

MESSAGES OF GRACE AND ETERNAL LIFE

IF PETER WAS A CATHOLIC—PAUL WAS A PROTESTANT

Simon, whose name was changed to Peter, was an apostle of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was one of the twelve apostles chosen and commissioned by the Saviour several years before His death and resurrection. According to the record, Peter and the eleven companied together all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto the same day that He was taken up. Acts 1:22.

Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, was not one of the twelve apostles. His own testimony was, “I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.” “One born out of due time.” I Corinthians 15:8 and 9. In that same Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul asked three questions, “Am I not an apostle?” “Have I not seen Christ our Lord?” “Are not ye my work in the Lord?” I Corinthians 9:1. He also wrote these words to that same church at Corinth: “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you.” II Corinthians 12:12. This statement immediately followed Paul’s glorying, in which he said, “In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.” Saul of Tarsus did not company with those who were apostles before him while Jesus was here in the flesh. The first record of his conversion is given in Acts 9:10 to 15. And we would emphasize the fifteenth verse

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

In connection with that first commission given to Paul perhaps two or three years after the resurrection of Christ, we should add his testimony recorded in Romans 11:13; “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”

Undoubtedly, every one of us who has searched the Scriptures, has asked why Christ needed a special apostle, with a special call. Why did not Christ select one of the twelve to do the work that was assigned to Paul? Surely the “why” of the call of Paul is an interesting study. Again hear his testimony, recorded in Acts 22:18 and 22:21, which we quote:

“And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me. And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Note the reaction when Paul gave his testimony. Why were the Jews stirred to murder? Why did they not feel the same toward the twelve?

Thus we see that Peter and the eleven received their first commission from the Lord Jesus before His death and resurrection, while Saul of Tarsus, or Paul, received his first commission from the risen Lord some time after His death and resurrection. Is it possible for us to definitely fix the day when the Old Covenant was done away and the New Covenant began? If the Old Covenant was done away when Christ died on the cross and the New Covenant began after the descent of the Holy Spirit, then we can say that Peter received his apostleship before the “New Testament” dispensation began. Paul was saved and received his commission during the “New

Testament” dispensation. However, Peter and the eleven had the unique experience of living both before and after the Day of Pentecost; therefore, before and after the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven. John 7:39. Just what lesson would the Lord teach us by the words of Paul, recorded in Galatians 1:17:

“Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia?”

Why did not Saul, or Paul, go to those who were apostles before him? They had the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Now, by way of comparison, let us study together Matthew 16:19 and Ephesians 3:1 and 2. In the first Scripture we observe that to Peter and the eleven were committed “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” In the other verses we learn that the Apostle Paul was the prisoner of Jesus Christ for Gentiles; and that Christ committed to him for the Gentiles “the dispensation of the grace of God.” Now the question is, was Paul’s ministry and message, with the “dispensation of the grace of God” to the Gentiles, the perpetuation of the message and ministry of Peter and the eleven, either while they were apostles of Jesus Christ before His death and resurrection, or on and after the Day of Pentecost? Is the student of the Word of God to understand that there is no difference between “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” and “the dispensation of the grace of God?” Just what is meant by the “keys of the kingdom of heaven?” It has been generally accepted and taught that Peter and the eleven used the keys in preaching to Israel on the Day of Pentecost and to Cornelius and his household seven or eight years later.

We are sure that in his ministry to Israel on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of acts, and in his ministry to Cornelius, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Acts, Peter gave the message dictated by the Lord. But most assuredly the Apostle Paul did not preach to the heathen, or Gentiles, the message that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost to Israel.

Peter addressed his message, “Ye men of Israel.” Acts 2:22. His message was concerning the Man on earth, Jesus of Nazareth, and included the Prophecy of Joel and the Prophecy of David. Those two prophecies had to do with Israel in their own land with the kingdom restored to them and their Messiah occupying David’s throne; Israel’s kingdom glory. Those men of Israel, on the day of Pentecost, were instructed to be baptized for the remission of sins. Any student of the Word of God should know that Paul’s message to the Gentiles was a different message. In his message to Cornelius Peter said: “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Acts 10:45. Now let us compare these words of Peter with Paul’s statement in Galatians 1:11 and 12:

“BUT I CERTIFY YOU BRETHREN, THAT THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED OF ME IS NOT AFTER MAN. FOR I NEITHER RECEIVED IT OF MAN, NEITHER WAS I TAUGHT IT, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

Here we have the specific testimony of Paul that he was not preaching the message which had been witnessed by the prophets, but the Gospel which he received by the revelation of Jesus Christ. It was not taught him or communicated unto him by Peter. He did not recognize Peter as having any authority over him and certainly not as the custodian or dispenser of the Gospel he was preaching.

Now the claim of the Roman Catholic Church is, that the papacy is the Holy See, or the God-appointed Christian cathedral, or seat, on earth; and that the present pope is the vicar of Christ, having apostolic authority. They claim this authority on the basis of apostolic succession;

that the keys of the kingdom of heaven passed at the death of Peter to his successor at Rome, and have been retained by and within the Roman Catholic Church down through the centuries.

Now perhaps it is in your mind to ask what is meant by saying, if Peter was a Catholic, Paul was a Protestant. Before we answer that question, let us see from the Scriptures that Paul did not believe either in the infallibility of Peter or in apostolic succession. We quote the Scriptures from the second chapter of Galatians, verses eleven to fourteen, in which verses is recorded Paul's vigorous protest against the acts of Peter at Antioch.

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Now we shall study what was involved in this controversy and the arguments of Paul, showing why he mentioned to the Galatians Peter's duplicity. Note that Peter, who had been using the keys of the kingdom walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel.

For the proper understanding of the difference between the ministry of Peter and the eleven, with their "kingdom of heaven" keys, and Paul's "grace of Christ" message, perhaps no Scriptures are more important than the first and second chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. So we are here quoting, beginning with Galatians 1:10 through Galatians 2:10:

"For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me in by His grace,

To reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

But other of the apostles saw I none save James the Lord's brother.

Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

And they glorified God in me.

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage;

To them we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepted no man's person) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."

These verses should be carefully, prayerfully and diligently studied by every child of God, because in them not only is the claim of the Roman Catholic Church concerning Peter's church authority repudiated and refuted, but they are God-breathed words profitable for correction; that is, to correct the serious mistake of most Protestants in their failure to differentiate between the calls, the missions, the ministries and the gospels of Peter and Paul. This failure is largely responsible for the fanaticism, propagated in the name of Christianity.

In Acts 8:1 we read of "the church which was at Jerusalem," and in Acts 11:22 of "the church which was in Jerusalem." About thirty years later Peter sent greetings from "the church which is in Babylon." I Peter 5:13. In the Greek the literal reading is, "she that is elected in Babylon with you." Undoubtedly Peter was the man of authority in the church which was at Jerusalem. That Church was the Church which Paul persecuted, and he called it, "the Church of God." Galatians 1:13. I Corinthians 15:9. We understand "church" to mean a "called-out company."

There were called-out companies before the new holy Spirit dispensation was ushered in fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, when the disciples were waiting in Jerusalem. Among the witnesses of that supernatural demonstration and that new beginning of the Church of God, included in the devout Jews from every nation under heaven, there were some "strangers from Rome." Acts 2:5 and 10. They were Jews from Rome visiting in Jerusalem. Undoubtedly some of them were saved and went back to Rome, as members of the Church of God at Rome, whether or not there was an organized assembly there. About thirty years after the Day of Pentecost Paul wrote to Rome mentioning "all the churches of the Gentiles," sending greetings to the church which was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Romans 16:3 to 5. In the light of Galatians 2:11, any intelligent student of the Bible is thoroughly convinced that the Apostle Peter never became the head of a church of the Gentiles at Rome, for we notice by reading that verse, that the

agreement had been reached among the apostles of Christ, several years before Paul wrote to the Romans, that Peter would confine his ministry to the circumcision. Years later Peter addressed his Epistle to “sojourners of the dispersion.” They were Jews. I Peter 1:1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Romans? The Apostle who said, “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.” Romans 11:13.

It was Paul then who was chosen by the risen Lord to indoctrinate the saints at Rome, and up to this present moment Paul’s message to Rome is a repudiation of most of the church doctrines and religious program of the Roman Catholic Church. Paul wrote to the Romans, “Being justified without a cause by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:24.

The word “freely” in this twenty-fourth verse literally means, “without a cause” and is so translated in John 15:25. In that same third chapter of Romans, the twenty-eighth verse, Paul reached the conclusion of his argument against salvation by works, or part works, in this language, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” He goes on to another climax in Romans 4:6, “describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”

We have no Bible authority for teaching that Peter was used of the Lord to indoctrinate the Gentile believers in the Church at Rome, or that Peter was ever general bishop of that Church; but we know that Paul was the Lord’s human instrument to write that holy document on salvation by grace without works. The Roman Catholic Church has either remained in ignorance as to the Lord’s message to Rome or they have wilfully ignored or disobeyed it. Does Rome today teach the truth of that message; that a sinner is declared righteous by faith alone? The believing sinner immediately receives God’s righteousness; and God’s righteousness is Divine perfect righteousness. Neither is it obtained by some gradual process, on the installment plan, through religious observances. Does Rome teach that a sinner is justified without religion, without a cause? Does Rome today teach Romans 6:23, that the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ? If the sinner must work for eternal life, either before he receives it, or after he receives it, then most assuredly it is not a free gift; it is not a gift at all. If salvation is by grace and works, the message to Rome is not true and Gospel of grace is invalidated. Romans 11:6.

Before we consider the verses from the first and second chapters of Galatians, let us be taught that the Church of Rome was not the first Christian Church. The Church which was in Jerusalem was the first of “the churches of Judaea” to which Paul referred in Galatians 1:22 and all of those churches were established before there was a Church at Rome. There is no record in the Book of Acts that Peter preached outside of the land of the Jews, or that he preached to any Gentiles besides Cornelius and his household. Compare Acts 15:7 and Galatians 2:11. There is the statement that the apostles remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. There is the record that those apostles, with perhaps the exception of James only, were still in Jerusalem thirteen years later. Acts 15:6. Peter was again the spokesman, at this later date. Thus we learn that the headquarters of the twelve apostles was at Jerusalem, whereas Barnabas and Paul, who were to go to the Gentiles, made Antioch, in Syria, their headquarters. Acts 11:26.

Just when Peter visited the church at Antioch we may be uncertain, but by reading Acts 12:27 and Galatians 2:1, we may be rather certain that it was not earlier than 46 A.D. From the Book of Acts we cannot say that Peter had any authority over and church outside of the holy land. Paul preached the Gospel where Christ was not named, lest he should build upon another man’s foundation. Romans 15:20. Any intelligent student of the Bible knows that if Peter were a pope, he was not a pope over the churches of the Gentiles established by Paul in Asia Minor,

Asia, Europe and the Islands. Peter did not write of the Church of Christ, which is His Body. Ephesians 1:22 and Colossians 1:24. That was Paul's message. In connection with Paul's ministry the word "church" or "body" is used more than eighty-five times, whereas the word is not used eight times in connection with Peter's ministry. Who had the prominent ministry then in the Church of Christ? Who is our chief authority as Christ's human instrument to the body or Church? If we should eliminate the writings of Paul, what would we know concerning the Body of Christ? Why does Peter's name disappear from the Book of Acts in the fifteenth chapter, about the year 46 A.D., and thereafter in the same record Paul's name occur more than one hundred times? Paul wrote more than one-half of the Books of the New Testament Scriptures and who can read his writings and not learn that he was Christ's appointed apostle to give us specific Church truth? By reading his writings we likewise learn that Paul—in addition to his testimony to the Jews—not only had a ministry to a people wholly different from the people to whom Peter ministered; but that he had a different message. While Paul in some of the Jewish synagogues, did confirm the testimony of Peter to Israel, we know that to the Gentiles he was sent with a message unknown to Peter or to any other man on earth until it was told to them by Paul, Peter was included in the multitude who kept silence and heard Paul's report of the work among the Gentiles. Acts 15:12.

Now for a little study of several of the verses in the first and second chapter of Galatians. We quote:

Galatians 1:12—"I NEITHER RECEIVED IT OF MAN, NEITHER WAS I TAUGHT IT, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST"

Galatians 1:17—"NEITHER WENT I UP TO JERUSALEM TO THEM WHICH WERE APOSTLES BEFORE ME."

Galatians 2:2—"I WENT UP (TO JERUSALEM) BY REVELATION AND COMMUNICATED UNTO THEM THAT GOSPEL WHICH I PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES:"

Galatians 2:6 and 7—"THEY IN CONFERENCE—ADDED NOTHING TO ME—BUT CONTRARIWISE, WHEN THEY SAW THAT THE GOSPEL OF UNCIRCUMCISION WAS COMMITTED UNTO ME, AS THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION WAS TO PETER."

We are asking you to diligently study all of the context. But what do the words, "but contrariwise" suggest to you? Do they not suggest in connection with the Roman Catholic Church, that there is something wrong with the teaching of apostolic succession and the transfer of authority from Peter to his successor? Did Peter transfer authority to Paul? In what sense should Paul be called Peter's successor? He certainly succeeded, superseded and surpassed him and all other apostles in Church authority. Who committed the gospel of uncircumcision to Paul? Was it Peter? By no means. Paul did not receive his message from man. He received it direct from the risen Christ in heaven; by revelation.

According to the claims of Rome today Church authority has come down from Peter to the present pope. If such an order of continuity, or apostolic succession, was the will of God, then the Apostle Paul was a worse rebel than Martin Luther or any of his associates. If the claims of the Roman Catholic Church be true, concerning Peter's bishopric, Paul was a deluded, self-appointed apostle, laboring under an obsession, although some of the Corinthians did say "I am of Peter." I Corinthians 1:12. All of Paul's converts were Protestants, if Rome's claim be true. Paul's testimony was, that he communicated unto Peter and his associates his gospel. Peter did not communicate to Paul. But contrariwise, that is, the very contrary of the claim of present day Rome, the order was not from Peter to Paul, but from Paul to Peter. If the "keys of the

kingdom of heaven” represent the Bible authority for the Church of Christ, inasmuch as Paul was commissioned by Christ with Church authority, Christ must have given Paul some new keys.

That Paul was appointed for his work by Christ no student of the Word can or will deny. But to say that Paul’s commission was included in the commitment of the keys to Peter and the eleven is without scriptural authority. In the light of Paul’s own statement, I Corinthians 1:17, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,” if his commission was included in the great commission, “teaching all nations and baptizing them,” the risen Lord either revised the great commission or gave to Paul a special permit of exemption, if the baptizing refers to water baptism.

According to the teaching of Rome, Paul must have submitted to the papal authority of Peter, and Paul must have received his message from Peter. But we have observed that the very contrary was the fact. and we may learn further by searching the Scriptures that Paul had the Divine authority, the Christ-given right, to appoint the elders and to commit to Timothy the continuation of his ministry, and not Peter’s. II Timothy 2:2. If there were apostolic succession for the Body of Christ it would come down froth Paul and not from Peter. Paul spoke with Divine authority, in his ministry and written messages using the first person pronoun about eleven hundred times.

“I Paul am made a minister to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church.” Colossians 1:23 and 24.

“I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” “How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery.” Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

Paul received his Grace of Christ message for the Gentiles by revelation from Christ and from the same Christ he received the revelation of the Mystery. He called the gospel, “my Gospel.” II Timothy 2:8. Romans 16:25. Rather presumptuous was Paul to call the gospel “my Gospel,” if he received it from Bishop Peter. Paul was not a very good Roman Catholic. He rather dishonored or ignored Peter, if their claim be true. But it is not.

But no, “When James and Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.” Galatians 2:9.

It was rather unfortunate that after this holy Spirit-directed arrangement, Paul should have been compelled to blame Peter and set him right. The infallibility was with Paul rather than with Peter in that controversy at Antioch. As some preacher remarked some years ago, if Paul had not taken his stand alone against Peter and his associates, the Gospel of Grace might have been lost in Judaism in the first century.

Let us not only differentiate between Peter’s “circumcision gospel” and Paul’s “uncircumcision gospel,” between the “keys of the kingdom of heaven,” committed unto Peter and the eleven, and the “dispensation of grace” given to Paul, but let us follow on with Paul after the program of signs in the overlapping kingdom age into the glorious truth of the Body of Christ seated in the upper heavenlies, the theme of Paul’s closing Epistles. Let us not be satisfied to remain as babes with that which is in part when we may enjoy the riches of the glorious truths that constitute that which is perfect. I Corinthians 13:8 to 13.

Such a course will save us from the delusion of modern Pentecostalists who would take us back to Peter and the Jewish feastday, rather than to say with Paul, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling, on high of God in Christ Jesus.” But you had better count the cost first for you will have to leave water behind with the signs and kingdom program, which means

religious persecution from all sides, but the richest blessings in Bible study and Divine truth you have ever enjoyed.

SHOULD A SAVED CHURCH MEMBER SUPPORT A MODERNIST PASTOR?

