

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

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WHAT IS THE DAY OF THE LORD?

The last recorded words of the Apostle Paul are found in his Second Epistle to Timothy. He referred there to the crown of righteousness which he was to receive “at that day”. “At that day!” At what day?

When Paul wrote to Timothy was he waiting for the day of Christ different from the day of Christ mentioned in I Corinthians 1:8? We quote several Scriptures concerning the day of Christ.

I Corinthians 1:8.

“Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in THE DAY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

I Corinthians 5:5.

“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS.”

II Corinthians 1:14

“As also ye have acknowledged as in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS.”

Philippians 1:6.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until THE DAY OF JESUS”

Philippians 1:10.

“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST.”

Philippians 2:16.

“Holding forth the Word of life, that I may rejoice in THE DAY OF CHRIST, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”

By studying Philippians 3:5 and 6, we learn that the Philippian saints, at the time Paul wrote the Epistle to them, about 64 A.D., were waiting for the same day of Christ for which they waited about twelve years before that time when Paul preached them into the Body of Christ. Acts 16:12 to 31. It was after Paul’s visit to Philippi that the Thessalonians were turned to God to wait for His Son from heaven. I Thessalonians 1:9 and 10.

These facts are so evident that it may seem needless to mention them; but we state them, because there are Premillenarians propagating the doctrines of Mr. Chas. H. Welch and others, who teach that the people of Philippi who believed Paul’s gospel message before Acts 28:31 became members of a different Body or Church. They dogmatically affirm that the Body of Romans 12:3 to 5 and I Corinthians 12:13 was not the same Body as Ephesians 1:19 to 22,

although when pressed they have to confess that most of the members of the Body described in Ephesians became members of that Body before Acts 28:31.

The members of the earlier Church looked for one day of Christ and the members of the later Church looked for another day of Christ. The members of the Body before Acts 28:31 were waiting for the coming of Christ. The members of the Body after Acts 28:31 were waiting to appear with Christ in glory. They were looking for the blessed hope; but not for the coming of Christ.

We agree with you that this is strange and unsound teaching. There is much strange and unsound teaching these days. But remember God's safeguard against those who would seduce you. I John 2:26 and 27.

Concerning this strange teaching, known as "hyperdispensationalism", those who propagate it teach that after Acts 28:31 Christ ascended, to higher heavens, from the heavens where He had been from His ascension to the day of the beginning of the new Body; that is, with the beginning of that new Body He ascended far above the heavens (Ephesians 4:10); and became the Head of a different Body (Ephesians 1:19 to 22). Therefore, the members of the first (Acts) Body, who were not transferred into the new Body, had a different hope and calling, and the two groups will be in different heavens. The members of the first (Acts) Body were looking for the coming of Christ, mentioned in Matthew 24 and in I Thessalonians. This was the "parousia". The members of the second Body were waiting for the "epiphaneia".

In the last chapter of Paul's last message he wrote Timothy: "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

Now let us study together II Timothy 4:1 and 8, Philippians 1:6 and I Thessalonians 2:19.

II Timothy 4:1.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

II Timothy 4:8

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Philippians 1:6

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

I Thessalonians 2:19

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing: Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

Is Paul to receive his crown of rejoicing for leading the Thessalonians to Christ at the "parousia" of Christ, and his crown of righteousness for loving Christ's appearing at the "epiphaneia" of Christ? Quite so, if the coming of Christ mentioned in I Thessalonians is an entirely different event than the appearing of Christ mentioned in II Timothy 4:1. According to

this, “TWO BODIES”—“TWO HOPES” “PAROUSIA”—“EPIPHANEIA” theory Paul is to receive some of His crowns at one day of Christ and others at another day of Christ; some at His appearing and some at His coming.

Philippians 1:5 and 6 studied together prove that the hope of the saints of Philippi had not changed, from “the coming of Christ” to “the appearing of Christ”, or from one day of Christ to another day of Christ. Remember the Thessalonians who are to be Paul’s crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming were saved after the Philippians in whom the good work was begun in Acts 16:12 to 13 and was to be performed until the day of Jesus Christ.

It is at His appearing that Christ is to judge the quick and the dead. In rightly dividing the Word of truth, we surely must teach that there is a difference between the blessed hope of the Body of Christ and the coming of the King to redeem Israel and establish His kingdom on earth. But to teach that I Thessalonians 2:19, is the coming of Christ to deliver Israel out of the tribulation, because the word “parousia” is used in both I Thessalonians and Matthew 24, is anything but rightly dividing the Word.

DOES HEBREWS TEACH THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

“FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO WERE ONCE ENLIGHTENED, AND HAVE TASTED OF THE HEAVENLY GIFT, AND WERE MADE PARTAKERS OF THE HOLY GHOST AND HAVE TASTED THE GOOD WORD OF GOD, AND THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME, IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY, TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE; SEEING THEY CRUCIFY TO THEMSELVES THE SON OF GOD AFRESH, AND PUT HIM TO AN OPEN SHAME.” Hebrews 6:4 to 6.

First of all let us observe that this Epistle is addressed to Hebrews. God’s people, Israel, for many centuries had been under the law. They had been observing the ritual, keeping ordinances, and practicing the ceremonies which God gave them through Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant. After we have carefully read the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn that the Epistle is written to believing Jews and those who professed to be the people of God.

Let us bear in mind that many Jews were both confused and uncertain as to their obligation to the ceremonies of Judaism after Christ had died on the cross. Perhaps we can better understand this when we behold what is going on today among so-called orthodox Jews who think they are carrying on the program of God in their religious observances during their Passover holy days and their Yom Kippur celebration.

Inasmuch as Gentiles today are saved by grace, and have no desire to turn to the sacrifices of Judaism for cleansing their sin, no primary application of Hebrews 6:4 to 6 can be made to any member of the Body of Christ

In Hebrews 10:26 we read: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Some have read into this verse, “if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more forgiveness for sin.” The word “forgiveness” is not suggested; it is “sacrifice”. All the way through the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that the once-for-all sacrifice, which Christ made on the cross, forever put away sin.

In this same tenth chapter we read, “there is no more offering for sin”, “no more sacrifice”, “no more remembrance of sin”; that is, God remembers “no more” the sins of those who have been saved by the blood of Christ.

If we will read carefully Matthew 12:31 and 32, and then study the history of Israel in the Book of Acts, we will learn that the nation Israel committed the unpardonable sin. They sinned against the Son of man and put Him to death. He prayed for their forgiveness on the cross. Luke 23:34. According to Acts 5:29 to 32, Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Prince and Saviour to give them repentance. The Holy Spirit was present to witness. Acts 5:32. If Israel sinned, against the Holy Spirit, rejecting His witness concerning the resurrected Son of man, Israel would not be forgiven. Matthew 12:32. Stephen saw the Son of man in heaven. He so testified to Israel. They sinned against the Holy Spirit. Acts 7:51 and 56. Israel committed the unpardonable sin. But any individual Israelite may be saved by grace at any time he believes.

So far as salvation by grace is concerned, “where sin abounded grace did much more abound.” The Gentile sinner is alienated from the life of God; is dead in trespasses and sin, and is by nature the child of wrath. Ephesians 4:18; Ephesians 2:1 to 7. In such a state all of his sins remain unpardoned. And therefore, there is no such thing as an unpardonable sin for one who has been saved by the grace of God and the blood of Christ.

Every Christian believes that any believer, who deliberately practices sin after he has become a child of God, can be restored by confessing his sin and turning to God. Every one who turns to God, whether sinner or saint, must turn through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator. The person who has once been saved and has fallen into sin habits does not turn to God through Christ on the cross. But he turns to God through Christ the Advocate and Intercessor in heaven, though it is always on the grounds of His shed blood. Christ is in heaven interceding for saints. In John 17:9 He said, “I pray not for the world”.

