

THE RECOVERY OF LOST BIBLE TRUTH

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STALEMATE?

ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS FOR A SEASON AND FOR A REASON.

The Holy Spirit directed the apostle Paul to tell the Galatians that they were foolish and bewitched. (Galatians 3:1 to 4). He urged them not to be again entangled with the yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1 and Acts 15:10 and 24). Paul wrote to them: "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain . . . ye desire again to be in bondage . . . ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." (Galatians 4:9 to 11). Paul was led to write to the Corinthians and all saints, that the same Satan, who beguiled Eve and is responsible for the sin in the world, desires and delights to corrupt the minds of believers from the simplicity which is in Christ. (II Corinthians 11:1 to 5).

The bewitched Galatians were foolish because after being saved from the penalty of sin by hearing and believing the gospel of grace which Christ, by revelation, gave to Paul (Galatians 1:11 and 12), they permitted religious men to pervert that gospel and frustrate the grace of God by causing them to believe, "that it was needful to circumcise them, and command them to keep the law of Moses." (Acts 15:5). They seemed to be so blinded and corrupted by Satan that they did not know that the law was the ministration of death and condemnation. (II Corinthians 3:7 to 9). Satan's religious messengers persuaded the foolish, bewitched Galatians that they could be better established in salvation by grace by adding the 'law' yoke, which no one was ever able to bear. (Acts 15:10 . . . John 7:19 . . . Hebrews 12:20). Paul clearly stated to them, in Galatians 2:16, in no uncertain language, the fundamental doctrine of what is called Christianity: "justification by grace through faith in the perfect redemptive work of the perfect Christ, without the deeds of the law or any part of Israel's religious, law program." (Romans 3:24 to 28).

Paul warned the Galatians—and that warning for all Christians then and since then—"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Galatians 5:9).

Paul was led to scold the Corinthian believers because of their 'sectarianism' (I Corinthians 1:10 to 13 . . . I Corinthians 3:3 . . . I Corinthians 12:25), because they seemed content to remain as 'INFANTS' on a milk diet (I Corinthians 3:1 to 3), and had no desire to grow to 'Full Age', to whom belongeth the 'Strong Meat' of God's Word. (Hebrews 5:11 to 14). Undoubtedly most of them knew not what Paul meant when he wrote them about becoming a man and putting away 'INFANTILE' things. (I Corinthians 13:11). He wrote to them; "and this also we wish, your perfection (katartisis) (perfectly joined together)." (II Corinthians 13:9). This is the same wish expressed by the word 'katartizo' in I Corinthians 1:10. Knowing what 'sectarianism' would do to the CHURCH OF GOD, Which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28), the Lord gave to Paul the truth of Ephesians, 'FOR THE PERFECTING (KATARTISMOS) OF THE SAINTS', that Christians "be no more 'INFANTS', 'tossed to and fro' and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:12 to 14) . . . Now note the verses that follow: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the HEAD, Christ . . . From Whom the whole BODY 'fitly joined together' (sunarmologeō) and 'compact' (sumbibazo) by that which every joint supplieth:"

The truth of God, which we call ‘the lost Bible truth’, is God’s deathblow to all the ‘schisms’ in ‘THE ONE BODY’ (Ephesians 1:21 and 23 . . . Ephesians 4:4), the remedy which God offers for the disgraceful, satanic ‘sectarianism’ which today prevails, more than 1900 years after Christ prayed that His disciples might all be ‘ONE’, that the world would believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. (John 17:21 . . . I John 4:14).

The HEAD of the CHURCH does not want the members of His BODY to be ‘INFANTS’ tossed to and fro. He wants them established by ‘PAUL’S GOSPEL’, the preaching of Jesus Christ according to ‘THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY’. This was kept secret from the beginning of the world, until the risen, glorified Christ in heaven revealed it to and through the apostle Paul. (Romans 16:25).

Knowing what the ‘LEAVEN’ of ‘JUDAISM’ (Galatians 5:9), and the ‘SECTARIANISM’ of I Corinthians 1:10 to 13 . . . I Corinthians 3:1 to 3, were going to do to God’s program and message of ‘grace’ revealed to the apostle Paul, that apostle delivered a warning to the elders at Ephesus after he had fed the flock and kept away the wolves for three years: “for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking ‘perverse’ things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29 and 30). This warning was in Paul’s farewell to Ephesus. But in his farewell to the earth he warned of a much more serious condition . . . ‘perilous times’ . . . ‘a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’ (II Timothy 3:1 to 7) . . . “for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . turn away their ears from the truth . . . turned unto fables.” (II Timothy 4:1 to 5).

The wolves entered. The perverse teaching prevailed. Sound doctrine was not endured. Religious forms and ceremonies covered up the gospel which was the power of God unto salvation. Yes, religious leaders—many of them unregenerated—became the power and authority in church organizations supplanting the Holy Spirit. The leaders and the followers turned to fables. The result was an organized church with political power, with a teaching and program of Christianity, Judaism and superstition that bordered on idolatry, with the leaven leavening the whole lump in the big church. The saint of God who dared to offer God’s remedy for the religious corruption, that is, the Divine truth for the perfecting of the saints was silenced by death or imprisonment.

THE TESTIMONY OF A PRESBYTERIAN PREACHER

Several years ago a man of God, a splendid messenger of the grace of God, spoke at the FOUNDER’S WEEK CONFERENCE at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. This man was the pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania. His subject was ‘The Recovery of Lost Bible Truth’. He saw that 99% of the pastors and Bible teachers and all other Christians were not obeying Ephesians 3:9, “make all see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been ‘HID IN GOD’ . . .” ‘HID FROM GENERATIONS’ ‘BUT NOW IS ‘MADE MANIFEST TO GOD’S SAINTS’ . . .” (Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:25 and 26). The speaker stated that this glorious truth had been revealed and had then been lost. He said it was lost within two generations after the death of Paul. Then the speaker said, that after the truth concerning ‘the dispensation of the MYSTERY’ was lost, the truth concerning the coming of the Lord, before the tribulation to rapture the Church, and during the tribulation to save Israel and then to establish God’s prophesied kingdom, was lost. He said in the apostasy that followed the death of the apostles, church-leaders ceased to differentiate between the

prophesied kingdom of heaven, which Christ declared at hand (Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:14 and 15), and the unprophesied BODY of Christ which began historically with the FALL of Israel (Romans 11:11). Then, said the speaker, it was not very long until the church-leaders, many of them unsaved religious leaders, substituted tradition for the Word of God (Matthew 15:6), preferred the praise of men to the praise of God (John 12:43) and the fundamental doctrine of 'justification by grace through faith' was lost, and the world and the church were plunged into centuries of religious darkness. The leaven had done its work. But it is still at work.

This continued, said the speaker, until Martin Luther was led by the Holy Spirit to believe 'the just shall live by faith'. As the result of Luther's conviction, vision, courage, zeal and aggressive evangelism, under God, the all-important Christian doctrine of 'justification by faith' was uncovered or recovered. Millions were saved as the result of the mighty reformation. Thus, said the speaker, the last of the great doctrines of the Church was the first to be recovered. Then the speaker said, God raised up other men of conviction and courage to clear Luther's 'justification' message of religious rites. Then God raised up the man of God, who perhaps did more to recover the truth concerning the difference between the unprophesied CHURCH, a spiritual ORGANISM rather than a religious organization or sectarian group, and the prophesied kingdom, which with the Fall of Israel was postponed until God completes 'The One New Man' of Ephesians 2:15, reconciling Jews and Gentiles in one Body by the cross (Ephesians 2:15 and 16), than any other man. Any man of God who is not grateful to God for John Darby and the recovery of truth by him and later propagated by the 'Plymouth Brethren', if he knows the facts, should be ashamed of himself.

Then, proceeded the speaker, God has seen fit to recover lost Bible truth in inverted order. Inasmuch as the truth of God, for which Paul suffered as a criminal (II Timothy 2:8 and 9 . . . Ephesians 6:19 and 20 . . . Colossians 4:3 and 4) has not been recovered to the degree that Christian pastors and Bible-teachers are now obeying Ephesians 3:9, the speaker said that task and responsibility belong to present-day Fundamentalists. What are we doing about it?

TWO PHASES OF THE MYSTERY

Let us first consider Ephesians 3:9 and Romans 11:25 and 26. Whether Christians plead negligence, disobedience or apathetic indifference or ignorance, after reading Ephesians 3:9, they know that it is their duty and blessed privilege to "make all Christians see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world was 'HID IN GOD' . . . 'HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS' . . . 'now made manifest to God's saints'." (Colossians 1:24 to 26). Whatever the MYSTERY of Ephesians and Colossians is, it is the duty of every Christian to make it known to others.

Inasmuch as no Christian, who does not know the MYSTERY of Romans 11:25, has ever seen, or will ever see, what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY of Ephesians and Colossians, it behooves every Christian to pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation and have the eyes of his understanding enlightened (Ephesians 1:15 to 17), to first understand the meaning of Romans 11:25 and then to continue praying to be enlightened as to how to obey Ephesians 3:9. No Christian leader will be a faithful steward of the MYSTERIES of God until he is taught by the Holy Spirit the dispensational crisis recorded in the eleventh chapter of Romans. This means to understand that God sent blindness upon Israel for a season, and for a reason.

