

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

APRIL 1936

DECLARED RIGHTEOUS WITHOUT A CAUSE, BY GRACE

SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND?

The believing sinner is justified freely by God's grace; that is, he is declared righteous "without a cause". Romans 3:24. "Without a cause by His grace". Little wonder, after the glorious gospel of grace, is presented, beginning with these words of Romans 3:24, "being justified freely" (or declared righteous without a cause) by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus", and on to the close of the fifth chapter of Romans, that the question follows, "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" It was because the human race, from the days of Adam, had continued in sin, without any human cure, or natural remedy, that the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, was made to abound. Abounding grace is because of abounding sin. Therefore, the question, shall the justified believer continue to live in sin because of the more abundant Divine grace; or sin to make grace abound? The answer is, "Gods forbid".

You will note that we have changed the reading from "justified freely by His grace", to "declared righteous without a cause, by His grace." "Without a cause." "Without a cause." The Hebrew word is "chinnam". The Greek word is "dorean". The word is sometimes translated "freely", sometimes, "for nought", sometimes, "without a cause." It comes from the verb meaning, to bestow gratuitously. In Genesis 29:15 Laban tells Jacob that he is not to serve him "for nought"; that is, wholly without any wages. This is the word translated in Psalms 69:4, "without a cause"; "that hated me without a cause". Perhaps you remember the question which Satan put to God, concerning God's righteous servant Job, "doth Job fear God for nought; that is without a cause, or without pay?" No; Job was a very prosperous man. The word is translated "without a cause" in Lamentations 3:52—Job 9:17—Ezekiel 14:23—Psalm 35:7—Proverbs 1:11—28:29 and 24:28. We quote Proverbs 24:28: "Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause; and deceive not with thy lips." It is translated "freely" in Numbers 11:5.

In the Book of Matthew, the Greek word "doron" is translated "gift" eight times. The word used by Christ in offering to give to the woman at the well in Samaria the water of salvation is "dorea". The word "dorean" used in the Scripture, "being declared righteous without a cause" is translated freely in Revelation 21:6 and 22:17, which read

"I will give unto Him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

"And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,"

Paul refused to permit the Corinthians to pay him for preaching to them the gospel. The word "dorean" is translated "freely" in II Corinthians 11:17.

We are told in very plain language, in Ephesians 2:8, that we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves. Then are added these words: "It is the gift (doron) of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." "Doron" excludes any kind of work; so that all boasting must

be excluded and all glory go to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God desires the redeemed sinner to say with Paul, “thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. (dorea)”.

Messengers of the unmixed grace of God are few and far between, and what a time they do have trying to convince sinners that eternal life is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ; that salvation is the gift of God, without the requirement of a single work, without any striving or struggling, without any feeling of worthiness, without any religious ceremony.

Perhaps it will help some to see this blessed truth of grace if they will compare John 15:25 with the Scripture “declared righteous without a cause”. We quote John 15:25: “But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause”.

Christ was the greatest benefactor that ever ministered unto suffering humanity. Surely He was hated without a cause. He graciously permitted Himself to be hated. The wages of sin is death. He died, but He did not sin. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “Christ knew no sin.” He was wholly without sin. In that sense He died without a cause. But in the shadow of the cross that meant to Him cruel suffering, He cried; “for this cause came I unto this hour.” He came to die, to save others from the wages of sin. On the cross the Lord of glory was made what He was not: He was made sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. Christ’s work was that God might be just and the justifier of all who believe in Christ. Romans 3:25 and 26. As Christ was hated without a cause (dorean), so believing sinners are declared righteous without a cause (dorean).

As we read the remaining verses of the third chapter of Romans and then pass on to the fourth and fifth chapters of Romans we learn that the sinner is made righteous by God with God’s own righteousness, “without works” and without religion, “without the deeds of the law”, Romans 3:28—Romans 4:3 and 4; all on the basis of the substitutionary redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. All boasting is excluded by the law of faith. Romans 3:27. Then on into the sixth chapter of Romans we pass, and learn that the believer has died with Christ, has been buried with Christ, and, has been raised with Christ to walk-in newness of life; that he is not under the law, but under grace. But some would also put him under the water. For what? They hardly know. Some say the water ceremony is efficacious and necessary to give the believer his newness of life. But this makes the other statements untrue, declared righteous “without a cause”, “without works”. The water ceremony is work. Others say; “no, I am a grace preacher” Romans 6:3 is spiritual baptism, but of course, Romans 6:4 is water baptism. Whatever that baptism is, it is meritorious, and is the cause that produces the effect; placing the believer in Christ, dead, buried and raised to walk in newness of life. If the water is meritorious in Romans 6:4, then the believer is not declared righteous “without a cause” or “without works”. If the believer’s salvation is wholly by grace, and if he, by grace alone, by a Divine baptism not made with hands, is brought to the newness of life, then there is no water baptism in Romans 6:4; for the believer is buried and raised by the same baptism that brings him to death in Christ and with Christ.

“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” God forbid that we should either teach this, or try to prove abounding grace by continuing in sin. On the contrary, the believer should prove by a life of righteousness, peace and joy, that the same abundant grace that saved him from the wages or penalty of sin is altogether sufficient to give victory over sinful practices.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this

present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:11 to 13.

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that yet always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” II Corinthians 9:8.

The unbeliever is without Christ and is dead in sins. The believer is in Christ and is dead to sin. “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” Romans 6:2. The Divine power of the omnipotent God, that raised Christ from the dead is given to us. Ephesians 1:19. God is the God of all grace. God is faithful who will not, suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with every temptation will make a way of escape.

“My grace is sufficient”, are the words of the risen Christ: God’s grace and power are altogether sufficient for the believer to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

OUR EASTER MESSAGE

GOD OPENED THE DOOR

When the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son, to be the Redeemer. Galatians 4:4 and 5. “We testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” I John 4:14. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”. “Christ Jesus was made for the suffering of death”. “Christ Jesus came down from heaven.” “Christ Jesus appeared once in the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” “This man after He had made one sacrifice for sins forever sat down at the right hand of God.” Christ Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. He abolished death and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light in the gospel. Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day. So we see it is all Christ. It was by the grace of God that He tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:8, Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 10:10 to 14, Hebrews 12:2. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him the highest place in the highest heavenlies. There today, in glory, sits, the omnipotent, eternal Christ, able to, save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25.

The world waited 4000 years for God’s fulness of time; for the Second Man to come from heaven to die, according to the Scriptures, and to be raised the third day, according to the Scriptures. By that coming, by that death and resurrection God opened the door of salvation, the door of grace wide open.

Hear these words:

“Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” Revelation 3:8. Who opened the door? God. Good news, sinner, believe it and enter in. Hear this word of Christ: “I am the door by me if any man enter in he shall be saved.” John 10:9. Nothing here to be reasoned out. It cannot be. This is Divine truth; good news for sinners of all kinds. You are just the right kind of a sinner for this message of salvation. It is eternal life. Christ said: “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” John 10:28.

THE CLOSED 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. Who opened the door? God. Who is going to close the door? God. When? It may be soon. For you it may be sooner than soon; for you may put off this earthly tabernacle any moment. Then this door will be forever shut. “After death the judgment.” When Noah went into the ark God shut him in and shut the others out. God longs to shut you in with Christ. He willeth not the death of any man. “If any man enter in, he shall be saved.”

THE OPEN SEPULCHRE—DOOR

Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” Mark 16:4.

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 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.

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 Mary’s had finished their question, they had their answer: “They saw 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.

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 that picture, singing with other redeemed ones; “Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God.” Revelation 5:9.

GOD OPENED OUR DOOR ABOUT 45 A.D.

“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, God-fearing, religious, Jew-loving, benevolent, praying Gentile was unlike many of the Gentiles to whom Paul

afterward preached. Paul was debtor even to the Barbarians; and heathen were turned to God from idols.

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. Romans 3:24 to 28. Salvation is just as free as the air we breathe and will be so long as this day of grace continues; that is, until the last member of the Body of Christ has been baptized 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.

ANOTHER DOOR—IS IT OPEN?

“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 me, 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 the 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. In II Timothy 1:12 Paul called it, “my deposit” (original text).

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.

Satan will do all possible to keep the sinner from hearing the unmixed gospel of grace. If not successful, he will keep him from believing it, if possible. Then he will do everything possible to keep the believer from obeying Ephesians 3:9. See what astir has been recently created in the camp of the Fundamentalists because some of God's children have given themselves to the study of the blessed truth of the mystery.

Christ is now in the heavenlies Head over all things to the Church. which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

PART III

An intelligent grasp of the facts thus far given would make it very difficult, if not impossible, for one to accept without reservation the statement that the so-called "Great Commission" stands unaltered as the marching orders for the Body of Christ today. If the writer believed that it was God's will in this dispensation of the mystery to make disciples of all nations by preaching to them the kingdom gospel, to baptize them in water for the remission of sins, to heal the sick, to speak with tongues, and to work miracles, he would be among the first to undertake that program. But if God has revealed that this program has been temporarily interrupted by a new, secret dispensation, then he would be the last to want to frustrate God's purposes by mixing the old and the new. In order to further ascertain the real meaning of this commission, the following question will be considered: "Was the commission of Matthew 28:19, 20 ever carried out by the Twelve?"

They were commissioned to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, but according to the Bible record they never obeyed this command, but instead baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:16; Acts 10:48; Acts 19:5). From the practice of the apostles they evidently understood that they were not supposed to obey this commission.

As touching the discipling of all nations, there is no record of any nation ever having been made a disciple. Christians for centuries have understood this expression to mean the conversion of nations, not merely making disciples of some out of all nations. For this reason missionaries have tried to claim China or Africa for Christ, and while this is a noble aspiration the Bible clearly teaches that no nation will be thus won for Christ until Christ Himself returns to the earth. Until His return our Lord told His Apostles that they would be hated of all nations for His sake (Matthew 24:9), thus making it impossible for even one nation to be won for Christ until His return; that the Jews would be led away captive into all nations until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24); that when He came the second time, all nations should be gathered before Him in judgment (Matthew 25:32); and that they were to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). With these facts in mind it should be plain that discipling all nations would be an impossibility as long as all nations were at enmity, but after their judgment at Christ's coming it would be a possibility and an accomplished fact.

Upon the day of Pentecost there were Jews out of all nations in Jerusalem who heard the message (Acts 2:5), and several years later there were scattered abroad many Jewish believers who went everywhere preaching to none but unto the Jews only (Acts 11:19); and then seven or eight years after Pentecost Peter was given a special revelation to preach to a God-fearing

Gentile household; but so far as God has given us record, none of the Twelve ministered to any other Gentile during the period of the Acts. The Twelve made no attempt to disciple all nations, but Paul, whom we have before proved did not labor under the Great Commission, tells us: “by whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name (Romans 1:5), and “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:25 and 26); and also “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and, strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear” (II Timothy 4:17). Paul was not fulfilling the Great Commission; he was not discipling all nations; but he had a world-wide commission to preach to all nations and he fulfilled it. Thus it may be seen that the Kingdom and the Body commissions are both world-wide in scope, but they differ in content of message. It is not necessary to go to the Great Commission for a universal appeal: Paul’s writings are full of that.

