

BIBLE STUDY FOR BEREANS

OCTOBER, 1936

GOD'S BOOK—GOD'S SON—GOD'S CREATION

The first Book of the sixty-six Books of the Bible (meaning the Books) is "Genesis", and the last Book is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." The human author of Genesis was Moses. Moses died at the age of 120, about 1450 B.C. The Apostle John, the human author of Revelation, died about 100 A.D. Thus we see that the human author of the last Book of the Bible died 1550 years after the death of the human author of the first Book of the Bible. John died about 4100 years after Adam was driven from Eden. Moses also wrote Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The five Books of Moses are called the "Pentateuch". John wrote also the Gospel and the three Epistles bearing his name.

Intelligent students of the Word of God recognize the principle of progressive revelation from Genesis to Revelation. Since the close of the Revelation, spiritually speaking, anything that is true is not new; and anything new is not true.

The Holy Spirit dictated as Moses and John wrote; and He also dictated as all the other human instruments spoke or wrote the holy Scriptures. "All Scripture is given by inspiration (is God-breathed)." II Timothy 3:16. Holy men of God spake as they were moved (along) by the Holy Spirit." II Peter 1:21

In studying the structure of the Scriptures we should distinguish between original inspiration and confirmation; and between inspiration, confirmation and revelation "God, Who at sundry time and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds." Hebrews 1:1 and 2.

This is a very interesting statement as to how the Holy Scripture were given to man by Divine inspiration, and we shall deal with this verse in another chapter. But beginning with the first verse in the Bible we should remember this statement and mark the divers manners by which God spake from heaven. Surely the Bible is the Word of God.

The Book of Genesis is the Book of beginnings. "In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1. "Elohim" is the plural of the Hebrew "Eloah". "Elohim" said, "Let US make man in OUR image". Genesis 1:26. We can get some light on the great mystery by reading "IN the beginning" of John 1:1 to 10 and I John 1:1 to 3. Concerning Christ, it is recorded in Colossians 1:16 and 17, "He is before all things and by Him all things consist." "All things were made by Him and for Him." This is that same truth that is recorded in John 1:1 to 10. Christ had glory with the Father before the world was. John 17:5. He was in the bosom of the Father. John 1:18. "Without Christ was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. Thus we can begin to understand why Elohim is used in Genesis 1:1, and why Christ said to His disciples, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father". John 14:9. "I and My Father are One." John 10:30.

ADAM—CHRIST

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Hebrews 11:3 and 4. About the creation: “for thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.” Isaiah 45:18.

Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. Consider the interesting statement concerning the first man created compared to the Man Christ Jesus. “The first man is of the earth earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven.” I Corinthians 15:43 and 47. Thus we see that the Bible is the story of the first man and the second Man and that the history of the human race is the history of these two men. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Romans 5:12. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ”. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Romans 5:17 and 18.

In the last verse of the third chapter of Luke we learn that the Second Man, through the Virgin Mary, descended from the first man. Study also two other interesting verses. Hebrews 2:14: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And Philippians 2:5 and 6, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Thus we see that the Second Man, when in the form of God, 4,000 years before “He became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), created the first man in His own image and then 4,000 years later became the Seed of the woman, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, in fulfillment of Genesis 3:14 and 15. “In Adam” in God’s Word, means under the curse. “Under the Law” (given by Moses) means under the curse. Galatians 3:10. “In Christ” means delivered, free, from the curse of both “the law of sin and death” and the law given at Sinai, through Moses, 2500 years after Adam sinned. Galatians 3:13 and Romans 7:4 and 8:1 and 2. Colossians 2:12 to 14. “In Adam” means, “in the flesh”, “dead in sins”, condemned already. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God”. “In Christ” means “in the Spirit”; “dead to sin” free from condemnation.

GOD’S CREATION

With the close of Genesis 1, we find God’s perfect work of creation. God delights to be worshipped as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

We quote a number of Scriptures concerning the creation:

Isaiah 42:5:

“THUS SAITH GOD THE LORD, HE THAT CREATED THE HEAVENS, AND STRETCHED THEM OUT; HE THAT SPREAD FORTH THE EARTH, AND THAT WHICH COMETH OUT OF IT; HE THAT GIVETH BREATH UNTO THE PEOPLE UPON IT, AND SPIRIT TO THEM THAT WALK THEREIN.”

Isaiah 45:8:

“DROP DOWN, YE HEAVENS, FROM ABOVE, AND LET THE SKIES POUR DOWN RIGHTEOUSNESS: LET THE EARTH OPEN AND LET THEM BRING FORTH

SALVATION. AND LET RIGHTEOUSNESS SPRING UP TOGETHER; I THE LORD HAVE CREATED IT.”

Isaiah 45:12:

“I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.”

Isaiah 45:18:

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord and there is none else.”

Colossians 1:15 and 16:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him.”

Revelation 10:6:

“And sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, Who created heaven, and the things that therein are and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.”

Revelation 14:7:

“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

God in His Divine Revelation, the Bible, sets Himself forth as Creator, King, Judge and Saviour; declares that He created by Christ, that He reigns by Christ, that all judgment is committed to Christ and that Christ is His one and only Saviour. John 1:10. John 5:22. Acts 4:12.

LIFE AND DEATH IN GENESIS

The Book of Genesis begins with a man in the image of God in paradise

“So God created man in His Own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them.” Genesis 1:27.

“And the Lord God took the man, and put Him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Genesis 2:15.

Genesis closes with Joseph in Egypt in a coffin: “So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt” Genesis 50:26.

Revelation closes with redeemed humanity in a new paradise.

Revelation 21:16:

“And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and breadth and the height of it are equal.”

Revelation 22:1 to 5:

“And he showed me a pure river of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need

no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

As we have a new creation in Genesis 1, with its paradise, so we have a new creation in Revelation 22, with its paradise. The original creation of Genesis 1:1 may have been ages before the creation of Genesis 1:3 to 31: The chaos of Genesis 1:2 becomes the “cosmos” of Genesis 2:1 by the re-creation of Genesis 1:3 to 31.

GENESIS 4000 B.C. TO 1690 B.C.

Genesis, the Book of beginnings, covers two periods.

1. From the Creation and Fall of Adam—to the Flood.
2. From the Flood—to the Death of Joseph in Egypt.

The first period was about 1656 years. This we may learn by studying Genesis 4:26 to Genesis 5:32; and this statement recorded in Genesis 7:11: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” Note Genesis Chapter Five. Adam lived 930 years. Adam lived until after the birth of his great-great-great-great-great grandson, Lamech, and Lamech was the father of Noah. Lamech was born 874 A.H. (year of man) and died in 1651 A.H. (about five years before the flood). Lamech’s father, Methusaleh, was born 687 A.H. and died 1656 A.H., or about 2344 B.C. Methusaleh, at the age of 969, died the year of the flood. When Methusaleh died Noah was 600 years old. Noah lived 350 years after the flood. Genesis 9:28. Noah died about 1994 B.C. Noah’s son, Shem, died about 1842 B.C. Genesis 11:10.

Abram, the son of Terah, was born about 1992 B.C., or about two years after Noah died. Abraham was 175 years old when he died, about 1817 B.C. Genesis 25:7. At the time of the death of Shem (about 1842 B.C.) Abraham was about 150 years old. All these facts may be found in Genesis, principally chapters 5 and 11.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis cover the history of man from the creation of Adam to the call of Abraham, or about 2,083 years.

Abram was called in uncircumcision, when 75 years old. He was circumcised 24 years later when 99 years old. Genesis 12:1 to Genesis 15:6, and Genesis 17. Romans 4:9 to 12.

ABRAHAM—ISRAEL—THE PROMISED NATION

Beginning with Genesis 12:1, and closing with Malachi 4:4, covering a period of about 1500 years, we learn that 39 chapters of Genesis and all of the other 38 Old Testament Books deal with Abraham and his “great nation”. Genesis 12:2. Gentiles are mentioned only as they have dealings with “the great nation”. The great nation is Israel. Read what the Scriptures say about the great nation.

Exodus 19:6:

“And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 4:6 to 8:

“Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

Psalms 147:20:

“He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.”

I Chronicles 17:21:

“And what one nation in the earth is like Thy People Israel, whom God went to redeem to be His Own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed out of Egypt.”

The same Hebrew word is translated “heathen”, “gentile”, and “nations”. From Genesis 12:1 to Malachi 4:4 we have the history of “THE NATION”, and “the nations”. In Jeremiah 30:11 we read that God will make a full end of all nations, except Israel. The word “though” is not found in the original text. Israel can neither be assimilated nor annihilated by the other nations. Numbers 23:9—Jeremiah 30:11.

Jacob’s name was changed to “Israel” in Genesis 32:28. Israel’s twelve sons were: Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, Benjamin. Genesis 35:23 to 26. From these came the twelve tribes, “all the house of Israel”. Acts 2:36.

Isaac, the son of Abraham, was the father of Israel. Therefore the twelve sons of Israel were the great grandsons of Abraham. The “Jews” (literally “Judahites”), came from Judah, the fourth son of Israel. The religion of the Jews began at Mount Sinai 430 years after Abram was declared righteous by faith. Galatians 3:17. Abel, Seth, Enoch and Noah had no religion. Circumcision was the seal of the righteousness which Abraham received in uncircumcision.

Read Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 9:10. “Jews” in the Bible means the natural seed of Judah and the word also means all Israelites and proselytes who took the Jews’ religion. In many instances the word “Jew” refers to religion rather than to the race. Even Gentiles became Jews. Esther 8:17. There is here no reference to nationality, but to religion.

In no sense of the word was Abram a Jew, or an Israelite. Neither was Isaac. Inasmuch as the Old Covenant was made between Jehovah and Israel at Mount Sinai, about 1492 B.C. (Exodus 19:8 and Exodus 20:1 to 16), there is no sense, in which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel) and his twelve sons were Old Testament saints or Old Covenant saints. They all died before the Law was added to the promise God made to Abraham 430 years before the law entered. Galatians 3:19. Romans 5:20. The Book of Genesis is not the record of the Old Covenant which God made with the House of Israel. Jeremiah 31:31 to 37. And most assuredly the redeemed men who lived before the flood were neither Israelites nor Jews. They were not, in any sense Old Testament saints.

When Joseph died in Egypt he was not under the law.

The Old Testament begins in Exodus. “The law entered that the offense might abound”, Romans 5:20. When? The law was given by Moses.

Let us study the Scriptures as God has marked off that first period, “from Adam to Moses”, and then subdivide that period of 2,500 years as God has. Romans 5:12 to 14.

Romans 5:13 and 14:

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.”

Romans 5:20:

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

Galatians 3:19: “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Hebrews 9:10:

“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.”

HOW GOD SPAKE

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds.” Hebrews 1:1 and 2. Ever since God placed Adam in Eden He has been speaking to man. “He spake by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21. Now His Word is complete and He speaks to man in all of the 66 Books of the Bible, His own inspired Word.

Concerning the revelation of God’s will and word to Israel, through Moses, the record is, “God spake all these words” Exodus 20:1. In Genesis 8:15 and 9:8, we read, “And God spake unto Noah.” In Genesis 31:11 we learn that God spake unto Jacob by His angel, in a dream. In Genesis 46:2 God spake unto Israel in a vision. In all of the Scriptures here mentioned we read, “God spake unto Moses”: Exodus 6:2, 6:10, 6:13, 7:8, 7:19, 8:1, 8:5, 12:1, 13:1, 14:1, 16:11, 25:1, 30:11, 30:17, 31:1, 31:12, 33:11, 40:1. More than 75 times do we find this same statement in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy,

Times without number the Lord spoke to David. The Lord spoke to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and by and through all of His holy prophets. “The Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” I Peter 1:11.

From God’s first question in Eden, “Adam, where art thou?” until Malachi 4:4 God was speaking in divers manners, generally by the prophets after the close of Genesis.

Paul wrote to Timothy that he had known the Scriptures (Israel’s Scriptures) from childhood and that they were able to make him wise unto salvation. II Timothy 3:15. Out of the same Old Scriptures Paul reasoned that Jesus was the Christ. Acts 17:5 and Acts 18:3 to 5. The Lord Jesus on earth told the rulers of Israel that the Old Scriptures testified of Him. John 5:39. He showed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection in person and in all the Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi. Luke 24:21 to 43.

GOD SPOKE IN HIS SON

While on earth, the Lord Jesus said, “the words that I speak unto thee are not mine but His that sent Me.” John 14:10; John 12:50; John 6:63; John 7:17; John 8:28 and 38. The Father from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him.” Matthew 17:5. Truly, “in the last time God hath spoken in His Son.” Hebrews 2:2. When the Son spake His Father’s words, He said to His disciples:

“For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” Matthew 13:17.

John 16:12 and 13:

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak and He will shew you things to come.”

By reading Romans 15:8 we shall see that the Lord Jesus on earth was confirming promises mentioned in Israel’s Scriptures.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. Romans 15:8. Read Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 2:17; 2:23; 4:14; 5:18; 8:17; 12:12, 13:14; 13:35; 21:4; 24:34; 26:54 and 56; 27:9; 27:35; Luke 2:43; 4:21; John 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12 and 13; 18:9 and 32; 19:24; 19:28; 19:36. We find in everyone of these Scriptures the word “fulfilled”, teaching us that every step in the birth, life’s program, betrayal, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was: “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” But we have observed in Matthew 13:17, that Christ added truth never spoken to Israel’s prophets. And in John 16:12 and 13, we learn that Christ did not reveal all of His Father’s will while He was “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Acts 2:22.

Hear these words of Christ on earth. “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Matthew 15:24.