Let us see how this truth is foreshadowed in Acts 13:5 to 15. In these verses we read of a Jew, with an excellent name, but with a heart filled with guile. His name was 'BAR-JESUS',

meaning 'The Child of Jehovah-Saviour'. What a wonderful name! What a significant name! Comparing Acts 13:5 to 13 with some chapters concerning Israel in the Book of Isaiah, from chapters 41 to 47, we will learn that Israel was indeed, 'BAR-JESUS', 'The Child of Jehovah-Saviour'. When we read the fearful denunciation of Christ upon Israel in Matthew 23:13 to 33 and compare His pronouncement upon Israel with the pronouncement upon Israel, recorded in I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16, we shall certainly know that 'ISRAEL', meaning 'a prince with God' (Genesis 32:28), was filled with guile. Christ told them that the devil was their father, although then claimed God. (John 8:41 to 44). Paul called 'BAR-JESUS', 'the child of the devil'. (Acts 13:10). Then note the verse which follows: "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind not seeing the sun for a season (kairos)." Then note what a Gentile did. when he saw what was done (the blindness of the ISRAELITE), believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. As we read two or three verses in the eleventh chapter of Romans, let us see why all Gentiles should be astonished at the doctrine of the Lord and believe and be saved.

A blind man cannot see. He must be led by another hand. (Acts 13:11). God sent blindness upon ISRAEL. (Romans 11:8 to 10). ISRAEL stumbled and had a great FALL. (Romans 11:11). ISRAEL was diminished and was cast away. (Romans 11:12 and 15). Now read Romans 11:25 and know that God would not have Christians "ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY', lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Then what? After Israel's blindness for a season and for a reason, ISRAEL will be saved, for another reason. (Romans 11:26 to 29). The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

WHO HATH KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD?

The minister of Christ is expected to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4). We are told in I Peter 5:10 that God is 'the God of all grace'. What a wonderful title! and most significant! God is omnipotent and omniscient and inerrant, or infallible. We read in II Peter 2:4 to 8, Romans 8:32 and Romans 11:21 that God is "the 'UNSPARING' God." God spared not the angels. He spared not the antediluvian race. When we read in Genesis 6:6, that "it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, it grieved Him at His heart. and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created," we might ask is it true that God never made a mistake? But when we read that God in this age and dispensation of grace is making a new creation, believing sinners made alive in Christ Jesus and raised up and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:5 and 6), God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10), we break forth with Paul saying, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways 'past-tracing-out'! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor?"

Christians should believe Acts 15:18, as to why God will build again the tabernacle of David; "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Christians should believe that some day in the future God will place His Son, as Prince of Peace, on David's throne and transfer the government of this world to His shoulders. Why? "The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this." (Isaiah 9:6 and 7). Christians should believe that "Israel shall be saved, 'AS IT IS WRITTEN'" (Romans 11:26); because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:27 to 29). Christians should believe that God, during this present age and

dispensation of grace, is working all things after the counsel of His own will; and that, therefore, in Christ, members of Christ's Body have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to God's purpose. (Ephesians 1:11). This 'ETERNAL PURPOSE' of God was 'PURPOSED' in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:11). Every Christian should be confident that the Lord Jesus Christ will present His blood-purchased Church (Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25) unto Himself as a glorious, spotless, blameless, holy Church (Ephesians 5:26 and 27). Every Christian should know that that Church was chosen by God, in Christ, from before the overthrow of the world. (Ephesians 1:4 and 5).

In the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:7). Every faithful steward of the mysteries of God knows that members of the Body of Christ are saved and called with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to God's own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. (II Timothy 1:9). They also know, that because of God's 'ETERNAL PURPOSE', members of Christ's Body have been 'GRACED' in Christ, the Beloved, "in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephesians 1:6 and 7). These Body-members, 'GRACED' in Christ Jesus, know that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20), "the mighty power that God wrought in Christ when He raised Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principalities and power, and might and dominion, and gave Him to be HEAD over all things to the CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, 'the FILLING-UP' of Him that filleth all in all." (Ephesians 1:19 to 23).

THE UNSPARING GOD OF ALL GRACE

God spared not the angels and the old world and Sodom and Gomorrah. God spared not His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, but delivered Him up for all, and with Christ God gives Christians all things. (Romans 8:32). God hath appointed Christ Heir of all things. (Hebrews 1:1 to 3). Christians are 'JOINT-HEIRS' with Christ. (Romans 8:15 to 17). Therefore, God says to the 'JOINT-HEIRS', "all things are yours; and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." (I Corinthians 3:21 to 23). Christians have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; being seated with Christ in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 1:3 and Ephesians 2:6).

Christ came unto His own (nation) and His own (ISRAEL) received Him not. (John 1:11). God raised Christ from the dead first to be Israel's PRINCE and SAVIOUR and sent the Holy Spirit to witness to that fact. (Acts 5:31 and 32). God raised Christ from the dead to give to Israel 'the sure mercies of David'. (Acts 13:34). Israel resisted and blasphemed the Holy Spirit, God's Witness that Christ had been raised from the dead to be Israel's Saviour. (Acts 7:51 to 60 . . . Acts 13:45).

Israel also forbade the apostles to preach justification by faith to the Gentiles. (I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16 . . . Acts 13:39). The Lord led Paul to say to Israel, "seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46). As Israel did not spare God's Son, but said, "away with Him, crucify Him" . . . "we have no king but Caesar" . . . and because they again rejected the resurrected Christ after He had given to Israel the great sign of Matthew 12:40 and had prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), yes, after God agreed to charge Israel's crime of

killing the Prince of Life to ignorance (Acts 3:1 to 18), God spared not His own NATION, but cast them away in blindness. (Romans 11:21 and Romans 11:9 to 15).

ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS FOR A SEASON AND FOR A REASON

God sent blindness upon Israel for a reason and for a season. We might ask the difference between the cause of Israel's blindness and the Divine reason or purpose for their blindness.

In Romans 11:21 we read that God spared not the natural branches (Israel). They were cut off because of unbelief. (Romans 11:20 and 21). Because of Israel's unbelief, God offered special mercy to the Gentiles. (Romans 11:30). Concerning Israel's blindness, "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see . . . Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." (Romans 11:8 to 10). Then follows what might be considered the most important dispensational verse of Scripture in the Bible, truth that marked a great turning-point in God's dealings with Israel on the one hand and with the other nations on the other hand: "Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should FALL? God forbid; but rather through their FALL salvation is come unto the Gentiles." (Romans 11:11). Then Romans 11:12 states that because Israel was diminished and was caused to FALL, God extended to the Gentiles the opportunity to become RICH. Then Romans 11:15 states that the casting-away of Israel sent 'RECONCILIATION' to Gentiles.

In II Corinthians 8:9, I John 2:2, Romans 5:9 to 11 and Colossians 1:20 and 21, we learn that believing Gentiles are RICH, because the RICH CHRIST became poor; that they have obtained Divine MERCY because of Christ's death on the cross; that they have been 'RECONCILED' because Christ made peace by His shed blood on the cross. Open your Bible and read these seven verses with seven verses in the eleventh chapter of Romans and learn that believing Gentiles are RICH, RECONCILED and enjoy God's GRACE SALVATION AND MERCY, because God SPARED NOT His own Son and because God SPARED NOT His own nation. With these fourteen verses read several other verses in which is found the word 'NOW', indicating a radical change in God's dealings with the Gentiles. These verses are Romans 3:21, Romans 8:1, II Corinthians 5:16, Ephesians 2:13 and Ephesians 2:19, Romans 11:30, Colossians 1:21 and Colossians 1:26. Surely these 'dispensational' NOWS' should convince any intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures that God offered a new deal to the human race when and because of the FALL of Israel. Therefore, it behooves every member of the Body of Christ to search the Scriptures diligently to learn when that FALL took place.

In the light of the Scriptures we have just mentioned, every Christian should know that Israel's blindness was for a reason. When we say 'reason', perhaps we should think of 'cause' and 'purpose'. When we read I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16, Romans 9:27 to 33, Acts 7:51 to 60 and Acts 13:45, we should know the 'cause' for Israel's stumbling and FALL. When we read Romans 11:25 to 33, we should learn God's 'purpose' in Israel's FALL. Why did God say in Romans 11:25, "I would not have Christians ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY'?" Perhaps He knew that more than ninety percent of Christians in every generation would be ignorant. This ignorance is often due to the strong prejudice of some Christians, or to preconceived opinions based upon tradition substituted for the Word of God, rightly divided, and very largely to the apathetic indifference of the great multitude of church-members who seem perfectly content to continue as 'INFANTS' on a milk diet. (Hebrews 5:11 to 6:1 . . . I Corinthians 3:1 to 3 . . . Ephesians 4:14 . . . I Corinthians 13:11). Then of course the god of this age, transformed into an angel of light, as head of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies (Ephesians 6:11 and 12 . . . II

Corinthians 11:13 to 15 and II Corinthians 11:1 to 3 and II Corinthians 4:3 and 4), will always do his utmost to keep religious sinners and saved religious people from knowing the glorious Divine Truth, 'GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE' in the dispensation and age of grace. Satan's principalities and powers are involved. (Ephesians 3:9 and 10). No Christian ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY' in Romans 11:25 will, or can, make other Christians "see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been 'HID IN GOD'," "HID from ages and generations" . . . But NOW is made manifest to His saints." (Ephesians 3:9 . . . Colossians 1:24 to 26).