As to teaching all things which Jesus commanded while He was on earth, it is significant that Paul nowhere instructs believers to do so, but instead gives the commands of the ascended Christ. Paul refers to the birth and the death of Christ, but to nothing in between. The Kingdom teachings are not for the Body of Christ; hence Paul says: “yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him so no more” (II Corinthians 5:16). Christ was born under the Law (Galatians 4:4), and His earthly teachings were the intensification of the law (Matthew 7:12), but if any thing is plain it is that the believer today is not under the law. The rule of Law will be resumed in the Kingdom, when Christ shall rule with a rod of iron (Revelation 12:5).

Having seen that the commission in Matthew has never been fulfilled and cannot be until Christ returns, the commission in Mark 16:15 to 18 must likewise be examined “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel in or to the whole creation” (R.V.), is the first command. This commission seems to have been interrupted before it was completed, for there is no record in the Bible of the Twelve going into all the world. Instead they stayed at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), but the peculiar fact is that the believers who were scattered preached only to Jews. Even more peculiar is the fact that about seven years after this command was given, God had to give a special revelation to Peter that he could now go to a Gentile. Peter, in justifying his action which up to that time had been unlawful (Acts 10:28), told of his vision but made no reference to this command. Surely if Jesus had given the apostles authority to go to the Gentiles, Peter would never have been called on the carpet for his action; and if he had been, he would have made use of this commission as the chief point in his argument. Evidently most Christians today make this commission mean something entirely different from what the Twelve understood it to be. Of course, they could not go into all the world at once; for they were instructed in Acts 1:8 to cover Jerusalem first, then all Judea, then Samaria, and finally the uttermost parts. Whether or not Christ so meant it, it seems that the Apostles understood that they were supposed to get all Israel saved before the Gentiles could hear. At least this is what Christ had taught them in dealing with the Syro-Phenician woman: “Let the children (Israel) first be filled” (Mark 7:27). “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the-dogs (Gentiles)”. Not only had Jesus taught this, but every Old Testament prophet is in accord with it. The prophets spoke much of Gentile salvation, but none gave the slightest intimation that Gentiles would be blessed before Israel as a nation was first saved and blessed. It was only “after this” that all the Gentiles were to call upon the

name of the Lord (Acts 15:16 and 17). Gentile salvation because of Israel's blindness and fall, instead of through Israel's salvation and blessing, is a part of the Mystery which was committed to Paul (Romans 11:11 and 25).

The program of "filling the children first" began on the day of Pentecost. Peter said to Israel, "Ye are the children—unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you" (Acts 3:25 and 26). Paul likewise began his ministry in this way: "children—It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you". (Acts 13:26, 33 and 46). Paul then turned to the Gentiles, not because the Great Commission said to do so, but because Israel judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life. Peter had said on Pentecost: "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off". (Acts 2:39), but Daniel 9:7 makes it clear that Gentiles are not meant: "unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou has driven them." This program of going into all the world with the Kingdom Gospel was begun, but never finished because it was interrupted by the ministry of Paul. It will again be resumed before the end of the age (Matthew 24:14).

The second command is: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." This statement was developed quite fully under point six in last month's installment. (Suffice it here to say the Acts gives record of this order being carried out. The Twelve baptized with water for the remission of sins, not as a testimony that the baptized had been saved by receiving the Holy Spirit, but in order that they might receive the Spirit (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12 to 17; Acts 19:5 and 6; Acts 22:16). Circumcision never saved any one, but under the old dispensation it was impossible to be saved apart from it (Genesis 17:10 to 14). Water baptism never saved any one, but according to the Mark commission and the practice of the Twelve, it was a necessary act of obedience and a factor in salvation and receiving the Holy Spirit. This is one of the great differences between the Gospel of the Circumcision and Paul's Gospel of the Uncircumcision, which carried no command to baptize (I Corinthians 1:17).

The third section of this Mark commission deals with the signs which were to follow them that believe. Casting out demons, speaking with tongues, working miracles, and healing the sick, is a record of the Acts in a nut-shell. These signs were given because the Jews require a sign (I Corinthians 1:22) and God was dealing with the Jew first. Paul made it plain, however, that these signs were to pass away as soon, as the revelation of the "perfect man" was come (I Corinthians 13:8 to 11). That which was perfect came after Israel was set aside Israel was set aside at the close of the Acts, and the two distinctive orders for believing Jews and believing Gentiles (Acts 21:20 to 25) gave place to the one order during the Dispensation of the Mystery (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:25 and 26).

It thus appears that the Twelve Apostles did undertake to carry out the commission as given in Mark 16; Luke 24; and Acts 1; but they did not undertake that of Matthew 28. Paul in his Gentile ministry never labored under any of these. Since it has been shown that the so-called Great Commission is not for the Body of Christ, it must now be explained just what is the commission for the Church. God willing, this subject will be covered in the last of this series to appear next month.

(To be Continued)

MAY OUR THOUGHTS AND MEDITATIONS BE ACCEPTABLE

BY PASTOR HENRY BULTEMA

“Let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts” said God, “for My thoughts are not your thoughts”. Isaiah 55:7 and 8.

God has a good deal to say about our thoughts in His Word: He saw that his thoughts are only evil. Genesis 6:5 The Lord understands the thoughts. I Chronicles 28:9. This is comfort to the godly, terror to the wicked. No thought can be withholden from God. Job 42:2. He knoweth the thought of man. Psalm 94:11. It is the desire of the godly that God may know his thoughts. Psalms 139:23. The thoughts of the wicked words are an abomination to God. Proverbs 15:26.

We read several times that Christ knew the thoughts of the wicked religious leaders. Matthew 9:4; Matthew 12:25; Luke 5:22; Luke 6:8; Luke 11:17. He knew that the heart was the origin of the thoughts. Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21.

The Apostle Paul desired to bring every thought into captivity to the Lord, II Corinthians 10:5, and the Word of God is a discernor, or, critic, of our thoughts. The things true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, think on these things: Philippians 4:8. Some dear folks loudly boast of their frankness, because they just say what they think, flinging out the words right and left as they come, no matter where they strike, or whom the wound; for words can be more cutting than sorrows. Call this never frankness or outspokenness, call it rather miserable impertinence, impudence. It is not only extremely rude and crude, brusque and brutal, but it is unethical and unscriptural; for we have no right to unload our bad humors, ill tempers and spites and envies upon our neighbor’s heart. Of every vain word we must give an account by and by.

If we want to unload our hearts, let us go to the Lord and empty ourselves into His great heart. He knows, He loves, He cares. In every pang that rends the heart, the Man of glory has a part, but He has no part in the boasted frankness of uttering whatever rolls over the lips. Lord Jesus, may our thoughts and meditations be acceptable unto Thee!

PAULINE MISSION-METHODS

Many Christians seem to fear that if they do not labor under the Great Commission of Matthew 28, the mission spirit will wax lukewarm and finally disappear. Just the reverse is true. The Pauline principle and practice will be conducive to burning mission zeal.

It will, first of all, mean self-support of the native church. When Paul brought the Gospel of Grace, he taught the believers in the poorest districts, as in Macedonia, the grace of giving, and the greater blessedness of giving than receiving. He did not tell the old mother-church in Jerusalem to help finance the cause of the heathen mission, but he asked the Gentile Christians to help the poor old mother-church in Jerusalem. No saint is ever full-orbed and “perfect” unless he is drilled in the holy art of giving. If a native believer cannot bring a dime, let him bring a chicken, and if he cannot afford to make an offering, let him bring an egg. It is amazing what native Christians can do if they have a heart to give, and it is still more wonderful how God can multiply the widow’s oil. If you teach the natives to expect all the help from the church at home, they may be pleased at first, but it will make them covetous, and covetousness is idolatry, and you were sent, and went to get them out of idolatry.

The Pauline method stands also for self-rule, of the native churches. The Jewish method was to send committees from Jerusalem to investigate, as we see in Acts, but the Pauline method means self-government of the native churches. Do the native saints not have the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth? It was of a Gentile church that the apostle Paul wrote the following eight glorious facts in Ephesians 1:13 and 14: (1) They heard the word of truth. This was a good beginning. Many natives today do not hear, from their missionaries, the word of truth, and I am

extremely sorry to say do not start right. (2) The Ephesian heathen believed the word of truth. Their missionary to them had not preached repentance and faith to them. (3) They had been saved, for Paul had not preached a social gospel, but “the gospel of your salvation.” (4) These Gentile believers had been sealed with the Holy Spirit; not after, but at the moment of their belief, consequently they were also safe and secure. Many think this sealing of the Holy Spirit is a fine feeling of assurance or something like that. It is the nature of seal to manifest itself to the outside and that is also true of this seal. (5) They were also in Him, i.e. in the Lord Jesus Christ and this again points to their perfect safety and their exalted position. The expression in whom is found twice for emphasis. They were accepted in the Beloved. (6) They also hoped in Christ. The word trusted should be hoped. These young believers on the mission field had the earnest of their inheritance. This was the “God’s penny”, the part payment to bind the bargain. If the part-payment is so glorious, what shall the full possession be? (8) These products of mission-labors lived “to the praises of His glory.” Not less than three times do we find this expression in the first chapter of Ephesians.

Products of such mission-work should be ready for self propagation. The native Christians need not “halt” on the crutches of lukewarm Christians in the home lands. They should not look askance, nor behind them, but in the simplicity of their faith pass on to victory with Him. It’s better for them also to trust in the Lord at all times and not put confidence in the white church prince at home, often blacker on the inside than the heathen are on the outside.

What would the result of such a Pauline mission-method be? Manifold blessings would accrue from this. All the natives talents would be used for God. Native interest would increase. Some of the most touching stories are extant in regard to the self-sacrifice of native believers. These true stories would be multiplied through this method. Much more money would be collected and more trained missionaries could be sent forth. Far more interest would not only be created in the fields, but also at home, and the real givers would vie with the natives in liberal offerings to the Lord.

In Ephesians alone we find at least ten great mission-texts and even more great principles for foreign missions. If the Ephesian truth would burn in the hearts of all the saints today, all the tribes and tongues would hear the truth in less than a decade. The mission work everywhere is suffering enormously because it has not been run according to Pauline principles and practices.

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS

BY PASTOR VINCENT BENNETT

LESSON NUMBER FIVE

THE PLAN AND WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD

Ephesians 1:3 to 14

We have already dealt with verses Ephesians 1:3 to 6 which reveal the work of the Father in the plan of the God-head. Now we turn our attention to verses Ephesians 1:7 to 12, which make plain to us how the SON realized the Father’s good pleasure.

REDEMPTION IN HIM,

Ephesians 1:7. “In whom we have redemption through His blood:”

“In Christ” alone is redemption planned, never apart from Him, and God’s grace made manifest in the forgiveness of sins is only experienced on the basis of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus.

The redemption of the sinner is not through the life and love of Christ displayed in, His earthly walk, but through of His Cross. Peace with God cannot be found in any other remedy. This truth, is the very foundation of the gospel of saving grace, and the touch-stone of the Christian faith. There are at least 120 passages of Scripture that state that Christ died for our sins.

