

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

DECEMBER 1935

INSIDE FRONT COVER

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

As we send forth our December edition of the "Bible Study For Bereans", we are praying that our heavenly Father, by the Holy Spirit, will bless these written messages to the minds and hearts of those who read them. Our earnest desire is to help Christians to understand, enjoy and apply the Scriptures in such a manner that they will be enabled to manifest the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, according to the will of God expressed in II Timothy 1:7, in the matter of a separated spiritual life and in intelligent and profitable Bible Study.

For both saint and sinner our purpose is to uncover the blessed gospel of the grace of God, which has for centuries been lost in the religious mixtures and church traditions and creeds which have been adopted and propagated by denominational Christianity. Our contention is that a sinner is saved by grace and grace alone, by faith in the precious shed blood of the eternal Christ, and that no religious ceremony is required by God for membership in the Church, which is the Body of Christ; and that the grace of God is sufficient for the believer's life of victory, peace, joy and faithful service.

We are still counting on you to help us get subscribers for the Magazine. We certainly wish you a very blessed Christmas in the Lord Jesus.

J. C. O'HAIR, Pastor and Editor.

HIS BIRTH AND OURS

"NOW THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS ON THIS WISE: WHEN AS HIS MOTHER MARY WAS ESPOUSED TO JOSEPH, BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER, SHE WAS FOUND WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST". Matthew 1:18.

"FOR THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT". Matthew 1:20.

"BEHOLD, I WAS SHAPEN IN INIQUITY; AND IN SIN DID MY MOTHER CONCEIVE ME." Psalm 51:5.

"BUT THE SCRIPTURE HATH CONCLUDED ALL UNDER SIN," Galatians 3:22. "BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH." Ephesians 2:3. "THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE FLESH IS FLESH", John 3:6. "THEY THAT ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD." Romans 8:8.

"FOR I KNOW THAT IN ME (THAT IS IN MY FLESH) DWELLETH NO GOOD THING." Romans 7:18.

“But as many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to them that believe on His name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.” John 1:11 and 12. “Ye must be born anew.” John 3:7.

Concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we are told, in Colossians 1:15, that He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. What ever truth the Holy Spirit would convey to our minds and hearts in this blessed truth we are sure that He would not have us follow the error of some teachers of the Bible; that the eternal Christ, before the ages was created by God, He was in the form of God, He was with God, He was God. “He is before all things and by Him all things consist.”

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” John 1:14. “The Second man is from heaven.” I Corinthians 15:47. He shared the Father’s glory before the world was. John 17:5. He was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Hebrews 2:9.

Although made in the likeness of sinful flesh, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. He knew no sin. The holy child Jesus was not born within the natural law of procreation. He had no human progenitor. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He inherited none of Adam’s sin. This sinless Saviour was made sin on the cross. II Corinthians 5:20 and 21.

Some one has estimated that 20 billion people have descended from Adam. By Adam sin and death have passed unto and upon all men.

Inasmuch as we were not born as the Holy Child was born, we cannot live as the Holy Child lived. It is worse than folly to talk about becoming holy by walking in His footsteps. We can only walk in Adam’s footsteps until we undergo a spiritual change, a Divine transformation, “God’s workmanship created in Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 2:9 and 10. God has told us how to become holy. “By the which will we are sanctified (made holy) by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrews 10:10.

To be sure the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, His once-for-all sacrifice, would have been valueless to accomplish our eternal redemption, had He not lived a sinless life, for He had to be God’s Lamb without spot or blemish. But His sinless life could have accomplished nothing but condemnation for sinful humanity apart from His death and resurrection. After we die with Christ we are raised with Him to walk in newness of life. Then we are told to put off the old man and to put on the new man. Ephesians 4:22 to 24. Then we can say “Christ liveth in me.”

To Nicodemus the Messiah said, “except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3, “Marvel not that I said, ye must be born again”. John 3:7. How? By looking to the Son of man on the tree. John 3:13 and 14. Paul wrote that we are saved by the washing of regeneration. Titus 3:5 to 7. He was directed by the infallible Holy Spirit when he wrote, “if any man be in Christ Jesus, there is a new creation.” II Corinthians 5:17. He wrote, no hope, no cure in religion; only in the new creation. Galatians 6:15. The sinner’s place of refuge, blessing, salvation, security is in Christ Jesus unto good works”. Ephesians 2:5 and 10.

There may be both a difference and distinction between the new birth which Christ, proclaimed to the ruler of Israel, and the new creation, He committed with the ministry of reconciliation to Paul for us. But let us not argue with the sinners whether it is regeneration or the new creation. Let us get them to Calvary, where the Lord of glory was crucified and became the Saviour of the world; and persuade them to appropriate by faith so they can with assurance say, “He is now my Saviour.”

As many as received Him to them He gave the right to become the sons of God.

If you are among the unredeemed members of Adam's family, why not celebrate this Christmas 1935 by beginning to live? You can never live until you live in Christ and with Christ. You must first die with Him by accepting His death.

SOME QUESTIONS AND SCRIPTURAL FACTS FOR MEDITATION

1. In II Peter 3:15 and 16 we read these words from the pen of Peter concerning Paul: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood."

I am sure that we desire to add our hearty "Amen" to Peter's statement. Not only do we find some things in Paul's Epistles hard to be understood but we find that an honest, prayerful, spiritual endeavor to understand them brings from Christians, who insist on mixing Peter's circumcision ministry with Paul's uncircumcision ministry, some hard sayings and uncharitable condemnation.

2. In Luke 2:25 we find an Israelite, Simeon, waiting for the Kingdom of God. In Luke 21:20 to 31 we learn from the mouth of the King that the kingdom of God will be at hand after signs in the heavens and on earth when the Son of man comes in the clouds. The Thessalonians and Corinthians were waiting for God's Son to come from heaven. I Corinthians 1:7—I Thessalonians 1:9 and 10. The Romans, with Paul, were waiting for the redemption of the body. Romans 8:23. Unto those that wait for Him Jesus is going to appear the second time. Hebrews 9:28. Members of the Body of Christ are looking for that blessed hope. Titus 2:13. We are waiting to appear with Christ in glory. Colossians 3:4. We are not waiting for the coming of the Son of man as told in Luke 21:23 to 31. If we are, remember the awful signs will precede that coming and we will be with Israel in the great tribulation. The time of Christ's appearing for His Body is not to be told by the signs which will be given for Israel.

3. Read the message of our brother Chas. F. Baker in our January edition. He is going to show in that message the folly of teaching that Peter's "last days" Kingdom Message on the day of Pentecost was the "first day" of the Body of Christ. How could Joel's "last days" mean the Body's "first days"? If we teach that the Kingdom of heaven, proclaimed in Matthew, Mark and Luke, has been postponed until after the Body of Christ has been completed and removed from earth, then why not teach that the "last days" proclaimed by Peter and the Eleven have been postponed until after that Body has been completed? If the Body of Christ was not prophesied as having anything to do with Israel's "last days", why have that Body begin historically when the "last days" message was proclaimed?

4. The word "Church" comes to us from the word "Kurios", translated several hundred times in the New Testament Scriptures "Lord". The word "church" and "churches" occurs over one hundred times in the New Testament Scriptures. The Greek word is "Ekklesia", literally "the called-out". The word is translated "assembly", Acts 19:31, 39 and 41, heathen gathered in the theatre. A mob thus gathered centuries before could have been correctly called "an assembly". Therefore the word "Church" has a rather indefinite meaning unless qualified and described in the Scriptures. The church of Hebrews 2:12 is called in Psalms 22:22, "the congregation". In

Luke 10:20 the Lord Jesus told 70 disciples that their names were written in heaven. Were they not then members of the Church of the first born, which are written in heaven? Hebrews 12:29. Believing Jews and Greeks were not baptized in one Spirit in one body while Christ was on earth. But where is the Scripture to prove that the Church, which is the Body of Christ did begin on the day of Pentecost? Who was the first Greek to be baptized into the Church which is Christ's Body? Let us be careful about proving doctrine by the use of the Word "ekklesia".

5. In Acts 28:20 Paul was in Rome and in that verse he declared to a company of Israelites that he was bound with chains for the hope of Israel. In Colossians 4:3, Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and II Timothy 2:9 Paul was in Rome and declared to Gentiles that he was in bonds for "the mystery". Our Premillennialist brethren, who devote very little time to the preaching of "the mystery" declare that "the mystery" was the fact that Paul was preaching Israel's hope to Gentiles. Peter did that to Cornelius in Acts 10:34 to 43. Was Peter preaching "the mystery" to Cornelius? If so, how did he and James keep out of bonds for "the mystery"? Would Gentile believers need the wisdom and revelation of Ephesians 1:17 and 18, if "the mystery" was Israel's hope? Remember that nearly all able students of the Word teach that Paul had two imprisonments in Rome. What is the difference between Israel's hope and the hope of the Church which is Christ's Body?

6. In Matthew 15:24 the Lord Jesus declared that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. John 3:16 declares that God gave His Son that whosoever believeth on Him should have everlasting life. How do we reconcile "the lost sheep of Israel only" with "whosoever"? Did Christ say what is recorded in John 3:16 while He was on earth or did the Holy Spirit speak those words years later by John? Did Jesus and the Twelve preach to Gentiles? Did the Twelve preach a "whosoever" message that took in the Gentiles during the first nine chapters of Acts? Did not the Twelve require something more than believing to receive God's blessing? Acts 2:38. Acts 8:12 to 16. Mark 16:15 to 18. How does the gospel program which the Lord Jesus gave to the Twelve, in Matthew 10:5 to 10, fit into the gospel program of Paul in Ephesians 2:8 to 10, I Timothy 1:11; 5:23, II Timothy 1:9 and 10 and Titus 3:5 to 7?

7. How are we to follow Jesus today? In I Corinthians 11:1 Paul wrote to the Gentile believers at Corinth; "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Several years later he wrote to the Philippians, "Be followers together of me". Philippians 3:17. In Philippians 3:5 to 9 Paul declared that everything he had cherished in Judaism, everything he had valued in his religious life, everything he had practiced as an Israelite under the law, he had counted as loss. It is not a difficult task to map out our spiritual path, our Scriptural program as given in Paul's prison Epistles, although we have a gigantic task to try to follow his course of faithful obedience; but we find no end of the study needed to be able to follow him in his pre-prison Epistles. We know we are not expected to circumcise a Timothy, to take vows, to shave our heads, to observe Pentecost, to sit as a Jew in a Jewish assembly; to become as one under the law—all of these Paul did. He said "I thank God I baptized none of you (but a few)," "I thank God I spake with tongues more than ye all." I Corinthians 1:14 and I Corinthians 14:18. Those who speak with tongues join with other brethren in telling how many were baptized in their meetings. Most Fundamentalists cannot thank God either way. Paul laid hands on the sick and they recovered (in his pre-prison ministry). Shall we follow him? In other words, how are we to apply the principle of II Timothy 2:15 so as to obey I Corinthians 11:1 and Philippians 3:17? Much of Paul's program during the Acts period was put away when he took up his ministry in Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, Philippians and II Timothy. And as we do not live in the Acts period we are

not expected to take up what was put away with the close of that period. This includes the “sign gifts” of Mark 16:17 and 18 and, I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

THE LITTLE WORD “BUT” IN EPHESIANS

The word “but” occurs twenty-five times in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is interesting and instructive to read the significance of each occurrence. Let us study several of these “buts”.