The blindness for a season and for a reason is explained in Romans 11:25: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY', lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." . . . Then what? "And so all Israel shall be saved. . . 'AS IT IS WRITTEN' . . ." What is written? It is written in many of the Books from Genesis to Malachi, that God's 'kingdom' nation, Israel, will be established in a kingdom of righteousness and peace and prosperity on this earth, with Jerusalem as the world capital; that Israel's Messiah and Prince and King will reign over Israel and the other nations. But it was not written in any of thirty-nine Books from Genesis to Malachi, that the building again of the tabernacle of David and the planting of Israel in their land (Amos 9:11 to 15) would be postponed for more than nineteen centuries; that while the prophesied kingdom is in abeyance Christ is to remain on His Father's throne in heaven, as Head of the Church, Which is His Body. Hence, 'THIS MYSTERY'.

Have you asked yourself the question, why 'Jehovah's Witnesses', 'The Seventh Day Adventists', and about ten million church-members affiliated with several so-called Protestant churches, all calling themselves 'ISRAEL', are as ignorant of 'THIS MYSTERY' of Romans 11:25 and 'THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY' (Ephesians 3:9), as though their Bibles did not contain Romans, Ephesians and Colossians? You can easily answer this question and see their inexcusable fallacy by substituting for the word 'ISRAEL' in the different verses of the eleventh chapter of Romans 'THE BODY OF CHRIST'. None of these religious people are Israel, although they might claim blindness with Israel.

THE LOST PRECIOUS GEM

Within the last year a man of God, who was considered by many spiritual leaders numbered with the Fundamentalists to be as good as the best of the Bible-teachers of this generation, departed to be with Christ. For years this man of God was affiliated with 'THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN'. He was a great admirer of Mr. John Darby and was familiar with the printed ministry of Mr. Darby. He endorsed Mr. Darby's teaching. I agree with this man of God who has gone to be with Christ, that no man has done more to help in the recovery of the truth concerning 'GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE', the 'GREAT MYSTERY' concerning Christ and the Church, 'ONE FLESH', the truth that the Church of God, Which He purchased with His own blood, is not primarily a religious organization, but a spiritual Organism, than did Mr. John Darby. Mr. Darby was an able expositor of the Scriptures, a courageous, uncompromising, spiritual, intelligent exegete. The Church owes much to Mr. Darby.

Now note what Mr. Darby's admirer wrote in his book entitled 'THE MYSTERIES OF GOD'. After reading the quotations from 'THE MYSTERIES OF GOD' you will see why I used the title, 'THE LOST PRECIOUS GEM', when I published a book concerning the truth of 'THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST' (Colossians 4:3 and 4 . . . Ephesians 3:1 to 3 . . . Ephesians 1:9),

which was lost within two generations after the death of the apostle Paul. Read the warning of Paul, given to the elders at Ephesus, recorded in Acts 20:28 to 32, concerning false prophets with false teaching, and then read the quotations from 'The Mysteries of God.'

"Throughout the writings of the apostle Paul he again and again refers to a wondrous secret which he designates in a special way as 'the mystery' or 'the great mystery.' Other mysteries he treats of, as we have seen, but there is one that is preeminently such. It occupies much of his ministry, and is clearly THE CHIEF GEM in the diadem of the truth of Christianity; yet for centuries it was almost entirely LOST SIGHT OF. In fact, until brought to the fore through the writings and the preaching of a distinguished ex-clergyman, Mr. J. N. Darby, in the early part of the last century, it is scarcely to be found in a single book or sermon throughout a period of sixteen hundred years! If any doubt this statement, let them search, as the writer has in measure done, the remarks of the so-called Fathers, both pre- and post-Nicene; the theological treatises of the scholastic divines; Romans Catholic writers of all shades of thought; the literature of the Reformation; the sermons and expositions of the Puritans; the general theological works of the day. That a doctrine so clearly revealed in the Scriptures could have become SO UTTERLY LOST is only to be accounted for by the Judaizing of the Church, and the consequent minding of earthly things that beclouded the heavenly ones."

"Of ordinances exalted to the place of mysteries, as in heathen rites, he will find much; but as to the mystery, which to the apostle was so UNSPEAKABLY PRECIOUS, rarely a reference."

Let every Christian read and read again, with real interest, these statements. Every Christian should acknowledge that it is his Christ-given duty to make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery (Ephesians 3:9), the glorious Divine Truth for which Paul suffered as a criminal, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for Gentiles. (Colossians 4:3 and 4 . . . Colossians 1:24 . . . II Timothy 2:7 to 9, Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and Ephesians 3:1 to 3). This truth, our brother calls 'THE CHIEF GEM' . . . 'LOST' . . . 'PRECIOUS'. LOST, because the CHURCH was for centuries 'JUDAIZED'. The Lord warned that a little leaven would leaven the whole lump. (Galatians 5:9). The Holy Spirit warned Christians against frustrating the grace of God, preventing the gospel of the grace of God with 'ritualism'. (Galatians 1:7 to 9 . . . Galatians 2:21). But millions of religious people have paid no attention to the warning. There are today more than two hundred million religious church-members who believe that the Christian must find Christ at the cross and in the cup, the chalice with the letters, I. H. S. (meaning 'Jesus the Saviour of men'). They are altogether ignorant of "THE LOST PRECIOUS GEM"; and have no interest in its recovery. Their 'MYSTICAL CHRIST' has nothing in common with the 'MYSTICAL CHRIST' of Ephesians and Colossians, 'THE CHRIST' of I Corinthians 12:12; 'CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, ONE FLESH'. (Ephesians 5:31 and 32).

There is a great difference between 'THE MYSTERY' having been 'HID IN GOD', 'HID FROM AGES AND GENERATIONS' . . . 'BUT NOW MADE MANIFEST TO GOD'S SAINTS', revealed to and through the apostle Paul, and the mystery LOST by a 'JUDAIZED' CHURCH. Certainly any church, calling itself 'ISRAEL', and confusing the prophesied kingdom of heaven with the unprophesied BODY OF CHRIST, is 'JUDAIZED'.

We have asked the question, "who is responsible for the STALEMATE, in the matter of recovering 'THE LOST PRECIOUS GEM'? It is so strange it seems paradoxical that the zealous immersionists among the Fundamentalists, who have accepted the dispensationalism of Mr. Darby, are the real enemies and aggressive, active, ungracious opponents of 'THE LOST

PRECIOUS GEM'. This we shall explain presently, and shall refer to the Reference Bible of Dr. C. I. Scofield.

But now we quote from a pamphlet published and distributed by Moody Colportage Association for more than thirty years. The content of this printed message was endorsed by Dr. C. I. Scofield some years after his Bible was published. Dr. Scofield said that he endorsed the content of the pamphlet without reservation.

Please keep in mind the quotation above that the PRECIOUS GEM was lost because the CHURCH was 'JUDAIZED'. You will note the dispensationalism that Dr. Scofield was sure would rid the CHURCH of 'THE LAST VESTIGE OF JUDAISM'. It is doubtful as to whether the dispensational teaching of the MOODY-SCOFIELD-BISHOP pamphlet will recover or uncover the lost 'PRECIOUS GEM'; but most assuredly it will do much to 'DEJUDAIZE' THE CHURCH. It is a step in the right direction. The weakness of the arguments are due to the fact that the pamphlet has Paul leading Christians from the Pentecostal program but leaving Paul and other Christians in the Pentecostal Church. But truth lost for centuries is not easily recovered. Now note these helpful quotations from the pamphlet

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

"In the latest Epistles of Paul not only is it noticeable that the sign gifts are nowhere in manifestation but a different order is brought forth by the Holy Spirit for the correction of prevailing hobbies and fanaticism."

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

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

"The sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the Acts period."

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

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

"Likewise, if we fail to see the hand of Satan in the present eccentricities and fanaticisms prominent in the 'Tongues,' 'Pentecostal,' and 'Holiness' movements, we will dishonor the Lord, and not be able to serve Him in the deliverance and protection of His own from these delusions."

You will observe in the quotations reference to 'The Book of Acts' period. That period covered about thirty years from the time of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Book of Acts gives us the record of the sayings and doings of the apostles of Christ. Fifteen chapters of Acts record the sayings and doings of the apostle Paul and only such other persons as had dealings with Paul. Luke, the human author of Acts, was with Paul when Paul bade farewell to earth. (II Timothy 4:11). The Holy Spirit did not direct Luke to include in the Book of Acts what Paul said and did during the years that he lived in Rome. Acts suddenly ended several years before Paul's ministry ended.