From Genesis to Revelation the truth is plain that, “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Not that the sacrifices offered up before Christ died could in themselves provide a full satisfaction or an atonement for sin, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and Of goats should take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). They simply provided a ‘covering’ for sin until a full and final redemption was accomplished by the blood of Christ. The sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament, were, representative; and pointed to the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. When by obedience to God the offering of a sacrifice was made in the Old Testament, atonement was made for the errors of the people and sin was ‘covered’. But how infinitely greater is the redemption in Christ Jesus! He does not cover our sins. He puts them away, and we can thank God that our redemption is through HIS blood.

The whole human family is born by natural birth into the first Adam, and is under the sentence of death. (Romans 5:12). Sin and death are universal facts. “By the offense of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation”. But we thank God that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”. (Romans 5:20). Just as death came through Adam; so life came through Jesus Christ. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:17. We were sold under sin; under the sentence of death. But Christ redeemed us; literally loosed us”. He set us free by paying the price. The price of our redemption was His own blood which He shed when He died in our stead, He became sin for us; He who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” II Corinthians 5:21. Many passages could be quoted in continuance of this glorious theme. In summing up, Romans 5:8 and 9 should not be forgotten. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” And the Divine purpose of our redemption as applied to conduct is equally clear in Titus 2:14, “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous: of good works.”

We could not redeem ourselves, But He has redeemed us. We could not make our own peace; but He has made peace for us by the blood of His cross. Only by the preaching of the cross can man be saved. To them that perish this is foolishness; but to them that believe its message of redemption, the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore with the Apostle Paul, we present Christ crucified, as the only hope of salvation for poor lost sinners; that their faith “should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”. (I Corinthians 2:5)

When we come to the study of Ephesians 1:14, which speaks of “the redemption of the purchased possession” and Ephesians 4:30, “sealed unto the day of redemption”, we see a future phase of our deliverance, the consummation of the work begun. Redemption through His blood is a redemption for the soul; but a day will come when God will do for our bodies what He has done for our souls. That will be the redemption of the body, when the body of humiliation shall be changed into the body of His glory. (Philippians 3:20). That will be the day of redemption.

Ephesians 1:7. "The forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His Grace".

The psalmist cries in Psalm 32:1, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." One of the first blessings of grace is the consciousness that redemption in His blood has brought the forgiveness of sin. What a glorious message! For when God forgives our sin, our responsibility for it ceases. The guilt then is no longer ours, therefore, we are freed from any penalty that had been incurred. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ." (Romans 8:1). Who can fathom the grace of our God?

Ephesians 1:8. "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."

"Abounded", that is, made to overflow. This grace has not been stinted and confined; but has been liberally manifested to us in all wisdom and prudence. There is a wide design running through the whole plan, all of God's plans are a display of His wisdom. His purpose for us in Christ Jesus was not an afterthought; although a secret hid in His own heart from before age times. "Prudence" is wisdom in action or application. God prudently chose the proper time for the revelation and manifestation of His Divine purpose and grace. It was not until Israel as a nation was set aside that the secret that was in His heart, or "the mystery of His will" was made known. How students of God's Word need to know this! Israel was out of the way with the close of Acts and then Paul proclaimed "the dispensation of the mystery". Ephesians 3:9.

Ephesians 1:9. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself."

It has pleased God to make known in Christ the mystery of His will, this is the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret from former generations; and is according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Read; reread; study; believe; preach Colossians 1:24 to 18. The revelation of the "untraceable riches (Ephesians 3:8) was given to the Apostle Paul. Having made known this mystery, our desire should be to fulfill Ephesians 3:9, and "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery." The "mystery" is not something mysterious, something not known. It is not a riddle; but a revelation. We do not need a key to an open door: all we have to do is to step inside and invite others to follow. Oh, let us enjoy and appreciate the riches of His grace and glory, by understanding our blessed position in Him and appropriating the truth of the mystery which completes the word of God. (Colossians 1:25).

Ephesians 1:10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him."

The word translated "gather together", means to bring things under one head. According to the economy of God, all things are to be headed up in Jesus Christ, in heaven and, on earth. The Word of God is progressive. While some talk of "going back to Jesus" the Bible makes it plain that we are "going on to and with the risen Christ". One day the Church, which is His Body will be completed, and join the Head in the glory. This will be making the "perfect man . . . the stature of the fulness of Christ". (Ephesians 4:13). And Ephesians 2:7 will be fulfilled and we shall be made the display of His grace in glory. The earth, also is waiting for its deliverance from the thralldom of sin. (Romans 8:22) "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," and this deliverance will come when He who now occupies the Father's throne receives His own throne and reigns in righteousness, at which time all things will be put in subjection under His feet. Then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. He will be Lord in heaven and on earth. When Christ came the first time it was "the fulness of time" (Galatians 4:4). When He comes again it will be the dispensation of times' fulness.

Ephesians 1:11. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

We who are so undeserving, who were one time outcasts; we were dead in sin but now the recipients of His love, mercy and grace, we have been given an inheritance. What an inheritance! Those who are "in Christ" are called of God to share the glory of the Lord Jesus. We are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ". Where He is there we shall be, for the Body must be with the Head to be to the praise of His Glory. Only the ages to come will disclose, in full, the unsearchable riches of the glory of our inheritance in Him. Only then will be brought out in all its splendor, the eternal purpose of our God and the counsel of His own will. It is all "in Him". We have been blessed "in Him", chosen "in Him", accepted "in Him", redeemed "in Him. Now we have an inheritance "in Him". Apart from Christ all shall dwell in the darkness of death, without hope, without blessing, redemption or glory.

Ephesians 1:12. "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ."

The "we" in this verse refers to believing Jews, while the "ye" in Ephesians 1:13, has reference to believing Gentiles, and "our" in Ephesians 1:14 to Jew and Gentile together. The second chapter enters more fully into the uniting of these two in the making of the one New Man. That second chapter shows how both are reconciled unto God in the one Body. We must wait until we reach that part of the epistle for a fuller exposition.

As in Ephesians 1:6, so again all the praise and glory must go to the only One to whom praise is due. For such wonderful and gracious provision made in the planning of our redemption in Christ Jesus, let us lift our hearts again to God and say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3

BULLINGERISM OR ULTRADISPENSATIONALISM

Chicago, April 1, 1936.

Dear Christian Friend:

In answer to your inquiry as to just how far I agree with the teachings of Dr. E. W. Bullinger, first of all let me say that whether or not all that I teach is sound doctrine, according to the Word of God, rightly divided, I believed and taught what I now believe and teach some years before I ever heard of Dr. Bullinger or read any of his written messages.

It has been since I have been charged with being a "Bullingerite" that I have carefully read the writings of Dr. Bullinger. Perhaps you know that he was identified with the Church of England, and lived until the year 1913. He was a profound student of all the Scriptures, and perhaps analyzed every word in them. He was an unusual master of the original languages. No man of God ever stood more faithfully for the verbal inspiration, the integrity and authority of the Bible. No man was ever a greater defender of the eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ than was Dr. Bullinger. Few men have ever presented as clearly as did Dr. Bullinger the message of the pure, unmixed grace of God. He stood without fear, favor, or compromise, for his convictions. Like every other able spiritual expositor of God's Word, he taught that there is only one true Bible Church in this dispensation of grace, and that that Church is definitely designated "the Body of Christ". He believed with all his heart that that Body of Christ is an

undenominational Church, and that sectarianism is the greatest hindrance to the clear understanding and proclamation of God's message of unmixed grace and His truth concerning the One Body.

Dr. Bullinger received most of his bitter opposition and ungracious persecution from the hands of God's people, known as the Plymouth Brethren. This was chiefly because, in his exegesis of the sevenfold unity of Ephesians 4:3 to 7, he taught that the ONE BAPTISM is a Divine baptism and not a religious ceremony, water baptism. He taught that water baptism, being a work of man, is incompatible with the message of pure grace contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Dr. Bullinger believed that water baptism had an important place in the Four Gospels, and during the "Book of Acts" period; but that it ceased to have any place in the spiritual program of the Lord when He presented, by the pen of Paul, the clear revelation of the Body of Christ, "the dispensation of the grace of God" and "the dispensation of the mystery", set forth in Paul's prison epistles. Ephesians 3:1 to 3— Ephesians 3:9. He believed that the miraculous signs, the sign-gifts, and supernatural visitations, were inseparably connected with water baptism; and that all were done away, when the climax was reached, in the Divine judgment of God, pronounced upon Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28.

Some years before I ever heard of Dr. E. W. Bullinger or his teachings I was taught by the Holy Spirit, through diligently searching the Word of God for an answer to Pentecostalism and the fanatical healing doctrines which have been carrying many of God's people into utter confusion and delusions for some years, these same blessed truths which Dr. Bullinger had learned from God's Book. Hundreds of other students of the Word of God have learned from the Bible these same Divine facts

I quote here from the Moody Monthly an editorial from the pen of a man of God, who for years has been held in high esteem by many of God's servants, Dr. James M. Gray, who has departed to be with the Lord and to await his rich reward when we shall all stand together before our Saviour.

"Bullinger would be called a fundamentalist were he now on earth, for he was an able defender of the inspiration of the Bible, the deity and virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the premillennial coming, and all that. But he was an extremist, some would call him a faddist, on dispensational truth, and he was unscriptural, as we believe, on future retribution.

Because of these last named errors, the Monthly has not felt free to advertise Bullinger's books, certainly not all of them, and yet the writer of these lines owes one of his richest spiritual blessings to that great teacher; for a truly great teacher he was. No one ever set before us from the Word of God as clearly as did Bullinger, the profound mystery of the Body of Christ, and we always shall be indebted, to him."

Now, my beloved brother, because of my belief and teaching concerning water baptism, which I have held for more than fifteen years, a number of Christian brethren who have been both unwilling and unable to take the Word of God and prove that my teaching is fallacy or unscriptural, have resorted to very ungracious, unjust and unspiritual tactics, by accusing me of teaching many things that I have never taught and have never believed. Most of these brethren have never read a line from the pen of Dr. Bullinger, but in a parrot-like, sheep-like fashion, they have joined with others to malign Dr. Bullinger, and to malign me and grossly misrepresent my teaching. I am willing to be called an "ultradispensationalist", if brethren will not deliberately misrepresent. However, in my own mind I feel that I have always been ultra-conservative in any Bible doctrine that I have taught. Every student of the Word of God is a "dispensationalist", and

if he is to intelligently apply the dispensational truth for the understanding of the Bible, he must carry the dispensational teaching as far as the Holy Spirit has carried it in the Bible.

DISPENSATIONALISTS AND ULTRADISPENSATIONALISTS

The unanimous verdict of all my critics who are considered premillenarians and “dispensationalists” has been, that the Lord Jesus, while on earth, was offering Himself to Israel as a King; that He was then presenting to them the kingdom of heaven promised to Israel in the Old Testament Scriptures. They teach definitely that the Body of Christ did not have its historical beginning until after the rejection of the King, after His death and resurrection. Therefore, they teach dogmatically, that beginning with the death of Christ, there was the interruption or, suspension of the promises and guarantees of God contained in the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. They teach definitely what its known as “the postponement of the kingdom”. Therefore, they declare we are living in a “parenthesis”. This parenthesis, they affirm, is “the dispensation of grace” also called by Paul, in Ephesians 3:9, “the dispensation of the mystery”. According to their program, the Body of Christ had its historical beginning on the day of Pentecost. At that time the New Covenant dispensation was inaugurated by the advent of the Holy Spirit. They claim that the dispensation of the New Covenant has continued down to the present time, without interruption; and that it will continue until God shall close this parenthetical period with the rapture of the Church, in Accordance with I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18. Therefore, God’s one purpose during this age, which began on the day of Pentecost and will close with the rapture of Thessalonians, is the making of one New Man, the Church which is the Body of Christ. They are agreed, in the light of Colossians 1:24 to 28 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9, that the Body of Christ was not the subject of prophecy; that it was not revealed to Israel’s prophets or by them, and therefore, it is rightfully called “the mystery”. According to their teaching the principal fact of the mystery was the fact that the Gentiles were raised to the same spiritual level with Israel and given the same spiritual blessings in the same Body of Christ.

