

# BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

FEBRUARY 1936

## **GOD'S WORKMANSHIP—GOD'S WORKMEN**

“WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM.” Ephesians 2:10.

“STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.” II Timothy 2:15.

Before any man can walk in the good works which God hath before ordained, before he can be a workman for God, he must be the workmanship of God. He must first be worked upon by God before his work will be acceptable to God. No man can work himself into God's favor or by any labour assist in his own creation in Christ Jesus. God is the Creator. God, the Divine Workman, does the work of creating. The believing sinner is the recipient of God's grace, and is made acceptable in Christ, the Beloved. It is God, the Father “Who 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, the forgiveness of sins”. Colossians 1:12 to 14. It is all the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.

Not of works; but unto good works. All believers are to learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. The Apostle Paul was directed to write much more about the believer's spiritual walk and good works than about the sinner's salvation without works; but he was never directed by the Lord to confuse the futile good works of an unbeliever with the fruitful good works of a believer.

In setting forth the gospel of salvation for the sinner, the Apostle Paul was directed to write that a man is declared righteous by faith “without the deeds of the law”, “without works”, even “without a cause” (freely). Romans 3:24. Boasting is excluded; not by the law of works, but by the law of faith.” Romans 3:27.

If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creation, he is God's workmanship. The works of Christ were not only good works, but absolutely perfect works. Christ came to put away sin and He accomplished His task. Hebrews 9:26. Christ abolished death. Christ provided a perfect righteousness for the unrighteous. Christ suffered for sins once, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. The sinner's first good work is to acknowledge himself the ungodly sinner for whom Christ died and accept the perfect redemption work of Christ, His death and resurrection.

Having taken this step of faith, the redeemed sinner is ready for good works. But he must look to God for God's program of good works. God hath before ordained that he should walk in them.

As it is possible for unbelievers to think they are saved when they are not, it is possible for believers to think that they are walking in the good works, ordained by God, when they are not. Be assured that no amount of sincerity and zeal will take the place of spiritual knowledge in the matter of walking in God's program. Zeal without knowledge means ignorant disobedience.

As members of the Body of Christ we may be walking in a path marked out in Scripture, we may be working religiously at some God-given task mentioned in the Bible, we may be enthusiastically and faithfully carrying out some specific program plainly described in the Word of God, and still not walk in the good works that God hath foreordained us. Such a workman of God is one who needs to be ashamed.

God wants a believer to be enthusiastic, zealous, sincere and faithful in constantly maintaining good works; but unless that believer studies the Word of God and rightly divides the Word of God, he may be wasting his time in dead works instead of in good works. There are many zealous, religious people much occupied with a program given to a different group of God's people in a different dispensation, earnestly trying to carry out orders from God which were never intended for members of the Body of Christ. Here are some good definite, specific instructions to follow, that will keep us busy walking in the good works that God hath before ordained: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Timothy, Romans 12 to 16, Galatians 3 to 6, I Corinthians 13, and Titus. When we have learned our path from these chapters, there are many others. But reading these and understanding them first, it will help us to intelligently and spiritually appropriate and apply the others.

## **PEACE ON EARTH—WHEN?**

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:14.

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15.

This first message of peace was proclaimed by God's angel and the heavenly host that was with him. The second message of peace was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul about sixty years later. Many significant events took place between the two proclamations.

Concerning the first proclamation of peace, it will prove interesting and instructive to observe some associated facts. These facts have to do with the birth of two sons, both “Divinely” given and both “Divinely” named: John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth and the other “Jesus” the Son of God and the Son of Mary. Luke 1:1 to 34.

The first son, John, was born to turn many of the children of Israel to their God. Luke 1:16. The second Son, Jesus, was to reign on David's throne, over the house of Israel forever. Luke 1:31 to 33. These two sons were sent by God in fulfillment of promises in Malachi 3:1 and Malachi 4:4 and 6.

Now let us carefully and prayerfully study God's purpose for Israel in connection with the births of John and Jesus

1. John—“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people” . . . “By the mouth of His holy prophets and the oath which He swore by our

father Abraham.” “That we should be saved from our enemies—Delivered out of the hand of our enemies.” Luke 1:67 to 77.

2. Jesus—“The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever: and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” “And the angel said: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy (the gospel), which shall be to all people: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.” Luke 1:31 to 33 and Luke 2:10 and 11.

In Luke 2:25 we learn of a devout Israelite, Simeon, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel. There are a multitude of devout Israelites who, in the year 1936, will be waiting for the consolation of Israel. They are by no means as close to God as was Simeon. Nor has God revealed to them that, like Simeon, they may see the Messiah and depart in peace, as he did. Luke 2:25 to 29. Most of the 17,000,000 scattered Israelites of today may be ignorant of the fact that the tribulation of Israel is to precede the consolation of Israel. But of this fact they are certain: they have not been delivered from the hands of their enemies. On the contrary, from newspaper reports, many of them have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

According to the infallible Holy Spirit, when John and Jesus were born, Israel was to be delivered by the Messiah from the hand of their enemies; but instead of any such national deliverance, the Messiah’s three chief messengers were delivered, with many other of His disciples, into the hands of their enemies. John the Baptist was beheaded by his enemy. Peter landed in jail in Acts 12. Paul landed in jail before the close of Acts, and about 69 or 70 A.D. perhaps 2,000,000 Israelites were put to death by Rome; and the survivors were delivered into the hands of their enemies, where they have remained until this day, in the spiritual darkness pronounced upon them in Acts 28:25 to 28 and Romans 11:7 to 26.

Israel was not delivered from the hand of their enemy as the infallible Holy Spirit announced.

Concerning the Holy Child Jesus, He was honored by a guileless Israelite with the proper salutation: “Thou art the Son of God: Thou art the King of Israel.” John 1:49. But, as far as His Nation was concerned: “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” John 1:11. “We will not have This Man to reign over us,” was their reception. Luke 19:14. “The Stone was rejected by the builders.” The rulers set themselves against the Lord’s Anointed “For to do whatsoever God’s hand and God’s counsel determined before to be done.” Acts 4:28.

The Son Jesus, born for David’s throne, did not take that throne, but instead, was crowned in a different manner for His death of disgrace, shame and sorrow. He went to the tree of Calvary instead of to the throne of David.

We have some very foolish religious people today who are teaching that Great Britain’s Prince of Wales is about ready to take David’s throne. But students of God’s Word know there is only One qualified for that throne and that that One today has now even a more glorious program in hand. Therefore, David’s throne and Israel’s kingdom must wait until God’s eternal purpose, in Christ, has been accomplished: the making of the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15.

There are likewise some very foolish religious people today, who declare that it is possible to forget David’s throne and to have universal peace while that throne is vacant,

while the Prince of Peace is the Head of the Church and the devil is the prince of the world. To them we must say, “ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures.”

If newspaper headlines are even ten per cent true, the nations of this earth are not beating their swords and spears into pruning-hooks and plowshares; but, on the other hand, they are buying up all the available scrap iron and other metals to beat them into weapons of war far more deadly than swords and spears.

It shall be when Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, the Prince of Peace shall, sit on the throne of David that there will be peace on earth. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. Then nations shall learn war no more. Then the devil shall have been dethroned as world ruler and the government shall be upon the shoulders of Him whose right it is to reign. Then equity; justice, love and righteousness shall prevail. The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The pain and sorrow of the curse shall give way to the universal blessing and peace of the reign of the sinless and omnipotent King. The Kingdom of the heavens will be at hand.

Surely, if the rulers of this world should get together in a peace conference and a love feast and destroy all their implements of war and divide up the wealth of the world so that there would be no hunger, and the Lord God would intervene in behalf of suffering humanity and remove sickness and withhold death, ushering in a reign of universal peace, that would be “good news”. That is “the gospel of peace” that was proclaimed. more than 1900 years ago. That gospel of peace is the “kingdom gospel of peace”. The gospel of the kingdom had in view, and will again have in view, the earthly throne of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

#### PAUL’S PEACE GOSPEL

While the King is the Head of the Church, He is seated far above all principalities in the highest heavenlies, and while the king is away, David’s throne vacant, the Kingdom in abeyance, God has another gospel of peace to be proclaimed: called the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. Acts 20:24; I Timothy 1:11.

While on earth, Paul called the gospel of peace “my gospel”. It was the gospel of Christ. Christ gave it to Paul. Paul passed it on to Timothy. Through his messages to Timothy and others it has been passed on to us. In the original text of II Timothy 1:12 Paul speaks of “my deposit”. In II Timothy 1:14, written to Timothy, we have it as “that good deposit”. Timothy was instructed to pass the deposit on to others. II Timothy 2:2. This is a greater commission, so far as we are concerned, than is the great commission of Matthew 10:4 to 12, or Matthew 28:19 and 20. Paul’s gospel has been passed on to us rather than the gospel of the Twelve. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Both Paul and Timothy had sick bodies. Paul gloried in his infirmities and in the fact that his inward man was being renewed day by day in spite of the fact that his body was daily rotting thoroughly. II Corinthians 4:16; II Corinthians 12:9. He instructed Timothy to take a remedy for his oft sicknesses. I Timothy 5:23. So if, in a body of humiliation, affliction and pain, you are today proclaiming God’s gospel of peace and the God of all grace has not thought it best to give you physical healing, do not question His wisdom and will because of the folly of the confused and deluded teachers who are trying

to bless your soul and spirit with Paul's peace gospel and place your body in Israel's kingdom peace gospel.

## MATTHEW AND ROMANS COMPARED

Matthew 10:5 to 10—The facts—Go to Israel. Go not to Gentiles. Proclaim “the kingdom of heaven is at hand”. Put no money in your purse, no extra coat, nor shoes. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons”. Israel's baptism for the remission of sins and fruits meet for repentance were included. Romans 10:12 to 15. No difference between Jew and Greek. A message for “whosoever”. Preaching the gospel of peace. In Romans 3:24 to 28 this peace gospel is stated. Declared righteous without a cause, by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ, through faith in His shed blood. All by grace, all of grace, without water and fruits. Should we mix these messages today? It is needless to say that thousands of Christian workers, who have gone out on their own charges, are mixing them: with the result that they are worse than mixing their poor victims. They make no attempt to raise the dead. They make no attempt to cleanse the lepers. They beg for money. If they take no money in their purses they cannot travel on the railroads. If they take only one coat, or one pair of shoes, it is either because they have no more or because they are away only for a short period. They do not go to houses. They put on high-pressure advertising and draw the people to their meeting places. They go to Gentiles. They claim to heal about one out of every fifty of the deceived people who come to them. Some of them are sincere; but all of them are sincerely wrong; because they “wrongly divide the Word of truth” instead of “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” They mix Israel's kingdom gospel program with Paul's grace gospel program.

Much confusion comes from the misunderstanding of the word “gospel”. “Gospel” means “good news”. As far as the individual's redemption from sin is concerned, the blood of Jesus Christ has been, from the days of Adam, and shall be until the time of the last sinner on earth, the sinner's only hope. But there is some “good news” for the member of the Body of Christ, as to his hope, calling, and spiritual blessings, which has no place in the good news that God has promised concerning Israel's future. It was that good news proclaimed in Chapters one and two of Luke's message. Peace on earth must begin with peace in Jerusalem and therefore with Israel and Israel's King in Jerusalem; the kingdom of glory on earth.

But for this age, the members of the Body of Christ have been delivered from the power of darkness and have been translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love”. “Having made peace through the “blood of His cross, by Him, to reconcile all things unto Himself”. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ in the heavenlies, seated with Him there, waiting for Him to call us to glory in glorified bodies. We have committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation, concerning which Jesus on earth said nothing to the Twelve or to others. The key to Luke is “on earth”. The key to Ephesians is “in the heavenlies”. The Head of the Body is in the heavenlies. The King is coming back to earth for His earthly throne and kingdom. Matthew 25:31 to 38.

It is surely one gospel to have the Prince of Peace on David's throne and peace governmentally and nationally on earth. It is surely another gospel to say, because the Lord Jesus went to Calvary's tree instead of David's throne and because Israel rejected the King and Messiah, Gentiles have obtained mercy and can say, “therefore being

justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And “let the peace of God rule in your hearts”. Colossians 3:15. By prayer, supplication, thanksgiving “the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”. Philipians 4:6 and 7.

Does this mean that we shall be delivered from the hands of our enemies? On the contrary: Our enemies shall multiply, especially our religious enemies who refuse to obey II Timothy 2:15.

Now as to peace on earth, you can do very little. Jehovah causeth the wars to cease. He breaketh the swords. Some day the King of Glory will enter in. You will have to be reconciled concerning the tabernacle of David which is broken down. By and by the Prince of Peace is coming. Do not get worried and fretted about signs, trying to figure out what Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin are going to do. The devil will take care of that.

How pitiable, that the great majority of our Fundamentalist preachers, who know that an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, are much occupied with preaching signs instead of obeying Ephesians 3:9: “make all men see the mystery”. Signs are not associated with the mystery.

What a message of peace we have for a world of sinners, for poor condemned children of Adam, trying to forget God and have a good time in this present evil age of distress, perplexity, crime and misery—with the worst to come.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts as you proclaim the gospel of peace to lost sinners.

## **GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS**

### LESSON SIX

WHAT GOD DETERMINED BEFORE HAND CONCERNING CHRIST AND ISRAEL:

“THE KINGS OF THE EARTH STOOD UP, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.

“FOR OF A TRUTH AGAINST THY HOLY CHILD JESUS, WHOM THOU HAST ANOINTED, BOTH HEROD, AND PONTIUS PILATE, WITH THE GENTILES, AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, WERE GATHERED TOGETHER,

“FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE.” Acts 4:26 to 28.

“AND WHEN THEY HAD FULFILLED ALL THAT WAS WRITTEN OF HIM, THEY TOOK HIM DOWN FROM THE TREE, AND LAID HIM IN A SEPULCHRE.

“BUT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.” Acts 13:29 and 30.

When Christ died at the wicked hands of Israel it was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God: Acts 2:22 and 23. Before His death Christ said, “The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him”. Matthew 26:24. When He came to the time of His death Christ said: “for this cause came I unto this hour”. John 12:27 and 28. Christ was made to die. Hebrews 2:9 and 14 and 17 and Hebrews 9:26.

Christ said to His twelve apostles “all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished . . . they shall put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again.” Luke 18:31 to 34.

The rejection of Jesus Christ, His death on the tree, His burial in the rich man's grave, and His resurrection, had to be; that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. When they had fulfilled all that written of Him, they took Him the tree and laid Him in the sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead. Christ had to die at a set time and in a manner determined beforehand.

They did whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. Acts 4:28.

Because of this "before-hand" determination and foreknowledge of God and because of Christ's prayer on the cross, God was willing to fully pardon Israel's great sin, "killing the Prince of life", "crucifying the Lord of glory." Perhaps these facts will help us to better understand the words of John 12:37 to 40:—"But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

With these verses we should carefully study Matthew 12:15 to 21. Israel could not believe? This, of course, brings this question to our minds, "did God arbitrarily cause Israel to reject His holy Son, as King and Messiah, that He might go to the cross to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself before He should come as the Son of man in the clouds, with power and great glory, to be accepted of Israel; in fulfillment of many Scriptures?"

If Israel could not believe and rejected the Son of man who had to go, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, did that not minimize the guilt of Israel? Were they not the foreordained human instruments of God accomplishing the foreordained purpose of God? Our first answer is, that God's foreknowledge of Israel's guilt, although God used their guilty and wicked deeds to provide salvation for the sins of the whole world, did not relieve Israel from their responsibility or in any way make them guiltless. There was forgiveness for them, had they repented at the preaching of Peter in Acts 3:14 to 26. Our other answer is Romans 11:33 and 34:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor?" This outcry of the Apostle Paul followed the Lord's announcement of Israel's judgment for the benefit of the uncovenanted Gentiles who were by nature the wild olive tree. As Israel had to reject their Messiah and King and do whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel determined beforehand to be done and with wicked hands crucify Him, some years after that crucifixion Israel must fall, that salvation be sent to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Romans 11:11.

In spite of this inevitable fall of Israel, that Nation was solemnly warned; "beware lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets." Acts 13:40. Because they killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and persecuted Christ's apostles and pleased not God, trying to prevent the salvation of the Gentiles, but were determined to fill up their sin away, the wrath came upon them to the uttermost. I Thessalonians 2:14 and 15. Something of that "uttermost" wrath is declared in Romans 11:17 to 25, in Acts 28:25 to

28, Matthew 22:7 and Luke 21:20 to 24. The uttermost wrath of God fell when Rome destroyed Jerusalem about 69 or 70 A.D..

But again to Romans 11:19; did the Gentile tell the truth when he said, “The natural branches were broken off that I might be grafted in?” Hear the message which the Lord gave to Paul:

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

“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.

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” Acts 28:28.

In the first chapter of Romans we are told how the Gentiles were cut off, given up by God. In Ephesians 4:18 we are told that they were alienated, from the life of God. But in Romans 11:15 we are told that the casting away of Israel meant the reconciling of the world. Hear these words of God to Gentiles:

“FOR AS YE IN TIMES PAST HAVE NOT BELIEVED GOD, YET HAVE NOW OBTAINED MERCY THROUGH THEIR UNBELIEF.” Romans 11:30. There is a most interesting and significant story recorded in Acts 13:6 to 12. We quote these verses:

“And when they had gone through the isle of Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

“Which was with the deputy of the country Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the Word of God.

“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

“Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

“And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

“And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

“Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.”

Paulus, the Gentile, was astonished at the Lord’s doings, and believed when he saw what was done to the Jew. Every Gentile in the world who has given serious thought to God’s dealings with the Jew should be astonished and believe. Just carefully read the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and then study the history of Israel to see how the judgments, the punishments, the curses of that chapter have happened to that chosen race. “The Gentile shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.” (Deuteronomy 28:44). “These curses shall come upon thee—they shall be upon thee for a sign—because thou servedst not the Lord thy God—thou shalt serve thine enemies the Lord shall bring a nation against thee—He shall besiege thee in all thy gates—and thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters—and ye shall be left few in

number—because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the Lord thy God—and the Lord will scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other—among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the soles of thy feet have rest but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. (Deuteronomy 28:45 to 68). “Thou shalt become an astonishment, and a Sheniynah (shenee)-naw) among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.” (Deuteronomy 28:37).

God created Israel for His own glory. He sanctified that nation and that holy nation was His peculiar treasure in the earth to witness to the other nations concerning the holiness, majesty, sovereignty, righteousness, justice and goodness of the one true and living God. Exodus 19:5 and 6—Isaiah 43:1—Isaiah 41:8 and 9—Isaiah 43:7 to 10—Isaiah 43:15.

Israel was the child of Jehovah-Saviour (Barjesus); but as a nation they were a disobedient and gainsaying people, to whom God stretched forth His hands all day long. Romans 10:21. “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted: and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers?” Acts 7:51 and 52.

The miraculous supernatural preservation of Israel, scattered all over the earth down through the centuries, following that terrible judgment which fell upon them about 70 A.D. under the hand of Titus, in fulfillment of Christ’s words in Matthew 22:7 and Luke 21:20 to 24, should cause every one to be astonished at the doctrine of the Lord, believe in the inspiration and infallibility of the Word of God, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour.

Bar-jesus, in Acts 13:6 to 12, typical of Israel, was blind for a season, not seeing the sun, because he tried to keep Sergius Paulus from hearing and believing Paul’s testimony concerning Israel’s Messiah, rejected and crucified by Israel. Because of Barjesus’ blindness, Paulus believed. The disciple Saul became the Apostle Paulus.

This is the message of the eleventh of Romans. Israel’s blindness is only for a season. Some day Israel will see the Sun; for the Sun of righteousness is to arise with healing in His wings and Israel will look upon the One they pierced. Then Israel shall be saved. Malachi 4:2—Zechariah 12:10—Romans 11:25 and 26. Because of Israel’s blindness salvation was sent to the Gentiles. Because of Israel’s unbelief the Gentiles obtained mercy. Romans 11:11 and 11:30.

In the light of judgments which Christ on earth promised Luke 21:20 to 24, Matthew 23:33 to 39, Matthew 21:43, Matthew 22:7, perhaps it seems strange that to that wicked nation, the Lord directed Peter to tenderly and affectionately address them as brethren and children, and say to the murderers of the Son of God “unto you first” Acts 3:26—Acts 3:12 to 25.

In the light of Acts 13:46; Acts 18:6; Acts 28:28, and Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:30, it is difficult to believe that the Great Commission was Paul’s Divine authority for preaching the Gospel of grace to Gentiles.

## FACTS AND QUESTIONS FOR YOUR MEDITATION

### AND ANSWER

I. In Philippians 1:10, students of God's Word are instructed to "test the things that differ." (R. V.) Even the babe in Christ knows there is a difference between the Old Covenant and New Covenant, between law and grace, between inheriting the earth and going to heaven, between Christ the Head of the Church which is His Body and Christ the King of Israel, between the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God. I Corinthians 10:32. Let us observe a few other things that differ. Compare Genesis 17:14 with Galatians 5:3; Galatians 6:12; Galatians 6:15 and Galatians 5:12 and observe that in 1900 B. C. those who refused circumcision were to be cut off, whereas, in 57 A.D., those who taught circumcision were to be cut off. Answer: Different dispensations. The Lord Jesus was circumcised and lived in a "circumcision" dispensation. We do not. Compare Exodus 31:12 to 17 with Colossians 2:14 to 17 and observe that God's people, in 1495 B.C., were judged with respect to the Sabbath, even unto death; and in 66 A.D. they were not to be judged with respect to the Sabbath. Christ spent His days on the earth "under the law;" the Holy Spirit tells Christians "ye are not under the law". Galatians 4:4. Romans 6:14. With respect to the law, how are we to follow Jesus?

II. In John 13:15 Jesus said to His disciples, "if ye love me, keep my commandments." How many of these commandments of Jesus should we keep?

1. "Sell all that ye have and give alms." Luke 12:32.
2. "Leave there thy gift before the altar." Matthew 5:24
3. "Agree with thine adversary quickly." Matthew 5:25.
4. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out." Matthew 5:29.
5. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away." Matthew 5:41 to 47.
6. "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48.
7. Pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. If ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:12 and 15.
8. "When thou fastest anoint thine head." Matthew 6:17.
9. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow." Matthew 6:34.
10. "Shew thyself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded." Matthew 8:4.
11. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Provide no script for your journey. No gold or silver in your purse." Matthew 10:7 to 9.
12. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13.
13. "Take nothing for your journey . . . neither bread . . . neither two coats." Luke 9:3.
14. "Strive (agonize) to enter in at the straight gate." Luke 13:24.
15. "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14.

16. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49.

17. "Wait for the promise." Acts 1:4.

If members of the Body of Christ are not keeping these commandments, do they love the Lord Jesus? Why disregard, or disobey, these commandments and say the commandments of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18 are binding upon members of the Body of Christ? Are members of the Body of Christ to observe all things which Jesus commanded His disciples and nation?

III. In Mark 16:15 to 18 we have the commission of the resurrected Christ to the "Eleven": their message and program, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved:" miracles, signs, healings were to follow. This commission was not given to Paul. I Corinthians 1:17; Galatians 1:11 to 17. Galatians 2:7 to 9. Paul's message of grace is our message for today; not, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" not miraculous signs for members of the Body of Christ.

### CONCERNING THE SIGNS OF MARK 16:16 to 18

We are all aware of the fact that the grace preachers who cling to water baptism preach, "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." This is not the order of Mark 16:15 and 16. Where are the signs? They are found only in the counterfeit. Explained away. 1. Uninspired. 2. Unintended. 3. Unbelief. 4. Undispensational.

1. Uninspired. Certain teachers declare that Mark 16:17 and 18, the "sign" verses, are not found in four of the original manuscripts. The fact is, that most of them include these verses. We refuse this explanation.
2. Unintended. Certain teachers declare that signs were intended for the Apostles only. But this is refuted by Acts 6:8; Acts 8:6 and I Corinthians 12:8 to 11. We refuse this explanation.
3. Unbelief. Certain Christians who are endeavoring to bring back the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18, declare they are absent because of unbelief. This is nonsense. Note the unbelief in the early Church. Acts 12:5 and 15. We refuse this explanation.
4. Undispensational. This is the intelligent Scriptural explanation of the absence of signs in the Body of Christ today. I Corinthians 13:8. I Timothy 5:23. II Timothy 4:20. The most carnal church of the days of the apostles had all of the "sign" gifts. I Corinthians 3:3; I Corinthians 6:7 and 8; I Corinthians 13:8 to 11. Whereas, the most spiritual saints today have none of these "sign" gifts. They are not for this dispensation. With the full revelation of the "mystery" after Acts 28:31, sign passed away. We accept this explanation.

IV Christ dealt with two Gentiles while on earth, a Greek woman and a Roman officer. There are two records of each. His dealings with the Gentile woman are recorded in Matthew 15:21 to 28 and Mark 7:24 to 27. His dealings with the Gentile man are recorded in Matthew 8:1 to 13 and Luke 7:1 to 10. You will find these stories very interesting. You will learn that both of these Gentiles had, "great faith". Matthew 15:28; Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:9. To the woman, Christ said, "Let the children (Israel) first be filled." Luke 7:27. To the man Christ said, "The children (Israel) shall be cast into outer darkness." Matthew 8:12. As we travel with Israel through the Book of Acts, we learn

that they are first being filled. Acts 3:26; Acts 13:46. And as we come to the close of the Book of Acts, we find that those who refused, to be, filled were cast into outer darkness. Acts 28:25 to 28. Then this question: If Israel was set aside in Matthew 23:33 to 40, when the Lord called them “serpents”, and if the dispensation of the mystery” began on the day of Pentecost, why did Israel have first chance during the “Acts” period?

V. Concerning water baptism, its significance is declared in John 1:31; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38, unto repentance for the remission of sins to present Israel’s Messiah to Israel.” and in Mark 16:14 to 16, baptism is coupled with belief as the factors in salvation. Some Bible teachers, who may consider themselves expert exegetes, tell us that water baptism was for Israel while Christ was on earth as a minister of the circumcision. Acts 2:22. Romans 15:8; Acts 13:24. They declare that that water baptism was not “Christian” baptism but “kingdom” baptism; that “Christian” water baptism began with the resurrection of Christ, when the significance of the water ceremony was changed in the mind of the Holy Spirit. As to its changed significance, there are about as many theories as there are denominations. But we are Bereans. What saith the Scriptures? Read Acts 2:38; Acts 8:5 to 16; and Acts 19:1 to 8 and what do we learn? Do we learn, as one zealous immersionist has declared, that water baptism was the obedience and expression of the grateful hearts of Christians who had already received the Holy Spirit, who had already become members of the Body of Christ? Positively not. In each case water baptism was the prerequisite; water baptism in each case was meritorious, efficacious and obligatory preceding the receiving of the Holy Spirit. If Peter intended to tell the 3000, on the day of Pentecost, that they had already received the Holy Spirit and were already members of the Body of Christ and they should receive Christian baptism as an expression of gratitude, he made an awful botch of the job; for he told them nothing of the kind. Acts 2:38. They would have told Peter to practice for himself what he preached to them: for he received no Christian water baptism after Christ’s resurrection. The apostles were baptized several years before Christ’s death baptism on the cross.

VI. Concerning the “Acts” Church program we have several interesting and important questions to ask. First: Should our slogan and policy be “back to Jesus and His gospel program on earth” or back to Pentecost and the first Chapters of Acts” for our gospel message, for our church creed, and for our Scriptural guide for our daily ministry and practice; or should we rather say, “travel with Paul; beginning with his first revelation from Christ in heaven for Gentiles; on to his last message in II Timothy?” Perhaps we have been prejudiced by the Red lettered New Testament, placing special emphasis for Christians on the words of Jesus, many of which were spoken to Israel on earth, or by believing that the Body of Christ, of which we are members, had its birth on the day of Pentecost and that that being the first Church in all its purity and power, we should turn back to that ideal Church for our ideal program. Perhaps we have overlooked the significance of the words of Acts 14:27, telling when the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles; and Galatians 2:7 to 9 and I Corinthians 9:20 to 25. Here are two of the most important facts, altogether essential for intelligent Bible study: first, all Scripture must be studied, interpreted and applied as to whether it covered. God’s program for His people before or after Acts 14:27. Second, all of Paul’s messages must be studied, interpreted and applied as to whether they were written before, or after, God’s declaration in Acts 28:25 to 28; when Israel was set aside. Before that climax, Paul wrote

Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians and Romans. After the “Acts” period he wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, Titus, Timothy.

Some of the things that accompany salvation in Paul’s earlier Epistles do not accompany salvation in Paul’s last Epistles. There is no change in the message of redemption clearly stated in Romans 3:24 to 28; Ephesians 2:8 to 10; Titus 3:5 to 7; II Timothy 1:9 and 10, for all emphasize salvation by pure and unadulterated grace apart from works; “without the law”, “without works”, “without a cause”, “unto good works”. Is Acts 2:38 our message for today. Is Acts 8:5 to 15 our program today?

There are about fifty religious ceremonies, signs, gifts and religious practices which were God’s order and program during the “Acts” period, but today have been dropped arbitrarily and without Scriptural explanation by virtually every Fundamentalist assembly and preacher of the grace gospel in the land. Why is there such a change in the “Acts” program and the program of the assemblies of those Fundamentalists who teach that they are members of the Body of Christ which began on the day of Pentecost? Which of them observe the order of Acts 19:1 to 10 or practice the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11?

## **STUDIES IN EPHESIANS**

BY PASTOR VINCENT BENNETT  
LESSON NUMBER THREE

THE PLAN AND THE WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD. Ephesians 1:3 to 14.

After our study of the opening verses of this epistle, we are now ready to meditate upon one of the most wonderful portions of the Word of God. What a different atmosphere is here found to that in Galatians. There it is a battlefield, here it is a heart meditation. There we find the strife of controversy, here the blessedness of a heaven-born unity.

Here, in a single sentence of two hundred and sixty-four words, the greatest sentence in all the literature of the world, is woven the plan and work of the God-head. These verses (Ephesians 1:3 to 14), must be taken in their entirety, so that the completeness of the truth before us is not broken. There is no stopping place in the way, because the persons of the God-head are inseparable, both in their being and activity. The message is clear: that which was essentially ours by the will of God the Father (Ephesians 1:3 to 6), and instrumentally ours by the blood of the Son (Ephesians 1:7 to 12), is now experimentally ours by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13 and 14). This is the best answer I know of to Unitarianism; for we see here that a Unitarian God never did or could save man. Man only knows redeeming grace as it is worked out for him by the three persons of the God-head: Not to be ignored are these words, Ephesians 1:6, “To the praise of the glory of his grace”, Ephesians 1:12, “that we should be to the praise of his glory”, Ephesians 1:14, “unto the praise of his glory”. These quotations come in proper sequence following the separate mention of Father, Son and Spirit. Notice the scope of this truth: from, “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4), to the “redemption of the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:14). Who can begin to sound the full richness of this profound word, which begins with a doxology and ends on a note sounding “the

praise of his glory?” Yet is not this glorious passage much like the entire epistle, scaling heights and spanning breadths unknown? The key to the instruction and construction of this marvelous sentence is found in the word “according” which occurs five times (Ephesians 1:4, 5, 7, 9 and 11). After some glorious truth or fact has been declared, the consequences and issues are made known and the word, “according”, ties the verses together. It is the link in the chain that keeps the theme in progressive revelation till the plan of the God-head is worked out.

THE DOXOLOGY. Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

We are going to take time to examine this verse, so please read it very carefully and study its contents, for it is a bud that gradually unfolds in succeeding revelation. Notice first that the Father, Son and Spirit are all here in anticipation of the unfolding to follow. God the Father is given as the Author and Source of all blessings. These blessings are ours “In Christ”, and they are spiritual, that is, they are bestowed by the Spirit of God. This verse is a doxology. In Ephesians 1:2, we had a ‘benediction’. A benediction comes down from the heart of God in His goodness and kindness toward us. A doxology goes up from the heart of man in praise and thankfulness toward God. We are the objects of His grace, He is the object of our praise.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. The word “blessed” from the Greek “eulogetus” literally means “well spoken of”. There is much eulogizing of men that is empty and meaningless. But as we contemplate the wonders of God’s redeeming grace, surely this exultant outburst of praise should come from overflowing hearts and be on the lips of all the redeemed, especially those who by the illumination of the Spirit of God, have come to a more intimate realization of their calling and hope. Notice next, that it is not “the God of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers,” (Acts 3:13). There is a vast difference between truth linked up with the “God of our fathers” and the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”, for this is not a covenant relationship such as He bears with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for Israel’s national blessing on the earth, but here the risen Saviour is given His full title and He is called “OUR” Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him, the God and, Father hath blessed “US”. Take note of these pronouns, for to know the meaning of these little words is to understand much of the interpretation of the epistle, and the “OUR” and “US” in this passage has reference to the Jew and Gentile as they are united in one body in Christ, for this is the theme of the Ephesian letter.

“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places.”

Oh, how distinct is our calling in Christ from that of Israel. Israel indeed has a glorious expectation, a hope that will be realized in a material way upon the earth when “the times of refreshing” shall be ushered in, when the spirit shall be poured upon all flesh, when Messiah the King shall reign in righteousness. Have not all the prophets foretold of “these days”? Israel then has material blessings related to the earth but the Church which is His body has spiritual blessings related to the heavenlies. We have no prophetic forecast such as is given to Israel, and our affections are not to be centered on the earth but in the heavenlies, where Christ is Who is our life, for this is where our hope is actually going to be realized—“in the Glory”. The term “in heavenly places”, literally “in the heavenlies”, occurs five times (Ephesians 1:3, 20; Ephesians 2:6; Ephesians 3:10;

Ephesians 6:12) and has definite reference to a locality. The Father is there, the Lord Jesus came from there, the Spirit came from there, and the best of all, Christ has gone back there and my citizenship is there, for my standing by grace is “in Christ”. So already, positionally, I am “in the heavenlies in Christ”, and the same power that brought again the Lord; Jesus from the dead and carried Him through the heavens to that blest abode, will one day bring the members of “His Body” to “The Head” in the glory.

When the hope of Israel is realized in the land of promise, surely the people will be able to say, blessed be God who hath blessed us with all “earthly” blessings; and when members of the Church which is His Body once realize the character and sphere of their own blessings in contrast, they will not want to go around robbing Israel of her glory.

### “ALL” (EVERY) SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Not blessings that are conditioned and restricted, depending upon my works of righteousness or faithfulness, but blessings secured for me by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Whom I have all things, thank God. All the riches of glory are at my disposal, and He will supply all my needs according to those riches by Christ Jesus (Philippians 5:19). This is just a glimpse of the fulness of the grace of our God.

“IN CHRIST”. This is the sum of it all: in two words, “In Christ”, we have the explanation of all that we are in the sight of God and all that we hope to be in the ages to come; for by identification with Christ we are “accepted” by the Father and all spiritual blessings are ours. “In Christ” explains our transition by faith from death to life. We died in Him, we were buried and rose in Him, we ascended in Him, and when He appears, transformed in His likeness, we shall appear with Him in His glory.

When the tabernacle was still standing the high priest entered the Holy of Holies as the representative of the people, bearing upon his person the breast-plate with its twelve precious stones on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, thus carrying them into the presence of God. “In Christ” we are not only “presented” but veritably “present”, for He has “made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ”. As we continue our study we shall find that this great teaching of our mystical union with Christ finds in this epistle its clearest enunciation.

## **SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF THE SOMATIC TRUTH**

BY HARRY BULTEMA

All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, II Timothy 3:16. This in a special sense is true of the truth concerning the Head and the Body and their perfect identification as to the heavenly position.

This truth, grasped well, provides a perfect safeguard against the fanaticism of our day such as Pentecostalism, Tongueism, Faith Healing, Fire Baptism and the Second Blessing. Fundamentalism has time and again been whipped by the different Pentecostal groups, which in the last decades have swept the land like a prairie-fire. It does not seem at present that the strange fires will soon be quenched or have burned themselves out to cinders, rather can we expect that the fires will increase in volume and extent, seeing that

the Bible Institutes are swinging more into Arminianism and away from Calvinism, and the former has always opened the sluices for wild waters. Calvinism can degenerate into legalism and fatalism, it can petrify and fossilize, but as a rule it does not produce wild fire and fanaticism. In its very nature it is a strong bulwark against it, and its history proves it till this very day in Europe and America. Those who know the so-called Body Truth and their supercelestial position in the heavenly Head, know also that the Pentecostal gifts have been superseded by the superabounding grace, the unsearchable riches, the manifold wisdom, the exceeding great power of His resurrection, and the Hope of glory. A temporal recuperation of our humbled bodies mean precious little to those who look forward to the imminent change of their bodies into the likeness of their Saviour. Certainly there are many healings and other miracles in the Bible, but they all belong to the earthly nation Israel and to those who were benefited by the Jewish believers. God never had any Gentile healers, miracle workers or tongue-people, and only with a terrible amount of exaggeration and down-right lying, can the Biblical miracles of instantaneous healings, and tongues and raisings from the dead, be maintained for our day. Pentecostals who have sobered up by the truth as it is, and by the facts as they are, have confessed this. God said in His Word that the prophesies, tongues, and miraculous knowledge were to “vanish away”, and they did vanish according to His Word, I Corinthians 13:8. No one can prophesy today what will happen tomorrow, but Peter, Agabus and Paul could do that in the Pentecostal period. No missionary going to China can begin to preach in Chinese the day after the arrival, and no one today has a knowledge as Peter displayed when he said that Ananias and his wife would at once drop dead and be buried. If the healings were here also these three kinds of wonders would be with us. If we maintain, however, that the miracles of healing, etc., are not for the age of the mystery and for the Body, then we do not deny thereby that the Lord will often hear the prayers of His own for the healing of their body. We only militate against the performance of the miracles such as we find in the Gospels and Acts, because they were for and through Israel. As soon as we take that ground we must be consistent and raise the dead and cast out the devils. When Peter could heal Eneas in Lydda, he could walk three miles farther to Joppa and raise Dorcas. If Peter could heal he could heal every one, even apart from faith, merely by marching through the street and letting his shadow glide over the patients. Paul did it, or God did it through Paul, by laying little rags on the sick. Nothing like this is seen anywhere in our day.

The truth concerning our glorious Head and His Body is also the best safeguard against the impouring tide of Modernism, which is the greatest foe of the Church today. Standing as it does for humanism and Evolutionism and Higher Criticism, it is nothing but infidelity masked in religion and clothed in the flowing garments of ecclesiastical formalism, traditionalism and ritualism. It has at best a Jesus that lived long ago, but not a present Lord in glory. It is deceitful in the highest degree for it has a Christianity without Christ, A kingdom without the King, Bible study without the Bible and godliness without God, just as we have chicken soup without chicken and bean soup without beans. It speaks with “great swelling words” about progress and peace while there is neither of the two, and it laughs at the idea of the second coming of Christ in judgment upon all the ungodly. The Somatic truth or truth concerning the Body shall never hammer down Modernism, but for everyone that takes hold of it by faith, it is intrinsically a safeguard

against Modernism and all the infidelity for which it stands, since it is impossible to hold on to the Head and at the same time to isms that deny Him.

Again, this truth is the best means to a joyful assurance of the believers. In the Bible saints we do not find the chronic lack of assurance but among the present day believers it is a very general disease. The Bible saints always knew how to put the personal pronoun *my* before God and the Saviour. That is true of Jacob, Moses, Job, Ruth, David, Elijah, Micah, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Daniel, Jonah, Thomas, Paul. But believers of today are swayed with doubts and fears and a lack of a joyful assurance. The causes are many that have contributed to that sad and abnormal state of affairs. Doubt in regard to God's Word! on a certain point, disobedience to His precepts, world-bordering, desire for riches, the pleasures of this world, the cares of this world, pride, carnality, secret rancor and resentment against a brother, the unequal yoke, lethargy and lack of service, evil habits, lack of prayer, lack of Bible study, culpable ignorance as to law and grace and the finished work of Christ, and the deplorable lack of the blessed Hope—these are only some of the causes that bring about that morbid state of doubt as to one's own salvation. When I came to the city of Muskegon twenty years ago, I had never in all my life met so many believers together, but I had neither found so many that doubted their own salvation. The Dutch are in this respect like the Scotch Calvinists, who think that joyful assurance is presumption, pride, and levity. They could sometimes glory in being "bruised reeds." Happy for such folk that the weak and breaking eye could also look at the brazen serpent and be healed. Even the palsied hand can accept His great salvation. The trembling soul is welcomed by Him. He did not say: "He that hath a giant faith hath everlasting life." A glimpse at the glorious epiphany of Christ, and a clear view on law and grace will greatly benefit such Christians, but the capstone for them is the knowledge that they have been made fully one with Christ, their heavenly Lord in everything. This truth of necessity makes for assurance and a joyful Christian life. It gives a peace that nothing can destroy and that passeth understanding.

Further, this truth also hushes forever all debate and dispute on eternal security. Assurance and security are sometimes mixed but there is a wide difference between these two. Security lies objectively in Christ whereas assurance lies in us. Security is God's work, while assurance is the way we take hold of it. Those who brought a lamb in the days of old, lay their hands on its head and thus identified themselves with it, but the poor who brought a turtle dove did not identify themselves with the sacrifice, but their sins were just as well covered up. This illustrates aptly the two grand truths of security and assurance. There are today many believers who do not identify themselves by faith with the Lamb in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, session and second advent. They just bring a little turtle dove so to say, and stick to what they are pleased to call "Jesus only" and "the simple gospel". Many of these feeble folk secretly tremble that they may yet one of these days perish. The best antidote for this is a good dose of the "Body Truth," for how can there be any doubt as to our security, if we know by faith that He Himself is our life and that our life is hid with Christ in God, and that we soon shall appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1 to 4.

This truth also settles once for all our relation to the law. In order to know this we simply have to ask what the position of our Head is relative to the law? Is He under it? No, then neither are we. Is He against the law? No, then neither are we. Does He try to get holy or thankful by means of the law? Of course not; but then it is also a matter of

course for us that we must not use the law as a means of gratitude and sanctity, for His position is ours before God. We have been accepted in the Beloved. "As He is so are we in the world."

Finally, a firm grasp on this truth smashes to smithereens all Ritualism, drives all Formalism beyond the North pole and sets forever free from paralyzing traditionalism. In Ritualism we also include Baptism, which in itself was a beautiful symbol. The waters separated the new creation from the old chaos, the second world from the first in the day of Noah, the Jews from Egypt at the Red; Sea and at Jordan it divided between the howling desert and the land of promise and at the time of John the Baptist it called to Israel to turn their back on their idolatrous past. The water is of the Lord and also Baptism, but it was never meant for the superheavenly people who are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone and who have been made to sit with Him far above all heavens. In the Lord of glory is no symbol, sign or shadow. The soma is all substance, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, complete in Him and eternally one with Him. Praise His Name!

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

BY PASTOR CHAS. F. BAKER

### PART I

It should be the fervent desire of every child of God to be obedient to every one of God's commands. Wherever and whenever there is a shunning or refusal to be obedient, it is a sure sign of unspirituality. It will be our purpose in studying the Great Commission not to ask whether we should obey God's commands, but to find out whether or not God is asking members of the Body of Christ today to carry out this commission. This question is not raised in order that we might find excuse to shirk our God-given duty, but is asked in order that we might be in a position to be obedient.

It is not only hopeless to try to obey all of the commands of the Bible, but it is outright disobedience for Christians today to obey some of God's commands given in the Bible. He commanded His children to stone to death the Sabbath-breaker, but such action would be murder today. Whereas He commanded many things to be done by Abraham and Moses and the children of Israel during the Old Testament and even down to the close of the Book of Acts, He likewise commanded that "the Gentiles observe no such thing." (Acts 21:25). He commanded man, before the Flood, to eat only herbs; then He gave to Noah to eat of every living thing that moveth for his meat; later on He limited the meats of the children of Israel and strictly forbade some animals of which Noah had freely eaten; and finally, through the Apostle Paul, He classifies any such command to abstain from eating any meat along with the doctrine of demons.

When a sinner's heart is convicted of sin and of everlasting judgment and there comes the desire to be saved, it is surely necessary to know which command of the Bible to follow. Should he strive to enter in at the strait gate (Luke 13:24)? Or should he be given the rich young ruler's, answer in Matthew 19:17 "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the (ten) commandments?" Or should he obey Paul's command to the Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved?" And if he did, would his whole house be saved? Should he be circumcised according to the command in

Genesis 17:10 to 14, or should he be baptized for the remission of sins according to Luke 3:3; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38? Then should he be obedient to Christ's command in Matthew 10:5: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"? Should he "provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in his purse, nor script for his journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves," in obedience to Matthew 10:9 and 10; or obey the command of the same Jesus in Luke 22:36: "He that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his script: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one"? Should he go forth and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead according to Matthew 10:7 and 8, or should he preach the Gospel of the Grace of God? If he baptizes others, should he do it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as commanded in Matthew 28:19, or follow the example of the Apostles and do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts 10:48; Acts 8:16; Acts 19:5? Then should he lay hands on those baptized in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:38; Acts 8:14 to 17; Acts 19:6, or should he be sure they have the Holy Spirit before he baptizes them according to good Baptist doctrine?

It should be evident that one is either speaking ignorantly or foolishly who professes to be obeying every command of the Bible and this much has been said in introduction in order that the need might be seen for a clear understanding as to whether or not the so-called "Great Commission" stands today, unabridged, unaltered, as the supreme and final command to the Church which is His Body, or whether the Scripture reveals that another commission has been given to supersede this one. Volumes might be written to show the confusion which exists amongst Bible expositors, especially amongst pre-millenarians, on this subject, but such would tend only to bring confusion and prejudice, and would in no way help to give the Scriptural answer.

In asking the question: Is the Great Commission the supreme and final instruction for the Body of Christ today? much simplification of the problem will result from taking into consideration the following facts:

First: It is important to see that there was not ONE commission, but several, given by the resurrected Christ to His Apostles. The first was given to the Ten on the evening of the resurrection day in Jerusalem, and is recorded in John 20:19 to 23. The Apostles were given the Holy Spirit and the authority to forgive and to retain sins. The second commission was given to the Eleven as they sat at meat (Mark 16:14 to 18): "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". The third was given on a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had appointed them (Matthew 28:16 to 20): "Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." The fourth was given immediately preceding the Ascension and is recorded in Luke 24:46 to 48 and Acts 1:8 and 9. The Apostles were to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father: power from on high, or baptism with the Holy Spirit; and then were to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It must now be decided just what is the "Great Commission". Is it one of these separate commissions, and if so, which one? Or should all be fitted together to make one Great Commission? This latter would surely be contrary to

intelligent exegesis, and to make one commission greater than another is to make a discrimination which God has not made. The Apostles no doubt were made to understand the place and purpose of each of these commissions, and it is our purpose to do likewise by God's help.

Second: It is important to recognize that the Gospel commissions authorize the preaching of the Kingdom Gospel, and not the Gospel of the Grace of God which was committed to Paul for the Gentiles. This fact alone is one of the most conclusive and convincing evidences that these commissions do not stand unaltered today as the orders for the Body of Christ. A careful study of the Scripture will show that the only Gospel preached from John the Baptist to the call of Paul in Acts 13 was the Kingdom Gospel. It was several years after the Gospel commissions were given that Paul was saved and that there was given to him by revelation from the ascended Christ the message of the Grace of Christ (Galatians 1:6, 11, 12) which Paul called "my Gospel" (Romans 16:25), or the Gospel of the uncircumcision in contrast with the Gospel of the circumcision which the Twelve Apostles were authorized to preach by the Gospel Commissions. If Christ gave another Gospel to be preached after He gave the so-called Great Commission, does it not appear rather peculiar to insist upon ministering the new gospel under the old commission? Since Paul's Gospel was for the Gentiles and the Twelve's for the Jews (true it was given to Cornelius but Peter says it was the same message which God sent to the children of Israel: Acts 10:36), and since to Paul was committed the revelation of the Body of Christ and the Dispensation of the Mystery, it is only common sense that as members of the Body of Christ we should preach Paul's Gospel under the distinctive orders of that message. A great deal of confusion exists today, even in the ranks of Fundamentalism, because of the mixing of these two Gospels in ministering to Gentile sinners and saints. When we mix that which God has kept apart, confusion is bound to result. It is as much error to read into Mark 16:15: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel of the Grace of God; as to read into Exodus 24:12: Come up to me in the mount, and be there and I will give thee the Gospel of the Grace of God. Peter five or ten years before Paul's revelation, didn't know any more about the Body of Christ or the Gospel of Grace, than Moses did fifteen hundred years before that.

Third: The Gospel Commissions do not represent the last commands of Christ. Some, in defending these commissions as our orders for today, state that they are being obedient to the last commands which Jesus Christ left, and that all who do not follow these orders are denying His last requests. This argument is designed to appeal to the emotions, and sounds convincing on the surface, but upon examination it is discovered to rest upon the same premise as does destructive criticism. With the premise that these commissions are the last commands of Christ, is it not but simple logic to prove that Paul was an impostor and a false prophet? Paul came after these commissions, and if they represent Christ's last words, where is any room left for Paul's epistles to contain the words of Christ? But Paul boldly claims that years after the commissions were given, Christ appeared and spoke words to him. "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11 and 12). "And I said, who art thou Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise and stand on thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear

unto thee” (Acts 26:15 and 16). These verses not only prove that all which Paul wrote was spoken by Christ after the Gospel commissions were given, but that Paul received more than one revelation of truth. If God gave to, Moses commands which were superseded by the teachings of Christ and finally abolished by His death; if Jesus commissioned His Apostles to go only to the lost sheep of Israel and then superseded that by another command to go into all the world; could He not even after that supersede the Kingdom Commission with another to the Apostle Paul for the Body of Christ?

(To be continued)

## **NOTES FROM A MESSAGE**

BY HENRY BULTEMA

The Apostle of the Gentiles went in his walk and witness from glory to glory. The dying of Christ for our sins became in Romans a death and resurrection with Him and upon this he based the whole doctrine of sanctification: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This reckoning is no feeling, experiencing, but an act of believing, of taking God at His Word.

In Ephesians the Holy Ghost went a step farther and pointed out to the saints that they are also united with Christ in his session at the right hand of God, “Far above all heavens.” The Apostle, at that time, between 62 and 65 A.D., had a manacled mandate and ministry message. In the rat hole of the Roman prison God Almighty burst open the heavens and told him a sacred secret which in all other ages had been hid in God. This secret could not have been told before. Why not?

1. Because Christ first had to suffer and die before the Body could come.
2. Because the Body, of which this secret speaks, follows the Head and He became the Head through His resurrection and ascension. Ephesians 1:20 to 23; Ephesians 4:10; Philippians 2:9.
3. Because Israel first had to have all his chance and had to be offered pardon through the crucified and risen Christ.
4. Because it had to be kept secret from Satan and being “hid in God” the devil did not know of this secret.

When Satan thought at the cross, and Israel’s fall, that his triumph was complete and he had scored a complete victory over God, then this secret of a glory surpassing all things was told to the stultification of Satan.

Nevertheless, the devil also seems to have scored a great victory in that he instigated a deadly hatred, against the human teller of this secret. It is very important to see that from the time he told this mystery, Paul was forsaken by many of his old friends. Study carefully Philippians 2:20 and 21; Colossians 4:11; II Timothy 1:15; II Timothy 4:10; II Timothy 4:17; Ephesians 6:19 and 20. The great apostasy which plunged the Church in the long dark ages for more than a thousand years, commenced with the rejection of Paul’s message, mystery and ministry. At least eighty per cent of the confusion and delusion of our troubled days is also directly attributable to the same cause.

## **DIVIDING THE WORD AND DIVIDING THE BRETHREN**

All believers who are in Christ are members of the one true Bible Church, called “the Body of Christ”. In Christ there is neither Gentile nor Jew. But “sectarianism” bears witness to the fact that in Christ there are Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Plymouth Brethren, Nazarenes, Pentecostals and hundreds of other “ites” and “ists”. This sectarianism, which is so much to be deplored here below, will not exist when the Head calls the Body to appear with Him in glory. In the mind and purpose of God there is no denominationalism in the Body of Christ. There is only one God, the Father. To this all true Christians are agreed. If they bow to the authority of the Word of God, they are also agreed that there is one Body, and one faith; and one baptism; and one Spirit. And they are agreed, because of the plain Statements in the Bible, that salvation is by grace and through faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is there not some way by which all brethren in the Body of Christ can reach unanimous agreement as to just what that one faith is, just what that one baptism is, and just how to receive that one Spirit? And were it possible to agree on this unity, would we then have settled that very perplexing question; “when did the Body of Christ begin historically and just what part of the kingdom program of Jesus of Nazareth and just how many of the signs, religious ceremonies, supernatural visitations, visions and gifts of the apostolic church, during the Book of Acts period, should be incorporated in our church creeds today?” My, how many problems we have!

We know that we should obey II Timothy 2:15 and rightly divide the Word of truth. But judging from the present-day unpleasant controversies and ungracious and uncharitable treatment of fellow-saints among Fundamentalists today, all of whom claim to divide the Word of truth, the question is, who is doing it “rightly”? Rightly dividing the Word of truth seems to be a “major operation”. Whether it is “rightly” dividing the Word or “wrongly” dividing the Word, something has divided the saints of God into many different religious camps. Paul might well ask again, “is Christ divided?” Surely Father, Son and Holy Spirit are grieved with this schism in the Body; but, knowing the Adversary and the weaknesses of man, they are not surprised.

Some brethren suggest that the very best way to deal with our doctrinal differences is to forget them, agree on a few points and labor together in unity. This doesn’t even sound well, as a theory, to a faithful saint of God who desires to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. But even an earnest attempt to adopt and practice such a plan will result in failure.

How can a zealous, religious Churchmember, who believes in the sign gifts for the Church, the imposition of hands for the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking with tongues, visions and tarrying meetings, compromise with his fellow Church-member who so divides the Word of truth as to eliminate all of these from the program of the Lord’s Body today? Then, how about a halfway position for the sake of harmony; select a part and let the rest go? That creates the problem of an expert selector and unanimous consent as to the ceremonies and gifts selected and those rejected.

If it can be proved that the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost, that Paul continued with the ministry begun by Peter and the Eleven, and that on the day of Pentecost and during Acts our heavenly Father established for the Body of Christ the

ideal order and spiritual program to be carried right through this age until the return of Christ, then no true and faithful saint of God should surrender any part of that program or compromise with any fellow-saint for the sake of unity. If this is God's program for the Body of Christ, then contending for the faith means contending for the "Acts" church program.

Surely, as God's redeemed children, we want to do that which pleases Him and as members of the Body of Christ we shall do our utmost to obey our risen Head. Surely God's will for us is in the Bible, scattered all through the Book. We must believe that there is a definite, Scriptural method of interpretation and application as well as a God-given plan of appropriation.

We are instructed in Philippians 1:10 to test the things that differ. We do want to be careful not to imagine things differ when they do not differ. But this should not keep us from faithfully obeying this command.

If representatives of every denomination of Fundamentalists should be called into conference, they would unanimously agree that there can be no intelligent Bible study, if the principle of "testing the things that differ" or "rightly dividing the Word of truth", is ignored. Yes, the conference would break up in disagreement, because of some honest differences, but principally because of denominational creeds, personal preferences, opinions and experiences, and preconceived ideas and prejudices rather than through an honest, prayerful, spiritual thorough searching of the Scriptures.

Surely it is without Divine authority or permission that different sects of the One Body adopt and practice different creeds and, different religious programs. If it is Scripturally proper, according to rightly dividing the Word of truth, for one assembly, made up of members of the Body of Christ, to anoint with oil, to have tarrying-meetings for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to teach that speaking with tongues is the Divine evidence of that baptism, to proclaim baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, to pray the "Our Father" prayer, to cast out demons, to preach the gospel of the kingdom, to teach the eradication of the old man by the second blessing, to proclaim for Gentile sinners today Peter's Pentecost message, to exercise the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, most assuredly it is the Scriptural duty of every such assembly to carry on the identical program. This is one way of having unity, whether or not the unity would be the unity of Ephesians 4:3 to 7.

It is obvious that so long as some assemblies, made up of the members of Christ's Body, teach that it is Scriptural to sprinkle with water little children, as the seal of the covenant, while other assemblies of saints declare that water baptism should be by immersion for the remission of sins, and still others say "no, not for the remission of sins, but after salvation as a witness to the world", and still others say, "no, simply as an act of obedience and as a door of entrance into the local church", and still others say, "you are all wrong; it is a burial ceremony to indicate that you have died with Christ", and others and others express their varying views, divisions, controversies, even strife and contention must continue. God intended that agreement concerning "baptism" should be the basis for Divine unity among members of the One Body. No unity except on the basis of "one baptism". Ephesians 4:5. It must be certain that the Holy Spirit was not speaking of water.

In Philippians 3:17 we find these words of instruction, the Holy Spirit speaking to us by our apostle Paul

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

In the verses immediately preceding this verse you will observe that Paul had changed his former religious program; in fact, he had had two programs before the close of the “Acts” period, one his program as a Pharisaical Jew under the law, and then his two-fold program during the “Acts” period before God’s judgment was pronounced upon Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28; I Corinthians 9:20 to 22.

About one dozen times Paul emphasizes the fact that he is the Christ-appointed messenger, apostle, teacher and preacher of the Gentiles. In his Epistles, written after Acts 28:25 to 28, he emphasizes the fact that he is the custodian of the mystery, the one apostle responsible to Gentile believers for the truth and gospel and spiritual program for members of the Body of Christ. We are members of that Body, if saved. Our hope and calling, our position and possession in Christ, are set forth in those writings, which we call the Prison Epistles of Paul. It does seem that God’s will for us, and our safe, sane, intelligent, Scriptural method of appropriation and application of Divine truth, rightly divided, is to thoroughly study the Epistles to the Romans, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to Titus, and to Timothy, and adopt those messages, altogether unmixed with religion, for our faith and practice, for our spiritual guidance; and then in the light of these messages from the Holy Spirit concerning the Church, which is Christ’s Body, appropriate and apply the truth of the Four Gospels, the truth and church program of the “Acts” period and all other Scriptures in the Bible, never forgetting God’s division, even during the “Acts” period, the Jews, the Gentiles, the Church of God.” I Corinthians 10:32. Surely there is a Scriptural answer to the question, is Matthew 10:5 to 8 or Mark 16:14 to 18 or Acts 2:38 or Acts 8:5 to 16 or Acts 19:1 to 10, or James 5:14 for members of Christ’s Body in this age?

## **CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM**

One of the simplest principles of Bible study is the “context” principle: that is, the study of a verse of Scripture in the light of the verses preceding or following in the same chapter.

The last reference to baptism in the Bible, if Colossians was written after Hebrews, is Colossians 2:12. One of the last references to circumcision is in Colossians 2:11. We quote Colossians 2:10 to 12

**“FOR YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM, WHICH IS THE HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER:**

**IN WHOM ALSO YE ARE CIRCUMCISED WITH THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS, IN PUTTING OFF THE BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST:**

**“BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM WHEREIN ALSO YE ARE RISEN WITH (HIM) THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, WHO HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.”**

If the circumcision of the eleventh verse is “without hands”, the baptism of the twelfth verse must be “without hands”. We have no doubt as to the fact of the “handless” circumcision. And we have no doubt that there is in the Bible a baptism “without hands”,

a Divine baptism. "Christ shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Mark 1:8.

"Baptized by One Spirit into one Body." I Corinthians 12:13. The Divine baptism for power, which took place on the day of Pentecost, is not identical with the Divine baptism into the death of Christ, mentioned in Romans 6:3. However, both were Divine baptisms. Moreover, no real student of the Word of God will contradict the assertion that the "baptism burial" of Colossians 2:12 is the same "baptism burial" mentioned in Romans 6:4. Neither will any student even question that there is in the Bible a circumcision "made with hands" and a baptism "made with hands".

Israel had "divers baptisms" before Christ became the minister of the circumcision. Hebrews 9:10; Romans 15:8; Hebrews 6:1 and 2. Israel had circumcision many years before they received the law and the old covenant. (John 7:22). Abram was justified in uncircumcision 24 years before he was circumcised. Genesis 12:4. When he was circumcised Abram's name was changed to Abraham. Genesis 17:6 to 16. Circumcision "made with hands" was instituted by God when Abraham was 99 years old. Abraham's circumcision was the sign of the righteousness which he received in uncircumcision when he was 75 years old. Romans 4:11. Isaac, Abraham's promised son, was circumcised when he was eight days old. Genesis 21:4.

The holy child Jesus was circumcised when He was eight days old. Luke 2:21. At the time of His circumcision His name was called "Jesus". The Lord Jesus was not baptized with John's baptism when He was an infant, but when He was thirty years of age. Luke 3:23. Then on the cross the Lord Jesus was baptized into death. Luke 12:50.

John the Baptist was a minister to Israel, the circumcision; not to the uncircumcision, Luke 1:16; Luke 1:80; Acts 13:24. The Lord Jesus on earth was a minister to the circumcision, sent only to the house of Israel. Romans 15:8; Matthew 15:24. The twelve apostles, both before and after the death of the Lord Jesus, were ministers to the circumcision. Matthew 10:5 to 8; Galatians 2:7 to 9; Acts 11:19. Their testimony, confirmed by the Holy Spirit, was that God raised Christ from the dead to be Israel's Saviour. Acts 5:29 to 31 Even their message to Cornelius was the word sent to Israel. Acts 10:34 to 38.

John's baptism, "made with hands", was, that Christ might be manifest unto Israel, and was unto repentance for the remission of sins. John 1:31. Mark 1:4. The Twelve on the day of Pentecost declared to all the house of Israel that God made the crucified Jesus to be Christ; and they preached if Israel was willing to confess Him as Christ, they should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38. By carefully comparing the Baptist's message with that of the Twelve on the day of Pentecost, it will be seen that in both cases the baptism "made with hands" was unto repentance for the remission of sins, and a prerequisite for Holy Spirit baptism. It was connected with faith as meritorious in salvation. Mark 16:14 to 18. Even Saul of Tarsus was told to arise and be baptized and, wash away his sins. Acts 22:16. Beginning with the baptism of "all Judea" by John the Baptist in Jordan, and in Aenon, and including the 3000 of Acts 2:41, the 5000 of Acts 4:4, the people of Samaria of Acts 8:12, and Saul of Tarsus of Acts 9:17, no man was baptized who had not first been circumcised, not even the "eunuch". Acts 11:19. And for years after that, circumcision continued even among "Jews that believed". Acts 16:3 and Acts 21:18 to 25. And the Twelve continued to preach the Gospel of the circumcision to the circumcision. Galatians

2:7 to 9. Historically the last record of water baptism is found in Acts 19:1 to 7. But circumcision was practiced after that among Christian Jews. Acts 21:18 to 25.

Thus we see by the “Acts” record that circumcision and water baptism went right along together. A careful study of Acts 2:41; Acts 4:4; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:38 (eunuch); Acts 10:48 (Cornelius); Acts 16:15 (Lydia); Acts 16:33 (the jailer’s household); Acts 18:8 (many Corinthians), Acts 19:5 (twelve Israelites); will show that there is no record of any water baptism between the year 41 A.D. (Acts 10:48) and 51 A.D. (Acts 16:15); and that more than 95 per cent of the believers baptized were Israelites, the circumcision, so far as we have any record.

Is this not sufficient proof for any honest, sincere, intelligent student of the Word of God to disprove that the teaching that water baptism, including the sprinkling of infants, was instituted by the Lord as the New Testament seal to supplant circumcision, the Old Testament seal?

The ministers of the circumcision were instructed by the resurrected Christ that those who believed the gospel and were baptized would be saved. Mark 16:15 to 18. Aside from the household of Cornelius there is no record in Acts that Peter and the Eleven preached to any but the circumcision. What baptism instructions did Christ give to Paul with the gospel of the uncircumcision? “Christ sent me not to baptize”. I Corinthians 1:17. There is not the slightest hint in any teaching of Paul that water baptism was a witness to the world or a testimony that the believing Gentile had been crucified, buried, raised with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenlies. All such teaching must be supported by tradition and denominational creeds. The baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 does identify a believer with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection; and it is the same baptism of Ephesians 4:5 which seats the believer as a member of the Body of Christ in the upper-heavenlies. How egotistical, proud and presumptuous is the man who believes that he can accomplish, or aid in accomplishing, such a transformation by his hands and by much or little water!

Whatever may have been the signification of the circumcision and baptism “made with hands”, before the days of Christ, or during the days of Christ, or Book of Acts, both physical circumcision and physical baptism ceased with the close of Acts. With abiding faith hope and love, the Divine circumcision and Divine baptism of Colossians 2:11 and 12 remain. Inasmuch as no physical baptism is required for entrance into the Body of Christ even into Christ Himself, no church organization that requires such a religious ceremony for admission should call itself the Body of Christ.

## **“CONDEMNED ALREADY”**

“BEWARE LEST THAT COME UPON YOU”.

A verse of scripture that is very frequently quoted by Christians is John 3:18:

“HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.”

A verse that is seldom quoted by Christians is Acts 13:40:

“BEWARE THEREFORE, LEST THAT COME UPON YOU, WHICH IS SPOKEN OF IN THE PROPHETS.”

In John 3:18, the predicament and perilous condition of the unbeliever is already upon him. But in Acts 13:40, the predicament and condemnation has not yet come.

This is all the more difficult to understand because we have been taught to believe that the words recorded in John 3:18 were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ while He was here on earth. Whereas, the words of warning recorded in Acts 13:40, were spoken by His servant Paul about 12 years after Christ had died. Let us consider the verse in Acts first: “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets.” If language has any meaning, we learn from this verse and the verse that follows that Israel’s prophets had foretold a condemnation that was to come upon Israel. And we also learn here that that condemnation had not yet come.

This should cause us to ask this question: did that condemnation come, and if so, when did it come? “Ye shall in no wise believe”, is the language found in Acts 13:41. About 18 years after these words were declared by Paul to the rulers of Israel, the judgment foretold by Israel’s prophets fell upon that nation. That judgment is recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28. And about 6 or 7 years later, the most terrific judgment that ever fell upon any nation was visited upon Israel in the destruction of their city, and their temple, when about two million Israelites perished under the hand of Titus and his army. This was in fulfillment of the words of the Lord Jesus, recorded in Matthew 22:7, which we quote: “But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.”

Any careful, spiritual student of the Word of God will see that the Nation Israel was on trial before God all during the “Book of Acts” period. And inasmuch as that which was spoken by the prophets had not come upon Israel, at the time Paul uttered the words in Acts 13:40, in what sense could it have been said concerning that Nation they then were condemned already, according to John 3:18?

It is not difficult for us today to say to the unbelieving Jew or unbelieving Gentile he is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. But we might ask this question: was that the reason why Gentiles were condemned while Jesus Christ was on earth? In the language of Romans 10:12 to 17, we learn that faith cometh by hearing the Word. No one can believe without hearing. But in the light of Matthew 15:24 and Matthew 10:5 to 8, Gentiles were not given the opportunity to hear while Christ was in the midst of Israel as Jesus of Nazareth, sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. How could they have believed on Him of whom they had not heard?

Gentiles were condemned in Adam and had been given up by God. Romans 1:28. They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. They were alienated from the life of God. Ephesians 2:11 and Ephesians 4:18. They were in the world, having no hope, because they were without Christ. Therefore, surely this question presents itself to our minds and hearts: how could they have been condemned already for not believing on Christ when they had had no opportunity to hear of Christ?

This brings us back to the old question as to how we are to reconcile the “whosoever” message of John 3:16 with the exclusive message to Israel, in Matthew 15:24. Does it not seem that the intelligent answer to this question is the fact that John 3:16 to 21 are the words given to the Apostle John, by inspiration, after the judgment

mentioned in Acts 13:40 and 41 fell upon the Nation Israel, and salvation was sent to the Gentiles in accordance with Acts 28:28? Certainly, if we say that the Lord Jesus preached in accordance with John 3:16 a “whosoever” message of grace to the Jews and Gentiles alike, while He was on earth, and thus interpret John 3:16 to 21, we find that Matthew 15:24 is a plain contradiction to this teaching. We quote Matthew 15:24: “But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”. Compare this with John 3:16 and name a Gentile who was saved by the gospel of grace while Christ was on earth.

## **THE LORD’S SUPPER**

(Continued from January issue)

### THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COME

The Lord’s Supper is to be observed by believers “till He come”. There are more than a dozen Greek words translated “come” in the New Testament Scriptures. That there are several aspects of the Lord’s coming, no real student of the Word of God will deny. That the principle of rightly dividing the Word of Truth should be applied to the doctrine of the Lord’s coming, no real student should even question. Concerning the Lord’s coming or appearing, the Greek words “parousia” “epiphaneia” “phaneroo” “apokalupis” are used. In the “till He come”, in the verse concerning the Lord’s Supper, the Greek word is “erchomai”. This word is not as limited, or as specific, in its meaning as are the other Greek words. It is true, however, that this word is used in a number of verses spoken to Israel concerning Israel’s hope and Israel’s kingdom; for example, “till I come”, in Luke 19:13. It is found also in John 21:22 and 23; “Shall so come in like manner”, in Acts 1:11, uses the same “erchomai”.

The same word is used in John 14:3, “I will come again and receive you unto myself”: The Gospel of John is not a message concerning the Body of Christ and, therefore, some Bible teachers feel quite positive that Christ was not speaking of the blessed hope of Titus 2:13, or the appearing in glory of Colossians 3:3 and 4, when He spoke in John 14:3. However, we should not be too hasty to agree with this statement. They are likewise quite positive that the coming of the Lord, mentioned in I Corinthians 1:7, I Corinthians 15:23, and in I Corinthians 11:26, had no reference to the blessed hope of the Church which is Christ’s Body. They admit that “erchomai” might include several aspects of the Lord’s coming, but that the hope of the “Acts” Church of God was Israel’s hope, and that believers of that “Acts” period had a hope and a calling different from the hope and calling of the Body of Ephesians and the Body at the present time.

### ISRAEL’S HOPE

Concerning the doctrine of Israel’s hope, there are hundreds of prophecies that Israel is yet to possess the land of Canaan and live in a kingdom age under the peaceful reign of their true King David. Certainly it is not sound exegesis to teach that the saved Israelites, during the Acts period, baptized into one Body, with saved Gentiles, had any scriptural right to that hope. The hope of Israel to which Paul referred in Acts 28:20 is

mentioned in Acts 23:6, Acts 24:15 and Acts 26:6 and 7. “The hope of the promises made of God unto our fathers” “hope toward God which they (Israel) also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”

Saved Israelites during the Acts period, in the Epistles to the Romans, were in the same Body of Christ with saved Gentiles and this Body is the same Body as is mentioned in Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

But then we are told that Israel had another hope, the hope of the Church of Romans and Corinthians, which was Abraham’s hope, the heavenly Jerusalem, that believers of the “Acts” period were linked up with Abraham, their father, and their hope was I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, and after the rapture they are to reach the heavenly city for which Abraham and others looked. This they confirm by linking up Galatians 4:26, “Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; and Romans 4:16, “Abraham the father of us all”, with Hebrews 11:10; Hebrews 12:22 and 23; “the continuing city and the church of the first born, the heavenly Jerusalem”; and with Revelation 3:12, “the city of my God, the new Jerusalem” and Revelation 21:2 and 3: “the New Jerusalem coming down from God”. Undoubtedly the same exegesis employed to rule out the Lord’s Supper will rule out the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 as the hope of the Church. Those who rule out the Lord’s Supper and the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 teach that the hope of the Body is Phillipians 3:10 to 21, the calling on high, which is to precede the “Thessalonians” rapture. They claim that the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 is the coming of Christ mentioned in Matthew 24, and if I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 is the hope of the Body of Christ then that Body must go into the great tribulation.

## THE PAROUSIA

Much emphasis is placed on the word “Parousia”, which literally means “presence”. It is so translated in Paul’s reference to his own presence. II Corinthians 10:10. Inasmuch as the word “parousia” is used in Matthew 24:3 and 27 and 37 and 39, referring to the Lord’s coming for Israel in the midst of their great tribulation, and the same word is used in I Thessalonians 2:19, I Thessalonians 3:13, I Thessalonians 4:15, I Thessalonians 5:23, II Thessalonians 2:1 and 8, and inasmuch as there are trumpets and angels connected with both Matthew and Thessalonians and reference to coming as a thief in the night, the argument is that the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 is Israel’s rapture out of the great tribulation, and this is the rapture of the “Acts” Church and Israel’s Hope.

“Parousia” is the Greek word of I Corinthians 15:23 and therefore the mystery and resurrection of I Corinthians 15:51 to 57 could not be the hope of the Church which is the Body of Christ; that Phillipians 3:19 and 20 and Colossians 3:3 and 4 and Titus 2:13 refer to an entirely different rapture or call to glory.

The “coming” of I Corinthians 1:7 is not “parousia”, but “apokalupsis”; and surely the day of “our Lord Jesus Christ” of I Corinthians 1:8 is the same day of Jesus Christ of Phillipians 1:6, and both companies of saints were waiting for the same day. Such faulty exegesis cannot rule the Lord’s supper out of this dispensation.

We submit for your study the different Greek words translated “come” or “coming”, “manifested”, “revealed” or “appearing” in connection with the return of the Lord, the following words are used: “ERCHOMAI”, “PAROUSIA”, “EPIPHANEIA”,

“EKO”. “APOKALUPSIS”, “PHAINO” AND “PHANEROO” are used in the following Scriptures; Matthew 21:9—Matthew 24:30, 44 and 46—Matthew 25:6 and 13 and 31—Mark 13:26—Luke 18:8, Luke 21:27—John 14:3, John 21:22 and 23—Acts 1:11—I Corinthians 4:5—I Corinthians 11:26—I Thessalonians 5:1—II Thessalonians 1:10—Acts 2:20—Jude 14—Revelation 1:7, Revelation 3:11, Revelation 22:7 and 12. In Hebrews 10:31 both “Erchomai” and “eko” are used. “He that cometh will arrive.” “Parousia” is used in the following Scriptures: Matthew 24:3 and 27 and 37 and 39—I Corinthians 15:23, I Thessalonians 2:19, I Thessalonians 3:13, I Thessalonians 4:15, I Thessalonians 5:23—II Thessalonians 2:1 and 8—James 5:7 and 8. In speaking of his own presence Paul used the word “parousia” in II Corinthians 10:10. In I John 2:28—both “Phaneroo” and “parousia” are used. “When He shall appear—not be ashamed before Him at His “parousia”. “Phaneroo is used in I Peter 5:4, and twice in I John 3:2. “Phaino” is used twice in Colossians 3:4. In I Corinthians 4:5 “Phaneroo” is translated “make manifest”. “Epiphaneia” is used in I Timothy 6:14—II Timothy 4:1 and 8. and Titus 2:13. “Apokalupsis” (disclosure or revelation) is used in I Peter 1:5 and 7, and I Peter 1:13—Romans 8:19—I Corinthians 1:7—II Thessalonians 1:7—Revelation 1:1—I Peter 4:13 and I Peter 5:1—Romans 8:18. “Eko” (arrival) is used in Matthew 24:14—Romans 11:26—II Peter 3:10.