The Epistles of Paul written during the Book of Acts period were I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Corinthians, Galatians, II Corinthians and Romans. We mention these facts, because Dr. Scofield believed that a new order, with a changed program, was brought forth after the close of the Acts period. Dr. Scofield believed that the normal course of the Church in this age and dispensation of grace is set forth in Paul's latest Epistles. Dr. Scofield believed that the Christian's slogan should not be 'back to Pentecost', but that his goal should be Paul's Epistles written while he was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus for Gentiles in Rome.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, during the Book of Acts period, he told them that they were carnal INFANTS unable to take the MEAT of God's Word. They were limited to a MILK diet. (I Corinthians 3:1 to 3) . But the carnal INFANTS of Corinth were exercising the miraculous sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11; during the period covered by the Book of Acts. According to the pamphlet, Satan deceives and deludes those who contend that Christians should go back to Pentecost for their spiritual program, including miracles, tongues and other signs, "If we fail to see the hand of Satan in the present eccentricities and fanaticisms in 'tongues'. 'Pentecostal' and 'holiness' movements, we will dishonor the Lord . . . and not be able to deliver saints from the delusions." Rather strong language and straightforward statements that will be challenged by the 'back to Pentecost' religious Christians.

Surely Christians, who do not apply the principle of progressive revelation in rightly dividing the Word of Truth, seeing this principle in I Corinthians 13:11, putting away INFANTILE things, must be puzzled as to why Paul healed idolatrous heathen in Acts 28:3 to 10, and at the close of His life left a faithful saint sick. (II Timothy 4:20).

It is noteworthy that in the Acts record of Paul's ministry, and in the six Epistles Paul was led to write during the Acts period, we find some such expression as 'AS IT IS WRITTEN', 'IT IS WRITTEN', (quotations from Books—Genesis to Malachi) about thirty times; whereas in Paul's Epistles written after Acts 28:31 we find no such expressions. But in such an observation we should not be carried to the extreme dispensationalism of teaching or believing that not only a new order and a changed program began after Acts 28:31, but a new and different BODY OF CHRIST. We repeat that the weakness of the arguments in the pamphlet endorsed by Dr. Scofield, is the fact that the writers explained how the Divine truth revealed to Paul, on the installment plan, led the Christians into God's program of unmixed grace and away from the Pentecostal program of signs and tongues and visions, but it left Paul and all the Gentile members of the Body of Christ in the Pentecostal Church of Peter and the Eleven.

The writers of the pamphlet likewise failed to deliver Christians from the 'back to Pentecost' kingdom gospel and communism. There have been more bitter controversies among the saints of God concerning the dispensational place of Mark 16:16 to 18 and Acts 2:38, as to whether water baptism is essential for regeneration and the remission of sins, as these Scriptures seem to indicate, than concerning tongues and miraculous physical healing and visions. Tongues, visions and miraculous signs are inseparably connected with water baptism in the Bible and any Scriptural exegesis which will eliminate the one will eliminate the other. They stand or pass away together. However, water baptism and the Lord's Supper are not in any way linked together. The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is a memorial to be observed till Christ shall have come (elthe).

Some one has truly said, "if the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18, or the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, are the credentials of a Christian, we haven't had any Christians on earth for about 1900 years. But let us remember Dr. Scofield's belief, the truth which gives the normal course of the Church, is recorded in Paul's latest Epistles. This truth is 'FOR THE

PERFECTING (UNIFICATION) OF THE SAINTS'; that Christians no longer be 'INFANTS' tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:12 to 14).

If, instead of the slogan, 'back to Pentecost', we make our goal, 'on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1)', 'on to the STRONG MEAT of Paul's Epistles', we shall know the difference between 'THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION' (Galatians 2:7) preached by the Lord's command, 'BEFORE THE FALL OF ISRAEL', and 'THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION' (II Corinthians. 5:16 to 21), preached by the command of the Lord, 'AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL'. There is as much difference between these two gospels as there is between law and grace. And likewise between Acts 2:38 and Titus 3:5 to 8. To this we shall presently refer.

POPULARIZING MR. DARBY'S DISPENSATIONALISM

Another man of God, who was rated by Fundamentalists as one of the most intelligent, gifted Bible-teachers of this generation, went to be with the Lord several years ago. He was pastor of a congregation in London for many years. This man of God made this remark: "if I have been successful as a Bible-teacher, it is due largely to the fact that I have endeavored in my ministry to popularize the teachings of Mr. John Darby, the dispensationalism of the Plymouth Brethren." Then he added, "this is what your outstanding Fundamentalists in America have done." This man of God knew that the Plymouth Brethren had become isolationists and had erected religious barriers, such as their 'household immersion', because the children of the Israelites crossed the Red Sea with their parents, their watery grave witness, and foolishly calling Sunday 'the Lord's day', barriers that were never intended to be by Mr. Darby. All of the Fundamentalists who have retained these same barriers, with Darby's dispensationalism, are the ones responsible for the stalemate. They have become hinderers instead of helpers in the task of ridding the Church of Judaism and recovering the lost precious gem. Instead of going on with Mr. Darby's unfinished task, they have turned their backs on some of the significant dispensational truths the Holy Spirit led him to teach.

But again we praise God for the valuable help the Church has received from the teaching of the Plymouth Brethren concerning God's program and purpose in this age and dispensation of grace. They have not sought to be popular while their teaching was being popularized. But others must go on from Mr. Darby's stopping-place; as the MYSTERY of Colossians and Ephesians, 'made known to and through Paul', is still a MYSTERY, so far as 98% of Christians are concerned. God wants all Christians to see His 'ETERNAL PURPOSE' concerning the 'JOINT-BODY' (not 'same' Body) of Ephesians 3:6 Which He chose in Christ from before the overthrow of the world (Ephesians 3:9 to 11 . . . Ephesians 1:4, 5 and 11); the members having been predestinated according to the 'PURPOSE' of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. (Ephesians 1:11).

Certainly no Christian can make another Christian see what he does not see. No Christian, who teaches that 'the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles' (Ephesians 3:1 to 3) began with Peter and Pentecost rather than with Paul after Peter had used the keys of the kingdom of leaven, or who ruins the glorious doctrine of the believer's identification with Christ in an inseparable and eternal union by reading a water ceremony into the sixth chapter of Romans, can see what God wants him to see concerning 'THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'.

THE NIAGARA CONFERENCE

In the latter part of the nineteenth century some splendid Christian leaders, spiritual men of God, most of them pastors, from different parts this country, met for days in Niagara for serious, diligent, prayerful Bible study. These men were outstanding leaders in their denominations, well educated, spiritual sincere men who had been successful in their ministries for Christ. They knew that ministers of Christ should be faithful stewards of the MYSTERIES of God. They knew the truth of Luke 10:21, that God hides the truth from the wise and prudent and reveals it unto those who have the spirit of a little child.

However, they knew the difference between the humble 'INFANT' spirit and remaining INFANTS in the knowledge of the Scriptures. (Hebrews 5:11 to 6:1 . . . I Corinthians. 3:1 to 3 . . . Ephesians 4:14).

Accordingly they humbly, prayerfully yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit and together, like the noble Bereans, searched the Scriptures daily. Before these Bible-teachers met at Niagara they had been influenced by dispensational and doctrinal messages of Mr. John Darby and 'The Plymouth Brethren.' They knew, what even a babe in Christ should know; namely, that God began a new Divine movement when and because of the FALL of Israel. They were convinced that when 'The House of Israel' (Acts 2:36) fell, God began to build 'The House of God', 'The Church or The Living God', of I Timothy 3:15 and 16. They were persuaded that all of their fellow-pastors, even in their own denominations, did greatly err by calling 'The Body of Christ', 'ISRAEL'. They saw that there was a great difference between the prophesied kingdom of God, prepared from the overthrow of the world, which is to be established on this earth with Christ present as 'PRINCE OF PEACE' (Matthew 25:31 to 34), and the unprophesied CHURCH, which is being BUILT while Christ is away from the earth as 'HEAD OF THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FILLING-UP OF HIM WHO FILLETH ALL IN ALL' (Ephesians 1:21 to 23), the CHURCH which was chosen in Christ before the overthrow of the world. (Ephesians 1:4 and 5). Therefore, they saw the meaning and significance of the word 'ELTHE' in II Thessalonians 1:7 to 10; the teaching in II Thessalonians 1:7 to 10, that Christ would not descend upon the earth in wrath as a Judge until 'He shall have come' to be glorified in His saints. So they saw that Luke 21:27 to 33 and Luke 18:8 did not refer to the rapture of the CHURCH, but to the second coming of Christ as the Son of man, for judgment and for Israel's redemption. So they saw 'THIS MYSTERY' in Romans 11:25, the blindness of Israel for a season and for a reason, the postponement of the prophesied kingdom, or millennium, and Israel's future redemption.

They decided that this present age and dispensation of grace, not having been predicted by Israel's prophets, not even contemplated, is a parenthetical period; that God had not abandoned His 'kingdom of heaven' plans, but had only postponed them until He has completed 'THE ONE NEW MAN' of Ephesians 2:15, by reconciling believing Jews and Gentiles in ONE BODY by the cross (Ephesians 2:16) .

These men of God left the Niagara conference as 'pretribulation premillenarians', believing that Christ would come for His Church (Thus 2:13 . . . Colossians 3:3 and 4) before the millennium and before the prophesied tribulation. In other words they were convinced that Mr. Darby's teaching as to the kingdom and the CHURCH was sound doctrine. Being leaders in various denominational established churches these men went back to their respective ministries as pioneers of what is called 'premillennialism'. While they were alive they did not succeed in popularizing Mr. Darby's dispensationalism. Perhaps, they believed what has been often said, "very frequently the radical of today is the hero of tomorrow."