Without hesitation or qualification this question can be and will be answered in the negative by those who are regularly enjoying the fellowship of an uncompromising ministry and testimony. The question should be promptly answered in the negative by any and every saved person. But perhaps the question requires more consideration for definite decision on the part of a saved person who lives in a town where there are no Orthodox or Fundamental pastors and assemblies.

How pitiable it is that many truly saved people, who lack spiritual discernment because of their ignorance of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, are unwittingly supporting pastors who very cleverly propagate their infidelity in the name of Evangelical Christianity and the phraseology of the New Testament Scriptures. Then there are some splendid well-meaning, peace-loving saved church-members who desire to be charitable and inoffensive; therefore, they not only refrain from any open protest, but continue their support of a pastor whose orthodoxy and loyalty to Christ and His Word they question. Then again, there are many uncompromising orthodox Christians thoroughly fundamental, evangelistic and zealous, who refuse to endorse their Modernist preacher, who feel it their duty to remain with the church organization so long as they are permitted to give forth their uncompromising fundamental testimony; in some cases hoping for an early and favorable change of pastors.

Quite frequently hasty decisions have been rather difficult because of division of opinion within the family. In many cases the wife and mother may have a firm conviction, whereas the father and husband is utterly without a vision concerning a spiritual testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a predicament presents a more difficult problem where older children are involved in the division and controversy. In such cases wisdom, patience and longsuffering are surely needed.

Those of us who are not so unfortunately situated cannot fully sympathize with those who are. We are liable to be rather impatient with their seeming compromise, and hasty in our judgment of their lack of courage of conviction. And it does seem that the only advice that we can conscientiously give to every individual who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word is to openly protest against such a spiritual crime, and absolutely refuse to give either time or money toward the support of a so-called Liberal or Modernist preacher. The Word of God is very clear as to the duty of a child of God in answering the question. We quote II John 7 to 11:

“FOR MANY DECEIVERS ARE ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, WHO CONFESS NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH. THIS IS A DECEIVER AND AN ANTICHRIST.

LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT WE LOSE NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE WROUGHT, BUT THAT WE RECEIVE A FULL REWARD.

WHOSOEVER TRANSGRESSETH, AND ABIDETH NOT IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, HATH NOT GOD. HE THAT ABIDETH IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, HE HATH BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

IF THERE COME ANY UNTO YOU, AND BRING NOT THIS DOCTRINE, RECEIVE HIM NOT INTO YOUR HOUSE, NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED;

FOR HE THAT BIDDETH HIM GOD SPEED IS PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS.”

In the light of such a clear statement, no saved person really needs the counsel or advice of other Christians. Christ said, “If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins.” John 8:24.

The Lord in His Word has foretold this great apostasy which is sweeping over Christendom. According; to the Epistle of Jude:

“THERE ARE CERTAIN MEN CREPT IN UNAWARES, WHO WERE BEFORE OF OLD ORDAINED TO THIS CONDEMNATION, UNGODLY MEN, TURNING THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LASCIVIOUSNESS, AND DENYING THE ONLY LORD GOD, AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.” Jude 4.

According to Jude 16:

“THEIR MOUTH SPEAKETH GREAT SWELLING WORDS, HAVING MEN’S PERSONS IN ADMIRATION BECAUSE OF ADVANTAGE.”

We also quote II Peter 2:1 and 2:

“BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS ALSO AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE SHALL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO PRIVILY SHALL BRING IN DAMNABLE HERESIES, EVEN DENYING THE LORD THAT BOUGHT THEM AND BRING UPON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION. AND MANY SHALL FOLLOW THEIR PERNICIOUS WAYS; BY REASON OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH SHALL BE EVIL SPOKEN OF.”

All about us we see these false prophets, pastors, seminary teachers, church leaders, many of them cultured, gentle, benevolent, kind and gracious gentlemen, cleverly propagating their emasculated gospel and their subtle infidelity, in the name of Evangelical Christianity. The explanation is found in II Corinthians 11:13 to 15.

“FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.

AND NO MARVEL; FOR SATAN HIMSELF IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.

THEREFORE IT IS NO GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO BE TRANSFORMED AS THE MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; WHOSE END SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.”

Let us understand that the counterfeit Christianity propagated under the banner of Modernism is nothing more nor less than “Christianized” agnosticism.

Perhaps you have heard of the man, who having lost his interest in his church affiliation because of the lack of conviction and vision on the part of the several preachers who had occupied the pulpit, was urged over his protest to hear a sermon from the pastor of one of his neighbors. The message was a beautiful moral essay, well prepared and well delivered by an eloquent Orator. On the way home from the church the neighbor solicited a comment from the man whom he had urged to attend his church. This was the comment that he received when he asked how he liked the teacher: “I like him so little that I will appreciate it if you will never ask

me to go again.” “Why?” said the neighbor. “Because I have enough doubts of my own without having your pastor impose his upon me”

In the Book of Jude God foreseeing the conditions as they are today and as they will continue to be worse and worse, thus instructed the true child of God

“BELOVED, WHEN I GAVE ALL DILIGENCE TO WRITE UNTO YOU OF THE COMMON SALVATION, IT WAS NEEDFUL FOR ME TO WRITE UNTO YOU, AND EXHORT YOU THAT YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS.” Jude 3.

Christian duty is not always pleasant. But after all, the servant of God has no option as to his duty in the midst of the present apostasy. We do admit, however, that the task of fighting veiled or camouflaged infidelity is more difficult than contending against open infidelity and agnosticism.

We quote here an article printed in a magazine published by the Free Thinkers Assn.:

“The fact that the heresy of Modernism is rapidly spreading among the more intelligent Christians brings Freethinkers in their conflict with organized religion, to the questions: Is the Modernist attitude favorable to the intellectual advancement of humanity? And if so, how shall we orient ourselves to it? Exactly what is modernism? There are so many gradations of opinion among church people, ranging from a ‘believe or be damned’ dogmatism to a sort of ‘Christian Agnosticism’ that it is rather difficult to draw the line. The Christian Liberal fancies that he is between what he considers the excesses of the two opposite poles of thought, dogmatism and agnosticism. He is sitting on the fence and the controversial rocks front both sides are bound to hit him. The old-line churchmen consider him as a new barrier to mental advancement.”

Again in this same paper: “So passionately he (the Modernist) clings to the skirts of Jesus, even though he perceives that the one he is grasping can no longer be considered the Almighty Creator of the universe. Therein lies the weakness of Modernism, and upon this point must Free thought oppose it. And yet I believe that the Christian Liberal is, on the whole, our friend. He does not so consider himself, it is true. He looks upon us with more disdain than that with which he regards his orthodox foes. As the latter are to him as the Pharisees, so are we the Bolshevik of religion. But he is accomplishing, in some measure, some of the things which we ourselves have set out to do. Inconsistent as the Modernist is, compromise as he is, yet although he esteems himself against us, he is with us. Of a sudden from within, there arises among the defenders themselves a friend who attacks from the inside.”

Is it possible that ungodly atheists and infidels have better understanding and discernment as to the clever tricks of the Modernist than do the children of God who have received the Holy Spirit, and are without excuse His to discerning spiritual matters? Remember a Christian infidel is an impossible paradox.

And let us remember this, that though these friendly enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word try in every way to lead church members to compromise or deny all of the fundamentals of the Christian faith such as the eternal Deity and Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, salvation wholly and solely by the grace of God on the basis of the shed blood of the Son of God, His bodily resurrection, the Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, the present intercessory work of the Saviour as the Man Christ Jesus at God’s right hand, the child of God is without excuse. Hear these words from I John 2:26 and 27:

“THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU CONCERNING THEM THAT SEDUCE YOU.

BUT THE ANOINTING WHICH YE HAVE RECEIVED OF HIM ABIDETH IN YOU, AND YE NEED NOT THAT ANY MAN TEACH YOU; BUT AS THE SAME ANOINTING TEACHETH YOU OF ALL THINGS, AND IS TRUTH, AND IS NO LIE, AND EVEN AS IT HATH TAUGHT YOU, YE SHALL ABIDE IN HIM.”

Surely the superlative need for this twentieth century civilization, boasting of its modern scholarship and its new interpretation of Christianity, is that blessed first century saving Gospel of Grace, revealed by the risen Christ through the Apostle Paul, to His Church which is His Body.

WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMETH

“When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?” It was the Son of Man Himself who asked this question. The question is recorded in Luke 18:8. In the seventeenth chapter the Son of man referred to His second coming as the day in which the Son of Man would be revealed. Luke 17:30. He said it would be as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, and shineth unto the other part under heaven. Luke 17:24. And then He added: “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.”

If language has any meaning, and if the Lord Jesus Christ was speaking with Divine authority and with Divine knowledge, any one who will read the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Luke will believe that the Son of man is coming; that He is actually coming to the earth. The Greek construction of the question, “when the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth,” requires the negative answer. In Luke 21:27, the Lord added these words, “Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” This is to be after the certain signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, and the terrible distress of the nations mentioned in the two preceding verses.

According to the thirty-first verse, the coming of the Son of man will mean that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. The clear teaching is that the Kingdom will come with the King. Until that time Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles. So as long as the land of the Jews is in possession of the Gentiles, the Kingdom of God will not be here as it will be here after the Son of man comes. Luke 21:24. Therefore the coming of the Son of man to the earth will put an end to the times of the Gentiles mentioned in that same twenty-fourth verse; and the Kingdom of God at hand will mean the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Then Israel’s land will be given to them. And when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, the twelve apostles shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke 22:30 and Matthew 19:28.

In studying the ministry and teachings of the Son of man while he was in the land of the Jews, as Jesus of Nazareth, we should not anticipate revelation that was to be, and was added some years later, through Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, concerning the Body of Christ. But let us remember that Christ had given His apostles no instructions nor any information concerning His program for this age which He revealed some years after He had gone back to heaven by the way of Calvary. Let us compare the statement of Christ recorded in Matthew 16:27:

“FOR THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER WITH HIS ANGELS; AND THEN HE SHALL REWARD EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS.”

and three statements of the Apostle Paul:

“FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD: AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST:

THEN WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS, TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR; AND SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD.” I Thessalonians 4:16 and 17.

“FOR OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN; FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIFIED BODY, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING WHEREBY HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF.” Philippians 3:20 and 21.

“WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY.” Colossians 3:4.

These statements concerning the return the Lord, recorded in Colossians and Philippians, are in connection with Christ’s revelation through the Apostle to the Gentiles concerning the mystery among the Gentiles. And we will note, from the Scriptures given to us by the pen of the Apostle Paul, that there is not the slightest suggestion that the appearing of the Lord to call His Body to glory has any reference to the Son of man coming to a faithless earth. The descent of the Lord to call His Body to glory must be different front the coming of the Son of man to earth.

Let us remember that the Son of man is the title of our Saviour, used only by Him in His ministry to Israel. The title is found more than 80 times in the so-called four Gospels. According to the prophecies Of His return recorded in those Gospels, the Son of man is coming for the specific purpose of restoring the kingdom to Israel, to be a King and judge on earth. According to the same Records, Israel is to be in the midst of great tribulation when the Son of man comes to the earth. It is the time of Jacob’s trouble out of which Jacob is to be saved. Jeremiah 30:7 to 11, Matthew 24:22. And truly in those days it will be as it was in the days of Noah. Very little faith will the Son of man find when He comes to the earth. And we have observed that that coming must be preceded by certain signs; therefore the coming of the Son of man could not have been yet, because the signs have not been.

On the other hand, when the Lord descends from leaven to call the members of His Body to appear with Him in glory, He will not come to the earth. But if He should, how much faith would He find? Surely if the Lord should come to earth today, he would find more faith on the earth than has ever been here since He went away. But so long as the Church is on this earth the Lord will not come back to earth as the Son of man to establish His Kingdom. The Lord is not mentioned as the Son of man in His relation to the Church; which is His Body. He is the Head of that Church; and they two shall be one flesh. Ephesians 1:23 and Ephesians 5:32.

The coming of the Lord to call His Church to glory is not to be preceded by the signs connected with His coming to establish His Kingdom on earth; that is, after certain signs in the sun, the moon and the stars, and in the midst of the great time of sorrow which is coming upon all the earth. Otherwise the Bible teaches that the Body of Christ is to pass through the Great Tribulation.

The time of the coming of the Lord for the members of His body cannot be figured by definitely fixing the end of “the times of the Gentiles,” from the Prophecy of Daniel, as many are trying to do at this time. Neither must there be certain rulers and certain political conditions in Europe and the other nations before there can be a fulfillment of Colossians 3:4 and Philippians 3:21. Otherwise it would not only have been needless, but it would have been folly, for the

faithful saints of God down through the ages to have looked for the Saviour, if His coming for them depended upon certain signs in the heavens and certain political conditions on earth that could not take place until 2520 years after the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. With such teaching there was no blessed hope for any living saints before the year 1934 A. D.

Certainly we cannot reconcile the teaching of the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church with the “sign” teaching of our present-day Premillennialists. If Mussolini had to be in Italy, Hitler in Germany, Stalin in Russia, if Japan had to be ready for 1934 war, before the Lord could come for His Church, then all of the saints of God, down through the centuries who have looked for that Blessed Hope, the glorious appearing of Christ, have not only hoped in vain, but they have hoped unscripturally and contrary to the will of God and against any possibility of the realization of their hope.

Now there is even wild and foolish speculation as to the soon coming of the Lord, because President Roosevelt’s NRA is the mark of the Beast. Again we ask the question, was there neither probability nor possibility of the rapture of the Church until President Roosevelt had inaugurated his program for America? Still others are setting the early date of the rapture of the Church because of the number of Jews in Palestine. And again we say that by such arguments no saints in the years gone by should have looked for the Lord’s coming because there were not several hundred thousand Jews in Jerusalem.

Was the Son of Man referring to the rapture of the Church, which is His Body, when on earth He said to His disciples “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh?” Luke 21:28. If so, let’s cease to preach the “any-moment” coming of the Lord for His Church, until after the signs in heaven and on earth.

Let us bear in mind that the Jews require a sign and also the evil and adulterous generation. Let us also bear in mind that Body truth was not made known by the Son of man on earth. Before the end of the first century the apostasy had begun. There were many antichrists. It was the last times. There have been much darker days than these for Christians down through the ages. In many respects these are days of special privilege and unusual opportunity, in spite of the reign of Modernism in so many so-called Evangelical denominations. We must admit that this Christianized agnosticism is one the most subtle of all of Satan’s movements against the Church of God, but during the days of Paul Satan was transformed into an angel of light and sent forth his servants transformed into apostles of Christ, preaching another Jesus and another gospel. II Corinthians 11:13 to 15 and II Corinthians 11:3 to 5.

Now the question; must we, who are the members of the Body of Christ wait for some more signs before our Lord can or will come, or should we expect Him at any moment?” We cannot be consistent and preach both “any moment” and “signs.” And every obedient member of the Body of Christ should be looking for and expecting the return of the Lord at any moment. He may come today.

SALVATION!

FACT . . . FAITH . . . FRUIT . . . FEELING

Have you ever seriously thought of that all-important question, recorded in Hebrews 2:3? Perhaps you may be one of that large number who do not know anything about Hebrews; that there is even such a book in the Bible. Whether or not you have heard of the book, hear this very important question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Does the question interest you, or do you belong to the indifferent crowd the millions who are like Gallio who cared for none of these things? Acts 18:17. A very intelligent and successful gentlemen said to me, "I am not interested in eternity, or whether or not Jesus Christ came from heaven to die on the cross for humanity." "In fact," said he, "I do not know whether or not I have what the Bible calls a soul." The Saviour, when here among men, found very few who took Him seriously. Only the little flock believed Him when He said, "Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke 12:15. One of His faithful disciples said, "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." II Corinthians 4:18. The majority of men are so occupied with temporal things that that they are unconcerned about things hereafter; in fact, they give little time to the serious thought of the infinite God and Creator. So far as this majority is concerned, it would have been just the same to them if Jesus Christ had not died on the cross. They seem to have neither desire, nor time for Christ; nor interest in salvation; though perhaps ever ready to acknowledge their weaknesses and confess their sins. How many conscious stricken sinners there are who are sincerely sorry for some of their misdeeds and yet who are not concerned about their responsibility to the holy God. They seem utterly devoid of any conviction of their sin against Him It is only when a sinner realizes that he is a lost sinner that he will think of salvation and consider the work of Christ.

To acknowledge that God has a salvation for sinners is of course to acknowledge that He has a salvation that is wholly adequate for any kind of a sinner; for all kinds of sinners. Such a salvation must necessarily be a great salvation; for we all know there are some great sinners in the world. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is the declaration of the Bible. Another declaration is, "where sin abounded grace did much more overabound." So Christ Jesus came into the world to save great sinners, as well as other sinners. And, by the way, this is God's confession for us, in case we are unwilling to make the confession; "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Ecclesiastes 7:20. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men. Read what He saw. Psalms 14:2 and Psalms 53:2.

The same righteous judge, who has declared all men sinners, is an Almighty Saviour and Said, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Isaiah 45:22. "The Lord is longsuffering to usward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9. "For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him; for whatsoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:14 and 15.

"Behold God is my salvation." Isaiah 12:2. "Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:9. The Lord is real. Salvation is real; yea, a divine reality. Salvation is neither a myth nor a theory. It is a glorious fact; a blessed experience; and not an experiment. Salvation is based upon One Of the most scientific Of all laws, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Thus we come to the consideration of the fact.

FACT

First Of all: salvation is an intellectual faith in an accomplished fact; but with Our next point we shall see that for salvation more than an intellectual faith is required. But let us deal

with the accomplished fact. Then this question, “Was that Man who died between two thieves more than 1900 years ago, the Son of God, the Creator of all things?” That is the Divine Record. “He was in the form of God . . . took upon Him the form of a servant . . . He humbled himself and became Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:8 to 9.

“Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Hebrews 2:9.

Here is a statement which should startle any unsaved man who has any time for meditation upon the important issues of life; The Second Man is from heaven.” I Corinthians 15:47. “Crucified the Lord of Glory.” I Corinthians 2:7 and 8. “killed the Prince Of Life.” He was not divine, as other men are divine. He was the eternal God in human form. How different is the sinner’s attitude toward the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his responsibility to that Saviour when he is really awakened to the fact, that Christ was not merely a good man, but the God-man, the Creator in the form of creature. Is it any wonder God’s salvation is called “great salvation?”

Here is a historical fact, a Divine truth, a Christian doctrine, a salvation act: “But now once in the end of the ages hath He (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Hebrews 9:26. Read with this Isaiah 53:6: “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And read also that wonderful statement in I Peter 3:18. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” It is both wonderful and true; yea, the greatest truth that any man can and should receive and believe and act upon. Observe that Christ appeared Once; that He suffered once. Would you suppose for a moment that such a Perfect Man such a Divine Saviour, who came from heaven to save sinners, would accomplish anything but a perfect work of redemption? Surely we should not offend God by any endeavor on the part of imperfect man to supplement or perfect the work of His Son. The Saviour on the cross cried, “Finished.” John 19:30 and 31. “He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.” Romans 4:25. He made peace by the blood of His cross.” Colossians 1:20. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” I Peter 2:24.

If we are going to base our knowledge of God’s salvation upon God’s Book, if we are going to act for time and eternity in this most important of all transactions and receive from God His salvation, let us believe the fact; that is, that the redemptive work of Christ is a finished work so far as the salvation of man’s soul is concerned; and know that He will return for the redemption of the body; to save man, soul and spirit.

Now we are going to receive this statement at full face value, without discount, without even the shadow of a doubt, without question or criticism: “By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

The fact is, that by the work of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there has been accomplished and there is available: for any and every believing sinner, an accomplished redemption, a perfect salvation. And we shall see by the same Divine authority the further fact that this perfect salvation can be had by the believing sinner without any additional work, religious endeavor or church ceremony.

FAITH

No more important question was ever asked by any individual than was asked by that trembling jailor nearly nineteen hundred years ago; “What must I do to be saved?” The verb in this question was “do.” The verb in the preacher’s answer was different; it was “believe.” There

is a difference between doing and believing. Every saved person should be constantly doing the will of God by serving God and humanity. But doing is the fruit instead of the factor in the salvation of the sinner. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:5. Not what we have done. How clear is God's statement. He saved us. It was His mercy and not our good deeds that saved us. Hear Paul's answer to that trembling jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:30 and 31.

The Apostle Peter declared that salvation is the end of your faith. I Peter 1:9. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Romans 10:9 to 11. Is it possible to become righteous through believing? It is not possible to become righteous in any other way, except to become self-righteous, which in God's sight is a great sin. The individual must believe with the heart something very definite; must believe and accept that fact which we have above stated. It was on the cross that Jesus Christ, the son of God, was made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. The righteousness of God has been made available for any one who will believe the truth of God. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Romans 10:4 and 5. "Christ is our righteousness and our redemption." I Corinthians 1:30.

Hear this plain way of salvation: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8 and 9. The believing sinner is saved unto good works; but not by good works." Ephesians 2:10. In your religious zeal you may say that it matters not to you whether the good works are the means or the result of salvation; just so the good works are maintained. But it does make a great difference with God; and remember, "salvation is of the Lord." "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." John 3:27. "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6:29. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Acts 4:12.

God hath chosen us to salvation through belief of the truth. II Thessalonians 2:13. Salvation is always and only the result of faith in the redemptive work of Christ. "And if by grace then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Romans 11:6.

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Hebrews 10:39.

Salvation obtained or retained is never by works of righteousness; but always the end of faith. The saved person is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." I Peter 1:5. The sinner who turns to religious works for salvation from sin is twice dead plucked up by the roots. On the other hand, faith without works is dead. And this leads us to consider

FRUIT

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12. This verse of Scripture has seemed to many Christians to be a contradiction of other statements from the pen of Paul concerning salvation, all of grace. Why should man have to work out his own salvation, if he is saved by grace without works? Ephesians 2:8, Titus 3:5. Surely there is no contradiction. It is a misunderstanding, an erroneous interpretation of the verse. In the Epistle to the Romans there are the plain declarations that a man is justified by grace, through faith, without works, without religion and without a cause. But in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Romans the justified believer is instructed how to walk and talk and act as becometh a saved

man. God's call is to salvation, separation and service. For the deeds done in the body, for his walk and conversation and service, the justified believer must give an account to Christ at His judgment seat. Romans 14:10, II Corinthians 5:10. In writing to the Galatians the Apostle Paul said, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. To them he also wrote; "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22 and 23. But how did the Galatians receive the Spirit; by the works of the law, that is, by religious endeavor, or by the hearing of faith? Galatians 3:2. The very moment they received Christ and salvation as God's free gift, they likewise received the Holy Spirit as God's free gift; by faith in Christ crucified. Galatians 3:14. They were sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30. If they received the Holy Spirit by faith, could they have retained the Holy Spirit by works? Nay, only by faith. "Because ye are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Galatians 4:6.

Thus we learn that Christians do not receive the Holy Spirit by bearing fruit; but they should bear fruit because they have received the Spirit by faith. All believers have the same justification by faith and therefore the same perfect standing before God. But no two Christians bear exactly the same fruit. In other words every believer's state differs; and even the most faithful saint in service is not perfect as to his state.

The believer is created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God hath before ordained that he should walk in them. Ephesians 2:9 and 10. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation. The new creation, mentioned in II Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15, is referred to as the "new man" in Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24. In this latter verse the believer is thus instructed: "That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In Colossians 3:5 to 9 there is recorded the deeds associated with the old man, "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness, anger, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, lies." When the Saviour was on earth he referred to these as the corrupt fruit from a corrupt tree. He said, "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:16 to 20. The old man is the corrupt tree the new man is the good tree. The fruit of the good tree is the fruit of the Spirit. Some religious people, who have never been born of the Spirit, manifest in their lives some splendid moral qualities; but no unregenerated person can manifest the fruit of the Spirit, because he has not the Spirit. But let us never forget that no one can be regenerated by trying to imitate Christ or by trying to bring forth good fruit. Remember God's order; fact, faith, fruit; and then what?

FEELING

"Rejoice in the Lord alway." Philippians 4:4. It was the same Lord, when here on earth, who said to His disciples: "rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20. He also said to them just before He went back to heaven by the way of Calvary, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." John 14:27. One of the shortest verses in the Bible is I Thessalonians 5:16; "Rejoice evermore."

Notwithstanding the fact that the Christian may experience many sorrows, with tribulation and persecutions unto the end, yet he is to rejoice evermore: he is to rejoice alway. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Ephesians 5:19. Most assuredly such an experience is one of a real good

feeling. Paul and Silas could not withhold the expression of their inward joy, but sounded forth their praises unto God even while they were in jail with bruised and bleeding bodies. Acts 16:25 to 31. Hear his testimony from his own pen: "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." II Corinthians 7:4. Every believer, who properly values and appreciates his salvation will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I Peter 1:9. No joy in all the world can compare with the joy of salvation, even if every believer, with Moses, chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Hebrews 11:25.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Romans 15:13. The sinner must believe and appropriate and practice all that is for him in all the verses in the Epistle to the Romans that precedes this verse, if he is to experience the joy and peace. He must believe that he is an unrighteous, unworthy, undone, guilty, condemned sinner in Adam and that he must turn to Christ, believe the gospel, and be saved by the grace of God through the redemptive work of Christ. He must believe that his salvation is wholly and solely by grace. He must be assured that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and be conscious of the Holy Spirit within bearing witness with his spirit of his sonship and security in Christ. Then he must know that he is not to continue in sin because he is under grace; for a saint who continues in sin will have a miserable feeling instead of one of joy. To experience the highest heights, the deepest depths of joy the believer must faithfully endeavor to obey all of the instructions given in the Epistle to the Romans intended by the Lord to govern the believer's daily conversation and behavior.

There are many religious people who have seasons of religious ecstasy and most assuredly they experience a most satisfactory feeling, and yet many of them are the deluded victims of some Satanic opiate administered by one of his servants in the name of Christianity. So we must know that feeling or religious experience is not to be magnified above the Word of God. Some very emotional religious people may be unsaved and laboring under a delusion, while some Holy Spirit taught children of God may be very spiritual, devout and fruitful with very few emotional demonstrations. However there are many very spiritual and fruitful Christians who are highly emotional. Joy is included in the fruit of the Spirit with peace and gentleness, with love and goodness, and most assuredly the Lord wants every saved person to have joyous feelings.

So often some unsaved person when urged to receive Christ will say, "Not now, I don't feel like it." Well, undoubtedly there must be conviction before a sinner will turn to Christ for salvation; and Holy Spirit conviction will certainly produce a feeling, a feeling of unrest, unhappiness, and a consciousness of responsibility toward God and a desire to be saved from sin. Very frequently the feeling produced is a very miserable feeling. That miserable feeling will change to a joyous feeling when the believing sinner is conscious that he has been justified from all things by faith in Christ and is at peace with God. On the other hand that miserable feeling may gradually pass away and the sinner may continue to reject Christ until he has reached the state of those men described in Ephesians 4:19. "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness." "Who being past feeling" would be better translated from the Greek, "who having cast off all feeling."

Just feel like you should feel without Christ; that you are a poor, helpless, lost, condemned sinner headed for eternal perdition. Then feel like you should feel toward Christ who came not to condemn the world but to save the world. Then receive Him and eternal life, and you will know what these words mean: "happy is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Romans 4:8. So remember as salvation is not by works, and not of works; neither is salvation of,

or by, feeling. Perhaps you have observed how many clever Modernists use their eloquence and pathos in delivering some sentimental moral essay, often to the strains of religious music, and although there is not in their message even the suggestion of a saving gospel, yet they succeed in stirring; the soul of man and producing within that soul a religious feeling, even serious meditations concerning God and an earnest desire to be good. But such feelings are in vain unless they cause the hearer to turn to Christ and Calvary for redemption.

We might well add another “F” to our list; namely, “Future.” For the redeemed sinner has a glorious future; a hope laid up in heaven. For believers are looking for that Blessed Hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. “We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Who can begin to describe the glory that awaits those who will be Christ’s at His coming? “Then shall ye also appear with Him in Glory.” Think of that glorious prospect, that heavenly future experience, out of the realm of sin, sorrow, sickness, temptation, suffering and trouble,” and at home with Christ and the redeemed, to enjoy peace and happiness for ever and ever. “If in this life only we have hope we are of all creatures most miserable,” said the apostle. There is too much suffering, and sorrow in our own lives mixed with our present peace and joy, and too much ungodliness and misery among sinners and unbelievers, for any redeemed one to be recompensed in this present age. The full joy and blessed reward will be realized beginning with the resurrection of the just.

THE HIDDEN THINGS OF THE BIBLE

Doubtless you have read of some of the things in the Bible that were hid. The “hid things” to me have been a very interesting Bible study.

In the very beginning of Genesis are recorded the words of Cain after his great sin: “Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid.” Genesis 4:14.

It was more than three thousand years later that God sent this message to His sinful nation through the Prophet Isaiah “Behold the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.” Isaiah 59:1 and 2. “Sins have hid His face.” This fact is stated in several other Scriptures.

“For Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities.” Isaiah 64:7.

“In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment.” Isaiah 54:8.

“Because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies.” Ezekiel 39:23.

The first “hid” thing is the hid face of God; hid from sinful man because sin separated between God and man.

Although God’s face was hid from his sinning people, David confessed for his nation, and for its, when he said: “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.” Psalms 69:5.

How foolish were Adam and Eve when they tried to hide from God with their sin. “Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” Genesis 3:8. And the Lord God called unto Adam, “Where art thou ?” And he said, “and I hid myself.”

Thus we learn that the first man was hiding from God. And in the coming time of sorrow, that time called “the great tribulation,” men will be hiding from God. “Hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:14 to 16.

The answer to this question is found in the words of David: “Thou art my hiding-place. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.” Psalms 32:7.

“Hide me under the shadow of Thy wing.” Psalms 17:8.

One of the Hebrew words translated “hid” is also translated “covered”; for example, “Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.” Psalms 32:1.

When a man makes God His hiding-place His sin is covered or hid. But he that covereth or hideth his sin shall not prosper.” Proverbs 28:13.

And doubtless you recall the words of Christ: “There is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad.” Mark 4:22.

In studying these words of Christ it is interesting to note the statement is true concerning mans secret sins and also concerning God’s revelation of truth which came to man on the installment plan.

Even concerning the redeemed ones of this age God’s Word is that when the Lord comes he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. I Corinthians 4:5.

Thus we see that all things are naked and opened onto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Hebrews 4:12.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING

In rightly dividing the Word of truth we learn that truth must be properly interpreted and applied, as God intended, to either Israel, the Gentile or the Church of God; and we must also observe the principle of progressive revelation, recognizing that truth hid from one age or generation is disclosed to another. However, prophecy though unfulfilled, is not to be considered a secret. Although it may not be that even the most spiritual shall know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. Acts 1:7.

Should not every child of God know the future of Israel? It is simply a matter of believing the plain Word of God. The truth concerning the Body of Christ and Paul’s message to the Gentiles was not made known to Israel’s prophets and was not made known by Christ when He was here on earth. But Christ confirmed the ministry of Israel’s prophets and came with added revelation to Israel concerning their Kingdom.

You doubtless recall His words of thanksgiving to His Father: “I thank Thee , O Father, Lord of heaven and earth Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Matthew 11:25.

We cannot read these words of the Son of God without thinking of several other Scriptures, such as I Corinthians 2:14 and James 1:21 and Romans 11:25 and Jude 19 and John 3:3, which we quote:

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

“Receive with meekness the engrafted Word.”

“Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.”

“Sensual, not having the Spirit.”

“Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Scholarship, diplomas and degrees cannot guarantee to any religious person the understanding of spiritual truths.

“The anointing which ye have received of Him The same anointing teacheth you of all things.” I John 2:24 to 27.

In all ages and generations men have claimed to be the servants and prophets of God, and yet ignorant of God’s truth, because they have been mere professors and not taught of God. How true this is today when church leadership has fallen into the hands of the so-called Modernists or Liberals. How ignorant they are of simple spiritual truths, in spite of their boast of education and religious training. On the other hand, we can see the truth of the Lord’s statement right up to date in the spiritual knowledge and discernment manifested by some humble, uneducated child of God, taught by the Holy Spirit.

Ignorance of the glorious truths of the Bible, including Moses and all the prophets, the messages of Christ and the twelve and the later revelation concerning the Body of Christ given through Paul, is inexcusable today. But the knowledge of Pauline truth was not only excusable, but impossible, during the years the Saviour was with His apostles on earth; and even for years after that earthly ministry. There are certain truths that the leaders of Israel should have known after Christ had revealed God’s program to them.

Let us read the words of His lamentation:

“HE BEHELD THE CITY AND WEPT OVER IT, SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN, EVEN THOU, AT LEAST IN THIS THY DAY, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE! BUT NOW, THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES.” Luke 19:42.

Because of their stubborn wills and self-righteous souls, God hid from the wise and prudent the kingdom message of their own Messiah. The Messiah and His peace was likewise hid from their eyes.

But there were many things hid even from those who had left all to follow Christ, from those who had acknowledged His Messiahship, Kingship and Divine authority.

You will doubtless recall His words, recorded in Luke 18:21 to 33, informing those intimate disciples of His approaching rejection, death and resurrection. Why did they not discern His statement? It was not due to a lack of humility, or because of carnal disobedience; but we note their reaction.

“AND THEY UNDERSTOOD NONE OF THESE THINGS, AND THE SAYING WAS HID FROM THEM; NEITHER KNEW THEY THE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN.” Luke 19:34.

We know that the gospel by which we were saved is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But when this message was preached to the twelve apostles before the death of Christ, that gospel was hid from them. But Christ had been preaching a gospel to them for several years and they had been preaching that same gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What gospel had they been preaching? The answer to this question is Mark 1:14. The time came in their ministry when the truth that was hid was made known concerning the need and value of the death and resurrection of Christ. But Peter, who said to Christ concerning His approaching sacrificial death, “be it far from Thee Lord this shall not be unto Thee,” wrote, perhaps thirty years later, concerning the death of Christ, “He once suffered for sins the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.” Matthew 16:21 and 22. I Peter 3:18. Certainly we have here a plain case of progressive revelation.

In spite of the command of Christ to His apostles concerning His sacrifice and resurrection, “let these sayings sink down into your heart,” “they understood not this saying and it was hid from them.” Luke 9:44 and 45.

Most assuredly that message of redemption was not hid from them for the same reason that it is hid from unbelievers today, through the work of the god of this age. II Corinthians 4:3 and 4. To this we shall refer later.

But if the twelve apostles did not understand the words of Christ concerning His death; if even the most favored ones after His death knew not the Scriptures that Christ must rise from the dead; and if all twelve of them were concerned about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, how foolish to believe that they knew the very first thing about the Body of Christ, or the mystery revealed years later to the Apostle who was not one of the twelve, Paul. John 20:9—Acts 1:6—Ephesians 3:1 and 2.

So we learn that while certain truths are hid from religious people who are mere professors and cannot see because they have not been born of God, and while spiritual truths are hid from even saved people who are wise in their own conceits and will not receive the Word with meekness, or as did the Bereans; yet in the careful study of Ephesians 3:5 and Colossians 1:26 we are instructed that even the most spiritual and faithful of the Lord’s servants in one age had to remain ignorant of the truth of God that was to be revealed in a later dispensation. And in rightly dividing and rightly understanding the Word of truth we must distinguish between fulfilled prophecy and the revelation of new truth not the subject of prophecy. As an example of this, the Holy Spirit declared by the mouth of the father of John the Baptist and by the mouth of Peter and the eleven more than thirty years later that the restitution of all things, including Israel’s peaceful possession of their land wholly delivered from any Gentile interference because of the righteous the reign of their promised Deliverer, was spoken by the mouths of all the holy Prophets since the world began. Luke 1:67 to 73 and Acts 3:19 to 22.

But when Paul preached among the Gentiles the riches of Christ he was preaching the unsearchable or untraceable riches of Christ; and he wrote to those Gentiles that they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and were already seated in Him and with Him in the upper-heavenlies; and with Him were one flesh. Ephesians 3:8—Ephesians 1:3—Ephesians 2:6 and 7—Ephesians 5:27 to 31. This grace was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. II Timothy 1:9. This was Paul’s final word as minister to the Gentiles. II Timothy 1:11 and 12.

Let us turn to Colossians and read several verses:

“CHRIST IN WHOM ARE HID ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.” Colossians 2:3.

“EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT IS NOW MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS . . . THE MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.” Colossians 1:26 and 27.

“FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. WHEN CHRIST WHO IS YOUR LIFE SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY.” Colossians 3:3 and 4.

If all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ and the believer is in Christ, who is his hiding-place, then the believer is where the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.

And now that the mystery has been revealed by the risen Head of the Church, which is His Body, it should no longer be hid. If it be hid, it is not God's fault. Satan has much to do with the astounding ignorance of "Body" truth and with the mixture of Israel's kingdom truth with the revelation of Christ for the Gentiles by the pen of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Concerning the mystery and the dispensation of grace and the untraceable riches of Christ, the risen Lord expressed His will and purpose in this language, "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God." Ephesians 3:9.

An unregenerated religious person cannot be made to see. But why is it that spiritual leaders even among zealous contenders of the faith will not see for themselves, or will endeavor to keep others from seeing, what the risen Lord wants them to see.

That which was hid in God from the beginning of the world has nothing to do with that which was spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. That which was hid from other ages and generations but has now been made known unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit is God's truth for this age; and this truth which was made known after Christ was raised far above all principalities and powers, and seated in the upper heavenlies. is specifically for those who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and who have obtained mercy because of Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:30. Ephesians 2:11 to 17. To mix this glorious "Body" truth with Israel's kingdom truth, or to confuse it with that which is in part, including signs and ceremonies, is not rightly dividing the Word of truth. Rather, such a mixture and confusion is to again hide the mystery in religion.

The Body of Christ is not Israel. Paul, who was an Israelite, after he turned to Christ did not suddenly abandon Jewish rites, signs and ceremonies; but with the full revelation of the Mystery they all passed out of his life and he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high; and for him to live was Christ, in whom he was full and with whom he was seated. Old things had passed away and that which was in part when that which was perfect had come; and he urged even the Hebrews to go with him on to perfection in doctrine. He no longer knew Christ after the flesh. But Paul knew and wrote that the fulness of the Gentiles would come in and God would then deal again with His nation Israel. Romans 11:25 and 26.

"ISRAEL IS NOT HID FROM ME"

According to the interpretations and theories of the Postmillennialists, who have misappropriated Israel's covenants and promises, Israel, as a nation, is hid from God. But this erroneous conception is the result of confusing Israel with the Body of Christ. God's word is, "Israel is not hid from Me." Hosea 5:3.

Whether or not the pearl of great price, mentioned in Matthew 13:46, is the Church—which is extremely doubtful in the light of Ephesians 3:5—or whatever may be the leaven hid in the meal, it does seem that the treasure in the field, mentioned in Matthew 13:44, is Israel. In Psalm 135:4 God declared that He had chosen Israel as His peculiar treasure. He so declared with the birth of that Nation. Exodus 19:5.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO TREASURE HID IN A FIELD; THE WHICH WHEN A MAN HATH FOUND HE HIDETH, AND FOR JOY THEREOF GOETH AND SELLETH ALL, THAT HE HATH, AND BUYETH THE FIELD. Matthew 13:44.

The field is the world and when Israel's Messiah shall return to claim His treasure, Israel, the kingdoms of the world are going to become the kingdoms of God and His Christ.

Concerning Israel's present whereabouts and punishment, we have this Word from God:

"Thy Maker is thy husband . . . For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I HID my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Isaiah 54:4 to 10. (Read the seven verses.)

"I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers . . . they are not HID from my face, neither is their iniquity HID from mine eyes." Jeremiah 16:14 to 21.

"Because they trespassed against Me, therefore HID I My face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies. But I have gathered them unto their own land, and left none of them any more there. Neither will I HIDE my face any more from them: for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 39:23, 28 and 29.

God's day of vengeance, the day of His wrath, known as the Great Tribulation the time of Jacob's trouble, is approaching. Israel will be saved out of it. Jeremiah 30:7.

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:22. They are beloved for the father's sake. This concerning their election.

In Zephaniah 2:2 this coming time of trouble is called, "the day of the Lord's anger." In the next verse is God's warning to Israel:

"SEEK YE THE LORD, ALL YE MEEK OF THE EARTH . . . IT MAY BE YE SHALL BE HID IN THE DAY OF THE LORD'S ANGER"

Israel is blind today. They have added their greatest sin since Isaiah wrote to their, "your sins have hid His face from you." Isaiah 59:2. "Thou hast hid thy face from us, because of our iniquity." Isaiah 64:7.

During this day of Israel's blindness, waiting for the times of the Gentiles to be fulfilled, the face of God is hid from them; but they are not hid from Him. Because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, for the fathers' sake, and because of His covenant with them, God will take away their sins and all Israel shall be saved. Romans 11:25 to 32. But in this day of grace the wrath of God is upon both unbelieving Jew and Gentile.

In the meantime Christendom is rapidly rushing on to Babylon and millions of professing Christians are described in Revelation 3:17 "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked." Alas! most of Christendom is nearly as blind as blind Israel.

The certain men who have crept in unawares, with their emasculated and perverted gospel, called "another gospel," were foreordained to this condemnation. Jude 4 . . . II Corinthians 11:13 to 15. They are propagating their Christianized agnosticism in the name of Christ, as apostles of Christ, under the one who has transformed himself into an angel of light. As the result, millions are going religiously to perdition, and the age is rapidly drawing to a close, headed for the awful judgment of God.

Many today are like Agrippa, to whom Paul said, "for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him"; and again like him, because they will not accept the message of God which they believe to be true.

Satan is accused of the crime of deceiving the whole world. He corrupts minds from the simplicity that is in Christ, with another gospel, another spirit and another Jesus.

"BUT IF OUR GOSPEL BE HID IT IS HID TO THEM THAT ARE LOST; IN WHOM THE GOD OF THIS AGE HATH BLINDED THE MINDS OF THEM WHICH BELIEVE NOT, LEST THE LIGHT OF THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, SHOULD SHINE UNTO THEM." II Corinthians 4:3 and 4.

Are you one of the lost ones to whom this glorious gospel is hid? Satan does not want it to shine unto you.

Isaiah said, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him," Isaiah 8:17. But let us remember that we are living in a different dispensation when the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, when salvation is as free as the air we breathe. "The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The gospel by which we are saved is "Christ died for our sins; He was buried and He was raised again the third day." The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is a matter of believing the Word of God, to be saved from sin and the consequences of sin.

The child of God should say today with David of old, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11.

Then this last verse we leave with you for your own interpretation

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall HIDE a multitude of sins." James 5:20.

IS THE ONE BAPTISM OF EPHESIANS WATER?

Some months before the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, He said unto His disciples; "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke 12:50. "How am I pained until my death be accomplished," was the meaning of the Saviour's words. He spoke of his death as a baptism. More than twenty-five years after Christ spoke those words, the Holy Spirit by the pen of Paul asked this question: "Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Romans 6:3. Then six or seven years later the saints at Ephesus were told; "there is one baptism." Ephesians 4:5. Now the question, "is it true today that there is but one baptism for the Church or Body, of Christ, and is the baptism of the individual member of the Body of Christ into the death of Christ that one baptism?" Is this one baptism accomplished by God or man; that is, is it the work of the Holy Spirit or the result of the application of water?

Perhaps you are entitled to an apology for even putting the question to you, if you have made a careful study of the Epistle to the Ephesians; for in that Epistle the saints have not only been sealed unto the day of redemption by the Holy Spirit, but they are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, members of the Body of Christ, seated with Him in the upper-heavenlies; chosen in Christ long before God had made any covenants with Abraham, Israel, or David, yea before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:13 . . . Ephesians 4:30 . . . Ephesians 2:22 . . . Ephesians 2:6. But inasmuch as there are Bible teachers of reputation and ability who not only insist upon water baptism for members of the Body of Christ today, but withdraw fellowship from those who disagree with them, interpreting the "one baptism" as water baptism to prove their position, we ask the question. The statement concerning the one baptism immediately follows the admonition, "forbearing one another in love." Which would you deem of greater importance, in the light of other Scriptures, believing that the "one baptism" is, or is not, water baptism, or "forbearing one another in love?" In my own personal experience I know of no one among real Christians who ignore or disobey the "forbearing one another in love" any more than do those who insist that the one baptism is water baptism.

Without obedience to the “love” admonition who can obey the admonition that follows: “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?” Unity must exist among members of the Body of Christ before it can be kept. If there is a lack of love, there is a corresponding lack of unity. If there is a lack of agreement as to the interpretation of the “one baptism,” there is a corresponding lack of unity. To some degree there is unity; that is, all Bible teachers of reputation and ability are agreed that water baptism does not cause, or even help to cause, any believer to become a member of the Body of Christ and does not keep any believer in that Body as a member. There is this further unity among these teachers, and that is, that every member of the Body of Christ has been baptized into that Body without water. They agree that that baptism is essential to become a member of the Body of Christ, and they agree that it is not water baptism.

So all are agreed that “one baptism” is essential to salvation, and that this one baptism is not water. But there the unity ends; for the “Household” immersers and the “Believer’s” immersers and the “Covenant” sprinklers all disagree among themselves, and some of them heartily disagree with their good orthodox brethren who make water baptism a door of entrance to their denominational churches. They admit that the only way they can enjoy interdenominational fellowship, or keep unity among themselves, is to put the silent boycott to water baptism. A discussion of water baptism is almost certain to precipitate an unpleasant controversy. But in spite of the disagreements and boycotts there are many sincere believers who are soliloquizing; “to be or not to be baptized.” Shall not every honest and intelligent Bible teacher advise these sincere believers to diligently search the Scriptures before they decide to be or not to be; why and how to be? There must be some reason why there is such division on the subject of water baptism among men who love the Lord, who believe in His Word, and would not purposely teach a line contrary to God’s Holy Truth. We admit that these different interpretations cannot be of God separating the members of His Church.

Is there “Old Testament” water baptism and “Church” water baptism? When did the Old Covenant or Old Testament pass away? When did the Church of God begin? If we could agree that the Old Covenant passed away with the death and resurrection of Christ, and that the Church of God began on the Day of Pentecost, we could have a fine point of agreement with which to begin to find out where and why we disagree on the subject of water baptism. Such an agreement immediately eliminates the teaching that baptism takes the place of circumcision. If we are agreed that the Church of God began fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, then it will be of interest to turn to the ministry of Jesus Christ during those fifty intervening days; that is, between the end of the Old Covenant and the birth of the Church of God, which we have been taught to believe took place on the day of Pentecost. Let us read Acts 1:5 and 6:

“FOR JOHN (THE BAPTIST) TRULY BAPTIZED WITH WATER; BUT YE SHALL BE BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT NOT MANY DAYS HENCE. WHEN THEY THEREFORE WERE COME TOGETHER, THEY ASKED OF HIM, SAYING. LORD WILT THOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL?”

To Peter and the eleven, Christ had said, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 16:19. These twelve apostles had companied with Jesus all the time that He went in and out among them beginning from the baptism of John. Acts 1:21. Were those days spent with Christ under the law or were the disciples members of His Church before His death? These twelve, together with their fellow enjoy disciples (one hundred and twenty in all) stood on the threshold of a new era. Just a few days before this the Lord Jesus had said to His apostles, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; However, when the Spirit

of truth is come.” John 16:12 and 13. They knew little of what was before them. They were wholly ignorant of God’s program for this age, especially “that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6. Their first duty as they looked forward to the unknown future was to tarry for the advent of the Holy Spirit; “another Paraclete.” Within a few days they were to receive their baptism; their second baptism; Holy Spirit baptism. Their first baptism was a human baptism, a physical baptism with a physical element, water, a ceremony demanded by the Lord in connection with the gospel of the kingdom. However there had been divers baptisms in Israel’s Old Testament religion. Hebrews 9:10. Was the significance of water baptism hidden from the twelve apostles at the time they received it and for several years thereafter? It most certainly was if we are to believe that it was a burial into Christ’s death. More than three years after they were baptized unto repentance for the remission of sins the gospel by which we are saved was hid from them. Christ preached to them His death, burial and resurrection, the gospel by which we are saved, “and they understood none of these things; neither knew they the things which were spoken.” Luke 18:34. But later, after He had been buried and raised, “opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.” Luke 24:45.

John the Baptist preached, before Christ appeared, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. Acts 13:24. John’s shewing was onto Israel. Luke 1:80. “Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” Luke 1:16. In connection with His divine appointment John’s father, filled with the Holy Spirit, declared that the Lord God of Israel was about to fulfill His glorious promises to Israel and deliver them from the Gentiles. Luke 1:67 to 77. Israel’s Deliverer Mary’s Son, Jesus, was to be given the throne of David to reign over the house of Jacob. Luke 1:28 to 32. To Israel was to be given the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins. Luke 1:77. At the appointed time John the Baptist suddenly appeared in Judaea for His ministry to Israel. “And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Luke 3:3 . . . Matthew 3:11 . . . Mark 1:4. He began His message with these words; “repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2. So we observe that whatever significance there was to John’s baptism it was for Israel in connection with their kingdom and the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham and David concerning Israel’s deliverance from the hands of their enemies, and their peaceful possession of their land under their true King David, their Messiah. “And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Messiah or not.” Luke 3:15. They even asked of John this question “why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ.” John 1:25. Let us carefully note the two statements of John the Baptist that followed:

“THAT HE SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST TO ISRAEL, THEREFORE AM I COME BAPTIZING WITH WATER.” John 1:31.

“I INDEED BAPTIZE YOU WITH WATER; BUT ONE MIGHTIER THAN I COMETH . . . HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH FIRE.” Luke 3:14.

According to the dates in our dated Bibles this statement of John the Baptist was made seven years before Christ confirmed it in the language of Acts 1:5: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” Thus we learn that in Connection with the “Kingdom of Heaven” message of John, the Lord Jesus and His apostles, there was one baptism; namely, water baptism. There was only one baptism before the day of Pentecost. That water baptism was for Israel, baptism of repentance for the remission of sins and it was that baptism that was to manifest the Messiah to Israel. Now, we certainly know that if the

one baptism of Ephesians is also water baptism, it has an entirely different significance, which means that there are at least two magnifications to water baptism. Judged by the division among present-day "Fundamentalists" there are at least one dozen magnifications. There have been about eight different interpretations among the men of God who have ministered to the assembly of which I am pastor. I speak of visiting Bible teachers during the past eight years. Now we have learned that for several years before the Lord opened the understanding of the apostles they had been preaching a gospel; but during that time the gospel by which we are saved was unknown to them. Mark 1:14 and 15. I Corinthians 15:2 to 4. Therefore it is utterly unthinkable to interpret the water baptism in connection with the gospel of the kingdom, as "buried with Him by baptism into death." And if the twelve apostles were not buried by baptism before the birth of the Church, they certainly were not thereafter. Even after His death Christ's most intimate disciples, Peter and John, knew not the Scripture that He must be raised from the dead. John 20:9. Now the question; "by which baptism, were the twelve apostles baptized into the death of Christ, the water or the Holy Spirit?"