After Christ’s death and resurrection we learn that Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas, in fulfillment of Scriptures. Acts 1:21 to 26. On the day of Pentecost Scriptures were fulfilled. Acts 2:16. Read Acts 3:21 to 24. The ministry and program of the Twelve was in fulfillment of Israel’s Scriptures. Acts 15:14 to 16: “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written.”

When Paul preached to the Bereans, they searched the Scriptures. Acts 17:11. Hear Paul’s own testimony as to truth received by him. Hear what Christ said to Saul in Acts 26:16 and 17:

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.”

We see that the Word of God came by inspiration; then it was given to servants of the Lord to confirm truth already spoken and then the divers manners included the revelations which the risen Christ gave to Paul. We must be careful to distinguish between the “Confirmation” ministry of the Twelve and the “Revelation” ministry of Paul. Hear Paul’s testimony:

Galatians 1:11 to 17:

“BUT I CERTIFY YOU BRETHREN, THAT THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED OF ME IS NOT AFTER MAN. FOR I NEITHER RECEIVED IT OF MAN NEITHER WAS I TAUGHT IT, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. FOR YE HAVE HEARD OF MY CONVERSATION IN TIME PAST IN THE JEWS’ RELIGION, HOW THAT BEYOND MEASURE I PERSECUTED THE CHURCH OF GOD, AND WASTED IT:

AND PROFITED IN THE JEWS' RELIGION ABOVE MANY MY EQUALS IN MINE OWN NATION. BEING MORE EXCEEDINGLY ZEALOUS OF THE TRADITIONS OF MY FATHERS. BUT WHEN IT PLEASED GOD, WHO SEPARATED ME FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB, AND CALLED ME BY HIS GRACE, TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME, THAT I MIGHT PREACH HIM AMONG THE HEATHEN; IMMEDIATELY I CONFERRED NOT WITH FLESH AND BLOOD; NEITHER WENT I UP TO JERUSALEM TO THEM WHICH WERE APOSTLES BEFORE ME; BUT I WENT INTO ARABIA, AND RETURNED AGAIN UNTO DAMASCUS."

II Corinthians 12:3 to 5:

"AND I KNEW SUCH A MAN, (WHETHER IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY, I CANNOT TELL: GOD KNOWETH;) HOW THAT HE WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE, AND HEARD UNSPEAKABLE WORDS, WHICH IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR A MAN TO UTTER. OF SUCH AN ONE WILL I GLORY: YET OF MYSELF I WILL NOT GLORY, BUT IN MINE INFIRMITIES."

Ephesians 3:1 to 5:

"FOR THIS CAUSE I, PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES, IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD, WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD: HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY; (AS I WROTE AFORE IN FEW WORDS, WHEREBY, WHEN YE READ, YE MAY UNDERSTAND MY KNOWLEDGE IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST) WHICH IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN UNTO THE SONS OF MEN, AS IT IS NOW REVEALED UNTO HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS BY THE SPIRIT."

Colossians 1:25 and 26:

"WHEREOF I AM MADE A MINISTER, ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, TO FULFIL THE WORD OF GOD; EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS."

Ephesians 3:8 and 9:

"UNTO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS, IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST."

Carefully compare Acts 17:11 with Ephesians 3:8. That which Paul was preaching in Acts 17:11, was searched in the Jewish Scriptures. The "unsearchable riches" of Ephesians 3:8 were not recorded in the Jewish Scriptures. "Unsearchable" is literally "not-to-be tracked". This truth was God's own secret; never revealed to Israel. It was reserved for Paul's special ministry to the Gentiles. Read Romans 11:13, I Timothy 1:11 and I Timothy 2:5 to 8, II Timothy 1:9 to 11.

Romans 16:25 and 26. "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

MATTHEW—MARK—LUKE—JOHN

These four men were chosen to be the Lord's human instruments to give us the record of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. These four Records have been incorrectly called "The Four Gospels." The Gospel is found in each of the four Books, but God's purpose was not to present four Gospels. So far as we of today are concerned, there is but one Gospel, namely, "The Gospel of the grace of God." "The Gospel of the glory of the blessed God," "the Gospel of our salvation." "the Gospel of reconciliation." Acts 20:24. I Timothy 1:11; Ephesians 1:13; II Corinthians 5:18 to 21. This Gospel of grace and glory was given by special revelation from heaven to the Apostle Paul. "Committed to my trust." I Timothy 1:12. "By revelation to me." Ephesians 3:1 to 3. Galatians 1:17. It is true that it is recorded in John 1:17 that by Jesus Christ came grace and truth. But the reign of grace (unmixed) began after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It required the death and resurrection of Christ to introduce the reign of grace, to blot out the law, to inaugurate the ministry of reconciliation. As some servant of the Lord has said, if Matthew, Mark, Luke and John present us with four Gospels, Paul was given a fifth Gospel and that is our Gospel for today. Read carefully Acts 20:24. And then note the agreement of Peter and Paul as to their different respective ministries. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Matthew was one of the twelve apostles. He was called also "Levi". He was a tax-gatherer when Christ met him in Capernaum. Matthew 9:9. It is generally believed that he wrote within seven years after the death of Christ; not later than 40 A.D. This was before Cornelius, the first Gentile, received the message from Peter. It is taught by many that Matthew wrote to the Jews presenting Christ as King of the Jews; corresponding to the face of the lion in Ezekiel's vision. Ezekiel 1:10 At any rate Matthew opens with Christ the Son of David the Son of Abraham. More than 30 times in Matthew is found the expression "the Kingdom of Heaven".

Mark was a nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). Mark left Paul and Barnabas when they took their first missionary journey. Acts 12:44. Because of the frequent use of the words, "forthwith", "immediately" in Mark's Record, some have taught that it was dictated to Mark by Peter.

John Mark departed from Paul and Barnabas. This caused the breaking up of Paul and Barnabas. But later on Mark became profitable to Paul. II Timothy 4. Mark was not one of The Twelve. It is taught by many that Mark wrote to the Romans concerning Christ, the Servant of God, corresponding to the ox in the vision of Ezekiel 1:10.

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called "The synoptic Gospels". Mark has been called an abbreviated Matthew. More than 80 per cent of the facts recorded in John's Gospel are not found in the Synoptics.

Luke was the beloved physician, Colossians 4:14. He joined Paul about 51 A.D. Acts 16:11. He was a faithful, uncompromising, fearless friend of Paul, even to the end. He travelled with Paul from Jerusalem to Rome and ministered to Paul in the Roman prison. "Luke, the beloved physician and Demas greet you." Colossians 4:14. "Only Luke is with me." II Timothy 4:11. Luke was not one of the Twelve. It has been claimed by many that he was a Gentile, the only Gentile to write a line of the Bible. If he was born a Gentile undoubtedly he was a proselyte to the Jews' religion before he became a disciple of Christ. However, Acts 16 may prove that he was a Jew. It is interesting to read his introduction in Luke 1:1 to 3. Here we see how he differed from the other writers. It is claimed by many that he wrote to the Greeks, setting forth Christ as the Son of man, corresponding to the third face of Ezekiel 1:10, the face of a man. The "we"

mentioned in the Book of Acts beginning with Acts 16:11 will tell the story of Luke's travels with Paul. Luke was the human author of Acts.

John was the partner of Simon. They were fishermen. They labored together to catch fish. Then they became partners in the task of fishing for men. John was the brother of James. James was beheaded about 45 A.D. Acts 11:12. These brothers were called "Boanerges", the sons of thunder. Mark 3:17. John was one of the Twelve. John wrote also three Epistles and "The Revelation". It is thought that he died about 100 A.D. and that he wrote his Gospel more than twelve years after Jerusalem was destroyed, more than fifteen years after Paul died. When he received the message of Revelation he was on the Isle of Patmos and it is known that he was not on that Isle while the temple was standing in Jerusalem. John's Gospel is sometimes called the Universal Gospel and also a message to Christians setting forth Christ as the eternal Son of God from heaven, corresponding to the eagle of the vision of Ezekiel 1:10.

Some brethren fix the date of John's Books, including The Revelation, before the death of Paul, because of the words of Paul in Colossians 1:25 and 26, "to fulfill (complete) the Word of God" with the mystery. This is only a guess.

MATTHEW—JOHN

A comparative study of Matthew and John is very interesting and instructive, although sometimes puzzling. Matthew opens with the Holy Spirit conception and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus. John begins "In the beginning," "the Word was God," "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." John 1:1 to 14. In both Records it is the same Christ the Son of God, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of Mary. But more than 85 per cent of the facts of Matthew are missing in John and more than 85 per cent of the facts in John are not to be found in Matthew. In fact, there are more than seventeen full chapters in John's Record containing facts not found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. More than 80 per cent of the facts recorded in Matthew are found in Mark and Luke. Therefore, Matthew Mark and Luke have been called "The Synoptic Gospels." But Luke presents a number of parables, found only in that Record.

Perhaps the first verse, and the first question of Matthew, together with the oft recurring expression found in Matthew "The kingdom of the heavens", furnish the key to Matthew. "The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Matthew 1:1. The question: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him." Matthew 2:2. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17. "And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Matthew 10:6 and 7.

Frequently, in Matthew, we find an expression like this: "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto." The mysteries of the kingdom are told in the seven parables of Matthew 13. We have a number of kingdom parables throughout this Book. The two main divisions of Matthew are definitely marked; Matthew 4:17, "From that time forth" and Matthew 6:21, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew". In the first division we have the kingdom of heaven presented to Israel, with the kingdom signs foretold in Isaiah 35:4 to 6, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." These credentials of the King are found in Matthew 8 to 11. "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Acts 2:22. The signs of Jesus of

Nazareth were to approve (show Him off) to Israel, that He was the promised Messiah and King. Christ foretold His rejection in the pardonable and unpardonable sins of Matthew 12:31 to 35, and then He presented the seven kingdom parables of Matthew 13. Later on He specifically instructed His apostles not to tell Israel that He was Messiah. Matthew 16:20. Therefore, His “sign” credentials were withdrawn. The one sign left, “Jonah in the big fish”, was the sign of His death and resurrection. Water baptism also was that Christ might be manifested to Israel. John 1:31. There is no record of any water baptisms in Luke after the statement of Christ’s death baptism in Luke 12:49 to 51.

In the first division of Matthew we find the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, the “Our Father” kingdom prayer; and Israel very much under the Law. Their righteousness was to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees and many things they were to do to get into the kingdom of heaven, beginning with baptism unto repentance for remission of sins. They continued under the law, even under the authority of the law and those in the seat of Moses, to the end. Matthew 23:1 to 3. Christ was made under, the law. Galatians 4:4. The sin of Matthew was the transgression of the law. The plain words of Christ in Matthew 15:24 should not be misunderstood by any one: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” In Matthew none could go to Gentiles or into any city of the Samaritans. Matthew 10:5. “Grace” is displayed in Matthew; but the word is not found. Very little is said of faith in Matthew. The emphasis is placed upon the “Great Faith” of two Gentiles. Matthew 8:1 to 11 and Matthew 15:20 to 27. In the faith and experience of these two Gentiles we have two dispensational lessons, “the children (Israel) must first be filled,” and “the children (Israel) will be cast into outer darkness.” Read Matthew 8:1 to 13 and Mark 7:28 to 28. Compare the great faith of two Gentiles who received physical healing for loved ones with the great love that brought salvation to Gentiles. Ephesians 2:4.

In Matthew we note that Christ’s rejection is not emphasized in the first division of the Book and that the second division of the Book opens with His rejection and approaching death and resurrection. Matthew 16:21 to 25. We also observe that this rejection, death and resurrection was neither understood nor favourably received by the Twelve. It was hid from them and they could not understand it. Luke 18:31 to 34. Matthew 16:21 to 25. Read the “O fools” of Luke 24:21 to 31.

THE KINGDOM IN JOHN.

Now by way of contrast: the expression “the kingdom of the heavens” is not once mentioned in John’s Gospel. The Kingdom parables and mysteries are not therein revealed or mentioned. There is no “Sermon on the Mount”, no “Golden Rule,” in John. There is the Lord’s Prayer in John 17:1 to 25, but so different from the “Our Father” prayer of Matthew, the kingdom prayer, not mentioned in John. There are seven miracles recorded in John’s Gospel, five of which are not found in Matthew, Mark and Luke: namely, changing water into wine, the healing of the nobleman’s son, the impotent man at Bethesda, the blind man in Siloam, and Lazarus four days dead. All of these miracles found in John’s message only, are highly significant, giving, us a key to John’s message. In John’s message the sinner is impotent, “cannot see”, and is dead in trespasses and sins. The sin question is concerning the Son; “Unbelievers are condemned already”. John 3:18. The Holy Spirit is to convict of sin concerning faith in Christ. John 16:8. Unlike Matthew, John’s message begins with “grace and truth by Jesus Christ.” John 1:14. Christ is rejected in the first chapter of John. John 1:10 to 12. In the first

chapter He is the Lamb of God and is from before the foundation of the world.” The two Gentiles of “Great Faith” are not mentioned in John’s Gospel but the word “believe” is found just 100 times. In John, Christ must needs go through Samaria. Israel’s ultimate darkness is also declared in John’s Record. John 12:34 to 44.

ISRAEL OR WHOSOEVER

We have the problem of reconciling Matthew 15:24 with John 1:11 and 12 and John 3:16. “But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:11 and 12. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

The apostles had a splendid opportunity to preach a “whosoever” message to a Gentile, but instead said “Lord, send her away” Matthew 15:23. They were obeying Matthew 10:5.

When we read Acts 11:19 and learn that even seven years after the death of Christ the disciples were preaching the Word to none but Jews only and Acts 10:28 that it was still not lawful for the Jews to go to the Gentiles, we know that the “whosoever” of John 3:16 must be studied in the light of the “no difference” in Romans 10:12 and the “whosoever” of Romans 10:13. The “whosoever” of John 3:16 is not difficult for us to understand now when the Jew has no preference, no advantage, no prior right or claim in any way. Surely God’s message in this day of grace is “whosoever”! Any kind of a sinner in any part of the world, in any kind of circumstances is included in the “whosoever”. Salvation is altogether by grace and may be received as God’s free gift in any place and at any time. But while Christ was an earth He was sent, and His apostles were sent, to none but the lost sheep of the house of Israel. His Twelve were very specifically instructed to “go not into the way of the Gentiles.” Matthew 10:5 to 7 and 15:24. The Lord Himself may have ministered to Gentiles while on earth, but according to the Divine Record, He ministered to one Gentile man, of great faith, in the land, because he had built a synagogue for the Jews; and one Gentile woman, of great faith, out of the land, because she took her place in subjection to Israel as a little dog under the table. Luke 8:1 to 11; Mark 7:29 to 36.

CHILDREN OR DOGS

To the Greek woman He said, “Let the children (Israel) first be filled.” Mark 7:27 to 30. To the Gentile man He said, “The children (Israel) will be cast into outer darkness”. Matthew 8:10 to 12. We open the Book of Acts with the “filling of the children first”. This order continued throughout Acts, “to the Jew first”. Acts 3:26 and 13:46; Romans 1:16. The Book of Acts closes with the “children cast into outer darkness”. Acts 28:25 to 28. Romans 11:6 to 9 and 11:15.

In Acts 10:28 it was unlawful for the Twelve to go to the Gentiles. Christ made it lawful. Cornelius was granted repentance unto life; and the Twelve rejoiced. Acts 11:18. In Acts 22:17 to 21 we have Paul’s testimony. Christ sent him far hence, out of Jerusalem to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Romans 11:11. In Acts 14:24, the door of faith is reported opened to the Gentiles. After Acts 28:25 to 28, (the children cast into outer darkness), the Gentiles were no longer subject to Israel in any way, as God’s order was no longer “to the Jew first”. The “whoso-

ever” of John 3:16 can be understood this side of Acts 11:18 and Acts 14:27 when Gentiles were given the message of salvation. In Romans 10:12 and 13 the difference between Jews and Greeks has disappeared. Matthew 15:21 to 26.

This brings us again to the question, “did Christ, while on earth, say the words of John 3:16, or were they given to John to write years after the door of salvation was opened to the Gentiles?”

TWO PARACLETES

We have another question, “if the Holy Spirit had to convict of the sin of rejecting Christ, the sin of unbelief, and if the Holy Spirit was not yet while Christ was here among men, how were Gentiles convicted while Christ was on earth? John 7:39 and 16:7. They were not yet preached to. Matthew 10:5 to 8. Christ declared the expediency of His return to heaven, that the Holy Spirit might descend from heaven for His work. And as Christ is presented as the rejected One and the Lamb of God in the very first chapter of John, it does seem that in the message of grace and eternal life, in John’s Gospel, Christ must be looked upon as having already accomplished our redemption by His finished work on the cross.

We have undoubtedly observed that it is in John’s Gospel where we have the twenty “I AM’s” of Christ. “I am”—“I am” twenty times in the Divine Record. “If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins”. John 8:24. We have likewise observed that the work of God, for man, in John, is to believe on Christ. John 5:29. In this message of grace and eternal life Christ is doing the work. John 5:17. “I must work”. John 4:34. “I have finished the work”. John 17:4. “It is finished!” John 19:30. The sin question in John’s Gospel is the “Son question”. In this message Christ was sent not to condemn. John 3:18. In this message of grace Christ, as Advocate (Paraclete), is likewise keeping His own unto the end; reminding us of Philippians 1:6: “being confident of this very thing, that He Which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.” We see then that the two Paracletes of John, chapters 13 to 16, tell in advance the work that the risen, glorified Christ was to do, what He is now doing for believers. In John 13:1 to 13, Christ, loving His own unto the end and washing their feet, pictures what Christ is now doing as Paraclete in heaven for saints, in agreement with I John 2:1 and 2. In John 17:1 to 26, Christ, interceding for His own, is the picture of Hebrews 7:25, Christ ever living to make intercession for saints, to guarantee their uttermost salvation. In between Chapters 13 and 17, in John’s Gospel, we have another Paraclete (Comforter), Whom the world cannot receive. John 14:17. The Comforter of Chapters 14 and 16 is the Holy Spirit, by Whom the believer is within sealed during his waiting days while the risen Lord is appearing for us in heaven in the presence of God. Read Ephesians 1:13 and Ephesians 4:30 and Hebrews 9:24. Two Divine Paracletes work with out ceasing or interruption for the children of God. The One teaches us of the Other. And they both make intercessions for the saints, according to the will of God. Romans 8:26 and 27 and Hebrews 7:25. These are splendid verses for deep meditation and spiritual study.

Romans 8:26 and 27:

“LIKEWISE THE SPIRIT ALSO HELPETH OUR INFIRMITIES: FOR WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT: BUT THE SPIRIT ITSELF MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US WITH GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED. AND HE THAT SEARCHETH THE HEARTS KNOWETH WHAT IS THE MIND OF THE

SPIRIT, BECAUSE HE MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR THE SAINTS ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD”

Hebrews 7:25:

“WHEREFORE HE IS ABLE ALSO TO SAVE THEM TO THE UTTERMOST THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM, SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.”

The word “uttermost” is two Greek words, “pan” meaning “all”, and from “teleo” meaning “perfect”, “finished”. The words of Christ on the cross “it is finished”, is the same Greek word, “teleo”—“uttermost”—literally, “all perfect” or “all to the end”—The same word is used in Philippians 1:6, “perform. Here “teleo” is used with “epi”—the word means literally “further perfect or finish”.

THE BOOK OF ACTS—PETER AND PAUL

THE BOOK OF ACTS—PETER AND PAUL

As we enter into the study of the Book of Acts, let us keep in mind the two statements spoken in connection with the two Gentiles of great faith who received blessings of healing from Him.

1. Let the children first be filled.” Mark 7:32.

2. “The children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness.” Matthew 8:12.

The children of the kingdom are called, in Acts 3:25, “the children of the covenant.” These are Israel. So, as we begin the study of Acts we shall see Israel “first being filled” before the Gentiles are called to salvation. As we close the Book of Acts we shall see the children of the kingdom cast into outer darkness and the period of special Divine favor for Gentiles ushered in. What a transformation! The “generation of vipers”, the “serpents” of Matthew 23:33 to 39 now become “children”. Compare the terrible judgment of Matthew 23:33 to 39 with the tenderness and mercy of Acts 3:16 to 26 and you will appreciate the efficacy of Christ’s prayer on the cross.

Acts 3:25 and 26:

“YE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE PROPHETS, AND OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD MADE WITH OUR FATHERS, SAYING UNTO ABRAHAM: AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE KINDREDS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED. UNTO YOU FIRST GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SON JESUS, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU, IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM HIS INIQUITIES.”

Acts 13:45 and 46:

“BUT WHEN THE JEWS SAW THE MULTITUDES, THEY WERE FILLED WITH ENVY, AND SPAKE AGAINST THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BY PAUL, CONTRADICTING AND BLASPHEMING. THEN PAUL AND BARNABAS WAXED BOLD, AND SAID, IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD FIRST HAVE BEEN SPOKEN TO YOU: BUT SEEING YE PUT IT FROM YOU, AND JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES.”

Acts 18:5 and 6:

“AND WHEN SILAS AND TIMOTHEUS WERE COME FROM MACEDONIA, PAUL WAS PRESSED IN THE SPIRIT, AND TESTIFIED TO THE JEWS THAT JESUS

WAS CHRIST. AND WHEN THEY OPPOSED THEMSELVES AND BLASPHEMED, HE SHOOK HIS RAIMENT AND SAID UNTO THEM, YOUR BLOOD BE UPON YOUR OWN HEADS, I AM CLEAN: FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO TO THE GENTILES.”

Romans 11:7 and 8:

“WHAT THEN? ISRAEL HATH NOT OBTAINED THAT WHICH HE SEEKETH FOR; BUT THE ELECTION HATH OBTAINED IT, AND THE REST WERE BLINDED. (ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN, GOD HATH GIVEN THEM THE SPIRIT OF SLUMBER, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR;) UNTO THIS DAY.”

Romans 11:11:

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

Romans 11:25 and 26:

“FOR I WOULD NOT BRETHREN, THAT YE SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YE SHOULD BE WISE IN YOUR OWN CONCEITS; THAT BLINDNESS IN PART IS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL, UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED: AS IT IS WRITTEN, THERE SHALL COME OUT OF SION THE DELIVERER, AND SHALL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

Now these most important words, Acts 28:28, “the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.” The salvation had, for some years, been sent unto the Gentiles. But these words mark a change.

The first seven chapters of Acts record the acts of the Twelve and their co-labourers, Philip, Stephen and others. In these seven chapters we have the testimony of these apostles and disciples to Israel: “For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.” Galatians 2:8.

During the first seven or eight years, after the advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it was unlawful for the Jews to go to the Gentiles. Acts 10:28; Acts 5:31. When Stephen was stoned the disciples went throughout the country surrounding Jerusalem and preached the Word “to none but Jews only.” Acts 8:1 and Acts 11:19. The Twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. The Lord appeared to Paul in Jerusalem and commanded him to get out of Jerusalem. Acts 22:17 and 18. Peter and the Eleven remained in Jerusalem. Paul got out of Jerusalem. Read carefully and study diligently Galatians 2:7 to 9.

Hear Peter’s testimony concerning his ministry to the household of Cornelius, the first Gentile to whom God granted repentance unto life.

Acts 15:7:

“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that THE GENTILES BY MY MOUTH should hear the words of the gospel, and believe.”

By carefully reading the tenth chapter of Acts we may learn of the Lord’s vision given to Peter authorizing him to preach to Cornelius. Let us note what kind of a Gentile Cornelius was:

Acts 10:2 to 4:

“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him he

was afraid, and said, What is it Lord? And He said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.”

Acts 10:22:

“And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all nations of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.”

Now let us keep in mind several commissions which Christ gave to the Twelve, including the so-called Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20. Read Matthew 10:5 to 8 and Mark 16:15 to 18.

Acts 10:34 to 39:

“Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all). That word I say ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem Whom they slew and hanged on a tree.”

So far as the saving message of God is concerned, all sinners who have been saved during all ages have been saved on the basis of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. But by comparing Acts 2:22 with Acts 10:38, we may learn that Peter, to whom was committed the gospel of the circumcision, preached concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His mighty deeds on earth. Peter declared that Cornelius’ fear of God and righteous works made him acceptable for the salvation message. The Lord’s heavenly messenger had already told Cornelius that his prayers and alms had gone up to heaven as a memorial.

No intelligent, earnest student of the Scriptures will deny that the Twelve were the custodians of “the gospel of the kingdom” and “the gospel of the circumcision”. But that to them was not committed “the dispensation of the grace of God”, given by revelation to Paul. Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

RECONCILIATION—GRACE

Now by way of contrast we quote from Paul’s message:

II Corinthians 5:16”

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.”

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.”

Romans 3:24:

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

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.”

Ephesians 3:1 and 2”

“FOR THIS CAUSE I, PAUL, THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES, IF YE HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN ME TO YOU-WARD.”

Thus we see that there was a difference between the grace extended by the Lord in the ministry of Peter with his kingdom of heaven keys and the dispensation of grace committed by the Lord to Paul “for you Gentiles.”

Ephesians 2:8 to 10:

“FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST, FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WALK IN THEM.”

Now compare the of the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter, in Matthew 16:16 to 19, with the “dispensation of the mystery”, “the unsearchable riches of Christ for Gentiles”, to Paul, Ephesians 3:8 and 9.

ISRAEL’S SIN—CHRIST’S PRAYER

Let us look into Israel’s pardonable sin, Israel’s unpardonable sin, and Christ’s prayer on the cross.

Matthew 12:30 to 32:

“HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME; AND HE THAT GATHERETH NOT WITH ME SCATTERETH ABROAD. WHEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, ALL MANNER OF SIN AND BLASPHEMY SHALL BE FORGIVEN UNTO MEN; BUT THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN UNTO MEN. AND WHOSOEVER SPEAKETH A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN, IT SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM; BUT WHOSOEVER SPEAKETH AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM NEITHER IN THIS WORLD, NEITHER IN THE AGE TO COME.”

Luke 23:34:

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment and lots”.

ISRAEL’S UNPARDONABLE SIN

When Israel sinned against the Son of man, the sin was pardonable for three reasons

1. “They did it through ignorance. Acts 3:14 to 16.
2. “Christ’s death was foreordained by God. Acts 3:17 and 18.
3. “Christ on the cross prayed for Israel’s pardon.” Luke 23:34.

During the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit was witnessing that God had made the Jesus Whom Israel had crucified both Lord and Christ, and that God had exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel.

Acts 2:36:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 5:28 to 32:

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom God hath given them that obey Him.”

In the Book of Acts Israel was committing the unpardonable sin, blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Acts 7:51 to 58:

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have, not your fathers. persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.”

Acts 13:44 to 46:

“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles:”

Acts 18:5 and 6:

“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”

The election from Israel hath obtained. The rest were blinded. Romans 11:6 and 7. Protected and preserved by the Covenant-keeping God Israel remained in Jerusalem, with their temple during the “Acts” period. The children were first filled and then the children were cast into outer darkness. And then “the dispensation of the mystery” of Ephesians 3:9 was made known.

We see that Paul was a watchman of the house of Israel in Acts 13 to 20. This was in accordance with Ezekiel 3:16 to 20.

During the “Acts” period Paul had a two-fold ministry and there was a two-fold Divine order. I Corinthians 9:20 to 24 and Acts 21:24 and 25. Paul was an able minister of the New Covenant. II Corinthians 3:6. But at the same time he preached the gospel of glory and the ministry of reconciliation. II Corinthians 4:4 and II Corinthians 5:16 to 21.

PROPHECY FULFILLED

While Paul had a two-fold ministry he had plenty of signs. II Corinthians 12:12; Romans 15:14 to 21. When Paul wrote as the prisoner of the Lord Jesus concerning the dispensation of the Mystery signs had ceased. I Timothy 5:23, II Timothy 4:20.

But now concerning the fulfillment of prophecies in the Book of Acts.

Acts 1:14 to 17:

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren, And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about one hundred and twenty), Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.”

Acts 1:21 to 27:

“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barnabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, (from which Judas by transgression fell) that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

Who went to his own place, Judas or Matthias ?

Whether or not Judas went to some peculiar place of his own. Matthias went to his place vacated by Judas.

Acts 2:16:

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel

Acts 3:24:

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

Acts 15:13 to 17:

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophet: as it is written. After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things.”

Concerning the “Unsearchable Riches for the Gentiles” and “the “Dispensation of the Mystery”, hid in God when Israel’s prophets wrote, the Twelve knew nothing and therefore preached nothing. But Paul had a ministry of confirmation and revelation.

PAUL’S CONFIRMATION MINISTRY

Acts 9:19 and 22:

“Then was Paul, certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. But Saul increased

the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.”

Acts 17:1 to 3:

“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, Whom I preach unto you is Christ.”

Acts 18:3 to 5:

“And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent makers. And he reasoned in the synagogues every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ (Messiah).”

Acts 26:22:

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”

Acts 28:16, 17, 20 and 23:

“And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. And it came to pass that after three days Paul CALLED THE CHIEF OF THE JEWS together, and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you because that for THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I am bound with this chain. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging: to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both OUT OF THE LAW OF MOSES, AND OUT OF THE PROPHETS, FROM MORNING TILL EVENING.”

We again call your attention to the fact that Paul, in his “Acts” ministry, was telling Israel that Jesus was the Christ. This was contrary to the plain instructions of the command of Christ in Matthew 16:20. Therefore we must believe that Christ’s orders of Matthew 16:20 were rescinded and that His prayer on the cross meant the beginning anew with Israel another chance for Israel. Read again Acts 2:36 and Acts 3:19 to 21. Compare Matthew 16:20 with Acts 17:3 and Acts 18:5.

However, we should not try to prove, by Acts 26:22, the “none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come,” that Paul preached in his oral and written ministry during the “Acts” period nothing to the Gentiles except that which was foretold in Israel’s Old Covenant Scriptures. The words “revelation” and “mystery” disprove such a theory. Galatians 1:11 to 20, 1 Corinthians 2:6 to 8, 1 Corinthians 15:51 to 53, Romans 16:25 to 26.

NONE OTHER THINGS

“Witnessing both to small and great, saying NONE OTHER THINGS than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come! That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22 and 23.

As has been said so many times, the preacher who separates his text from its context has only a pretext. The expression, NONE OTHER THINGS is qualified in Acts 26:23. The prophets foretold the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul declared this to be the gospel and to be “according to the Scriptures”. I Corinthians 15:1 to 4. Christ rebuked His disciples for not knowing and believing this. Luke 24:26 to 48.

There are more than twenty-five prophecies concerning Gentile salvation. It was both known and told by Israel’s prophets that salvation was to be sent to the Gentiles, but the saved Gentiles were to be in subjection to Israel who would be enjoying their kingdom blessing.

But the facts of the “oneness” in Christ and the “oneness” of the Body, as described in Galatians 3:26 to 28 and Romans 12:3 to 8, the ministry of reconciliation of II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 and Romans 5:12 to 20, and the program with the gospel of the uncircumcision before the restoration of the Kingdom (Galatians 1:11 to 17 and Galatians 2:1 to 9) and the death baptism into Christ and identified with Him, as described in Romans 6:1 to 15, were wholly unknown to Israel’s prophets and not one word of these facts was revealed by any one of them.

The teaching of a kingdom gospel or a “kingdom of heaven” program. for Gentiles in Paul’s messages to the Galatians or in Romans or II Corinthians cannot be proved by the Scriptures. But can be refuted by rightly dividing the Word of truth.

To teach that Gentiles, saved during the “Acts” period, were in an Israelitish kingdom church with Israel’s kingdom hope, saved by a kingdom gospel, is error.

Philippians 1:3 to 6 should be sufficient evidence, conclusive proof, that the church established in Philippi, by Paul’s preaching in Acts 16:11 to 31, and the Body of Christ at Philippi during Paul’s imprisonment were one and the same Body. The Body did not change. The change was the spiritual program and the administration.

Carefully compare Romans 12:1 to 11 and Romans 6:1 to 11, with. Ephesians 4:1 to 7 and Ephesians 3:6 and Ephesians 5:29 to 32, and surely you will not believe that the Body of Romans was a different Body from the Body of Ephesians. And surely it is not sound exegesis to declare that the spiritual program of the Body of Romans was a sample of the coming kingdom program. This is being taught by some brethren today. This means that in the coming kingdom age, Jews and Gentiles will be members of the same Body, members of one another; that they will be baptized into one Body and into Christ by a Divine baptism not made with hands. Surely the one death baptism of Romans 6:3 is the one death baptism of Ephesians 4:5. This means there must be in the coming kingdom age a Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles, to send salvation to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy.

PAUL’S REVELATION MINISTRY

Galatians 1:11 to 18:

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but

I 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.”

II Corinthians 12:2, 4 and 7:

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth); How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

Galatians 2:1, 2 and 6 to 9:

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also, And I WENT UP BY REVELATION, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION WAS COMMITTED UNTO ME, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter: (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles: And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and THEY UNTO THE CIRCUMCISION.”

Ephesians 3:1 to 11:

“For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Colossians 1:24 to 28:

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church. Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

I Corinthians 2:6 to 8:

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

I Corinthians 15:51 and 52:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Romans 11:25 to 33:

“For I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O 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 MYSTERY—STRONG MEAT

There is more than one mystery mentioned in Paul’s Epistles and there is more than one aspect to “the mystery” mentioned twelve times in Paul’s Prison Epistles. Paul was a faithful steward of God’s mysteries before he reached Rome. I Corinthians 4:1 to 5.

We cannot fix the exact date of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it must have been about the time Paul wrote concerning Israel and the mystery in Romans 11:25 to 33. But perhaps few Christians have appreciated the dispensational change, the progressive revelation, suggested in Hebrews 6:1 to 3:

Hebrews 6:1 to 3:

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.”

The careful, spiritual, intelligent student of the Word of truth will distinguish between “the Mystery” and “the dispensation of the Mystery”, and he will observe that there are different phases of the mystery. It is interesting to study the “dispensational” “nows”. II Timothy 1:10, Ephesians 2:13; Ephesians 2:19; Ephesians 3:5; Ephesians 3:10, Colossians 1:26 and I Corinthians 13:13.

We quote I Corinthians 13:13: “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Now Abideth Faith, Hope, Love.

Several years after the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning “faith”, “hope” and “love” he wrote to the Ephesians and in one of the chapters he wrote about “faith”, “hope”

and “love”; only he reversed the order. This is the order in Ephesians 4:3 to 7: “love”, “hope”, and “faith”.

EPHESIANS 4:2 TO 7

“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Some men of God, who have thoroughly examined the ancient manuscripts, have declared that the Epistle to the Ephesians was not addressed to the local assembly at Ephesus; but that the Epistle is general, addressed to the faithful in Christ, in Paul’s day and ours. Whether or not the original manuscripts mentioned Ephesus, we do know that the Epistle is general. It is not only for the faithful in Christ Jesus, but for the deeply spiritual, and contains that which is mentioned in Hebrews 5:14, the strong meat for those who are of full age. It is very interesting in this connection to read these words of Peter;

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” II Peter 3:15 and 16.

In order that the will of God may be done; that the message of His special truth for this age may be declared, received and understood, God wants all saints to pray for an open door where it can be declared, an open mouth that the messenger may speak it forth boldly, and open hearts and minds that it may be received and revealed. Read Colossians 4:3 and 4; Ephesians 6:18 to 20 and Ephesians 1:16 to 18.

In Ephesians 1:17, we are instructed that the Lord desires that all saints may be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened we may know concerning the hope, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance.—In Ephesians 3:9, the Lord desires that all should see the dispensation of the mystery.—In Ephesians 3:18 and 19, He desires that all saints may comprehend the truth of this Epistle and know, even that which passeth knowledge, the love of Christ.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Ephesians, 3:17 to 19.

There are few open doors, open mouths and open hearts for “the mystery”. There are many for the Christian religion, undispensational and fanatical mixtures, strange doctrines, signs of the times; but how few seem to care for Ephesians 3:9.

SIGN-GIFTS AND THE MYSTERY

Just when Christ revealed to Paul “the mystery”, is not stated.

In writing to the Corinthians Paul declared “we speak among them that are perfect the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, that which was hidden, but ordained by God to our glory

before the world.” I Corinthians 2:6 to 8. But here we have but a hint of the sublime and glorious truth later on written to the Ephesians. For, unto the Corinthians he wrote: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal for whereas there is among you envy and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” I Corinthians 3:1 to 3. In contrast to the strong meat for the full age of Hebrews 5:14, the Corinthian saints remind us of Hebrews 5:12 and 13.

Now here is a fact noteworthy and a truth much needed for light and instruction just now when sincere, conscientious, faithful saints are much perplexed as to how many, or how few, of the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 are for the obedience and practice of God’s people today. There must be a God-given, intelligent, Scriptural explanation as to how much of the spiritual program of the Church of God in Corinth, 58 A.D., would the Lord have His faithful saints to include in their spiritual program for today. If we should select one hundred of the outstanding, spiritual preachers of the grace of God of this generation, we would learn by interrogating them, that not one of them exercises the gift of “knowledge”, “healing”, “tongues”, or “miracles”, mentioned in I Corinthians 12:8 to 12. Perhaps some of them would be unable to explain as to when and why the Church lost these gifts: “And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversity of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:28.

Let us read what some of the servants of God have said as to why these sign-gifts are not to be found in the church today, the Scriptural explanation for their elimination

Several Bible teachers have written that the explanation for the absence of the sign-gifts must be found in Dr. Warfield’s church history. His explanation is, that the signs continued until the middle of the second century, waned and passed out. How absurd to be compelled to turn to church history to answer the “healing” and “tongues” fanaticism today. If we cannot answer from the Bible, let’s make no attempt to answer.

The sane Scriptural explanation is found in the article printed in the Moody Monthly of July, 1936, under “Spirit Manifestations”. We quote several statements:

“It is a common error to assume that the rejection and crucifixion of Christ was the historical crisis at which Israel was set aside

“The simple answer is that in this Book, (Acts), we have the divine record of the Pentecostal dispensation, and that transition period was now ended. And here we notice a very significant fact, which surely cannot be said to be accidental; that in the New Testament Books written after the date of Acts 28, there is not a word to be found about Spirit manifestations except as a warning, such as I Timothy 4:1, 2. Therefore, we heartily agree with the late Sir Robert Anderson when he says:

“As there were no miracles in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen, there were none in Rome after that solemn ‘Ichabod’ had been pronounced by the apostle. For the age of miracles was past, with the dispensation to which they belonged; and the apostle himself entered upon the life of faith beneath a silent heaven. Such is the character of this Christian dispensation; for ours is the blessedness of those who have not seen but yet have believed.”

WHY PAUL DID NOT HEAL HIS SICK FRIENDS

“That explains why the Apostle Paul performed no miracle in Rome, did not even speak in tongues. During his first imprisonment in Rome his ‘brother and companion in labor,’

Epaphroditus, lay ill, but he exercised no special gift of healing upon him but simply depended upon the mercy of God to restore him to health again (Philippians 2:25 to 30). When on the journey to his second imprisonment another of his beloved friends became very ill, his brief statement concerning him is “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” (II Timothy 4:20). When Timothy, his “own son in the faith,” was feeling far from well, all the great apostle could do was to send him a simple medical prescription, very likely suggested by Luke who was with him at the time. (I Timothy 5:23). There was a time when a handkerchief carried from his person brought healing and health to the sick (Acts 19:12). But that dispensation was now ended.

“It is only as we understand the dispensational character of the inspired Book which marks the transition period between the gospels and the setting aside of Israel, that we can understand the mystery of the silence of God in this dispensation of grace. All the attributes of God have been fully vindicated and manifested in the person and work of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. God is silent in this age of grace because in the gospel He has spoken His last word of mercy, and the day of wrath is not yet. (Hebrews 1:1 to 3; Hebrews 2:1 to 3). The divine lever for raising men from the dead in this dispensation, is not supernatural signs or gifts of the Spirit, but the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16).

NO LANGUAGE MIRACLES TODAY

“Miracles in the sense in which the present-day gift of tongues cult craves for miracles, have ceased. There have been none since the apostolic age. Not a single case has ever been heard of in which any representative of the modern “Pentecostal” or “tongues” movement has ever been empowered to preach the gospel in a foreign language. The teaching of the New Testament concerning tongues has nothing in common with the facial distortions and unintelligent twitchings and mutterings of the “gift of tongues” movement of today, with the unseemly and often indecent orgies of hysterical laughter and screaming! God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. “Take heed that no man deceive you.”

DR. SCOFIELD

Dr. C. I. Scofield gave his unqualified endorsement of A. E. Bishop’s message entitled “Tongues, Signs, and Visions Not God’s Order for Today”. On page 17 of this booklet is found this statement:

“There is no foundation in the word of God for the prevailing popular doctrine of ‘Divine Healing’.”

On page 19 is found this statement:

“A careful study of the epistles, especially of the latest epistles of Paul, which give the normal course of the church during the present dispensation, would dismount all from their hobbies, eliminate the last vestige of Judaism from their lives.”

On page 15 is found this statement:

“The sign gifts of I Corinthians 12 were operative only during the Book of Acts period.”

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON

We also quote from Sir Robert Anderson’s, “The Silence of God”:

“My contention is that the Acts, as a whole is the record of a temporary and transitional dispensation in which blessing was again offered to the Jew and again rejected.

“As indicated in these pages, it gives the clew to the right understanding of the Acts of the Apostles—A book, which is primarily the record, not, as commonly supposed, of the founding of the Christian church, but of the Apostacy of the favoured nation.”

“It has been further argued that, so far as their evidential force was concerned the ‘Christian Miracles’ were for that favoured people ‘of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.’ And if this be well founded we shall be prepared to find that as long as the kingdom was being preached to Jews, miracles abounded, but that when the gospel appealed to the heathen world, miracles lost their prominence, and soon entirely ceased.”

“There were no miracles seen by Felix, or Festus, or Agrippa; and as already noticed, when Paul stood before Nero the era of miracles had closed. The miracles of Acts 28:8 and 9 are chronologically the last on record, and the late epistles are wholly silent respecting them.”

“The word of God is our guide, and not the experience of fellow-Christians; and when this is ignored the practical consequences are disastrous. The annals of ‘faith healing’, as it is called, are rich in cases of mimetic or hysterical disease, but about the spiritual wreckage due to failures innumerable they are silent.”

“An appeal to ‘the Christian Miracles’, it has been urged, so far from solving the mystery, serves only to intensify it. The purpose of the Miracles, moreover, was to accredit the Messiah to Israel, and not, as generally supposed, to accredit Christianity to the heathen. And therefore, as Scripture plainly indicates, they continued so long as the testimony was addressed to the Jew, but ceased when, the Jew being set aside, the Gospel went out to the Gentile world.”

It is obvious that some Divine change took place even before Ephesians was written, during Paul’s lifetime. Paul wrote Timothy to take a remedy for healing. No servant of the Lord was more faithful than, was Timothy; but surely he was not told to exercise the gift of healing or the gift of miracles, when he himself was instructed to take a remedy for his oft sicknesses. I Timothy 5:23. (II Timothy 4:20). In this connection it is interesting to compare the gifts of I Corinthians 12:28 with this truth of Ephesians 4:11 to 13.

I Corinthians 12:28:

“And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondary prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversity of tongues.”

Ephesians 4:11 to 13:

“And he gave some apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

After Paul wrote I Corinthians, he wrote II Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, I Timothy, Philemon, Philippians, Titus, Colossians and II Timothy. In these Epistles we find the words, “faith”, “hope” and “love” more than one hundred and fifty times. In writing to the Romans he failed to include a number of sign gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11. We quote Romans 12:6 to 10: “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth on teaching: Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth let him do it with simplicity: he that ruleth with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil: cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another: not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”

NO SIGNS IN PRISON EPISTLES

In the last seven Epistles above mentioned we never find one mention of “signs”, “miracles”, “wonders”, “visions”, “tongues”, etc. All saints today are members of the One Body described in Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Ephesians 4:4; and any of the “sign-gifts”, mentioned in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, found among saints today, are counterfeit signs. Not obeying II Timothy 2:15, many are caught in Satan’s trap.

Now, remember, it was in the Church at Corinth in which there were so many unspiritual babes where all these gifts were found. The Corinthian saints were carnal; with so many divisions and faults that Paul could not give unto them deep spiritual truths, such as, he wrote to the Ephesians and Colossians; and yet the Corinthians exercised all the sign-gifts. But today even the most spiritual saints, the faithful in Christ, cannot exercise any of the sign-gifts. Thus this lesson; the exercise of the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 would not today prove that saints are either extra ordinarily faithful or super-spiritual. Again we quote:

I Corinthians 13:8:

“Charity never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

If all of these sign-gifts had not already ceased when Paul wrote Ephesians, they were surely gone at the time the Scriptures were completed. They have no place in the spiritual program with the “dispensation of the Mystery”, mentioned in Ephesians 3:9. This is not Israel’s “sign” age.

ISRAEL’S CRISIS

Surely Acts 28:25 to 28 marked the crisis with Israel. The Book of Acts suddenly closed before the acts of the Apostle Paul were ended. Israel’s standing with God changed and the “administration of the Mystery” began after the Divine judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28. The student who misses the signification of Acts 28:25 to 28 will miss one of the important dispensational keys to intelligent Bible study.

PETER AND PAUL AND THE GENTILES

After the Twelve Tribes of Israel joined in persecuting the disciples of Christ, first stoning Stephen to, death, the scattered disciples driven from Jerusalem, went into neighboring cities and countries “preaching the Word to none but Jews only”. Acts 8:1 and Acts 11:19, The twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem. It is quite significant that the Twelve were broken up right after Peter was sent to preach to the household of Cornelius. Acts 11:1 to 18. After the Twelve rejoiced because God had granted repentance unto life unto the Gentiles, James, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod. No successor was chosen to take the place of James. God was through with the number “twelve,” so far as the apostles were concerned; at least, for the age that has passed. This together with Galatians 2:7 to 9 disproves the Romanists’ foolish theory of apostolic succession.

Strange language do we find in Acts 2:31 to 38, if it is true, as some Christian ministers teach, that the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles began on the day of Pentecost. It is unthinkable that the “dispensation of the mystery”, of Ephesians 3:8 began before the revelation

and beginning of the program of another mystery recorded in 60 A.D. Read this mystery in Romans 11:25 and 26.

The vision by which the Lord sent Peter to the Gentiles, the household of Cornelius, is recorded in Acts 10:9 to 16. In Acts 22:17 to 21 Paul relates how the Lord appeared to him in a vision in the Jerusalem temple and sent him to the Gentiles.

To Peter was committed the gospel of the circumcision. To Paul was committed the gospel of the uncircumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. There is no Scriptural record that Peter, or any other of the Twelve, during the "Acts" period, preached to any Gentiles other than Cornelius and his house. If they did, the Scriptures are silent. There is no record that any of the Twelve preached outside of the land of the Jews during the "Acts" period.

Several years after Peter had preached to Cornelius he mentioned the fact at the Jerusalem Council:

Acts 15:7:

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know that how a good while ago God made choice AMONG US, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

Before Cornelius received from Peter the message whereby he and his house were saved (Acts 11:14) Saul (Paul) was chosen by the Lord to be His witness to Gentiles. Acts 9:15. In Acts 13:12 we have the first record of a Gentile salvation by Paul's message. Note these words in Acts 13:12: "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." Sergius Paulus believed and was saved when he saw the Divine judgment fall upon Bar-Jesus; blindness. Bar-Jesus was the child of Jehovah-Saviour. Israel was the child of Jehovah-Saviour. Israel's blindness brought salvation to Gentiles. Israel's present blindness should cause many Gentiles to do what Sergius Paulus did; believe. Saul became "Paulus" or "Paul". By Paul God sent salvation to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. Gentiles have obtained mercy because of Israel's unbelief. Note in Acts 13:46 why Paul turned to Gentiles. Note result of Paul's first missionary journey.

Acts 14:27:

"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

Note something of Paul's work in general among the Gentiles during the "Acts" period.

Romans 15:15 to 20:

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed. Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

Something of Paul's authority for this ministry is mentioned in Galatians 1:11 and 12 and Galatians 1:15 to 17. He did not confer with flesh and blood. He received no authority from the Twelve. His authority and message were from heaven.

In the light of Peter's claim of Acts 15:7, perhaps you have asked why Peter did not continue with the evangelization of Gentiles. Undoubtedly he preached the gospel of the circumcision to the one company of Gentiles to whom he did preach. Galatians 2:8. So we ask the difference between the gospel of the kingdom,—the gospel of the circumcision—and the gospel of the uncircumcision. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached to Israel concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His mighty deeds and signs. In Acts 10:34 to 39 he preached the same message to Cornelius, adding, "To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins". Acts 10:43.

Some students say that Peter and Paul had the same gospel program; Peter in the land of the Jews and Paul out of that land. But there is quite a contrast between Peter's message to Cornelius concerning God's acceptance of him, because of his righteous works, and Paul's "not by works of righteousness." Titus 3:5, II Timothy 1:9, Romans 3:24 and 25. Paul did not refer to the deeds of Jesus on earth or to the kingdom ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, when he wrote to the Gentiles. But Paul did reason out of the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah, when he preached to Israel. Acts 17:3 and 18:5. "Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Acts 26:22 and Acts 28:23.

JEWS IN ROME

Acts 28:23:

"And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodgings to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening."

Compare Ephesians 3:5 and Ephesians 6:8. In these verses Paul was teaching truth not found in the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets.

In teaching the Jews, in Rome, what the Old Testament prophets said about the kingdom of God, Paul was not teaching them concerning the Body of Ephesians 3:6, concerning which those prophets neither said nor knew one thing.

It is unthinkable that Christ committed to Peter the dispensation of the grace of God that He revealed to Paul. Did He take it away from Peter and give it to Paul? If Peter had it, Galatians 2:9 proves that he was instructed by the Lord to forfeit it. The plain declaration of Galatians 2:7 to 9 has given many students a spiritual insight into the Scriptures to distinguish between the ministries of Peter and Paul. The last record of Peter's ministry, during the "Acts" period, is recorded in Acts 15:7 to 20.

The decision between Peter and Paul, recorded in Galatians 2:7 to 9, was reached about the same time the declaration of Acts 15:13 to 18 was made. Before we look into these important and significant verses in Acts 15, let us notice the statements of Peter and Paul concerning "no difference between Jews and Gentiles."

NO DIFFERENCE.

Acts 15:8 and 9:

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us: And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

Romans 10:12:

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.”

In Ephesians 2:14 we are told that on the cross the Lord broke down the middle-wall between the Jew and the Gentile. In Ephesians 2:17 these words follow: “And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” The Gentiles were afar off. Israel was nigh. The “far off” Gentiles of Ephesians 2:17 are not to be confused with the “far-off” Israelites of Acts 2:39. Read Daniel 9.

Before Christ died on the cross there was a difference. Hear these words of the Lord spoken 1500 years before Christ died on the cross: “But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.” Exodus 11:7.

Now carefully read the conversation which the Lord Jesus on earth had with the Gentile woman. He called the Jews “children” and the Gentiles “dogs”. There is a great difference between “children” and “dogs”, Matthew 15:21 to 27, Mark 7:27. We will better understand the first eleven chapters of Acts, if we note that the Lord, during the first seven or eight years after the death of Christ, did not reveal to the Twelve the fact of the “no difference”. The study of Acts 5:31 and Acts 10:28 should convince any student of this. And even after Acts 11:18 there was a difference between the commission and ministry of the Twelve and those given to Paul. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

In this dispensation of grace, when we are to “make all men, see what is the dispensation of the mystery”, if we obey Ephesians 3:9, if anything, the Gentile now has the advantage over the Jew, because Israel has not only been deprived of the priority rights which they had even to the end of the “Acts” period, when they were set aside, but they are under judgment with little or no spiritual authority. During the “Acts” period God’s order was “to the Jew first”. Romans 1:16, Acts 3:26, Acts 13:46. While God’s order was “to the Jew first”, Paul carried on a two-fold spiritual program: I Corinthians 9:20 to 25. The Twelve, with Paul and Barnabas, adopted and practiced one order, to the Jews that believed, and another, to the Gentiles that believed. Acts 21:18 to 28, Acts 15:13 to 25. It was for this reason that Paul circumcised Timothy; but would not permit Titus to be circumcised. Acts 16:3 and Galatians 2:1 to 5. Compare Paul’s conduct in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 21:26 to 30) and his apologetic ministry to Israel, his seeming compromise in Acts 23:1 to 7, with his uncompromising attitude toward the Jews’ religion and ceremonies after the “Acts” period had come to an end. Read Philippians 3:4 to 10. By this we should know that a most radical change in God’s attitude toward Israel took place between Acts 21:24 and 25 and the time when Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Timothy from the Roman prison. The Bible student who misses the significance of Acts 28:25 to 28 will fail to obey II Timothy 2:15.

PAUL’S GOSPEL TO JEWS.

But then this question, during the Acts period did Paul preach the same gospel to the Jews that he preached to Gentiles? Surely we are agreed that individual sinners have been saved from the days of Adam and Abel down to the present moment, by faith in Christ the Redeemer and on the basis of His Death and resurrection. Hebrews 9:15 gives much light on this. Paul, during the “Acts” period, testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. But surely Romans 3:19 to 28 is sufficient evidence that Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles during the “Acts” period the grace gospel. Ephesians 2:8 should read, “by grace were ye saved. But we should know not

only that the things that accompany salvation have differed under different Divine dispensations; but that the gospel of the kingdom differs from the gospel of the grace of God.

THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD

Note these words of Paul in Acts 20:24: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." This is the first time in Paul's ministry that he used the expression "the gospel of the grace of God." He had been preaching the message of grace; but there is a difference between grace in a Divine message and the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 and 2. There is a difference between grace in a dispensation and the dispensation of grace. Very significant are the words in Acts 20:24: "I might finish my course with joy." Compare these words with II Timothy 4:7, written seven years later, when the time of Paul's death was at hand. "I have finished my course." Although Paul said in Acts 20:27, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God", yet the careful, spiritual, unprejudiced student of the Scriptures will note somewhat of a change in Paul's course after the close of the "Acts" period. Compare the counsel of God, in Hebrews 6:17, in connection with the Abrahamic Covenant, with the eternal purpose of God in Christ, mentioned in connection with the mystery in Ephesians 3:11 and II Timothy 1:9. As Paul changed his course and spiritual program, his former friends changed in their attitude toward him. Compare Acts 19:10 and Acts 20:36 to 38 with II Timothy 1:15; "all they which are in Asia be turned away from me." Paul, the greatest of all men (Christ excepted) because of his faithfulness to his Divine deposit became one of the most unpopular men of God who ever lived.

Note these words of Paul in connection with God's eternal purpose expressed in II Timothy "my deposit", (The Greek of II Timothy 1:12). And these important words in II Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

If we obey II Timothy 2:15 and rightly divide the Word of truth, distinguishing between the counsel of God, during the "Acts" period, and "the dispensation of the Mystery," after the "Acts" period, we may understand Paul's words: "all they that be in Asia are turned away from me"; and moreover we may soon say "all they of the Fundamentalists (except a few) are turned away from us."

But as to "the gospel of the kingdom" and "the gospel of the grace of God", let us remember that there was always the element of grace in God's saving message and great mercy will be bestowed upon Israel when, under the guarantee of God's covenant, they shall inherit the kingdom promised them since the foundation of the world. But even the babe in Christ should see at once the great difference between Matthew 10:5 to 8, Matthew 25:31 to 45, Acts 3:19 to 21, which speak of the gospel of the kingdom, and Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Ephesians 1:3 and 2:6 and Colossians 1:13, which describe the heavenly position and possessions of members of the Body of Christ, saved according to the unmixed message of grace stated in Ephesians 2:8 to 10. There is a difference between grace in a dispensation and "the dispensation of grace."

Although Paul, during the "Acts" period, repeatedly testified to Israel that Jesus was the Messiah, and while the Nation Israel, during that period, was preserved and protected in their land by the covenant-keeping God, yet Paul preached justification by faith, the ministry of reconciliation, righteousness by faith without works, to both Jews and Gentiles during the "Acts"

period. It cannot be proved by the Scriptures that Paul preached the kingdom gospel or presented a kingdom program to Gentiles during the “Acts” period.

THE KINGDOM GOSPEL TO CORNELIUS

Undoubtedly, the message given by Peter to Cornelius, the just, religious Gentile, who loved the Nation Israel and acknowledged his subjection to Israel and their God, was the kingdom gospel. Peter had the keys of the kingdom. Matthew 16:18 to 20. Cornelius was included in God’s kingdom program, as we shall show presently. And most assuredly Paul did not continue with the ministry among Gentiles which Peter began.

In the coming age the Gentiles will join with Israel, in subjection to Israel, with Israel’s religious program. This is the very thing that God did not permit during the “Acts” period. Read Galatians 2:7 to 15 and Acts 15:7 to 19. It was not the grace gospel that changed after the “Acts” closed. Compare Matthew 16:20 with Acts 28:25 to 28. In Matthew 16:20 Christ instructed His messengers to cease the proclamation to Israel that He was their Messiah. But He rescinded the order by His prayer on the cross. Luke 23:34. So they began the Messianic proclamation again on the day of Pentecost and it continued throughout the “Acts” period. Acts 2:36, Acts 9:20, Acts 17:3, Acts 18:5, Acts 18:28, Acts 28:23. But the great change came with the Divine judgment announced in Acts 28:25 to 28; and after that the Lord made known His will concerning the period of special Divine favor upon Gentiles. We quote Ephesians 3:8 and 9.

Ephesians 3:8 and 9:

“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

We do not know when this special truth was revealed to Paul, but the first revelation from Paul concerning it is in Ephesians. Now let us compare Ephesians 3:5 and 6 with Acts 15:13 and 18:

Ephesians 3:5 and 6:

“WHICH IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN UNTO THE SONS OF MEN, AS IT IS NOW REVEALED UNTO HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS BY THE SPIRIT: THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOWHEIRS, AND OF THE SAME BODY, AND PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST BY THE GOSPEL.”

WHAT GENTILE CHURCH IN ACTS 15:14?

Acts 15:13 to 18”

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

In Ephesians 3:5 and 6, let us first emphasize the fact that the expression “same body” is, in the Greek, one word, “Sussomos”, meaning literally “Joint-Body”. Although this word is not

found in the messages of Paul, during the “Acts” period, the same thought is expressed in Galatians 3:28; “ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” “Neither Jew nor Greek.” The “one in Christ Jesus” of Galatians 3:28 is called in Ephesians 2:15, “the ONE NEW MAN”. Galatians and Romans seem to teach that God was making one new man of believing Jews and Gentiles, in the “Acts” period.

Because in the original text the article is missing in I Corinthians 12:13, written during the “Acts” period, and because during the “Acts” period members of the Church of God were called “the children of Abraham”, there are some preachers who teach dogmatically that the Body of I Corinthians 12:13, into which Jews and Gentiles were baptized, was a different Body from the “joint-Body” of Ephesians 3:6. They say that the members of these two different Bodies enjoyed different spheres of blessings; with different hopes and callings, with different destinations. They teach that, inasmuch as Abraham was the father of believing Gentiles as well as of Jews, during the “Acts” period, the children of Abraham had the same hope as father Abraham, who looked for a city; and that city is the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21 and 22. Therefore, the “‘Acts’-period Body” will be in the New Jerusalem; whereas the JointBody of Ephesians 3:6 will appear with Christ in glory. The hope of the first Body, they call “celestial” or “heavenly”; and the hope of the second Body, they call “supercelestial” or “superheavenly”. They teach that the rapture of I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18 and I Corinthians 15:51 to 55 was the hope of the celestial Body of I Corinthians and the “Acts” period, and will be the hope of the tribulation saints; whereas, the “outresurrection” of Philippians 3:10 to 21 is the hope of the Joint Body of the Post-Acts period.

These brethren who separate the “Acts” Body and the “Post-Acts” Body endeavor to prove by the “now” of Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 3:5, that not the slightest suggestion of the Body of Ephesians is in the message of Paul dated before the close of the “Acts” period.

Colossians 1:25 and 26:

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God: Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest to His saints.

Ephesians 3:5:

“Which in other ages was not made know unto the sons of men, as it is NOW revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

The “NOW” of these revelations was after Paul was in prison at Rome, after his “Acts” ministry had ceased

But there are two other “nows” that disprove this theory of two different Bodies. However, they prove different dispensations or administrations for the One Body.

I Corinthians 13:13:

“And NOW abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Philippians 1:5 and 6:

“For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until NOW; Being confident of this very thing, that He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”.

The “now” of I Corinthians 13:13 suggest a changed spiritual program for the same Body. This program was to go on, without signs, under “the dispensation of the mystery.” Ephesians 3:8 and 9. The teachers of “two bodies”, have the problem of transferring from the first Body to the second Body, all believers who were saved before the close of Acts, but who lived after the close of the “Acts” period. Of course, this would mean that those members who

died between 45 A.D. and 62 A.D. (or Acts 28:25 to 31) will not be in the same heaven as the believers who lived before the “Acts” closed but died after Paul made known the revelation of the Body of Ephesians.

Now all of this is disproved by the “three days”, of Philippians 1:5 and 6 :

1. The “first day”;
2. “Now”; the day Paul wrote to Philippi, which epistle was from the Roman prison.
3. “Until the day of Jesus Christ.”

This day of Christ is the same day for which the Corinthians waited. I Corinthians 1:7 and 8. The same Philippians who were saved under Paul’s preaching at Philippi, in the year 43 A.D. (Acts 16:16 to 31), were in the year 64 A.D., when Paul wrote Philippians, in the very same Body and still waiting for the same coming of Christ. The Philippian saints living when Paul wrote to them had not been transferred from one Body to another later Body. This is proved all through Philippians. We must learn that the Body is one thing and the dispensation of the mystery another thing.

But other teachers who oppose the truth concerning the “signless dispensation” of the mystery, the changed spiritual program after the close of the “Acts” period, endeavor to use the little word “as” in Ephesians 3:5 to prove comparative light on the truth of the mystery; that is, that the Old Testament prophets did know and write about the Body of Christ and the Mystery; but their knowledge was quite limited compared with the revelation which Christ gave to and through Paul. Hence the words, “as it is now revealed” in Ephesians 3:5. But the plain statements of Ephesians 3:8 and 9 and Colossians 1:25 to 27 refute this argument. Paul’s revelations and mysteries are mentioned in Galatians 1:11 to 17, II Corinthians 12:2 to 5; Romans 11:25; Romans 16: 25 and 26 and in I Corinthians 15:51. In I Corinthians 2:6 to 8 we learn that Paul had received the revelation from the Lord concerning the truth, designated “the mystery”, truth which he called in II Timothy 1:12 “my deposit” (Greek text). Just how much Paul knew but did not reveal to others before the close of the “Acts” period, we have no way of proving. The risen Lord may have restrained Paul from revealing to saints, in his ministry during the “Acts” period, the high and glorious truth revealed in Ephesians and Colossians, but the “nows” of these Epistles give us no positive proof as to when Paul received the revelation.

But now to compare Ephesians 3:5 and 6 with Acts 15:13 to 18. At first glance we should note this difference: the truth of Ephesians 3:1 to 11 was unknown to the Old Testament prophets and the truth of Acts was known to the Old Testament prophets. Therefore, we should conclude that they refer to different Divine movements.

The key to Acts 15:13 to 18 is these words in verse 14, “to this agree the words of the prophets.” Here we find a quotation from Amos 9:11 to 15. Now let us carefully compare Amos 9:11 to 15 with Acts 15:13 to 18, as this is most important truth for the study of God’s people today; not only in the present-day controversy about Postmillennialism and Premillennialism, but in the controversy between “Dispensationalists” and Premillennarians who differ as to whether or not Peter and Paul carried on the same Divine spiritual program during the “Acts” period.

Let us compare the prophecy of Amos with the declaration of James

Amos 9:11 to 15:

“In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed, and the mountains shall drop sweet

wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”

Acts 15:13 to 18:

“AND AFTER THEY HAD HELD THEIR PEACE, JAMES ANSWERED, SAYING, MEN AND BRETHREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME: SIMEON HATH DECLARED HOW GOD AT THE FIRST DID VISIT THE GENTILES, TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME. AND TO THIS AGREE THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS; AS IT IS WRITTEN, AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN, AND I WILL BUILD AGAIN THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, WHICH IS FALLEN DOWN; AND I WILL BUILD AGAIN THE RUINS THEREOF, AND I WILL SET IT UP: THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES, UPON WHOM MY NAME IS CALLED, SAITH THE LORD, WHO DOETH ALL THESE THINGS, KNOWN UNTO GOD ARE ALL HIS WORKS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD.”

Did not Amos foretell that God would visit the Gentiles and take out a people for His name? What meaneth “after this” or “after these things”? Did not Israel’s last days have a fulfillment in part from Acts 2:16 to Acts 11:18?

Now we say that the key that will unlock the meaning of these words in Acts 15:13 to 17, is found in Acts 15:15, “And to this agree the words of the prophets.” The Premillennial teachers say that Amos prophesied that which is to take place after this age. This age is the “Church” age, the “parenthetical” age. They say God’s purpose for this age, expressed in Acts 15:14, was unknown to Amos or the other prophets of Israel. Israel’s prophets foretold that Israel’s Messiah and King would do what is recorded in Acts 15:16 and 17; namely, that Messiah would come and build the tabernacle of David, restore the kingdom to Israel and then through the proclamation of the Messianic kingdom gospel the Gentiles would be brought to God by the preaching of Israel and be in subjection to that redeemed nation, in accordance with many other prophecies, such as Jeremiah 30:4 to 11. This to take place after God takes out the Gentiles “a people for His name”. These Premillenarians teach that Jesus came to be King and to fulfill Amos 9:11 to 15; but that Israel would not receive Him. Therefore God postponed the Messianic kingdom, the national redemption of Israel, and surprised Israel by introducing a program wholly unknown to them; namely, “for the first time to take out from among the Gentiles “a people for His name.”

This, they say, is the Body of Christ of Ephesians 1:19 to 21, Colossians 1:25 and 26. This Amos did not foretell. But what is the meaning of “after this” in Acts 15:16?

Now we have several questions to ask them. First, “Is God now taking out from the Gentiles a people for His name; or is He now making One New Man of both saved Jews and saved Gentiles?” Are these two purposes identical? If we believe God’s sure Word of prophecy, we must believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is to come back to this earth to reign as King and righteous Judge; that Israel will be planted in their own land, the land of Canaan, and that during the reign of universal peace, whether or not we call it a millennium, the Gentiles are to come to Israel’s light and enjoy kingdom blessings of this earth with Israel. Certainly Amos foretold this.

But now the word’s, “after this” in Acts 15:16. The thought is “after these things”. If these words, “after these things” mean after the Body of Christ has been chosen and taken away from the earth, then why call the Church “the secret”, the mystery not made known to Israel’s prophets? Amos must have known that the kingdom would not be established on earth until after

this Church age had come to an end. So then either expression, “to this agree the words of the prophet” or “after this” proves that God’s purpose expressed by James, in Acts 15:13 to 18, must be different from the purpose of Ephesians 3:1 to 6. Why should Paul tell us that the prophets of Israel knew nothing of this age, if Amos foretold this dispensation of the mystery.

The Postmillenarians tell us that Christ did come as the Seed of David, born in the city of David and the House of David; that He was raised from the dead, in fulfillment of David’s prophecy. They quote Acts 2:28 to 33, as well as Luke 1:29 to 33. They claim that Christ rebuilt the, tabernacle of David; then from Pentecost to the death of Stephen the Lord fulfilled the first part of Acts 15:17, by saving the remnant from the Nation Israel; and then, beginning with Cornelius, the Lord began to fulfill the last part of Acts 15:17 and has continued until this time. Hence they claim that Amos 9:11 to 15 has been having its fulfillment ever since Christ was born in the city of David. They teach that Israel has no promise concerning the future occupation of Canaan under the earthly reign of Christ.

“Plymouth Brethren” dispensationalism, which is the standardized premillennialism among Fundamentalists today has no correct Scriptural answer to some of the teaching of the Postmillenarians concerning the kingdom.

Premillenarians and Postmillenarians are agreed that the salvation of Gentiles was foretold by Israel’s prophets. But when a student of Scripture comes face to face with the statement of Colossians 1:24 to 27 and Ephesians 3:8 and 9, and learns that the particular phase of Gentile salvation therein mentioned was hid from ages and generations and was hid in God,—His secret—he should be willing to acknowledge that there is a difference between Gentile salvation, as expressed in Acts 15:13 to 18, and that of Ephesians 3:1 to 11. Certainly there is a difference between Peter’s gospel message to Cornelius, recorded in Acts 10:34 to 38, and Paul’s message expressed in the language of Ephesians 2:8 and 9. The unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ, preached among the Gentiles by the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:8), certainly differed from anything promised to the with Gentiles by Israel’s prophets; for such promises could be traced through the Scriptures.

All Premillenarians are “dispensationalists.” All of them believe that Christ and His apostles presented the promised kingdom of heaven to the Nation Israel; that Israel rejected the King and the Kingdom; that then the Lord postponed the kingdom and suspended His Covenant that guaranteed to Israel peaceful possession of Canaan under the reign of the true King David, until the return of the King. They are agreed that we are living in a parenthetical period of time, that during this parenthesis—an age unknown to Israel’s prophets—the Lord is making the One New Man of Ephesians 2:15, completing the Body described in connection with the mystery in Ephesians 1:19 to 22 and Colossians 1:25 to 27. But Premillenarians are not agreed as to when the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn. This difference is what is causing so much controversy today. Some teach that the kingdom was more definitely presented to Israel in Acts 3:19 than it was at any time while Christ was on earth. Others insist that the postponement of the kingdom is definitely marked by the words of Christ in Matthew 23:33 to 39 and no offer has since been made. With others, the teaching is that the definite withdrawal of the Divine offer took place with the stoning of Stephen, in Acts 7:43 to 57. Others say, with the breaking up of the Twelve by the death of James and the Holy Spirit’s message to Barnabas and Saul. Acts 12:2 and 13:2. Still others say, that the kingdom was offered to Israel up to the judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28, about thirty years after the death of Christ. Perhaps the majority of Premillenarians accept the Premillennialism of Dr. C. I. Scofield as set forth in his reference Bible. Concerning the difference between Acts 15:13 to 18 and Ephesians 3:5 and 6, Dr. Scofield thus expressed his

views in his notes covering these two Scriptures. His heading over Acts 15:13 reads: "GENTILE SALVATION KNOWN TO ISRAEL'S PROPHETS". Then his footnote:

"Dispensationally this is the most important passage in the N.T. It gives the divine purpose for this age and for the beginning of the next. The taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name, the distinctive work for the present, or church age. The church is the "ekklesia" the called out assembly." Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost. The gospel has never anywhere converted all, but everywhere has called out some. After this (viz. the outcalling) I will return." James quotes from Amos 9:11 and 12. The verses which follow in Amos describe the final regathering of Israel, which the other prophets invariably connect with the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (e.g. Isaiah 11:1, 10 to 12; Jeremiah 23:5 to 8). "And will build again the tabernacle of David," i.e. reestablish the Davidic rule over Israel (II Samuel 7:8 to 17; Luke 1:31 to 33). That the residue of men (Israelites) may seek after the Lord (cf. Zechariah 12:7, 8; Zechariah 13:1 and 2). "And all the Gentiles", etc., (cf. Micah 4:2; Zechariah 8:21 and 22). This is also the order of Romans 11:25 to 27."

Compare now his footnote Ephesians 3:5 and 6:

"That the Gentiles were to be saved was no mystery (Romans 9:24 to 33; Romans 10:19 to 21. The mystery "hid in God" was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing "the church, which is His (Christ's Body)" formed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12, 13) and in which the earthly distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (Ephesians 2:14 and 15; Colossians 3:10 and 11). The revelation of this mystery, which was foretold but not explained by Christ (Matthew 16:18), was committed to Paul. In his writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the Church."

Perhaps it seems to you, as it does to me, that Dr. Scofield has not clearly expressed the difference which really exists. In both of the footnotes he has the outgathering of Gentiles in the Body, which began on the day of Pentecost. And yet he states that Israel's prophets knew about the outgathering of Acts 15:13 to 18 and they did not know concerning the "same Body", "Sussomos" of Ephesians 3:6.

Acts 15:13 to 18 is a stumbling block, a real problem for the Premillenarian who tries to begin "the dispensation of the Grace of God", "the dispensation of the Mystery", (the parenthetical age), with the day of Pentecost. He has Paul continue with the same message to Gentiles that Peter preached to Cornelius. It is because of this error that some teachers say that Paul took the place of Judas, as one of the Twelve. This is an inexcusable blunder.

"To this agree the words of the prophets" could be said concerning the ministry of the Twelve, but not concerning the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles given by Christ to Paul, mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 9.

Let us note some of the events, beginning with the day of Pentecost, until the death of James. As we approach this study, we keep in mind the promise which Christ made to the Twelve; that they were to sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28. In the message of Pentecost Peter and the Eleven declared the fulfillment of two prophecies; both of which had to do with Israel's last days. One was Joel's prophecy concerning Israel and the Holy Spirit. One was concerning David and the resurrection of Christ to take David's throne. Acts 2:16 to 20 to 33. Neither of these Prophecies had any reference to either the "first days" or the "last days" of the dispensation of the mystery", as related to the Body of Christ; but were prophecies concerning Israel and kingdom. The message was, to all the house of Israel". Acts 2:36. We should know that Israel's "last days" are still future, 1900 years after the day of Pentecost; and that Joel's prophecy, concerning Israel and the Holy Spirit, is yet to be fulfilled

and that David's prophecy concerning Christ on David's throne is yet to be fulfilled. Then we observe that Peter's message to Israel was repentance and restitution, and not Paul's message of reconciliation and the dispensation of the grace of God. Read carefully the order in Acts 2:38: repentance—water baptism—receive the Holy Spirit. These people were God's covenant people, preserved and protected, and not yet cast away even temporarily. What resulted? The penitent ones sold their houses and lots and possessions and brought the money to the Twelve. Acts 2:45. Was not this the program of the kingdom? Read Luke 12:32 and 33 and Luke 22:29.

Is it not strange that the "dispensationalists", who insist that "the dispensation of the mystery" and the Body began on the day of Pentecost, do not preach "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" and make no mention of the disposal of houses, lots and other possessions by the Body members? Rather inconsistent is it not?

Then we go into the next chapter of Acts and find again the message of repentance and restitution. Acts 3:19 to 21. This restitution of the kingdom with earthly blessing, was mentioned by Moses, Samuel and all the prophets and was for the children of the Covenant. Acts 3:24 and 25. "These days" are not to be confused with the "these days" in which we live. Nineteen hundred years have passed and God has not sent His Son back from heaven to establish His Theocracy on earth.

We quote Dr. Scofield's notes on Acts 3:19 to 21:

"Namely, seasons in which, through the appearance of the Messiah in His Kingdom, there shall occur blessed rest and refreshment for the people of God." "The appeal here is national to the Jewish people as such, not individual as in Peter's first sermon (Acts 2:38, 39). There those who were pricked to the heart were exhorted to save themselves from (among) the untoward nation; here the whole people is addressed, and the promise to national repentance is national deliverance 'and He shall send Jesus Christ' to bring in the times which the prophets had foretold" (see Acts 2:14) note.

Read Acts 5:31 and Acts 11:19, and note that the whole program, up to the message to Cornelius, was an Israelitish program. In other words, if Christ was raised from the dead to build again the tabernacle of David, in accordance with Amos 9:11 to 15, according to those same verses, surely a residue of Israel had been turned to the Messiah; thousands of them (Acts 2:41; Acts 4:4; Acts 6:7; Acts 8:12.) And, then one company of Gentiles, the household of Cornelius. Surely Cornelius was seeking the Lord. Compare this seeking Gentile with Paul's grace and reconciliation message. Romans 3:10 to 28; II Corinthians 5:19 and 20. Peter, with the Eleven, had the keys of the kingdom of heaven and up to the death of James the Lord had carried on such a kingdom program, concerning Israel's last days, as He will carry on after He has finished the program which He began with the Apostle Paul.

Now if we agree with these notes and believe Peter's words of Acts 2:16 to 20, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, etc." why not believe that in the "Acts" ministry of the Twelve we have a pattern of the kingdom program that is yet to be in fulfillment of Amos 9:11 to 15, Joel 2, and Acts 3:24.

Note the significant words of Paul, "I conferred not with flesh and blood"; "I received it not from man, but by revelation from Christ;" "In conference they added nothing to me"; "But contrariwise." Galatians 1:11 to 21. Galatians 2:7.

Most significant these word's "But contrariwise". The very opposite of what has been taught by the Roman Catholics and also by most evangelical Christians. Instead of Paul receiving his gospel message and Divine authority from the Twelve, they received from him the news concerning the Lord's revelation of the gospel of justification by faith, the ministry of

reconciliation, the truth concerning the Body of Christ, and the dispensation of the grace of God and the gospel of uncircumcision.

The careful student of the Word of God will see that Christ gave to Paul a ministry, a commission that superseded and survived the keys given to Peter with the Eleven. In contending for his Christ-given authority and spiritual program even Barnabas was carried away in the dissimulation. Galatians 2:11 to 16.

Apart from the kingdom keys, the kingdom gospel and the circumcision gospel, which Christ committed to Peter, Paul received a separate commission by revelation, with a different message, and he was to be designated “the apostle to the Gentiles”. He magnified this special office. Romans 11:13. Surely no one of the Twelve ever did. The radical change from Peter to Paul, from Peter’s proclamation to Israel, concerning their kingdom and their “last days,” to Paul, with his special Divine revelation concerning justification by faith, without the deed of the law, the gospel of justification freely (without a cause) by God’s grace for Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy, and the truth that the believing Gentiles were baptized by One Spirit into One Body, not only provoked, confused and upset the circumcision and their apostles in the middle of the first century, but it has created many a stir and plenty of controversy and confusion ever since. More than a dozen times Paul tells of his special call to be the apostle, the minister, the teacher, the preacher, the prisoner of the Lord to the Gentiles. In Acts 17:1 to 11 Paul was preaching truth that could be traced through Israel’s Scriptures, Acts 17:11. In Ephesians 3:8 and 9 Paul referred to truth that could not be traced through Israel’s Scriptures. Quite a difference. Several important Scriptures to read are: Galatians 2:7 to 9; I Corinthians 9:10 to 24; Acts 21:24 and 25; Acts 15:19.

MUCH ADO ABOUT SOMETHING

TRANSFER FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER

Every intelligent student of the Word of God is a “dispensationalist”. This is true of the Postmillenarian as well as the Premillenarian. It is true of the student of the Scriptures who believes in the postponement of the kingdom and the student who opposes this teaching.

The Postmillenarian speaks of “the Old Testament Church” and “the New Testament Church”. While it is true that he is generally vague in his declaration as to when the Church began, he is opposed to the teaching of the interruption or suspension of the covenants that God made with Israel. Most Post millenarians believe that the Church which began in the days of Abel has continued as the same Church down through the ages to the present time, although they are willing to admit that a new Divine movement began on the day of Pentecost, with the advent of the Holy Spirit. Very few Bible teachers in this school of interpretation are willing to definitely fix the time when the New Testament dispensation began. Some of them teach that John the Baptist was the Lord’s messenger to proclaim inauguration of this New Testament dispensation; but others are positive that John lived and died before the New Testament period began. But every intelligent Postmillenarian acknowledges that the Church today is not under the reign of law, but ministering under the dispensation of grace. The question then is this: Did a New Testament Church begin on the day of Pentecost or did the same Church continue? Was it a different Church or the same Church under a different covenant? When were the members of the Old Testament (Covenant) Church transferred to the New Covenant Church? Every intelligent student of the Word of God believes in a transfer somehow and some time.

The “Plymouth Brethren” Premillenarians teach that the New Testament Church of God is identical with the Body of Christ, and began either when the resurrected Christ breathed the Holy Spirit into His apostles or on the day of Pentecost. They teach the suspension, or interruption, of the covenants which God made with Israel concerning the peaceful possession of their land under King David; and therefore they dogmatically affirm the postponement of the kingdom from the day of Pentecost until the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of man. They differentiate between the coming of Christ for His Church and with His Church. They teach that the reign of grace which began on the day of Pentecost will continue until the rapture of the And these two events define the parenthetical age referred to in the Bible as “the Mystery”. Inasmuch as they acknowledge that many Israelites were saved while Christ was on earth, they must necessarily believe that those saved Israelites became members of the Body of Christ after that Body had its historical beginning, which they say was the day of Pentecost. Therefore, they teach that the transfer of saints from kingdom salvation, or from the Old Testament Church, to the Body of Christ took place after the advent of the Holy Spirit. According to this dispensationalism, John the Baptist was never transferred into the New Covenant Church or the Body of Christ.

On the day of Pentecost after Peter, with the Eleven, had preached concerning the prophecies of Joel and David relating to Israel’s “last days” it is recorded that believers sold their possessions and had all things in common.

“And the Lord added (to the church) daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:47.

We have placed in brackets “to the church” because these words are missing in several of the original manuscripts. But there was a Church. The Greek word is “EKKLESIA”. This word is used many times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Note Psalms 22:22 and Hebrews 2:12. The congregation of the Lord is the “EKKLESIA” or Church of the Lord, but it is not necessarily the “Body of Christ”.

The “Body of Christ” is not being formed in fulfillment of prophecies concerning Israel’s last days. Ephesians 3:5 and 6.

Three thousand were added on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:41. They were added to a company of 120 redeemed ones. There were many others saved while Christ was on earth. When were they added? Were all of the saved disciples who were scattered through the different countries transferred into the “Body of Christ” on the day of Pentecost? Many were saved in Samaria when Christ and the woman testified there. When were they transferred into the Body of Christ? John 4:39 and John 4:42.

Inasmuch as there is considerable controversy at this time present time as to just when the “Body of Christ”, the dispensation of the grace of God” and the “dispensation of the mystery (all described in the Epistles to the Ephesians) began, let us consider the question by mentioning four martyrs and asking if they died belonging to different churches.

JOHN THE BAPTIST STEPHEN—JAMES—PAUL

First, we note that John Baptist was killed some months before Christ went to the cross, that is, before the day of Pentecost. Stephen died some months after the day of Pentecost. James, the brother of John, was put to death about eight years after Pentecost. (Acts 12:2). Paul died about five years after the close of the period covered by the Book of Acts.

Now we are all sure that Paul; died a member of the “Body of Christ”, described in Ephesians 1:19 to 22. And all Premillenarians are positive that John the Baptist was not a member of that “Body” when he died.

In the light of Ephesians 3:5 and 6 wherein we read of a joint-Body which was unknown to Israel’s Old Testament prophets, it is very difficult for some sincere spiritual students of the word of God to believe that Stephen was a member of that “Body of Christ” when he was stoned to death. Certainly at the time of his death believing Jews and believing Gentiles had not been baptized into “One Body”, for the word of God had been preached to none but to Jews only at the time Stephen died. Acts 11:19.

If the “Body of Christ”, described in Ephesians and Colossians, began when Saul’s name was changed to Paul, and salvation was sent to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, then this question comes to our minds: Did James, the brother of John, die as a member of that “Body of Christ”? Because of Matthew 19:28 and Hebrews 2:3 to 5, there are some dispensational brethren who teach that the twelve apostles never became members of the “Body of Christ”. We have already stated that the Plymouth Brethren Premillenarians teach that the twelve apostles were transferred into the “Body of Christ” after the resurrection of the Messiah.

Thus we see that it makes no difference at what point along the line we have the “Body of Christ” begin, every student of the Scriptures believes in a transfer of saints into the “Body of Christ”.

The brethren who follow the teachings of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and Mr. Charles Welsh, teach dogmatically that the “Body of Christ” did not begin until after the close of the “Acts” period, or about 63 A.D. So they have the transfer of saints from the “Church of God” to the “Body of Christ” after 63 A.D. Some of these brethren teach that it was optional with members of the “Church of God” of the “Acts” period as to whether they were transferred into the “Post-Acts” “Body of Christ”. This teaching is what is being termed, “Ultradispensationalism” or “Hyperdispensationalism”. It is frequently mentioned as “Bullingerism”.

The Epistle to the Philippians is undoubtedly the Scriptural refutation of this teaching, as Paul, at the time he wrote to the Philippians from Rome, was a member of the same “Body of Christ” to which the Philippian converts were added when Paul was in Philippi, about 20 years before he reached the Roman prison. Read Acts 16:11 to 31.

Now, again concerning the twelve apostles, certainly the Twelve will be together in the coming kingdom age. And certainly Paul was not one of the Twelve and will not be with them when they shall sit on the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Therefore, we see that if James, at the time of his death, was not a member of the “Body of Christ”, none of the twelve apostles were members of that “Body”.

It makes no difference at what point we fix the transfer, we have some difficult problems. Certainly we have some very serious problems if we set the time of the beginning of the “Body of Christ” on the day of Pentecost. But the problems are far more serious if we have the historical beginning of the “Body of Christ” after the close of the “Acts” period.

Perhaps we have some problems if we have the transfer of the twelve apostles and all the saints, shortly after Peter preached to Cornelius, but before the death of James. But most assuredly, we have fewer problems with this date than with the day of Pentecost or Paul’s imprisonment in Rome.

Peter and the Eleven had the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and the Book of Acts record of their ministry ceased when the only company of Gentiles to whom they preached was granted repentance unto life.

We admit that this is rather deep study. Any diligent student of the Word of God will most assuredly see a crisis and a new Divine movement beginning with the second of "Acts", also with Acts 28:25 to 31. A most significant dispensational change took place with the closing words of the Book of Acts. It was then and there that God ushered in the signless dispensation of the mystery, with the Nation Israel set aside.

These facts cannot be denied by the careful, prayerful, spiritual student of the Word of God. But neither should it be denied that a most important change took place when Paul's active ministry began not long after the message was proclaimed to the household of Cornelius.

SCRIPTURAL REPENTANCE

Since the days of the apostles there has been much discussion and disagreement concerning "repentance." And there is plenty of controversy over the subject today. In Acts 20:21 this utterance of the Apostle Paul is recorded:

Acts 20:21:

"Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Because of this and other statements in the Bible, many Christians have insisted that repentance must precede faith as a requirement for salvation. The Arminians have generally held this view. Others have insisted that the order is faith first and then repentance. This is sometimes called Calvinistic theology.

It is certain that Paul, the messenger of grace, the apostle to the Gentiles, preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Hear him again in Acts 17:30 and 31:

Acts 17:30 and 31"

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

Surely here is declared good and sufficient reason why all men everywhere should repent This is declared also in Peter's Epistle in this language

II Peter 3:9"

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance:"

When Christ was on earth He said, "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3.

In Paul's last Epistle, II Timothy 2:25 we read this statement: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

Because this is the only reference to "repentance" in Paul's Prison Epistles, there are Bible teachers who claim that repentance has no place in "the dispensation of the grace of God" for Gentiles, mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 and 2. This particular Gentile salvation, they claim, was altogether apart from Israelitish covenants; and repentance was associated with covenants. The

saved Gentiles in the Epistle to the Ephesians had been dead in trespasses and sins, had been alienated from the life of God (Ephesians 2:1 to 6 and Ephesians 4:18). Such sinners could not repent. Their salvation is described in Ephesians 2:4 and 13 and Ephesians 2:8, which we quote:

Ephesians 2:4 and 13:

“But God’, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us.”

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

Ephesians 2:8:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God.”

But we remember that Paul was at Ephesus when he gave out the truth of Acts 20:21: “Testifying both to the Jews and also to the, Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus “ Christ.” Surely we have two most important statements concerning repentance in Romans 2:4 and II Corinthians 7:9 and 10.

Romans 2:4:

“Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

II Corinthians 7:9 and 10. “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

Now in all the Scriptures we have quoted the Greek verb is “metanoeo”; and not “metamellomai”. The Greek noun is “metanoia” from “metanoio”. Now let us get fixed in our minds that “metamellomai” means to regret or to care after something has been done. This Greek verb is used in the following verses: II Corinthians 7:8; Hebrews 7:21; Matthew 21:29 and 32; Matthew 27:3. “Metanoeo” means to change one’s mind or mental attitude. It implies a change to that which is right.

Perhaps the words of a scholarly servant of the Lord will give us some helpful information:

I. The Verb.

1. METANOEO: to change one’s mind, always for the better, morally. Because of this it is often the Imperative (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19). Not merely to forsake sin, but to change one’s apprehension of it. It occurs 34 times. It answers to the Latin *resipisco*—to recover one’s senses, to come to one’s self.
2. METAMELLOMAI: to regret; to have after-care or annoyance at the CONSEQUENCE of an act of sin rather than a deep regret at the CAUSE from want of knowing better. Hence never used in the Imperative. It occurs six times, and in each case (except Matthew 21:29, 32) never in the real Biblical sense of “repentance toward God.” It is from *meta*—after, and *melo*—to be an object of care. See notes on II Corinthians 7, 8 and 10. It is used of Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:3); negatively of Paul’s regret (II Corinthians 7 and 8) and of God (Hebrews 7:21). The Noun *Metameleia* is not used in the N. T.

II. The Noun.

METANOIA—a real change of mind and attitude toward sin itself, and the CAUSE of it (not merely the CONSEQUENCES of it), which affects the whole life and

not merely a single act. It has been defined as a change in our principle of action (Greek nous) from what is by nature the exact opposite.

It occurs 24 times, and except Hebrew 12:17, is a real “repentance toward God”. It is associated with the work of the Holy Spirit, and is connected with the remission of sins and the promises of salvation.

III. The Negative Adjective.

AMETAMELELETOS—is used twice, viz. Romans 11:29 and II Corinthians 7:10.

In the light of the foregoing might ask this question, “can a sinner be saved without repenting?” with this question perhaps ask this question: In Ephesians 2:8 and 9, which is the gift of God, the salvation or the faith? In the light of II Timothy 2:10, we might think man has little to do with his salvation. We quote these two verses:

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.”

Ephesians 2:10:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

As we consider these verses, together with the “not by works of righteousness which we have done”, in Titus 3:5 and Romans 3:24, certainly we cannot interpret repentance as “works” for salvation by grace, or we immediately find contradiction in the Scriptures.

Then we say that there must be some difference between the repentance of Romans 2:4 which we have already quoted, and the repentance mentioned in Luke 3:8.

Luke 3:8: “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

Matthew 3:11:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

Acts 2:38:

“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 3:19 to 21:

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you. Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

Most assuredly the risen Christ never instructed the Apostle Paul to preach to Gentiles, who were not only aliens from the commonwealth of Israel but who were also alienated from the life of God (Ephesians 2:11 and 12 and Ephesians 4:18), to bring forth fruit meet for repentance, as a requirement for salvation. Fruits are works and in Ephesians 2:10 we learn that the saved Gentiles, saved by grace, are God’s workmanship, not of works, but unto good works. Therefore some Bible teachers declare that repentance is the fruit of salvation rather than a factor, but this statement requires definitions, qualifications and explanations.

No intelligent messenger of the grace of God will preach to any sinner, in this dispensation, baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins. Any preacher who preaches Acts 2:38 to any sinner today is out of the will of God. "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" were God's messages to His own chosen nation, Israel, protected and preserved by the covenants that God had made with their fathers. These messages are altogether incompatible with the gospel of the grace of God.

Before any sinner will believe the grace message and turn to Christ for salvation he must be convicted by the Holy Spirit of his need of God's grace and God's Son. Surely this means a sense of his sinful nature and his thoughts, words and deeds. But it is not his sorrow and regret that saves him, nor the agonizing of his soul, nor his praying and No sinner has to beseech God for His saving grace. Salvation is God's free gift through Christ, and can not be earned or obtained by anything that the sinner can do. Most assuredly God's message to the uncovenanted Gentiles in the dispensation differs from His repentance message to covenanted Israelites, for centuries under the law of Moses

When the Holy Spirit reveals to the convicted sinner the goodness of God and the truth of Ephesians 2:4 and Titus 3:5 to 7, that convicted sinner will confess his guilt, his utter ruin and impotence apart from God's grace. The redeemed sinner will always be sorry for anything and everything he ever done contrary to the will of God.

No sinner can be saved without a change of attitude toward Christ, but to mix Israel's covenant repentance with the message of grace which Paul was authorized to preach is to frustrate the grace of God and even pervert that gospel.

FROM BACK COVER

WE PERSUADE MEN

The Believers responsibility to Christ and to his fellow-man is set forth in such strong language in II Corinthians 5 as to cause him to do some very serious thinking. Moreover, it should stir him to active service as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note several facts:

1. In II Corinthians 5:15, the believer is definitely and emphatically instructed that he has no right to live unto himself, but that he should live unto Christ Who died for him and rose again.
2. In II Corinthians 5:10, the believer is told that he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body whether good or bad. In the light of the context the good things done in the body is the believer's faithfulness as an ambassador.
3. In II Corinthians 5:14, the believer is told he should be constrained by the love of Christ.

In II Corinthians 5:16 to 21, the ambassador's message is plainly declared. He is not to know Christ after the flesh, as He was presented and proclaimed to Israel in their kingdom gospel and program. The ambassador is to tell poor lost sinners that God was in Christ reconciling them unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; that the Holy Son of

God, Who knew no sin, was made sin on the cross, that believing sinners might receive, by faith, God's righteousness by receiving God's Son.

What a message! What a responsibility! What failures we believers have been! What a multitude of lost sinners all about us! If the plain language, the Divine warning of this chapter will not stir us to go after the condemned sinners, what can be done to make us true, loyal, zealous ambassadors?

In our serious moments of Bible-reading, spiritual mediation, and prayer, truly the Holy Spirit convicts us of our lethargy and indifference and causes us to ponder in our minds and hearts the full meaning of these words: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men". How much "persuading" time is in our programs?

If God has been reconciled to man by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ—His death and resurrection—then surely the Lord's ambassadors will not instruct or urge sinners to beg God for salvation, or to pray to God for mercy. May the Holy Spirit encourage, enthuse and energize us to beseech men to be reconciled to God. May the love of Christ constrain us to be His faithful ambassadors for His Name's sake.