Not one of the men of God, who returned from that conference with a strong conviction and determination to teach what the Holy Spirit had taught him, was willing to exchange conviction for convenience. (Galatians 1:10 . . . John 12:43 . . . Jude 16). You can imagine what they suffered from the ungracious, sometimes vicious and slanderous, opposition of the ‘postmillennial’ or ‘amillennial’ religions leaders who taught that ‘THE BODY OF CHRIST’ is ‘ISRAEL’; that the CHURCH of today began with Abel; that the prophecies concerning Israel should be spiritualized.

The fact is, they so ‘despiritualized’ God’s ‘kingdom’ prophecies that they have them mean exactly what the Scriptures do not say. If they happen to touch on ‘THE MYSTERY’ of Ephesians and Colossians, which they seldom do, they must surely agree with Peter, that in all of Paul’s Epistles are some things hard to be understood. (II Peter 3:15 and 16).

If the pastors and elders in the pulpits remain ‘INFANTS’ and do not go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1), progressing to those of Full Age, to whom belongeth the ‘Strong Meat’ of God’s Word (Hebrews 5:11 to 14), we may expect their followers in the pews to be like the ‘INFANTS’ of I Corinthians 3:1 to 3, or the ‘INFANTS’ of Ephesians 4:14, tossed to and fro. However, according to I John 2:26 and 27, God expects all Christians to be like the noble Bereans of Acts 17:11, and He will not wink at the ignorance of those Christians who follow, blind, blundering leaders, ashamed workmen, because they do not rightly divide the Word of truth. (II Timothy 2:15).

The spiritual men of God who so influenced Dr. C. I. Scofield that he wrote his pamphlet ‘Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth’ and published his ‘Reference Bible’, were for the most part the brethren who attended the Niagara Conference or other Bible-teachers who received light on the Scriptures from the oral and written messages of those brethren.

Some of the friends who assisted Dr. Scofield in publishing his Bible had been affiliated with the Plymouth Brethren. Thousands of copies of Dr. Scofield’s Bible have been printed. Very many Christians who have read Dr. Scofield’s Bible notes have been led into ‘premillennialism’. Therefore, they have accepted the teaching that this present ‘CHURCH’ age is a parenthetical age, not contemplated in the prophetic Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi, except the figure of Christ and the Church, ‘ONE FLESH’ (Ephesians 5:31 and 32), in Genesis 2:21 to 24 and Genesis 5:2, before sin entered by Adam. They have accepted the teaching that the members of the Body of Christ will be raptured (I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 . . . Titus 2:13 . . . Philippians 3:20 and 21) before the prophesied ‘tribulation’, called ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble’, and of course before Christ comes to earth for His millennial reign, in fulfillment of many Scriptures. After the CHURCH is in glory with Christ, “Israel shall be saved”. . . “AS IT IS WRITTEN.” (Romans 11:26).

With present world and church conditions we are not surprised that most ‘post-millennarians’ have become ‘amillennarians’. These religious churchmen, who called ‘The Body of Christ’, ‘ISRAEL’, who are going to establish God’s prophesied kingdom on earth without the return and presence of the King, are not only in a state of utter confusion, but they have added much to the confusion of the so-called statesmen and political leaders in so-called Christian lands. They use the term ‘Scofieldism’ to deride and ridicule and disfellowship spiritual Christians who have been definitely led by the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, rightly divided, to be ‘pretribulation premillennarians’. The modernists join with the saved ‘amillennarians’ in calling the saved ‘premillennarians’, ‘heretics’, ‘fanatics’, ‘undesirables’, ‘ultradispensationalists’. Such name-calling is not a new thing. ‘Twas ever thus; and thus it shall continue. The tug of war between Christians has been going on for centuries. The various groups of Christians do not

seem to be concerned about obeying I Corinthians 1:10 and Ephesians 4:1 to 7, as to a unified testimony; so that the world will believe that the Father sent His eternal, sinless Son from heaven to be the Saviour of the world. (John 17:21 . . . I John 4:14) .

Surely God expects every Christian to have a strong conviction, a real spiritual vision, and while he is exhorted to preach the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), he is likewise exhorted to contend for the truth. In many places aggressive, earnest, active, sincere saved 'premillenarians' and saved 'amillenarians', although they have all been baptized by One Spirit into ONE BODY (I Corinthians 12:13), and are members one of the other (Romans 12:4 and 5), although the Holy Spirit states that there should be no division in the BODY (I Corinthians 12:25), are like the Jews and the Samaritans of Christ's day: they have no dealings with each other. The churchmen who insist that the CHURCH is 'ISRAEL', will not tolerate the dispensationalism that teaches that God interrupted or suspended His covenants and prophesied kingdom program, when and because of the FALL of Israel; that this present dispensation of grace was not prophesied; that 'THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY' is not 'THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN', which Christ declared to be at hand. (Matthew 1:14 and 15).

PRESENT SECTARIAN CONFUSION

Some time ago a Roman Catholic priest in a public meeting prayed this prayer, "O God, if the Roman Catholic Church' in this twentieth century is not the one and only true CHURCH OF CHRIST, as it was in the first century, strike me dead in this pulpit; for I do not want to be guilty of preaching error." That priest could not be truthfully charged with insincerity. The Seventh-Day Adventists, 'Jehovah's Witnesses' and the Mormons are each as sure as there is a sun that their interpretations of the Bible and Bible Christianity are genuine and sound doctrine; that all others are counterfeits. The Lutherans, the Southern Baptists, 'The Church of Christ', The Nazarenes, The Christian Missionary Alliance and the Pentecostals are a few of the various sectarian groups, each of which would like to have all other Christians say: "no doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." (Job 12:2).

Most of the members of these groups consider 'Scofieldites' just another denomination. Those who are carefully analyzing the situation will see that Dr. Scofield, because of his much-read Bible, has so succeeded in popularizing Mr. John Darby's dispensationalism and teaching that the Body of Christ is a spiritual Organism, rather than a religious organization, that within a little more than one generation we find the outstanding, spiritual, aggressive, fruitful evangelists and Bible-teachers are for the most part 'premillenarians'. They are sure that they are preaching the gospel of the grace of God. Many men of God have said, when Bible preaching becomes popular, it is time to check up.

There are about sixty organized Bible Schools in this country, whose presidents are 'premillenarians'. The teachers in these Schools (with few exceptions) are teaching the dispensationalism of the Plymouth Brethren. Many of these presidents and teachers have not been like the noble Bereans. For some reason they have not searched the Scriptures daily to see whether or not Dr. Scofield teaches sound doctrine when he teaches that 'the dispensation of the grace of God' for Gentiles, mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 3, began with Peter on the day of Pentecost.

We referred to the pamphlet printed and distributed by Moody Colportage Association for more than thirty years, endorsed, without reservation by Dr. Scofield. We reiterate that the dispensationalism set forth in that message led Paul and Christians, both saved Jews and

Gentiles, out the Pentecostal signs and visions and miracles, but left all of them, with Paul, in the Pentecostal Church, and left all of Dr. Scofield's followers in utter confusion as to Mark 16:16 to 18 . . . Acts 2:38 . . . Acts 8:1 to 15 and the meaning of Galatians 2:7: "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me (Paul), as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter." It would seem that even a babe in Christ should know that there is a difference between these two gospels, even if he does not know what that difference is. Christians who revise and abridge Mark 16:16 to 18 and Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 handle the Word of God ignorantly, if not deceitfully. (II Corinthians 4:2). Have you ever seen one man of God, who could obey both Mark 16:16 to 18 and Ephesians 3:9? Have you ever heard a Christian try to reconcile Acts 2:38 and Titus 3:5 to 8, if he teaches that 'the dispensation of the mystery' was given to Peter with the keys of the kingdom of heaven" Think of their travesty on sound exegesis when they try to reconcile Acts 3:19 to 21, "spoken by the mouth of all of the holy prophets 'SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN' . . ." with Romans 16:25, "THE MYSTERY KEPT SECRET SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN". Fundamentalists who begin 'the dispensation of the mystery' with Peter and Pentecost cannot help in the recovery of THE LOST PRECIOUS GEM. They can hinder; and they do seriously hinder. They are the men responsible for the stalemate. They too engage in name-calling, boycotting, condemning, intimidating, apparently unwilling to pray the prayer of Ephesians 1:15 to 17 and ask the Holy Spirit to teach them the meaning of Colossians 1:24 and Colossians 4:3 and 4. We often wonder why some of the spiritual, intelligent leaders among the premillennial Fundamentalists, who consider themselves 'grace' preachers, do not spend much time in prayerful meditation and consider the meaning of Ephesians 3:9, "make all see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world was 'HID IN GOD'." and see why Paul was the prisoner of Jesus Christ for Gentiles. A minister of Christ who does know the difference between the gospel and 'the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL' (Ephesians 6:19 and 20) should read Hebrews 5:11 to 6:1 and then turn to Ephesians 4:12 to 14.