Ephesians 2:4 and 5:

“BUT” God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”

In verses one to three of this chapter we read of the miserable condition of the unsaved sinner, his black record, his dark past, his helpless and pitiable, ruined state. He is everything he ought not to be by nature. He is dead. Religion could not benefit such a man. There is nothing within to offer any hope. Forms and ceremonies prove futile. Any attempt to remedy the disease or get rid of death by trying to do something for God will result in absolute failure.

“But God.” Now something worth while may happen. The sinner is powerless and dead. The living God is omnipotent. With Him all things are possible. He created the heavens and the earth. He delivered Israel from Egypt and led them dry-shod across the sea. He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him far above in the highest heavenlies. Surely the supernatural God, with such supernatural power, can do something for the natural sinner who will allow Him to. God is rich in mercy and great in love. Note what He did for those poor, lost, ruined, condemned, dead sinners. “Quickened (made alive) with Christ . . . hath raised us up together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:5 and 6. “By grace are ye saved.”

These redeemed sinners, together with you and me, if we are saved by God’s grace, are going to be put on exhibition as sinners saved by grace in the ages to come, all to the glory of the person and work of the Son of God’s love. Ephesians 2:7.

In, verses eleven and twelve, lest we should forget what we were before we became God’s workmanship, God reminds us again that we were Christless, Godless and hopeless.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ:” Ephesians 2:13.

Then follows the second “but”.

This is how the great transforming work is done. “But now”. Emphasize the “now”. What a change! What a difference! “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” “Far off;” the past. “Nigh;” the present. How? By the once-for-all suffering and sacrifice of Christ. By Him we were brought to God. I Peter 3:18. The two factors in the believer’s salvation are God’s grace and the precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the sinner’s saving faith is the gift of God. So salvation is, from beginning to end, all by grace; and nothing but grace.

Let us read the third “But” in Ephesians 5:8. Here we have another “but now”.

Ephesians 5:8:

“For ye were sometimes darkness, BUT now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”

To the redeemed sinner God here says, “ye were” “ye are”. You have heard that testimony of one of God’s faithful saints, “I am not what I ought to be: I am not what I hope to

be: but, by the grace of God, I am not what I once was.” “Ye were darkness.” “But now”. “But now ye are light in the Lord.” Think of it! Christ is the light of the world! The believer is in Christ. In Christ he is light. There is no real spiritual light or life outside of Christ. There is no place of Divine blessing outside of Christ.

How should those who have light in Christ walk? “Walk as children of light.” And what else? Read the “buts” in Ephesians 5:3 and Ephesians 4:20.

We give three other “buts”. Ephesians 4:15:

“BUT speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.”

Ephesians 4:7:

“BUT unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Ephesians 5:18:

“And be not drunk with wine, BUT be filled with the Spirit.”

From these verses we learn that we are expected not only to abstain from worldly habits, ungodly practices, from yielding to former lusts, but to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and to give forth a clear positive, uncompromising, unmixed testimony concerning God’s message for saint and sinner in this day of grace “speaking the truth in love”. For this life of peace and victory, for this worship and service, every member of the Body is given grace. Moreover, to do all that God desires of His children, His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained for us, the believer must be filled with the Holy Spirit. As we walk in the Spirit, we shall fulfill the righteousness of the law, we shall manifest the fruit of the Spirit. But in order to walk well pleasing unto the Lord and worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, we must faithfully, diligently, spiritually and prayerfully study the Word of truth, rightly divided, so we shall know our calling and not walk in the path the Lord marked out for Israel.

Study the other “buts” in Ephesians.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

LESSON FOUR

“WITNESS UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH.” Acts 1:8

“I SAY THEN, HAVE THEY STUMBLER THAT THEY SHOULD FALL? GOD FORBID; BUT RATHER THROUGH THEIR FALL SALVATION IS COME UNTO THE GENTILES FOR TO PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY.” Romans 11:11.

This Greek word translated “earth” is translated in Acts 7:3 and in 40 other Scriptures, “land”. Therefore, there are some Bible expositors who translate the Greek in Acts 1:8; “unto the uttermost limits of the land”, referring to the land of the Jews. We might agree that it is possible that such a translation was intended by the Holy Spirit, but then we might add that it is not probable.

One reason why these “expositors” have changed the reading from that in the authorized version, is because it is stated in Acts 8:1, that the twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem, and in all of the twenty-eight chapters of Acts there is no record that any of the Twelve preached beyond the limits of Israel’s land. In Peter’s Epistle, written after the “Acts” period, he had been in Babylon.

The Lord Jesus appeared in a vision to Saul of Tarsus in the Jerusalem temple and told him to get out of Jerusalem and to go far hence to the Gentiles. Acts 22:17 and 21. As we travel with Paul in the Book of Acts, we learn that as he journeyed through Asia Minor, Asia, Europe and the Islands, that his custom was to go first into the synagogues of the Jews and testify that Jesus was Messiah. Acts 13:26 to 30; Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5. And then he would turn to the Gentiles. Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:6.

We must not be too dogmatic in our conclusions when our proof is by the silences in the Scriptures concerning certain facts; but we must admit that it seems rather significant that the first and only Gentile to receive a kingdom blessing from Jesus on earth was a Roman official, that the first and only Gentile (with his household) to receive a message of salvation from the twelve apostles was a Roman official (Cornelius), and that the first Gentile to receive a message of salvation from Paul on his first missionary journey, was a Roman official, (Sergius Paulus). Acts 13:6 to 12.

We recently offered to our radio hearers a book, as a reward for the correct Scriptural answer to this question "Who was the first Gentile to whom salvation came to provoke Israel to jealousy?" This fact is declared by Paul, in Romans 11:11, about 60 A.D., or about 33 years after Christ died and told the Eleven to "disciple all nations". Matthew 28:19 and 20. Here is the statement: "Salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy." Perhaps, in the light of the Great Commission, we have thought and questioned, and still are uncertain, as to why it is stated that Paul turned to the Gentiles because of Israel's attitude toward his testimony concerning the resurrected Christ, or that salvation was sent to the Gentiles to provoke jealousy. Perhaps we have tried to reconcile Paul's declaration in Acts 13:46 with the words of Jesus in Matthew 23:33 to 39. Why was it necessarily to Israel first when the Lord Jesus called them serpents and vipers and said "your house is left unto you desolate"? There is not the slightest suggestion, or hint, that provoking Israel to jealousy was in the mind of the Lord when He commissioned His apostles to disciple all nations. Nor will there be jealousy with Israel when that Great Commission is carried out in the age to come, when the Gospel of the Kingdom will again be the King's message.

Well, it was interesting to read the different responses as to the Gentiles to whom salvation was sent to provoke Israel to jealousy. Some, of course, think that the woman at the well was a Gentile, and that the sinners of her village whom she brought to Jesus were Gentiles. But Matthew 10:5 teaches us that there was a difference between Gentiles and Samaritans and the woman's statements in John 4:12, John 4:20 and John 4:25, should convince any student of the Word that she was not a Gentile. Others think the Syrophoenician woman of Matthew 15:21 to 28 is the correct answer. Where does it say she was saved? Where is the Scriptural proof that any Gentile was saved while the Lord Jesus was on earth? If a Gentile had been saved while Jesus of Nazareth was witnessing to Israel, under the law, as the Minister of the circumcision, would that saved Gentile have become a member of the Body of Christ, or a proselyte, that is, a Jew by religion? Acts 2:22. Romans 15:8. Galatians 4:4. Remember, Jesus and His Twelve were under the law, obedient to the faith and practice of the true Jewish religion, while He was on earth. Luke 2:21 to 24. Luke 4:16. John 7:10. Luke 22:7 and 8. Let us be careful of what we mean when we speak of following Jesus.

If the Roman centurion, of Luke 7:1 to 8 and Matthew 8:1 to 12, was saved, he did not receive salvation to provoke Israel to jealousy. He received the answer to his petition and response to his great faith, by the intercession of Israel. Luke 7:3 to 5. Israel helped him to secure the blessing.

Others said that the message of Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost was for both Israel and the Gentiles, because Peter declared, “this promise is unto you, and to all that are afar off.” Acts 2:39. There are several reasons why this answer is Scripturally incorrect. One reason is, if we are included in the “afar off” Gentiles, the promise has not been fulfilled, and moreover no true messenger of the Lord preaches to Gentiles, or Jews, today, Acts 2:38, as God’s message of salvation. It is inconceivable that Peter had the Gentiles in mind in 33 A.D. when he specifically declared, in 40 A.D., that it was unlawful for him to come to a Gentile. Acts 10:28. It was after that vision of Peter, recorded in Acts 10:1 to 28, that we hear the words of the apostles rejoicing over God’s acceptance of the Gentiles. Acts 11:18. All that Peter and the Eleven were preaching was in fulfillment of Israel’s prophecies. Acts 1:16; Acts 2:16; Acts 2:30; Acts 3:21 and 24; Acts 10: 43; Acts 15:13 to 17. The “afar off” Israelites of Acts 2:39 are the “afar off” Israelites of Daniel 9:7. They were not Gentiles.

We do greatly err when we open the door of salvation for the Gentiles before God opened that door. In Acts 15:7 we have the record as to when God opened a door in the land of the Jews, by Peter’s mouth; and in Acts 14:27 we have the record as to when God opened the door for Gentiles by Barnabas and Saul. Now the details concerning the first open door are given in Acts 10:1 to 47; and the door opened by Paul in Acts 13:6 to Acts 14:1.

This should convince us that the Scriptures mean exactly what they say in Acts 11:19. “preaching the Word to none but Jews only.” This should be the final word that the Ethiopian eunuch was a Jew by religion. This should convince us that the people in the city of Samaria, to whom Philip preached, were not Gentiles. Acts 8:5 to 17. Here is an important suggestion All Scripture should be studied as to whether it applied, as to time, before or after the statement of Acts 14:27.

Of course, the greatest number of guesses was, that Cornelius was the first Gentile to whom salvation was sent to provoke Israel to jealousy. But is that answer Scripturally correct? From the Record it seems that he and his household were the first Gentiles to whom any one of the Twelve preached and also the last Gentile, so far as we can learn by reading the Book of Acts. But it did not provoke Israel to jealousy after Peter had explained that Cornelius acknowledged that Israel had the only true God, the only true religion, that Cornelius feared God, prayed to Him, stood well with Israel, and gave alms to Israel. Acts 10:1 to 3; Acts 10:22. Peter preached to Cornelius the Word which God sent to Israel. Acts 10:36. Peter declared, in the name of Israel’s God, that Cornelius would be accepted because he feared God and worked righteousness. Acts 10:34. Doubtless Cornelius was an uncircumcised proselyte. It was Israel’s prophets who foretold this salvation through Israel’s Messiah. Acts 10:43. And the Israelites rejoiced over the salvation of Cornelius. Acts 11:18.

It is well to remember that Peter with the Eleven had the keys to the kingdom of heaven, that the Twelve are yet to judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel; and that the Twelve Apostles and the Twelve Tribes are linked together in the New Jerusalem. Matthew 16:16 to 18; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 21:12 to 14.

THE TWELVE AND PAUL

Does it not seem somewhat inconsistent that our Premillenarian Bible teachers so vigorously protest against confusing Israel with the Church and yet most of them teach that Paul carried right on with the Twelve, working under the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 the keys of the kingdom of because of the number “twelve” and because Matthias had to be chosen

in fulfillment of Scripture to maintain the “twelve”, because the twelve apostles kept together in Israel’s land until Cornelius was saved, and because thereafter it was ordered by the Holy Spirit that the Twelve, represented by the pillars, were to go to Israel with Israel’s Gospel and turn over to Paul the responsibility of going to the Gentiles with different messages which he received in different revelations from the risen Christ. Galatians 2:7 to 9; Galatians 1:11 to 17; Ephesians 3:1 to 11; Colossians 1:24 to 28; II Timothy 1:9 to 11; I Timothy 2:5 to 7.

