about the unrighteous acts? What is it that God forgets not? Let us turn to God's Word for our answer:

"WHEN I SAY TO THE RIGHTEOUS THAT HE SHALL SURELY LIVE: IF HE TRUST TO HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND COMMIT INIQUITY, ALL HIS RIGHTEOUSNESSES SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED; BUT FOR HIS INIQUITY THAT HE HATH COMMITTED, HE SHALL DIE FOR IT." EZEKIEL 33:13.

"AND THEIR SINS AND INIQUITIES WILL I REMEMBER NO MORE . . . HAVING THEREFORE BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS . . . LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A TRUE HEART, IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH." HEBREWS 10:17 AND 19.

"FOR GOD IS NOT UNRIGHTEOUS TO FORGET YOUR WORK AND LABOR OF LOVE, WHICH YE HAVE SHOWED TOWARD HIS NAME, IN THAT YE HAVE MINISTERED TO THE SAINTS, AND DO MINISTER. AND WE DESIRE THAT EVERY ONE OF YOU DO SHOW THE SAME DILIGENCE TO THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTO THE END." HEBREWS 6:10 AND 11.

No Divine truth is more clearly taught in the Bible than the fact that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:8. "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt." Romans 4:3 and 4. The righteous, or religious, acts of a self-righteous man are not acceptable unto God; such acts are dead works. Christ died to save religious men from dead works. Hebrews 9:14. Humanity is willing to ascribe praise and honor to the philanthropist who endows the hospital for the relief and cure of the sick and helpless, who provides food for the hungry and clothing for the naked, who finances the asylum for the orphans; for all who minister to the physical needs of the unfortunate. Such benevolences are truly praiseworthy. But God says: "if he trust in his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Thus we see that some benefactions that are remembered by men are forgotten by God. "Man's ways are not God's ways." "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the ends

thereof are the ways of death.” Whether or not we may be dogmatic in the statement that the good deeds of an unsaved man displease God, we may be sure that the unrighteous or self-righteous man never receives credit or reward from God for his acts of righteousness.

How about Cornelius, the just and religious man? To him Peter preached “in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him.” Acts 10:34 to 37. While it is true that Cornelius had to hear from Peter’s mouth “words whereby he and all his house should be saved”, yet Cornelius was by no means a self-righteous man. Cornelius prayed to God alway: he was a just and devout, Godfearing man, who gave much alms to God’s people. Cornelius was not trusting to his own righteousness. From the record, we can say that Cornelius believed the gospel the first time he heard it. He was apparently eager to be saved. He was conscious of his unworthiness and his need of grace.

The “sin” controversy between God and man is of a very serious nature, and must be entirely settled before God can give credit for deeds. Only righteous deeds will be rewarded by God. The doer must be righteous before his deeds are righteous in God’s sight. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Because all have sinned, death has passed upon all men. All men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins. Some dead men are more religious than others. Some dead men do not sink as deep into immoral habits and lustful practices as do others. Some dead men do not possess and manifest the same traits of gentleness, kindness, patience and charity as do others. But with respect to life and salvation, all dead men, religious and irreligious, have the same need. Regardless of the language used, the theological terms employed or the doctrine presented, the sinner’s need is Christ. “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” He said, “I am the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” Christ died to abolish death and bring life to humanity in the Gospel. II Timothy 1:9. It was Christ who said that believers “have passed out of death into life.” John 5:24. He gave to His servant Paul this message: “The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. “You hath He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 2:1 to 5.

The sinner’s first need is life and righteousness. Christ is the believer’s life and righteousness. He is available for all. On the cross of Calvary this sinless Christ was made sin that sinners might be made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. He had power to lay down His life and take it up again. John 10:17 and 18. Christ received the sinner’s wages; death. Christ on the cross received the penalty for sin, when He by the grace of God tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:9. Then by His inherent Divine omnipotence He was able to abolish death, Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Hebrews 9:26.

The believing sinner is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ: “in whose Blood we have redemption even the forgiveness of sins.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” When God forgives the sinner, it is because his sins have been dealt with, have been put away. When the worshipper came to the Lord, under the Old Covenant, his sins were covered by the blood of the sacrifice which spoke of the once-for-all sacrifice of the coming Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our sins are not covered; they are put away. We are pardoned, exonerated, freed, forgiven and justified, by the blood of the sinless Son of God. And our God, who has the perfect Divine right to forgive the sinner who receives Christ as his worthy Substitute, says: “their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Hebrews 10:17.