HOW MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST ARE IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST BY BAPTISM

It is interesting to compare the words of the Lord's heavenly messengers at the time of the birth of Christ, "on earth peace", with Christ's own words about 32 years later; "suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay: but rather division"; "I am come to send fire on earth." (Compare Luke 2:14 and Luke 12:49 to 51). We know, by reading Isaiah 9:6 and 7, when peace on earth will be a reality. When Christ shall occupy the throne of David, with the government on His shoulder. When another heavenly messenger announced the birth of Christ He said, "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Israel for ever." (Luke 1:31 to 33). Thus we see the two events that go together, Christ on David's throne and Peace on earth. Christ did not go to David's throne. He went to Calvary's cross. On that cross the Lord Jesus made peace by His shed blood. Christ will return to earth to fulfill Isaiah 9:6 and 7 and many other 'kingdom' prophecies. He will sit as a King and a Judge on the throne of His glory. (Matthew 25:31 to 34). When Christ told His disciples that He was going to the Tree and not to the Throne, He said, "I have a BAPTISM to be BAPTIZED with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke 12:50). It was accomplished when Christ was crucified and cried 'it is finished' or 'finished'. Christ referred to His death as His 'BAPTISM'.

We read in Matthew 19:44 and John 19:32, that malefactors were ‘crucified with’ Christ. The Greek word translated ‘crucified with’, is ‘Sustaroo’. More than twenty years later a man - who called himself ‘the chief of sinners’ (I Timothy 1:15) , said: “I have been ‘crucified with’ (sustaroo) Christ.” (Galatians 2:20). The two malefactors were crucified on their crosses with Christ. But Paul was crucified on Christ’s cross. Then Paul wrote concerning Christians; “our old man was ‘crucified with’ (sustaroo) Christ.” (Romans 6:6). Were we with Christ on that cross? We were crucified with Christ.

Then we read, in Romans 6:3, that Christians were BAPTIZED into the DEATH of Christ. In the language of Luke 12:50 Christians have been BAPTIZED into the BAPTISM of Christ. Then we read, in II Timothy 2:11, “if we have ‘died with’ Christ, we shall also ‘live with’ Him.” The Greek word translated ‘died with’ is ‘sunapothneske’. ‘SUN’ . . . ‘SUS’ . . . ‘SUM’ . . . ‘SUG’, LIKE THE PREFIX ‘CO’, means ‘with’ . . . ‘together’ . . . ‘joint’. The Christian has been joined in death with Christ. The Greek translated ‘live with’, in II Timothy 2:11, is ‘suzao’. We live with Christ, because, in Ephesians 2:5 and 6 and in Colossians 2:12 and 13, we read that believers have been ‘made alive together with’ Christ. The Greek ‘made alive together with’ is ‘suzoopoieo’. Note in Colossians 2:12 that through the operation of God, Who raised Christ from the dead, believers ‘have been raised with’ Christ. The Greek, ‘raised with Christ’ is ‘sunegeiro’. This same Greek ‘sunegeiro’ is translated in Colossians 3:1, “if Ye then be ‘raised (risen) with Christ.” Now note Ephesians 2:6: “God ‘hath raised us up together” (sunegeiro), and made us ‘sit together’ (sugkathizo) in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Sugkathizo’ ‘sit down together’.

Thus we see that believers have been ‘crucified with’ Christ; have ‘died with Christ’; have been ‘raised with Christ’; have been ‘made alive with Christ’; have been made to ‘sit down in the heavenlies with Christ’. It is right that burial should follow death and precede resurrection; but how can the burial be taken care of when the crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension all take place at the time the believers are BAPTIZED into the BAPTISM of Christ, at the time believers believe the gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4. God takes care of the BURIAL at the very same time He raises the believers from the dead which is at the time they died. So we read in Romans 6:4; “therefore’ we were ‘buried with’ (sunthapto) Him, by BAPTISM into death . . . ‘planted together’ (sumphutos) (Romans 6:5). After this glorious identification has taken place, altogether by God’s grace and power, then believers are called to be ‘labourers together with’ (sunergos) God (I Corinthians 3:8 and 9), recognizing the apostle Paul, as ‘architekton’ . . . ‘head carpenter’. (I Corinthians 3:10). That means suffering begins; but the promise of glory. “If we ‘suffer with’ (sumpascho) with Christ, we shall be ‘glorified with’ (‘sundoxazo) Christ. (Romans 8:17) . . . And we shall ‘reign with’ (sumbasileuo) Christ. (II Timothy 2:12). But we are told in I Corinthians 12:26 that if one member of the Body suffer, all the members ‘suffer with’ (‘sumpascho’) it.

Let us see how all the members of the ONE BODY OF CHRIST are joined together. We note, in Ephesians 3:6, that the ONE BODY OF CHRIST is called ‘Sussomos’, meaning ‘JOINT-BODY’. In this verse we read: “that the Gentiles should be ‘fellow-heirs’ (‘joint-heirs’) (‘sugkleronomos’), and of the ‘same Body’ (Joint-Body) (‘Sussomos’), and ‘partakers’ (joint-sharers’) (‘summetochos’) of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” So we read in Ephesians 2:21 and 22; “all the building (‘oikodomeo) ‘fitly joined together’ (‘sunarmologeoo’), groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord . . . in Whom ye (believers) also are ‘buildded together’ (‘sunoikodomeo’) for a dwelling-place (‘katoiketerion’) of God through the Spirit.”

In Colossians 2:19 we read again concerning the believers joined to Christ, the Head, “from Whom all the Body by joints and bands (‘sundesmos’), having nourishment ministered,

and ‘knit together’ (‘sumbibazo’) . . . One reason why the glorified Christ gave gifts unto men ‘FOR THE PERFECTING (KATARTISMOS . . . UNIFICATION) OF THE SAINTS’ (Ephesians 4:12), was that believers’ hearts should be ‘knit together’ (‘sumbibazo’) in love, “unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the MYSTERY OF GOD. Note in Colossians 1:24 what Paul suffered for believers and the MYSTERY.

Again note Ephesians 4:15 and 16 that the Holy Spirit wants believers to speak the truth concerning ‘THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY’ in love, and wants them to grow up into the HEAD, from WHOM the whole BODY, ‘fitly joined together’ (‘sunarmologeō’) and ‘compact’ (‘sumbibazo’). So we should understand that CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, joined together, will be ‘ONE FLESH’, (Ephesians 5:31 and 32). “SO ALSO IS ‘THE CHRIST’ . . .” (I Corinthians 12:12): “for by ONE SPIRIT were we all BAPTIZED into ONE BODY” . . . (I Corinthians 12:13) . . . “There should be no schism (division) in the BODY.” (I Corinthians 12:25). Near the end of II Corinthians, 13:9, Paul wrote: “this also we wish, your ‘perfection’ (‘katartisis’), perfectly joined together. ‘Katartizo’ is used in I Corinthians 1:10.

Surely after reading of the Joint-Body and the joined members, we can see what Satan and ‘sectarianism’ have done to the Church. Surely the truth that we have presented is the deathblow to all of the twenty different water ceremonies practiced by sectarian groups. One of the most fantastic and absurd theories concerning water baptism is taught by the Fundamentalists, who are zealous immersionists, the brethren we claim are responsible for the stalemate. They read a watery grave witness into Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12, and yet they state that by God’s Divine BAPTISM unimmersed believers have been crucified with Christ, have been baptized into Christ’s death, have been raised up and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ. But they want them buried in water, which means that both the old man and the new man must be buried. Brethren who contend for this religious ceremony will not help in the recovery of ‘THE LOST PRECIOUS GEM’; but will do what they can to hinder. They cherish their water ceremony more than they desire to obey Ephesians 3:9: “make all see what is the dispensation of the MYSTERY.”

When we learn the meaning of ‘the dispensation of the MYSTERY’, what Paul meant by ‘the unsearchable (past-tracing-out) riches of Christ for the Gentiles’ (Ephesians 3:8), and the riches of God’s inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:16 to 18), we will know that Paul did not suffer for us, as a criminal (II Timothy 2:8 and 9 . . . Colossians 1:24), for preaching the gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 by which believing sinners become saints, but for making known ‘The MYSTERY of the gospel’ (Ephesians 6:19 and 20), ‘The Mystery of God’s will’. (Ephesians 1:9). The saving gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4 was ‘according to the Scriptures’; that is, in fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 13:29 and 30 . . . Luke 18:31 to 35 . . . Luke 24:44 to 46). ‘The MYSTERY of the gospel’ was not foretold by Israel’s prophets; but was according to God’s ‘Eternal Purpose’. (Ephesians 1:17 . . . Ephesians 3:11 . . . II Timothy 1:9 . . . Romans 8:28 to 32 . . . Ephesians 1:1 and 5 . . . Romans 16:25).

PETER—PAUL—GENTILES

What Peter and the Eleven preached, as recorded in the first chapters of Acts, was foretold by David, Joel, Moses, Samuel, Amos and many other prophets. (Acts 2:16 to 21 . . . Acts 2:27 to 33 . . . Acts 30:21 to 25 . . . Acts 10:43 . . . Acts 15:13 to 18). Therefore, the Twelve were not preaching ‘The MYSTERY of the gospel’, or preaching Jews and Gentiles into the unprophesied JOINT-BODY of Ephesians 3:6 when they preached Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19 to

26. Not one of the Twelve was in jail for preaching ‘THE MYSTERY’. There is no Bible record that any one of the Twelve called the CHURCH, ‘THE BODY.’

It should prove both interesting and profitable to read Paul’s statement in I Corinthians 3:10, Galatians 1:11 to 17 and Galatians 2:5 to 7; that Christ selected him to be ‘head-carpenter’ or ‘wise masterbuilder’, to lay the foundation; that he received his grace message from Christ in heaven by revelation and did not confer with Peter and the Eleven for authority, that when he did confer with the pillars and ‘somewhats’ years later they added nothing to Paul, but learned that he had something that they did not have. The record is plain that Paul received his several commissions by revelation; that he preached ‘grace’ to the Gentiles when Israel put it from them. (Acts 13:45 and 46). Surely when we read in Acts 10:28, Peter’s words that it was unlawful to preach to Gentiles, in Acts 11:19, that the scattered Christian Jews preached to Jews only, we will not teach that Peter and the Eleven were preaching Jews and Gentiles into ‘THE JOINT-BODY’, or they could have truthfully said what was said in Acts 14:27, in connection with Paul’s ministry: “all that God had done with them (Barnabas and Paul), and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

It will likewise prove interesting and profitable to carefully study Peter’s message to Cornelius, concerning Jesus of Nazareth in the land of the Jews and what the prophets foretold, and who is accepted of God (Acts 10:34 to 45); then read the reaction of the other Christian Jews (Acts 11:1 to 19). Then most significant is the sudden ending of the record of Peter’s activities with the statement in Acts 12:19: “he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there abode.” Peter could truthfully have said then “Paul must increase: I must decrease.” From the thirteenth chapter to the end of the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Acts the only record of Peter’s activities is recorded in one chapter, the fifteenth, and that because of Paul’s request for a conference. At that time Peter and his fellow-apostles agreed to Paul’s request for a conference. The decisions reached at that very important conference at Jerusalem, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, seemed good to the Holy Spirit. At that conference Peter and James declared that God had used Peter’s mouth to preach to the first Gentiles (the household of Cornelius). (Acts 15:7). What about the other eleven mouths? The Scriptures are silent. Just why was it that James and others did not approve of Peter’s eating with saved Gentiles more than fifteen years after Pentecost? (Galatians 2:10 to 14). It causes us to ask if there were any uncircumcised saved Gentiles in the Jerusalem assembly. And a question that must come to every thinking, spiritual, student of the Scriptures, who compares the so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, “disciple all nations”, with Galatians 2:9, that Peter and his fellow-apostles agreed to go to Jews; how could these messengers of the Lord preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:14 to 16) and disciple all nations, if they confined their ministry to Jews? In this connection it is very interesting and enlightening to compare Mark 16:14 to 16 with Colossians 1:5, 6 and 23, noting the ‘every creature’ in these verses.

The Gentiles were ‘far off’ from God. (Ephesians 2:13). The Lord sent Paul far off from Jerusalem to evangelize the Gentiles ‘far-off’ from God. (Acts 22:17 to 21). But after Paul agreed to assume the responsibility of evangelizing the Gentiles (Galatians 2:9) he preached to many Jews, (Acts 19:10); becoming a Jew to the Jews. (I Corinthians 9:16 to 21). Paul’s distinctive calling was for a ministry to the Gentiles. (Romans 15:16 . . . Galatians 1:15 and 16 . . . Romans 11:13 . . . I Timothy 2:7 . . . II Timothy 1:11 . . . Ephesians 3:8 . . . Ephesians 3:1 to 3). Paul never preached ‘the gospel of the kingdom’ (Matthew 4:23 . . . Matthew 24:12 to 14) to the Gentiles.

By reading Genesis 17:1 to 7 and Genesis 17:9 to 27 we shall understand what is meant by Acts 7:8, that God gave to Abraham, for Israel, 'the covenant of circumcision'. So preaching 'the gospel of the circumcision' (Galatians 2:7), meant preaching 'the covenant of circumcision'. Paul was given 'the gospel of the uncircumcision'. (Galatians 2:7). Abram, years before he became 'circumcised Abraham at the age of 99, was declared righteous in uncircumcision (Genesis 15:6 to 8) (Romans 4:7 to 12). We learn in Galatians 3:8 that Abram was a sample or kind of firstfruits; for the Scriptures, in Genesis 15:6 to 8, foresaw that a great multitude of Gentiles would receive from Paul 'the gospel of the uncircumcision' and be justified by grace through faith, without law, works of religion.

We referred to 'the covenant of circumcision', recorded in Genesis 17:1 to 7 and Genesis 17:9 to 27. Why did God break into this detailed explanation of this covenant with Genesis 17:8: "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession: and I will be their God?" Under the guarantee of 'the covenant of circumcision', God will surely be Israel's God; "Israel shall be saved, 'AS IT IS WRITTEN' . . ." (Romans 11:26). Note why. God's gifts and calling are without repentance. (Romans 11:28 and 29). Israel will be saved for the 'fathers' sake. (Romans 11:28). Abraham was the first of the fathers. God made a covenant and confirmed it with an oath. (Hebrew 6:17). The same God Who promised to be Israel's God promised that Canaan will be Israel's land. (Amos 9:11 to 15). (Ezekiel 36:24 . . . Ezekiel 37:27).

Both of these promises are included in the 'RESTITUTION', spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 8:19 to 21). "Yea, all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days!" (Acts 3:24). Israel's national redemption and their occupation of Israel are of necessity included in 'the gospel of the circumcision' (Galatians 2:7). The message of Acts 2:38, like Luke 3:3, was included in the proclamation of 'the gospel of the circumcision' and 'the gospel of the kingdom'. But Paul said that he must testify of 'the gospel of the grace of God' (Acts 20:24); that Christ, by special revelation, committed to him, "the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles" (Ephesians 3:1 to 3), even 'the unsearchable (unprophesied) riches of Christ.'" (Ephesians 3:8).

What thinking, spiritual Christian has not asked, why is it recorded in Acts 12:19 that Peter abode at Caesarea, and after that not once in the last sixteen chapters of Acts is there any record of the missionary journeys of Peter and his fellow-apostles? When, during the Acts period, Peter stepped out of the land of the Jews, he got into rather serious trouble. (Galatians 2:6 to 14). Did Peter preach 'reconciliation' to Gentiles, because Israel was cast away (Romans 11:15)? Certainly not. Could Peter have said when he preached Acts 2:22 and Acts 10:38 that he did not know Jesus after the flesh (II Corinthians 5:16) or, in his message of Acts 2:39, that Gentiles were obtaining Divine mercy because of Israel's unbelief? (Romans 11:30).

AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL

After Peter used the keys of the kingdom there was no longer a need for 'the gospel of the circumcision', which guaranteed Canaan to Israel, or 'the gospel of the kingdom'. If after Peter was reminded of God's 'grace' message in Galatians 2:16 he preached any other gospel, he should have been disqualified and removed from service. But he was not. The apostle Paul did not work under the authority of Peter and the Eleven, and Paul did not work under the so-called great commission. When converted he conferred not with flesh and blood. Note why he preached 'grace' to Gentiles. (Acts 13:46). Years later the other apostles in conference added nothing to

Paul. (Galatians 2:6). Paul received his orders, his 'grace' message and program, by revelation, from the risen, glorified Christ. (Galatians 1:11 to 16 . . . Ephesians 3:1 to 3 . . . II Corinthians 12:1 to 12). He even went up to Jerusalem, by revelation. (Galatians 2:1 to 4). Paul was the only unsaved person who saw Christ after his resurrection; for he was born as an abortion. (I Corinthians 15:8).

'The gospel of the circumcision' is no part of 'THE MYSTERY OF (Ephesians 6:19 and 20 . . . Ephesians 3:1 to 3). Paul called the 'dispensation' (oikonomia), which was committed unto him by Christ, in II Timothy 1:12. "my 'paratheke,'" 'my deposit'. Another form of the same Greek word is used in II Corinthians 5:19, translated 'committed'; "hath committed unto us (deposited with us) 'the word of reconciliation'." This was not deposited with Peter while he was using the kingdom keys.

Let us keep in mind that the 'MYSTERY' truth of Ephesians and Colossians is for 'THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS', to keep Christians from being wind-tossed 'INFANTS'. (Ephesians 4:10 to 14). Note that 'evangelists' are included in the gifts for the work of the ministry. How foolish then are the evangelists who make light of the importance of obeying Ephesians 3:9, saying they are too busy saving souls to get into any discussion concerning the difference between Peter's Pentecostal message 'BEFORE THE FALL OF ISRAEL' and Paul's unmixed 'grace' message, 'AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL'. Where do we learn in the Bible that ignorance of God's 'ETERNAL PURPOSE' will make a Christian a better soul-winner?

Moreover most evangelists never seem to learn their lessons. Follow any so-called big evangelistic campaign and see how the Seventh-Day Adventists, 'Jehovah's Witnesses', The Mormons, The Fanatical Pentecostals, The Second-Blessing Holiness Groups, The Water Regeneration Religious Groups, and The Healers, with great zeal hurry to the new convents, the new-born babes. They generally capture and hold them, as religious 'INFANTS', wholly ignorant of the dispensation of the grace of God which is repudiated, if not ridiculed, by every one of the groups we have mentioned. God's way of establishing saints is set forth in Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 4:1 to 16.

As a group, the Fundamentalists, who call themselves independent or undenominational, but who are only zealous Baptists with a different name, are the pick of all, so far as sound doctrine is concerned. But because they do not understand God's 'ETERNAL PURPOSE' (II Timothy 1:9 . . . Romans 8:28 to 31 . . . Ephesians 1:4 and 5 . . . Ephesians 1:11 . . . Ephesians 3:8 to 11 . . . Romans 16:25), they begin this present 'grace' age and dispensation with Peter and Pentecost, use Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 to force water into Romans 6:4. They therefore have no antidote for many of the religious groups that are playing havoc with the religious 'INFANTS' in the Church. Surely the great majority of Christians are suffering with 'SPIRITUAL INFANTILE PARALYSIS'. . . (Hebrews 4:12 and 13 . . . I Corinthians 3:1 to 3). The word 'feeble' in Hebrews 4:12 is 'paraluo'. A Christian woman, as a true Berean (Acts 17:11), should ask herself the question, "if I am working under the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, is it not my duty to baptize all whom I evangelize?" What would her pastor say?

Also it would seem that there should be a real uprising in the Fundamentalists' fellowship or union with the demand upon the part of those who are Bereans with the question; "what right have you preachers and teachers to revise and abridge Mark 16:16 to 18 to read 'he that believeth and is saved should be baptized with water as a witness to the world, and skip the signs'?" Let us all be honest and check up, and see why we have blundered. Let us not be guilty of altering the Scriptures to make them agree with our accepted doctrinal statements or adopted religious programs. What group of Christians today preaches Mark 16:16 to 18 as this program is

recorded in plain words in the Bible: “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My Name shall they cast out demons: they shall speak with new tongues: They shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover?”

Many sincere, zealous Christians, with honest intent, believe that water is essential for salvation and for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). They accept Mark 16:16 as the up-to-date gospel; but they say positively or negatively that the program of tongues and miraculous signs is both unimportant and unnecessary. So it is right and proper to ignore Mark 16:17 and 18. They know that other Christians, equally sincere, faithful and zealous, who do try to include tongues and miraculous physical healing and poison-drinking with water regeneration, become fanatically wild often bordering on insanity and seriously injure the Lord’s work.

SPRINKLING OR IMMERSING FOR SALVATION

Two of the outstanding church organizations in this country are ‘The Lutherans’ and ‘The Church of Christ’. There are in these two groups, in this country alone, more than six million members. These six million church-members ignore Mark 16:17 and 18. But they are absolutely sure that Mark 16:16 teaches plainly that without water baptism for the remission of sins, in addition to faith in Christ, no person can be saved or become a Christian. Each of these two denominational churches claims to be the one true Bible Church, proclaiming the one true message of salvation. As do all denominations teaching water regeneration, these two preach and teach that after a person is saved by faith and water that person can, and may, lose his salvation or regeneration. With ‘The Church of Christ’ James 2:24 is the verse of warning to keep their members from losing salvation.

Although the Holy Spirit declared that there should be no division in the Body (I Corinthians 12:25) and Christ said, “a house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:20), there is a real division between ‘The Lutherans’ and ‘The Church of Christ’. The Church of Christ theologians ask the Lutheran theologians how a very young child can believe; and if the parents believe for the child, why not let the parents be sprinkled for the child? Then the Lutherans reply to The Church of Christ elder; “you say that only those who are members of your Church of Christ are real Bible Christians, and that you become Christians by faith in Christ plus immersion in water. Then how and when do your little sons and daughters become members of The Church of Christ?” Although both denominations hold tenaciously to Mark 16:16, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”, they are like the Jews and Samaritans who had no dealings with each other.

And we repeat that the Fundamentalists, who have the dispensation of grace begin with Peter and Pentecost and try to work the commissions of Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:16 to 18 into God’s present ‘grace’ dispensation and message, are helpless as referees. They know that Paul never preached Acts 2:38 to Gentiles. But they do not know why. They too need to be rescued from their confusion; and should know that their deliverance cannot come by twisting and altering and abbreviating Mark 16:16 to 18 and Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 to mean exactly what these Scriptures do not say.

THE REAL RELIGIOUS TUG OF WAR

For some years I was an evangelist in the southern part of this country. I learned much of the religious tug of war, if not a religious feud, which has been going on for many years between the pastors and evangelists representing the Southern Baptist denomination and the elders of The Church of Christ.

As an interested and grieved spectator I was reminded of the old gentleman and his wife from the rural district who for the first time saw a tug of war, a group of men at each end of a long rope, each group striving to pull the other group over the white line on the ground. The 'country' lady remarked to her husband that she thought it would be much easier on the men if a knife were used to cut the rope. The old gentleman replied, "if that were done while they are pulling so hard, men at both ends might fall and be hurt." That religious tug of war, or water baptism controversial battle, is still going on, with ever-increasing numbers of religious men on both sides. In recent years the Pentecostals have tried to step into the struggle as referees, to show both the Southern Baptist preachers and The Church of Christ elders that they have been dishonest in handling Mark 16:16 to 18. But the two contestants have rejected the fanaticism of the Pentecostals as an acceptable solution of their problems or a settlement of their differences.

The Southern Baptists and the elders of The Church of Christ and the Pentecostals should take a little time off, and for several days, at least, be true, honest, unprejudiced Bereans (Acts 17:11 . . . I John 2:26 and 27) and ask if Paul meant what he said when he said, "follow me, as I follow Christ" (I Corinthians 11:11 . . . Philippians 3:17), and when he said, "I thank God I baptized none of you (but a very few)" (I Corinthians 1:14), and when he said, "I thank God I spoke with tongues more than ye all" . . . "forbid not to speak, with tongues." (I Corinthians 14:18 and 39). Do the religious leaders of these three groups know why Paul said, "Christ sent me not to baptize" (I Corinthians 1:17) . . . "there is ONE BAPTISM" (Ephesians 4:5)? What Southern Baptist pastor or Church of Christ elder thanks God that he speaks with tongues or that he baptized so few that he cannot remember more than five?

The Church of Christ elder teaches that water baptism, together with faith in Christ, is absolutely necessary for the remission of sins and regeneration and salvation. Is there any Church of Christ preacher who will suffer as Paul suffered, when he traveled in birth, when he could have wished himself accursed from Christ, when he became all things to all men that by all means he might save some? Paul was willing to face what seemed certain death to help sinners to be saved. Why do not prejudiced, religious, confused church-leaders exercise a little common sense, at least prove they are rational, by seriously, diligently prayerfully, spiritually asking, "if there had been any saving value in water baptism in the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles, committed to Paul, would Paul have thanked God for the very, very few he baptized during his eighteen months in a very, very large city?" If that water had had any power to remove the sinner's guilt, to make him a new creature in Christ Jesus, Paul would have baptized day and night and would have thanked God for permitting him to baptize a great multitude of believers.

No student of the Scriptures would believe that Paul thanked God that he had helped no believer to witness to the world that he had been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, or that he had helped no saved man to become identified with the local assembly. He did thank God for the very, very few that he had baptized. The Baptists are divided in their teaching as to the significance of water baptism: some say an entrance into the local Baptist Church, others a watery grave witness that the individual has been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the death of Christ and should witness that he was also buried with him, by being immersed in water.

With this absurd, unsound teaching, it is easy to see why the Church of Christ elders, with Luke 3:3, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:1 to 15 and Acts 22:16 on their side, will not let go of their end of the 'tug of war' rope, and allow the Southern Baptists to pull them over the line.

The poor helpless Presbyterians can not help any of the 'immersion' groups, with their various and sundry 'watery' theories, as long as they teach that they sprinkle babies on the head, because they are children of the covenant. and because Isaac was circumcised when he was eight days old. The poor little baby doesn't know what is being done to make it a child of the covenant. But a regenerated new born babe should see the nonsense of teaching that sprinkling took the place of circumcision, when no male was baptized by Christ's servants during His years on earth, or for some years thereafter, who had not been first circumcised. And why sprinkle baby girls or women; for none were ever circumcised?

BAPTISM BEFORE AND AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL

We may well challenge any student of the Scriptures to find the Bible record of any Gentile having been baptized with water after Paul was directed to make known the truth concerning the ministry of reconciliation and the new creation in II Corinthians 5:17 to 20. The programs and messages of God, 'BEFORE THE FALL OF ISRAEL', included water baptism. There is as much difference between 'the gospel of the circumcision', preached 'BEFORE THE FALL OF ISRAEL', and the ministry and word of RECONCILIATION (II Corinthians 5:17 to 21 . . . Ephesians 2:16 . . . Colossians 1:20 and 21), preached 'AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL' (Romans 11:15 and Romans 5:10 and 11, as there is between law and grace. There is the same great difference between "repent . . . be baptized for the remission of sins . . . receive the Holy Spirit" of Acts 2:38, and "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit" of Titus 3:5 to 8.

Think of the ruin, wreck and disgrace that Satan has caused with the ungracious and unholy disunity among members of the Body of Christ by twenty-five or more theories concerning water baptism, when the Word of God is plain that ONE BAPTISM is the basis of a unified BODY. Many of our leading Fundamentalists are almost 'water worshippers': and must either be brought into the light of Ephesians 4:1 to 7 or they will continue to be what they are, a real hindrance to the recovery of lost truth.