"Did water baptism have one meaning for Israel before the death and resurrection of Christ; another meaning for Israel in Jerusalem and Samaria on and after the day of Pentecost; and still another meaning for Cornelius in the tenth chapter of Acts; and then a new meaning in Romans, the sixth chapter?" Which of these is the one water baptism of Ephesians? Is it unto repentance for the remission of sins? If today water baptism may have one of a dozen different meanings to the children of God, and there is but one meaning in the mind and purpose of God for this age, then we must agree that the different meanings are due to the inability or unwillingness to obey II Timothy 2:15, "rightly dividing the Word of truth." Even the simplest application of that principle has brought us to the agreement that Peter's message concerning baptism on the day of Pentecost is not for today.

Let us compare the baptism of the Great Commission with a statement made by Peter in connection with the baptism of a Gentile and two statements by Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles

"Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them into (or unto) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts 10:47 and 48. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." I Corinthians 1:17. "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.

Paul received from Christ in heaven by revelation, the gospel that Christ sent him to preach. In that revelation he was not to baptize. "Christ sent me not to baptize." In the so-called Great Commission Peter and the eleven were to baptize. There are some splendid Christians who teach that water was not there in the mind of the Lord. But in the light of the ministry of the twelve that followed, the Lord could have meant water baptism. Granting that He did, then are we not forced to the decision that if Paul was working under that Great Commission, with the Christ-revealed Gospel that he preached to the heathen, Christ either revised that Commission or gave to Paul a special permit of exemption?

Now as to the Great Commission and the twelve, Bible teachers of reputation and ability, spiritual men of God, are divided in their opinions as to whether or not it is possible for the Church of this age to fulfill that Commission; in fact, it is openly stated by some of these brethren that the Great Commission is for the future "Kingdom" age; and that even the twelve apostles did not begin their ministry on the Day of Pentecost under that Commission. I have read

their arguments for and against. I have studied the Bible with open mind and heart and have prayed for light on the subject, but must admit that it is most difficult to reach a fixed conclusion. Without going in for a thorough or critical exegesis of the closing verses of the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew, one can say that the Church has been for the past nineteen centuries, making Christians out of all nations; that is, has evangelized to the uttermost part of the earth. But when we study the Great Commission in detail, in the light of the messages and program of the twelve apostles and in contrast with the last ministry of the Apostle to the Gentiles, we are forced to put the subject of the Body of Christ and the Great Commission to the Berean test. And no Berean will be satisfied with the statement that the Great Commission will have a larger fulfillment in the next age but really is for both ages.

Is the same program set forth in the Great Commission as the program declared by Peter and James thirteen years later; “God for the first time did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name.” Acts 15:14. In the Great Commission the eleven were alone with Jesus, and they were told to disciple all nations. More than thirty years later the Apostle to the Nations, Paul, declared that God was making a “New Man” during this age. Ephesians 2:14 and 15. Shall we say, that “discipling all nations” and “making a New Man” are identical? Did the Lord later change His mind when it was decided that Peter and his associates should confine their labors to the Jews? Galatians 2:7 to 11.

If the Lord Jesus, who spoke to His apostles during the forty days after His death concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3), then gave them the Great Commission for this “Body” age, why was it that they did not understand that Commission as it is generally interpreted today, either before or after they received the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? When the Lord was leaving for heaven He told them of their Holy Spirit baptism within a few days; and they immediately asked if the kingdom would be restored to Israel. Acts 1:6. Is it not true that every intelligent student of the Word of truth, in accordance with II Timothy 2:15, believes that God’s more sure word of prophecy teaches that the real work of discipling the nations will be after the kingdom has been restored to Israel? It is not difficult to see how a Postmillennialist can put the generally accepted interpretation to the Great Commission; but that interpretation is not compatible with the other teachings of the accredited Premillennialists in Fundamental circles. With the interpretation that the Church is carrying out the Great Commission during this age, how are we to understand Peter’s statement, his confession for himself and his fellow-apostles, eight years after the Great Commission was given; “it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to come unto one of another nation?” Acts 10:28. They were to disciple all nations. Why the vision of the sheet filled with unclean creatures if the twelve understood from the Great Commission that they were to disciple all nations during this age? Why the question, “can any man forbid water,” if they were to baptize all nations with water? Why this question eight years after the Great Commission was given? Why was Peter condemned by Hebrew Christians for preaching to Gentiles, if they understood that they were to disciple all nations, unless they remained wilfully disobedient to the Great Commission? Another “why” and there are many other whys: Why did Paul, in the year 60 A.D., write that God was sending salvation to the nations to provoke Israel to jealousy, and was saving them because of Israel’s unbelief, Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:30, if they were included in the Great Commission? Why did Paul wait until the Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life before he turned to the Gentiles, if all of the servants of the Lord realized that Israel and the Gentiles were the all nations of the Great Commission to be disciplined. Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:6 and Acts 28:28. Why did not the twelve and Paul baptize in the name of the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit? Although we get no satisfactory answers to our many “whys,” we must either accept the interpretation given by a certain recognized denomination or group of Bible teachers or be subject to disfellowship. True Bereans will search the Scriptures for the “whys” and not be sheep-like.

Again, is there similarity or a decided contrast between Peter’s message to, “ye men of Judaea,” and “ye men of Israel,” on the Day of Pentecost, and Paul’s written message to the Ephesians sent to them more than thirty years later? Let us touch a few high points between the two messages; that is from message to message

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

Second . . . Acts 3:19 to 21 . . . “Repent ye therefore . . . And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you . . . Which the heaven must retain until the times of restitution of all things”;

Third . . . Acts 8:5 and 12 to 15 . . . “Then Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them . . . When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized . . . They sent Peter and John unto them, Who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit: For as yet he was fallen upon none of them”;

Fourth . . . Acts 11:15. . . “As I began to speak (Peter to Cornelius), the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning”;

Fifth . . . Acts 19:1 to 6 . . . “Paul came to Ephesus . . . He said unto them, Believing received ye the Holy Spirit? . . . We have not so much as heard that there be any Holy Spirit . . . Unto what then were ye baptized? Unto John’s baptism . . . They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus . . . When Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them”;

Sixth . . . (Year 64 A. D., Paul writing to Ephesus) . . . Ephesians 1:13 . . . “The gospel of your salvation, Believing ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit”;

Seventh . . . “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”;

Eighth . . . Ephesians 4:4 to 6 . . . “There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.”

Let us ask another question, one that I have endeavored to answer for myself; “If the Church of God born on the day of Pentecost and the Body of Christ mentioned in Ephesians are one and the same, why should not the members of the Body of Christ today give forth the message and program of Peter and the eleven on the day of Pentecost, or that of Philip in Samaria, or that of Paul in Ephesus in the nineteenth chapter of Acts?” To the eleven Christ had said: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . . And these signs shall follow.” Mark 16:15 to 18. They preached, “Repent and be baptized and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit.” Baptism was connected with their gospel; the order suggests water essential to salvation. Peter in his message preached the Prophecy of Joel concerning God’s favor upon Israel in their land and David’s Prophecy concerning Christ taking His throne in that land. Acts 2:10 to 30. Joel and David had no prophecies concerning the Body of Christ and the mystery among the Gentiles. Then Peter told Israel that Christ would be in heaven until those two Prophecies would be fulfilled; that He would be sent back for that fulfillment, if they would repent. Is there not a decided difference between the return of Christ to bring about the restitution of all things promised to Israel since

the world began (Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21) and the present Headship of Christ over His body, seated with Him far above principality and power and might in the upper-heavenlies, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, ages before God by the mouth of the holy prophets spoke of Israel's restoration? Ephesians 1:23 and Ephesians 2:6. Did Peter preach to Israel on the Day of Pentecost the Unsearchable Riches of Christ or the Mystery not made known to other ages? Did he preach the "my gospel" of Paul in connection with that mystery? Romans 16:25.

Twenty-five years after the Day of Pentecost Paul wrote these words: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body." I Corinthians 12:13. If that one Body is the Body spoken of as the "one Body" of Ephesians surely the one Spirit is the one Spirit spoken of, and if so, is not the baptism the one baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:5? If that Holy Spirit baptism is the one baptism, should we now have two baptisms? If the three thousand who responded to Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost were baptized into the Body of Christ on that day, was it by water baptism or Holy Spirit baptism, or by both? What difference was there between the message of John the Baptist, "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" and Peter's message? Did Peter preach on the day of Pentecost the Grace of Christ Gospel that Paul received by revelation? Galatians 1:11 and 12. The twelve apostles had to wait several years after their baptism unto repentance before they received the Holy Spirit baptism, because the Holy Spirit was not yet given. John 7:39. The three thousand received both baptisms the same day. But why did the people in Samaria, who obeyed Mark 16:16 and 17 (believe and is baptized shall be saved), have to wait several days before they received the Holy Spirit? Acts 8:10 to 14. Were they in the Body of Christ while they were waiting, and if not, were they saved? In the light of I Corinthians 12:13, we cannot understand how they could have been in the Body, can we? We give these questions to cause you to study the why and how of water baptism.

Any intelligent student of the Word of God observes the change of order from Pentecost in 33 A.D. to Cornelius in 41 A.D.. Cornelius was not told to repent and be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fell on him and then he was baptized with water. Acts 10:34 to 44. But now the question concerning Paul's program in Ephesus in the year 56 A.D. Read Acts 19:1 to 7 and observe how many baptisms are there mentioned. Explain Paul's ministry there in the light of the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5. Why did Paul there revert to the order of the day of Pentecost and Samaria; "water baptism, imposition of hands, Holy Spirit baptism?" That is a most interesting question, especially since that is the last Scriptural record of the baptism of any believer. No more important question on our subject can be asked or answered than this one: "When and why did the program of the Church of God change since the order of the nineteenth chapter of Acts? Linked with the water baptism in that Chapter there were the imposition of hands, Holy Spirit baptism after water baptism, speaking in tongues, casting out demons, healing the sick, etc. By what process of elimination, other than by the consent of Bible teachers and by the traditions of church fathers, or denominational creeds, are we to divorce the hands, tongues, exorcising of demons and healing the sick from the water baptism?"

If we can show by a consistent exegesis of the Scriptures that all of the program, but water baptism, passed with the apostolic "sign" age, such an exegesis should satisfy any honest investigator, any sincere seeker after the truth. But to eliminate them from the program of the Church of God which began on the day of Pentecost and which shall be on earth until the Lord comes, without such an exegesis, is not the mark of an intelligent student or teacher of the Word. How consistent is a teacher of the Bible who will prove water baptism for this age by the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, the Lord's Supper by the eleventh chapter of the same Epistle, and then condemn the teacher who wants to include all of the nice gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned

in the twelfth chapter? If these gifts are to be eliminated from the program of the Church of God today, then some most radical change has taken place, for they most assuredly belonged to the program of the Church of God during the period that “two baptisms” belonged. Certainly we shall not eliminate the gifts because of the consent of church fathers or because of denominational creeds; but only because there is a Scriptural reason for doing so. The reason is the study of the “sign” age in the light of the risen Lord’s last messages, through Paul, to and concerning the Body. That is intelligent and consistent exegesis, and rightly dividing the Word of truth. By the same principle “two baptisms” of the earlier period studied in the light of the “one baptism” of the later period, and one of the two baptisms eliminated, is intelligent and consistent exegesis. Which is the “one baptism” remaining ?

THE DOORS OF SALVATION

There is only one way to be saved. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only one by Whom, in Whom, and through Whom there is salvation. He is the one and only way to God. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only Door of salvation. But several doors are mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures and our message is concerning these several doors.

In John 10, the Lord called Himself the Door several times; first in John 10:1 and 2; and in John 10:7 He said, “I am the DOOR of the Sheep.” But the verse with which we are so familiar is John 10:9; those simple but significant words of the Lord

“I AM THE DOOR: BY ME IF ANY MAN ENTER IN, HE SHALL BE SAVED, AND SHALL GO IN AND OUT AND FIND PASTURE.”

When these wonderful words were uttered by the Lord, the truth concerning the Church, which is His Body, had not been revealed. Now we know that all saved people have been baptized by one Spirit into that one Body. I Corinthians 12:13. And we know that all believers are in Christ, and to be in Christ means to be in the true Church. The Church is not the door to Christ. Christ is the Door to the Church, as He is the Door of salvation. Every saved person is a righteous person. Christ himself is the believer’s righteousness.

“If any man enter in.” The expression “any man” is used seventeen times in the Gospel of John. Another word, meaning the same thing, is used, “whosoever.” “Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Another expression used is, “as many as.” “As many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” John 1:12.

The message of salvation by grace is clearer to us today than it was when the Lord Jesus was on earth, because even His intimate disciples did not understand many of the sayings of Christ, recorded in the four Gospels.

Even those who belonged to the inner circle of His intimate group, after they had been constantly under His instructions for several years, “knew not the scripture that He must rise from the dead.” John 20:9.

Christ instructed His messengers to confine their message to His own nation Israel, and not to proclaim it to the Gentiles. Matthew 10:3 to 7. So we must remember these points in the study of these several doors. But the Saviour, in that same tenth chapter of John, uttered these words: “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.” John 10:16. Whatever maybe the correct interpretation of this promise, we know that our Lord Jesus Christ, by His death and

resurrection, has opened the door of salvation to any kind of a sinner, and any kind of a sinner can enter at any time through the Door and he saved and go in and out and find pasture.

What would have happened, had that door of the sepulchre failed to open? Hear the answer: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain." I Corinthians 15:14 and 17. Without the bodily resurrection of the Christ, who died for our sins, there would be no door of salvation. Christians down through the ages have been false witnesses, and Christianity is a fraud or a superstition, if there is not a man, the Man Christ Jesus, alive at God's right hand in heaven. After His once-for-all sacrifice This Man "sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews 10:12. This brings us to the consideration of the second door; namely, the door of the sepulchre.

"WHO SHALL ROLL US AWAY THE STONE FROM THE DOOR OF THE SEPULCHRE?" Mark 16:4.

That stone was a very great stone. Mark 16:4. Christ called Himself a Stone. He was a very great Stone. In the beginning He made the stones, yea, all the great stones. A very great stone could not keep the door of His Sepulchre closed. Before the Marys had finished their question, they had their answer. "They saw that the stone was rolled away." Mark 16:4. Within a short time they saw the Stone which the builders had rejected. They saw the resurrected Christ. The Jews had endeavored to thwart the report of His resurrection. They said to Pilate: "Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure." To them Pilate replied, "Make it as sure as ye can." Matthew 27:64 to 66. They did. But God loosed the pains of death; "because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Acts 2:24.

There was no conspiracy, for even the apostles did not believe the testimony of the resurrection until the risen Lord had appeared to them and showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Luke 24:11. But He was seen, after His resurrection, "of above five hundred brethren at once." I Corinthians 15:6. By His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus abolished death, spoiled principalities, including him who had the power of death, that is the devil. II Timothy 1:9 and 10. Colossians 2:15. Hebrews 2:14.

It is by His death and resurrection that the Son of God opened the door of salvation. Salvation is wholly and solely by grace. The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23. The Gospel is, that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried. But it does not stop there. We are not serving a dead Christ on a crucifix, but a living resurrected Christ. "That He was buried; and that He rose again the third day." I Corinthians 15:4. Our Forerunner has entered within the veil, even Jesus, who now appears in the presence of God, in heaven itself. Hebrews 6:19 and Hebrews 9:24.

If the door of the sepulchre had not been opened, the Messenger of God could never have said, "Behold, a door was opened in heaven." Revelation 4:1. If you will read the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation, you may look through the open door of heaven and get a vision of the glorified Christ worshipped as Creator and Redeemer, and perhaps, you can see yourself in the picture singing with the other redeemed ones; "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God" Revelation 5:9.

"AND WHEN THEY WERE COME, AND HAD GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER, THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM, AND HOW HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES." Acts 14:27.

When Jesus was here among men, He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24. Certain Greeks wanted to see Him. But He refused to see them. Because

they were to be blessed by receiving Him as the corn of wheat dying and coming forth; that is, by His death and resurrection. John 12:20 to 31. Even some years after His death and resurrection His disciples preached the Word to none but Jews only. Acts 11:19. It was not lawful for them to associate with Gentiles. Acts 10:28. Peter was directed by the Lord to preach to the Household of Cornelius, and did. Then the apostles rejoiced that repentance unto life was granted unto the Gentiles. Acts 11:18. Cornelius, a most respectable, Godfearing, religious, Jew-loving, benevolent, praying Gentile was unlike the Gentiles to whom Paul afterward preached. Paul was debtor even to the Barbarians; and heathen were turned to God from idols.