Their further teaching concerning the New Covenant is, that after God has accomplished His purpose in this parenthetical dispensation, the calling-out of a people for His Name, the Lord will return, as Israel’s Deliverer, Saviour, Messiah and King, and fulfill for that Nation the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 to 35, Hebrews 8:7 to 11: then “all Israel shall be saved”. Romans 11:25 to 30. The coming of the King will usher in the millennium; and then “the kingdom of heaven”, which Christ proclaimed when on earth, which is now in abeyance, will be at hand.

Then there will be the fulfillment, for Israel, of the Abrahamic Covenant guaranteeing the occupation of all of the land of Canaan, kingdom reign of the Prince of Peace in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, and the spiritual transformation of the children of Israel, in fulfillment of the New Covenant. All of these guarantees are included in the Prophecies of Ezekiel, chapters 34 to 39, and in Isaiah, chapters 2, 9, 11, 35, 62 and 66.

WHEN WAS ISRAEL SET ASIDE?

Now in this teaching it must be proved that Israel was set aside, as a Nation, at the cross of Calvary. Any faithful careful student of the Word of God must say that this is contrary to the fact, because the judgment, pronounced by Christ in Luke 21:20 to 24 and Matthew 22:7 to 9, did not take place before Pentecost, or immediately thereafter. The Nation Israel was given more than thirty years of grace. They rejected Jehovah in the Old Testament. They rejected the Son of

man in the Four Gospels. They killed the Heir according to Matthew 21:36 to 43. But that Heir said in Matthew 12:31 to 32, "Sin against the Son of man, and it shall be forgiven you; but sin against the Holy Spirit and it shall not be forgiven." The armies which were to surround Jerusalem, according to Luke 21:20, which were to kill the murderers of Christ, according to Matthew 22:7, were not sent by God until after the close of the Book of Acts; and even then, the judgment was delayed until Paul had penned his last message in II Timothy, and said. "the time of my departure is at hand." Christ on the cross interceded for Israel; praying "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do". The Father very graciously withheld for some years His Divine wrath. According to Acts 5:30 to 32, the Holy Spirit was sent to witness to Israel concerning the resurrected Christ. They resisted the Holy Spirit, blaspheming against Him. Thereby they committed the unpardonable sin until the children were cast into outer darkness, in accordance with Christ's prediction in Matthew 8:7 to 12. Read Acts 7:51, Acts 13:45 and 46, Acts 18:5 and 6, Acts 28:25 to 28. There is a very radical change marked in the Bible by the quotation, in Acts 28:25 to 28, of the Divine judgment of God mentioned in Isaiah 6:6 to 9, "blindness upon Israel". He who teaches that Israel was set aside at the time Christ uttered the words of Matthew 23:31 to 39 doth greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures.

All of this cry about "Bullingerism" and "ultradispensationalism" is simply a trick to prejudice God's people and to keep them from studying the difference between "faulty dispensationalism" and so-called "ultradispensationalism". It is the old trick of Rome to keep people ignorant of the Bible. After all, the difference is this: the "dispensationalists" teach that Israel was set aside by God before Pentecost. The "ultradispensationalists", so-called teach that Israel was set aside after Acts 28:28. We urge not to be intimidated by any group of Christians, but carefully and prayerfully decide by an earnest investigation of the Scriptures just who is right. To set aside Israel before Pentecost is to leave the Bible with many contradictions as to the Church. Compare Acts 5:29 to 32 with Ephesians 1:19 to 22.

Dr. Bullinger taught that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is never mentioned in feminine gender in the Bible and that Israel is. He was unable to see how the of this dispensation could be both the Body and Bride of Christ. Therefore, he believed that a special remnant of Israel will be the Bride. Is this teaching a spiritual crime?

He taught that the hope of the Church, during the "Acts" period, was a different hope from the blessed hope of the Body of Christ, expressed in Titus 2:13. On account of this difference he believed that "till He come", in connection with the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:26) referred to the "Acts" hope; and not to the blessed hope. And therefore, he taught that the Lord's Supper ceased with the close of Acts. With this teaching I most heartily disagree.

Dr. Bullinger taught that, Christ's soul and spirit separated at death; and that the same is the experience, of every believer at death. His teaching was that, the soul is not conscious in the intermediate state. But Dr. Bullinger most vehemently denied that he believed in annihilation for the unsaved. He positively denied the "theory" of future retribution which his critics claimed that he taught.

I quote these words from Dr. Bullinger's Magazine:

"The term annihilation is non-scriptural and the statement that the doctrine is held by the writer is both false and malicious."

Dr. Bullinger taught that the Gospel of Matthew is Israelitish, and in the other three Gospels Christ was speaking to His own Nation Israel, concerning their promised kingdom; and not to Gentiles concerning the Gospel of Grace. Therefore, it was his firm expressed conviction that Christ was not dealing with the Body of Christ, while He was on earth, and that He was not

then instructing members of that Body concerning the hope and calling preached, to them by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, some years later. In his later writings Dr. Bullinger differentiated between, the hope and calling of members of the Church of God of the "Acts" period, set forth in Galatians, Corinthians, Thessalonians and Romans, and the hope and calling of the Body of Christ described in Ephesians, Colossians and Titus. According to his teaching, concerning this difference, members of the Body of Christ since the close of the "Acts" period, since the setting aside of Israel, have not been the seed and children of Abraham. The New Jerusalem let down from heaven is to be the dwelling-place of the Church of the "Acts" period; but the Body of Christ which is to appear with Christ in glory has more than that heavenly or celestial hope. The Body of Christ has a "super-heavenly" or "super-celestial" hope. Of course, this means that the Body of I Corinthians 12:13 and the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 4:3 to 7 are different Bodies; and that the Seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 do not speak of the Body of Christ of Ephesians. The rapture of the "Acts" Church, mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 54, and I John 3:1 to 6, will take place at the last trump of Revelation and will, therefore, be a "tribulation" rapture. But the hope of the Body of Christ, expressed in Philippians 3:20 to 22, Titus 2:13 and Colossians 3:3 and 4, will be a different rapture. To some men of God some of these teachings seem rather fanciful, more like fantastic speculations than sound exegesis of the Word of God. I have been much troubled with the Olive tree of Romans 11, but have never taught these doctrines just mentioned.

As for my "Bullingerism", I most heartily disagree with Dr. Bullinger's teaching concerning the unconscious intermediate state of either believer or unbeliever, between death and resurrection. I have been much perplexed, and am somewhat uncertain as to "the Wife of Jehovah" and "the Bride of Christ". I have not found as much difficulty as some men of God have found in making the Church both the Body and the Bride. I have looked, however, to see where "the Body" is called "the Bride" in the Scriptures. In the light of II Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:31 and 32, it appears that the Body is the wife. The question is often asked, "how can an adulterous divorced wife (Israel) be a Bride? In the first place, that wife is to be forgiven and cleansed, Jeremiah 3. In the second place, it is a special Israelitish remnant that is to be the Bride, according to what is called "Bullingerism". Dr. Bullinger sought to confirm his teaching by the language of Revelation 19:7 and 8 and by the Israelitish description of the City of Revelation 21:12. Because this City was Abraham's hope (Hebrews 11:10) and because of the truth of Romans 4:16, Galatians 4:26, and Hebrews 12:22, the Church of the "Acts" period was considered by Dr. Bullinger "Israelitish" as to its hope and calling.

But we say that Abram was not an Israelite and that some very definite promises were made to him as Abram for Gentiles. By Galatians 3:8 we learn that the Gospel was preached to Abram in uncircumcision. According to prophecy the Gospel was to go to the Gentiles after the kingdom had been restored to Israel and that nation was occupying the land promised them. But Christ revealed to Paul the Gospel of the uncircumcision by which believing Gentiles could become members of the Church before Israel would enjoy the blessings of their national redemption and kingdom. Galatians 1:11 and 17, Galatians 2:7 and Galatians 3:8. I have always taught that the Body of Christ is also the Bride, but I confess I cannot be dogmatic. In spite of such Scriptures as Mark 2:19 and Matthew 25:1, which do not refer to the Body, there are just as many Scriptures to prove that the Body is the Bride. Up to the present moment I have accepted none of the extreme teaching of Dr. Bullinger. Neither do I claim that I have answered all of his doctrines with which I disagree.

I earnestly and honestly tested the Scriptures in the matter of the Body of Christ beginning after the close of Acts. In my humble judgment, it is a more difficult task to prove that the Body of Christ began with the close of Acts than on the day of Pentecost. It is difficult, even impossible, for me to see either at the present time. Very much depends upon whether or not the prophets foretold the Body of Christ. If they did not, then Acts 15:14 to 18 does not refer to that Body. Ephesians 3:8 and 9, Colossians 1:24 to 27 seem to prove the prophets were ignorant of the Body of Christ. But to teach that any part of the mystery was not revealed to Paul and by Paul, in Corinthians, Galatians and Romans, written during the "Acts" period, in my judgment, is not sound exegesis. On the other hand, any endeavor to prove that many phases of the mystery, including "the dispensation of the mystery", were not, for some Divine reason, withheld for Paul's prison Epistles, after the "Acts" period, will prove futile. With the close of the Book of Acts a most radical change took place in the spiritual program of the Body of Christ and this climax divided Paul's pre-prison and prison Epistles. Why did Acts close before Paul's acts closed? There are three baptisms in the "Book of Acts" period and only one in the "Body", according to Ephesians. The program concerning signs and sign gifts changed after the close of Acts. After Israel was set aside there was a new administration; but the same Body, the same grace gospel but a changed program.

I do not hold or teach what is termed "ultradispensationalism" or the extreme views of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and others. I accept for the Body of Christ any teaching found in the synoptic Gospels that is compatible with the dispensation of the Grace of God committed to Paul for the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 and 2. I do not at all agree with the "ultradispensationalists" as to the place of John's Gospel and his Epistles, I believe that the truth in John's Record, which differs so radically from the synoptic Records, is the message of grace based upon the rejected, crucified and resurrected Christ. I believe that John's grace message fits into Paul's grace message. I heartily believe in the doctrine of Paul's pre-prison Epistles for Gentile believers but not in the practice as to signs, judgments and ceremonies.

I cannot eliminate the Lord's Supper from this dispensation of grace, because of the words "the blood of the new covenant", as some brethren do; for the simple reason that I would have to eliminate, by the same exegesis, all the spiritual benefits mentioned in the Book of Hebrews, which is based upon the value of the blood of the new covenant. This includes the believer's uttermost salvation through the work of Christ as intercessor, priest and advocate. To my mind, there is no place to stop, if we begin to take away from members of the Body of Christ everything that pertains to God's covenants, especially, the covenant that He made with Abram as an uncircumcised Gentile. I have been falsely accused of this teaching, to which I am unalterably opposed.