In Acts 15:7 we have recorded the words of Peter, that God chose him to represent the Twelve in preaching to the Gentiles. And now, you and I have some questions in our minds. How do we reconcile Acts 15:7 with Galatians 2:9; that Peter was God’s choice to preach to the Gentiles and yet he was to confine his preaching to Israel? What need was there for Paul, if Peter was God’s choice for the Gentiles and if Peter continued preaching to Gentiles and Paul perpetuated the ministry and message of the Twelve under the Great Commission? Think prayerfully and diligently in your attempt to answer this question. Where will Paul be when the Twelve shall sit on twelve thrones with the Son of man judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel? Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30. Why was it that Israel accepted Peter’s explanation as to why he preached to the Gentiles and when Paul gave his authority for going to them they wanted to tear him to pieces? Acts 11:1 to 18; Acts 22:21 to 30. If Paul was acting under the general instructions of Matthew 28:19 and 20, why did he need a special revelation to preach a different message to the heathen, and why did he declare that Gentiles obtained mercy through Israel’s unbelief? Galatians 1:11 to 18; Romans 11:30. and why Acts 13:46 and Acts 18:6 and Acts 28:28? Good why’s, answer them.

If we will carefully, prayerfully, spiritually and studiously compare Acts 13:46; Acts 18:6; Acts 28:25 to 28, with Galatians 1:11 to 18; Romans 11:11; Romans 11:30 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9, we shall certainly be persuaded that the Apostle Paul had a ministry of revelation, as well as a ministry of confirmation; that he had a ministry which more than supplemented the ministry of the Twelve, one that superseded that ministry. In order that we might understand Paul’s ministry during the “Acts” period, we must understand his two-fold program as declared by him in I Corinthians 9:20 to 22, “as one under the law” and “as one not under the law”.

Quite a number of our radio friends wrote in that in the Thirteenth of Acts we find the first Divine Record of Gentiles being saved to provoke Israel to jealousy. And perhaps they are Scripturally correct. Let us read Acts 13:47 to Acts 14:5 and see that we find there the first record of the salvation of Greeks; and that salvation stirred the Jews to more than jealousy. Let us not confuse the Grecians of Acts 6:1 and Acts 11:20 with the Greeks of Acts 14:1. The Grecians were Jews. The Greeks were Gentiles.

Let us turn to Acts 13:6 to 12 and read that very interesting and symbolic lesson. Here we have the story of BarJesus, the disobedient, gainsaying Israelite, blind for a season, and Sergius Paulus who “when he saw what was done, believed.” Paulus was astounded at the doctrine of the Lord. All Gentiles should be. Because of Israel’s blindness for a season, because of Israel’s unbelief, the Gentiles have obtained mercy and salvation. Read it in Romans 11:6 to 32. Great story! BarJesus means the child of Jehovah-Saviour. Israel is so called in the Scriptures. The individual Gentile, Sergius Paulus, and the individual Jew, BarJesus, are representative and symbolic. With the close of Acts 13, we have a group of Jews provoked and judged and a group of Gentiles saved. “All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” Romans 10:21. Israel the people. How long is “all day long”, until Matthew 23:39 or until Acts 28:25 to 28? Write down your answer.

Now read carefully Acts 13:40 and ponder it in your mind and heart and do not follow in the steps of so-called Bible teachers who have made the serious blunder of having Israel judged and set aside with Matthew 23:31 to 39. "Beware lest it come". It had not yet come. The blindness and Divine judgment, pictured in Romans 11:3 to 32, fell upon the Nation with the quotation from Isaiah 6:6 to 9. Read it in Acts 28:25 to 28. And read Matthew 23:31 to 38 with Luke 21:20 and Matthew 22:8, and know that God's judgment, pronounced by Christ while on earth, was postponed until after the "Acts" period closed. Then it was that God sent His army. But He is to send another army. It was then (about 69 or 70 A.D.) that Jerusalem was compassed with armies and their desolation night. Jerusalem will again be compassed with armies. Compare Matthew 13:14 and 15; John 12:40 and 41, Acts 28:25 to 28 with Isaiah 6:6 to 10.

(To be continued in the January magazine.)

"UNTO ALL PLEASING"

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:9, 10).

It is the first impulse of love to desire to be well pleasing to the one loved. Every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ must have some measure of love for Him, and must therefore have some degree of desire to please Him. A mere desire to please Him is not sufficient; nor is any amount of sincere energy expended in that which may be contrary to His will able to please Him. If we are to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, it will be because we are filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Since this article may fall into the hands of some unsaved person, let us begin by calling attention to the fact that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6), and also that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8). Millions of religious, unsaved sinners are striving to make themselves pleasing unto God, but their labor is all in vain. Being ignorant, and many of them willingly ignorant, of His will, they suppose that by religious works, morality, and philanthropy God will be pleased or obligated to finally receive them into heaven. Every man is by nature in the flesh, and thus unable to please God because he is under the condemnation of the law of sin and death, but every one who through faith is in Christ Jesus is able to please Him, because he has been set free from that condemnation. When the sinner realizes that the only way he can please God is to be well pleased with God's Son and His sacrificial death with whom and with which God was well pleased, he will enter into the joyous experience of salvation and find himself upon the only basis of being well pleasing unto the Lord.

It goes without saying that believers ought to be well pleasing unto God, but it is equally as evident that the majority are not. It is significant that the Apostle Paul beseeches believers so many times to be well pleasing to the Lord, and the reason he can do so is because we are supposed to have the mind of Christ. That mind can be seen when Jesus, in speaking about the Father, said: "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29); and five times it is recorded that the Father said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Paul tells us that "even Christ pleased not Himself" (Romans 15:3).

There are two reasons why believers are not well pleasing to God. They live either to please self, or to please men. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let everyone of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself." (Romans 15:1 to 3). "But as we, were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (I Thessalonians 2:4). "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God." (Colossians 3:22) "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Ephesians 6:6 and 7). "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10).

Christians who live to please themselves usually evidence little outward service for the Lord, but instead spend their time and money in such pursuits as will add to their pleasure; whereas those who live to please men are usually those who are very busy in what appears to be the Lord's service, doing what they do to make a name or to gain popularity for themselves, or to escape the hardships and persecutions which come from standing for the truth. No doubt we are all tainted to some degree with one or the other of these ailments, but it should be our desire to have a testimony such as Enoch had: "He pleased God."

It should be evident that we will be well pleasing to God when we are doing those things which please Him. We can discover what things please Him only as we discover His will for us as revealed in His Word. We must first understand that no desires motivated by the "flesh" can ever please God. Instead we are told: "it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). God Himself must do the willing and working, in order that the work please Him, and we provide merely the instrumentality through which He works. This is true because "we died" (our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, Romans 6:6; "ye did put off the old man with his deeds." (Colossians 3:9), and "our life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). It is a denial of this basic fact of our salvation when we allow ourselves to be energized by the "old man"; for that was put to death with Christ, and thus rendered inoperative. If God was pleased to put an end to the "flesh" in the death of Christ, He is surely displeased when we revive it. Since no good thing dwells in the flesh (Romans 7:18), and since they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8), God must put the flesh to death. The one great difference between believers and unbelievers today is that the believer has already been put to death (in the person of a Substitute, of course) and the unbeliever is yet awaiting that experience (not in a substitute, but in himself). Thus, as believers, we have been delivered from the power of darkness, and have been actually translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13). In order to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, we must seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1 and 2). In so doing, we will be obeying Romans 12:1 and, 2: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable (translated elsewhere 'well-pleasing') unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world (age);but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable (well pleasing), and perfect will of God."

Now since it pleased the Lord to bruise Him (Isaiah 53:10), and since it also pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (I Corinthians 1:21), we must conclude that the kind of service which pleases Him, is that which makes known to a lost world as an all-sufficient Saviour this crucified and resurrected Christ. God is not only displeased, but His anathema rests upon all who preach any thing today but the Gospel of the Grace of God. No

believer can be pleasing to God who does not share this great burden of His heart, and who is not actively engaged in spreading abroad this Gospel of the glory. The responsibility rests upon all who are not actively engaged in preaching, to make the preaching possible by their financial aid, and this is “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice wellpleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18).

God is pleased not only in the salvation of the sinner, but also in the edification of the saint. He wants us to “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; that we be no more children; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:13 to 15). “He is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell” (Colossians 1:18, 19). May we, therefore, seek to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE WHAT IS THE ECONOMY

OF THE MYSTERY

EPHESIANS 3:9

BY PASTOR HARRY BULTEMA

There it stands in its sublime majesty. It is so simple that a child can almost understand it. The word “economy” means a rule, a law, or management for the house; in this case the holy temple of the Church. Every believer must know what God’s administration in His temple is. The word MYSTERY means a revealed secret of the Lord and stands here, not for EKKLESIA, or Church, in general, but specifically for the mystical Body of Christ, which had been hid in all other ages and generations, but around the year 60 A.D. made known to the Apostle of the Gentiles, or better, the Apostle of the Body.

WHY does God want all to know about the house rule of this sacred secret? Because He wants all His people—and He is thinking with “ALL” of all saints—to know in what house they are. He wants them to know that He dwells in that holy temple, there to meet His own and bless them with all Spirit-blessings. He wants them to know that not the ark, but Christ is there and that the grace and glory of God fills this new holy temple; and He wants them to know how to behave in this holy habitation and fill it with glad songs of gratitude.

WHEN must all know the economy of the secret? Right now: in this age and day. Satan has succeeded long enough to hide this blessed truth and blind the eyes of even believers from it. After it has been buried nineteen hundred years it is certainly high time to come boldly out with this Divine secret. It is now a “told” secret and may not be kept a secret any longer. It must be told that Christ was not only crucified for our sins according to the Scriptures, but that we were crucified, buried, raised, and seated with the Lord of glory; positionally one with Him in His humiliation and exaltation, His past, present and future.

Now the question arises: how must this be made known? This was the problem for Paul himself at the end of his life. All his own converts, and those whom he had taught and edified, turned away from him when he told them this. II Timothy 1:15. This is also the problem confronting, if not perplexing, us today.

It cannot be made known PHILOSOPHICALLY, since the very mystery truth sounds with clarion call the alarm; “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy.” Colossians 2:8

It cannot be done HISTORICALLY, for the simple reason that this mystery was UNHERALDED, UNPREDICTED, UNPROPHESIED, UNTYPIFIED, UNCOVENANTED, UNPROMISED, UNDESCRIBED, UNASSOCIATED, since it was hid in God.

For the same reason a PROPHETIC approach is of little or no avail. The sweet singer, David who sang so much about the coming Messiah, and put Him ever before him, could not sing about His Body hid in God. The seraphic Isaiah, who painted the most roseate pictures of the Messiah’s Kingdom, could not and did not give an oration about this mystical Body of Christ; and neither did Jeremiah, with all his pathos and tears, weep concerning this Body. Nor did Daniel, the much beloved man, in his wisdom, know a thing about it.

Again, for the same reason, a COVENANTAL approach will not accomplish anything in regard to this secret hid so long in God, because the Body exists on uncovenanted mercies pure and simple. The “sure mercies of David” are wonderful but they cannot refer to this Body of Christ.

Further, CHRONOLOGICALLY, we cannot accomplish anything in regard to this revealed secret, because it is altogether dateless and timeless. The Kingdom has its “TIMES AND SEASONS”. but not so the mystical Body of Christ. It breathes the air of the eternal hills.