Therefore, we see that Hebrews 6:4 to 6 does not refer to the so-called backslider who has fallen away but who can be restored. For this Scripture says it is impossible to renew the man who has fallen away. Thus we see how frequently this portion of Scripture is misinterpreted and misapplied by those who apply it to a person whom they declare was once saved but lost his salvation by falling from grace.

Surely a person who has become a partaker of the Holy Spirit has become a child of God.

Therefore, if there is any application of Hebrews 6:4 to 6 to be made to members of the Body of Christ, it must prove the very opposite of what is taught by many. It must prove that the child of God cannot fall away. Therefore, the case presented in Hebrews 6:4 to 6 could only be considered a hypothetical case so far as any member of Christ’s Body is concerned.

The impossible of Hebrews 6:18 proves the eternal security of the believer and therefore Hebrews 6:4 to 6 does not prove the opposite. One thing is sure, if we apply it to a so-called backsliding Christian, there is no hope for such a backslider, in Hebrews 6:4 to 6, for the person therein described cannot be renewed.

HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT

SINCE YE BELIEVED?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

This rather loose translation of Acts 19:2 in the Authorized version has been used as a basis for the erroneous teaching that a Christian receives the Holy Spirit as a second blessing or second work of grace, sometime subsequent to his being saved. The American Standard version is more accurate “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” The actual text uses the present participle of believing, literally: “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit upon believing?” showing that the receiving and the believing had, been contemporaneous. The same construction is used in Ephesians 1:13; although it is no longer a question, but an attested fact, that when these Ephesians believed in Acts 19, they were at that moment sealed by the Holy Spirit. The same Greek participle of the Greek word, “believe”, is used in Acts 19:2 and Ephesians 1:13.

But if it be true that we receive the Holy Spirit upon believing, why did Paul ask whether these had received when they believed? Does not the fact that they hadn't yet received give proof that it is possible to believe without receiving the Spirit? This question is plainly answered in the context of Acts 19. These men had not believed the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ; they had only heard the message of John the Baptist that One was coming. They didn't know whether He had come; they had not even heard about the Holy Spirit being given. No doubt Paul met many others who knew only John's baptism of repentance, a message which had no promise or power in it to give the Holy Spirit. John said that the One coming after him would baptize in the Holy Spirit but these men hadn't heard about that One. When Paul told them about Jesus Christ, they believed and received the Holy Spirit. The water baptism, laying on of hands, speaking with tongues, etc., which accompanied their believing, was part of God's temporary dispensational dealings with Israelites. Even if one claimed that all of these “accompaniments” were part of God's order for today, there is nothing in the passage upon which to base a second blessing idea.

The apostle makes it very plain that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9), which fact once and for all settles the question of the possibility of a man being saved but not having the Holy Spirit. The Corinthian letter is another great body of evidence that the Holy Spirit does His work of baptism into the body of Christ upon ALL believers (I Corinthians 12:13), and that the reception of the Holy Spirit is not dependent upon our state of perfection. These Corinthian saints were living in sin, but Paul did not say: “Get rid of sin in order that ye may receive the Holy Spirit”; but he said: “Because you did receive the Holy Spirit when you believed, and because your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, therefore get rid of sin.” (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Many confuse baptism in the Spirit with being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). We may be and should be filled with the Spirit many times, but we can be baptized but once, and that upon believing. We cannot receive part of the Spirit at one time and more later. The Spirit is a person and we either have Him or do not have Him. It is an altogether different question as to how much of us He has. If He has possession of our whole being, we are filled with the spirit.

Every one, who is a Christian, is a “Christ's one,” anointed, The anointing abides. I John 2:27. The sealing is received when the sinner believes unto salvation. The Holy Spirit is in the believer. II Corinthians 1:22 The anointing, the sealing and the baptism with the Spirit is always

a past experience with one who has become a Christian. He needs no second blessing, because when he believes he is blessed with ALL spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1:3.

WHAT IS OUR HOUSE FROM HEAVEN?

THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT

The experience of every child of God, whether or not there is the consciousness or intelligent understanding of the burden and desire, is expressed in II Corinthians 5:2; "For in this we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." And in II Corinthians 5:5 is added: "God also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

What is our house which is from heaven? When will we receive our house from heaven? What is meant by the earnest of the Spirit?

We should study together II Corinthians 5:1 to 6 with I Corinthians 15:49 and 42 to 44. We quote these last four verses:

"And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" I Corinthians 15:49.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor: it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness: it is raised in power." It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." I Corinthians 42 to 44.

In these verses quoted from I Corinthians 15, we learn that we are to bear the image of the heavenly. In Romans 8:29 and 23, we learn, first, that the believer is already conformed to the spiritual image of Christ and that he has already received the firstfruits of the Spirit; and, second, that he is groaning within, waiting for the redemption of the body. In Ephesians 1:13 and 14, we are taught that the Holy Spirit within the believer is the earnest of his inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. In Ephesians 4:30, we are taught that the sealing with the Holy Spirit is unto the day of redemption.

By comparing Scripture with Scripture we learn that the earnest of the Spirit, mentioned in II Corinthians 5:5, is the assurance that the believer is to receive this house from heaven. This earnest is the guarantee of the redemption of the purchased possession, the redemption of the believer's body on the day of redemption. Therefore, the believer will receive his house from heaven on the day of redemption; that is, when all who are Christ's shall be made alive at His coming.

The earnest of the Spirit in II Corinthians 5:5 and Romans 8:23 and Ephesians 1:14 and Ephesians 4:30 is all the same earnest for believers in the same Body of Christ, whose bodies are to be redeemed at the very same moment. This does not include the redemption of tribulation saints; for that would put the Body in the tribulation.

The question has been asked: "how could a house coming from heaven be the same as the resurrection and transformation of the corruptible body into the incorruptible?" If one body is coming down from heaven and one is coming up from the grave, how can the house from heaven in II Corinthians 5:2 be the incorruptible spiritual body of honor, mentioned in I Corinthians 15:42 to 44? The answer is, I Corinthians 15:49, that the incorruptible body is going to be a heavenly image. Such an image is our house which is from heaven.

Now let us note carefully all of the verses in II Corinthians 5:1 to 8:

II Corinthians 5:1 to 8.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life. Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, Who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight). We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

We have written the explanation as above, because, on the one hand, there are some who teach that the members of the Body at Corinth were waiting for a coming of Christ and a day of redemption that was not the hope of the Body of Ephesians, or our hope today. You can readily see the folly of such teachings. And, because, on the other hand, there are those (though comparatively few) who follow the teaching of Dr. C. I. Scofield as to “our house from heaven”. We quote from the footnotes of his Reference Bible under Hebrews 9:27:

“Death, physical, Summary:

1. Physical death is a consequence of sin (Genesis 3:19), and the universality of death proves the universality of sin (Romans 5:12 to 14).
2. Physical death effects the body only, and is neither cessation of life nor of consciousness (Habakkuk 2:15, note: Luke 16:23, note Revelation 6:9 and 10).
3. All physical death ends in the resurrection of the body. See “resurrection” (Job 19:25; I Corinthians 15:52, note).
4. Because physical death is a consequence of sin, it is not inevitable to the redeemed (Genesis 5:24; I Corinthians 15:51 and 52; I Thessalonians 4:15 to 17).
5. Physical death has for the believer a peculiar qualification. It is called “sleep” because the body may be “awakened” at any moment (Philippians. 3:20 and 21; I Thessalonians 4:14 to 18).
6. The soul and spirit live, independently of the death of the body, which is described as a “tabernacle” (tent), in which the “I” dwells, and which may be put off (II Corinthians 5:1 to 8 cf. I Corinthians 15:42 to 44; II Peter 1:13 to 15).
7. At the believer’s death he is “clothed upon”, with a “house from heaven” pending the resurrection of the “earthy house” and is at once “with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:1 to 8; Philippians 1:23; Luke 23:43).”

Thus we observe that Dr. Scofield taught three bodies for the believer who dies before the day of redemption; namely, this earthly tabernacle until death; the house from heaven from death, until the coming of Christ and then the incorruptible spiritual, body of I Corinthians 15:42 to 44.

The reading of II Corinthians 5:8, “absent from the body and to be present (at home) with the Lord surely seems to be proof positive of the conscious state of the believer with Christ at death and the word “naked” of II Corinthians 5:3 seems to prove that so far as a body is concerned the believer will be naked between death and the day of redemption, “at His coming”.

IS SATURDAY THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

We know that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, being the last day of the week; but is it the Christian Sabbath? Some believe that the Emperor Constantine changed the sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, but that God's command is still to keep Saturday. Others believe that Christ changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday; therefore we should observe Sunday. Neither of these suppositions is correct. God never changed the sabbath from Saturday to another day. Neither did He give a sabbath day to the Body of Christ to keep. When professing Christians either continued or began keeping, sabbath days, it was an indication to Paul that they had never understood the grace of God and that his labour had been in vain upon them. Listen to his words:

“Ye observe days, I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” (Galatians 4:10 and 11).

“Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” (Colossians 2:16 and 17.)

A few years before Paul wrote these words, he could have been lawfully stoned to death for such teaching; for according to the law of Moses, a man was to be judged for these very things. But Christ had died and had become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Romans 10:4). Some try to argue that Christ became the end only of the ceremonial law, but that the sabbath along with the other nine commandments is still in effect. This is refuted by the Bible in several ways. First, the Apostle classes “sabbath keeping” with the other ceremonies which were shadows of good things to come, and emphatically denounces the keeping of the legal sabbath. Secondly, although some contend that the sabbath was given to Adam 2500 years before Moses and was therefore not a part of the law, the Bible makes it plain from Exodus 16:29; Ezekiel 20:12; and Nehemiah 9:10 to 12 that it was not given for man to keep until the law was given to Moses, and hence was one of those things written upon tables of stone which was “done away”, “abolished” (II Corinthians 3:7 to 12). It is plainly stated in Exodus 31:12 to 17 that the sabbath was a sign between Jehovah and the children of Israel. Thirdly, the teaching of Paul as to how the law was put aside is most conclusive. God put the law aside by causing it to judge us, condemn us, and put us to death in the person of a Substitute; so that we “are become dead to the law by the body of Christ,” and “the law hath dominion over a man (only) as long as he liveth” (Romans 7:1 to 4). It is because we died to the world of sin and of religious practices that we are no longer to be judged by such things (see Colossians 2:20; Galatians 2:20; etc.). The believer is dead, buried and risen with Christ. The sabbath was buried with Christ: Read Colossians 2:14

No one ever enjoyed the true sabbath rest by keeping of a day (Hebrews 4:4 to 11); for all who do such are working to keep the Sabbath day; but it is necessary to cease from all our works, as God did, to have real rest. The Sabbath days were a shadow of Christ. He has done all the work, so that we now find our rest in Him. He is our Sabbath. We can now come unto Him and rest. He died under the Law and was in the grave on the Sabbath. He arose the Head of a new creation on the first day of the week, and it is for that reason that we, as members of that new creation, meet upon that day to preach the Word. (Acts 20:6 and 7; I Corinthians 16:2; etc.).

IS A DIVORCE SCRIPTURAL?

So far as the world is, concerned, it is perhaps a splendid thing that divorce is sanctioned by the law of the lands; although it is to be deplored by even respectable unsaved citizens of this country that the divorce laws in some states are too free and easy. The question is not, "is divorce legal for unbelievers", but, "is divorce Scriptural for believers?"

How about it in the case where either the husband or the wife is an unbeliever?

How about it in the case where both were unbelievers at the time of marriage and later on either, or both, became Christians?

Perhaps the last case is the most perplexing of all and the question most difficult to answer. So many have presented this question in letters we have received. During my pastorate of fourteen years at the North Shore Church, more than 500 divorced persons have come to me to be married. You will see from the Scriptures which we quote why I was unwilling to serve.

Mark 10:12

"And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Matthew 5:31 and 32

"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him; give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her who is divorced committeth adultery."

Romans 7:2 and 3

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her, husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

I Corinthians 7:2

"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

I Corinthians 7:10 and 11

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. But if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."

I Corinthians 7:14 and 15

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."

It is impossible to see from the Scriptures quoted how God could in any way sanction the divorce or remarriage of His own children. Many Christians declare that Matthew 5:32, quoted

above, is Scriptural grounds for both divorce and another marriage. In more than 90 per cent of such divorces and remarriages, there would be no remarriage to a different person, if the believer would obey Romans 14:23: "And he that doubted is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Most Christians, who marry where there has been a divorce, doubt, and are therefore condemned when they marry.

One Christian preacher was divorced and married again. He went to several friends, including me, and asked them about it, and they all advised against it. He married in spite of all the counsel and then was angry with his counselors. He was doubting before and after the time of his second marriages.

"The two one flesh" is used to describe Christ and His Church. Ephesians 5:31 and 32 Christ will never divorce any member of His Body. And note God's desire concerning the believer: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." II Corinthians 11:1 to 3.

During all the years of my Christian ministry I have never known of a divorce where husband and wife were spiritual Christians. I am not speaking of those who were just church-members. There have been some disagreements and sometimes temporary separation. Well, is a divorce more desirable than unhappiness and an unfortunate union? What saith the Scriptures? Christians cannot-be guided by mere sentiment or carnal desires. "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this (divorce) precept". Fornication is Scriptural grounds for divorce but it cannot be proved that it is Scriptural grounds for marrying another person until the one put away has died. Some Christians believe this to be grounds for marrying after divorce, before being freed by death of divorced husband or wife:

The case where one is an unbeliever is clearly answered in I Corinthians 7:10 and 11 and 15.

But the difficult question to decide, is the case where children have been born to the man and woman married after divorce. It is difficult to advise separation in such a case. But where is the Scripture that opposes this advice? Only the persons involved can be responsible to God and His Word, in such a predicament; and predicament it is, especially if either party was saved when the marriage took place. We can only say, "We commend you unto the Word of His grace.

But now in the case where both parties were unsaved at the time of marriage, and either one or both afterward became Christians. The argument is, that even if both parties were violating the seventh commandment, because of divorce before marriage, when saved by grace God blots out the past, and therefore the justified are not only forgiven, but stand in God's presence as though they had never committed a single sin. This is surely Scriptural truth.

Then how do these questions fit the case? "What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Romans 5:1 and 2 and 15. Is it sin? It is agreed that it was sin. Did sin become not sin because of salvation by grace? I Must confess this is a most difficult problem. Perhaps grace covers but which Scripture assures us of this?

Do you not see why it is so difficult for a servant of God to advise? Every child of God, in the predicament described, must work out his or her own problem with the Heavenly Father Who is "the God of All Grace."

WHAT IS BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they baptized for the dead?” (I Corinthians 15:29).

Dozens of interpretations have been given to this verse. Mormonism finds its practice of baptizing in water a living person as a substitute for one who died without being baptized, so that the dead one will be saved. Surely nothing could be farther from the teaching of the Bible than this heathenish practice. It would be useless to go into all of the speculations which men have made in this verse, but we present herewith an explanation which satisfies our mind.

There are many baptisms in the Bible. Water is just one of the many. The most important one is that which Christ spoke about in Luke 12:50, where He called His death His baptism. We are baptized into His death baptism. Our important baptism is the Divine baptism into Christ. Since Christ placed this meaning upon baptism and since Peter puts the same construction on baptism in I Peter 3:18 to 22, it is not out of place to read this thought into the verse now before us. Upon so doing we see the point Paul is trying to make.

In I Corinthians 15 Paul sets forth the fact of Christ’s resurrection as the hope of the Gospel, and apart from His resurrection, the hopelessness of the believer in Christ; Read I Corinthians 15:12 to 19 especially. Then in I Corinthians 15:29 to 32 he undertakes to show that if it is vanity for a person to believe in Christ apart from His resurrection, then it is worse than folly to be such as he was, a preacher of the Gospel, who stood in jeopardy every hour, who died daily, who suffered so much for his stand for the Gospel. It is plain to see in these verses that Paul is using figurative language: He didn’t die daily, although he risked his life daily for Christ’s sake; he didn’t fight with actual beasts at Ephesus, but with men who acted like beasts. It is only natural then to look for a figurative meaning in the baptism, such as Christ Himself placed upon it: a suffering or even death.

Paul and other preachers were being baptized daily (dying daily) that others might hear the Gospel. But if these believers were never to rise from the dead, why were the apostles submitting themselves to this death baptism? They might as well “eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.” The fact that the apostles did endure such suffering for the Gospel (read II Corinthians 4:8 to 12; II Corinthians 11:23 to 33; Colossians 1:24) makes evident the fact that they had complete assurance and knowledge of the resurrection of Christ. If Paul suffered this baptism daily, “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,—always delivered unto death for Jesus sake”, surely it could be said that at the executioner’s block in Rome, he truly suffered this baptism in order that the truth of the Gospel might continue with us. Thank God for such an one as Paul.

WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW?

This question is asked in Galatians 3:19. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" The question is followed by one of the most important dispensational truths in the Bible. "It (the law) was added because of transgression, till the Seed should come." Galatians 3:19.

Before we consider this dispensational doctrine, let us carefully note Galatians 4:3 and 4:7, which we quote

Galatians 4:3.

"Even as we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

Galatians 4:7

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Here we have the clear teaching of the Holy Spirit, that the people of God, under the law, were servants; that the people of God, under Grace, are sons. In Romans 6:14 and Romans 7:6 we have these Divine truths:

Romans 6:14

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law. but under grace."

Romans 7:6

"But how we are DELIVERED FROM THE LAW, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

The sons of God are not under the law. They are delivered from the law. Romans 7:4.
In Galatians 2:19 to 21 we have the believer's relation to the law stated:

Galatians 2:19 to 21

"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

The law was crucified with Christ. The believer was crucified with Christ.

Colossians 2:13 and 14

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

God took it (the law) out of the way. Who has any right to put it back in the way? Certainly the law was in the way. While it was in the way the people of God "were shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." Galatians 3:23.

It is so strange that so many of God's sons, under grace, not under the law, desire to go back to the place of servants, back to the yoke of bondage, under the law, and again receive the spirit of bondage unto fear. Romans 8:15.

In the Epistle to the Galatians God is upbraiding, warning and beseeching His children, who are eager to serve the law, to which they are dead, instead of being happy to serve Christ as those who are crucified with Christ to the law risen with Him to walk in newness of life and seated with Him in the heavenlies. Hear this Divine admonition:

Galatians 5:1

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

“In the LIBERTY wherewith Christ hath made us free.” Free from what? From two Divine laws, from the curse, from the wrath of God. Free from “the law of sin and death”. Romans 8:2. Free from “the law of Sinai”: that law which worketh wrath. Romans 4:15. “The law was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” John 1:17. “The law entered that sin, might abound.” Romans 5:20. The law, which was the ministration of death and condemnation, has been abolished. II Corinthians 3:7 and 9; II Corinthians 3:12 to 17. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:21. By this grace, and by this Christ, a new law was established, “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

We are no longer servants, but sons; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, Who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Romans 10:3 to 5. Now again the question: “Wherefore then serveth the law?” The answer, “It (the law) was added till the Seed should come.”

430 YEARS—3 YEARS—14 YEARS

Now let us study this interesting and important truth in the light of the “430 years”, the “3 years”, and the “14 years” of Galatians 3:17— Galatians 1:18 and Galatians 2:1.

Galatians 3:17.

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS AFTER, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

Galatians 1:18.

“Then AFTER THREE YEARS I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”

Galatians 2:1.

“Then FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.”

First, the 430 YEARS”: By reading Genesis, chapters 12 to 15, we learn that God made a covenant with Abram (not Abraham) when Abram was 75 years old. Genesis 12:4. Abram believed God and was declared righteous: justified in uncircumcision. Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:9

to 12. Abram was an uncircumcised Gentile. He was not a religious Jew. He was a righteous Gentile. God gave him no religious ritual or holy days at the time he was declared righteous, by faith, apart from any works. Romans 4:8 to 8. According to James 2:21, when Abraham offered up Isaac, Abraham was justified by works. Abram was not Abraham when he was justified without works. He offered up Isaac more than 40 years after he was justified by faith alone. Abram, the uncircumcised Gentile, was declared righteous by faith, when God preached the gospel to him, twenty-four years before Abram was circumcised, twenty-five years before Isaac was born. Genesis 17:4 to 17 and Genesis 21:4.

Galatians 3:8

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

Here we observe that, 430 years before God gave the law to Israel at Sinai, before God entered into that covenant of works through Moses which covenant was made old by Christ’s death on the cross), God preached the gospel to uncircumcised Abram, the Gentile. In Galatians 3:17, we learn the number of years (430) between the preaching of the gospel and the giving of the law. “And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

It is quite important to know that the 430 years dates from the year that Abram was justified in uncircumcision, rather than from 24 years later when Abram was circumcised and became Abraham (at the age of 99) Genesis 17. It is so essential that we have this fact in mind so we may understand the significance of the other fact stated in Galatians 3:8: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

The Scripture foresaw something when God preached the gospel to Abram, 24 years before he became “circumcised Abraham” and 430 years before the law was given.

If we clearly discern this important truth, we shall never be guilty of three common blunders made by Bible students; namely,

1—We shall never call Abraham an Old Testament saint or a Jew, for he lived and died several centuries before the (Old) Covenant was made with Israel, before the Jew’s religion was given to Moses, and he also lived and died before his great grandson Judah, the first Jew, was born.

2—We shall not teach that the message that Peter and the Eleven preached to Israel, in Acts 2 to 7 or the message that Peter preached to Cornelius, the Gentile, (Acts 10:34 to 44), was foreseen in the Scriptures when God preached to uncircumcised Abram. Galatians 2:8.

3—We shall not teach that there is no difference between the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision. Galatians 2:6 to 9.

4—We shall not teach that the Twelve learned of the gospel of the uncircumcision when Paul visited Jerusalem, three years after he went to Arabia; but that Paul told them about it when he visited Jerusalem fourteen years later.

The law was added 430 years after Abram was declared righteous. “A man is not justified by the deeds of the law.” Galatians 3:11. The (Old) Covenant was added at Sinai to the promise, to the gospel, 430 years after Abram was justified without the deeds of the law. The law was added TILL. TILL WHAT? Till the Seed of the promise came and took the law out of the way.

He took the Old Covenant Sabbath to the sepulchre. Christ is the Christian's Sabbath. The first day of the week is called neither "the Christian's Sabbath" nor "the Lord's Day". The believer finds rest in Christ: is crucified, buried, risen and seated with Him; is complete in Christ. This is all Divine grace without one iota of religion.

Before the law was given by Moses, death reigned from Adam to Moses "when there is no law". Romans 5:13 and 14. The "law" dispensation was both parenthetical and temporary. Members of Christ's Body do not live in the law dispensation but under the reign of grace.

PETER AND PAUL

Galatians 1:17 to 19

"Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I (Paul) went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Galatians 1:23

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

Galatians 2:1

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

Galatians 2:7

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was to Peter."

What did Peter and his associates learn from Paul when he went up to Jerusalem "after three years? They learned that he preached the faith which he once destroyed. Paul destroyed that which Peter and the Eleven preached. They did not preach the gospel of the uncircumcision. They preached the gospel of the circumcision. After Abraham was circumcised (24 years after he was declared righteous in uncircumcision) all blessing from God was on the grounds of circumcision until Cornelius was accepted because of his prayers, alms and good works. Acts 10:3 and 4, 34 to 37. What did Peter and his associates learn from Paul when he went, by revelation to Jerusalem fourteen years later? They learned about the gospel of uncircumcision revealed from Christ in heaven to Paul. This was quite different from the faith which once Paul destroyed. It was not a Divine blessing on the grounds of circumcision for the circumcised but was what the Scriptures foresaw concerning the justification of uncircumcised Gentiles when God preached the gospel to uncircumcised Abram and saved that believing heathen by faith without works in uncircumcision.

What did Paul learn from Peter and his associates? Nothing. Galatians 2:6. He did not work under the authority of the Twelve or under the kingdom of heaven commission given to them by Christ. Paul received a new commission from Christ in heaven by revelation. Galatians 1:11 and 17.

The heathen, to whom Paul preached, were justified without a cause, by grace through faith in the redemptive work of Christ. They were not under the law either before or after they were saved, as Abram, the Gentile, was saved. It is in this sense that believing sinners, saved by grace, are the seed of Abraham.

Let us not confuse the grace message of Paul with the circumcision message of Peter.

HOW WAS ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY WORKS?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works? Can faith save him?” asks James. Says Paul: “If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”

These seemingly contradictory statements will perhaps be more clearly understood if the following three points are considered:

1. James speaks of Abraham being justified by works “when he offered up his son Isaac”, which happened 49 years after his justification by faith as mentioned by Paul (Genesis 15:6; Genesis 22). Paul makes it plain in Romans 4:1 and 2 that the justification by works of which James speaks, was not a justification before God, and James states that it was the fulfilling of the faith which he already had (James 2:23). Grace is the source of justification (Romans 3:24); Christ’s blood is the ground (Romans 5:9); faith is the means (Romans 3:28); and works are the evidence (James 2:21). As the tree must have life before it can bear fruit; so Abraham received life when justified by faith alone, and 49 years later that faith bore the fruit, of which James speaks.

2. The touch of legalism in James reflects the tone of the Sermon on the Mount and is to be expected; for this epistle was written to the Twelve Tribes of Israel who still met in synagogues (James 2:2 R.V.), and that without doubt before the door of faith had been opened to the Gentiles and the new revelation of the grace of Christ had been granted through Paul. Acts 14:27. In Acts 15:28 the Holy Spirit released Gentile believers from all obligation to observe the law, but gave no hint that Jewish believers were thus exempt. Therefore in Acts 21:20 to 26 we find James along with the other Jewish believers zealous of the law, not in its bondage apparently, but in its liberty (James 1:25). Acts 15:19 and Galatians 2:9 should be read with the Epistle of James.

3. Since Paul received his revelation containing many previously unrevealed truths it should be plain that of necessity there would be a difference between their epistles. Although witnessed by the law and the prophets (Romans 3:21), if justification or the righteousness of God apart from the law had been manifested previous to Paul’s proclamation of it, then his statement: “BUT NOW” the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested,” would be meaningless. This BUT NOW is the key to the difference between Paul and James, which marks the progress and change in God’s revelation and dispensation.

ARE CHRISTIANS BORN OF THE WATER?

In John 3:5 we have these words of the Lord Jesus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Whatever interpretation may be given to this verse of Scripture, "born of the water" and "born of the Spirit" are linked together. This leads us to compare the language of Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38. We quote these two verses "For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for THE REMISSION OF SINS." Matthew 26:28.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

And we notice the expression in the two verses, "the remission of sins". In one verse the remission is by the blood of Christ; but in the other case it is by water baptism. Now let us compare these two verses, and the verse already quoted in John 3:5, with this language in I John 5:8, "And there are three that bear witness in the earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood: and these three agree in one". We can appreciate the problem of trying to prove that water baptism is not essential to salvation. From the verses quoted, it would certainly seem that "born of the water" refers to baptismal regeneration. In Mark 1:4 we have this language: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Here again we have the plain statement that water baptism is "unto repentance for the remission of sins".

In I Peter 1:23 and James 1:18 we have the statement that the new birth is by the Word of God. Because of this, most grace preachers teach that "born of the water" in John 3:5 means "born of the Word". They thus teach to do away with the seeming contradiction in the Scriptures concerning salvation. For it must be admitted that, if the believer receives water, and the preacher administers the rite of baptism to aid in the sinner's salvation, then salvation is by faith plus works. Whereas, we are told in plain language, in Romans 3:24, in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, in II Timothy 1:9, that salvation is wholly by grace without any act on the part of the sinner.

Now we quote Titus 3:5 to 7 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the WASHING OF REGENERATION, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here we learn that we are saved without works. But we are saved by the washing of regeneration. Undoubtedly we have the answer here. This washing of regeneration has nothing to do with water. Therefore, the question, does the Bible contradict itself? We all should admit that water baptism is one of the deepest subjects in the Bible and must be studied dispensationally, in obedience to II Timothy 2:15. But washing of regeneration in the same Scripture with "not by works of righteousness" proves that water is not for salvation, in this dispensation of grace. Then what is it for? In Mark 16:16 it is coupled with belief for salvation

Mark 16:16

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

There are grace preachers today who tell us that we should be baptized with water; because we are saved. But where is the Scriptural proof? They have various explanations. Many of them tell us water is a witness to the world; but they cannot prove this teaching by any verse of Scripture. Some declare that water baptism is a door of entrance into the visible church. They cannot prove this by Scripture. Still others use Romans 6:3 and 4, to teach that the baptism is a burial, to prove that the believer is dead and buried and raised with Christ. But the careful student of the Word of God will learn that the baptism in Romans 6:3 and 4 is both efficacious and meritorious, and produces the transformation in the believer's life. Therefore, if we read "water" into Romans 6, it must be water regeneration. However, we do not believe that any intelligent student of the Scriptures will deny that the baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 is the baptism of Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 2:12, all of which refer to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. This is not water.

The statement of the Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 1:14, proves conclusively that in his "grace" message, there was no advantage, no efficacy, no aid toward salvation in water baptism. Hear these words of the Apostle Paul: "I thank God that I baptized none of you." Now, probably Paul travailed in his soul for the salvation of Gentiles. Paul could wish himself accursed from Christ for the salvation of Jews. And if there had been any efficacy or value in water baptism, he would have found great joy in baptizing every believing Jew and Gentile to whom he preached. But hear his own statement, "Christ sent me not to baptize". I Corinthians 1:17. How different from Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:15 to 18.

By carefully studying Acts 2:38 and Acts 8:5 to 15, we must conclude that not only in the synoptic Gospels, but in the early part of the Book of Acts, water baptism was a pre-requisite for the remission of sins and the reception of the Holy Ghost. After you have read Acts 2:38, I am sure you will decide that those Jews would never have received the Holy Spirit, if they had refused to be baptized with water.

Moreover, during the Book of Acts, we find three separate and distinct baptisms; water baptism, the believers' baptism into death, and Holy Spirit baptism for power. Now, when we study these three baptisms in the light of the statement of Ephesians 4:5, "there is one baptism", we must come to the conclusion that a radical change, as to baptism, took place in the message of salvation.

Most grace preachers acknowledge the fact that water baptism has no saving value. They say that the believing sinner is saved by grace alone. They acknowledge that by grace alone, through faith in Christ's redemptive work on the cross, the believer becomes a member of the true Church, the Body of Christ. But they say water baptism has a place in the program of the Church. When they admit that the water ceremony is not essential to membership in the Bible Church but is essential to membership in their church, they should be willing to admit that there is, therefore, a difference between their church and the Bible Church.

Let us say in conclusion, in the light of Ezekiel 36:25, which we quote: "then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you," it may be that water will again play a part in the salvation message to the Nation Israel, in the coming kingdom age, when the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 will be again in order. But, in the meantime, no sinner, saved by grace, is born of actual water. Neither is there Scriptural proof that he should have water baptism because he has become a new creation in Christ.

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE AN EVOLUTIONIST?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

Some Christians, who do not know what Evolution is, think they can be evolutionists, and some evolutionists, who do not know what, Christianity is, think they can be Christians. Those who know the true character of both of these systems know that it is impossible to embrace both at once; for they both present opposite viewpoints. There are many varieties and gradations of the evolutionary hypothesis, but all join in opposing the Bible story of creation and development. The fact that they must oppose the Bible, shows that they have no claim to the name "Christian".

Evolution does not purport to explain where everything came from; it seeks only to explain the development of matter and of life as it now appears. It blindly closes its eyes to the first Cause, the Creator, and because it does so it is usually atheistic, although some claim to believe in theistic evolution, a theory that God created matter in the beginning and placed an inherent power within matter to develop itself into all forms which we now see: God started the machine and left it to run for and by itself. Evolution is defined by some of its advocates as:

"The teaching that the universe has come into being without the interference of any agency external to itself." "The universe is altogether non-miraculous as to its origin and progress."

All evolutionists agree that the process has continued from the beginning without any breaks or interference from an outside force. Only resident forces have been in operation. This one point shows the impossibility of being a true Christian and a true evolutionist.

A Christian is not merely one who lives decently: many atheists do that, but he is one who believes the Gospel. According to I Corinthians 15:1 to 4, belief in the Gospel demands a belief in the Scriptures, a belief in Christ, and a belief in redemption. Since the evolutionist believes in the unbroken continuity of all things (cf. II Peter 3:4), he must believe that the Scriptures are a product of evolution and not a Divine intervention and revelation; he must believe that Christ was but a product of evolution, the fairest flower of humanity, but not the eternal God manifested in the flesh. The evolutionist cannot believe in redemption, "that Christ died for our sins"; because according to his scheme, man never had a fall, but has been continuously developing from a lower to a higher form. The Bible, the Christ, and Redemption, are all breaks in the continuity of the natural order, and are therefore a refutation of the evolutionary hypothesis. If evolution be true, it must follow of necessity that the Gospel of Christianity is false. Evolution may contain many truths and scientists have doubtlessly amassed many facts, but its interpretation of the facts is at fault, is contrary to the Bible, and of such nature as to make it impossible for a true Christian to embrace its tenets.

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE SINLESS?

CHAS. F. BAKER

Only a moron would argue that anyone could sin with indifference, much less a professing Christian. Sin in the life of a Christian is a more hideous thing than in an unbeliever, because it dishonors Christ and causes others to stumble. Our question, however, is "Is it

possible for a true Christian to sin?” or “Can a Christian finally become sinlessly perfect, incapable of sinning?”

The first question is sufficiently answered by I John 1:8 to 10: “If we (believers) say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” Also I John 2:1: “These things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The Christian may and does sin, and God has made provision for this.

The Bible nowhere teaches that a Christian can become sinlessly perfect. The Christian has two natures which are constantly warring against each other (Galatians 5:17). The old nature is enmity against God and can do nothing but sin (Romans 8:7 and 8; Romans 7:18), and the new cannot commit sin (I John 3:9). It is only as our wills yield to the new nature that our lives can be pleasing to God. But the old man is ever present and is ever a menace. Many a useful servant of the Lord, who has lived a godly, spirit-controlled life, has in his later years fallen a prey to the old nature, the flesh, and has been degraded in sin. Such a one has not lost salvation. He needs not to be re-saved, but to be restored to the power and joy of salvation. Galatians 6:1.

God could have made us automatons, or have removed every possibility of temptation and sin, but that would have been of no glory to Him. He has done something infinitely more glorious. He has manifested His power by making it possible for us to live in the midst of temptation and possibility of sinning, and yet be victoriously delivered from sin. The sixth chapter of Romans gives the secret. Read also I Corinthians 10:4 to 15. God reckoned us to have died unto sin with Christ, and as we walk by faith, reckoning ourselves to have died with Christ, we find ourselves delivered from the power of sin; “for he that is dead is freed from sin.” “How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Those whom the devil has fooled into believing they can no longer commit sin are in just the place he wants them. They are destined to fall prey to their deceitful hearts and to the devices of Satan.

God has provided a salvation which makes it possible for us to live without sinning, but He has not made it impossible for us to sin.

CAN A CHRISTIAN LOSE SALVATION?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

This question suggests another. What could cause the loss of salvation? Since sin is the one thing which plunged man into a lost condition, we must conclude that sin is the only thing that could cause one to be lost after being saved. If sin in the life of the Christian forfeits his salvation, how much sin is required? Only one sin, according to James 2:10, which would put all Christians beyond hope. The doctrine of sin causing the loss of salvation makes salvation to depend upon the good works of the Christian, and salvation by works or merit frustrates the grace of God and invokes the anathema of God (Galatians 2:21; Galatians 1:6 to 9; Galatians 3:1 to 3). If sin may cause the loss of salvation, we cannot “know that we have eternal life” (I John 5:13); we may only hope we have; for we may die with some unknown or un-confessed sin against our account.

Since salvation does not depend upon our works, but upon Christ’s work for us, and since His work for us involved His being made sin for us, and our co-crucifixion with Him the Scripture affirms “that there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus” (Romans 8:1); because all such have been judged and put to death already for their sins in the Person of a Substitute. Our new life in Christ Jesus is beyond condemnation and hence is never ending (see Romans 6:6 to 10).

Much confusion exists upon this subject: because Christians either undispensationally apply Scripture (The Old Testament and Gospel records are under the law; but we are not under the law, but under grace, Romans 6:14; Romans 10:4). Or they apply to the believer those passages which describe unregenerate teachers of the last days (I Timothy 4:1 and 2; II Peter 2:1 to 22, etc.). Or they take to themselves the warnings God has given to religious, self-righteous people who see no need of trusting Christ alone for salvation, (Galatians 5:2 to 4; Hebrews 6:4 to 6; 10:26, etc.). Or they confuse passages which show that Christian profession is justified before man by its fruits, with those which deal with justification before God by faith (James 2:14 to 26; Romans 4:1 to 5, etc.). Or they fail to distinguish between rewards which are given for good works, and salvation which is not of works but of grace (I Corinthians 3:11 to 15; Ephesians 2:8 and 9, etc.). Or they fail to see the difference between God’s chastisement of His child which is for his good, and His judgment of wrath upon the unbeliever (I Corinthians 5:1 to 5; I Corinthians 11:31 and 32; Hebrews 12:3 to 11; Acts 12:20 to 23; etc.).

Our salvation can never be lost for the following reasons: It is a free gift (Romans 6:23). It is eternal, therefore unending (same). The Christian has been forgiven ALL trespasses (Colossians 2:13). He has already been put to death for his sins (Galatians 2:20). He has the promise of God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:16 to 20; John 10:28; II Timothy 1:12; Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:1 to 39, etc.). The Holy Spirit, among other works, has sealed him until the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13). It is Christ’s present work as Intercessor and Advocate to keep us saved (Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1, etc.). And because God has expressly told us so (I John 5:13).

DID PETER HAVE POWER TO REMIT SINS?

“WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE REMIT”

When Christ in His resurrection body, appeared to Peter and the other apostles He said, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained,” John 20:23. About thirty years later Peter wrote these words: “Yea, all of you be subject one to another”. “Neither being lords over God’s heritage.” I Peter 5:5 and 3.

When Judas fell by transgression, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, Matthias was chosen to take his place, and to keep the number of apostles “twelve”. Acts 1:20 to 26. But when one of the Twelve, James, died about nine years later, no successor was chosen. Acts 12:2. There is no Scriptural authority for apostolic succession except when Matthias succeeded Judas.

About seventeen years after Peter preached on the day of Pentecost the Lord, by revelation, sent Paul to Jerusalem to tell Peter and the other apostles of his (Paul’s) apostolic authority, and wherein his ministry differed from Peter’s. Galatians 2:1, 7, 8 and 9. In the same chapter (Galatians 2:11 to 14) Paul tells how he had to condemn Peter for his duplicity. Peter believed in Paul’s apostolic authority, but Paul’s message and program were disliked by Peter’s Jewish friends. Peter was Christ’s messenger to the Jews with the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. Read what Peter said in II Peter 3:16, about Paul’s message, “hard to be understood.”

Immediately following Paul's "revelation" visit to Jerusalem, the record of Peter's ministry ceases. In the last half of Acts Peter's name is never mentioned. Peter never preached a message outside of the land of the Jews, the Holy Land, so far as the "Acts" Record is concerned. According to that same Record, Peter preached to only one company of Gentiles. No other one of the Twelve preached to a Gentile, as far as the "Acts" Record is concerned. In the last half of Acts Paul is mentioned more than one hundred times. In that sense Paul succeeded Peter as the chief human actor in the Book of Acts. The last half of "Acts" never mentions any one except as that one has dealings with Paul.

The revelations concerning the one true Church of Christ, as His Body, was not given to Peter, but to Paul. If we would understand "Church" truth, that is "Body truth, we must learn it from Paul and not from Peter. Peter never used the word "Body", and never claimed any revelation from Christ concerning "the Body". Paul made that distinctive claim. Colossians 1:24 to 28; Ephesians 3:1 to 9. There is one Body and one Head. Ephesians 4:4 to 7. Christ in Heaven is the one Head. There is not one suggestion as to a pope, cardinal, or archbishop in the Body of Christ. No holy robes or candlesticks, incense, altars, ashes, interceding saints, and no confessionals.

DOES CHRIST HEAL SICKNESS TODAY?

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

Some Christians are sure that He does and as a proof quote Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Of course the context of this passage has nothing to do with healing, but that doesn't trouble most people. The foolishness of basing such claim upon this verse comes from not understanding that the "yesterday" takes us back, not merely to Christ's life on earth, but back into the eternity past before there was ever earth or man. The "yesterday" must cover the whole past of the human race, and the experience of that past would refute many of the present healing ideas.

Jesus healed ALL while He was on earth, but did He heal all before He came to earth? If He didn't, why didn't He, if He is the same? Hasn't God always seen man's suffering? Hasn't His heart always been moved with compassion? Why did He wait for 4000 years before sending Christ into the world?

Every Christian must admit that Christ has the power to heal: for all power in heaven and in earth was given unto Him. Every Christian should admit that since Christ is the Creator, by Whom all things consist or hold together (Colossians 1:16 and 17), that all life, health, and restoration is in the final analysis within the realm of His providence; although we must realize that in His providence He uses a multitude of means to accomplish His ends. It must also be admitted that Scripture teaches that Satan has superhuman power, so that he has ability to do miracles of such nature as to deceive God's elect, if that were possible (Matthew 24:24; II Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:3, 12 to 14), which fact no doubt accounts for the healing performed by many unchristian cults.

There is something better than knowing that Christ heals sickness; it is that God has promised to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, to make all

things work together for good to them that love God, and to give us freely all things with Christ. These promises include everything that we have need of, and surely if God sees that we have need of health in a greater degree than we now possess it, He will see to it that our need is supplied. The trouble with us is that we do not use the supplies which He gives us. He has supplied us with knowledge, common sense, and many means for caring for our bodies, but many Christians will throw away all of these supplies, and then after living contrary to laws of nature so that their bodies become sick, they demand that God heal them miraculously. It is much the same as if God had given a man health and work so that he could earn money with which to buy his daily bread, and then throwing these away should demand that since God had promised to supply his daily bread, it was now up to God to rain food down from heaven, and then feed it to them.

Surely Christ can and does heal His people when it is in accordance with His will, but don't suppose that He is going to miraculously intervene when you have despised the many means which He has already supplied for that purpose.

WILL THE CHURCH BE IN THE TRIBULATION?

HOW ABOUT A PARTIAL RAPTURE

I believe the experience of Lot and the destruction of Sodom will give us light on this question.

“But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Luke 17:29 and 30.

“Thus shall it be when the Son of man is revealed.” “Thus”—“Thus shall it be.” The revelation of the Son of man refers here to His coming in judgment. According to the Word of God the Nation Israel is headed for judgment, the great tribulation. Jeremiah 30:5 to 11. Israel is going to be saved out of that time of sorrow. At the same time the wrath of the Lord will fall in great judgment upon the nations.

Christ is not called the “Son of man” in His relation to the Church, which is His Body. He is the “Son of man” to Israel and as judge of the nation. It is as the “Son of man” that He is coming to deliver Israel. It is as the “Son of man” that He is coming to sit, as Judge, on the throne of His glory. Matthew 25:31 to 46. Inasmuch as the experience of Lot in Sodom is linked up with the coming of the Son of man in judgment, we should carefully study the experience of Lot.

In II Peter we have some statements concerning the coming of Christ in judgment, and the escape of Lot from Sodom. Scoffers are to arise and ask, “Where is the promise of His coming?” II Peter 3:4. But this Epistle declares that He is coming in judgment. Now as to Lot and Sodom: “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) II Peter 2:6 to 9. “Delivered—just Lot”. Why did God deliver just Lot? From these verses in II Peter we would certainly conclude that Lot was a consecrated saint of God; such a true, noble faithful man of God that God could not think of sending judgment upon Sodom until

that spiritual saint had been delivered. Well, God did deliver just Lot before His work of destruction.

And, therefore, we must conclude from II Peter 2:7 and Luke 17:29 and 30 that all of the just Lots, every sinner, saved by grace, who is alive at the coming of the Lord, shall be delivered before God's judgment falls upon the world.

But now let us read about this man who is called "just Lot"; the man with the righteous soul.

We quote several verses from Genesis:

"And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous." "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake" . . . "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground." "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it;" "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt." Genesis 18:20 and 23 and 32— Genesis 19:1 and 13— Genesis 19:22 and 24 and 29.

God remembered Abraham and saved Lot. Later on, God remembered Abraham and saved Israel. Exodus 2:24 and 25. God again remembered and saved Israel. Deuteronomy 9:27. God will once again remember Abraham and deliver Israel. Romans 11:25 to 29.

Lot was delivered before Abram became Abraham. Neither Abram nor Lot were Israelites. They were Gentiles. God had preached the Gospel to Abram and Abram believed and was declared righteous. Galatians 3:6 to 8. Now note Galatians 3:8: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (Gentiles) through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

The Scripture foresaw our justification by faith at the time Abram was declared righteous by faith. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His", II Timothy 2:19.

God's servants said to Lot, "I cannot do anything until thou be come thither." Thus shall it be when the Son of man is revealed.

Now note the question in Luke 18:8: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" The Greek calls for the negative answer. Therefore the Son of man will not come until all the people of faith have been delivered. This is verified in II Thessalonians 1:7 to 11. The Lord shall be revealed to take vengeance upon the wicked "when He shall (shall have) come to be glorified in His saints, in that day." (II Thessalonians 1:10).

The very purpose of the tribulation is to punish disobedient unbelievers; not members of the Body of Christ:

If members of the Body of Christ are to go into the tribulation death would certainly be the believer's blessed hope; anything to escape that awful day of wrath. Why should such wrath of God be visited upon those who are without condemnation in Christ?

Lot was anything but a victorious consecrated saint and if God could not and did not destroy Sodom until Lot was free from that awful judgment, (and thus shall it be when the Son of

man is revealed), surely we have no Scriptural authority to support the teaching that there is to be a partial rapture of God's saints; that is, that only Spirit-filled saints are to be taken to glory when Christ comes for His Church.

The parable of the ten virgins does not refer to the members of the Body of Christ but to Israel.

DO GENTILES HAVE A PENTECOST IN THE DAY OF GRACE?

DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT FALL UPON BELIEVERS TODAY?

In Acts 2:1 we read, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come" The disciples of the Lord were filled with the Holy Spirit; and then they preached to devout Jews from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5. In Acts 2:39, Peter, declared that the promise was to those who were "afar off". This had no reference to Gentiles who were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel. The "afar off" people of Acts 2:39 are the "afar off" people of Daniel 9:7. This is the language of Daniel 9:7: "unto all Israel, near and afar off through all the countries whither thou hast driven them."

When the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, in Acts 2:16 and 17, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." This is a prophecy from Joel 2:28. In Joel 2:27, God declares that He was in the midst of Israel.

In Joel 2:23 the Holy Spirit was speaking to the children of Zion, promising "the former and the latter rain." The Christian who confuses Israel with the Body of Christ greatly errs, not knowing the Scriptures. The modern Pentecostalists claim that the former rain spoke of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the latter rain is now being fulfilled in the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Pentecostalists of today who are trying to imitate, in their tarrying meetings and tongues, the experience of the Galileans on the day of Pentecost.

In Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:24 to 27, we learn that God's movement, in this period of grace among the Gentiles, was at the time that Joel wrote, the unrevealed mystery. Joel knew nothing of this "dispensation of grace", which was revealed to Paul, the special ambassador to the Gentiles. Joel wrote concerning "Israel" and "Israel's last days". Paul, in Ephesians and Colossians, wrote concerning the Body of Christ, which Body is to be removed from earth to heaven before Israel's last days. During the first ten chapters of Acts we have somewhat of a pattern program of that which God will do with the children, Israel; during the coming kingdom age. After the Nation Israel, in the Tribulation, is saved by the coming of Messiah, the Gentiles will seek the Lord through them. Then there will be the out-pouring of the Spirit, in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, and also the fulfillment of all that Prophecy.

In Acts 11:15, Peter declared that the Holy Spirit fell on the members of Cornelius' household, about 7 years after the day of Pentecost.

Now let us remember that Paul, about twelve times, emphasized the fact that he was the Apostle to the Gentiles. In I Corinthians 11:1 he tells the Gentiles to follow him as he followed the Lord Jesus. Paul never speaks of the Holy Spirit falling upon any member of the Body of Christ. Surely, he never endorsed for saved Gentiles, a "tarrying meeting" for Holy Spirit baptism. In Galatians 3:2 to 4, he condemns, in no uncertain language, praying or working for

the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 3:14 and Ephesians 1:13, Paul gives out the information that the Holy Spirit is received when the sinner believes the Gospel. According to II Corinthians 1:20 to 22, every Christian has the Holy Spirit within. There is no Scriptural authority for teaching that a member of the Body of Christ receives the Holy Spirit after he is saved.

Thus we see that no member of the Body of Christ is expected to tarry for the Holy Spirit; to seek for the baptism of the Spirit; or to expect a Pentecost. Pentecost was a Jewish feast day, 50 days after the feast of the Firstfruits; and has nothing to do with this dispensation of grace, which was unknown to the writer of Leviticus or any prophet of Israel. Read Leviticus 23:5 to 18. Perhaps some of the "Fundamentalist" preachers, who have the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery to begin on the Jewish feast day, Pentecost, are responsible for the fanaticism of the Pentecostalists. Is it any wonder that other preachers today are teaching that the rapture of the Body of Christ will take place on another feast day, the feast of the Trumpets? If the Body began on a Jewish feast day why not have it raptured on a Jewish feast day?

Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:24 to 27 give the answer to the Pentecostal delusion.

WHAT IS THE OUT-RESURRECTION

BY CHAS. F. BAKER

The literal translation of Philippians 3:11 is: "If by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection, that out of dead ones." The word used for resurrection in this verse is the usual one but with a prefix, meaning "out of". This form of the word is used only in this verse, so that it is not possible to compare its usage elsewhere to learn more of its meaning. Many interpretations have been given to it, such as saying that Paul was striving for salvation, although he had been preaching for over twenty years that no one could be saved by striving (Ephesians 2:8 and 9), or that a new body of Christ had begun after the Acts and Paul was striving to get into that body so he could share in its distinctive resurrection which is called the "outresurrection".

Whatever it is, it must be admitted that it is to be attained by some act or merit on the part of the believer. It could not be, therefore, the resurrection hope which Paul and the Philippians were entertaining; for they could not miss that if they wanted to. It is hard to believe that God has set aside His grace in the Body of Christ, making membership or resurrection to depend upon works. It could not have been merely an individual problem which faced the Apostle: for he told them all to be followers of himself (vs. 17). If Paul was still striving and pressing on for this distinction, how many of us could have any assurance that we had attained it?

In the light of Hebrews 11:35 certain Hebrew saints are to receive "a better resurrection," which does not refer to a separate and distinct resurrection, but to a special place of honor in the first resurrection. Since the "out-resurrection" is spoken of as a prize to be attained by some who are raised "out of the dead ones", it seems only logical that Paul used this special word to designate the quality of resurrection which some members of the Body will enjoy. This view at least places this passage in harmony with every other one in the Pauline Epistle on rewards, grace, membership in the Body, and resurrection. The Philippians were not told to expect a different resurrection; they were told to continue to look for the Saviour out of heaven (Philippians 3:20), exactly as the Thessalonians had done earlier (I Thessalonians 1:10).

Thus the "upward calling" (Philippians 3:14) which is the hope of the Body of Christ, has a prize attached to it, and this prize is the "out-resurrection", a special place of honor and award

for those who win the prize. This prize is not to be attained merely by giving assent to some particular brand of dispensationalism, as some are teaching, but it is won by suffering the loss of all things for Christ's sake, by experiencing the power of His resurrection, and by being conformed to His death. May God show us the true value of that prize, and may we with Paul press toward that goal for the prize which is connected with that upward calling.

WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE?

Whatever difficulty we may meet in endeavoring to answer this question, let us believe the Word of God, which clearly states that Adam was the first man and Eve the first woman. I Corinthians 15:45 and 47. Adam was God's original creature, the only man (except the Lord Jesus) created but not begotten by a human progenitor. Inasmuch as every member of the human race descended from Adam, Cain's wife descended from Adam.

Let us carefully note the confession from Abraham, concerning his wife, Sarah, more than 2000 years after Cain married: "And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife." Genesis 20:12. Here, we observe that in accordance with the will of God, Abraham married the daughter of his own father.

In Genesis 4:25 and 26, we find the record of the birth of Seth. Adam and Eve were 130 years old when Seth was born unto them. Genesis 5:3. Thus we see that Seth was born more than 100 years after Cain and Abel were born. Seth was born to take the place of Abel, whom Cain slew. How about the sons and daughters born to Adam and Eve during the years between the birth of Abel and the birth of Seth? You say, there is no record. In Genesis 3:14 and 15, God had promised a Divine human Redeemer. He would come from Seth. The Divine Record is concerned with tracing the seed of the woman and is by no means a complete history of the human race.

Now let us again read concerning Abraham, in Genesis 24:1 and Genesis 25:1 and 2 and learn that after Sarah died, Abraham, an old man, stricken in age, married Keturah and unto them were born six children within a comparatively few years. How many sons and daughters could have been born to Adam and Eve between the birth of Abel and the birth of Seth, if one child were born every three years? About forty? How many were born? No human knows. But certainly, before the flood, when men lived for several centuries, God had to sanction the marriage of relatives, if men were to be fruitful and multiply. Inasmuch as the Bible does not mention the date of Cain's marriage, we see that he could have married even a niece. Undoubtedly he married his sister.

But does not the Bible state that Cain went to the land of Nod to marry? This is what the Bible says: "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch."