

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

MARCH 1936

GLORYING IN THE LORD

“That no flesh should glory in His presence, but of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness And sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” I Corinthians 1:29 to 31.

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:3.

After carefully and prayerfully reading the verses quoted above, or better still, after spiritually studying them together with their contexts, we shall be taught by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that even the redeemed sinner is forbidden to glory or boast in any of his excellent qualities or claim any special Divine favor because of his sincerity and faithfulness in his religious observances: Salvation, eternal life, is God’s gift—It is free. It is by grace. Christ accomplished the sinner’s redemption. Likewise the believer is all that he is by the grace of God.

Even if the believer is daily giving forth a spiritual testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ, by word of mouth, in a consistent Christ-like life, controlled by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, he is to glory in the Lord. The Lord is ever to be his glory: “yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Galatians 2:20.

Some Christians claim a unique experience, something different from the general run of Christians, a baptism, or a sanctification, that has lifted them above ordinary saints and placed them upon a super-spiritual plane. Surely, all believers should commend and praise their fellow-believers who are constantly enjoying the joy of salvation and bringing honour to Christ by a life of righteousness, peace, and victory: daily manifesting that fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22 and 23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control.

But if the experience is genuinely spiritual, and not religiously carnal, if the believer is truly controlled by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit-filled believer will fulfill John 16:14: “the Spirit of truth shall glorify Me (Christ).” How true that is. But how many “super-spiritual”, “satisfied”, “religious” Christians there are who glory in their piety, their sanctification or their Holy Spirit baptism, witnessed by visions and ecstasies of the flesh, instead of glorying in the Lord. “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” Why? Because Christ Himself is the believer’s righteousness, and holiness, and redemption.

Some Christians glory in their ability or success, and are proud of their records as evangelists, or soul-winners, of their Bible-teaching, their money-raising campaigns, the multitudes that have heard them, the increase in their attendances, their popularity as public speakers, or as Christian leaders, or something else. “He that glorieth, let him glory, in the Lord.”

“So, then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” I Corinthians 3:7.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants we have done that which was our duty to do.” Luke 17:10.

According to Galatians 2:20, the believer is crucified, and dead to the law. According to Galatians 5:23, there is no law against the spiritual believer. According to Galatians 5:24, “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”. The believer who is daily experiencing the result of this crucifixion has the Scriptural right to be filled with satisfaction and, joy, as well as with genuine praise. But he will give all the glory to the Author and Finisher of his faith.

According to Galatians 6:14, the believer is crucified to the world and the world is crucified to him. He will not have fellowship with a world that still hates God, spurns His love, despises His grace, and rejects His crucified and glorified Son. This does not mean that he will withdraw himself as a religious recluse, into a religious prison. The Lord’s prayer, in John 17:9 to 25, is against this religious practice. But it does mean that a “worldly Christian” is a paradox.

The believer is not of the world, although in the world. The Saviour’s prayer is: “Father sanctify them (set them apart—separate them) with Thy truth. Thy Word is truth.” John 17:17. “If any man love the worlds the love of the Father is not in him.” I John 2:15. But a spiritually, separated believer will not glory in his separation. He will glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The believer, who really knows how to glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, will not only depart from worldly habits; but he will give up all religious practices. No spiritual believer will take the offense of the cross away by claiming any contribution to his standing, which is all by God’s grace in Christ, because of any religious observance of any kind. “The believer is complete in Christ.

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Philippians 3:3.

Let the truth of this verse grip your mind and soul and then read the remaining verses of the chapter. See the utter futility and folly of mixing anything religious with Christ.

“Let him that glory, glory in the Lord”.

Dear reader, is not Christ sufficient, without religion, without “churchianity”, without ritualism”? Every need is available in Christ, all spiritual blessings are on deposit in Him. He is our all-sufficient Christ. Christ is the believer’s life and hope, his peace, his complete redemption. “Glory in the Lord.”

GOD’S STANDARD OF PERFECTION

Only perfect human beings are fit for the presence of the holy God, and only perfect human beings will come in to the realization of that hope which is laid up in heaven.

Hear the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel and the instructions of the same Lord, by the pen of the Apostle Paul, to the saved Gentiles

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48.

“That ye may stand perfect and complete in all of the will of God.” Colossians 4:12.

The perfect God will not lower His high and holy standard to the level of even the very best that the most respectable, moral, upright, charitable and benevolent man can do. By nature man is in a pitiful spiritual predicament. He is born with a disease that knows no human cure.

This disease is universal, according to God's pronouncement: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "there is none righteous: no not one." God has a supernatural remedy for this disease and unless His remedy is appropriated and applied, every case will prove fatal, resulting in a death that is far worse than physical death. All who miss heaven will not miss the second death.

Most men and women are so absorbed in the temporal things that are seen that they spend but little time in serious meditation and consideration of their spiritual responsibility to the true and living God. God is the judge of all the earth and He solemnly declares that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. He also declares in clear, unmistakable language that no unrighteous man shall enter the kingdom of God.

Here then we see our great problem: we are all unrighteous and no unrighteous man shall enter the kingdom of God. God is the great Physician. He has thoroughly diagnosed our case and given us a clear record of that diagnosis. But he has done much more. He has prescribed an absolute cure and, at the greatest possible cost to Himself, He has provided that remedy. So far as the charges are concerned, He has put the price within the reach of the poorest of the poor. Yes, with no human scheme, philosophy or remedy available, the Almighty God has proved that He is the God of all grace and He has revealed to sinful humanity His own Divine way of making an imperfect man perfect.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12. There are many self-righteous, conceited, deceived human beings who are willing to be religious and even tell God that they are religious and quite decent: somewhat different from the average run of sinners. They present their self-righteousness to God as a substitute for His plan: "being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God which is by faith."

God has given His well beloved Son to pay the penalty for sin. The wages of sin is death. In the shadow of the cross the Son of God said: "now is the judgment of this world". John 12:31.

By His death, propitiation for the sins of the whole world was provided. "Whosoever will," is God's most gracious invitation. It was by the grace of God that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God, in His Book, declares that He can be just and the justifier of every one who believes in Christ. While true justice knows no mercy, God can be both just and, merciful; because Christ the Just died for the unjust that He might bring us to God. Read it in God's Book, and believe it with all your heart. It is good news. Romans 3:24 to 28. I Peter 3:18.

Now we are beginning to see how we can be perfect. Perfection must be the work of God and not of man. Man's work was the law. Under that perfect work man was an absolute failure.

"The law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did." Hebrews 7:16.

The "better hope" did. Did what? Made something perfect. Then surely we shall not be satisfied until we find that better hope. Think of such a better hope that can make an imperfect sinner perfect. Here's the better hope

"By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once-for-all; and by one offering He hath PERFECTED forever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:10 and 14.

Blessed good news! "He hath perfected forever." "By the one offering!" Surely the Father was more than well pleased with that one offering of His Son on the cross. When we go by faith to that cross we find, everything we need to take away our guilt and to fix us up for

God's presence and blessing. "Perfected forever?" "Too good to believe", you say? But it is no good unless you do believe.

Then God declares that He wants every man to be taught in all wisdom: "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Colossians 1:28.

Then God wants every man to present himself, his body, as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God and to be transformed by the renewing of his mind that he may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Colossians 1:28, Romans 12:1 to 3. Then, by the pen of James, God adds: "By works was faith made perfect." James 2:22.

And the noblest of all saints, the most obedient and faithful of all Christians said: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." Philippians 3:12.

But before we are disturbed or discouraged by this statement we should read Philippians 3:15, and all of the context: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Certainly there seems here to be a contradiction, for in one verse the great apostle seems to be striving for perfection, while in the other verse he already had perfection. Surely Paul was neither dissatisfied with his standing in Christ nor labouring for sinless perfection.

When we carefully and prayerfully study God's Word, we see that there is a great difference between the believer's perfect standing in Christ and the believer's state of sinless perfection. In Christ the believer is without condemnation before God. In Christ he is made accepted. In Christ he is complete. No one can lay anything to the charge of God's elect. No one or no thing can separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. The babe in Christ, like the most matured spiritual saint, has a perfect standing before God. It is because he is in Christ. The justified sinner stands in the presence of God as though he had never committed a sin. By one offering forever perfected. It is all of grace and all by grace.

Then, as to the believer's state: his behaviour, his walk, his conduct, his service. Does he ever reach the state of sinless perfection? The believer is a new creature in Christ Jesus. His old man has been crucified; and he has received a new nature, a Divine nature. The new man is created in true holiness and righteousness after the image of Him who created him. Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 4:24, Romans 6:6. Here are three very interesting questions in the sixth chapter of Romans

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?" "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

The answer to the first question is, "certainly not." The answer to the third question requires much searching of the Scriptures.

When we have done our best we are only unprofitable servants and we never reach the spiritual state when we do not want to confess, "Lord we have done the things that we should not have done and we have left undone the things that we should have done." We can fall short of perfection by leaving things undone just the same as we can by doing what we should not have done.

The believer is told how to walk, how to run the race, how to look, how to pray, how to yield, how to submit, how to resist, how to study the Word, how to be sober and vigilant, how to put on the whole armour of God, how to confess, how to serve, how to worship, how to witness, how to grow, how to obey, how to love, how to endure, how to suffer and how to rejoice.

We are reminded that Christ, the captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering. Hebrews 2:10. And by the pen of Peter we have these words: "The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." I Peter 5:10. And we are assured that the God

of peace, Who raised Christ from the dead, can make us perfect in every good work. Hebrews 13:20 and 21.

The mighty power of God that raised Christ from the dead is to usward. Ephesians 1:18 to 22. God is able to make all grace abound toward us for every good work. II Corinthians 8:9. God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20. "My God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, Philipians 4:19.

The true child of God knows that he has from God no license to sin; but he also knows that he does miss God's high and holy mark; and he is always conscious of imperfections No believer ever reaches a state of sinless perfection on this earth, but he is presented in God's Book with no lower standard to adopt. His heart's desire is to measure up to the highest spiritual standard that is possible by the grace of God, knowing that perfect love casteth out all fear.

PERFECTION IN DOCTRINE

Then the Bible speaks several times of perfect doctrine, and, surely, every Christian should be established in this perfection, as far as it is possible in this dispensation. The Bible declares that "strong meat" belongeth to them that are of "full age". Hebrews 5:14. "Full age" is the same Greek word translated "perfect". "Strong meat belongeth to then that are perfect"; and the very next verse, Hebrews 6:1, says "let us go on to perfection". Not perfection in conduct, but on with the revelation of truth, from the first principles given to Israel to the highest truth given from the risen Christ to the Apostle Paul.

Let us not forget that Christ chose Paul to bring to completion the Word of God with the Mystery. Colossians 1:24 to 27. Certainly on from the word spoken to Israel to the revelation of the Mystery, through Paul, is progressive revelation: "On to perfection". This should convince any Christian of the folly of the slogan of the Modernist: "Back to Jesus", or, "give me the program of Jesus", or, the folly of red-lettering the words that Jesus spoke to Israel. Not "back to Jesus"; but "on with the risen Christ's revelations to the Body of Christ." All Scripture was given on the installment plan. There is progressive revelation from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. Then and there it ceases.

Neither would we have such counterfeit Christian movements as the Pentecostalists, if we go on to perfection with Christ and Paul instead of "back to Pentecost", with Peter and the Eleven. These Twelve were ministers of the circumcision with the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Moreover, we must carry this progressive revelation and perfection of doctrine beyond the thirty years covered by the Book of Acts; for in I Corinthians 13:8 to 13, written a few years before Acts closed, we are specifically instructed in this very thing. Certain things, which are spoken of as childhood, or "that which is in part", had their rightful place in the Church program before "Acts" closed, before Israel was set aside (Acts 28:25 to 28). But they were to be done away as the Church moved on to perfection. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith unto a perfect man". "No more children, tossed to and fro". Ephesians 4:13 and 14. "When I became a man I put away childish things". I Corinthians 13:11. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. I Corinthians 13:10.