I believe that the "Body" of Romans is the "Body" of Ephesians and Colossians. I believe that the Gospel of the Grace of God, in Romans, is the Gospel of the Grace of God in Ephesians and Colossians. But I do not believe that God's order continued to be "to the Jew first" after the close of the Book of Acts. I believe that Israel was set aside as a nation, after Acts 28, and that they ceased then to have priority rights. As the Jews required a sign, signs ceased at the close of Acts. And as water baptism that Christ might be made manifest to Israel, I believe that water baptism ceased the close of Acts with the sign gifts. I believe that Acts 19:1 to 5 is the last recorded case of water baptism and in that chapter signs and water are inseparably connected; the water having been required for Holy Spirit baptism.

Dr. C. I. Scofield, author of the Reference Bible bearing his name, held this same view concerning the miracles and signs, and Israel's place of privilege and priority until the close of Acts. Send to the Moody Colportage Association for A. E. Bishop's book on Signs in Acts.

Unless I am to be considered an extremist, because of my views concerning water baptism, I am not an extremist. I am not an "ultradispensationalist". I am not a Bullingerite. I am taking a definite stand against what I consider to be extreme views. By studying together Colossians 2:11 and 12, I must believe that if Colossians 2:11 refers to spiritual circumcision, not made with hands, that Colossians 2:12 refers to spiritual baptism, not made with hands. Therefore, I believe that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the Divine baptism which places a redeemed sinner in Christ, into the death of Christ, and in possession of all the riches of Christ. I believe by this same operation of faith the believer is buried with Christ, raised with Christ; and seated in the heavenlies with Christ. It is the unanimous verdict of all "dispensationalists", who preach a grace gospel, that water baptism has neither merit nor efficacy in aiding in any way to put a believing sinner in the true Bible Church, or to keep him in. Therefore, it is my firm conviction that no servant of the Lord has the right to demand for membership in his assembly, if he calls that assembly the Bible Church, a religious ceremony not required by the Lord for membership in the Lord's Body.

I hope I have made myself sufficiently clear in this letter to answer the questions which have been put to me.

I close by saying that I am positive that more than ninety-seven per cent of the ministers today are utterly failing to obey Ephesians 3:9, which I quote: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." And I also affirm that no man who is clinging to water baptism is making any effort to obey these instructions. Neither can he hold on to water baptism and please God in his presentation of this "mystery" truth.

With sincere good wishes, I remain
Very cordially yours,
J. C. O'HAIR.

WHAT GOD FOREKNEW AND WHAT HE FORETOLD

We trust that it will prove both interesting and spiritually profitable to compare the kingdom of God, prepared for a certain company of people from the foundation of the world, according to Matthew 25:34, with the salvation and calling, which God, according to His own purpose and grace, gave, before the world began, to another company of people, as recorded in II Timothy 1:9. This will open the way for our study, "What God Foreknew and What He Foretold."

We quote first Matthew 25:31 and 34: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

We quote II Timothy 1:9: "The power of God Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

By comparing Matthew 25:34 to 37, with II Timothy 1:9, we learn that there is a decided contrast in that the place of blessing, in the Matthew kingdom, is yet to be, and it is to be gained by good works, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and imprisoned brethren, whereas the salvation given in II Timothy, is not according to works. These saved people are saved unto good works.

Then we observe this contrast: the “Matthew” kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world; the “grace and purpose” of God in the salvation and calling of II Timothy was given before the world (age) began.

In speaking of this same salvation and calling, the Holy Spirit, in Ephesians 1:4, uses this language

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world (kosmos).

And again in Ephesians 3:11:

“According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:”

Thus we observe that both expressions are used in referring to the same eternal purpose in Christ Jesus: “before the ages began.” and “before the foundation of the world.” God also foreordained the good works of these selected ones. Ephesians 2:10 and 11.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the two expressions, “before the age began”, and “before the foundation of the world”, are used in other Scriptures: first, I Corinthians, 2:7: “the hidden; the mystery which God ordained (predestinated) before the world (age) unto our glory.”

Again, John 17:24:

“Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world (kosmos).

Again, I Peter 1:20

“Christ, as of a Lamb, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world (kosmos).”

Certainly we would agree that it takes no profound student of the Scriptures to distinguish between that kingdom of God, with the Son of man on the throne, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, and the kingdom of the Son of God’s love (Colossians 1:12 to 15) with Christ in the heavenlies, Head of His Body, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Our message of salvation is not according to our works but according to His grace and purpose which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

In Acts 2:23, we learn that the death of Christ was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. In I Peter 1:20, we are told that that foreknowledge antedated the foundation of the world. Not all of God’s foreknown spiritual programs were foretold. Some of them were foreknown but not foretold. Some of them were both foreknown and foretold.

By searching the Scriptures we shall that God’s determinate counsels purposes are fixed with respect to the foundation of the world. The counsel of God and the eternal purpose of God are not identical. This word “foundation” is the Greek “katabole” from “kataballo” to “throw down”. The “throw-down” of the world. Perhaps this refers to the first great “over-throw” of the world. It is most important to note in the study of a Scriptural truth, whether the fact was purposed before the foundation of the world, or foretold and prepared since the foundation of the world.

In Matthew 13:35, Luke 11:50, Hebrews 4:3, Revelation 13:8 and in Revelation 17:8, we find the expression “from the overthrow of the world (kosmos)”.

It is interesting to compare Matthew 13:35 with Romans 16:25: Matthew 13:35 records the words of Christ when He was giving the seven parables of the kingdom.

“I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret (k-r-u-p-t-o) from the foundation of the world (kosmos).”

Romans 16:25 has reference to Paul’s “my gospel”; “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery (secret-musterion) which was kept a secret (sigao-hushed) since the world (ainosios) began.”

SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.

In Hebrews 9:26 we find the expression, “since the foundation of the world.” This different expression is found in Luke 1:70 and in Acts 3:21: “since the world began.”

In Acts 3:21 the same redemption of Israel by their Deliverer, in fulfillment of the covenants which God made with Abraham and David and the promises made to Israel: “As God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world (aion-age) began.”

Read Acts 3:14 to 21: Note the redemption and kingdom of Israel is offered to the rulers of that nation, upon the condition of their repentance, “Christ, Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets SINCE THE WORLD (age) BEGAN.”

We learn from the two Scriptures that God promised to Israel a kingdom. It was promised to them by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began “. . . Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” Acts 3:24. This word “foretold” is the Greek “prokatagello” literally, to announce beforehand. If God announced some event beforehand, then it should not be considered a secret. That which is in fulfillment of Scripture should not be confused with the mystery”.

But compare this with Ephesians 3:9: “the dispensation of the mystery (secret) which from the beginning of the world (age) hath been hid in God.” This should be carefully noted: that Israel’s kingdom, of Acts 3:21, made known to and by Israel’s prophets since the world began, differs from the dispensation of the mystery of Ephesians 3:9, which was hid in God from the beginning of the world. This language is used in Colossians 1:26: “the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.” This is peculiarly a mystery among the Gentiles. Colossians 1:27. It is designated the “unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ among the Gentiles.” Ephesians 3:8. What Christ is going to do as King on His throne was forewritten. What Christ is now doing as Head of the Church was never foretold nor forewritten by Israel’s prophets.

In Acts 15:18, we find these words “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (age).”

We have already mentioned, Acts 2:23, God’s foreknowledge of the suffering of Christ. “Foreknowledge” is the Greek “prognosis”, to know before. “Foreordained” in I Peter 1:20, was from before the foundation of the world. Therefore we see that Christ’s suffering on the cross was foreknown” by God from before the foundation of the world. But that “foreknowledge” was not hid in God, nor from the sons of men in other ages, as was the truth concerning the Body of Christ; but was testified beforehand. Note the Greek word in Peter 1:11, “promarturomai”. A witness was a martyr. Christ’s death was “before witnessed.” Israel’s kingdom was “before witnessed.” The mystery of Ephesians 3:8 and 9 and Colossians 1:24 to 28, was not “before witnessed.”

Thus we see that the prophets from Moses to Malachi foretold Christ on the tree. Likewise Christ on the throne. But not one of them foretold Christ in the heavenlies as Head of the Body. Hence the “mystery”.

In other words, the death and resurrection of Christ were known and purposed before the foundation of the world and witnessed beforehand from the foundation of the world.

The kingdom of Israel, the Son of man as King on the throne, of Matthew 25:34, was not purposed before the foundation of the world, but prepared from the foundation of the world. and told ahead of time by all of God’s holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21.

But the mystery of Ephesians and Colossians was foreknown and purposed before the foundation of the world. This ministry of Christ was not made known by the prophets of Israel. “Hid in God”, “Hid from other ages”. Hence untraceable riches of Christ. Body members were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son; to be His children, and to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. The Greek “predestinate” is “pro-orixo”. “Orizo” is literally horizon.

KNOWN UNTO GOD—NOT MADE KNOWN BY GOD

Now compare carefully, Acts 15:13 to 18 with Colossians 1:24 to 28.

“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.”

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the Church;

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God;

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Now the question, if the calling out and calling in of Gentiles, in Acts 15:14 to 17, agree with the words of the prophets, they knew it and wrote about it. But the Gentiles’ salvation, hope and calling of Colossians, was not that foreknown by the prophets and foretold by the prophets. If the truth of Ephesians 3:6 concerning Gentile salvation was not made known to Israel’s prophets and the Gentile salvation of Acts 15:14 was, what conclusion must we reach? The outgathering of Acts 15:14 is not the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6.

THE LORD’S SUPPER AND THE NEW COVENANT

A further word concerning the teaching that the members of the Body of Christ are not to observe the Lord's Supper during this dispensation of grace, because of the words of the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 26:28, and the words of the Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 11:25, first we quote these two verses

“This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

“After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Now the argument of these teachers is, that the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 to 35 and Hebrews 8, is for the house of Israel, and not for the Church, designated “the Body of Christ” in Colossians and Ephesians, which Body cannot be scripturally called, “The New Testament Church”. Therefore, the members of that Body have no obligation to the Lord's Supper which is strictly a New Testament ordinance.

We have called attention to the fact that water baptism for Israel, as preached and practiced by John the Baptist and the disciples of the Lord while He was on earth, was unto repentance for the remission of sins; and that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. Mark 1:4, John 1:31. This water ceremony was taught and practiced with the proclamation of John the Baptist and the disciples of Christ; “the kingdom of heaven is at hand”. After Christ spoke of His rejection, in Luke 12:49 to 52, and referred to His death as a “baptism”, He instructed His apostles to tell no man that He was the Messiah. Matthew 16:20. After the twelfth chapter of Luke there is no record of the practice of water baptism until the day of Pentecost, at which time God began anew with Israel, because of Christ's prayer. Luke 23:34. This rescinded the orders of Matthew 16:20. Read Acts 2:36. But water baptism was still linked with faith as a pre-requisite for salvation and the Holy Spirit; Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38; whereas the Lord's Supper speaks of Christ's finished work called a baptism.

It was after Christ was rejected as King of Israel and referred to His death as a “baptism” that He sat at the table with His apostles and said, “this is the New Covenant in my blood: Luke 22:20. Paul preached in his grace message to Gentiles the “death baptism” of Christ and the believer. Romans 6:3. But Christ sent Paul not to baptize with water. I Corinthians 1:17.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the benefits and blessings, belonging to the people of God, are all because of the blood of the New Covenant. Therefore, if one teaches that members of the Body of Christ are not to partake of the Lord's Supper, because it is associated with the blood of the New Covenant, to be consistent, he must teach that no member of the Body of Christ is a partaker of any of the spiritual blessings in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Therefore, the believer who is in the Body of Christ cannot draw nigh to God in full assurance of faith; Christ has not opened up for him the new and living way; Christ is not appearing in heaven in the presence of God for him; Christ is not saving him to the uttermost for He is not living to intercede for him; the believer is not a partaker of Christ or His holiness; for all of the ministry of Christ, and all of these blessings for the believer, in Hebrews, have to do with the blood of the New Covenant;

On the same exegesis, offered for the elimination of the Lord's Supper for this age, the believer today cannot claim for himself anything in the tenth chapter of Hebrews, because there we have the climax of the arguments for the better things of the New Covenant. “By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”; and our sins and iniquities remembered no more forever.

This is only the beginning of the far-reaching damage that is done by the fanciful and unsound exegesis employed by some very godly men in trying to get out of the spiritual program of the Body of Christ this Christ-given memorial which they call a “Jewish ordinance.”

We again call your attention to the two statements of Paul recorded in I Corinthians 11:23 and in I Corinthians 1:17. And remember these words in I Corinthians 12:2, “ye were Gentiles.” Just the same statement found in Ephesians 2:11. In I Corinthians 11:23, Paul explains how Christ, by revelation, gave him the “Supper”. In I Corinthians 1:17, Paul explains that he was not sent to baptize. This should convince any student of the Word of God concerning the difference between baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the ministry of Paul; the difference between these so-called ordinances in the spiritual program of Gentiles which believed. We have called attention to the likeness of the language of I Corinthians 11:23 and 15:3. Paul received the Gospel, with signs, by revelation. He likewise received the Lord’s Supper, with signs, by revelation. I Corinthians 11:23 to 32. If the Lord’s Supper ceased to have a place in the program of the Body of Christ, after the “Acts” period closed, because the “judgment signs” ceased, by the same argument, the Gospel ceased at the same time, because of the cessation of the signs mentioned by Paul in Romans 15:19 Galatians 3:5 and I Corinthians 12:8 to 11. The brethren, to whom we refer, teach that the signs which accompanied the “grace” message during the “Acts” period ceased with the close of that period, but that Paul continued to preach the same gospel, without signs. Then the Lord’s Supper did not have to cease because the signs of I Corinthians 11:26 to 31 were no longer manifested.

By comparing II Corinthians 3:6 with II Corinthians 4:4 and II Corinthians 5:17 to 21, we learn that Paul, the able minister of the New Covenant was, also during the “Acts” period, the preacher of the “gospel of glory” and the “gospel of reconciliation”, both of which are mentioned in connection with “the mystery” of the “post-Acts” period. I Timothy 1:11 and Colossians 1:20.

THE LORD’S SUPPER AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

We have mentioned two reasons offered by those who would rule the Lord’s Supper out of the spiritual program of the Body of Christ as “undispensational”; namely, because they say it was instituted as a New Covenant ordinance, which Covenant is for Israel, and because the Divine judgments of Corinthians 11:26 to 32 have not been visited upon unworthy communicants since the, close of Acts. The reason offered by a few men is that the exact manner in which the bread and cup are to be served and by whom is not clearly stated; therefore, the so-called ordinance is not for us. This is too absurd for comments. By the same argument no group of Christians would have any Scriptural authority for any order of Sunday “church” services, the employment of a pastor, the organization and administration of a Sunday School or government of an assembly by a “church” board, But we continue to open with hymns and prayer and then proceed to read the Word and, preach or teach. What Scripture gives this order?

But the two other reasons presented are; first, because of the meaning of “till He come” of I Corinthians 11:26, and second, the relation of Church-members of the “Acts” period to the Abrahamic Covenant.

Just a line or two concerning “till He come.” These brethren claim that members of the Body of Ephesians and Colossians were not to expect the Lord to come; for they had no such hope. They differentiate between the coming of the Lord, the hope during the “Acts” period, and the “appearing in glory with Christ”, the hope of the “Post-Acts” Church. We showed in a

former message that the two Churches were waiting for the same day of the Lord Jesus. I Corinthians 1:7 and 8 and Philippians 1:6.

Now concerning the “Post-Acts” Church, the Body, and the Abrahamic Covenant, the claim is that Abraham is not the father of members of the Body, of Ephesians and Colossians, as he was of the church-members of the “Acts” period. Romans 4:14 to 17. They claim that the hope of that Church was “celestial” whereas, the hope of the “Post-Acts” Church, of which we are members, is “super-celestial”. The Abrahamic Covenant covered Gentile salvation and Gentile membership, with Israel, in the “Acts” Church until Israel was set aside, with the Divine judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28.

These brethren, who follow the teachings of Mr. Charles Welch, state that members of the Church of God, during the “Acts” period, were the children of Abraham, blessed with faithful Abraham; and that their hope was linked up with Abraham’s and Israel’s hope. Galatians 3:7, Galatians 3:9 and Galatians 3:29. Abraham’s hope, according to Hebrews 11:10, Hebrews 12:22, Hebrews 13:14, Galatians 4:21, was the heavenly city which is to descend according to Revelation 21:10. This city is for Covenant people. Inasmuch as the members of the Body of Ephesians and Colossians had been strangers from the covenants of promise, they were not blessed under the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant, with father Abraham, or under any other covenant, but were blessed according to the eternal purpose of God in Christ. Ephesians 2:11, Ephesians 3:11. Eternal life, according to God’s grace and purpose, was given, before Abraham or Adam, to members of the Body: hence “the mystery”. II Timothy 1:9, Ephesians 1:4, Titus 1:2, Ephesians 3:3 and Colossians 1:24 to 27. These saints, whose citizenship is in heaven, have more than the “heavenly city” hope of Abraham. Their citizenship is in heaven and they are not to reach the New Jerusalem with Abraham and Israel, but have already a super-heavenly position in Christ, “far above”, with the promise of appearing with Him in glory. They are to reign in glory with Christ, in a super-heavenly realm. The rapture of the Church of God which is to reach the New Jerusalem, is in I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 54. The hope of the members of the “Post-Acts” Church is an “out-resurrection from among the dead”, the blessed hope. Philippians 3:11; Titus 2:13, Philippians 3:20 and 21. This may, or may not, be called a rapture: the brethren are divided.

While the Lord does want us to distinguish between the things that differ and we do want to carry “dispensationalism” as far as the Holy Spirit has carried it in the Scriptures, yet we want to stop short of fantastic speculation. There is a difference between the counsel of God connected with the Abrahamic Covenant and the eternal purpose of God in Christ. Hebrews 6:17, Acts 20:27, Ephesians 3:11. We should distinguish between this counsel and purpose. And certainly, any honest, intelligent, spiritual, student of the Scriptures will distinguish between the “sign” program of “Acts” and the “signless” program thereafter and should easily see the change in “administration” after Acts 28:25 to 28. But because the “parousia” (presence), of Christ did not take place before Acts 28:25 to 28, there is no Scripture to prove that the “coming” of Christ has no meaning to the Body of the “Post-Acts” period. “Till He come”, we are to show forth His death. This word come is not “parousia”. Both at the “parousia” and the appearing the Lord is to judge the living and the dead. II Timothy 4:1, Acts 10:38 to 44, I Peter. 4:5.

We are told also that we have no responsibility concerning the Lord’s Table, because Israel will eat at that Table in the Kingdom. That will not be “till He come”, but after He has come. Hence this has nothing to do with the instruction to believers in I Corinthians 11:23. If I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 is the rapture of tribulation saints and is, the coming of Christ, referred to in I Corinthians 11:26, “till He come”, then we should be able to find in the Scriptures where

Israel and Gentiles will be partaking of the Lord's Supper during the tribulation, while waiting for the rapture. But, where is such information? Eating at a table in the coming; kingdom is not shewing the Lord's death "till He come."

Whatever interpretation and application: we may give to Galatians 3:9, as to how members of the Body of Christ may, or may not, be blessed with faithful Abraham, it is note worthy and significant that the blessings of saved Gentiles, mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians, had to do with uncircumcised Abram, the Gentile, and not with circumcised Abraham. The Holy Spirit calls our attention to the 430 years from the call of Abram, in uncircumcision, to the giving of the law.

Again we say, if we are to eliminate the Lord's Supper because we have no relations whatever to Abram, then it is optional with us as to any obedience to the instructions to the Body of Romans contained in the Epistle of the Romans, because the members of the Body, in Romans 12:5 were linked up to Abraham and we are not. By such reasoning, or lack of it, we could relegate to the "Acts" dispensation, to a Church that has ceased to be, such truths of Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians and Romans as we elect. And as there is uncertainty concerning Timothy, since there is a Mediator between God and men, that Epistle might likewise be ruled out of this dispensation. The exegesis that rules out the Lord's Supper, because of, its, relation to the blood of the New Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant, rules out Christ as Advocate for members of the Body of Christ. This same unsound exegesis rules out of John 17 any benefit for members of the Body in the prayer of Christ; No High Priest, no Advocate, no Intercessor, no message from John's Gospel. Peter's Epistle's are not addressed to us. The Body of Romans is not the Body of Ephesians and where shall we end? Better go slowly, brethren. You might find yourself with only a dozen chapters left.

The brethren who are going to these extreme views are but hindering the already difficult task of getting believers to obey Ephesians 3:9.

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER

We might well wonder if the Holy Spirit did not have in mind the foolish healing theories that were to be propagated by the use of the statement, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever," when He added, in the next verse, (Hebrews 13:9), "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."

Your attention is called to those two verses, because it is a fact that those who teach that the healing miracles and other signs of the Lord Jesus and His apostles should be perpetuated, or restored, as a part of the program of the Body of Christ during this dispensation, never seem to understand God's pure message of grace. Is it because their hearts are not established with grace? At any rate, they are not established in this "grace" message; and therefore, they are carried about with divers and strange "healing" doctrines. They teach that, because "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever", He longs to carry on with members of the Church, which is His Body, the healings and other signs that were included in His Kingdom message and the commission which He gave to the Twelve, in Matthew 10:5 to 8 and Mark 16:16 to 18.

These healing preachers claim that the low spiritual state of the members of the Church, and their sin of unbelief, account for the absence of these miraculous healings and sign gifts. They say that God is not permitted to work all things today after the counsel of His own will, because Body-members will not work out with fear and trembling the salvation which God desires to work in them to do His own will. If there was first-century apostolic faith, there would be first century apostolic miracles, is their claim.

Some of these messengers of divers and strange doctrines are bold to teach that the once-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross was for the healing of the believer's body, just as much as for the salvation of his soul; that is, the believer can and should look to Calvary and claim salvation for the body here and now. They teach that as it would be unscriptural and foolish to ask God to save a soul, "if it be Thy will", it is just as absurd and unscriptural to include "if it be Thy will", when asking God to heal the body of the believer. Truly, this is a strange doctrine: contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God. As some teacher has said, thus commanding God, is not the prayer of humility but the presumptuous orders of a dictator.