Even the DISPENSATIONAL approach is by no means the wisest. With this is meant the study of the different EONS and ECONOMIES of the Scriptures. Understand me well, all these different ways of Bible study are very necessary and useful, but they do not bring the desired results in regard to the purpose heading this article.

After some blundering and after much exercise of heart and prayerful Bible study I have come to the conclusion that the best way to propagate the knowledge concerning the economy of this mystery, is the PRACTICAL, SPIRITUAL method of our walk in the light of this truth. This is always the best medium for the propagating of any truth, but it holds good here in a special way.

In connection with the holy walk I would advocate to bring forth, in practical study, all the illumination and consolation which this truth holds for the believers. Was this not the Pauline method? In Ephesians Paul describes in 66 verses the doctrine concentrating around this mystery with much practical matter even here, while he uses 89 verses to describe the WALK of the believers as a result of this mystery. Not less than seven times he speaks, in Ephesians, about the walk of the saints in this evil world.

Ever since the statement “Enoch walked with God” was given, the picture of a walk or traveling has been used to denote a believer’s whole life. In the broadest sense the WALK includes the WITNESS, WORK, WILL, WARFARE, WATCHING, and WAITING of the believer. Let us look at a few walks

Walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

Walk not after the flesh but walk after the Spirit. Romans 8:4.

Walk honestly. Romans 13:13.

Walk by faith, not by sight. II Corinthians 5:7.

Walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:6.

Walk by a definite rule. Galatians 6:16. Philippians 3:16.

Walk in good works. Ephesians 2:10.

Walk worthy of the vocation. Ephesians 4:17 to 18.

Walk not as other Gentiles walk, Ephesians 4:17 to 18.

Walk circumspectly. Ephesians 5:10.
Walk in love. Ephesians 5:1.
Walk as children of light. Ephesians 5:8. I John 1:7.
Walk worthy of the Lord. Colossians 1:8.
Walk in wisdom. Colossians 4:5.
Walk to please God. I Thessalonians 4:1.
Walk honestly to them that are without. I Thessalonians 4:12.
Walk in the truth. III John 4.
Walk even as He walked. I John 2:6. Walk humbly. Micah 6:8.
Walk in the way of good men. Hosea 14:9.
Walk in integrity. Psalms 26:11.

Good Lord, help us to walk straight in these dark and evil days.

Before Paul points to the “glory of the one baptism”, he exhorts to all **LOWLINESS** and **MEEKNESS**, **LONG SUFFERING** and **FORBEARING**. The purpose of God to form a perfect man has, as its immediate object, that we should be **NO MORE CHILDREN**, tossed about as the waves by storm and carried about as a rudderless ship, and deceived by the dice-throwing and deceitful men. After Paul states the case negatively, he puts it positively, and says, that we should be “**TRUTHING IN LOVE**”; with affection and not with affectation. Not with sledge-hammer blows and with sectarian harshness and bigotry, but with **LOVE**, which never acts unseemly and is not provoked and never fails and cannot fail here. Talking about this wonderful Body we should not forget that the Body has **JOINTS** and that every joint supplieth to the well being of the Body as a whole. Ephesians 4:16. There is often sickness in the joints and then we call it arthritis, or rheumatism, and it seems sometimes that the Church is also afflicted with that disease for it is often so stiff and stubborn. Then we must not try first of all to edify or build up the other fellow, but edify ourselves. “**EDIFYING ITSELF IN LOVE**”. Ephesians 4:16. “This I say”, Paul exclaims, (about the unity, love and self-edification) “that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk”. How do the Gentiles walk? With **DARKENED MIND**, **ALIENS**, **IGNORANT**, **BLIND**. Then he gives a series of contrasts, verse Ephesians 4:25 and 32. Put away lying, tell the truth, for **WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER**. No rocking-chair for his black majesty. Take the whole panoply of God. No stealing, but laboring and giving to the needy. No smutty talking, but edifying and ministering grace to the hearers. No grieving of the Spirit, but glorying in His sealing to the day of redemption. No bitterness and wrath, but kindness, tenderhearted, forgiving one another; not seventy times seven, but as God in Christ forgave us.

May God help us in these troublous days to so firmly, lovingly and persistently make all see the economy of the mystery! We need not sermons in stones, but sermons in shoes; nor stones in sermons.

BRIEF STUDIES IN EPHESIANS

BY VINCENT BENNETT

THINGS THAT DIFFER

Introduction:

There are Divine distinctions made in the Word of God that must be recognized by every student who desires to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. II Timothy 2:15.

We must “distinguish between the things that differ” (marginal rendering of Philippians 1:10). While all Scripture is for us and is profitable, yet not all truth is about us or to us. II Timothy 3:16. In order to obtain the true interpretation of any passage of Scripture, we must take into consideration the particular period of time in which the message was given and to whom it was addressed.

Much of the confusion today in the churches, the different interpretations that are accepted by different groups, and the divers and strange doctrines that are carrying away even some of the most zealous and earnest Christians, can be traced back to a mishandling of the Word of God and a disregard for the injunction just mentioned.

For instance: in I Corinthians 10:32, we find these words—“Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.” The distinctions in this passage are given by God and unless recognized will make for a distortion of the Scriptures so disastrous that nothing but confusion can be expected, and the spiritually new born babes in Christ will be lost in such a maze of different beliefs that to find the right track will be almost impossible.

The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God are not the same and never will be. This seems superfluous and unnecessary, for the very names of these three groups make them distinct and different. Yet is it not a fact that today we find men, not understanding their distinct calling as members of the Church which is His Body, trying with every conceivable plan and program to bring in an earthly kingdom of blessedness that is God’s purpose for Israel? Would to God that Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:17 could be answered in us today; that we might have our understanding enlightened and know what is the hope of His calling. The Church of Jesus Christ, not knowing the nature of this calling, which is heavenly, in ignorance seeks to realize the vocation of Israel, which is earthly.

God has a definite plan and purpose for Israel on the earth and our God, who cannot lie, will yet fulfill the covenants He has made with His people. The entire prophetic Word has its climax in the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of His Kingdom. Luke 1:31 to 33. “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.” We know how Jesus came to His own and His own received Him not, He was rejected, and they crucified the Lord of glory as an emphatic declaration that they would not have this Man to reign over them.

While it is true, that the majority of the Jews were blind, it is also true that many of the Gentiles had their eyes opened and in the purpose of God Paul was chosen as the “Apostle to the Gentiles”, with the good news that a door of faith had been opened to them. Acts 14:27. Later, in Ephesians 3:1, the Apostle Paul tells of a definite truth that God had given to him: truth not made known to previous ages and generations; and he is the dispenser of this new revelation to the Gentiles. Could any statement be more clearly stated? Read it in Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Colossians 1:24 to 28.

While the Kingdom is in abeyance and blindness has happened to Israel, God, according to His eternal purpose, made known to Paul this secret hid from ages and generations. Not one of Israel’s prophets knew this mystery; neither did John the Baptist nor the Twelve Apostles. Not until the glorified, ascended Lord revealed it to Paul was the manifold wisdom of God made

known; that before the foundations of the world He had purposed the making of a new thing, whose nature, calling and destiny would be heavenly. Paul is the minister of this truth or revelation which completes the Word of God. Colossians 1:25. (the word 'fulfill' is 'complete'). God is now definitely concerned with the making of a New Man, Ephesians 2:15; i.e. the "Church which is His Body". Christ Jesus our Lord is the glorious Head. Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18 to 28.

One day the Body will be complete, the last soul that will realize his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:19) will be called from justification to glorification. When that day comes our heavenly hope will be realized and the Body will be joined to the Head in the glory! After that, God will deal with Israel again for they have not been cast away forever. Romans 11:27. God's purpose with them and the setting up of the earthly kingdom will be established.

Looking back, we can easily see how the Jews were blind when they rejected Jesus Christ and said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." But those people are equally blind who today take for themselves Christ's message to the Jews and apply it to the dispensation in which we live. To say that we are now in the Kingdom and Christ Jesus is reigning as "King of the Church" is more than absurd. Today any one with open eyes can see that not Christ is reigning but the powers of darkness are in control. When Christ comes back again He shall reign in righteousness and to His sovereign control every knee shall bow.

Paul's later Epistles have a distinct message for this age. In them is found truth for us concerning the Church which is His Body, as distinct from kingdom truth for Israel. May God reveal to us what is the hope of our calling, character and destiny! To this end we are going to study the Epistle to the Ephesians which was written by the Apostle Paul during his imprisonment at Rome, after the final rejection of Israel and the judicial sentence in Acts 28:27 and 28—"For the heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

THEME OF THE EPISTLE

The most glorious revelation that God has given, the highest and deepest truth He has made known to man, He communicated through the Apostle Paul. The Epistle to the Ephesians stands without a peer in the whole range of the inspired Book. Its love surpasses knowledge.

Its riches are unsearchable. Christ Jesus is far above all principalities and powers, seated in the heavenlies, into which God's grace has brought us in Him. The truth takes us back before the foundation of the world, and points forward to the ages to come when believing sinners shall be made the display of His grace in the glory. In Colossians 1:25, Paul states that this truth which he is dispensing "completes the Word of God." How many Christians really know and understand this final word which God here declares, this truth which God kept secret from former ages and generations, this mystery which was hid in God's heart, this purpose which He purposed in Himself before the foundation of the world? What a message of pure unadulterated grace for hell-deserving sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, telling them that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ exalts them to a position of identification with Him in the heavenlies, with the blessed hope of appearing with Him in the glory.

If we could only get the Church to read this Epistle and understand this distinct message of grace which is set forth, it would do away with much of the confusion that exists and make for a unity of the faith which God Himself has made.

KEYNOTE:—"IN CHRIST."

Throughout this Epistle we find this dominant recurring expression which occurs more than 20 times and is the keynote of the book.

"In Christ." Isn't it wonderful? We do not have to try and follow Him, as did the disciples before the Holy Spirit was given. thank God. We are in Him and, as Colossians 2:10 puts it, "ye are complete in Him." Oh! the matchless grace of our God! To think that the sin-question is forever settled, that we are justified freely by His grace, and are made one with the Lord Jesus. In Him we stand holy and without blame before the Father;

What a message of deliverance for church-members today who are entangled with all kinds of churchianity and ecclesiastical machinery of good works, trying to become righteous by their own efforts, when the message of God's Word is plain: that Jesus Christ is our righteousness and we are complete in Him.

Before going into an exposition of the Epistle, I want to give you a simple outline which will be a picture of the contents of the book before you.

OUTLINE OF PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Introduction.

Keynote—IN CHRIST JESUS

Salutation and Benediction— Ephesians 1:1, 2.

Our calling in Him— Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 3:21

Our conduct in Him— Ephesians 4:6 to 9.

Our conquest in Him— Ephesians 6:10 to 18.

Conclusion— Ephesians 6:19 to 24.

Let no man think that he can come to this Epistle and grasp its riches, scale its heights, or fathom its depths, aided only by the natural mind. There must be more than an intellectual understanding of the truth. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. We pray then that in the meditation of this portion of His Word the Holy Ghost shall be our teacher and that we shall go on from Glory to Glory.

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE BIBLE IN TEN LESSONS

LESSON NUMBER FOUR

WAS ABRAHAM A JEW OR AN ISRAELITE?

In the Old Testament we find the word "Jew" or "Jews" occurs 82 times. The word is found in the Book of Esther 53 times. It is in this Book that the word "Jew", in the singular, is used, for the first time in the Bible, in the year 519 B.C. So the word "Jew", in the singular, occurs for the first time 1400 years after the call of Abram.

The plural, “Jews”, occurs for the first time in II Kings 16:6 in the year 739 B.C., or nearly 1200 years after the call of Abram. The Hebrew word is “Yehuwdiy”. The name “Jew” is not applied to the ten tribes. Concerning them we read in II Kings 23:27, “I have removed Israel.” Originally the word “Jew” meant a descendant of Judah who was the son of Israel. So the Hebrew word means a Judahite.

It is interesting to note that although Isaiah was Jehovah’s prophet to Judah he mentioned Israel 92 times. He did not use the word “Jew” even once, except as he referred to their language in Isaiah 36:11 and 13. It is also interesting to note that although David was of the Tribe of Judah, he never used the word “Jew” in the Psalms that he wrote. The word “Israel” is found 62 times in the Psalms.

It is also interesting to note in Esther 2:5 that Mordecai is called a Jew; although in that same verse it is recorded that he descended from Benjamin. This same information is given us concerning Saul of Tarsus or Paul the Apostle. In Acts 21:39 and 22:3 Paul said, “I am a Jew”. In Philippians 3:5 he said, “of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews.” In Romans 11:1 and II Corinthians 11:22 he says, “I am an Israelite”. So then we learn that Saul of Tarsus was of the tribe of Benjamin; that he was a Hebrew; that he was a Jew; that he was an Israelite. Benjamin was associated with Judah after the Kingdom of Israel was divided.

As we turn to the New Testament Scriptures we learn that the word “Jew” in the singular and in the plural is used 193 times. It is very interesting to note that in the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, the word is used only 16 times; while in John’s Gospel the word “Jew” occurs 70 times. In the Book of Acts the word occurs 79 times. The word “Israel” occurs in the Old Testament Scriptures 2494 times. In the New Testament Scriptures the word “Israel” occurs 74 times; “Israelite” 4 times. The first occurrence of the expression “children of Israel” is found in Genesis 36:31 and there referred to the first descendants of Jacob, rather than to the Nation Israel. We have more of the history of the birth of that Nation in the Book of Exodus. In that Book, as well as in other Books that make up the Pentateuch, God’s people are not called “Jews”. In the Book of Exodus, before the Law was given, they are called “the children of Israel” 62 times. After the Law was given, 39 times. After the Book of Exodus they were called by that name for many centuries.

In the New Testament Scriptures we learn that “Israel” and “Jews” are used interchangeably. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. John 3:1. Christ called Nicodemus “A master of Israel”. John 3:10. We learn that Christ was called “the King of Israel”, in Matthew 27:42, Mark 15:32, John 1:49 and John 12:13. According to Matthew 2:2, Christ was born King of the Jews; and in that same chapter, the sixth verse, he had come to rule Israel. When He was crucified, the superscription placed above His head was “King of the Jews”.

According to Luke 1:16, John the Baptist was to turn many of the children of Israel to Christ. At that time Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel. Luke 2:25. Associated with him in the religion of the Jews was a woman of the tribe of Asher. Luke 1:36. Christ was a Jew but He was sent to Israel. Matthew 15:24.

After the resurrection of Christ, His own disciples trusted that He would have redeemed Israel; and several days later asked the question, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Luke 24:21 to 24. Acts 1:6. They did not ask if He would restore the kingdom to the Jews; although according to Acts 10:28 and Galatians 2:14, Peter was a Jew. On the Day of Pentecost Peter addressed the Jews first, as “ye men of Judea”; and then, as “ye men of Israel”. Acts 2:5, Acts 2:14 and Acts 2:22. Peter and his associates were Galileans. Acts 2:7. Compare Acts 2:36 with I Thessalonians 2:15.

In Paul's ministry, recorded in the Book of Acts, we learn of the opposition from the Jews and the judgments which he pronounced upon them. But when we turn to Romans 11:7, he referred to them as "Israel", and declares in Romans 11:26, "all Israel shall be saved". This is to be because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance and for the fathers' sakes. Romans 11:28 and 29. God's gifts and calling to the fathers was for the whole house of Israel, the twelve tribes. According to Matthew 19:28, the twelve apostles in the coming Kingdom age are to judge the twelve tribes. According to Hebrews 8:9 to 11, the whole house of Israel is to be saved under the New Covenant. Read Acts 26:7.

In Romans 9:4 the question is, "Who are Israelites?" To them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law, the fathers, and Christ. The same thought is expressed; in Romans 3:1 in the question, "What advantage then hath the Jews?" The oracles of God were committed to them. The oracles of God were committed to all Israel. So we see that Israel and the Jew are used interchangeably. The "land of the Jews" is also called the "land of Israel". Matthew 2:20 and Acts 10:39. Paul was sent to the children of Israel. Acts 9:25. But he became a Jew to the Jews. I Corinthians 9:20.

Thus we see the word, "Jew" refers not only to the descendants of Judah, but to the Israelites and proselytes who practiced the Jews' religion. Even the Persian Gentiles in the days of Esther became Jews. Esther 8:17. And the proselytes of Acts 2:10 were devout Jews. Acts 2:5.

This age is divided into "Jews, Gentiles and the Church of God." I Corinthians 10:32. After the birth of the Nation Israel and until Pentecost, there were Jews and Gentiles. Before the birth of the Nation Israel and until Pentecost, there were Jews and Gentiles. Before the birth of the Nation Israel there was neither the Jew nor the Church of God. The Hebrew word translated "Gentile" is also translated "heathen" and "nation".

Abram was a Hebrew according to Genesis 14:13. His grandson was Israel. His great grandson was Judah. Judah came from Israel. Both Judah and Israel came from Abraham. It is in this sense only that Abraham could be called either a Jew or an Israelite. Therefore strictly speaking, Abraham was not a Jew. Jacob was not a Jew. If we say that Judah was a Jew we could not say that his eleven brothers were Jews.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT THE NATION ISRAEL

Abraham was 75 years old when God made His gracious promises to him. Genesis 12:4. In II Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23 Abraham is called "the friend of God."

"BY FAITH ABRAHAM, WHEN HE WAS CALLED TO GO OUT INTO A PLACE WHICH HE SHOULD AFTER RECEIVE FOR AN INHERITANCE OBEYED; AND HE WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING WHITHER HE WENT." Hebrews 11:8.

"FOR WHEN GOD MADE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM, BECAUSE HE COULD SWEAR BY NO GREATER, HE SWEAR BY HIMSELF." Hebrews 6:13.

"BUT WHEN THE TIME OF THE PROMISE DREW NIGH, WHICH GOD HAD SWORN TO ABRAHAM, THE PEOPLE GREW AND MULTIPLIED IN EGYPT." Acts 7:17.

Because of the oath which God "swore to our father Abraham" Israel shall be "saved from our enemies," and from the "hand of all that hate us." Luke 1:71 to 73.

"ART THOU OUR GOD, WHO DIDST DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND BEFORE THY PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND GAVEST IT TO THE SEED OF ABRAHAM THY FRIEND FOREVER?" II Chronicles 20:7.

Read also Isaiah 41:8 to 14.

God made His covenant with Abraham 430 years before He made His Law covenant with Israel, through Moses, at Sinai. Galatians 3:17. The Law contract was made about 1490 B.C. The promises were made to Abram about 1920 B.C. or about 2080 A.H.

The Seed promised to Abraham was Christ, of whom Isaac was the type. Galatians 3:16. Isaac was the child of promise and a type of the child of God saved by grace. Galatians 4:28 and 31.

The record of God's covenant with Abram, restated after his name was changed; to Abraham, when he was circumcised at the age of 99, is in Genesis 12 to 21. The record of the oath confirming the covenant is in Genesis 22:1 to 15. It was to that oath that James referred when he wrote that Abraham was justified by works. James 2:21. In Romans 4:1 to 6, Paul referred to the covenant of promise. When Abram believed God, he was reckoned righteous. Genesis 15:6. Romans 4:3. Galatians 3:6. Abraham was just as righteous before God during the 40 years before he had offered Isaac as "when he had offered Isaac." He showed his faith by his works.

Now, we turn to Genesis and gather some information concerning God's dealings with Abram and His promise which He confirmed with an oath.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

"Now the Lords has said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee;

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:1 to 3.

"And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto thee Lord, Who appeared unto him." Genesis 12:7.

"For all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.

"And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that If a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Genesis 13:14 to 16.

"And he brought him forth abroad, and said Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Genesis 15:1 and 5

"Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

"And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" Genesis 17:1 to 7.

"AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE, THE LAND WHEREIN THOU ART A STRANGER, ALL THE LAND OF CANAAN; FOR AN EVER-LASTING POSSESSION; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD." Genesis 17:8.

"And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin." Genesis 17:24.

“And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.” Genesis 21:4.

“And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.” Genesis 21:5.

THE OATH

“By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

“That in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.” Genesis 22:16 to 18.

God made several promises in His covenant with Abraham

1—I will show thee the land.

2—I will bless.

3—I will curse.

4—I will make of thee a great nation.

5—I will give to thy seed, the land of Canaan.

6—In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Four hundred and thirty years before Moses, under the hand of Jehovah, led Israel up out of Egypt God said:

“AND HE SAID UNTO ABRAM, KNOW OF A SURETY THAT THY SEED SHALL BE A STRANGER IN A LAND THAT IS NOT THEIRS, AND SHALL SERVE THEM; AND THEY SHALL AFFLICT THEM FOUR HUNDRED YEARS;

“AND ALSO THAT NATION, WHOM THEY SHALL SERVE, WILL I JUDGE; AND AFTERWARD SHALL THEY COME OUT WITH GREAT SUBSTANCE.” Geneses 15:13 and 14.

Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. Genesis 16:16. In Genesis 17:20, God promised to Ishmael a great nation; that twelve princes would come from him. Ishmael means “The Lord will hear”. He was born after the flesh, of the bondwoman. Galatians 4:23. Hagar and Ishmael, in the allegory, stand for the old covenant.

ISAAC AND ISRAEL

Isaac, the son of the free woman, was by promise. Galatians 4:23. Isaac means “laughter”. He was born about 2183 A.H. In Genesis 24 and 25 we have the record of Isaac’s marriage to Rebecca and the birth of Jacob and Esau. Jacob means “Cheater” or “Supplanter”. Jacob’s brother was Esau, also Edom, which means “Red”.

In Genesis 29 and 30, we have the record, of Jacob’s marriage to Rachel and Leah, the daughters of Laban, whom Jacob served. In addition to the children born unto Jacob, by Rachel and Leah, other sons were born unto him by Bilhah and Zilpah. The names of Jacob’s twelve sons were as follows Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Joseph, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. Exodus 1:2.

“AND ALL THE SOULS THAT CAME OUT OF THE LOINS OF JACOB WERE SEVENTY SOULS, FOR JOSEPH WAS IN EGYPT ALREADY.” Exodus 1:5.

The name “Jacob” occurs 346 times in the Old Testament and 25 times in the New Testament Scriptures.

The record of God’s dealing with Jacob at Bethel, which means “the house of God”, is recorded in Genesis 28:12 to 22; a very interesting and significant story. The ladder of the vision was a type of the Son of man. John 1:51. It was at Bethel that God renewed the Covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac. The dealings of God with Jacob at Peniel are recorded in Genesis 32:24 to 32. Peniel means “the face of God”. It was there that God changed the name of Jacob to Israel; meaning “power with God”. After the wrestling which took place there the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was touched in the sinew that shrank.

In Genesis 46:2 to 27 we find the record of Jacob and his sons locating in Egypt. “All the souls that came into Egypt were seventy.”