The word "perfect", translated "teileios", from "teleo", to accomplish, to end, to complete, to finish, to fill up. "Tello" to set out for a certain goal. "Teleo" is the word Christ cried out on the cross, "finished".

“Pleroo” is also translated “complete”, “end”, “fulfill”, to “perfect”. This is the word used in Colossians 1:25, wherein Paul writes that Christ chose him to finish the Word of God. And, as Christ on the cross cried “Teleo”, after He said, “I must finish the work”, “I have finished the work”, so Paul said, “I must finish my course with joy.” Acts 20:24, and finally, “I have finished (teleo) my course.” II Timothy 4:7.

For your eternal redemption rest in simple trust in the finished work of Christ. Then by the grace of God give Him your very best.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

LESSON SEVEN

THIRTY FACTS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

1. The Book of Acts was written by Luke, the beloved physician. He must have joined Paul when he received the call to Macedonia: for Luke uses “we” the first time in Acts 16:10, about the year 52 A.D. The beloved physician was with Paul, sailing to Rome, when the ship went to pieces and the passengers and crew reached land on pieces of the broken vessel. Acts 28:2. Among the last written words of Paul are these “only Luke is with me.” II Timothy 4:11. This will give us some idea of the unwavering faith, the unfailing fellowship and the undaunted fortitude of this beloved comrade of Paul, the human author of “Acts”.

2. The last words of Luke’s Gospel, Luke 24:53, concerning the apostles are: “they worshipped Christ, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” In Acts 5:42 it is recorded concerning them that “daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” In Acts 8:1, it is recorded when the great persecution arose and many Christians were scattered, the Twelve Apostles remained in Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that Jerusalem is mentioned sixty times in Acts from Acts 1:4 to Acts 28:17 and the Jerusalem temple is mentioned twenty-four times in Acts. Jerusalem continued to be the headquarters for the Twelve throughout the Book of Acts: and so far as the “Acts” record is concerned, not one of the Twelve preached the gospel outside of Israel’s land. In spite of the judgment of Christ, pronounced upon Israel’s temple and Jerusalem (Matthew 23:31 to 39), that Nation never received greater favor from Rome than they did during the period covered by the Book of Acts: during which time the temple stood and both believing and unbelieving Jews had access to it.

3. Aside from the statement: “Peter with the Eleven”, in Acts 2:14, only three of the twelve apostles are mentioned by name from the day of Pentecost, throughout the Book of Acts, except eleven words concerning the death of James, the brother of John, in Acts 12:2. The three apostles mentioned are Peter, John and James. These three are mentioned together in Galatians 2:7 to 9, as pillars of the church. After the council at Jerusalem, (Acts 15:1 to 19), only one short reference is made to one of these in the last half of the Book of Acts. This reference is to James, when Paul visited Jerusalem about 59 or 60 A.D. Acts 21:18 to 28. By all means use Acts 15:19, and Acts 21:18 to 25, and Galatians 2:7 to 9 as the key to James’ Epistle to the Twelve Tribes of Israel. And by all means study the ministry of Peter, James and John, in the Book of Acts in the light of Galatians 2:7 to 9, where the statement is made in the clearest, plainest language possible, that these three representatives of the Twelve, preached the “circumcision” gospel to the “circumcision” people.

4. The ministry of the Twelve Apostles, in the Book of Acts, was a ministry of confirmation witnessed by signs and miracles. Hebrews 2:2 to 4. The messages which they proclaimed were concerning events foretold by Israel's prophets. Acts 1:16; Acts 1:20; Acts 2:16; Acts 2:25; Acts 2:30 and 31; Acts 3:22 and 24; Acts 4:11; 4:25 and 26; Acts 7:1 to 50; Acts 8:32 and 33; Acts 10:43; Acts 15:13 to 18. All of this should be studied in the light of Colossians 1:24 to 28 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9: for in these writings of Paul we are plainly told that the "dispensation of the mystery", "the mystery among the Gentiles", the peculiar place of blessing of Gentiles in the Body of Christ, was unknown to Israel's prophets.

5. One thousand years before Christ came from heaven, the Holy Spirit prophesied that a successor would be chosen to take the place of Judas, who would lose his bishopric, in fulfillment of prophecy. Acts 1:16 and 30. That successor had to be a fellow-companion of the Eleven, who, with the Eleven, had been several years in company with Jesus of Nazareth; and an eye witness of His resurrection. Acts 1:21 and 22. This would exclude Saul of Tarsus as ineligible to succeed Judas. I Corinthians 15:5. It would also disprove the claim of some that Paul succeeded Judas as one of the Twelve.

6. Although the resurrected Christ gave his commission to the Eleven, He required twelve men for the ministry and message to "all the house of Israel", on the day of Pentecost. Mark 16:14. Matthew 28:19 and 20. Acts 1:8. Acts 2:14. The fact that they were all together with one accord is proof of God's approval of the selection of Matthias. After repentance of life was granted unto the household of Cornelius, the God-fearing Gentile, the Lord was not concerned about having twelve apostles; for no successor was chosen to take the place of James, whose death is recorded in Acts 12:2. This should be studiously and spiritually considered: that is, the fact that the Lord required twelve apostles during the first eleven chapters of Acts. Why?

7. The "far off" people of Acts 2:39 were Israelites and not Gentiles. Acts 10:28 and Daniel 9:7. Not one word, in the early chapters of Acts was spoken to Gentiles. No messenger of the Lord today has Divine authority to proclaim the messages and the religious programs and Divine orders of those chapters to any Gentile today, except preaching Christ. Paul never preached "baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins" unto Gentiles.

8. There are four classes of Jews mentioned in the first eleven chapters of Acts: "Hebrew Jews", "Grecians (Greek Jews)", "Strangers or visiting Jews from Rome" (Acts 2:10), and "Proselytes". The Grecians of Acts 6:1; Acts 9:29 and Acts 11:20, are not to be confused with the Greeks (Gentiles) of Acts 14:1; Acts 16:1 and 3; Acts 17:4; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:17; Acts 19:10; Acts 19:17; Acts 20:21; Acts 2:28. Also there was a difference between many of the religious Greeks and the idolatrous Gentiles. Many of the Greeks were interested in the Jews' religion. Acts 13:43; Acts 13:48; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:4.

9. Peter and his associates were sent by Christ to Israel only, with a kingdom message and kingdom signs, according to Matthew 10:5 to 7. To them the keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed. To Peter and his associates the great commission was given. To the Eleven Christ said, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." To them the gospel of the circumcision for the circumcision was given. Matthew 16:18 to 19. Matthew 28:19 to 20. Mark 16:14 to 18. Galatians 2:7 to 9. Paul received his commission, ministry, message and program from Christ by revelation. Galatians 1:11 to 19. Ephesians 3:1 to 11.

10. During the Book of Acts Israel was committing the unpardonable sin; sinning against the Holy Spirit, or blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Read Matthew 12:31 and 32. Christ said to Israel, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men". Israel sinned against the Son of man. They put

Him to death. But on the cross He cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. God was willing. Acts 3:14 to 18. He sent the Holy Spirit to witness that He had raised Christ from the dead, exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel. Acts 5:29 to 32. Stephen was filled with that Holy Spirit and saw the Son of man standing in heaven. He accused them of killing the Son of man and resisting the Holy Spirit. They committed the unpardonable sin.

Paul went to Israel's synagogues to testify that Jesus was Messiah. He was a watchman to the house of Israel. Ezekiel 3:16 to 20. Israel blasphemed. Acts 13:45; Acts 18:6. They committed the unpardonable sin. Paul turned to the Gentiles. Acts 13:46; Acts 18:6; Acts 28:28.

11. Beginning with the preaching of John the Baptist, whose message was for Israel, (Luke 1:16; Luke 1:80; Acts 13:24), during the several years of the earthly ministry of Christ, with His Twelve Apostles, which was exclusively for Israel (Matthew 15:24; Romans 15:8; Matthew 10:5 to 7), and for seven or eight years after Pentecost, the gospel was not sent to Gentiles.

Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God in the midst of Israel. He responded to the appeal of two Gentiles of "great faith", by healing their loved ones. Matthew 8:1 to 12; Matthew 15:20 to 28; Luke 7:1 to 10; Mark 7:27 to 37. The one and only Gentile man, to whom Christ in blessing, ministered on earth, as far as the Gospels record, was this Roman official who had built Israel a synagogue. This Roman reached Christ through elders of Israel. Luke 7:3 and 5. The first and only Gentile to whom the Twelve Apostles preached, as far as the Book of Acts records, was a Roman official and his friends, Cornelius who gave alms to Israel. and worshipped Israel's God. Acts 10:1 to 6; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:28; Acts 11:18 and 19. The first Gentile to whom Paul preached, according to the "Acts" record, was a Roman official. Acts 13:6 to 12.

12. During the seven or eight years, covered by the first nine chapters of Acts, there is not a single word to suggest that "Peter with the Eleven" preached justification by faith, the gospel of the grace of God, the ministry of reconciliation; or that they urged the Israelites to whom they preached to forsake Moses, give up circumcision, or to abandon their hope of the Messianic kingdom. Of course there was the element of grace in their messages of repentance and restitution. But they preached to Israel only the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. They preached to Cornelius the word that God sent to Israel Acts 10:36. Paul preached to Gentiles the gospel of the uncircumcision.. This gospel was not sent to Israel. God preached the gospel to Abram, when he was 75 years old, in uncircumcision. Abram was circumcised when 99 years old, (Genesis 17:3 to 20). From that day until Cornelius was saved all blessings were on the grounds of circumcision.

13. In Acts 2:36, and through chapter seven in Acts, the Twelve and their associates were testifying to Israel that Jesus was Christ (Messiah). Paul and his associates continued in the synagogues of Israel to testify that Jesus was Christ (Messiah). Acts 9:16 to 28; Acts 17:3; Acts 18:5; Acts 28:19 to 28. Jesus specifically instructed His Apostles not to testify that He was Messiah, after the rulers had rejected Him. Matthew 16:20 and 21. If Jesus did not rescind this order, then His Apostles wilfully disobeyed Him. When did He rescind this order? Christ's prayer on the cross (Luke 23:34) rescinded the order. God began anew with Israel on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:36; Acts 3:14 to 26. Compare the kingdom communism of Acts 2:45; Acts 4:34 with Luke 12:33.

14. According to Acts 2:29 to 33, Peter declared that David prophesied that Christ would be raised from the dead to take David's throne. All the prophets, beginning with Moses and Samuel, foretold Israel's kingdom days. Acts 3:21 to 24. In Acts 3:19 to 21, Peter declared that

God would send Christ from heaven to establish these kingdom days, if Israel would repent. What a contrast between these messages and the fact concerning Christ and the members of His Body seated in the upper heavenlies. Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 2:5. Christ, on David's throne, as Israel's King, foretold by the prophets, is quite a different relationship and ministry, than Christ far above in the heavenlies, Head of the Church, which is His Body. It is one thing for a believer to be raised up where Christ is, in the heavenlies. Ephesians 2:6. It is quite a different thing for God to send the standing Christ back from heaven to the believers on earth.

15. In the Book of Acts we learn that, with the exception of the miracles performed by Phillip and Stephen, either Peter or Paul was present when the recorded miracles were performed. Peter and Paul each raised a man lame from his mother's womb, (Acts 3:1 to 5; Acts 14:8). Each had a miraculous jail deliverance (Acts 5:19 and 20; Acts 12:11 to 17; Acts 16:23 to 31). Each was told in a vision, to preach to Gentiles (Acts 10:1 to 28 and Acts 22:17 to 22). Each of them miraculously healed those who came near their bodies (Acts 5:11 to 14 and Acts 19:11 and 12). Each pronounced a Divine judgment (Acts 5:1 to 10 and Acts 13:8 to 11). Each raised the dead (Acts 9:37 to 41 and Acts 20:9 and 10.)

16. During the first half of the Book of Acts, Peter, the minister of the circumcision is mentioned 67 times. In the last half Peter is never mentioned after Acts 15:13 and Paul, as Paul, is mentioned 132 times, beginning with Acts 13:9. In all the messages of Paul, from Acts 9:14 to II Timothy 4:22, he uses the first person pronoun in speaking of himself, more than 1200 times. The Book of Acts closed in the middle of Paul's Epistles. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Timothy, Titus, Philemon and II Timothy were written after Acts closed. As the Book of Acts is principally the record of the acts of Peter and Paul, why did that record close several years before Paul's life closed; especially since it is evident that Paul had two imprisonments and he acted between these imprisonments. I Timothy 4:13; Philemon 22. It is generally believed that he wrote Titus between the two imprisonments.

17. In the Book of Acts the Lord is carrying out His program, declared in Mark 7:27 and in Matthew 8:12. Read the very interesting accounts of the Lord's conversations with a Roman man and a Greek woman; the only account of the Lord's dealings with Gentiles until He stood before Pilate. The Records are Matthew 8:1 to 12 and Luke 7:3 to 10, the Roman man; Matthew 15:22 to 28 and Mark 7:24 to 30, the Greek woman. Concerning each of these Gentiles it is recorded "great faith". Matthew 8:10; Matthew 15:28. To the Greek woman, the Saviour said: "Let the children (Israel) first be filled." Mark 7:27. To the Roman man, the Saviour said "The children of the kingdom (Israel) shall be cast out into outer darkness." Romans 8:12. The judgment of the outer darkness is announced by Paul in Acts 28:25 to 28 (about 62 A.D.) and in Romans 11:6 to 25. The awful judgment came with the destruction of Jerusalem, about 69 or 70 A.D. During the Book of Acts the children were being "filled first". With the close of Acts they were cast into outer darkness.

18. With Acts 2:38, "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Compare Matthew 3:1 to 12 with Mark 1:4. Luke 3:3, John's water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Both messages were for the same people, Israel. Both were repentance and water baptism for the remission of sins. John's water baptism was that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. John 1:31. The Twelve Apostles received their water baptism, at least three years before the day of Pentecost. If, as some claim, Christian baptism began on the day of Pentecost, the Twelve Apostles never received Christian baptism. There is no Scriptural proof that water

baptism was given a new meaning on the day of Pentecost. Water baptism was a kingdom ordinance.

19. In Acts 3:26 Peter said to Israel “to you first”. In Acts 13:46 Paul said to Israel it was necessary that God’s words should first have been spoken unto Israel. Let us compare these statements with the judgment of the Lord Jesus pronounced upon Israel in Matthew 23:31 to 33. Note what He called them in Matthew 23:33, “serpents” and “vipers”. He called the Gentiles, “dogs”. Matthew 15:26. If Israel’s rulers were “serpents” and “vipers” before they added the greatest of all crimes to their list, “they killed the Prince of Life” (Acts 3:15), were they not then worse than serpents and vipers after Pentecost? Why after that should Israel be “first”? Why was it necessary that the word should first be sent unto them? Why should a “serpent” come before a “dog”? The answer is Luke 23:3 and 4, Acts 1:8 and Acts 3:16 to 18.

(To be continued)

FAR OFF—BUT BROUGHT NIGH

Quite frequently there is reference made in the Bible to a people who are “far off”. Sometimes the reference is to a “spiritual distance”, and sometimes to a “geographical distance”. Generally the geographical distance refers to the location of the people with reference to Jerusalem. And because God’s mercyseat was located in Jerusalem, sometimes their spiritual distance is likewise determined by their location with respect to Jerusalem where God was worshipped in the temple. The woman at the well said to Christ, “ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Christ replied, “we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews”. John 4:19 and 21. God had said to Israel: “there will I meet with you and commune with you from above the mercyseat.” Exodus 25:22. How different from the scene at Sinai when the ten commandments were given: “and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood “afar of”. Exodus 20:18. “They could not endure that which was commanded”. Hebrews 12:20. Certainly the Lord Jesus was not saying to the man who stated the great commandments that that man was not far from salvation because he almost kept the law. Mark 12:34. “Far off” is as near spiritually as the law of commandments ever brought any sinner to God. The law worketh wrath. Romans 4:15. Christ made peace by the blood of His cross. Colossians 1:20.

“For He is our peace”. “And came and preached peace to you which were “afar off; and them that were nigh.” “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:14 and 17 and 13.

From these verses we learn that at the time Paul was preaching the gospel of the grace of God, Israel was mentioned as “nigh” and the Gentiles, as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were “far off”. Most of them were also “far off” from Jerusalem; for the Saviour met Paul in the Jerusalem temple and said, “I will send you far hence to the Gentiles.” Acts 22:17 to 21. But particular reference is made in Ephesians 2:13 to the Gentiles’ spiritual distance from God. How far away from God they were is told in the first two chapters of Romans.

What an awful description! What a terrible condition! What a perilous predicament! God had given them up. They were alienated from the life of God; in the world without God, having no hope; dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 4:18. Ephesians 2:13. When God gave up the Gentiles centuries before Christ, He chose Israel. But that Nation was a miserable failure; their history one of sin, shame and disgrace, with the blood of prophets and the murder of the Son of

God upon their heads. That Son prayed on the cross for Israel's forgiveness, and God stretched forth His hand all day long to that disobedient and gainsaying people until they filled up their sins and God's wrath came upon them to the uttermost. I Thessalonians 2:16. To provoke that Nation to jealousy the rejected Messiah sent the most religious Jew He could find to Gentiles with the gospel of grace, to tell Gentile sinners that they could be declared righteous and receive eternal life without obeying Moses or observing any of Israel's religious ceremonies. "The word is nigh to thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Romans 10:8 and 9.

Paul's message from the risen Christ for Gentiles "far off" was so different from the message Christ gave to the Twelve, while He was Jesus of Nazareth in the midst of Israel. They were sent to Israel only, with signs, and with a message concerning the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 10:5 to 8. Paul's message was so different from the message of Peter and the Eleven in the first chapters of Acts. Paul never preached to any Gentile Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." That is not the gospel of the grace of God for Gentiles. There was grace in the message: but it was for devout Jews from every Nation under heaven, for "ye men of Israel"; for "all the house of Israel". Acts 2:5; Acts 2:22; and Acts 2:36.

But how about Acts 2:39? "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off", even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Here is where we may see the great blunder of getting the "geographical distance" of people confused with the spiritual distance. Let us remember that the Israelites in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, were from every nation under heaven. With respect to Jerusalem there were Israelites from "afar off" and those who are nigh. God had made promises by the holy prophets concerning these Israelites.

Here is one of the promises: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee". Daniel 9:7. Again: "I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal them." Isaiah 57:19. Again: "He that is far off shall die of the pestilence: and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish My fury upon them." Ezekiel 6:12. Again: "And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." Zechariah 6:15. Again: "Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge My might." Isaiah 33:13. Again: "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God: Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." Ezekiel 11:16. Again: "Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous and much vexed." Ezekiel 22:5.

When Peter was preaching to the Twelve Tribes on the day of Pentecost, it was not lawful for him to go to Gentiles. Acts 10:28. The first matter of importance was what all the house of Israel was going to do about the testimony of the Twelve and the witness of the Holy Spirit, sent in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. God had raised Him from the dead in fulfillment of David's prophecy, to reign on David's throne. Would the

Nation repent? God had exalted the Prince of Life, whom Israel had killed, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. Would Israel repent?

This Israelitish message of repentance and kingdom restitution was not Paul's ministry of reconciliation. While John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth and the Twelve had preached to Israel before the Saviour's rejection and death, they had called Israel to baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, because Israel's promised kingdom was at hand. Matthew 3:2 to 12. Matthew 4:17. Matthew 10:7. Note the commission, ministry and message to Israel after the death of Christ; a call to Israel to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. When Paul preached to Gentiles they received the Holy Spirit when they heard the gospel of their salvation, the unmixed gospel of grace. Ephesians 1:13. Galatians 3:13 and 14.

For many years, as Paul preached the "grace" gospel to Gentile sinners, he reasoned with Israel, out of Israel's Scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah and warned them of the impending judgment. Christ had pronounced that judgment in Luke 21:20 to 24. Jerusalem would be destroyed. Israel would be scattered all over the earth. And hear this awful judgment: "But when the King heard thereof, He was wroth: and sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Matthew 22:7.

This terrible penalty was withheld until God gave His Nation another opportunity. Jerusalem and the temple stood. Israel was given favor with Rome during their years of grace, more than thirty-five years. Some years after Christ died God, by the mouth of Paul, warned Israel. Acts 13:40. All of those years they were addressed as "brethren". Their "all day long" came to an end with the awful destruction of Jerusalem about 69 or 70 A.D. Romans 10:21.

Israel today is still where Christ said they would be. Jerusalem is still where Christ said it would be. Luke 21:20 to 24. We quote Isaiah 6:12: "And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land."

This is the day of Gentile favor, the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery. Ephesians 3:1 to 11. Israel has forfeited every special privilege or priority right and must come in without any circumcision advantage or any religious reputation or preference, on the same grounds as the poor lost condemned Gentile and be saved by grace alone." "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh". Ephesians 2:17. Quite significant that the "afar off" people are mentioned before the "nigh" people. This should be compared with Romans 1:16; Acts 3:25 and Acts 13:46.

All that is required to bring any kind of sinner to God is His grace and the precious blood of Christ. The necessary faith will be given for the appropriation of the grace and shed blood to any kind of a sinner who is willing to be saved.

Because of centuries of Christian influence it is not easy for Gentiles today to realize their predicament as set forth in Ephesians 2:12 and Ephesians 4:18 and Ephesians 2:1 to 3. But it is wonderful to know that the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; that, therefore, salvation is as free as the air we breathe and may be received by any convicted sinner in any place at any time.

After this day of grace God will deal again with Israel. Some of them will be in and around Jerusalem; most of them will, be afar off. We quote several prophecies: Isaiah 43:5 and 6, "Fear not: for I am with thee I will bring thy seed from the east and gather them from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth". Jeremiah 30:10: "Therefore fear thou not, O My servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the hand of their captivity: and Jacob shall return and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and

none shall make him afraid.” Isaiah 60:4: “Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged: because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” Isaiah 60:9: “Surely the Isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee.” Micah 4:3: “And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

We have God’s more sure word of prophecy that Israel will be established again in their own land; the tabernacle of David will be built again and the true King David will be Wonderful, Prince of Peace, reigning on David’s throne, with the government upon His shoulder.

Then there will be the fulfillment of kingdom Gentile salvation for the Isles “afar off” and the nations that shall come to worship the Lord. Isaiah 66:19 to 24.

Hear God’s question asked five centuries before Christ. It is up to date. “Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God “afar off?” Jeremiah 23:23. And hear the answer: “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; ascertain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.”

But let us remember, even as near as God is, there is only one way to Him. That way is Christ. John 14:6. Brought nigh by Christ’s blood. Ephesians 2:17. Draw nigh to God by the better hope. Hebrews 7:19. By the blood of Christ draw nigh in full assurance of faith. Hebrews 10:22.

How nigh are believers who are members of the Body of Christ? They are in Christ. Christ is in them. They are dead, buried, raised, risen and seated in the heavenlies in Him, in an unending, inseparable union with the glorified Christ; accepted in Him and complete in Him; and therefore, nothing above or below can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

BY CHAS. F. BAKER
PART TWO

In studying the so-called Great Commission to determine whether or not it contains the marching orders for the Body of Christ today, several important facts were previously pointed out: first, there is no such thing as the Great Commission, Christ having given several distinct commissions after His resurrection; second, the commissions given to the Twelve Apostles and recorded in the four Gospels authorize the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom and not the Gospel of the Grace of God which was later committed to Paul; and third, the commissions given to the Twelve do not represent the last commands of Christ, since He gave all of the truth and commands for the Body of Christ Paul many years after He had commissioned the Twelve

The fourth outstanding fact is that Paul did not work under the commission which was given to the Twelve. In Galatians 1:11, 12 he made it very clear that he received none of his information or instruction concerning the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles from the Twelve; neither was he taught it, but he received it all by revelation of Jesus Christ. “I

conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me". (Galatians 1:16 and 17). This excludes the thought that Paul had the same Gospel or the same commission as had the Twelve. After fourteen years Paul went up to Jerusalem by revelation and "Communicated unto them that gospel which I among the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:2), concerning they had been ignorant all that time. Besides this, Paul very plainly stated: "Christ sent me not to baptize" (I Corinthians 1:17). Regardless of one's views on water baptism or of why Paul said: "I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius," it must be admitted that Paul had no command to baptize in his commission for the Gentiles; and it must be equally admitted that no one who was working under the commission of the Twelve could truthfully have said: "Christ sent me not to baptize." In no place does Paul instruct Gentiles to baptize or to be baptized, as contrary to his own commission. Since Paul had to be given a separate and distinct commission under which to administer his distinctive Gospel, doesn't it seem somewhat irrational for Christians today to try to administer that same distinctive Gospel under a different commission? The case is much akin to that of the sick man who, having been given one prescription of medicine, insisted upon following the directions on the old bottle even after the doctor had changed the prescription and had given him new medicine. Every medicine has its distinctive directions for being administered, just as each of the several gospels in the Bible has its distinctive commission.

A fifth fact of significance is that the commission in Matthew 28:19, 20 endures until the end of the age. This has been thought by some to be positive proof that this commission still stands for the Church, since the age has not yet ended, but closer examination will reveal just the opposite. The age in which we live is a secret age which was parenthetically injected into the age then existing while Christ was on earth, so that the secret Church age must end before that age spoken of in the commission can be resumed and brought to its climax. Paul claimed that the present Church Dispensation was unknown to the sons of men until Christ revealed it to him. He was not saved until several years after the Twelve were commissioned, thus making it impossible for the age in the Matthew commission to mean the present secret period. The expression, "the end of the age", is used five times in Matthew 13:39, 40; Matthew 24:3; Matthew 28:20; and is inferred in Matthew 10:22; Matthew 24:6, 13, 14. The end of that age is called "the harvest" and it occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation. Now if Matthew gives the Church Commission, then it must be true that either the Church will go through the Great Tribulation, or that the Church Commission will continue in effect even after the Rapture When there is no church upon earth.

Some claim it to be absurdity to teach that Christ would give a commission to His apostles and then shortly afterwards interrupt it by revealing a new commission to go with a new dispensation, so that the original commission would have to wait for two thousand years before being fulfilled; but these same ones teach that Jesus truthfully offered Himself as a literal King to Israel just a few days before His death and then but a few days later set aside the Kingship, the earthly kingdom, and His literal earthly reign for two thousand years by giving the Great Commission. If it is absurd to teach that the Great Commission was interrupted in its fulfillment, then it is absurd to teach that the Church Age is a parenthesis interrupting the kingdom Age (which is taught by practically all pre-millenarians), which was proclaimed "at hand" while Jesus was on earth. It is all important to understand that Pentecost, instead of introducing the secret Church dispensation, ushered in the last days of that age which was to end with the Great Tribulation (Acts 2:17); so that it could be said of those Jews on Pentecost and thereafter who witnessed the miraculous signs and wonders that they "tasted the powers of the age to come"

(Hebrews 6:5). The “age to come” was the Kingdom age, but because Israel fell away and crucified afresh the Son of God, it was impossible to renew them again to repentance; so God set Israel aside, and instead of the Kingdom Age being the age immediately to come, God injected this present, secret age. The Twelve, working under their commission, were preparing the people for the age to come, or the Kingdom; Paul, working under his commission, was administering a new dispensation in which God is calling out sinners saved by grace to be members of the Body of Christ.

A sixth fact must be pointed out, namely, that the commission in Mark 16:15 to 18 teaches that baptism precedes salvation. The Old Testament clearly teaches that from the circumcision of Isaac on down to the end of the book a man had to be circumcised to enjoy covenant blessing (Genesis 17:9 to 14), and upon this same basis it is taught in the Roman, Lutheran, and other churches that water baptism, as a means of grace, must precede salvation. This doctrine is denied by all preachers of the Gospel of Grace, although the majority of such preachers, in trying to defend this commission as belonging to the Church, teach that “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized.” in spite of the fact that God said: “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” They say, “We know from Paul’s writings that water has no such power and that all God requires is faith.” Yes, this is true, and we may and should know it, but did the Apostles know it before it was revealed through Paul? What reason did they have to suppose it, when the Lord put the water before salvation? And what reason do we have to suppose it, when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” and when every record of water baptism in the book of Acts, with the exception of Cornelius, puts water baptism before the reception of the Holy Spirit (The last record is Acts 19:5, 6)?

Some have recognized the difficulty here and the inconsistency of such teachings about water baptism, and they say that the Lord must have meant Holy Spirit baptism, and not water. This interpretation clears them of inconsistency on this particular text, but it does not clear them on the many texts in the record of what the Apostles actually did. There is no disputing of the fact that the Samaritans believed and were baptized, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit until several days later, where the Apostles came down and laid hands on them, Acts 8:12 to 17. It must be admitted that it is impossible to assert dogmatically whether water or the Holy Spirit is meant in Mark 16:16, but it can be said dogmatically that one is inconsistent to claim that it is water and at the same time say that water has nothing to do with salvation. It is little wonder that the Romanists, Lutherans, Campbellites, Pentecostals, and others who believe this is water, have so much difficulty in trying to understand the fundamentalists who teach that it is water, but that the water is no factor in salvation.

Those who teach the necessity of water are consistent with the Mark commission, but they are undispensational in not seeing that this commission has been superseded by another which entirely omits water baptism. Most of the ills of legalism, ceremonialism, and ritualism are due, not to antisciptural teachings, but to undispensational application of Scripture to this dispensation. The Bible contains legalism and ceremonialism—every one will admit that; but many fail to see that all such has been done away in the present secret dispensation, and many who do see this truth make the mistake of supposing that in actual practice all of these things ceased at the Cross. The Cross is the place where these things ceased, doctrinally; but in actual practice God allowed these things to continue all during the book of Acts while He was still dealing with the nation Israel. The many thousands of Jews which believed were all zealous of

the law of Moses (Acts 21:20). They, as well as Paul, were practicing ceremonialism, and there is not one word in the Bible which condemned their actions. Whereas, the Jewish believers continued in their legalism and ceremonialism, because they had been given no revelation to the contrary, it was clearly revealed that this burden should not be imposed upon Gentile believers, Acts 15:19, 28. The middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14) was broken down by the Cross of Christ, doctrinally; but the fact was not made known until after the close of the Book of Acts. During the "Acts" period the Holy Spirit set up an entirely different system of practice for Jewish and Gentile believers, and Paul and James confirm this fact in Acts 21:18 to 26. Paul took a vow to prove that he had never taught the Jews of the dispersion to forsake Moses, or circumcision, or the customs; but "as touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing."

CONCERNING THE DEATHS OF TWO SIMEONS

Christians know more about Simon Peter than they do about the other Simeon. In Acts 15:14 Simon Peter is called "Simeon".

The record of the other Simeon is found in Luke 2:25 to 35. It is a very interesting story. Read it prayerfully and spiritually.

"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him."

"And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

More than sixty years after Simeon held the holy Child Jesus in his arms and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word" (Luke 2:29), the aged Simeon wrote:

"Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."

"Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." II Peter 1:13 to 15.

How long the first Simeon lived after the Lord had revealed that He would remain alive until Christ was born, it is not stated. But it is quite certain the second Simeon lived at least thirty years after the words of the Lord Jesus spoken after His resurrection: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me."

The first Simeon lived to see the Lord's Christ. The second Simeon lived to see many mighty workings of the Lord, beginning anew with His message to Israel on the day of Pentecost and ending with his second epistle, which closed with this reference to the Apostle Paul: "in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood." II Peter 3:16. Paul spoke and wrote some things that had never been revealed when the first Simeon lived and they are too hard for most Christians even today.

Perhaps we might be wondering if these two Simeons are now together. There are some Christians who seem to get great consolation and blessing trying to prove that God's saints are not in a conscious state while they are absent from their bodies and waiting for the day of redemption, the day when they will receive their resurrection bodies. But Stephen surely departed to be with the Lord when he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Simon Peter said, "I must put off this tabernacle." The "I" put off this tabernacle and the "I" departed to be with Christ. This is also what Paul meant in Philippians 1:23.

Surely both of these Simeons will be among those who belong to Christ and who will be made alive at His coming. I Corinthians 15:23. This wonderful resurrection chapter has no reference to that spiritual life experienced by God's saints before they reach their graves: "you hath He made alive, who were dead." Ephesians 2:1 to 6.

But we are told by our Premillenarian Bible teachers that, although both of these Simeons ministered in the same city to the same people (Israel), they will not be found in the same group of redeemed people in the ages to come; because Simon Peter died as a member of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, which they teach had its historical beginning on the day of Pentecost, whereas the other Simeon died as an Israelite, waiting for the Kingdom, some years before the Body began on the day of Pentecost. This teaching is worthy of prayerful, serious consideration and real Scriptural investigation. It means that these two Israelites died in different dispensations and departed this life with entirely different hopes. Let us see what light we can get by looking into the Word.

The first Simeon had undoubtedly died some years before the second Simeon was led to Christ by his brother Andrew, before Simon said, "depart from me for I am a sinful man." The first Simeon was an especially blessed Israelite, because the Holy Spirit was upon him for a special message concerning Christ and the prophecy that many in Israel would fall and rise again. Luke 2:34. John the Baptist had been born and was to turn many of the children of Israel to Christ. Luke 1:16. The second Simeon was likewise an especially blessed Israelite: "blessed art thou Simon Barjona." The Lord committed to him the keys of the kingdom of the heavens and was mighty in him to the apostleship of Israelites. Matthew 16:16 to 19. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Beginning anew his ministry on the day of Pentecost, Simon Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. Just when the gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Simon Peter for Israel we may not be sure; but we know that he was sent to the Twelve Tribes while Christ was in the midst of Israel in their land. Matthew 10:5 to 8. He was instructed to go not to Gentiles. And we know that his message on the day of Pentecost, addressed to devout Jews from every nation under heaven, was for all the house of Israel. Acts 2:5 and Acts 2:36. The "afar off" people of Acts 2:39 were the Israelites of Daniel 9:7. And we know that Simon Peter's messages, during the first nine chapters of Acts, were addressed to Israel, unto whom the Lord sent Peter to say that Christ had been exalted to be Israel's Prince and Saviour and give repentance and forgiveness to Israel. Acts 5:29 to 32. And we know that for many years after Christ had thus been exalted, it was not lawful for Simon to preach unto Gentiles. Acts 10:28.

It was by the mouth of Simon Peter that many of the children of Israel, as foretold by the first Simeon, were turned to Christ. Acts 2:1 and Acts 4:4. Acts 5:14. Acts 6:7. But they preached to Jews only. Acts 11:19.

Both Simeons were in Jerusalem and ministered in Israel's temple. Luke 2:27. Luke 24:53. Acts 5:42. The first Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel, the kingdom restored to Israel, Israel's deliverance from the hands of their enemies. Luke 1:67 to 77. Luke 1:29 to 33. Luke 2:25. The second Simeon was promised a high place in that kingdom. Luke

22:28 to 30. He asked the risen Christ if He would at once restore the kingdom to Israel. Acts 1:6. Then it was by his mouth that God offered to send Christ back from heaven to Jerusalem and Israel, to establish the kingdom, for which the first Simeon was waiting, if Israel's rulers would repent. Acts 3:14 to 21. On that day of Pentecost Simeon had given God's word to Israel that Christ had been raised from the dead in fulfillment of David's prophecy to take David's throne. Simon Peter is to have a reigning seat in the kingdom for which the first Simeon was waiting. Matthew 19:28. He is to sit and eat with Israel's Messiah in the same kingdom for which Simeon waited.

Now the question comes to our minds, just what place will the first Simeon occupy in the coming kingdom of the heavens? If he died outside of the Body of Christ and Simon Peter died as a member of Christ's Body, which began with this key used in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, then these two Simeons will be separated in the millennium. Will the Body of Christ and Paul be seated with the Twelve Apostles, judging the Twelve Tribes when the Son of man shall come to reign? How is it that Peter will be there and not Paul, and both of them members of the same Body?

According to some teachers the two Simeons will meet again in the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:2, after the millennium. Is this intelligent Bible study or is it speculation?

It is regrettable that all earnest Christians cannot agree on these things. But already you have asked the question, how can Simon Peter have a throne reigning over the Twelve Tribes during the millennium and still be a member of the Body of Christ, seated with Christ in the heavenlies, and waiting to appear with Him in glory? And will not the first Simeon be with the Twelve Tribes and therefore in Simon Peter's company?

Those who have Simon Peter unlocking the doors to the Body of Christ on the day of Pentecost try to forget that he is to sit on a throne with Christ the King reigning over Israel. They prefer not to be asked to explain Luke 22:18 and 30 and Matthew 19:28. They must begin Paul's dispensation of grace and the dispensation of the mystery on the day of Pentecost and cut the Twelve Apostles off from John the Baptist, Simeon, and other Israelites who died before Pentecost, and raise them up to sit with Christ in the heavenlies on the day of Pentecost.

If, in Acts 3:14 to 21, there is a real bonafide offer from God to Israel to send Christ to establish in their midst the kingdom foretold in Daniel 2:44 and 45, and proclaimed at hand by Christ in Matthew 4:17, then we are confronted with this problem. According to those who have the Body of Christ begin on the day of Pentecost, the 3000 Israelites saved on the day of Pentecost, then and there became members of that Body and were then and there raised up and seated in the heavenlies in Christ, according to Ephesians 2:6 and Ephesians 1:19 to 22. These teachers acknowledge that membership in the Body of Christ is far more desirable than a place under the King in the Kingdom.

Now if Peter was in the Body with the 3000, how could he have, conscientiously and sincerely, with Divine authority, offered the King's return and the kingdom to Israel, when he was already eternally saved as a member of the Body and neither he, nor any of the other 2999, could have stepped out of the Body and have had a place in the offered kingdom? Moreover, he would have told the Israelites to again reject the kingdom and get something better, a place in the Body of Christ. Carefully read Acts 3:14 to 21 and, you will be convinced that no man of God was ever more sincere than was Simon Peter, as God's mouthpiece, offering the kingdom to Israel.

It is equally as difficult to prove that the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Colossians 1:24 to 27 began, historically, on the day of Pentecost, as to prove that it did not. The many who

believe that Pentecost was the birthday of that Church believe it because others have believed it. It is generally believed among Fundamentalists by implication or inference, rather than proved by rightly dividing the Word of truth. It cannot be proved by the word “Church”, translated from the Greek “ecclesia”, for this word is found more than sixty times in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament Scriptures. There was no more difference between the Church of God on and before Pentecost than there was between the Church of God in the early chapters of Acts and the Body of Christ in Ephesians and Colossians.

But according to the general teaching among Fundamentalists of the “Plymouth Brethren” school of interpretation the following statements are taught to be Divine truth and Scriptural facts:

1. The Church, which is Christ’s Body mentioned in Ephesians 1:17 to 22, Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Colossians 1:21 to 26 was unknown to any of Israel’s Old Testament prophets and was not mentioned by any of them.
2. By the mouth of Peter, God, in Act. 3:14 to 25, made a definite, bona fide offer to send Christ back from heaven to establish the kingdom reign of Christ on earth, proclaimed by John the Baptist, Christ and the Twelve, in Matthew, beginning with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, in fulfillment of the prophecies of Moses, Samuel and all of Israel’s prophets. Acts 3:22 to 25,
3. The Church of Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Colossians 1:21 to 27 had its historic beginning on Israel’s feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Christ.

Our answer is, if statements 1 and 2 are Scriptural facts, statement 3 is contrary to fact, because all that occurred on the day of Pentecost was in fulfillment of prophecy; so also was the kingdom of Acts 3:19 to 25; so also was the out-gathering of Gentiles, mentioned in Acts 15:13 to 17. We must conclude that the Body of Christ was either the subject of prophecy, or that it did not begin on the day of Pentecost.

But back to the two deaths. We have two puzzling questions:

1. If the first Simeon was waiting for and expecting a real, literal, earthly kingdom, with the Lord’s Christ on David’s throne, in accordance with Luke 1:30 to 33 and Israel’s deliverance, in accordance with Luke 1:67 to 77, why should he want to die in peace rather than to remain alive and have a place in Christ’s kingdom of peace, in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6 and 7?
2. If, in accordance with John 21:18 and 19, the second Simeon had to live to an old age and then be put to death, how could there have been either the probability, or the possibility, of the acceptance of the offered kingdom in Acts 3:14 to 21, when Simon Peter was not yet an old man; and surely he would not have been put to death if the millennium reign of Christ had been established by Christ’s return from heaven.

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS

BY PASTOR VINCENT BENNETT
LESSON FOUR

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

In our last lesson the nature of this wonderful sentence, which reveals the plan and work of the Godhead, was set before us. We found that the Father's choice, Ephesians 1:4, is realized in Christ, Ephesians 1:7, and sealed with the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13. In this lesson we are going to look more intimately at Ephesians 1:4 to 6, which reveal to us the Father's part for the working out of the purpose and plan of the Godhead.

THE FATHER'S CHOICE Ephesians 1:4

“According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.”

The Father's choice of us “in Christ” is seen to be according to a preconceived plan which He purposed in His own infinite wisdom “before the foundation of the world” or literally, “before the ages began.” The whole-scheme of redemption, and the calling of the Church with all its details, was on the heart of God before the ages began. The members of “the Body” are placed in an eternal relationship with Christ their Head. The calling of the Church was not an afterthought on the heart of God, when Israel had failed to realize her purpose and the judicial sentence of blindness was passed upon her. Before man was created, God had already planned the calling of the Church; but He kept it a secret, “hid from generations” until He was ready for the working out of His purpose, at which time the revelation of it was made known to the apostle Paul. Should you want to know when the Church began or where it originated, one answer is plain, viz. In the heart of God “before the foundation of the world.”

I want you to turn with me to some of the similar expressions that bring out this important fact, and then contrast them with the passages that relate to Israel's choice and calling. II Timothy 1:9, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.” Also, Titus 1:2, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.” Now notice the choice of God's earthly people the Jews. Genesis 12:1 to 3. “Now the Lord had 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 shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The history of this one nation is clearly marked in the Word of God, we see God making choice of one tribe within the nation, that of “Judah”, then one house within the tribe, “the House of David”, then one particular virgin within the house “Mary” and, in the fulness of time Jesus came born of a woman to redeem Israel, and although the Jews would not have this King to reign over them when He came the first time, yet, “when the Son of Man shall come in His glory” in His second advent, the purpose of God's choice and calling of Israel will be realized. Matt. 25:34. “Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. All these things “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN (Acts 3:21). Surely the words “before the foundation of the world” and “from” or since the foundation of the world” must be distinguished if confusion of truth is to be avoided, and our eternal relationship with Jesus Christ that originated in the heart of God before the foundation of the world, must not be made identical with any Jewish hope or promise spoken of as being made since the world began, and a thought worthy of meditation is this, that according to God's eternal purpose the members of the Body of Christ are not “historic” but “prehistoric” specimens of grace.

The glory and wonder of the Father's choice is made more precious in the light of other facts that obtained; before the foundation of the world.

In John 17:24, we find this blessed statement in the prayer of Jesus Christ "Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world", and now with Ephesians 1:4, before us we can truthfully say that with the love of the Father for the Son, we also were loved and made choice of before the foundation of the world. And again, in I Peter 1:19, 20, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is said to have been "foreordained before the foundation of the world" so now we can, say that we were chosen and loved with the foreordination of the sacrifice. These statements are profound and beyond human comprehension leaving us lost in wonder and awe, so that with a deep sense of reverence we bow before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the Apostle Paul cry "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and, knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

THE FATHER'S PURPOSE Ephesians 1:4

" . . . That we should be holy and, without blame before Him."

Only "in Christ" can we ever stand thus before the Father, for only Christ Jesus has met every demand of God's righteousness and holiness. What we are, we are by Divine mercy and grace, that has been so freely given us through the death of His Son. I believe there is a two-fold interpretation of this passage, that must be recognized in view of corresponding passages to be found elsewhere. In Colossians 1:21, 22, we have been reconciled to God in the death of Jesus Christ that we might be "holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight", then Philippians 2:15, requests that we "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." "holy and without blemish" is the language of sacrifice, and speaks of an acceptable offering, does not this remind us of Paul's great appeal in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

In Titus 2:14 the purpose of our redemption is unmistakably clear "that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." These passages seem to emphasize our walk, He, who has called us into this life, has made perfect provision for any emergency in His Son, and the supply of our needs is amply met according to His riches in glory, and the God of righteousness, who has worked in us the salvation that is ours "in Christ", now asks that we show the fruit of Christ's indwelling by a manifestation, in our walk through life. All this is only possible because of "Christ in us", but a more blessed truth is the revelation of our standing "before Him" because of our being "in Christ". This places the emphasis not upon "condition" but "position". In Chapter 5:27, we have the words "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." This certainly is not descriptive of the Church's purity realized in an earthly pilgrimage, but rather a presentation before the Father because of an heavenly standing in Christ.

When Jesus Christ became one with us in His incarnation, God was "in Christ" with a standing before men, and so now those who are "in Christ" have a standing before God in His exaltation, holiness and righteousness. We see God in Christ and God sees us in Christ, thus in Christ we have a perfect standing before the Father, and Colossians 2:10 is a blessed fact, we are complete "in Him".

THE FATHER'S MOTIVE? Ephesians 1:4 " . . . In Love

Some commentators feel that these two words should be linked with Ephesians 1:4 as in the authorized version, others connect them with Ephesians 1:5, reading thus, "In love having predestinated us, etc." I believe these words belong to both verses and cannot be separated from either. It was love which passeth knowledge that motivated the Father's heart to make such choice of us in His Son. Love we did not deserve and upon which we had no claim, Love that has broken down all barriers of distinction, and come to aliens, far off, dead in sin, Love that is not to be reckoned according to human concepts and cannot be fathomed by any reasoning process of man. The word here used for "love" is "agape" and never occurs in profane Greek writings, other words of lower standards being used. Now, God gives a new word, for "love", for the language of man could never express the feeling of God's heart for sinners. Only the sinner saved by grace understands something of its meaning as it is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). No wonder at all that the apostle speaks of God's "great love wherewith He loved us" Ephesians 2:4, and prays that we might be "rooted and grounded in love", Chapter 3:17, beseeching us that we "forbear one another in love", Ephesians 4:2. He implores also that the precious truths we hold be not spoken in a manner that might detract from the glory of the message, but, "speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things". Ephesians 4:15, and thus members of the Body can be "edified in love" Ephesians 4:16. May we never forget the motive of the Father's choice, viz. "LOVE".

THE FATHER'S WILL. Ephesians 1:5:
"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ
to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

According to His own sovereign will, in love, God has predestinated or foreordained us to the "Son-position". The word "adoption" does not bring out the clear teaching of this passage. Believers in Christ Jesus are made new creatures in Christ, and given the position of Sons. Literally speaking, we are given the "Son-place", because we are partakers of His Divine nature. Just as Jesus Christ is the Son of God, by nature we who are "in Christ" are given the "son-place", and become the sons of God by grace. Notice all this is according to the good pleasure of His will, and, not according to our appreciation or understanding of this blessed truth as some would have us suppose. His will is the origin and secret of it all, and all blessings in the past, present, or future, realized or anticipated, are the wondrous manifestations of His love according to the good pleasure of His will.

THE FATHER'S OBJECT. Ephesians 1:6:
"To the praise of the glory of His grace".

This is the end to which the Father made choice of us, to set forth "the glory of His grace". Let our hearts be filled with adoration and praise. Surely every attribute of God is a revelation of His glory. But the glory of His grace is the most glorious in revelation and manifestation, for it shines in all its splendor on the dark back ground of sin and death. We who have been saved by His grace can say with Paul, "where sin abounded, grace did much more

abound”, “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so, might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:20, 21). This indeed is grace glorified.

God said of His choice of Israel in Isaiah 43:21: “this people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise”. Now the truth is declared that concerning us, His choice is made to the end that we might be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Psalms 150 with its 6 short verses can truly be the expression of our hearts as a splendid doxology, forming a fitting climax to this portion of God’s word in the light of the fuller revelation. (Read it).

THE FATHER’S ACCEPTANCE. Ephesians 1:6
“. . . wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved”.

With the previous thought in our minds of “the glory of His grace”, the literal translation of the above clause is clearer, “with which grace He has graced us in the Son of His Love”. The “Beloved” is the one in the heart of the lover, and Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, is the Beloved of God. Three times in Matthew’s Gospel, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the “Beloved” of the Father, and with each mention these words are added “in whom I am (or my soul is) well pleased”. (Matthew 3:17; Matthew 12:18; Matthew 17:5). Now this precious thought is made known to us; we are accepted in the Son of His love, our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). The love with which God loves the Son, is the love that includes us. In His acceptance of us in the Beloved, surely I cannot nearer or dearer be to the heart of the Father than I am “in Christ”, the Son of His love. I am “graced” or “accepted” in the Beloved, and rest near the warm heart of the Father in the person of His only Son.

“Near, so very near to God, Nearer I cannot be;
For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He.”

SEVERAL BIBLE THOUGHTS

BY PASTOR HENRY BULTEMA

The manna, which had all the vitamins, even the very latest, in it, was occasioned by Israel’s sin. This was true of all the three objects stored away in the ark, which all pointed to Christ. Sin is the most God-defying thing in the universe, yet God has always overruled it by the greatest display of His virtues. Even the cross itself was the greatest crime of the ages, but God has used it as the manifestation of His virtues, the means of salvation, the motive for service, the mark of separation, and the melody of heaven.

When we scrutinize the human wonders and achievements, we always find flaws and defects, but when we analyze the Biblical wonders, we find hidden beauties and perfections, wheels within the wheels, as it were. Take the frogs of the Egyptian plague: they were revered by the Egyptians as gods, but here the gods became a pest. As a rule frogs do not climb, but here they climbed. Frogs do not come into the houses, but here they did enter the dwellings. The morass dwellers avoid the fiery regions, but here they came into the ovens. So also the miracle of Elijah’s feeding under the juniper tree was really a combination of seven miracles. Study the other miracles.

Pharaoh was a procrastinator, for, although he believed that God could instantly command and remand the frogs, he said: “tomorrow”, in regard to the departure of the frogs. He

was like the sinners in our day: content to sleep with the frogs of sin, creeping and crawling in their lives, croaking frogs of lust and loquacity and many others.

Where Evolution leads mankind, can be seen in our day. If man is not made in the image of God, but is only a developed brute, why should he not, as a brute, be killed? Lust and thrill murders are the result of Friedrich Nietzsche, who wanted all the weak to be crushed and the superman, the blond beast to be adored, was only a consistent Evolutionist. The struggle for life was with him simply a dutiful struggle for power. According to this theory Christianity must be destroyed; for numerically and financially, that is the weaker party. According to this cruel theory euthanasia is perfectly justifiable, because there is no wrong in softly ending the miseries of a highly developed animal. Again, Nudism is just the right thing, for nakedness goes with the beasts of the jungle. And, according to this theory, Italy is in her right to pounce upon a weaker nation and take its land. Do you not see, my dear reader, how Evolution has leavened the nations in our day?

Paul was afraid that he might be a castaway, i.e. set aside, not from salvation, but as a worker from his work and the worker's reward. He was a castaway from men. Study his life and you will see that he was a castaway everywhere. When Ananias, Peter, James, John and the others were not persecuted, there he was rejected.

He was rejected at Damascus. Acts 9:23 to 25.

He was rejected at Jerusalem. Acts 9:26 to 29.

He was rejected at Antioch at Pisidia. Acts 13:45 to 50.

He was rejected at Iconium. Acts 14:5.

He was rejected at Philippi. Acts 16:12 to 39.

He was rejected at Thessalonica. Acts 17:5.

He was rejected at Berea. Acts 17:13.

He was rejected at Athens. Acts 17:18 to 32.

He was rejected at Ephesus. Acts 19:9 to 23.

He was rejected by all Asia. II Timothy 1:15.

He was rejected in Rome. Acts 28:24 to 29; II Timothy 4:10 to 16.

He was rejected by Galatia, Galatians, chapters 3 to 5.

We must sharply discriminate between man's casting away and God's casting away. Paul never feared the former, he did fear the latter. Saints today reverse this order. Why did Paul want to go to Jerusalem even in the face of the pleadings of his fellow-believers? It was not mere love for Israel since he could love Israel outside of Jerusalem; nor was it mere love for the Jewish poor, for he could have sent the gifts by others. No, he went to Jerusalem in order to become conformed to Christ in every thing. They shouted, "away with him!" as they had done with Christ, The legalists persecuted him as they had done with the Lord. They bound him and delivered him into the hands of the Gentiles. They hated him without a cause and lied about him, just as they had done with his master. He wanted to be conformable to His death.

To say that Paul made a blunder and compromised in going to Jerusalem is a great error. A temporizer could not say so often: "follow me" Let us furnish some proofs that Paul was right

1. He was bound in the Spirit. This might refer to the human spirit, but in connection with the whole story, it evidently refers to the Holy Spirit or His power.
2. If Paul had been out of the way, Christ would not have comforted him the way He did in Acts 23:11. He dealt harshly with Jonah when this prophet was out of the way.

3. In Acts 20, Paul set himself as an example before the Ephesian elders, and his conscience would not have allowed him to do this, nor the Holy Spirit, if he had been a miserable compromise.
4. He claimed to be “pure from the blood of all men.” which would not have been true if he had compromised, for, when Peter compromised in Antioch, he drew many others with him in hypocrisy.
5. He would say: “I finish my course with joy.” The man who is out of the will of God cannot say that for he is wretched and miserable.
6. At the end of life he said: “I have fought a good fight,” which again could not be true if he had so sadly been out of God’s will.
7. The weakest negative “me”, in Greek, has been used in Acts 21:4, which expresses a relative, subjective and conditional “not”. It is not “our”.
8. Finally, if Paul had been a manpleaser he would, according to his own statement, in Galatians 1:10, not have been a servant of Christ and the Holy Spirit could not have put him as the great paragon saint and servant before the church of all ages. There is nothing God: hates more than compromise.

What was the purpose of God’s eternal choice? Not that we should be successful, sociable, prosperous, religious, brilliant, scholarly, cultured, churchy; but that we should be HOLY. Ephesians 1:4. Let us never forget the Divine purpose of His choice. His plan is not miscarried, but fully realized, for in Colossians 1:22, we read that He will present us HOLY in His sight. And to that end He Himself takes all the spots and wrinkles out of His Church, as we can see in Ephesians 5:27. All glory to His name

Traditionalism is a sworn foe to Bible study. If a pathologist puts the stethoscope on the heaving chest of his patient, looks at his bleary eyes, his pallid Cheeks, his coated tongue, then he will announce it to be a complicated and hopeless case of Bibliophobia, fear of the Bible; Paulophobia, fear of Paul; Creedophilia, love of creed; Myopia, shortsightedness; Atrophy, and Dispepsia in regard to the heavenly manna. We need Divine healing against this disease.

Ezekiel stood before deep waters, but we read three times: “He brought me through.” God always leads into and through the deep waters, except the Pharaohs, they stay in. Ezekiel found that there are different degrees of waters: ankle-deep, knee-deep, loin-deep, and swimming-deep, for finally he could not wade and had to let go.

Some one has rightly compared Christian workers to three kinds of ships: the canal barges, which must be dragged to work, representing the non-volunteers pressed into labor. The sailing ships, which come along fine, as long as the wind’s and the tides are with them, but they have an awful hard time with “contrary winds” The big ocean steamers, which plow through any sea and storm, and the Spirit-filled Christian worker is like the big liner, nothing detains him from working while it is for the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is of extreme importance for Fundamentalism to know the fundamental teaching of Scripture about the state of fallen man. Is man only a bit darkened in his mind by his fall from God? Then Christ, as prophet is enough to teach him. That is the modernistic way. God’s view about man is far different, God says, man is dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1. Colossians 2:13. The apostates are twice dead. Jude 12. Christ came that men might have life. John 10:10. The implications of this fundamental are many. It shows that a Prophet is not enough for us, nor a good King nor a Governor. We need One that raises us from the dead. It includes that salvation is of the Lord. It denotes man’s total depravity and total inability. It also includes that man has no free will to accept Christ in his own strength. Man is a free agent, for he lives in sin

and is responsible. Man is free from external coercion, but he is not free but a slave of sin. It is not of him that willeth. Romans 9:16. Man likes to carve out his own destiny, but he is like the Niagara: ever going down, free, and yet not free to go upward, backward, or sideward; according to its own nature, it must go down. Man is as free as a leopard, but he cannot change his spots. He is as free as an Ethiopian, but he cannot change his skin. He is as free as a cyclone, but he can only storm and destroy; as free as the billows, but can only foam and roar and roll on; as free as a landslide, but he can only slide down and destroy; as free as an earthquake, but he can only quake and shake and devastate; as free as the swine that ran down the steep hillside: no one pushed them, but they pushed themselves with their own weight. Self help and self rescue is an eternal impossibility with fallen and falling man. He needs, first of all, a resurrection and then he needs a God who worketh in him, both to will and to do. And thank God that we have this wonderful provision of God's grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him we stand complete and more holy than the very heavens, because these are not pure in His sight. In Him we stand more safe and secure than the angels in heaven, for they fell and became devils.

THAT DAY-WHAT DAY?

A NEW PREMILLENNIALISM

In the last written message of the Apostle Paul, he declared that for him and for all that loved the Lord's appearing, there was laid up a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give in THAT DAY. II Timothy 4:8. In that same last message Paul wrote, "the Lord is able to keep "my deposit" against THAT DAY. II Timothy 1:12. Again, in verse eighteen of the first chapter, "the Lord grant unto Onesiphorus that he may find mercy of the Lord in THAT DAY.

Now the question: "What day is THAT DAY?" Paul wrote to the assembly where Timothy had ministered' "ye are sealed unto the DAY of redemption." Ephesians 4:30. What is to take place on the DAY of redemption is declared in Philippians 3:20 and 21: "Our citizenship is in the heavenlies: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory." And, in another Epistle, written about the same time, Paul wrote, that believers were "looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing (epiphaneia epiphaino-brightness) of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13. And in still another Epistle: "When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear (phaino) -shine), then shall ye also (phaino)-shine) with Him in glory." Colossians 3:4. This word "appear" comes from the same Greek word "phos" from which the word "phosphorescent" is derived.

In the First Epistle of John the believer is exhorted not to be ashamed before Him at His coming (parousia)presence) when He shall appear (phaneroo) shining). I John 2:28. "When He shall appear (phaneroo), we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is". I John 3:2. This was the blessed hope of the believers to whom John wrote. I John 3:3.

IS THE HOPE OF JOHN 3:2 THE HOPE OF TITUS 2:3?

We are asking this question because God's people are being disturbed by a new teaching that these two hopes were entirely different hopes. The student of the Word of God is instructed

to distinguish between things that differ. Philippians 1:10. And if these hopes are entirely different hopes, we desire to distinguish between them.

Because John wrote, "it is the last time," it is the opinion of those who differentiate: between these hopes, that John was referring to the coming of Jesus Christ, the same coming of Jesus Christ mentioned in Matthew 24:37, the "parousia" (presence) of the Son of man. They declare that this hope was the hope of the Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians, but not the hope of the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians. They opine that the hope of the Body of Christ is not the coming of Jesus Christ; that the glorious appearing of the Great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, has no reference to the coming of Jesus Christ. They furthermore claim that there is not the slightest suggestion of any coming of Jesus Christ in Philippians 3:20 and 21: "our body fashioned unto His own body of glory" or in Colossians 3:3 and 4, "appearing with Him in glory when He appears in glory." When the "Acts" period closed, a new church began, the Body of Christ, with a new calling and new hope.

Surely this teaching is rather disconcerting to Christians who have been led into the "premillennialism" taught by most Fundamentalists. It has been difficult enough to oppose organized "postmillennialism" and make as much progress in dispensationalism as has been made by teachers who have propagated, what might be called, "Plymouth Brethren premillennialism", the doctrine of the imminent return of the Lord; the teaching that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Lord shall descend with the shout and the trump, at which time the dead in Christ shall be raised and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and ever be with Him. I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18; I Corinthians 15:51 to 54.

Now it is rather a radical departure from this standardized premillennialism to the teaching of other premillennialists today: that I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:23 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 53, describing the rapture of the (Church of God, speak of the parousia (presence) of the Lord Jesus Christ. These scriptures refer to the second coming of the Son of man to save "tribulation" saints. The Greek word "parousia" is used in I Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 5:23; II Thessalonians 2:1; James 5:7 and 8; I Corinthians 15:23: also in Matthew 24:27 and 24:37 and 39.

Much of God's glorious truth, down through the Christian centuries, has been buried beneath man-made church creeds and traditions of apostate leaders, and the recovery of Body truth has met with much bitter religious opposition. Therefore it has been slow, tedious work, a very difficult task and, in many respects, a most unpleasant one. Because of these facts, Bereans are not primarily interested in whether a teaching is disconcerting to some Christians or by them considered, radical. The all important question is, "is the teaching the rightly divided Word of truth?" Is the blessed hope of Titus 2:13 and Philippians 3:20 and 2,1 altogether different from the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18?

Then we ask several questions: "Is it rightly dividing the Word of truth to teach that the last trump of I Corinthians 15:52 is the seventh (or last) trumpet of Revelation 13:15, and therefore, the rapture of I Corinthians 15:51 to 53 is the rapture of the "tribulation" saints and not the rapture of the Body of Christ? Because there is also a trump in Matthew 24:31 and I Thessalonians 4:16, is that proof positive that in these two chapters we have the record of the rapture of the same "tribulation" saints mentioned in Revelation and I Corinthians 15:51 to 53? This is part of the Scriptural evidence offered by certain Premillennarians in support of this new dispensationalism. We state again that according to their exegesis, the hope of members of the church of God, mentioned in the Book of Acts, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Corinthians, Ga-

latians and Romans, (Epistles written during the “Acts” period) was I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 53, a hope different from the blessed hope of Titus 2:13 and Philipians 3:20 and 21. This blessed hope is the hope of members of the Body of Christ in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus and II Timothy (Epistles written after the “Acts” period closed), and our hope. If I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 is our hope the Body of Christ is headed for the “great tribulation”.

In I Timothy 6:14 Paul instructed his son, Timothy, to keep the commandment until the “appearing (epi-phaino), of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Timothy 6:14. But it is claimed that the hope in the Epistle is rather uncertain, as the date of this Epistle is uncertain, whether before or after Acts 28:25 to 28. However, the same appearing (epi-phaino) is mentioned in II Timothy 4:1. And, according to this verse, the Lord Jesus Christ is to judge the living and the dead at His appearing. This is not “parousia”. The judgment of saints, according to I Corinthians 4:5 and II Corinthians 5:10, they claim is at Christ’s “parousia” and not His “Epiphinaea”.

Much importance in support of this new “premillennialism” is attached to the words of I Corinthians 7:29, “the time is short” and the words of Romans 16:20, “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly”. If Corinthian saints were instructed not to bear children, because the time was short, and if Paul later wrote that women should marry and bear children, in I Timothy 5:14, the dispensation in which the saints of Corinth lived, came suddenly to an end, and immediately after the close of the “Acts” period a new dispensation, with an entirely new calling and hope began with the historical beginning of the Body of Christ after God’s judgment upon Israel. Acts 28:25 to 28. According to this separating of Paul’s Epistles, the “till He come”, in connection with the Lord’s Supper, spoke of the coming of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18, and, inasmuch as God postponed that coming and Israel’s tribulation, the believer’s obligation to remember the Lord at His table was canceled with the beginning of a new Church, the Body of Ephesians 1:19 to 22; Ephesians 3:6 and Colossians 1:24 to 27. The expounders of this “new premillennialism” are divided as to whether the church members of Paul’s pre-prison Epistles, who lived beyond the close of the “Acts” period, became members of the later “Body” Church. But they are sure that those “Church of God” members who died before the close of the “Acts” period, died outside of the Body of Christ. They will be raised at the last trump with “tribulation” saints.

Inasmuch as you will have to meet this new teaching, would ask that you hear with as much patience as possible another fine point of distinction. The saints of the “Acts” period had a “celestial” hope; the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:2 to 10. The saints of the “Post-Acts” period had a “super-celestial” hope. This latter is the hope of the Church today; our hope. The celestial” hope is supported by “mother Jerusalem” of Galatians 4:26 and “father Abraham” of Romans 4:16. Abraham was looking for a city whose builder was God. The “Acts” Church of God members were Abraham’s seed. Members of the Body of Christ are not. That city is to be the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:1 to 10. The Body of Christ is seated in the upper-heavenlies with Christ, far above, waiting to appear with Him in glory and will never reach that heavenly city. Of course if this teaching is Scripturally correct, Israel, and not the Body, is Christ’s Bride.

If this teaching is fantastic, unscriptural, speculation, the corrective is not the ridicule and condemnation; but II Timothy 2:15. It is no more ridiculous than is the inconsistency of the majority of other accepted premillenarians, who, in one message, tell about the noble and spiritual saints, servants of the Lord in generations past, who were Scriptural premillenarians, and in the next message prove that the Lord is soon to appear because of the activities of Stalin,

Hitler, Mussolini and even Roosevelt, with his new deal. If these dictators had to be, before the Lord could come, the noble saints of other ages were not Scriptural; they were deceived. “Political “sign” teachers and “date-fixers” have done much harm to the “premillennial” teaching.

There should be no doubt in the mind of any intelligent, spiritual, careful student of the Scriptures, that a radical change took place with God’s judgment upon Israel pronounced in Acts 28:25 to 28. There are high and glorious truths in connection with the Body of Christ revealed in Paul’s Epistles, written after that pronouncement. In his prison epistles we find truth concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ, the dispensation of the mystery, the heavenly calling of believers identified with the glorified Christ, the seven-fold unity of the Spirit, the believer’s conflict, etc., not found prior to that time.

But the question is, were the saints of the “Acts” period waiting for a day of redemption different from that day for which the saints of the “Post-Acts” period waited? Romans 8:23 and Ephesians 4:30.

The word, “coming” in I Corinthians 1:8 is still another Greek word (apokalupsis)-disclosure or revelation. So, according to the teachers of the “new premillennialism”, the Corinthian saints were waiting for the “apokalupsis”, the “erkomai” (I Corinthians 11:26), the “parousia”. They claim that the Epistle of John was written before the close of the “Acts” period, and therefore the believers addressed were waiting for the same coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The saints of the “Post-Acts” period were not looking for any coming of the Lord Jesus. The blessed hope must not be considered a “coming”. The majority of these teachers teach that the hope of the “Acts” saints is the “anastasis” (resurrection from the dead); that the hope of the “Post-Acts” saints is “exanastasis”, used but once in the Bible. Philippians 3:11, “The resurrection out from among the dead.” They hesitate to designate this as a rapture. In fact, most of these teachers are reluctant to offer any Scriptural proof as to just how members of the Body of Christ are going to reach glory without death. Some of them are now teaching two raptures; the Body of Christ is to be called on high and then the tribulation and then the last trump of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18.

THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST

Perhaps we will find the refutation of the arguments of the preachers of this “new premillennialism” by comparing Philippians 1:6 and 10 and Philippians 2:16 with I Corinthians 1:8; I Corinthians 3:13; I Corinthians 5:5; I Corinthians 4:5; II Corinthians 1:14; I Thessalonians 5:2 and II Thessalonians 2:2 and 3. Were not the saints of Corinth and Thessalonica waiting for the same day as were the saints of Philippi? Paul preached in Corinth after he preached in Philippi. The church at Philippi existed before the church at Corinth. Compare Acts 16 with Acts 18. Was not Paul waiting for the same day of Christ, both before and after Acts 28? Let us read Philippians 1:6; Philippians 1:10; Philippians 2:16.

“Being confident of this very thing, that, He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”.

“That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ”.

“That I may rejoice in the day of Christ”.

These Philippians were to be kept until the day of Christ and were to look to that day for their reward. Is not the day of Christ dependent upon the coming of Christ? The Corinthian saints were to be confirmed unto the end and look to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ for their

rewards. I Corinthians 1:7 and 8. They were waiting for the same day, the appearing of Christ to judge the living, as well as the dead. II Corinthians 5:10; II Timothy 4:1.

Now I Corinthians 1:8; I Corinthians 5:5; and II Corinthians 1:14.

“Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ?”

“The Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (Jesus omitted in some manuscripts).

“That we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

Now I Timothy 6:14:

“That thou keep this commandment without spot, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul was to be preserved unto His heavenly kingdom, which was to be at His appearing, to judge. II Timothy 4:1 and 18. Who are the living who are to be judged at the “epi-phaino” of the Lord Jesus Christ? Compare II Corinthians 5:10 with Colossians 3:24 and 25.

Acts 2:20 speaks of the notable day of the Lord. Surely this notable day of the Lord has to do with the coming of Christ for Israel. The Greek word translated notable is “epiphanes”, which is the Greek word expressing Christ’s appearing, the blessed hope of the Church which is His Body.

IS IT UNSCRIPTURAL TO GIVE A PUBLIC INVITATION TO SINNERS TO ACCEPT CHRIST?

The immediate response to this in the heart and mind of the great majority of Christians is, “how absurd to ask such a ridiculous question.” But we present the question for more than a moment’s consideration and for more than your own private and personal opinion. There are many practices in churches today which may seem right in the eyes of all people but which do not have the Divine sanction of the Word of God.

We are perhaps familiar with the theological controversies that have taken place from time to time during the past two or three centuries in America and Europe between the “Hyper-Calvinists” and the “Arminians”, “Irresistible Grace” versus “Free Will”. The “Irresistible Grace” theologians have been frequently called “Fatalists”, because they have taught that the omniscient God, knowing the end from the beginning, has not only foreknown the eternal destiny of every member of the human race, but He has arbitrarily predestinated and foreordained that some should be the vessels of His wrath. They quote in support of this teaching Romans 9:22 with other scriptures such as Ephesians 1:4, II Timothy 1:9 and Titus 1:2.

I was preaching the Gospel for ten days in a southern town. I was asked to call on a prominent business man, who had made it a practice to criticize and condemn every evangelist, as well as the local pastors, who had proclaimed a “whosoever” message. He was especially bitter and sarcastic in his denunciation of what he called the high-pressure tactics and cunning tricks of the professional evangelists. If he had the right to be the judge in such matters, perhaps some of his criticisms were just. There are many who are quite sure that these so-called professional evangelists have done much harm to the Lord’s work by substituting carnal schemes, clever methods and a compromise message for a spiritual, Scriptural method and for God’s pure Gospel of grace. How many times have we heard the statement, “professional

evangelists have killed evangelism". The only thing that can kill true evangelism is for the servants of the Lord to cease to proclaim the pure evangel or cease to get to the sinners with that saving message.

When I called on the "critic" I found him to be quite a theologian, and from his own theological point of view quite a student of Scriptures. He told me that his father for many years was a Primitive Baptist preacher. He was quite sure that his father belonged to the elect; but he had serious doubt as to his own spiritual welfare. Then he added, "my own deep concern can never alter the foreordained decree of God. If God knows that I am predestined to be a vessel of wrath, all of your preaching and all my anxiety and emotional desires and struggles will not change God's mind. If I am ordained to be numbered with the elect, God knows all about it and He will yet call and justify me." Romans 8:29 and 30; Acts 13:48. All my appeal to the Scriptures to show him the responsibility of man was in vain. When I left him he said, "perhaps when you come again I will be numbered with the elect." I asked him if he would have assurance, if and when God should elect him to eternal life. He was quite positive that he would.

This man was also quite positive that Christ died for the elect; and he was also of the opinion that the number was not only strictly limited, but limited a very small percentage of the human race.

In recent years there has been quite a revival of Universalism in the religious movements of Charles T. Russell and Judge Rutherford known as "Jehovah's Witnesses" alias "International Bible Students", alias "Millennial Dawnism". They have worked out a salvation scheme to refute all the arguments and counteract all the evil influences of the "limited atonement" theologians. Along the same line we now find the literature of the "Universal Reconciliationists", claiming by Colossians 1:20 and a few other disconnected Scriptures that the atonement (reconciliation) by Christ on the cross was so unlimited that all humanity will finally be reconciled to God; and perhaps Satan also and the fallen angels. Those of us who are somewhat familiar with this movement know what it has done to the evangelistic zeal of preachers who have been caught in its grip.

Several years ago I was an eye-witness of the wreck of a spiritual assembly of the Lord produced by a "limited atonement" preacher who viciously denounced, as servants of Satan, every evangelist and pastor who preached what he called a "whosoever Gospel." He was a very clever juggler of the Scriptures, and won for the defense of his "election" hobby a sufficient number of the leaders in the assembly to control the work. About seventy per cent of the believers withdrew and were scattered. There was no longer a sane, spiritual testimony given out by the believers left behind: It is needless to add that missionary zeal died out and soul-saving ceased in that assembly. But here is an interesting fact: One of the believers, who withdrew from the assembly to which we have just referred, ascertained from those who remained with the "election" preacher that, without a single exception, one hundred per cent of them, as well as the preacher himself, had been saved by hearing and responding to what they called the "whosoever Gospel".

Mr. Moody related an experience with one of his critics who protested against his emotional urge and his prolonged appeal to sinners to accept Christ. He asked "how do you know they have been elected?" He proceeded to preach "predestination" and "foreordination" to Mr. Moody. Mr. Moody very graciously replied to the man with this statement, "I feel quite sure if by chance a sinner, who had not been elected, should believe the Gospel, should respond to his invitation and receive Christ, that God will forgive me for my blunder."

Perhaps you have heard of the evangelist who had preached several nights about the death of the Lord Jesus, in sincerity and with deep devotion, describing the sufferings and sacrifice of the eternal Christ, saw no visible effects upon his audience. Then, with much pathos in his voice, he related a story. It was the unsuccessful attempt of a father to save a drowning dog, a pet of his little son, who looked on the scene with tearful eyes and pleading cries. As the evangelist pictured the last death struggle of the dog, he observed that there were but few dry eyes in the audience. A number responded to his invitation. Later on in the meetings he reminded them that not one had shed a tear when he had described the death of the Son of God on the cross, but most of them cried over the drowning dog.

It is rather unfortunate that in many meetings the success of an evangelist and the amount of his pay-check depend upon the number of hands that are raised in the meetings. This is rather a temptation. Many men of God fall into the trap and are not altogether honest in their invitations; they make them so broad and so general that a larger number may respond and give to the evangelist his coveted record.

It is interesting to compare God's assurances to Paul and Paul's appeals, recorded in the Book of Acts. God assured Paul that he would reach Rome: yet Paul solicited human aid and appealed to Caesar. Acts 23:11, Acts 23:17. "I appeal unto Caesar." Acts 25:11. Again: "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Acts 27:24. "I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." Acts 27:22 and 23. Paul is sure to reach Rome. All aboard the sinking vessel are sure to reach land in safety. It is an assured fact. But hear the word: "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Acts 27:31. We can never remove the human element from salvation Compare Ephesians 1:4 and 5 with Colossians 1:23:

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will Ephesians 1:4 and 5. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled. and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heavens; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Colossians 1:23.

As to the sinner's responsibility in the matter of salvation, it is clearly set forth in Romans 10:8 to 13, "the word of faith his heart", "believe and confess", "call upon the name of the Lord. And the preacher's responsibility is set forth in the verses that immediately follow; Romans 10:14 and 15. The preacher will be held responsible for withholding or proclaiming the saving Gospel. Read carefully II Corinthians 5:11 as to why believers should persuade unbelievers.

There is no Scripture limiting the ambassador of Christ to a private interview with a sinner. Whether private or public every Christian worker should believe John 6:44 and John 6:37:

"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 3:37

The Christian worker should make no attempt to do the work of God or the Holy Spirit.

"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; Of sin, because they believe not on Me." John 16:8 and 9. "I (Paul) have planted,

Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." I Corinthians 3:6 to 8.

The sinner's salvation is accomplished according to II Thessalonians 2:13:

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

But the true servant of the Lord will never forget Romans 10:14, 15:

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? at how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

In the light of the foregoing Scriptures no servant of the Lord will allow himself to be put in bondage by the dictation of theological critics; but will look to the Holy Spirit and God's Word for direction, and give God's invitation to sinners privately or publicly, just as frequently as the opportunity is at hand.

THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

The statement of our Lord Jesus Christ, recorded in John 5:24, should certainly give assurance to any one whose trust is in the Word of God, whose hope is in the redemptive work of God's only begotten Son. God said: "this is My beloved Son: hear ye Him". Now hear Him:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24.

The believer has eternal life. The believer shall not come into judgment. The believer has passed out of death into life.

Most certainly God wants believers to have a positive "know so" salvation, the real assurance of salvation. Hear God's own Word:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Son of God." I John 5: 13

The Greek word, translated "know" is "iedo" and the other definition in the Greek dictionary is "perceive" and "to be sure". Can you not see then that God wants you to know, "to be sure", that you have eternal life; because you believe unto the salvation of your soul. You did not obtain your salvation by earning it or by laboring for it. Neither do you retain it because you are paying for it with your good works.

Eternal life is God's free gift to the believing sinner. The believing sinner is not saved because he is worthy; but because he believes. He believes God and he believes that Jesus Christ is God's Worthy One. Christ, on the tree, suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. I Peter 3:18. It is Christ's work, and not ours, that brings us to God. Christ's work was a perfect work. "God, which cannot lie, promised us eternal life before the world began." Titus 1:2. Not according to our works but according to His grace and purpose which was given us in Christ Jesus." II Timothy 1:9. Christ's perfect work makes sinners perfect

and complete. Hebrews 10:14. Colossians 2:10. Reverently speaking, God can do nothing but save the sinner who comes to Him by the way of His Son by the way of His cross.

“If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this age hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” II Corinthians 4:3 and 4.

The god of this age is very clever. He is called “Satan”, that “old devil”, who has deceived the whole world. Revelation 12:11. This is the crime with which he is charged. We are warned against him. He is like a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour. In Eden he beguiled Eve through his subtlety. We are not to be ignorant of his devices. II Corinthians 11:3; II Corinthians 2:20; Ephesians 6:11. We are told that he is transformed into an angel of light, that he has religious servants who are ministers of righteousness, and, who do their work by imitating the servants of Christ. II Corinthians 11:13 to 15.

There are millions of religious people, identified with some Satanic cult, who have a peace that is not genuine, who have a false security, a hopeless hope, but withal complacent and completely satisfied with their delusion. They are headed, with all their religion, for the sorrows of the second death. They have done the very thing that God’s Word declares leads to that fearful vengeance described in Hebrews 10:25 to 30. They have treated Christ’s shed blood as an unholy thing and have despised the grace of God. This is the sure way to God’s vengeance. God’s grace is available and altogether sufficient for sinners. Christ’s shed blood is the only way to eternal life, the sinner’s only hope, God’s only remedy for sin. Remember, God’s controversy with fallen humanity is sin and death. Christ put away sin by dying and then He abolished death.

Thus we see that this great adversary deludes millions of religious people and gives to them a sense of security, corrupting their minds from the simplicity that is “in Christ”. He causes them to so misinterpret and so misapply the plain teaching of the Word of God, that they reject the gospel of the grace of God and redemption through the shed blood of the Son of God, following the fallacy of some self-appointed religious prophet for whom the followers claim special inspiration, visions or revelations. These different false prophets differ much in their various interpretations, but each claims to have the true Bible religion and the sure way to the Bible heaven, and the peace of God, while enroute to their final reward.

Think of the multitude in Christian Science, Unity, New Thought, Modernism, Unitarianism, Russellism, Mormonism and other “isms”; twice dead, plucked up by the roots, calmed into the sleep of death by the devil’s religious opiate, which is something far more serious than “another gospel”, “the perverted gospel”, in the days of Paul. Galatians 1:6 to 10. The messengers, who give forth this message of death, use Christian phraseology and corrupt the Christian’s Bible, to carry on their soul-damning work; for their master is transformed into an angel of light. II Corinthians 11:13 to 15.

Let us never minimize or discount the work of Satan.

While the devil gives this false security to these lost religious victims, he fills the hearts of many truly redeemed sinners, God’s own children, with doubt and fear, and sometimes with despair. They trust much in their feelings or in their religious activities and experiences. wondering whether they will really reach heaven. They sum up their good works to see if the total is enough to keep them in God’s favor or get them into God’s heaven. Others strive for sinless perfection, agonizing to reach a state of holiness that will fit them for glory. Many of the redeemed of the Lord hesitate to say, “I know I am saved.” To them that would be presumptuous or boasting. They are not properly taught in God’s Word. No true believer will glory in himself or in his works or worthiness. The Bible-taught child of God has no confidence in the flesh. He

should endeavor, sincerely, every day, to give the Lord the very best service that is possible, by His grace; but he will not depend upon that faithful service for his eternal security.