The greatest of all of the Lord's saints gloried in his afflictions, but found the grace of God sufficient. II Corinthians 12:9 and 10. He said, "though the outward man perish (decay thoroughly) the inward man is renewed from day to day." II Corinthians 4:16. Timothy, the beloved companion of Paul, who had as great faith as any man living today has, and who was as uncompromising a soldier of the cross as has lived since his days, was instructed to take wine for his oft sicknesses. I Timothy 5:23. Why? Why was Trophimus left at Miletus sick? II Timothy 4:20. Like all other saints of their time, and like all saints of today, Paul and Timothy had the Spirit, but were in bondage waiting for the redemption of the body. Romans 8:23. Like our bodies, their bodies were bodies of humiliation. Philippians 3:20 and 21.

Some of God's most faithful and spiritual saints of today suffer much physical pain, while many self-appointed preachers of a perverted gospel are abroad in the land setting forth their strange unscriptural "healing" theories; demonstrating with hit-or-miss success, mostly miss.

As members of the Body of Christ, we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, but we are not Israel with the kingdom gospel and Israel's kingdom signs. Jesus of Nazareth was here on earth presenting Himself as Israel's Messiah and King, and was approved by God by miracles and signs and wonders in their midst. Acts 2:22 He sent out the Twelve to the same Nation to proclaim that Kingdom gospel, saying to them: heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, cleanse the lepers. Matthew 10:5 to 8. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Why heal the sick and not raise the dead? First, miracles and signs were the credentials of the Apostles. Hebrews 2:2 and 4; II Corinthians 12:12.

When Christ was in the midst of Israel both the messenger and message were here, in fulfillment of Scripture. Christ's ministry was to the circumcision. It was a ministry of confirmation and fulfillment. Romans. 15:8 and Matthew 5:17. Israel's Messiah was to come with healing of the body, sight for the blind, hearing for the deaf and speech for the dumb. Isaiah 35:3 to 6.

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision. As such, He was "Jesus of Nazareth". Before the Word became flesh He was in the form of God. The Eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is unchangeable. He is now far above principalities and powers, in the highest heavenlies. He is not now a minister of the circumcision, but Head of the Church which is His Body. Ephesians 1:19 to 21. When we say that Jesus Christ on earth was Israel's King, but is now Head

of the Church, we acknowledge that, notwithstanding His unchangeable Deity, the Lord is not the same yesterday, today and forever, as to His form and ministry.

In the Gospel of John the statement is made, that the Record is given to prove that Jesus was Messiah, the Son of God. His unchangeable Deity is certainly declared in the Record. If, by perpetuating or duplicating the miracles of Christ, we are to prove that He is the same yesterday, today and forever, let us duplicate the seven miracles of John which witnessed to Israel the unique claim of the Lord Jesus. Seven is the perfect number. Christ was the perfect God-man. If we are to prove it by signs, let us include all seven in our religious program: “turn the water into wine”, “walk on the water”, “heal the nobleman’s son”, “feed 5000 people with one half pound of fish and bread”, “heal the impotent man 38 years afflicted”, “give sight to the man born blind”, “raise from the dead a man four days in the grave”.

What a spectacle we behold in the “healing” meetings today! First, the healing is limited to certain afflictions; and then, nine-tenths of those who respond in great sincerity and faith go away “unhealed”. Most of the preachers who use, or misuse, the Scriptures to support their Divine healing theories, slip away to the physician or the medicine-cabinet now and then. Some of these who carry on their traffic with human souls apparently make no attempt to explain their inconsistency in an occasional visit to the dentist for a little repair work, or the use of glasses for impaired eyesight.

In Matthew 8:16, in Mark 16:17 and in Acts 5:14 to 16, we learn concerning the sign healings of Christ and His Apostles, “healed all manner of disease” and “healed every one of them”. No hit-or-miss quack healing, or tricking the poor unfortunate victims, or a cure within a week or a month. Such quackery cannot convince any thinking person that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Our heavenly Father does hear and answer prayer for His children who are sick or in other trouble; but always according to His will. He raised up Epaphroditus. Philippians 2:20 to 24. All of us have some real blessed experiences in the matter of answered prayer. I am alive and well today by the grace and mercy of God. Many far more worthy than I are alive but in miserable health. And regardless of our various healing theories, the death rate of saint and sinner is one apiece. We look back to Calvary for soul redemption. I Peter 1:10 to 12. We look forward to our meeting in glory with our Lord for our body redemption. Philippians 3:20 to 22. In the meantime we accept Romans 8:28 as applying to both health and sickness.

No child of God would, for a moment, question the omnipotent power of God: His ability to restore to health any child of faith, but yet, every sane student of the Word of God knows by the experiences of the saints that so long as God extends this dispensation of grace there is no permanent cure for physical diseases, and no matter how sincerely and religiously the most faithful or spiritual Christian may look to Calvary for the healing of the Body, day by day that body is headed for utter corruption.

Among the members of the Body of Christ there is no trace to be found of the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 10, except in the counterfeit. These sign gifts served their place in that “Acts” program of God, which was “in part”. Look out the most zealous, sincere, faithful, gifted Bible teacher of this generation and you will fail to find one who has the miraculous gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 10.

Has the prayer of faith saved the sick? Thousands say “yes, I have had the experience”. Thousands of others, just as faithful and spiritual, are in their graves. Many other thousands, still in their sickness, testify that it has not worked for them. The statement, “the prayer of faith”, like all other Bible statements must be studied in the light of other Scriptures.

If healing is the proof that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, then it must be that there is more abundant proof in the testimonies of the “unhealed” that Jesus Christ is not the same yesterday, today and forever.

“EVEN AS” “SO LIKEWISE”

It is sad but true that many of God’s true children, because of ignorance or prejudice, perhaps both, ridicule with real antipathy the principle of “dispensationalism” in the appropriation, interpretation and application of Divine truth in the Bible. Undoubtedly every child of God who knows anything of the difference between God’s dealings with Israel “under the law”, and the Church “under grace”, rejoice that they have not again received the spirit of bondage unto fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father.

We shall all have to admit that it is no easy task to definitely separate all that is law from all that is grace in the Books which we call the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and, John. John’s Record is so different from the three synoptic Gospels, and is so filled with the message of grace, that the task is less difficult. In the very first chapter of John we see the Lord Jesus rejected, and the witness that He is the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world. We read in that first chapter, “the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”.

In order to understand the grace that came by Jesus Christ, to be given to Gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel while Christ was on earth, we must turn to the words of grace that Christ gave to us through our Apostle Paul. Let us emphasize the words found in Ephesians 3:1 and 2: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward”. Now observe these three points: First—Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for Gentiles. Second—The dispensation of the grace of God given to Paul. Third—The dispensation of the grace of God given to Paul for Gentiles.

This messenger of grace, sent by Christ to the Gentiles, wrote to the Gentiles that Jesus Christ was made under the law. Galatians 4:4. He wrote to the Gentiles, “ye are not under the law, but under grace”. Romans 6:14. Now we want to compare forgiveness for sin in Matthew, while Christ was under the law, with the forgiveness of sin for those of us who are not under law but under grace. First we quote Matthew 18:21 to 35.

“Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?”

“Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

“And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

“But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had and payment to be made.

“The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

“Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

“And the fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

“And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

“So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

“Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me;

“Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant even as I had pity on thee?

“And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

“SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU, IF YE FROM YOUR HEARTS FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES.”

Also Matthew 6:14 and 15:

“FOR IF YE FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU; BUT IF YE FORGIVE NOT MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES”.

This message was given by the Lord Jesus to His disciples while He was under the law. Now we quote Colossians 2:13 and 14

“AND YOU, BEING DEAD IN YOUR SINS AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR FLESH, HATH HE QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH HIM HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES;

“BLOTTING OUT THE HANDWRITING OF ORDINANCES THAT WAS AGAINST US, WHICH WAS CONTRARY TO US, AND TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY, NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS.” And Ephesians 4:31 and 32:

“LET ALL BITTERNESS AND WRATH, AND ANGER, AND CLAMOUR, AND EVIL SPEAKING, BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, WITH ALL MALICE;

“AND BE YE KIND ONE TO ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS GOD FOR CHRIST’S SAKE HATH FORGIVEN YOU.”

You will notice in these two quotations, we have emphasized the words, “so likewise” and “even as”.

Now surely you and I will bow our heads and give thanks to the Lord that the forgiveness of our sins by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has been by the free grace of God, an not conditioned upon our imperfect forgiveness of our fellow man. But then our hearts should be so filled with gratitude because of what God has done for us, for Christ’s sake, that we should fully forgive those who trespass against us. Surely it takes much grace. But God is the God of all grace, an He is able to make all grace abound toward us; that we, a ways having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to ever good work. II Corinthians 9:8. And let us also remember that not only does God forgive; but God forever forgets. And it will not be so difficult for us to do

this if we will keep in mind the difference between “ten thousand talents” and “one hundred pence.”

But surely we shall not go back to legal grounds and the King’s message to Israel for our unmixed message of grace

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

THIRTY FACTS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS .

LESSON SEVEN

20. In Acts 19:3 to 7, we find the last record of any person baptized with water. In the same chapter we learn that those who were baptized received the Holy Spirit after the imposition of hands; and that then they spoke with tongues and prophesied. In the same chapter we have the record of Paul’s casting out demons and miraculously healing with the use of handkerchiefs and aprons. We find that the circumcision of believing Jews was endorsed after this last record of water baptism, Acts 21:18 to 21. Sign healings are also recorded after this last record of water baptism. Acts 28:8. After Acts 28:28 there are no evidences of the continuation of signs or water baptism. Read I Timothy 5:23 and Ephesians 4:5. It would seem consistent to continue the imposition of hands and expect tongues, prophesying, healing, miracles and other signs, if we continue the practice of water baptism.

21. In the Book of Acts the following eight Jewish words are found 264 times, whereas the same eight words are found only 241 times in the synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, which are 98 per cent Jewish: “Jew”, “Israel”, “synagogue”, “law”, “Moses”, “temple” “Jerusalem” and “father”. The Book of Acts opens with a little company of Jews in Jerusalem. In the second chapter, the Book deals with devout Jews from every nation under heaven, including some Jews from Rome. Acts 2:10. In the last chapter of Acts, 30 years later, Paul is addressing a company of Jews in Rome concerning Moses and the prophets. Acts 28:19 to 28. Israel’s “fathers”, are mentioned from Acts 3:13 to Acts 28:25 twenty-eight times. As long as Israel was addressed as “brethren” they were protected nationally before God. The Book of Acts is 85 per cent Jewish. Israel, as a nation, was not set aside by God until after the close. of Acts.

22. In the Book of Acts we find no beginning of the fulfillment of Luke 21:24: “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

There is not the slightest hint in the “Acts” period that the judgment pronounced in Luke 21:20 would fall upon Israel, except the words of Paul in Acts 13:40, Romans 11:11 to 25, I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16. Israel enjoyed the favor of Rome during the “Acts” period. Politically the “times of the Gentiles” began about 600 B.C. II Kings 25:1 to 30; Jeremiah 52:1 to 34. Spiritually, or religiously, “the times of the Gentiles” began after Acts 28:28. Paul, the Israelite, was the Apostle to the Gentiles. He instructed Timothy what to teach others. II Timothy 2:2. Timothy was half Jew and half Gentile. Acts 16:1 to 5. Timothy was the connecting link in the transfer of spiritual authority from Israel to Gentiles and the handing down of Paul’s deposit. II Timothy 1:12 to 15: II Timothy 2:2. (R.V.) Politically and spiritually the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled when the Son of man comes to redeem Israel, after the fulfillment of II Thessalonians 2:2 to 9.

23. From the beginning of Christ’s earthly ministry, until God granted unto Cornelius repentance, unto life, about seven or eight years after: Pentecost, God’s order was, “to the Jews

only”. Beginning with Paul’s ministry out of Antioch, until Acts 28:25 to 28, God’s order was, “to the Jews first, also to the Gentiles.” After Paul’s statement, in Act 28:28, “the salvation of God is sent to Gentiles;” God’s order was “to the Gentiles, also to the Jews.” Ephesians 2:17. After Acts 28:25 to 28, credential signs, signs-gifts and tongues ceased, (I Corinthians 13:8); for God’s order was no longer “to the Jew first.” Philippians 2:27. II Timothy 4:20. I Timothy 5:23 After Acts 28:28 there was one baptism, a Divine baptism not made with hands Colossians 2:12. Ephesians 4:5. After Acts 28:28, Paul wrote his prison epistles and in them mentioned “the mystery” twelve times. Read Ephesians 3:9 and obey it.

24. During the years covered by the Book of Acts, God’s order was “to the Jew first”. Believing Jews remained under the law, (Acts 10:28, Acts 21:18 to 25, Acts 20:16) keeping Pentecost twenty years after Christ’s resurrection. “The Jews require a sign.” I Corinthians 1:22. Water baptism was, that Christ might be manifest to Israel.” John 1:31.

During the “Acts” period Paul wrote I and II Thessalonians, I and II Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. During that period sign and water baptism continued and sign-gifts. I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, During that period Paul became as one under the law to those who were under the law, in accordance with I Corinthians 9:20 to 22. Read Acts 16:3; Acts 18:18; Acts 21:18 to 28; Acts 20:16; Acts 23:5 and 23:6. There was one order for the Jews that believed and another order for the Gentiles which believed, Acts 21:25.

(To be Continued)

FULFILLED—FINISHED—PERFECTED

“TELEO”—“EPI-TELEO”—“PAN-TELEO”

It is most interesting and instructive to study the Scriptures to learn how one Greek word is used to tell us of the perfect life and perfect redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ; and of the believer’s perfection in Christ. The simplest form of the word is “teleo” meaning “to end” or “to finish”. “Telegraph” means to write from the end. This Greek word is translated in the Scriptures “perform”, “finish”, “fulfill”, “perfect” and “full age”. In Hebrews 7:25 it is preceded by the Greek prefix “pan” which means “all” or “entire” or “full”. The word is “pantelace”; “uttermost”. Now carefully note these Scriptures as they give us the progress and development and final completion of redemption. Some form of “teleo” is in every verse.

“And when they had PERFORMED all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.” Luke 2:39.

“And when they had FULFILLED all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead.” Acts 13:29 and 30.

“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation PERFECT through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10.

“And being made PERFECT, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” Hebrews 5:9.

“I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have FINISHED the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” John 17:4.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, “It is FINISHED: and He bowed His head, and gave up the Ghost.” John 19:30.

“Looking unto Jesus the author and FINISHER of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2.

“For by one offering He hath PERFECTED for ever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:14.

“But ye are come unto mount Sion . . . and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made PERFECT.” Hebrews 12:22 and 23.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the UTTERMOST that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will PERFORM it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6.

“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.” Hebrews 5:14 and Hebrews 6:1.

“But when that which is PERFECT is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” I Corinthians 13:10.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13.

Your careful, prayerful, spiritual study of these scriptures will teach you that Christ is indeed the author and finisher of our faith. This word “author” is the same Greek word translated “captain” in Hebrews 2:10, and “prince” in Acts 3:15 and Acts 5:31. The word is “archegos”, literally “the chief leader”. The word “finisher” is “telerotes”. The Finisher being made perfect cried, “finished” and became the author of eternal life. Hebrews 5:9. This “author” is a different Greek word from Hebrews 12:2 and means the “causer”. Surely the Lord Jesus Christ is the “causer” of eternal life; and He is and will be the finisher. This brings our minds to Philippians 1:6: “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The word “perform” is “epi-teleo” meaning to “further fulfill” or to completely finish”.

The captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. He said “I must finish”; “I have finished”; “It is finished”. Christ, in His perfect life, ministry and sacrifice, was the perfect antitype of all of the Scriptural types of Him by which He was prefigured, all that spoke of His work before and during the “shadow” days of Israel. Hear these words of Christ, in Matthew 5:17 and Luke 24:44: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” “And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.” Read the manner in which He had to fulfill the law even in childhood. Luke 2:21 to 39. “When they had performed (teleo) all things according to the law.” Then read carefully Acts 13:29, how all things concerning His sufferings were fulfilled. “When they had fulfilled (teleo) all that was written” He cried, “Finished”.

God sent His Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Galatians 4:4 and 5. All that Christ, did under the law, and on the cross for those who were under the law, was in fulfillment of the Scriptures; and was what God before had determined to be

done. Acts 4:28—Acts 2:23. He became the author (causer) of eternal life. “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”. Hebrews 10:14. He cried, on the cross, “finished”. The good work begun will be performed (epi-teleo) until the day of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Chief-leader and finisher of our faith. He is able to save to the uttermost (pan-teleo) all who come unto God through Him; because He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

With Father, Son and Holy Spirit ever occupied in behalf of the believer and the believer in possession of the completed Word of God, with the perfect truth concerning membership in the Body of Christ, the hope, calling and blessings in the heavenlies, the mystery revealed to Paul (Colossians 1:24 to 27), certainly the believer today should be of full age (teleo), and go on to perfection. With the high and holy truth revealed Paul said, “I have finished (teleo) my course.” II Timothy 4:6 to 9.

Some day the Lord of Glory will bring all believers to the day of redemption and give to them glorified bodies like unto His own glorified body, and then all will come unto the realization of a perfect redemption, body, soul and spirit. Then Ephesians 4:13 will be realized—“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

This has been called the masterpiece of God.

MADE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST

It is quite interesting to compare Hebrews 2:14 with Hebrews 3:14, and to note why Christ was made partaker of flesh and blood. It required Christ’s death and resurrection to destroy Satan’s “death” power. In the next chapter we learn that believing sinners delivered by Christ are partakers of Christ.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.” Hebrews 2:14.

“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” Heb. 3:14.

The spiritual benefits that have come to believers have come because of the death and resurrection of the eternal, omnipotent and sinless Christ. It was on the cross of Calvary that Christ was made sin, and we, thereby, have been made the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21. He was made for a little while lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Hebrews 2:9. Christ suffered for sins once, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. I Peter 3: 18.

Because of the suffering, death and resurrection of the Son of God we have been made partakers of Christ. This Greek word “partakers” is “Metoches” meaning a “participant”, a “sharer” or a “partner”.

Perhaps we have tried to inventory all that we have in Christ, our possessions, our riches, our spiritual blessings; and we have scarcely dared to believe all that God’s Word tells us that we have, and all that we are, and all that we are yet to be in Christ. We are partakers of Christ. In Him “all things” and “all spiritual blessings” are ours.

Six or seven different Greek words are translated “partaker” in the Scriptures. These words are used by the Holy Spirit to tell us what it means to be a partaker of Christ. Believers are

joint-heirs with Christ and are joined to Christ in an inseparable and eternal union; members of His Body, seated with Him and blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

So we join with Paul in “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” Colossians 1:12. This Greek word “partaker”, is “meris”, meaning to “get as an allotment”, “to receive a portion”. What a portion! What an allotment! We receive it, by grace, through faith. God made us meet, or literally, “qualified” us. We are God’s workmanship. God did the work. He wrought the Divine transformation. He placed Christ where He is, far above in the heavenlies, and placed us in Christ. When we were dead He made us alive and raised us up. We are God’s workmanship.

As partakers of Christ:

We are partakers of the Divine nature. II Peter 1:4

We are partakers of His holiness. Hebrews 12:10

We are partakers of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 6:4

We are partakers of the heavenly calling. Hebrews 3:1

We are partakers of His sufferings. I Peter 4:13

We are partakers of God’s promise in Christ. Ephesians 3:6

We are partakers of grace. Philippians 1:7

We are partakers of fruit. II Timothy 2:6

We are partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel. II Timothy 1:8

We are partakers of Christ’s glory. I Peter 5: 1.

It is very interesting to trace the meanings of the different words translated “partaker” and learn of our intimate relationship, partnership and fellowship with Christ; “joint-heirs”, “sharers”, “partners”, “Co-partners”. “In Christ” and “Christ in us”. Christ partook of our nature that we might partake of His nature. We partake of His sufferings that we might partake of His glory. As the Captain of our salvation, He was made perfect through suffering.

We are partakers of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. By that grace He became poor that we, through His poverty, might become rich. The Gospel has made us rich. The Gospel has brought us peace. It is called the “gospel of peace”. Christ made peace by the blood of the cross. Christ is our peace.

Paul seems to have reached the highest expression of the Gospel of Christ when he wrote to Timothy concerning “the gospel of the glory of the Blessed God, committed to my trust.” I Timothy 1:11. Grace and glory are combined in that gospel, which offers grace and glory to every beneficiary, and declares “As He is, so are we in the world”. I John 4:17.

What a spiritual treat, what an abundant feast! Let us spiritually, seriously, prayerfully read that wonderful prayer of the Lord Jesus, John 17:9 to 26, and learn of our union, partnership, eternal glorious fellowship in the Son and in the Father. Then later on in the Book we learn that it has been the delight of the Holy Spirit to be the instrument with the Word of God to bring it about. II Thessalonians 2:13. It means much to be a partaker of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in the believer. The believer is in the Spirit. The believer is to walk in the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, and to manifest the fruit of the Spirit, as he is led and instructed by the Holy Spirit.

The partaker of Christ is the partaker of the Divine nature, because God has created in that believer the new man in righteousness and true holiness, after God’s own image. Christ is the believer’s holiness. I Corinthians 1:30.

Everything that the believer needs to please God has been provided in Christ; even the grace, the boldness, the humility, the power to be a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel. The

true Grace preacher must suffer as an evil-doer to make Paul's gospel known. "Be not ashamed," are the words in this connection. II Timothy 1:5 to 12. It is an up-to-date admonition. Preachers and Christian workers of today are ashamed and afraid to be partakers of the affliction of that unmixed gospel. They join up with a semi-religious movement for protection, for security and for advantage. They limit the Holy Spirit, as they take off the keen edge of the affliction of Paul's Gospel. But if we suffer with Christ and Paul, and follow Paul as he instructed us, we will be glorified and reign with Christ. This should encourage us to an uncompromising, unmixed testimony in this religious day of confusion, compromise and condemnation.

For we are partakers of Christ's glory that shall be revealed. I Peter 5:1. Hear the prayer of Christ in John 17:22, 24 and I Peter 5:10 and 11.

"And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one."

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

"But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."