SINS REMEMBERED NO MORE

The unbeliever's good deeds are not remembered. The believer's sins are not remembered. This is the way God does things. He is just and the justifier of every one that accepts the redemptive work of His well-beloved Son. Romans 3:24 to 26. God's grace is marvelous. We are saved from sin because God is rich in mercy and great in love. Ephesians 2:4 and 5. The believer is in Christ. God cannot find fault with the helpless sinner who has taken refuge in Christ. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ." "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." It is all by and of grace. Believing sinners are the recipients of God's grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves."

One of our difficulties is, that we have no way of measuring the grace of God, or of putting the true value on the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is sovereign. God is just and holy. Christ received the just penalty for sin. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. By His vicarious work of redemption God can and does forgive and forget and justify the penitent, believing sinner.

Another difficulty with us is, that we inventory our blunders, weaknesses and faults, that we consider our unworthiness, and try to measure God by human standards. Because we cannot forget our history of sin, our miserable past record, because of our present shortcomings, because we find it so difficult to forgive others, and especially to forget their offenses against us, our minds and hearts are filled with doubts as to the obliteration and obviousness of our sins in God's sight. But we should believe God, take His Word at full face value: "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Gone forever. Forever put away, by the grace of God and the work of Christ. God looked, and still looks, upon His Son, obedient unto death and exalted to His own right hand, where He now appears in heaven for us; and we should do the same thing; "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." When we look at ourselves, or at others, we will be disappointed, dissatisfied and doubtful. But not when we look unto Him who loved us and gave himself for us; unto Him who is our redemption, holiness, righteousness, peace, hope and life. Such a look will make us confident of this very, thing that He that hath begun a good work in us will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ, As Christians we should obey Ephesians 4:32; "And be ye kind one to another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." We should do this, not to influence or cause God to forgive us our sins, but because, for Christ's sake, He has already done that.

Just this morning I had a very sad message from a sorrowing, broken-hearted wife. Two weeks ago she and her husband received Christ. They were in earnest, truly convicted by the Holy Spirit. After struggling and doubting they believed the gospel of redemption and were both saved. They acknowledged that God had put away their sins, because Christ had shed His blood to make forgiveness possible. The wife had already confessed her unfaithfulness to her husband. Yesterday he told her that he could not forgive her, and that they would have to separate. Surely this is disobedience to the Word of God. But God is the God of all grace, and in spite of the determination of this man to give up his wife, God will not give him up. His sins have been judged and put away by the Lord. The sinner is forgiven; his past has been blotted out and forgotten. How blessed it should be to know that God is not dealing with us, under grace, on the terms of the "Our Father" prayer; "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:15. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Because of the value of the blood of Christ, because of the superabounding, all sufficient grace of God, the believer is exhorted to draw nigh in full assurance of faith. If we are trusting in the redemptive work of Christ, if we are depending upon the grace of God, surely we should be

delivered from doubts and fears, from any feeling of insecurity. God wants us to have assurance, full assurance.

TO FORGET YOUR WORK AND LABOR OF LOVE

As God will not remember the sins of the justified sinner, He will not remember the good deeds of the unbelieving sinner. But God will not forget the good deeds of the believer. "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Corinthians 15:58. "Not in vain in the Lord." Does Job serve God for naught? No. No Christian serves God for naught. "Every man shall be rewarded according to his works." Matthew 16:26. As there will be rewards for the saved, undoubtedly there will be different degrees of punishment for the unsaved, although, all unbelievers are lost.

God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." I Corinthians 3:14. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

No sinner can lay his foundation. No sinner needs to lay a foundation; the foundation has been laid. The only works that are "good works" in God's sight are the works that are built on the foundation. Faith in the good work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the believing sinner's passport to heaven. No other works are necessary to get the believer into heaven. But every good work done by the believer, who is in Christ, will be rewarded by God, if that good work is done in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. God will not forget a single deed done by the redeemed sinner in the Name of His Son.

Therefore believers are urged, "that ye be not slothful." "Shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Hebrews 6:12 and 13. As the believer should have no doubt that all of his sins have been put away by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, he should have no doubt as to receiving a full reward for every service of love, for every sacrifice, for all suffering in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "In the world ye shall have tribulation", "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." Let us not weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

"If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." I Peter 2:20.

If we suffer with Christ we shall reign with Him. We should work for Him, walk for Him, witness for Him, wait for Him. We should constantly be occupied with Christ and for Christ, and we shall not regret when God proves in that day that He shall not forget.

A STUDY IN GENTILE SALVATION

"THESE TWELVE JESUS SENT FORTH, AND COMMANDED THEM, SAYING, GO NOT INTO THE WAY OF THE GENTILES." Matthew 10:5.

"BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, I AM NOT SENT BUT UNTO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL." Matthew 15:24.

"NOW THEY WHICH WERE SCATTERED ABROAD UPON THE PERSECUTION THAT AROSE ABOUT STEPHEN TRAVELED AS FAR AS PHENICE, AND CYPRUS, AND ANTIOCH, PREACHING THE WORD TO NONE BUT UNTO THE JEWS ONLY." Acts 11:19.

“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.

“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.” Acts 14:27.

“FOR I SPEAK UNTO YOU GENTILES, INASMUCH AS I AM THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE.” Romans 11:13.

“FOR AS YE IN TIMES PAST HAVE NOT BELIEVED GOD, YET HAVE NOW OBTAINED MERCY THROUGH THEIR UNBELIEF.” Romans 11:30.

“UNTO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.” Ephesians 3:8.

“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. WHEREUNTO I AM APPOINTED A PREACHER, AND AN APOSTLE, AND A TEACHER OF THE GENTILES.” II Timothy 1:9, 11.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE BAPTIZED

A SIMPLE MESSAGE ON BAPTISM

Judging from the present-day controversy about water baptism it would seem that it is not possible to write a simple message on the subject. Most assuredly it requires more than a superficial study of the Scriptures to produce a strong conviction in the matter, based upon an intelligent understanding of the different verses in the Bible relating to the subject, instead of a bitter prejudice produced by a misunderstanding of all these Scriptures. With most Christians baptism is a habit rather than an intelligent act of obedience given to members of the Body of Christ.

Among the most spiritual of God's people, including the most competent and fruitful preachers and teachers, there is much difference of opinion as to what the Bible teaches concerning water baptism. But how many of them, or rather, how few of them, have opened the Book with unprejudiced minds and unafraid hearts to search diligently and honestly for the truth, willing to accept and propagate what they find even though it is contrary to all of the traditions of church fathers and church creeds! It is no coward's nor compromiser's task to proclaim a message that is not in agreement with Christendom's creeds.

But can the honest searcher of the Word of God answer the question, “to be or not to be baptized?” If he decides to be, can he say, “I have decided to be, because of a certain chapter or verse in the Book which gives instructions to members of the Body of Christ?” Most certainly not.

There are living today more than 200 million persons who have been baptized with water. With the great majority of them it was a case of involuntary baptism. Of the number of those who were baptized in infancy and have reached the age to render a decision, more than fifty per cent of them have approved the motive, the religious belief and act of the parent, guardian, priest, or preacher responsible for the religious ceremony or church ordinance, although they are

by no means agreed as to the spiritual benefits derived therefrom. Certainly with none of them was it a case of the answer of a good conscience toward God. I Peter 3:21. The answer was by proxy.

The mode, formula and meaning of infant baptism vary with different church creeds and programs. In some cases the child is immersed to comply with the example of I Corinthians 10:1 to 13. In some cases the mode is pouring. In most cases infant baptism is by sprinkling. With the Roman Catholics the ceremony by the priest is with water that has been blessed and is a water ceremony to remove original sin. With other denominations sprinkling is the seal of the New Covenant, taking the place of circumcision which was the seal of the Old Covenant. In such cases it is required that the parents of the infant be professing Christians. In other denominations the sprinkling is the manner in which the parents dedicate the child to the Lord. Many teach that the child presented by believing parents, by the act of baptism, then and there becomes a Christian and a member of the Church of Christ. I heard a preacher of one of the leading so-called Protestant denominations say, "most of our people become Christians by accident, being presented for baptism in infancy."

It has been argued by many that the Greek word "baptizo" means "immerse", but this can not be verified by the Holy Scriptures. The word, in noun form, is used in Hebrews 9:10, translated "washings". Israel's ceremonial washings were sprinklings, pourings, as well as dippings.

From four Scriptures the immersionists reason that Scriptural baptism must have been by immersion. Mark 1:9 and 10. John 3:23, Acts 8:38 and 39, Romans 6:4. In defense, or support, of infant baptism, the following Scriptures concerning the baptism of households are used: Acts 11:14 and 10:18; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:31 to 33; I Corinthians 1:16; I Corinthians 7:14; I Corinthians 10:2 and 11.

Those who refute the teaching and practice of household baptism, including infants, quote Mark 16:16, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Acts 8:12, "when they believed they were baptized, both men and women". Acts 18:8, "many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized."

One of the leading authorities on the subject of baptism, although he teaches infant baptism by sprinkling, acknowledges in his printed message on the subject, that he cannot prove this doctrine by any clear statement in the Bible. His claim is that the practice is taught by implication or inference.

Others who teach water baptism for believers in the Body of Christ with any other significance need not ridicule this theologian's "implication" or "inference" doctrine; for they employ precisely the same method, regardless of their interpretation as to the formula, mode and meaning of their water ceremony. It is all by implication or inference. As we look into the different interpretations of evangelical Christians who teach and practice water baptism, we must conclude that if any one of them is the correct Scriptural interpretation, some of the others are unscriptural theories. If the watery grave is Scriptural, the sprinkling seal is absurd.

But remember, hundreds of thousands of real Christians have believed each and every one of the following interpretations:

1. The seal of the New Covenant as circumcision was of the Old Covenant.
2. Baptismal regeneration, or unto repentance for the remission of sins for the reception of the Holy Spirit.
3. An outward symbol of an inward work of grace.
4. A witness of the believer's salvation to the world.

5. A door of entrance into the Church.

6. A watery burial to acknowledge identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection.

Five out of the six interpretations must be supported by implication or inference and by the creeds and practices of certain denominations which were organized centuries after the death of the apostles of Christ. There is not one verse to prove that water baptism was received by the believer as a witness to the world that he had become a member of the Body of Christ.

The interpretation of water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, is supported by Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:3; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12 to 16; Acts 19:3 to 7. This baptism began with the ministry of John the Baptist: Hear his own words:

John 1:31:

“AND I KNEW HIM NOT: BUT THAT HE SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST TO ISRAEL, THEREFORE AM I COME BAPTIZING WITH WATER.”

There was one baptism for God’s people while Christ was on earth. Christ’s baptism unto death took place on the cross. Luke 12:47 to 52. After the close of the Book of Acts, the statement in Ephesians 4:5, is “one baptism”. Baptism was not something new with Israel. Hebrews 9:10. But the baptism committed to John had a special significance. There were three baptisms in the “Acts” period, “water baptism”, “Holy Spirit baptism”, and “death baptism”. Acts 1:5; Acts 11:14 and 15; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Acts 19:2 to 7 and Romans 8:3.

When the twelve apostles were baptized, many months before Christ’s baptism unto death, before His resurrection, the Twelve knew not what the rising from the dead meant and knew nothing concerning Christ’s death baptism. Matthew 16:21 to 23; Mark 9:10; Luke 9:44 and 45; Luke 18:31 to 34; John 20:9. Therefore we observe that the Twelve were certainly not baptized with water as an indication or acknowledgment that they had been buried with Christ by baptism. And certainly not to indicate that they had joined the Church, which is His Body. That Church was not when they were baptized. The Twelve never received the second water baptism after Christ’s death baptism. Water baptism is called by different names “a kingdom ordinance,” “a church ordinance,” “New Testament baptism”, “kingdom baptism”, “Christian baptism”. But all of these names have been suggested by men: they are not found in the Bible.

All students of the Word of God are grieved that the baptism of I Corinthians 12:13 is not water baptism.

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.”

“Baptized in One Spirit into One Body.” In Ephesians 4:4 to 6 there is mention of one Body, one Spirit, one Baptism. Jews and Greeks were not baptized in one Spirit into one Body at the time John Baptist was baptizing with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel; at the time the Twelve were baptized with water. It is one thing for Israel to have water baptism to have their Messiah manifested to them: it is quite a different thing for Israelites and Gentiles to be united in One Body by Holy Spirit baptism. John’s water baptism was in connection with Christ’s proclamation of the kingdom to Israel. Therefore there is Scriptural authority for “kingdom baptism”. But “Christian baptism” is an indefinite, uncertain expression; an expression from the pen of theologians but not found in the Bible: Some differentiate between kingdom water baptism while Christ was on earth, and what they call Christian water baptism

after the Spirit came from heaven. But they cannot Scripturally prove the two different water baptisms by the experience of Twelve. According to this discrimination the Twelve never received Christian baptism; only Israelitish kingdom baptism

If John's baptism was New Covenant baptism, and if there is anything to the law of first occurrence, what meaning had water baptism until the last occurrence of water baptism in Acts 19:2 to 7? We should not prove the meaning by the exception to the order set forth in Acts 10:34 to 48, the experience of Cornelius and his house; remembering that Cornelius was the first Gentile to come in with the Jews who required a sign.

There is no Scriptural authority for the two-fold designation of water baptism. "kingdom baptism", and "Christian baptism". This is theory and tradition.

Neither has a Christian Scriptural authority for changing the order of Mark 16:16, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved", to "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized". If we are to hold on to water on the authority of that Scripture, let us observe the order. If we do, how can we reconcile that gospel with the gospel of Romans 3:24 and Ephesians 2:8 and 9? Water baptism has no place in the message of pure grace as it had in Mark 16:16. Christ sent Paul not to baptize. I Corinthians 1:17.

This leads us to this important declaration. No Scripture instructs one member of the Body of Ephesians to baptize with water another believer who is already a member of that Body. The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, like the one baptism of Romans 6:3, produces a spiritual change in the sinner. By that one baptism the believing sinner is identified with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. As the result of that one baptism, the believer is seated in the heavenlies in Christ and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. Forever is he a member of the Body of Christ. Water baptism today produces no spiritual change in any sinner or saint: Water baptism neither helps to save any sinner nor helps to keep him saved. All such messengers admit that water baptism has absolutely no efficacy to aid toward, or add to, the believer's completeness in Christ or membership in His Body. Colossians 2:10. Water baptism is not required by God for membership in the true Church, which is the Body of Christ. Water baptism is not required for salvation or regeneration. Water baptism is not demanded as a condition for receiving the Holy Spirit. Then water baptism, according to Ephesians, and according to the admissions of present-day grace preachers, does not have the meaning that it had in Acts 2:38 and Acts 19:3 to 7 or in Acts 8:12 to 17.

What is its meaning? Can you give a Scriptural answer and not a human theory?, What men have been teaching and preaching will never satisfy the searching mind of the true Berean. Do not follow established creeds or the tradition of the elders. Church habits and Bible truth may differ. After you have prayed earnestly and searched the Scriptures, diligently and have been thereby convinced as to which of the more than one dozen interpretations, modes and signification's practiced by orthodox Christians is demanded for members of the Body of Christ, obey the demand and then look for the man who is Scripturally qualified to baptize.

But remember; study diligently the Word of God before you answer to God, "to be or not to be baptized". When you ask men, however spiritual they may be, as a rule they cannot give you any definite Scripture to prove that water baptism is compatible with the gospel of the grace of God. If they quote the so-called Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18, they must admit that the instructions there were given to apostles, who were not yet in the Body of Christ, apostles who will be on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:28). These apostles were ministers to the circumcision with the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. They were commissioned before the Body began historically.

They were baptized many months before the Body began historically. Then the Twelve were not baptized with water as members of the church of Ephesians 1:19 to 22. The apostle to the Gentiles plainly declared, "Christ sent me not to baptize". I Corinthians 1:17. As members of the Body of Christ from which Scriptures are we to get our instructions concerning water baptism and the gospel of the grace of God? There is not a single word instructing members of Christ's Body to be baptized.

The great majority of Christians are practicing what their human leaders have taught them; what church creeds demand of them, and seem to think that they are in the will of God because they comply with a denominational demand instead of obeying the Scriptures rightly divided.

If a man or a group of men demand a religious ceremony as a door of entrance into any of their churches and the Lord does not demand that ceremony to become a member of His Church, what is your duty? Something may happen to your church membership here below if you obey the Head of the church in the heavenlies.

Be a Berean. Ask for chapter and verse. Do not do something because it has long been a religious habit.

FUNDAMENTALISTS DIVIDED

Who are the Fundamentalists? The Fundamentalists are the orthodox Christians who have assumed the responsibility of contending earnestly for the faith once-for-all delivered unto the saints, in obedience to Jude 3. But there is considerable commotion in the camp, because Fundamentalists are not agreed among themselves on all the points concerning the faith. Therefore the several different groups are spending much of their time and energy contending against one another for or against some special phase of Bible truth, which some claim is part of that faith delivered unto the saints and which others say is not.

The intelligent student of the Bible might ask, "to which saints do you refer" and "to which faith, or spiritual program do you refer?" The Lord had more than one company of saints and different programs for the different companies.

All Fundamentalists are agreed on some fundamentals. They are not divided as to the plenary inspiration of the Bible, the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. They are agreed concerning the need of redemption and regeneration on the grounds of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are agreed as to the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are agreed that God's grace is sufficient for the salvation of any kind of a sinner and is likewise sufficient for the believer's spiritual walk and life of victory, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

All Fundamentalists claim that they believe that the believing sinner is saved by grace and by grace alone, by nothing but the gospel of the grace of God; and that the believing sinner, justified by God's grace without a cause (Romans 3:24), is complete in Christ; that he needs nothing to aid toward this completeness except the redemptive work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Colossians 2:10.

It is sad to relate that some leaders among Fundamentalists are making false claims concerning some other Fundamentalists with whom they disagree in some points. They are enemies of other Fundamentalists who are preaching and practicing what all Fundamentalists claim to believe; namely, that Christ is sufficient, without religion. These friendly enemies have

added to Christ and grace. In contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, they are contending for a mixture of grace and religion. They not only refuse to have fellowship with those who are satisfied with Christ, without religion; but they persecute them, malign them, and give them the choice of their religious mixture or their religious condemnation.

I have just returned from an eastern city where I enjoyed fellowship with a company of devoted saints who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. They are spiritual, but not religious. There is a great difference. They are members of the Body of Christ, identified with Him in death, burial and resurrection; seated with Him, complete in Him, blessed with all spiritual blessings, seeking those things which are above as they endeavor to walk worthy of their vocation or calling. There are a number of "Fundamentalist" preachers and workers in that same city who claim to be "grace" preachers and "grace" teachers. They are filled with religious zeal because they have failed to obey II Timothy 2 :15. Their "church" programs are mixtures of God's orders to Israel and His high and holy truth for members of the Body of Christ. Their opposition to the messengers of grace is so subtle that it seems to be directed by one who is superhuman. They apparently have ceased their attacks upon the Modernists, Christian Scientists, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unity, New Thought, the cults that deny the Book, the Blood and the Blessed Hope; and are concentrating on a little company who are standing uncompromisingly, valiantly, and sacrificially for all three. What's the matter? Why are the leaders of Fundamentalists in Chicago doing the same thing? Such opposition is from one who is very religious, but who has long kept the saints of God from the highest and most blessed truth in the Word of God. "We are not ignorant of his devices." It is the old spirit in a new movement, "except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Here it is up-to-date; "Except ye agree with us about water baptism, as to when the Body of Christ began (historically), and agree to keep quiet with us about the "Acts" Church program and the sign gifts of I Corinthians so our followers will not see the fallacy of our dispensationalism, we'll have to disown you, disqualify you and disfellowship you." Many of these men of God are so determined in their bitter opposition that they do not hesitate to resort to ungracious, unjust and in some cases, untruthful statement to prejudice their followers against fellow-members of the Body of Christ who refuse to include their religious planks in their "grace" platform.

Down through the dark ages of church history and down to the present time church leaders have wanted their followers to look upon them as Job did upon his counselors; but not in the same satirical spirit: "No doubt but ye are the people and wisdom will die with you." Job 12:2. Moreover, these leaders have insisted that their followers accept their interpretations of the Scriptures, discouraging those who would continue their search for Divine truth beyond the knowledge of those in control of the denominations, circles, or movements with which they are affiliated. Few have been more intolerant than are some of the recognized leaders in Fundamental circles today, who, unable to disprove the teaching of other Fundamentalists by an appeal to the Holy Scriptures, resort to the use of carnal weapons. Religious people have ever done this.

In considering the unhappy divisions that exist among present-day Fundamentalists, we are not referring to the differences designated "premillennialism" and "postmillennialism." To be sure that is deplorable. Neither are we thinking of the differences of interpretation and practice concerning Holy Spirit baptism (whether it is an experience separate from and subsequent to salvation), with the speaking in tongues and fanatical physical healing, visions, signs, etc. Any true messenger of the grace of God knows that these religious preachers and teachers are ignorant of God's message and program for this "Grace" dispensation, notwithstanding their boast of

orthodoxy, their sincerity and enthusiastic zeal and the apparent success of their movements. We are referring to the unpleasant, although perhaps not unprofitable, discord and controversy found among Fundamentalists, who preach the finished work of Christ as the sinner's only need and only hope, the eternal security of every sinner saved by pure and unadulterated grace. These Fundamentalists are divided into two general camps, the "so-called dispensationalists", and the "so-called ultra-dispensationalists." Their differences concerning the interpretation, appropriation and application of the Bible are "dispensational" and not "inspirational".

Other differences which exist between these two camps of Fundamentalists are because of their differences concerning the beginning and program of that dispensation of the grace of God to which the Apostle Paul referred to in Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

The dispensationalists declare that the dispensation of the grace of God began on the day of Pentecost, several weeks after Christ; that the commission of Mark 16:15 to 18 introduced that dispensation of the grace of God on the day of Pentecost, and which has continued to the present time and which dispensation will close with the rapture of the Body of Christ, in accordance with I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18. The dispensationalists are not only warm hearted but hot-headed, in their determinate opposition to the ultra-dispensational teaching, that God caused the Apostle Paul, after the close of the "Acts" period, to prevent a revised Church program; after that period not only to present Divine truth that supplemented the truth of the "Acts" period, but some new truth of that period. The dispensationalists give no Scriptural explanation for the absence in present-day Church programs of the program of the Church in the Book of Acts. Neither the dispensationalists, nor the ultra-dispensationalists are proclaiming or preaching the instructions of Christ in Mark 16:15 to 18, or the message, order and program of Acts 2:22 to 43. Neither of them are making any attempt to preach or practice the order of Acts 19:1 to 7. Neither of them are trying to duplicate, perpetuate, or recover, for the church today the signs, ceremonies, visions, miracles and gifts of the Acts period. Not one of the leaders in either camp is trying to exercise any of the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 10, except as preachers may be called prophets. Without any intelligent Scriptural explanation the dispensationalists arbitrarily select from the "Acts" period, water baptism and the Lord's supper, to the exclusion of the signs, gifts, imposition of hands, divine judgments, visions, etc. In defense of this inconsistency their appeal is more to "Church history" than obedience to II Timothy 2:15. In their camp quite often is heard, "after all these years," instead of submitting their dispensationalism to the Berean test. Of course it requires a reformation, or a revolution, to substitute "what saith the Scriptures" for "after all these years". "Do you mean to say, after all these years Christians have been wrong?" This is not the test.

The ultra-dispensationalists declare that they cannot harmonize the message of Ephesians 2:8 and 9; Titus 3:5 and 6; II Timothy 1:9 and Romans 3:24 with Mark 16:15 to 18; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:5, 12 and 15; Acts 10:34 to 37; Acts 19:3 to 6. This dispensationalists declare that they can, but they never do. In their futile attempt to do so they do that which they are forbidden to do; they change the Word of God. We quote the Scriptures above mentioned:

Ephesians 2:8 and 9"

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:"

"Not of works, lest any man should boast."

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;"

II Timothy 1:9”

“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,”

Romans 3:24:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”

Mark 16:15 to 18:

“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.”

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 Ghost.”

Acts 8:5, 12, 15:

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.”

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

“Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:”

Acts 10:34 to 37:

“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:)”

“That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;”

Acts 19:3 to 6:

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.”

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

“When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

“And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

Let us repeat, that not a “grace” preacher among Fundamentalists preaches to any sinner Acts 2:38, repentance and baptism, for the reception of the Holy Spirit. What student of the Word of God cannot see, by comparing the second chapter of Acts with the second chapter of Ephesians, that the messages are different messages addressed to different people, offering them

different blessings and different hope? Are we not to test the things that differ? Philippians 1:10 (R.V.). Here is a simple test.

Not one of these “grace” preachers among Fundamentalists preaches Mark 16:16 to any sinner; “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”; “and signs shall follow.” Does it not seem ridiculous that they will claim they are working under this commission and then refuse to preach the message and observe the order of the commission? Who has the right to preach “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?” Where are the signs following? They are not found following the preaching of the grace of God gospel in the first century after Paul’s declaration in Ephesians 3:1 to 11. Where is the verse of Scripture that instructs a believer already in the Body of Christ to baptize another believer already in the same Body?