Like the twelve apostles, Paul at first gave the Jews priority rights, until after they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life and then he turned to the Gentiles. It was after that declaration in Acts 13:46, that he returned to Antioch to tell the church there that a door of faith had been opened to the Gentiles.

The Gentiles had been given up and given over by God. Romans 1:21 to 32. They were in God's sight a foolish nation; no people. Romans 10:19. They were the wild olive tree. Romans 11:17. God sent salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Romans 11:11. The Gentiles have obtained mercy through Israel's unbelief. Romans 11:30. Then Gentiles who were afar off have been made nigh, with the elect remnant of Israel, and out of the two the Lord is making the New Man. Ephesians 2:13 to 16. Now any Jew or any Gentile may enter through the Door, which is Christ, and be declared righteous without a cause, without the deeds of the law, without religion, character or reputation. Salvation is just as free as the air we breathe and will be so as long as this day of Grace continues; that is, until the last member of the Body of Christ has been baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ. Some day—and it may be very soon—the door of salvation will be closed. Then it will be too late to enter in. But now, “if any man,” or “whosoever,” or “as many as.” You are included. Have you entered in? If not, why not? Don't be foolish; come on in.

“BEHOLD, I HAVE SET BEFORE THEE AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO MAN CAN SHUT IT.” Revelations 3:8

What is the open door that God has set before the Church of Philadelphia? Before we can agree as to the meaning of the open door we must agree as to the meaning of the “Church of Philadelphia.” The interpretation generally accepted by present-day Fundamental Bible teachers is, that the Church of Philadelphia marks the beginning of the nineteenth century world-wide missionary and evangelistic movements; and that that church speaks of the faithful, spiritual members of the Body of Christ who shall continue to give forth the evangel to the uttermost parts of the earth up to the moment of the return of the Lord. These men also teach that all those included in the Philadelphia Church will be saved from the Great Tribulation. But not so with the Laodicean Church which is now rapidly assuming control of denominational church organizations.

Whether or not this is the true interpretation, it is true that for the past two or three generations the missionaries have been able to enter into almost every country with the Gospel. During the past few years some of the nations have closed their doors and missionaries are being opposed, restrained and persecuted. However, for the most part the doors have not been shut. But alas! the great majority of Christians have not met the challenge, but have been negligent and indifferent. They have not assumed the responsibility or enjoyed the privilege of entering the open doors with the message of salvation. What a day of privilege is ours with the press and the radio and even the protection of the government. How long the doors will be open and the day of privilege extended we do not know. But surely, the lord will hold responsible for the

evangelization of the great mass of unsaved men and women those who have been redeemed by his blood. In the same third chapter of Revelation we find recorded the next door

“BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR, AND KNOCK; IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, AND WILL SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME.” Revelations 3:20.

We have here a picture of the Lord on the outside of His Church. And again, we have the condition, “if any man.” So it seems to be an invitation to the individual. We have come to believe that the correct interpretation is, that the Saviour is knocking at the human heart for entrance. We know that when He came to this earth there was no room for His mother in the inn. And the testimony concerning His visit to His own nation is given in these words, “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” But picture His rejection in the parable in which His own nation said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” In their words of slander and condemnation they said, “This man receiveth sinners.” Again it is said, “As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God.” John 1:12.

Thus we see, it is a matter of mutual reception. Christ receives as many as receive Him. And if any man receives Him, He does come in to abide. As the Apostle Paul said, “Christ liveth in me.” The mystery among the Gentiles “Christ in you the hope of glory.” We call your attention to the next door.

“WITHAL PRAYING ALSO FOR US, THAT GOD WOULD OPEN UNTO US A DOOR OF UTTERANCE, TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, FOR WHICH I AM ALSO IN BONDS.” Colossians 4:3

In this Scripture, the Apostle to the Gentiles is asking; every Christian to join with him in prayer that God would open a door of utterance. Undoubtedly at that time a multitude of the disciples of Christ were propagating Christianity all over the known world. But here, the Apostle Paul is concerned about a door of utterance for the special phase of Christianity; that specific message which he calls “the mystery of Christ.” He adds that he is in bonds because of that message. We quote also Ephesians 6:19 and 20 touching on the same thought.

“And for me, that utterance may be given unto the, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel,”

“For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

In Ephesians 5:20 the correct translation is “in chains.” Paul was an ambassador in jail. The jail door had been opened for him but he was concerned about open doors to proclaim the mystery. This message differed from the message that had been proclaimed by the twelve apostles. A few years before Paul’s imprisonment he wrote to the Galatians and said, “I certify that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:11 and 12. From this statement it is apparent that Paul was not perpetuating the message that had been proclaimed by the twelve. The Gospel which Paul preached was revealed to him from the risen Christ in heaven. And later on the same Christ added by revelation the glorious truth concerning the heavenly position, citizenship and hope of the members of His Body, and the pure message of grace wholly separated from religion or Judaism. Paul was the recipient and custodian of that special dispensation of grace and that revelation which he designated, the mystery. Ephesians 3:1 and 3—Ephesians 3:8 and 9. Undoubtedly, Satan was unceasingly active in his opposition to that glorious truth, and religious doors were closed against it.

That opposition has not ceased to this day. There are many open doors for the preaching of the Christian religion. But when the servant of the Lord gives forth a message of pure Christianity, without religion, and sounds forth the truth of God concerning Christ's revelation through Paul, he will find the same opposition, persecution and closed doors. There is an urgent need today for the prayers of God's people that a door of utterance will be open for the mystery of Christ, which is no longer a mystery but a revealed truth, although unknown to the great majority of the members of the Body of Christ, because withheld from them by their religious leaders and instructors.

The last door of salvation is the door mentioned in the Gospel of Luke; the shut door.

“WHEN ONCE THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS RISEN UP, AND HATH SHUT TO THE DOOR, AND YE BEGIN TO STAND WITHOUT, AND TO KNOCK AT THE DOOR, SAYING, LORD, LORD. OPEN UNTO US; AND HE SHALL ANSWER AND SAY UNTO YOU, I KNOW YOU NOT WHENCE YE ARE.” Luke 13:25

Primarily, this verse of Scripture refers to Israel and the kingdom, and perhaps should be studied in connection with James 5:9—“Behold, the judge standeth before the door.” What a picture! What a solemn thought! The same Lord Jesus, Who came from heaven; Who suffered, bled and died that a door of salvation might be opened, shall some day return to be a judge. “The Father hath committed all judgment in the hands of His Son.” John 5:22. “The Father will judge the world in righteousness by His Son.” Acts 17:31. Everyone who does not meet Christ as a Saviour in this day of grace when He is saying, “come unto Me,” must meet Him in that awful day of judgment, when, as the judge, He shall say, “depart from Me, ye cursed.” Matthew 25:41. How soon will the door be shut? In the light of these words from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, can we believe that there will be a revival among the churches after the Lord has taken the true Church home to heaven and the days of sorrow, known as the Great Tribulation, will be upon its? Some preachers in Fundamental circles are teaching that there is to be such a revival and that many unsaved church-members will then be saved. But let us bear in mind these solemn words of warning, “when once the Master has shut the door.” We quote in closing the words of the verse that follows

“BUT HE SHALL SAY’ I TELL YOU, I KNOW YOU NOT WENCE YE ARE; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YE WORKERS OR INIQUITY.”

FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND

Perhaps more New Year's sermons have been preached from Philippians 3:13 and 14 than from any other verses in the Bible. We quote Philippians 3:12 to 14:

“NOT AS THOUGH I HAD ALREADY ATTAINED, EITHER WERE ALREADY PERFECT: BUT I FOLLOW AFTER, IF THAT I MAY APPREHEND THAT FOR WHICH ALSO I AM APPREHENDED OF CHRIST JESUS. BRETHREN, I COUNT NOT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED: BUT THIS ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND REACHING FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE, I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”

In the New Year's messages which we have heard, the emphasis has been placed on the latter part of the thirteenth verse, “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.” But the great majority of Christians do not understand the

statements of Paul immediately preceding this statement. I have talked with many able Bible teachers who have confessed that the meaning of these verses has never been clear to them, and that no exegesis that they have read or heard has been altogether satisfactory. I have admitted the same to them. And although I have heard many expositors give their interpretations I do not recall one that would stand the Berean test.

In the twelfth verse Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." In the fifteenth verse he said, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Most assuredly the Apostle Paul was making no reference in these verses to any doubt concerning his own eternal security in Christ; that is, as to the assurance of his salvation. Such an admission on his part would certainly have been the negation of many of his other statements. He said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended." Paul was not afraid that he would "backslide out of salvation" and not be caught up at the coming of the Lord to receive his glorified body on Redemption Day. Neither did Paul believe that he had to add his works to the finished work of Christ in order to be assured of his eternal redemption; for Paul accepted for himself what he taught to others, "by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." But the question is, what did Paul mean?

In the light of the context, we cannot believe that Paul was urging the Philippian saints to forget either their failures or successes. In almost every New Year's sermon that we have heard this interpretation has been given warning Christians not to live in the past, not to be satisfied with past exploits, or discouraged because of past blunders. Certainly every Christian should be thus instructed and warned. But there is a far deeper meaning to the words found in these verses.

What did the Apostle mean when he said, "not as though I had already attained." Certainly he had not in his mind that he was striving for sinless perfection, as some have taught. Neither did he mean that he was agonizing to get himself ready for death or the coming of the Lord. Whatever things behind Paul was forgetting was that he might press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" has been translated by some as the "calling on high of God in Christ Jesus." But even this change does not make the interpretation less difficult.

Undoubtedly every thinking student of the Word of God has learned that the Holy Spirit through Paul, in his messages to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to the Philippians, and in his Second Epistle to Timothy, has revealed truth concerning the believer's exalted place in Christ that transcends the truth revealed through any other prophet or apostle or even through Paul before he reached Rome. As the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles as the custodian of the mystery among the Gentiles, he had revealed to him by the risen Christ truth that had never been made known concerning the riches of Christ and the believer's riches in Christ, that glorious truth concerning the Body of Christ, seated with Him and in Him in the "upper-heavenlies."

Before Paul reached Rome he wrote to the Corinthian saints these words, recorded in I Corinthians 13:10:

"BUT WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT IS COME, THEN THAT WHICH IS IN PART SHALL BE DONE AWAY."

Immediately preceding this statement, in the eighth verse, prophecies, tongues and knowledge were to pass away. But according to the thirteenth verse, faith, hope and love were to abide. Therefore in the light of the context we are sure that the Holy Spirit, in speaking through Paul, was not referring to the future glory of the believer in saying, "when that which is perfect is come." "What does the Apostle mean by stating "that which is in part shall be done away?" If

that which is perfect was to come then that which was in part was not perfect. Certainly the Apostle here was not primarily referring to the believer's imperfect conduct or condition, either as to soul, body or spirit; but rather as to doctrine and revelation. I have tried to study together the two statements, "then that which is in part shall be done away" and "forgetting those things which are behind," the statement of Paul to the Philippians. And I have received much profit for my own edification in studying both of these statements in the light of Hebrews 5:12 to 6:3, another portion of God's Word very difficult to understated. We quote these verses:

"FOR WHEN FOR THE TIME YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, YE HAVE NEED THAT ONE TEACH YOU AGAIN WHICH BE THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD AND ARE BECOME SUCH AS HAVE NEED OF MILK, AND NOT OF STRONG MEAT. FOR EVERY ONE THAT USETH MILK IS UNSKILFUL IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; FOR HE IS A BABE. BUT STRONG MEAT BELONGETH TO THEM THAT ARE OF FULL AGE, EVEN THOSE WHO BY REASON OF USE HAVE THEIR SENSES EXERCISED TO DISCERN BOTH GOOD AND EVIL. THEREFORE LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION; NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS AND OF FAITH TOWARD GOD, OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS, AND OF LAYING ON OF HANDS, AND OF RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT. AND THIS WILL WE DO, IF GOD PERMIT."

Now the question is, just what did the Holy Spirit mean in Hebrews 6:1 when He said "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ?" The better translation is, "leaving the Word of beginning of Christ." But what does this mean? In Hebrews 5:12 the Holy Spirit referred to the first principles of the oracles of God. In the fourteenth verse He said, "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age" which would better be translated "that are perfect."

Of course this message was written to Hebrews. But there seems to be some connection with the three statements we have read, "I press toward the mark," "When that which is perfect is come," "Let us go on unto perfection." We are positive that the writer to the Hebrews did not teach in these verses which we have quoted that the first principles of the oracles of God or the Word of the beginning of Christ, should not have been taught. Neither should a Bible student be taught that repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, were the foundation of the truth which Paul taught in his prison Epistles. Certainly no Christian is instructed to discredit or deny the doctrine of eternal judgment or to abandon faith toward God. But it is evident that the Holy Spirit had no reference to the believer's conduct; or condition when He instructed the Hebrews to go on unto perfection. It was in the matter of doctrine and revelation. And the Christian who does not recognize the principle of progressive revelation, who does not go on from the Word of beginning of Christ, or the Kingdom message of Jesus and His apostles, to the Pauline truth, revealed in his closing Epistles, will remain a babe, and thus disobey the Word of God. Some of the doctrines mentioned in the verses which we quoted from Hebrews were brought over from the Old Testament. But Jesus of Nazareth was a minister of the circumcision with a ministry of confirmation to Israel. Romans 15:8. Not only did He restate and confirm these doctrines, but they were rightfully preached to Israel by the twelve apostles after the death and resurrection of their Prince and Saviour, Who was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law.

There is a great difference between the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth to Israel, with a confirmation of that ministry by His twelve apostles, and the truth which He revealed from

heaven through the Apostle Paul. So far as we have any record, Jesus, neither by His own personal ministry nor through the testimony He gave through the twelve ever revealed in His Kingdom message the glorious truths He revealed from heaven through Paul.

The Holy Spirit never led Paul to write to the Church concerning the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth in detail. Although he wrote half of the books of the New Testament, Paul made only several short references to the Manhood or earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, the man approved of God in the midst of Israel. The principal revelation and ministry of the Apostle Paul was “Christ in the Gentile, the hope of glory”; that is, the believer “in Christ” and “Christ in the believer.”

In that connection he uttered another statement which has perhaps been misinterpreted many times. We quote here the statement to which the refer, recorded in II Corinthians 5:17:

“THEREFORE IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATURE; OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW.”

What does Paul mean by the statement, “Old things are passed away?” In the light of the preceding verse, undoubtedly the primary reference was not to the believers conduct or condition. Undoubtedly the key to the words, “old things are passed away” is the double “henceforth” in the sixteenth verse, which we quote:

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.”

Certainly here we have the principle of going on to perfection, progressing in revelation, advancing in truth toward that which is perfect; going on with the Apostle Paul to that sublime truth to which we referred in our opening verses.

According to the closing verses of the eighth chapter of Hebrews, Israel’s former covenant was made old by the death of Christ on the cross. But during the early transition period, for some years after the death and resurrection of Christ, that which was in part, including some of Israel’s old things, were permitted until the Lord finally revealed to and through the Apostle Paul the glorious Body truth the mystery, the unsearchable riches of Christ. That which was perfect came and that which was in part was done away. But most Christians seem to prefer to be babes rather than of full age. They prefer not to forget those things which are behind

Let us consider together these four statements: “Old things are passed away,” “then that which is in part shall be done away,” “leaving the first words spoken by Christ” and “forgetting those things which are behind,” and let us not join with the modernist in his cry “back to Jesus,” but rather let us obey the Word of the Lord “let us go on unto perfection.”

FROM PENTECOST TO THE WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

The Apostle Paul was commissioned by the risen Christ to be His apostle to the Gentiles. II Timothy 1:11. The risen Christ gave to Paul the gospel by revelation. Galatians 1:11. The risen Christ gave to Paul by revelation that message which is designated “the mystery.” Ephesians 3:3 to 9. “The mystery” and Paul’s “my gospel” are linked together in Romans 16:26. Colossians 1:25 to 27.

It is most interesting to travel with Paul from his conversion in the ninth chapter of Acts to his closing message, his Second Epistle to Timothy; and any student of the Bible, who has thus followed Paul in his two-fold ministry from 34 A. D. to 66 A. D., has seen the wisdom and necessity of the two-fold ministry, and the will and purpose of God in the same; and has some

appreciation at least of one of Paul's last statements "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. That appreciation must carry with it the fact that "rightly dividing the Word" means the recognition of the Dispensational divisions of the Bible. Failure to do this will lead any student not only to question Paul's authority and sincerity, but to join with his critics in openly charging him with duplicity in condemning others for their mixture of Christianity and Legalism, when he confessed that he became as one under the law to those who were under the law; and because he did certain things on account of the Jews. I Corinthians 9:23, Acts 16:3, Acts 21:25 to 28.

If in his two-fold ministry Paul was out of the will of God, can we say "Amen" to his claim of fidelity and triumph in his farewell message: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith?"

Were all the apostles walking in the flesh contrary to the will of God when they reached the decision, recorded in Acts 21:25 and Acts 15:19 to give to the Gentiles a program different from the religious program of the Jews which believed?

Let us open our Bibles and read the record in the Fifteenth Chapter of Acts. For our study we quote the first nineteen verses:

"And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren and said "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

And being brought on their way by the church they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

And when they were come to Jerusalem they were received of the church and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the words of the gospel and believe.

And God, Which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us;

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, 'Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written.

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

That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord Who doeth all these things.’

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Wherefore my sentence is, ‘that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.’”

Before we examine these verses in the light of other Scriptures, we suggest these questions for your thoughtful consideration and correct answers

1. Why was no further mention made in the Book of Acts of Peter’s ministry after the Jerusalem council about 52 A. D., recorded in this fifteenth Chapter?
2. Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles is recorded in Acts and in thirteen Epistles which he wrote; fourteen books in all. Why did the Book of Acts close before Paul’s ministry closed or why seven of his writings after the close of Acts?
3. Why did not Paul refer to the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth in his messages to the Gentiles, the first of which was written about the time he said, “Henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles,” about 54 A.D., or about 20 years after Paul was converted? Acts 18:6.

Now for our consideration, Acts 15:13 to 18, which we again quote:

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

SIMEON HATH DECLARED HOW GOD AT THE FIRST DID VISIT THE GENTILES, TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME.

AND TO THIS AGREE THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS; AS IT IS WRITTEN.

AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN AND WILL BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, WHICH IS FALLEN DOWN; AND I WILL BUILD AGAIN THE RUINS THEREOF, AND I WILL SET IT UP:

THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES UPON WHOM MY NAME IS CALLED SAITH THE LORD, ‘WHO DOETH ALL THESE THINGS.’

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

Among our aggressive, evangelical, orthodox Christians, we have many denominations, divided into several groups with respect to “Dispensationalism.” We mention three of these groups and shall consider their different interpretations of the six verses of Scripture just quoted; for these three interpretations represent about all of the interpretations:

1. “The Covenant Anti-Dispensationalists.”
2. “The Dispensationalists.”
3. “The Ultra-Dispensationalists.”

Before we enter into this consideration, let us again read verse fifteen: “And to this agree the words of the prophets.” What were the words of the Prophet to which James and Peter referred? They were quoting Amos 9:11 to 15:

“In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

That they may possess the remnant of Edom and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”

I am sure all are agreed that Joel prophesied of the same days in Joel 3:17, 18 and 20, which we quote:

“So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.”

We quote another verse, Joel 2:32:

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”

The declaration of James, recorded in Acts 15:16 and 17, is concerning the fulfillment of Joel 2:32 and Amos 9:11 to 15.

On the Day of Pentecost Peter and the eleven referred to the Second Chapter of Joel and also to the Prophecy of David concerning the One who was to occupy his throne. Acts 2:16 to 21 and Acts 2:29 to 31. Therefore Peter’s message on the Day of Pentecost and the declaration in Acts 15:16 and 17 were concerning the same Prophecies.

Now as we enter into the consideration of the three different interpretations, let us have in mind these words of the Apostle Paul:

“In other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the spirit THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOW-HEIRS OF THE SAME BODY, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel, whereof I was made a minister.” Ephesians 3:5 to 9.

Here we have three facts set forth:

- A. That the Gentiles by the Gospel are fellow-heirs in the Church which is Christ’s Body.
- B. That this is the Mystery referred to in Ephesians 3:1 to 4, which was not made known in other ages. (This, of course, means that Joel, Amos and David did not prophesy that Gentiles would become members of the Body of Christ.)
- C. That Paul was Christ’s minister, who received and taught this new Revelation.

Remembering these points, we shall know better how to obey II Timothy 2:15 in our study.

1. The interpretation of Acts 15:14 to 18 by the “Covenant Anti-Dispensationalists.”

Generally speaking the “Covenant Anti-Dispensationalists” are “Anti-Premillennialists” Many of them are spiritual men of God, thoroughly orthodox as to salvation by grace on the basis of the shed blood of Christ, whose eternal Deity they preach.

They divide the Bible into the “Old Dispensation” and the “New Dispensation.” Most of them teach that the “Old Testament” began with Adam and the “New Testament” with the First Chapter of Matthew, or with the birth of Jesus Christ.

They teach that Abel, by faith, became a member of the same Church that is designated in the New Testament Scriptures “The Church of God” and “The Body of Christ.”

According to their teaching there has been then the one continuous but changing Church from the antedeluvian days, including the Church in Abraham’s Household Israel in and out of Egypt, Israel in the Land of Canaan and in captivity. They teach that Christ simply revived the Church which had existed for the four thousand years before He came to earth; that when He said, “Upon this Rock I will build my Church,” He did not mean that it was to be an entirely new Church, but the same old Church with new life in a New Dispensation. They teach that “the House of Israel,” over which Christ is to reign forever, according to Luke 1:31 to 33, is identical with the Church which is His Body, mentioned in Ephesians 1:21 to 23. In the Luke Scriptures, quoted, the Lord God is to give Christ the throne of David to reign over the house of Jacob. In the Ephesian Scriptures, God the Father, has raised Christ to His own right hand in the heavenlies, to make Him Head over all things to the Church which is His Body. The contrast is King on David’s throne and Head on God’s throne in heaven.

These “Covenant” interpreters for the most part are opposed to the teaching that there has been any postponement or discontinuation of the Abrahamic Covenant concerning the Nation Israel, which Covenant, they claim, does not guarantee to the natural seed of Abraham the possession of the Land of Canaan under the government of their Messiah. They likewise claim that there is to be no future fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, in that Christ shall sit on that throne as Israel’s King on earth. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. They teach that the Church of God and the Body of Christ are the same and are the true Israel of God, the true seed of Abraham and the true children of Abraham. They claim, therefore, that the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore, in the light of Hebrews 8:8 to 11, they are opposed to the teaching that there has been a suspended period since the Day of Pentecost, as taught by the Dispensationalists; that the “Church of God Dispensation” is a temporary or parenthetical dispensation and that after this age God shall again deal with the Jews. They say that the statement in Romans 11:26, that “all Israel shall be saved,” does not refer to the Jews or the natural seed of Abraham; and that there is not to be a millennium after Christ returns to take His Body away to heaven and regather the Jews in their own land; if indeed there is to be a thousand year earthly reign of Christ.

They claim that Christ will not come until the end of the world and then there will be a general resurrection and a general Judgment-day, and so there has been, and now is, and is yet to be, but one Church, not only from Pentecost to the White Throne judgment but from the “Eden” Paradise to the Paradise of the closing chapters of Revelation. We quote the Scriptures, which they use, among others, to support their teaching:

Hebrews 8:8 to 11. “For finding fault with them He saith, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.”

Also Galatians 3:6 to 9: “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, ‘In thee shall all nations be blessed.’ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

Also Galatians 3:29: “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Romans 2:28 and 29: “For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh;

But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Thus we learn that, according to the teaching of the Covenant Anti-Dispensationalists, Christ did come to rebuild the tabernacle of David, which meant that He came to revive His Father’s Church. Their claim is, that the Dispensationalists today are making the same blunder that the Jews in Judea made when Christ was here on earth. Those Jews erred in that they expected Christ to establish a visible earthly kingdom instead of reviving an invisible spiritual kingdom, which was to be within the person. To them members added to the Body of Christ means the spread of the Kingdom, which is prophesied to continue until there shall be the fulfillment of Hebrews 8:11, Jeremiah 31:34, which we quote, together with Isaiah 11:9.

Hebrews 8:11: “And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.”

Jeremiah 31:34: “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Isaiah 11:9: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Therefore James was declaring that Christ had fulfilled Amos 9:11 and 12.

“IN THAT DAY WILL I RAISE UP THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID THAT IS FALLEN, AND CLOSE UP THE BREACHES THEREOF: AND I WILL RAISE UP HIS RUINS, AND I WILL BUILD IT AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD:

THAT THEY MAY POSSESS THE REMNANT OF EDOM, AND OF ALL THE HEATHEN, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAITH THE LORD THAT DOETH THIS.”

Christ had rebuilt the tabernacle of David and the residue of men and the Gentiles were seeking after the Lord in the days of Christ and His Apostles. So Acts 15:14 to 17 was being

fulfilled in the year 52 A.D. and is still being fulfilled and will be until the end of the world and the general resurrection day.

2. The interpretation given to Acts 15:14 to 17 by the Dispensationalists.

We refer to the teaching of the outstanding “Fundamentalists,” who are “Premillennialists,” and who, for the most part, accept the interpretations concerning dispensations as taught in the Scofield Reference Bible and in the leading Bible Schools of this country.

According to their interpretation, at least seven dispensations, or different ages, should be recognized by the student of the Bible who would rightly divide the Word of truth.

The Law Dispensation was added about 1492 B.C. to the “Promise,” or “Abrahamic Covenant” Dispensation, which began 430 years before. The Law was added till Jesus came and took away the first that He might establish the second. Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 10:9.

They teach that God never confuses Israel with that Church of God, which began on the day of Pentecost, fifty days from the resurrection of Christ.

They teach that, according to Luke 1:29 to 32, Jesus was born to take the throne of David and to reign over the House of Jacob; and that, although Christ knew in advance He would not be received as King by the rulers of Israel, He offered them in good faith a literal, visible kingdom on earth, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. They support this interpretation by many Scriptures, such as Luke 1:66 to 76.

They teach that there has been a “suspended period” since the Day of Pentecost, so far as the restoration of the earthly kingdom to Israel is concerned; that God has not gone back on His Covenant, has not withdrawn His oath, has not abandoned His purpose concerning Judah and Jerusalem, prophesied by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began. But that the Kingdom is in abeyance, the establishment of the seed of Abraham, after the flesh, in Canaan has been postponed until the “Times of the Gentiles” be fulfilled. Luke 21:24. They teach that when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, according to Romans 11:25 and 26, all Israel shall be saved. They do not teach that during this Dispensation of Grace, unbelieving Jews are to be included in the “all Israel.”

Therefore, they teach that the time from the Day of Pentecost to the coming of the Lord Jesus to remove the members of His Body to glory, is a parenthetical dispensation; that it is the “Church of God” age, the “Body of Christ” age, or “Grace Dispensation.”

They teach, that as this dispensation began on the Day of Pentecost, it will end with the coming of the Lord, after which time God will fulfill His promise in Isaiah 11:11 and bring His ancient people through their Great Tabulation into their own land, Canaan; and then place His King on David’s throne.

According to their teaching, at the coming of Christ, only those that are His will be raptured. “The dead in Christ first and we which are alive.” I Thessalonians 4:16 and 17.

The rest of the dead are not to be raised until after a millennium of peace and righteousness on this earth. During the one thousand years, all sinners saved by Grace are to reign with Christ over the earth. Revelation 5:9 to 11—Revelation 20:3 to 7.

They teach that no member of the Body of Christ will come for judgment at the White Throne, which is to be the judgment of the unsaved only; but that members of the Body of Christ will appear before the judgment seat of Christ before the millennium begins.

They are divided as to their teaching concerning the number of years between the coming of Christ for His Body and the coming of Christ with His Body, or as to the duration of the Great Tribulation, between the rapture of the Church and Christ's coming to earth as King. It is generally interpreted that Israel's seventieth week of Daniel 9:22 to 28, meaning a seven-year week, will intervene.

Now as to their interpretation of Acts 15:14 to 17. Their interpretation of the sixteenth and seventeenth verses is, that the same Christ, who is now the Head of his Body, shall return as King, to establish His visible kingdom on earth taking David's throne in Jerusalem. "After this?" means after God's purpose in this "Church" age has been accomplished. Then Israel "shall look upon Me whom they pierced." Zechariah 12:10. Then God will do for Israel and Israel's land all that is prophesied in Ezekiel 36:24 to 34 and Ezekiel 37:11 to 14. And following Israel's redemption they shall again proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom to the Gentiles; and then such Scriptures as Zechariah 8:23 and Isaiah 62:1 to 4, shall be fulfilled.

"Every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Zechariah 14:16.

Thus will be fulfilled the Scripture, "the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord." Acts 15:17.

According to this interpretation, the Gentiles, who are to be saved after the tabernacle of David has been rebuilt by the second coming of Christ, are not identical with the Gentiles mentioned in the fourteenth verse. Herein lies one of the principal differences between the interpretation of the "Dispensationalists" and that of the so called "Ultra-Dispensationalists."

So then the Dispensationalists must teach that the words, "to this agree the words of the prophets," could have referred only to the sixteenth and seventeenth verses. They could not have referred to the fourteenth verse, "God for the first time did visit the Gentiles, to take out from among them, a people for His name," because that out-gathered company of Gentiles constitute the Body of Christ and it is clearly stated in Ephesians 3:5 and 6 that the fact that Gentiles would be fellow-heirs in the Body of Christ, did not agree with the words of the prophets, to whom this Body truth was wholly unknown. The Gentile salvation in the Body of Christ was not the subject of the Prophets. This truth was a much later revelation from Christ in heaven to and through the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 3:3 to 6.

Therefore, to say that the called-out company, mentioned in Acts 15:14, is the Body of Christ, and was prophesied by Israel's prophets, is to show plain contradiction in the Word of God; whereas, all Christians know, that, when properly divided, there no contradiction in the Word of truth.

While it is generally agreed among Dispensationalists that Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost, concerning Joel's Prophecy and David's Prophecy, was for Israel and not for the Gentiles; yet these Dispensationalists are divided as to whether or not there was a bona fide offer of the kingdom to the Nation Israel upon the condition of national repentance in Acts 3:19 to 21. The "Ultra-Dispensationalists" say "yes" and some of the Dispensationalists say "yes." Most of them say "no."

The Dispensationalists are almost unanimous in their teaching that the Church of God, which began on the Day of Pentecost, and the Body of Christ mentioned in Ephesians are one and the same church, and therefore the Body of Christ began on the Day of Pentecost and will be on earth until it has been caught away, according to I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18. This they call the "Rapture of the Church."

Most of the “Dispensationalists” teach that there was a Transitional period beginning with the Day of Pentecost, during which apostolic signs continued; but they are not agreed as to when that period ended. Neither are they agreed as to just when the offer of the Kingdom to Israel during the Transition period was withdrawn if it was actually offered.

The “Dispensationalists” must necessarily teach that the declaration of Acts 15:14 was made known after the year 41 A. D., after Peter had preached to Cornelius and the other saved Israelites contended with Peter for preaching to Gentiles some seven years after Pentecost, when it was unlawful for a Jew to come to one of another nation. Acts 10:28.

3. The interpretation of the Ultra-Dispensationalists.

By the “Dispensationalists” the name, “Ultra-Dispensationalists” has been given to Bible students who teach that there is in the mind of God more than one Dispensation between the Day of Pentecost and the Rapture of the Church. It is needless to say that from the standpoint of the Covenant Christians the “Dispensationalists” are quite “ultra.” It is also needless to say that “Dispensational” divisions unfortunately have caused “Fellowship” divisions.

The “Ultra-Dispensationalists” teach that there was an overlapping Kingdom age for at least twenty years after the Day of Pentecost. These interpreters are divided as to whether that overlapping period ceased shortly after Paul’s declaration in Acts 18:6, “henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles,” or some ten years later when he declared in Rome, “the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.” Acts 28:28. They are agreed that Paul did not write the Lord’s messages to the Gentiles until after the first declaration, but most of them teach that from the Day of Pentecost up to Paul’s pronouncement in Rome, about 62 A. D., there was a “Kingdom Dispensation,” and during that Transition period the Lord was giving the Jews in their own land and the dispersed Jews the opportunity to repent and have the Kingdom restored to them. Between Paul’s declaration in Acts 18:6 and his declaration in Acts 28:28, he wrote I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians and Romans, the first about 53 A.D. and the last about 60 A.D. After his declaration in Acts 28:28 Paul wrote I Timothy, Philemon, Titus, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and II Timothy, from the year 64 A.D. to the year 67 A.D. Therefore, according to the Ultra-Dispensationalists who carry the overlapping Kingdom age to the close of Acts, Paul’s first six epistles were written during the “Transition” period; and during that time God’s order was “to the Jew first,” and Kingdom signs were in God’s program. Their claim is that signs ceased with Paul’s declaration against Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28. They further claim that after that declaration the Lord made known new truth, truth concerning that Mystery which had been hid in God from the foundation of the world, which must be distinguished from “the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” Luke 1:67 to 77 and Acts 3:19 to 21.

They claim that those who were added on the Day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2:47, were not added to the Body of Christ, which did not exist at that time.

Therefore, the teaching of Ultra-Dispensationalists is that the Church of God, which Saul persecuted, according to his confession in I Corinthians 15:9 and Galatians 1:13, was not the Body of Christ. They claim that the two Mysteries mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans, 11:11 to 25 and Romans 16:25 and 26, explain that God has been sending salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy while that Nation has been judged with temporary blindness; that that judgment was not definitely pronounced until the close of Acts; and also explain that Paul’s “My

Gospel” and the “Mystery,” mentioned in Romans 16:25 and 26, are Christ’s two special revelations to the Apostle to the Gentiles. Galatians 1:11 and 12 and Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

In regard to Acts 15:14 to 17, they teach that Peter, James and those who were apostles before Paul did not preach to the Gentiles the message revealed from heaven to Paul; but the message witnessed by Israel’s Prophets. Acts 10:43. They claim that if the Scriptures had contained Paul’s message, a revelation to him from heaven, would have been unnecessary. Therefore the truth given to Paul, by revelation, was entirely new truth.

Therefore, they teach that the declaration of James and Peter in Acts 15:14, “God for the first time did visit the Gentiles to take out from them a people for His Name,” is in fulfillment of Amos Prophecy, quoted in Acts 15:16 and 17. For their contention is, “If Paul wrote that the Mystery, which was unknown to Amos Joel, Isaiah and all of Israel’s Prophets was, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs in the Body of Christ, and if Peter and James were stating that Amos prophesied that Gentiles should be in the Body of Christ, then there is a sharp contradiction and either Peter or Paul was wrong.”

Some of the Ultra-Dispensationalists teach that the Church is the Body of Christ; but that Israel will be the Bride. But both the “Dispensationalists” and the “Ultra-Dispensationalists” teach that the “Times of the Gentiles,” mentioned in Luke 21:24, will come; the “Fullness of the Gentiles,” mentioned in Romans 11:25, will be; the “Times of Refreshing,” mentioned in Acts 3:19, will come; and the “Times of the Restitution of all things,” mentioned in Acts 3:21; will begin; when Christ comes the second time, not for His Body but with His Body.

Therefore, the “Ultra-Dispensationalists” teach that obedience on the part of Israel to the message of Peter and the eleven, recorded in Acts 3:19 and 21, would have meant to that Nation the return of their Messiah to David’s throne. And they teach, furthermore, that that proposition was held open to Israel, upon the condition of repentance until Paul had confirmed the testimony of the twelve as to the Messiahship of Jesus among the Jews scattered throughout Asia and Europe; and that the proposition was open up to Acts 28:28. They teach that the twelve apostles from Pentecost until the close of Acts did not preach to Jews outside their own land and to only one Gentile household within or without the land.

Repentance on the part of Israel would not have meant the Rapture of the Body of Christ, which was unknown to the prophets; but rather the restitution of all things “spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” This restitution had primary reference to Israel. Luke 1:70—Acts 3:21. Inasmuch as Amos was referring to this Kingdom restoration, he prophesied concerning Kingdom salvation for Gentiles. And to this salvation James and Peter referred in Acts 15:14, rather than to salvation by Paul’s “my gospel” and membership in the Body of Christ which was not made known to other ages since the world began. Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 3:3 and 6.

The “election” of Israel obtained mercy; the rest were blinded. Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel’s unbelief and obtained salvation to provoke Israel to Jealousy. Romans 11:7—Romans 11:30—Romans 11:11.

According to the interpretation of the “Ultra-Dispensationalists,” Acts 15:14 to 17 should be studied in the light of the two Mysteries mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans. The first Mystery has to do with Israel’s present and future; their blindness in part until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in; and then their national deliverance. Romans 11:25 and 26. “This is my covenant.” Romans 11:28. The second Mystery is in connection with Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, recorded in Romans 16:25, which seems to be a postscript. This was not God’s covenant, but a new revelation from Christ to Paul, and agrees with the statements in Ephesians

3:9 and Colossians 1:26, “hid in God,” “hid from generations.” By special revelation Paul received his “My Gospel” and the “Mystery.” Galatians 1:11 to 13 and Ephesians 3:3.

According to their interpretation, there are three significant declarations in the Book of Acts to Israel, showing the gradual withdrawal of the offer of the Kingdom and God’s judgment upon them; that is, blindness in part and temporary: Acts 13:46, Acts 18:6 and Acts 28:25 to 28. It was not until the last of these declarations, about 62 A. D., that God definitely changed His program. It was then that the “Sign” age passed away; the Kingdom Dispensation ended; God’s order, “to the Jew first” ceased; and then in Christ’s new message through Paul was fulfilled I Corinthians 13:10, 11 and 13. And now Acts 15:16 and 17 awaits fulfillment until after the Church, or Body, of Christ has been called on high; and then Christ Himself shall return to restore the Kingdom to Israel and visit the nations with the Kingdom message, and the redeemed ones in the age to follow this age will not be members of the Body of Christ.

ALL MEN TO BE SAVED I Timothy 2:4

A DISCUSSION OF UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION

VERSUS LIMITED ATONEMENT

“God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved.” I Timothy 2:3 to 7.

In I Timothy 1:15 we are told that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This brings to our minds His own words uttered more than thirty years before Paul wrote to Timothy: “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” Matthew 18:11. Christ Jesus came to give life to the world. Hear His words again; “For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.” John 6:33.

Yes, this wonderful Saviour came down to earth from heaven. And this same wonderful Saviour is again coming down to earth from heaven. The first time Christ Jesus came down where sinners were to save them from sin. The second time He is coming down to take saved sinners, in glorified bodies, back to heaven to be with Him and to share His glory.

Now, the question is, “how many sinners did Christ come to save and how many sinners will be saved.” Undoubtedly you are aware of the fact that Pastor Charles T. Russell’s Millennium salvation theories are based very largely on the second chapter of First Timothy. And this same Scripture is one of the principal arguments of some very godly men who are today propagating the doctrine of “universal reconciliation,” teaching, that not only did Christ make provision for the reconciliation of all mankind, of all ages; but that every one will ultimately be saved. We quote the verses from I Timothy 2:3 to 7:

“FOR THIS IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR; WHO WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, AND TO COME UNTO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. FOR THERE IS ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS; WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME. WHEREUNTO I AM ORDAINED A PREACHER, AND AN APOSTLE, A TEACHER OF THE GENTILES IN FAITH AND VERITY.”

We all believe that God is Sovereign and omnipotent, and we have this clear declaration in His Word: “Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” Ephesians 1:11. Then the question, “if God will have all men to be saved, why will not all men be saved?” Surely God is able to perform all that He wills. And another question, “if Christ Jesus and His ransom are for all and to be testified in due time, will not God have His servants continue the testimony beyond this present age until all mankind has been ransomed?” Is there a future “due time” for the millions who died not having been testified to? Most assuredly the Word of God plainly declares that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. I John 2:2. And again the Word teaches that Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:9. And again, how are we to answer the eighteenth verse of the fifth chapter of Romans, if we deny the doctrine of universal salvation, “therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life?”

One of the verses always used by the advocates of universal reconciliation is Colossians 1:20, which we also quote:

“And having made peace through the blood of His cross, BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; by Him I say whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

There are spiritual men of God who are positive, without the shadow of a doubt, that this verse plainly teaches that all men will ultimately be saved. Then on the other hand there are today, and have been down through the Christian centuries, spiritual men of God who go to the other extreme, teaching that God will limit the number of saved sinners to the comparatively few whom He foreordained to salvation; and in fact Jesus Christ died only for that elect number. Among other Scriptures they base their teaching on the following Scriptures:

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

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me.” John 17:6

From these two verses of Scripture they confirm the sixteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter of John, “ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.” Their teaching is, that not the whole world was ordained or chosen; but only certain men out of the world. Christ died for them. They quote again, in support of their teaching, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.” I Peter 1:2. And again, “and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Acts 13:48.

Some of these men who teach this doctrine believe in both limited atonement and limited election, while others emphasize only, “limited election.” And most assuredly they quote Scripture to support their views. They say that we must either accept their interpretation or eliminate from the inspired Word of God, the ninth chapter of Romans, where the following statements are recorded: “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.” Romans 9:18. “And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory.” “Even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.” Romans 9:23 and 24. We shall refer again to this last statement concerning Jews and Gentiles. But how are we to reconcile these two statements from the pen of Paul, when we believe and know that His writings were directed by the infallible Holy Spirit, “whom He will He hardeneth” and “who will have all men to be saved.”

While no spiritual child of God, who is an intelligent student of God's Word, will accept the unscriptural and nonsensical teaching of Pastor Russell or that of his successor, judge Rutherford, yet it is not difficult to see how on the one hand certain men of God might use certain Scriptures to prove universal reconciliation, not only as to the provision but as to the salvation of all mankind; and on the other hand, understand how certain other men of God might use certain other Scriptures to prove that only that certain few will be saved who were selected and foreordained by God from before the foundation of the world and that Christ did not die for other sinners. But both groups are guilty of ignoring hundreds of Scriptures contradictory to their doctrines; though each group might silence and baffle the other, by clinging to what we might call their "pet" or "favorite" verses to the exclusion of other Scriptures.

It is rather unfortunate, to say the least, that there should be such variance among God's own people. But perhaps we may consider the Church fortunate in that the great majority of Christians do not hold either of the two extreme views mentioned above. However, we must bear in mind that a teaching is not necessarily Scripturally correct and true because it is believed and propagated by the majority of church-member and leaders. We know quite well that there are many doctrines to which the majority have clung down through the ages that would not stand the Berean test. The decision as to the correct interpretation and application of any Scripture must be reached by submitting the particular doctrine to the test of all other Scriptures bearing on the same subject, always in obedience to the Divine principle of rightly dividing the Word of truth and with the recognition at all times of the principle of progressive revelation. We cannot intelligently study the Scriptures if we anticipate some revelation of truth that the Lord added years later to the particular portion we are studying. With the recognition of these principles let us study the two statements, "who will have all men to be saved" and "to be testified in due time" in the light of other Scriptures:

Matthew 18:11 (Year 32 A. D.):

"FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST."

Matthew 15:24 (Year 32 A. D.):

"I AM NOT SENT BUT UNTO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL."

Matthew 10:5 and 6:

"GO NOT INTO THE WAY OF THE GENTILES . . . BUT GO RATHER TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL."

Luke 1:68 (Year 5 B. C.):

"BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL; FOR HE HAD VISITED AND REDEEMED HIS PEOPLE."

Acts 5:30 and 31 (Year 33 A. D.):

"THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS RAISED UP JESUS, WHOM YE SLEW AND HANGED ON A TREE. HIM HATH GOD EXALTED WITH HIS RIGHT HAND TO BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR, FOR TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL, AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

Acts 10:18 (Year 41 A. D.):

"THEN HATH GOD ALSO TO THE GENTILES GRANTED REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE."

Acts 14:27 (Year 46 A. D.):

ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM, AND HOW HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES."

Acts 18:6 (Year 54 A. D.):

“YOUR BLOOD BE UPON YOUR OWN HEADS: I AM CLEAN; FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO UNTO THE GENTILES.”

Acts 28:28 (Year 63 A. D.):

“THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, AND THAT THEY WILL HEAR IT.”

Hebrews 8:11:

“AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERY MAN HIS NEIGHBOR, AND EVERY MAN HIS BROTHER, SAYING KNOW THE LORD: FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST.”

Romans 11:25 and 26:

“UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN . . . AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED.”

Acts 15:15 to 17:

“I WILL RETURN AND WILL BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID . . . AND I WILL SET IT UP . . . THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES, UPON WHOM MY NAME IS CALLED, SAITH THE LORD, WHO DOETH ALL THESE THINGS.”

Revelation 7:4 to 9 and 14:

“AND I HEARD THE NUMBER OF THEM WHICH WERE SEALED, AND THERE WERE SEALED ONE-HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND OF ALL THE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL . . . AFTER THIS I BEHELD A GREAT MULTITUDE OF ALL NATIONS CLOTHED WITH WHITE ROBES. THESE ARE THEY WHICH CAME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION, AND HAVE WASHED THEIR ROBES AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.”

Zechariah 8:22:

“MANY PEOPLE AND STRONG NATIONS SHALL COME TO SEEK THE LORD OF HOSTS IN JERUSALEM, AND TO PRAY BEFORE THE LORD.”

Isaiah 2:2:

“THE LORD’S HOUSE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED . . . AND ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW UNTO IT.”

Thus we see that the Saviour Jesus Christ was born to redeem His people Israel; “to give knowledge of salvation unto His people lay the remission of their sins.” Luke 1:77. So we learn from the first Scriptures quoted above that the Son of Man, who came to save the lost, came during the days of His flesh, only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; that even after His death and resurrection He was exalted to give repentance to the children of Israel. Then after seven years one household of Gentiles was saved. Several years later God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. That door is still open. As to what Paul meant there may be some doubt, but in the year 64 A.D. he wrote to the Colossians that the gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven whereof I Paul am made a minister.” Colossians 1:23. But let us bear in mind that the truth of Colossians was not known at the time Jesus was born to give knowledge of salvation unto His people. And doubtless you recall his conversation with the Greek woman. It was not meet to give her the children’s bread. Christ said to her, “the children must first be filled.” Mark 7:27, Matthew 15:24. At that time the Gentiles were no people. Romans 10:19. “I was found of them that sought me not.” Romans 10:20. “Salvation is come to the Gentiles for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy.” Romans 11:11. “At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” Ephesians 2:12.

It is true that God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all; but as Gentiles, we must never forget the preceding, verse: “Even so have these (Israel) also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy Romans 11:31 and 32. And read also the thirtieth verse: “For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief.” Israel was cut off that the Gentiles might be grafted in. Romans 11:19.

Thus we see that God’s due time for preaching Christ Jesus and His ransom, or the saving Gospel, to the Gentiles was not while Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among Israel, the minister of the circumcision, made under the law. For then He was sent only to lost Israel. Acts 2:22 . . . Romans 15:8 . . . Galatians 4:4. The day of Pentecost was not God’s due time for the Gentiles, for at that time and for some years after, it was not lawful for the twelve apostles to keep company or come unto one of another nation. Acts 10:28. The disciples preached to none but Jews only. Acts 11:19. They were compelled to glorify God when Cornelius was saved, but even after that the twelve were to go unto the circumcision. Galatians 2:9. And so far as the record is concerned they confined their testimony to the land of the Jews for twenty or thirty years. God opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles by the hand and mouth of Paul. The day of grace for the Gentiles will last until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And then. Then what? “All Israel shall be saved.” And then what? “The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name.” Isaiah 62:1 to 4. “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light.” Isaiah 60:3.

The times and seasons are in God’s power and in due time He will restore the kingdom to Israel. Acts 1:6 and 7. When that kingdom shall be restored to Israel, Christ shall sit on the throne of His glory. Matthew 19:28. He will then occupy the throne of David. Isaiah 9:6 and 7. He shall then rebuild the tabernacle of David. Acts 15:16 and 17. The residue of men and Gentiles will be testified to and they will respond. Before that time Israel is to pass through the great tribulation. Out of that great tribulation some Israelites and a great multitude of all nations are to be saved. Therefore the due time for them is not now. Who would say that today is the due time for those who are to receive the two witnesses in Jerusalem, mentioned in Revelations 11:3?

If it is true that millions have died in heathen lands to whom no one has testified as to the ransom of Christ Jesus, and though we may feel that it would be a rank injustice to bring them to judgment for not accepting a gospel which they never heard, let us not try to reason out or invent some salvation scheme or program for them either as disembodied spirits in another world or brought back to earth in bodies during some dispensation after this day of grace. There is not one Scripture to support such teaching. The judge of all the earth will do right. But it is not for us to go beyond the Word of God in making up what we might consider an equitable and just arrangement for those who have not had the opportunity and privilege with others of hearing the message of salvation. Remember this statement: “God is love.” “The Lord is long-suffering.”

In the light of hundreds of other Scriptures it is difficult to understand how any sincere, faithful, spiritual, intelligent student of the Word of God can accept either the teaching of universal reconciliation or the teaching of reconciliation provided for only a limited number. Most of the Scriptures quoted by both of these groups of interpreters to support their views are vague, and in the light of their contexts do not agree with their interpretations. On the other hand there are hundreds of Scriptures simply stated, with no uncertain or hidden meaning but easily understood, that refute and contradict both of the extreme views mentioned. Shall we say then that the Word of God contradicts itself? Certainly not.

If God is omnipotent and omniscient, certainly we believe the Scripture, “known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.” Acts 15:18. It is; connection with this statement that the programs of God for this age and the coming age is stated. Acts 15:14 to 17. Certainly the Bible clearly teaches God’s foreknowledge of all future events and because that foreknowledge, predestination and election John 6:64. But any child of God who has carefully studied the character and attributes and acts of God knows that He is the God of all grace and that He would neither arbitrarily foreordain to eternal despair any man nor will to exclude from His “whosoever” either by a limited atonement or a limited election any sinner. On the other hand, while it may be a consoling and satisfactory belief to interpret the Scriptures to teach that all men will ultimately be saved, yet such an interpretation is based largely upon human reason and desire apart from, and contrary to, revelation. God is just and the justifier of sinners. But this justification of sinners is by faith of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21 to 26. Salvation is the end of faith. If sinners do not believe in this life, there is no suggestion in the Word of God that they will believe for salvation in the life to come.