If we believe that the “‘till’ he come” in connection with the Lord’s Supper referred to the rapture of I Thessalonians, can we prove that the rapture differs from the blessed hope of Philippians, Colossians and Titus?

## **SHORT MESSAGES**

BY HENRY BULTEMA

A new world war may burst upon the world with destructive fury almost any day. According to the Word of God the earth must yet be deluged with blood. Terrible wars and revolutions shall shake all the nations of the earth. Just read of the many Scriptures where this is predicted; the following: Psalms 2; Isaiah 29:1 to 8; Daniel 11 and 12; Ezekiel 38; Joel 3:9 to 11; Haggai 3:22; Zephaniah 3:8; Zechariah 12:1 to 9; Revelation 16:16; Revelation 19:11 to 16.

If England should fight Italy, then Holland will fight with England, and there is great danger that Japan will plunge in and then the world war will have started, for all the colored races will rise as one man against the superiority of the white race and in that case it will be next to impossible for America to remain neutral.

Why do the nations rage? They will soon wind up in their rage against the blessed Lord. The main question soon will be as to victory, but no one will have victory. They will all suffer dismal defeat at the hands, not of the King of Kings of Ethiopia, but at the hands of the King of Kings from heaven.

Thank God we have already the victory, for victory does not center in feelings and strivings but it is found wholly in the Lord Himself. We need not even be occupied with the strength and chicanery of our foe, for Christ has overcome him, and faith is the victory over the world.

There are three great foes: the world, the flesh and the devil. The world is especially the enemy of the Father, the flesh of the Spirit, the devil of Christ, and we can shout in all these things “We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

“Victory! Victory! Precious blood-bought victory,  
As Jehovah liveth, strength Divine He giveth,  
Unto those who trust Him, victory all the time!”  
Victory! Victory! All along the line.

Hymeneus and Philetus were once upon a time faithful church members, but there came a day in their life that they turned their back upon Paul and upon the rightly divided Word and they became cankerous. They believed in a resurrection, but the trouble was, they misplaced it; they taught it was already past and not future and so they overthrew the faith of some.

This shows that truth must not be misplaced. What is to be may not be put in the past. When the Word is not rightly divided, it ceases to be the Word of God. When the doctrines are put in the wrong tense, they cease to be sound doctrine. These two men could not overthrow the one sure foundation Christ, but they did succeed in overthrowing the faith of some. Hymeneus did not only teach wrongly, but he also blasphemed; and he had put away a good conscience as we see in I Timothy 1:19 and 20. Hence Paul had given him up to Satan that he should learn not to blaspheme. That shows the importance of sound teaching.

## **THREE GOSPELS**

1—And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. Matthew 4:23.

2—When they saw that the GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION was committed unto me (Paul). Galatians 2:7.

3—As the GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION was unto Peter.

Three preachers are mentioned in the Scriptures which we have quoted. Three GOSPELS are mentioned. The Gospels preached by the three preachers are called; by three different names.

There are Christian preachers and Bible teachers who insist that there is but one Gospel in the Bible; that there are many different names given to the same Gospel.

In Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25 and II Timothy 2:8, Paul writes of “my Gospel”. In II Timothy 1:12 he writes of “my deposit” (literal translation from the Greek). In I Timothy 1:11 he writes, “according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed unto my trust” In Galatians 1:11 and 12 Paul writes that he received the Gospel, that he preached, by the revelation of Jesus Christ. In Acts 20:24 Paul declared “my course” “I received of the Lord Jesus”, “to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” In Ephesians 3:1 to 3, Paul writes as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for Gentiles with the dispensation of the grace of God “given me to you-ward (Gentiles)”, and the mystery, “by revelation He made known unto me.” In II Corinthians 4:4 Paul’s message is the

Gospel of the glory of Christ. In II Corinthians 5:18, “the ministry of reconciliation” in which the messenger is used by the Lord to beseech and to pray, to men that they be reconciled to God.

In the following Scriptures we read of Paul’s Divine authority for preaching to the Gentiles; Acts 22:17 to 21, Acts 9:15, Galatians 1:16, Galatians 2:9, Romans 11:13, Romans 15:16, Ephesians 3:8 and 9, Colossians 1:24 to 28, I Timothy 2:7, II Timothy 1:11; II Timothy 4:17.

In the light of the Scriptures which we have quoted, and in the light of all of Paul’s messages to the Gentiles, it is certainly not the mark of spiritual intelligence to teach that there is only one Gospel in the Bible. And to teach that the Lord Jesus Christ committed to Peter and Paul the same ministry is unworthy of any intelligent student of the Scriptures. To so teach is to wholly ignore II Timothy 2:15, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Undoubtedly we have observed that the disciples of Alexander Campbell, the disciples of Mrs. White (Seventh-Day Adventists), the disciples of Pastor Charles Russell (Jehovah’s Witnesses), the Pentecostals, the Church of God disciples, and many other groups of religious people, have propagated a counterfeit Christianity with great zeal and sincerity, because their teachers have kept their followers wholly ignorant of Paul’s “my gospel”, “my deposit”, “the Dispensation of the Grace of God”, the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ for the Gentiles”, “the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God committed to Paul’s trust”; and have led them into their religious confusion or delusion by giving them Jesus’ “gospel of the kingdom”, claiming prophecies made to the Nation Israel, or Peter’s Gospel of the circumcision given to Israel, in fulfillment of the prophecies to the Nation Israel.

Fundamental Bible teachers are somewhat to blame for these conditions, because they fail to show the difference between these different Gospels and continue to be like parrots and sheep in teaching that the last commissions of Jesus to His apostles were the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and the orders in Acts 1:8. The Commissions of Galatians 1:11 to 18; Galatians 2:7 to 9, Ephesians 3:1 to 9, Colossians 1:24 to 28, II Timothy 1:12; II Timothy 1:14, and II Timothy 2:2 are much later commissions. And unless they are adopted by the Church of Christ there is no scriptural cure for the abounding and ever-increasing number of heresies and counterfeit Christian movements in which another gospel is being preached.

Christ gave a program to the Twelve, in Matthew 10:5 to 10, for the Twelve Tribes, which He never gave to Paul for the Gentiles. Christ gave to Eleven of the same Twelve a commission in Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18, which He never gave to Paul or to us for the Gentiles.

Christ never authorized Paul to preach to Gentiles of this dispensation the kingdom message and program of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, or the Twelve. Paul never preached Acts 2:38 to any Gentile. Acts 3:14 to 21 and Acts 5:29 to 32 is not the Gospel of the Grace of God. And no Gentile believers are authorized by the Lord to follow the order of Acts 8:5 to 16 or Acts 19:2 to 7.

Christ committed to Peter and his associates the Gospel of the circumcision. They preached the message to one company of God-fearing, Israel-loving Gentiles, in the Book of Acts, the Word which God sent to Israel. Acts 10:36. Mark in the first ten chapters of Acts where Peter with the Eleven preached justification, reconciliation or the unsearchable riches of Christ, or one word concerning the Body of Christ and the

believer's identification with the risen Christ, seated with Christ in the heavenlies. As humble, spiritual, diligent students of the Word of God, if we will be Bereans, and obey Philippians 1:10, "test the things that differ" (R. V.), we shall learn that the Pauline truth given him from the risen Christ for the Church, which is His body, is the answer to every religious cult and counterfeit Christian movement that is menacing the Body of Christ, leading multitudes into error, corrupting the Word of God, and frustrating the grace of God.

This should lead all spiritual students of the Word of God to the conclusion that if the Body of Christ, described in Ephesians and Colossians, began on the day of Pentecost, at some later date a most radical change in that Church's message and program occurred. When did it occur?

## **THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD**

In what sense are members of Christ's Body to be judged? The Scriptures plainly declares, Romans 8:1, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus". The remainder of that verse is missing in the original text. The Lord Jesus plainly declares, John 5:24, believers "shall not come into condemnation". In John 3:18 the Scriptures declare that believers are not condemned. In Romans 8:34, the question is asked, "Who is he that condemneth"? "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

These Scriptures seem to settle the matter that believers are not now condemned and shall not come into condemnation. But now we must find the correct explanation of some other Scriptures which are addressed to believers.

1—I Corinthians 11:31 and 32—"For if we judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

2—II Corinthians 5:10 and 11—"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

3—Romans 14:10 to 12—"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God."

4—Colossians 3:23 to 25—"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons"

When we carefully study Acts 5:1 to 11, the experiences of Ananias and Sapphira, and those men in the assembly at Corinth, I Corinthians 5:5, who were delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and I Timothy 1:20, who were delivered unto Satan, we appreciate the fact that there are no believers today who have Divine authority to deliver

fellow-believers to judgment. In that sense, present judgment of saints must be different. And perhaps there may be some difference in this day of Gentile favor as to the manner in which the Father chastens His children. However, we may be sure that self judgment is still in order and will save the believer from judgment from the hands of God.

From the Scriptures which we have quoted, it is apparent that members of the Body of Christ are going to receive for the wrong which they have done. The question is suggested: "what are they going to receive?"

When according to Romans 14:10 and II Corinthians 5:10, the believers stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, it is certain they will not be there to learn whether or not they have earned eternal life. Eternal life is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23. We are saved with an everlasting salvation, by because God is rich in mercy and great in love. Ephesians 2:4 to 8.

When we read I Corinthians 15:58 and Hebrews 6:10, Luke 14:14, I Corinthians 3:14 and II Timothy 2:12, certainly we are taught that we shall be rewarded, by our blessed Lord, for the service we have rendered in His Name and the sufferings we have endured for His sake.

The verses that follow II Corinthians 5:10 seem to teach us that we shall have to give an account to the Lord for our faithfulness or neglect in giving the saving message of reconciliation to the unbelievers. Surely in II Corinthians 5:10 to 21 a great responsibility is placed upon the members of the Body of Christ. In giving account for the deeds done in the body, we shall answer to the Lord as to our faithfulness as ambassadors of Christ. Many teachers teach from Thessalonians and Philippians that the crown of joy or rejoicing will be given to those who are faithfully telling the Gospel message to sinners.

But we are sure that God is not unrighteousness to forget our labor of love, that our labor is not in vain in the Lord, and that if we suffer with Christ we shall reign with Him.

We can never get into heaven by serving the Lord, for it is altogether by grace through faith in the redemptive work of Christ. But we shall receive the reward for service when we shall appear with Him in glory.