There are few stories in the Bible as interesting as the story of Joseph, the favored son of Israel, who was sold by his brethren and who was carried away to Egypt, to become the saviour of the world. Surely Joseph was a type of the Lord Jesus, Israel’s Messiah.

The final words and death of Jacob are recorded in Genesis 47:27 to 31. He died at the age of 147 years. Joseph died at the age of 110 years. Genesis 50:26.

Now we turn to Exodus 12:37 and learn that about 600,000 Israelites came up out of Egypt about 1490 B.C. This was beside children and women.

According to God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:13 and 14, these Israelites spoiled the Egyptians. Exodus 12:36. And, “the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was 430 years.” Exodus 12:40 to 41. They were delivered from Egypt and Pharaoh, because of God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac and; Jacob. Exodus 2:24 and 25. The children of Israel were saved from destruction in the wilderness because of God’s covenant with these fathers. Exodus 32:13 and 14. References are made to this Covenant in Leviticus 26:42, Deuteronomy 9:27, Deuteronomy 30:20, II Kings 13:23, Psalm 105:9 and 42, Isaiah 41:5 to 12, Isaiah 51:2 and 3, Isaiah 63:15 and 16, Micah 7:20.

Because of God’s oath-supported covenant given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob we behold, today His miraculous preservation of the Jews. They number about 17,000,000, or a little more than one per cent of the inhabitants of the world. We still speak of the Jews as a nation, although they are now scattered among several hundred nations. And the land which God gave to them is being trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Luke 21:24. Then all Israel shall be saved and their land and the kingdom restored to them; for the fathers’ sake. And this is to be in accordance with another covenant which God made with David. II Samuel 7:12 to 20, Romans 11:25 to 30.

The story is told in Ezekiel 36, 37 and 38.

A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS

A MESSAGE BY HAL REED

The words of the angel to the shepherds that first “Christmas” night, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of Great Joy, which shall be to ALL people”, sent a shaft of sunshine piercing through the darkness of sin and despair. That Christ is still alive and still saves, yet “Christmas”

of 1935 will find multitudes going through the empty form of “Christmas” observance, still ignorant as to how they might appropriate this great joy which is offered to ALL people.

Surely never have the good tidings of great joy been more needed than today. Sin and misery, sorrow and despair are on every hand, even though the world is doing all within its power to offer pleasure and forgetfulness to a sin-burdened people. But all to no avail. Try as one may, with the guilt and burden of sin bearing down upon the soul, there can never be true joy and peace, and “none can keep alive his own soul.” (Psalm 22:29) “The soul that sinneth, it shall die”. Christ is man’s superlative need. It is either Christ or eternal ruin.

The next words of the angel reveal the source and means of receiving this great joy, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” To Israel, in bondage to sin, under the curse of the law, and ruled by a Gentile overlordship, the advent of Jesus, the Saviour, was indeed good tidings of great joy. He came to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21), to “redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:5), and to be an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear”. (Luke 1:69, 74).

This glorious message of joy is not limited to Israel alone. Into the heart under the dominion of, and in bondage to sin, Christ is ready to come today with His message of joy, peace and forgiveness of sins. He is the “Saviour of the World”, and “Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins”. He is “Lord of all”, “For there is NO difference between the Jew and Greek; for the same Lord over ALL is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:12, 13) “The God of Hope fill you with ALL JOY and peace in believing.” (Romans 15:13).

How is this joy received? Meditation upon the glorious birth of Jesus alone cannot bring joy. Feasting, merriment and observance of “Christmas” brings but a temporary shadow over the glaring sinfulness of the human heart. Exchanging gifts and feeding the poor and hungry still leave the heart, aching with the guilt of sin, simply temporarily stimulated and relieved. Peace with God through forgiveness of sins, and joy in the Lord as the fruit of the indwelling Spirit, come not through outward rites and ceremonies, nor inward or outward works of man. Rather, they come through the heart’s belief and trust in the redemptive work of Christ, in His taking on Himself our sins in cruel death on the tree and by God imputing to us His Divine righteousness and holiness. “Joy and Peace IN BELIEVING.”

As the world at this season contemplates the wondrous event of the entrance of the Son of God into this sin-cursed world as the Babe of Bethlehem, may our minds dwell on that greater mystery, the entrance of Christ into the heart of a sinner saved by grace. “Behold I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door. I will come in to Him, and will sup with Him, and He with me.” (Rev. 3:20) “To whom God would make known the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . Christ IN you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27, 28). The shepherds glorified and praised God for the wonderful word of the entrance of the Christ child into the world. What greater glorifying and praising God should be the expression of the one today who contemplates the matchless grace of God in Christ’s entrance into his heart by faith. Small wonder that the apostle challenged the lives of the careless Corinthian saints—“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”. (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

In the tabernacle worship, they were to make a perfume to put before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, and God forbade the making of any like unto it to “smell

thereto". It was not for mere personal gratification, but to be "holy for the Lord". (Exodus 30:37). Similarly in this age, the perfume of praise for the matchless grace of God, is not for us to be occupied with for our own personal pleasure, but set apart for Him. Let us beware of our being so occupied with our exalted position in Christ and the mystery of His indwelling, that we fail in remembering these graces are not for us to "smell thereto", but are for the express purpose "that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." (Ephesians 1:12). They are "holy for the Lord". Let us "glorify God in our body". "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." (Colossians 2:6).

Those who at this season of the year are occupied with Christ as the babe and the man of Nazareth may well "mind earthly things." Let us who are saved by His grace and possess Christ within as the hope of glory, as we contemplate our exalted blessings in Him, heed the Word—"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:2,3) "When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4) Our Head (Christ) is in heaven; our life is hid with Christ in God; we are seated in the heavenlies in Him. Then let us remember our feet are upon the earth in order that we might manifest in our walk, our manner of life, that we indeed have a heavenly citizenship, by lives of separation unto, and witnessing for the Christ who died for all. May our aim be that of the apostle, "whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily (Colossians 1:28, 29).

What abiding joy there is in salvation and service under Christ. "Rejoice in the Lord and again I say, Rejoice," "For the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10) A Joyous "Christmas" to ALL.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

In I Corinthians 6:19 and 20 we find these two spiritual truths: "Ye are not your own", "ye are bought with a price". Very much the same fact is declared in Romans 14:7 to 9, which we quote

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

There may be a sense in which it can be said that man is a free moral agent. And yet the Bible clearly teaches that there are only two classes of people in the world; those who belong to Christ and those who do not belong to Christ. Concerning the latter class, their spiritual state is described in Ephesians 2:2 and 3, which we quote: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others". In the thirteenth verse of this same second chapter of Ephesians we have this glorious message of redemption:

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

God’s Word tells us that His Son was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. That His incarnation was for the specific purpose of destroying the devil’s death power, by Himself dying and then conquering death. I John 3:8 and Hebrews 2:14. In Matthew 12:30, the Saviour declares; “he that is not with Me is against Me”. In the preceding verse He speaks of Satan as “the strong man”; and the sinner with his iniquity as the strong man’s house and his goods. And there the Son of God declares that the strong man must be bound before his goods can be spoiled.

According to Colossians 2:15 the Lord Jesus, by His death and resurrection, spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them. In Luke 4:1 to 13 we have the Divine Record of the conflict on earth between Christ and Satan and Christ’s complete victory over the Adversary. Thus we see, by the infallible Word of the living God, that the unsaved sinner is the property of Satan, and that the redeemed sinner is the property of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In Titus 2:14, we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, “that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:” What a wonderful verse of Scripture this is, because of the blessed and important truths herein declared. The Lord Jesus died to redeem us from all iniquity, and He redeemed us unto Himself; to be his peculiar people. He desires that we should be zealous of good works. We belong to Him.

This blessed truth is stated in I Peter 1:17 to 19: “Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as ye that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”. Here we see that the believer’s sojourning on earth is to be passed in fear. Because the Lord Jesus Christ has paid such a precious price for his redemption. Truly the believer is not his own. We are bought with a price.

We are familiar with the history of Israel from the day God called them out of Egypt to the hour that they delivered Christ to Pilate to be put to death. What a sad history! What an inglorious record! Surely God did not exaggerate when He said, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider”. It was the confession of David concerning Israel, “God hath not dealt with any nation so”. And hear these words of God, recorded in Isaiah 43:1 and 7; “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. Even every one that is called by My Name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” In a brief summary we have the history of Israel, told by the Lord Jesus in the Parable of the Vineyard, in Matthew 21:33 to 46; and also in Stephen’s message, recorded in the seventh chapter of Acts. It would be well for every Christian to read these two messages, and then hear the words of God in Romans 11:21 and 22, which we quote “For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off”.

It is recorded in Luke 13:6 to 9 that for three consecutive years the Lord Jesus, while on earth, came to Israel to find fruit; but found none. That fig tree was to be cut down; and it was. Thus we see how sorely Israel disappointed the Lord, and how miserably they failed in their responsibility, although they belonged to Jehovah, who created them for His own glory.

But how about those of us who are members of the Body of Christ, sanctified by the offering of the blood of Christ, sealed with the Holy Spirit, saved by His precious blood, and seated with Him in the highest heavenlies? We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are the righteousness of God in Him. We are complete in Him. All things are ours in Him. Christ is our redemption, our holiness, our righteousness, our peace, our hope and our life. We have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life and to show forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Let us pass the time of our sojourning in fear. It is God's command. We are not our own. We are bought with a price; the precious blood of Christ. We are His property. We belong to Him and all that we have belongs to Him. Our time is His; our gifts are His; and our money is His. We are to seek those things where He is at the right hand of God. Our citizenship is in heaven. Our hope is laid up in heaven. Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. In all things God wants Christ to have the preeminence. We leave with you again, 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."

God grant that we may ever be faithful and not weary in well doing.

WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM

In I Corinthians 10:1 to 15 the Holy Spirit has reminded us of some experiences of God's ancient people Israel. In the sixth verse we are told that "these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted". And in the eleventh verse we are told that "these things happened unto them for examples; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come". In order that we may be admonished and instructed, and thereby derive the benefit that the Holy Spirit desires us to have, we should carefully study the "these things" to which He referred. Let us refresh our memories concerning several of these experiences. We read these words in Exodus 14:30 and 31.

"The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

"And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses."

In the preceding verses we have the details of this great deliverance. And we can see why Israel feared and believed the Lord, and believed the Lord's servant Moses. In Exodus 14:11 and 12 we learn that the Israelites murmured against Moses and rebuked him for leading them away from Egypt. In order that the Israelites might have confidence in Moses' leadership and Divine authority, the Lord, by the hand of Moses, performed two great miracles, mentioned in Exodus 14:19 to 21, namely, the pillar of the cloud; and the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea. Then 600,000 men of Israel, beside the women and the children, passed through the sea. This fact is told in Exodus 14:22, which we quote: "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the DRY GROUND; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left". When Pharaoh with his army followed after Israel God completely destroyed them and their chariots in the midst of the sea. We might ask the question, how we are to be admonished or

instructed by this example? By some brethren there has been a very strange teaching concerning household baptism. They have insisted that believers should be immersed in water, and that their children should likewise be immersed with what they call “Christian” baptism. They support their theory by quoting I Corinthians 10:2 and 10:6, which we here quote:

“AND WERE ALL BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES IN THE CLOUD AND IN THE SEA;
“NOW THESE THINGS WERE OUR EXAMPLES, TO THE INTENT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS, AS THEY ALSO LUSTED.”

To our minds this is rather fanciful and unsound exegesis, and seems to be a desperate attempt to force the Bible to agree with their religious practice and, the traditions of some of the church fathers. Perhaps it has also resulted by insisting that the word “baptizo” has, just one meaning. In ancient Greek literature this Greek word had a number of meanings. And by carefully comparing the fourteenth chapter of Exodus with the tenth chapter of I Corinthians, there seems to be no doubt that the statement concerning the Israelites, baptized unto Moses “in the cloud and in the sea,” could better be rendered “by the cloud and by the sea”. Undoubtedly the meaning that the Holy Spirit would convey to our minds and hearts is the fact that the two miracles, which the Lord performed by the hand of Moses, were to give them implicit confidence in Moses and reliance upon him as their Divinely appointed leader. They were “baptized unto Moses.” They acknowledged him their leader. They received him as God’s servant.

In Acts 2:22 we are instructed that God, by great miracles, tried to persuade Israel to receive Jesus of Nazareth as their great Prophet and Messiah. The works that Christ did was to induce Israel to accept Him as Messiah, King and Deliverer.

These brethren who practice household baptism say that, passing through the Red Sea was symbolic; and that members of the Body of Christ should be immersed. And because the babies and little children went through the Red Sea with their parents, the infants and little children should be immersed in this day of grace with their parents.

It is quite significant that the Holy Spirit, in the fourteenth of Exodus, was very careful to tell us, more than once, that the children of Israel did not get wet. They passed over on dry land.

Perhaps these brethren have overlooked the words in I Corinthians 10:6, “to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” There was no lusting after evil things when they accepted the leadership of Moses and followed him across the Red Sea. To my mind, the key to these instructions in I Corinthians 10:1 to 15 is found in the word “wherefore” in the twelfth verse. It is not an example of baptism; but an example of temptation.

As members of the Body of Christ we have all been baptized into Jesus Christ We have put on Christ. We have been baptized into His death. We have been raised to walk in newness of life. And because we are made of the same human material as were the children of Israel, we have this important admonition in I Corinthians 10:12, which we quote “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Our one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 identifies us with Christ.

God speaks of His Nation Israel as a disobedient and gainsaying people, as a rebellious and stiffnecked people. We quote several verses from Exodus relating their murmurings, their rebellion, their disobedience, and their idolatry. “The whole congregation of the children murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Exodus 16:2 and 3.

“And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, is the Lord among us or not?” Exodus 17:7 .

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him”. Exodus 32:1.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves”. Exodus 32:7

“And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men”. Exodus 32:28.

“Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee; behold mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them;. And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made”.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived”. Numbers 21:8 and 9.

A CHRISTMAS POEM

Christ Jesus came from heaven above the Scriptures to fulfill;
He came because of God's great love; to do His Father's will.
In Israel's land the virgin's Child was born as David's Seed,
Holy, harmless, undefiled, in thought, in word, in deed.

The sinless Christ, because Divine, was full of truth and grace,
He proved His claim by word and sign, a witness to His race.
Messiah came unto His own, and perhaps we've wondered why
Christ was born for David's throne and yet was born to die.

“Peace on earth” He came to bring, if Israel would repent;
They received Him not as Christ the King; nor the messengers He sent.
Elect and precious Corner Stone, by prophets long foretold,
Despised, rejected by His own; for thirty pieces sold.

He wept for Israel and their land, but their rulers, filled with hate,
Gave Him into Pilate's hand to meet His cruel fate,
Surrounded by the hissing crowd, the Lord was crucified;
And on the tree He cried aloud; “finished”; then He died.

There on Him our sins were laid, when the Saviour bowed His Head;
The guilty sinner's debt was paid when His precious blood was shed.
He who came to seek and save, the sinner's sins to bear,
Was buried in the rich man's grave; but His spirit was not there.

Nor did His body go to dust, nor His soul in hell remain;
Conquer death the Saviour must; and so He rose again.
Ascended, seated far above in heaven's highest place
The Spirit tells of God's great love. His more abounding grace.

What wondrous love! What grace Divine! redemption full and free;
By faith I've made this Saviour mine and God's accepted me.
Perhaps you too have made this choice, have assurance, joy and peace
And in this glorious hope rejoice, in a life that shall not cease.

No worth, no merit of our own, not works lest man should boast,
But justified by grace alone, our earnest the Holy Ghost.
Believing saints with Christ are dead; with Christ in God they hide;
Complete in Christ, our risen Head; faith hope and love abide.

Members of that Body one, whose greatest gift is love;
Identified with God's dear Son and seated far above,
Our Father wants us all to know our high and holy place
In future ages He will show the riches of His Grace.

That Grace sufficient here below as we do our Father's will;
Sufficient as we undergo what comes that seemeth ill.
In glory we shall yet appear; we labor not in vain;
If unashamed we suffer here, with Christ we'll surely reign.

The sufferings here cannot compare with the glory then revealed
Forgotten every woe and care and every heartache healed.
With patience then let's run the race, looking to Christ above
Depending on God's matchless grace; filled with hope and love.

Many precious souls still lost exchange their Christmas cheers,
Unmindful of the awful cost; Christless, yet no fears.
Receive the gift, believe and live, sinner, hear the call;
The Christ of Christmas longs to give eternal life to all.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

For several reasons some Christian brethren teach that the Lord's Supper is not for the observance of members of the Body of Christ in this present dispensation when it is surely the Christ-given responsibility of every believer to make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery, in obedience to Ephesians 3:9. They say that the Lord's Supper is not mentioned in any of Paul's Prison Epistles, in which are set forth the hope and calling of the Body of Christ; that the Lord's Supper was a religious ordinance which had its rightful place in the "Acts" transitional period, while the Nation Israel was on trial; but that it ceased with signs and water

baptism with the full revelation of the “mystery”, mentioned about twelve times in Paul’s last seven Epistles.

These brethren also give as a reason for their rejection of the Lord’s Supper, it was instituted before the death of the Lord Jesus in connection with Israel’s Passover, when the Lord specifically stated: “this is My blood in the New Covenant.” Matthew 26:10 to 30. They rule out the Lord’s Supper because God has ceased to visit upon Christians, who partake unworthily thereof, the judgments mentioned in I Corinthians 11:25 to 33. They eliminate it because Israel is going to eat at the Lord’s table in the coming kingdom age. Matthew 26:29; Luke 22:20 to 30. The contention of these Christian brethren is, that the Lord’s Supper must be eliminated from this period of special Gentile favor by the same exegesis and dispensational principle that is employed for the elimination of the sign gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, and the water baptism of the “Acts” dispensation, from God’s program for the Body of Ephesians and Colossians. They also teach that “till He come” in I Corinthians 11:26 had no reference to the calling on high of the Body of Christ, but had reference to another aspect of the Lord’s coming.

So far as I know, only one of these Bible teachers, who has given up the Lord’s Supper for the Body of Christ, teaches that the Church of God of the Second Chapter of Acts is identical with the Body of Christ in Ephesians and Colossians. They differentiate between the Pentecostal Church of God and the Church which is Christ’s Body. But all claim that the Church of Ephesians and Colossians has no connection with Israel’s New Covenant, but that the Lord’s Supper has, and therefore the Lord’s Supper should be eliminated with water baptism by the same application of the principle set forth in II Timothy 2:15, “rightly dividing the Word of truth”.

I am here submitting several objections to the arguments of these Christian brethren, although agreeing with them that during the transitional “Acts” period, when the believers had not the several hundred written Scriptures telling of the death and coming again of Christ, the Lord’s Supper may have been more needed as a reminder of the finished work of the Son of God, than it is today.

My first argument we shall call a philosophical one. The Lord’s Supper, by no means, offers to the earnest and diligent Bible student the same problem as does water baptism. This is proved by the fact that seven of the leading “Fundamentalist” Bible teachers of this generation, in America, have all heartily disagreed concerning water baptism, but were all one as to the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. I refer to Dr. A. C. Gaebelien, Dr. W. L. Pettingill, Dr. James A. Gray, Dr. T. T. Shields, Dr. I. M. Haldeman, Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse and Dr. H. A. Ironside.

Three of these brethren taught positively that the Great Commission was not for the Body of Christ. Two of them taught household baptism, one an immersionist, the other a sprinkler. Some of them baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and some in the name of the Lord Jesus. Some of them taught that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is water; and others said positively, “no”. Some of them said Romans 6:4 is water; others said “no.” No two of them agreed as to the authority for, the significance, mode and formula of, what they call “Christian baptism”. Neither could any one of them convince the other that his position was Scriptural. Not one of them could give an intelligent Scriptural defense of his position on water baptism. Concerning their baptisms, like other Fundamentalists, they were so uncertain that they didn’t care to discuss the question with an open Bible. Every interpretation held by them can be easily shown unscriptural as can every denominational creed concerning water baptism. But all of the seven men were agreed as to the significance of the Lord’s Supper. They taught that the Lord’s Supper is a reminder of what Christ did for God and for us. Here is a seven-fold unity

concerning the Lord's Supper and a seven-fold division concerning water baptism. It is unity and certainty in one case; division and uncertainty in the other.

While this argument is significant, important, and somewhat convincing, I admit it is not a Scriptural answer to the position of the Christian brethren who have no place for the Lord's Supper in the Body of Christ. But now we proceed with the Scriptural objections, trusting that they may provoke again the Berean spirit of Bible study; but neither condemnation nor spiritual pride.

IS THE LORD'S SUPPER AN ORDINANCE?

Any attempt to show by the Scriptures that the Lord's Supper is either a kingdom ordinance or a Church (Body) ordinance, will prove very difficult, if not futile. In the Bible it is not called an ordinance. Some Christian brethren say that it is, and in support of their claim quote I Corinthians 11:2; "that ye remember me in all things and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." The Greek word used in this verse is "paradosis" translated in the New Testament Scriptures twelve times "tradition".

In Colossians 2:14, we read of the work of Christ on the cross: "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us:" This Greek word translated "ordinances" is the same word used in Ephesians 2:15 concerning the middlewall of partition, "dogma". In Acts 16:4 the same word is translated "decrees". When Christ on the cross blotted out the "dogmas" given to Israel through Moses, He did not blot out the "paradosis" which Paul gave to the saints at Corinth some years after Christ died on the cross.

WATER BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

With few exceptions the servants of the Lord who have received "denominational" or "undenominational" ordination, have been asked to state the two ordinances belonging to the Christian Church. The answer expected and required is, "Water baptism and the Lord's Supper." If God in His Holy Word has joined these together as inseparable ordinances, most assuredly no servant of the Lord should be guilty of putting them asunder. But where is the Scriptural proof that God has joined them together?

John the Baptist came baptizing with water that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. John 1:31. With what message was John's water baptism identified? "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17. John baptized with water unto repentance. Matthew 3:11. "He came preaching the baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins." Luke 3:3.

Water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins was a kingdom ordinance and was a Divine command given with the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven. It was inseparably connected with repentance and remission of sins. Obedience to this water baptism command was essential for the blessing promised.

All students who have made an earnest endeavor to rightly divide the Word of truth, have divided the Gospel of Matthew at Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 16:21; "From that time" and "From that time forth". The first Scripture marks the King's presentation of the Kingdom. The second Scripture marks the rejection of the King and the Kingdom. If water baptism was to present the King with the Kingdom offer, then we shall not expect to find water baptism in the Gospels after the rejection is stated. And we do not.

Perhaps this can be more clearly seen in Luke's Gospel. In Luke, Christ is born to take David's throne and fulfill Isaiah 9:6 and 7 and bring peace on earth. Luke 1:29 to 33; Luke 2:14; Luke 1:67 to 77. This is the Kingdom Gospel and with it water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, and Kingdom signs Luke 3:3; Luke 9:6.

In Luke 12:49 to 52, the King's rejection is announced with the withdrawal of the peace proclamation and a new baptism is there stated; namely, Christ's baptism on the cross. This baptism was the Lord's death which is remembered in the Lord's Supper. There is no record of water baptism in the last half of the Book of Luke; that is, after the Lord's death baptism is stated in Luke 12:51. It was after His "death" baptism is announced that the Lord Himself, ready for that baptism, broke the bread and took the cup, not unto repentance for the remission of sins, but to tell us of the baptism that is to abide after the water baptism has ceased to have any place in the Lord's Grace program: to tell of His blood shed for the remission of sins. Luke 22:19 and 20. Baptism was also for the remission of sin for Covenant Israel.

Then let us observe that water baptism was a Kingdom ordinance given before the King and the Kingdom were rejected, and that the bread and cup were given after the King and the Kingdom were rejected, while Christ was on earth.

Water baptism was what the human baptizer did for the baptized and what the baptized human did for God to make God's forgiving mercy efficacious. Therefore water baptism was a meritorious and obligatory ordinance, required with penitence for the remission of sins.

Christ's death baptism was what Christ did for God and for sinful humanity when He cried "finished". The Lord's redemptive work is altogether sufficient. Water baptism was for the remission of sins. The blood of Christ is for the remission of sins. Water has no place in God's message of pure grace; but the blood abides. The blood is altogether sufficient for the redemption of the believing sinner and needs not be supplemented by the Lord's Supper to make it efficacious. The Lord's Supper is neither meritorious, nor obligatory, in any way, to make the sacrifice of the Son of God more effective. It has been called a memorial that speaks of the once for all sacrifice of the Son of God, and surely no redeemed sinner should object to a reminder of that finished work.

WATER BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER IN ACTS TWO.

On the day of Pentecost the question of the convicted Israelites was, "brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37. What they were to do was told in Acts 2:38. But before reading that verse let us carefully note the words of Peter in Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." They were testifying to Israel that Jesus was Christ, or Messiah.

When Jesus announced that Israel was going to crucify Him, He instructed His kingdom messengers, "that they should tell no man that He was the Messiah." Matthew 16:20 to 22. After that there was no record of water baptism until they again were permitted to announce to Israel that He was the Messiah, after His death. On the cross the Messiah cried, "Father, forgive them". Luke 23:34. The Father heard the prayer and was willing to forgive all and begin anew with them. This was in confirmation of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 12:31 and 32. If Israel sinned against the Son of man, it would be forgiven them; but if they sinned against the Holy Spirit it would not be forgiven them. They sinned against the Son of man while He was on earth; but the Son of man had to go. Matthew 26:24. Israel began to sin against the Holy Spirit shortly after Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was sent to witness that God had raised Christ up from the dead

to be Israel's Prince and Saviour. Acts 5:31 and 32. Years later Paul was still testifying to Israel that Jesus was the Messiah, the message forbidden in Matthew 16:20; Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5, and Israel was still committing the unpardonable sin, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. Acts 18:6. In the Four Gospels Israel was committing the pardonable sin: they were sinning against the Son of man. In the Book of Acts Israel was committing the unpardonable sin; they were sinning against the Holy Spirit.

Water baptism was that Messiah might be manifest to Israel. John 1:31. Therefore, in answer to the question of Acts 2:37, Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38.

Does not this sound very much like the message of John the Baptist who preached baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins? Is not the order here in agreement with Mark 16:15 to 17, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"?

However sincere and conscientious those 3000 Israelites may have been, they would not have been added on the day of Pentecost, had they refused water baptism for the remission of sins. No able and spiritual grace Bible teacher among the Fundamentalists today, teaches that water baptism is a requirement for membership in the Church which is Christ's Body, to obtain or retain eternal life, or necessary to receive the Holy Spirit. With them, therefore, water baptism, in what they term the present-day New Testament Church, has an entirely different meaning than it had on the day of Pentecost, and yet they call Pentecost the birthday of the same New Testament Church of which they are members. Why they do not preach Acts 2:38 is still a secret, perhaps an enigma.

Some true and faithful Christian brethren have interpreted Acts 2:46 to mean the Lord's Supper: "they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." They have offered their dispensational exegesis as to why they do not obey Acts 2:44 and 45: "and had all things common: and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need." That this was a kingdom program none of them deny. They declare it is not practical today and not God's order for today, Rather strange, if the ideal Church began on that day, identical with the Body of Ephesians and Colossians, and has continued unchanged down to the present time. The saved Israelites did the same thing with their property in Acts 4:34 and 35. Surely this was in accordance with the kingdom command of the Lord Jesus in Luke 12:32 and 33. Are Bible teachers consistent or intelligent to select or reject such of the Acts Church program as fits into their scheme of interpretation without Scriptural authority?

It cannot be denied that water baptism was a kingdom ordinance; neither can it be denied that the Lord Jesus instituted His Supper when He was declaring truth concerning the future of Israel's kingdom. Luke 22:18. But the division of possessions and water baptism ceased. Soon the outside saints were taking collections for the Jerusalem saints (Acts 11:29 and Romans 15:26), and others were urged to this ministry. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles and Paul's commission from Christ, which sent him to the Gentiles, did not include such a division of property and water baptism. Romans 11:13. The Lord's Supper was specifically mentioned by him as being for the saved Gentiles as well as for saved Israelites, by Divine authority and revelation.

THE LORD'S SUPPER—THE GOSPEL—AND SIGNS

Our Christian brethren who cannot reconcile the observance of the Lord's Supper with "the dispensation of the mystery", mentioned in Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:24 to 28, argue that inasmuch as signs have no place in the last seven Epistles of Paul, in his "mystery message", and inasmuch as judgment signs were connected with the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:25 to 29, the Lord's Supper must have ceased when the signs ceased with Acts 28:25 to 28. Certainly the sign gifts were for members of the Church in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11. They ask the question, "Can a believer take the bread and cup unworthily and drink damnation to his soul in this day of special Gentile favor? We quote I Corinthians 11:24 to 29:

"AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS HE BRAKE IT AND SAID. TAKE, EAT: THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU: THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. 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. FOR, AS OFTEN AS YE EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP, YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME. WHERE-FOR WHOEVER SHALL EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP OF THE LORD, UNWORTHILY, SHALL BE GUILTY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD. BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP. FOR HE THAT EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY, EATETH AND DRINKETH DAMNATION TO HIMSELF NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY."

Read the verses that follow concerning Divine judgments of sickness and death.

Certainly this question of accompanying judgments provokes thought and should be answered by the Word of truth rightly divided. First let us refresh our minds concerning the signs which accompanied the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles during the "Acts" period. "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit. and worketh miracles among you. doeth He it by the works of the law. or by the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5.

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed. through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum. I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel. not where Christ was named. lest I should build upon another man's foundation:" Romans 15:18 to 20.

"FOR TO ONE IS GIVEN BY THE SPIRIT THE WORD OF WISDOM; TO ANOTHER THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE BY THE SAME SPIRIT; TO ANOTHER FAITH BY THE SAME SPIRIT; TO AN OTHER THE GIFTS OF HEALING BY THE SAME SPIRIT; TO ANOTHER THE WORKING OF MIRACLES; TO ANOTHER PROPHECY; TO ANOTHER DISCERNING OF SPIRITS; TO ANOTHER DIVERS KINDS OF TONGUES; TO ANOTHER THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES. BUT ALL THESE WORKETH THAT ONE AND THE SELF-SAME SPIRIT, DIVIDING TO EVERY MAN SEVERALLY AS HE 'WILL.'" I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

Surely in Galatians Paul is defending the authority, source and exclusiveness of the grace of Christ's gospel. committed to him for the Gentiles. Did he cease to preach the Grace of Christ Gospel after Acts 28:25 to 28? The signs ceased, but the Gospel did not cease with the signs. The Gospel of Grace is so clearly stated in Romans 3:24 to 26, which we quote: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins

that are past. through the forbearance of God. To declare. I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Paul did not cease to preach that gospel after signs waned and passed out and faith, hope and love remained. He committed to Timothy and Titus faith, hope and love and the pure gospel of grace; but no signs. By the same exegesis, the absence of signs for the elimination of the Lord’s Supper, the Gospel could be dropped.

When God brought to an end the program of miracles and Divine death judgments He likewise ceased the miracles of raising from the dead. When the sign gifts of healing the sick ceased. the judgment of sickness upon unworthy saints likewise disappeared. So we cannot prove that the Lord’s Supper and Divine judgments were inseparably connected. It is a known fact that many saints are taking the Lord’s Supper unworthily but they are enjoying good health and are not in the cemetery.

(This message will be continued in January edition.)

A HAPPY AND A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS

In wishing our readers a happy and a joyous Christmas we are thinking of many verses of Scripture. We mention three of them just now:

“BLESSED (Happy) IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD WILL NOT IMPUTE SIN.” Romans 4:8.

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND DRINK; BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE, AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Romans 14:17.

“NOW THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING THAT YE MAY ABOUND IN HOPE THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.” Romans 15:13.

In these verses we read of the true happiness, of righteousness, of peace, of hope and of joy. In all three verses God is mentioned. True happiness, righteousness, peace, hope and joy come from God. “Every good and perfect gift is from above.” God is not a merchant. God is a gracious King. He is the God of all grace. The blessings mentioned in these verses are not for sale. Man has nothing with which to purchase them. So far as spiritual riches are concerned, the natural man has no earning capacity. He needs none. God longs to give to man every spiritual blessing that He holds. God is a Great Giver. Man is a poor receiver. Spiritually speaking, every man is a bankrupt in Adam, but he may be a multimillionaire in Christ, for God has blessed believers with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

Many, who know little or nothing of the rich spiritual blessings, may be very grateful to their Creator or Supreme Ruler for temporal blessings and offer thanks for good health, food and raiment, a good income, a nice home and some splendid friends. But they are unacquainted with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly many in this land are enjoying many of the by-products of Christianity and still shut out the Christ for whom there was no room in the inn.

God’s Word declares that the man without Christ is without hope. Ephesians 2:12. If an eternity of darkness and despair is before the hopeless sinner, how can he know anything of true happiness or true peace or true joy?

Speaking of joy we are at once reminded of Hebrews 12:2, “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.”

What a glorious fact! What-blessed good news! God’s Son came down from heaven and God’s Son went back to heaven. He paid a thirty-three year visit to man’s temporary home, this earth. What a reception was His! What disgraceful and cruel treatment the Creator received from His creatures! Truly He was the man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. But for the joy that was set before Him He went to Calvary. There on the cross the sinless eternal Christ for us made peace with God; there He suffered for sin to bring us to God; there He bare our sins in His own body on the tree; there He provided a positive Divine righteousness for us and then He went back to heaven having obtained eternal redemption for us. All of these facts are declared in the Word of God.

“Happy is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” If our sins were charged to Christ on the Cross, and we by faith have made Christ ours, our sins have been forever put away. No happy Christmas without the knowledge of the good news. How can man be happy with all of his sins charged against him and the wrath and judgment of God waiting for him?

If we have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God’s love, God’s own righteousness is ours, the peace of God that passeth understanding is ours and the joy of the Holy Spirit is ours. This is the only true joy.

No better wish can we ask for you than Romans 15:13: Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“Fill you”. “Abound in Hope”. Fill you with joy and hope. The God of hope must do this. No one else can do this for you. Believing is your part. Believing comes through the hearing, the reading, of God’s Word. To be filled and to abound is enough to make any believer have a happy Christmas and an every day happy life. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit and the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ.