

DIVINE TRUTH
and
HUMAN THEORIES
concerning
WATER BAPTISM
(In Lesson Form For Bible Classes)

Lesson Number One

WHY DO CHRISTIANS BAPTIZE?

In other lessons we shall study together the question, how should Christians be baptized. But now why do Christians baptize? John the Baptist knew why he baptized with water; for he said, “that He (Christ) should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” John 1:31. It is not for this same reason that Christians for centuries have been baptizing. Christ was sent to Israel. Matthew 15:24. Israel rejected Christ in incarnation and then rejected Him in resurrection. With this second rejection Israel was cast away and reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles. Romans 11:15 and 11:30. And it is more than significant that after the announcement of this second rejection in Romans 11:9 to 30 the Bible gives no record of any water baptizing. So no Christian has Divine authority to go baptizing with water that Christ should be made manifest to Israel.

Christ very definitely told His twelve apostles to go to Israel, but not to the Gentiles. Matthew 10:5 and 6. Note what He told them to do: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.” Matthew 10:8. These same men were later given the so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, wherein they were told to baptize into, or unto, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But this did not mean that they were no longer to obey the first commission. As they baptized, they healed the sick, raised the dead, and cast out demons. Not only so, but in the great commission of Mark 16:14 to 18, given after Israel had rejected Christ in incarnation, signs were to be performed by those who believed the gospel and were baptized: “these signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name shall they cast out demons, they shall speak with new tongues; they shall lay hands on the sick and they recover.” Mark 16:17 and 18. Years after this commission was given it is recorded that many Corinthians believed and were baptized. Acts 18:8. And then note what those Corinthians did. They performed miracles, they spoke with tongues, they healed the sick and had other wonderful miraculous gifts. I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

Thus we learn that not only the apostles performed divers miracles, but also did Christians like the Corinthians, who were the least spiritual and faithful of all the Christians of the first century mentioned in Paul's Epistles.

Somewhere along the way the Christians, for some reason, dropped the tongues, and healing, and other miracles, from their various church programs. They arbitrarily eliminated all of these wonderful, supernatural signs without any intelligent Scriptural explanation, without even an apology. However, they decided that they would hold on to the "water" sign; but they agreed to disagree as to the mode and meaning and formula of their water ceremony.

Now in the year 1943 A.D. the outstanding Bible teachers, Fundamentalists, who are contending earnestly for evangelical Christianity, most assuredly are not agreed as to why they baptize with water, and the great majority of them give not one word explaining why they do not exercise the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and Mark 16:17 and 18, those wonderful signs that accompanied water baptism during Christ's earthly ministry and the ministry of the apostles and disciples during the period covered by the Book of Acts. Now and then one of these Bible teachers declares that the absence of signs in the present-day Church is because of the lack of faith and consecration among Christians. But they forget to tell their hearers that most of the spiritual men of God today are more faithful than were those carnal Corinthians who exercised all of the sign-gifts. Many of these Fundamentalists are actually afraid to search the Scriptures and learn the real explanation as to why signs are not to be found in this day and age of grace, because they know that every student of the Scriptures, who finds that explanation, must, if consistent, by the same intelligent exegesis, eliminate the "water" sign with the other signs.

As we consider our question, "why do Christians baptize"? let us ask other questions. "Why do Christians not speak with tongues?" Note the testimony of the apostle Paul. "Forbid not to speak with tongues." I Corinthians 14:39. "I thank God I speak with tongues more than ye all." I Corinthians 14:18. "I thank God that I baptized none of you (except a few)." "I know not whether I baptized any other." I Corinthians 1:14 and 16. Paul thanked God that he spoke with tongues. Do the Fundamentalists, the grace messengers of today, thank God that they speak with tongues and publicly preach, "forbid not to speak with tongues?" Do the Baptist Fundamentalists thank God that they have baptized no Baptists except a very few? Read some Baptist church papers, if you want the answer. But many of these men of God, who boast of the number that they have immersed, ridicule those who try to speak in tongues and heal the sick. They would excommunicate any member who would try to raise the dead. Let us ask and answer this question, "did not the same Christ, Who told twelve men, to baptize, tell those same twelve apostles to raise the dead?" Has not the Christian the very same Scriptural right to put hands on the dead and raise them to life as he has to put hands on believing sinners and say the water is the believer's testimony that he has been baptized into the death of Christ?

We should see that the various church programs have not been adopted by intelligent, spiritual students of the Scriptures, but by religious leaders who have arbitrarily and capriciously selected at random certain doctrines and practices from the ministries of Christ and His apostles without employing any intelligent Bible principle in the selecting and eliminating. Then as tradition takes the place of sound exegesis, the great majority of the Christians who have played Follow the leader, say, "we believe in water baptism because our pastor believes in it; and we believe in my particular mode and significance of water baptism, because our denominational

church has been teaching and practicing this for generations.” The teaching of some denominational group is not necessarily sound Bible doctrine because it has been taught for years or centuries by that group.

If we say that Christians baptize because Jesus Christ commanded His apostles and disciples to baptize, we should teach just as dogmatically that Christ’s disciples should take gifts to the priests (Matthew 8:3 to 6), that disciples should sell their property and give to religious leaders the proceeds (Luke 12:33 . . . Acts 4:37 and 35) that disciples should wash one another’s feet (John 13:15), that they should deliver sinning saints to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (I Corinthians 5:5), that they should heal the sick, raise the dead, be instructed and directed by visions, speak with tongues, travel without any money in their purses, talk with angels, and perform greater miracles than Christ did. John 14:12. All of the earlier commissions of Christ must be studied in the light of the later commissions which the risen Lord gave, by revelation, to the apostle Paul, that apostle, who said, “Christ sent me not to baptize.” I Corinthians 1:17. Paul was sent with the gospel of the grace of God and the ministry of reconciliation when and because God’s religious nation, Israel, was set aside. Romans 11:15. Unto Paul was given “the dispensation of the grace of God” for Gentiles. This was a mystery by revelation. Ephesians 3:1 to 4. In connection with that dispensation, which was given to Paul (I Corinthians 9:17—Colossians 1:25 and 26) he declared “there is one baptism.” Ephesians 4:5.

The ministry and message of reconciliation was committed unto Paul. II Corinthians 5:16 to 21. This was not the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, but it was a great commission committed unto Paul, because Israel would not receive the Word of God. Then Paul said, “lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46. Under this commission, the Gentiles obtained mercy, because of Israel’s unbelief. Romans 11:30. All Christians can work under the great commission of II Corinthians 5:18 to 20 without confusion but not under the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20.

When asked, “Why Christians baptize,” we often hear the answer, “our Lord was baptized, and we should follow Him in baptism.” Jesus Christ on earth was a minister of the circumcision, made under the law, to fulfill the law, sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Romans 15:8, Galatians 4:4, Matthew 5:17 and 18, Matthew 15:24. When Christ’s mother presented Him she offered a dove, some time after He was circumcised. Luke 2:14 to 26. Christ went regularly to the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath. Luke 4:16. Should we follow Christ in circumcision? Every Christian has been circumcised. Colossians 2:11. Every Christian has been baptized into Christ’s baptism. This baptism, mentioned in Colossians 2:12, like the circumcision, mentioned in the next preceding verse, is without hands. Wicked hands baptized Jesus Christ into His death. Luke 12:50 and Acts 2:23. But it was the Lord’s doings. Matthew 21:42 and Acts 2:22 and Acts 4:25 to 29. How do we follow the Lord in baptism? His baptism took place on the cross. Luke 12:50. When we accept the message of reconciliation, committed to Paul, we are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:3 to 6. Christ’s baptism is the believer’s baptism, for the believer is accepted in Christ and complete in Him. Ephesians 1:6 to 8. Colossians 2:10.

If Christians are to follow the Lord Jesus in water baptism, why not follow Him to the Jewish synagogue on Saturday, and why not follow Him to the Passover and to other Jewish feasts which He attended? If we are not careful in the matter of following Jesus Christ, we may

find ourselves Old Testament Jews instead of members of the Body of Christ. Paul tells us how to follow Jesus Christ. How? By following Paul. I Corinthians 11:1 and Philipians 3:17. Paul was God's master builder. I Corinthians 3:10. We are builders with God, the Great Builder. Paul was appointed the foreman and told us to take heed how we build the building together. I Corinthians 3:10. Only as we build according to the blue print and specifications which the Lord gave to Paul, under the dispensation of the mystery, will we be acceptable builders. Under this dispensation there is one baptism and that one baptism is the Lord's own death baptism. Some Christians say there is no water baptism in Romans 6:3, but there is water baptism in Romans 6:4 and 5. This is not true, for all of the benefits of Romans 6:3 to 6 are received by the believer in one Divine operation, in which man's religious ceremony has no place or part.

Some Christians say dogmatically that other Christians, who sprinkle or pour water, do not follow the Lord Jesus in baptism; for He went down into and under the water; and therefore only Christians, who are immersed, really follow the Lord Jesus in baptism. But the Christians, who do go into and down under the water, do not agree when they speak of following the Lord in baptism. The Disciples (of Alexander Campbell) teach that Christians should go into and down under the water to be saved by the water; baptism for the remission of sins; born of the water. They quote several scriptures to support their teaching. The water is mixed with faith to make the believer a Christian. The Lutherans teach water salvation by sprinkling, water and grace and faith mixed. The Baptists teach that no water is necessary to supplement the grace of God and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ to save the believer; but that the water ceremony is either a door of entrance into the visible church or a testimony to the world that a change has taken place in the life of the one baptized. The Presbyterians say that not one of these interpretations is in harmony with New Testament doctrine.

And so we can truly say, "there is a division among the people because of baptism," whereas baptism is mentioned in connection with that ideal unity which Christians are to endeavor to keep. Ephesians 4:3 to 6.

Frequently we hear the question, "if water baptism is not for this age of grace, why have we waited all these centuries to find it out"? But what denomination has not accused other denomination: of teaching for centuries some unscriptural doctrine?

Some Christian missionaries, working in the foreign lands, say that water baptism is the mark of separation and definitely separates the baptized ones from the other heathen. Other missionaries say that heathen, who show no evidence of regeneration, like the religious water ceremony and want to be baptized, because they like to do religious things. One great missionary in India said that water baptism was one of the greatest hindrances to missionary work in that land. So there is a division among the missionaries concerning ,water baptism.

The only testimony in water baptism, or water baptisms, to the world, is the testimony of the utter confusion that exists among Christians concerning the mode and meaning and formula of water baptism.

No true messenger of grace, in any denomination, teaches or believes that there is any merit, efficacy or saving value in water baptism. No matter how much they disagree as to the meaning of the ceremony, they are agreed that a believing sinner is saved by grace, without any religious doings, water or good deeds. Titus 3:5 to 8, Romans 11:6, Romans 4:4 and 5, II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 2:8 and 9. Therefore, with these "grace" messengers, in their various

denominations, the answer to “why Christians baptize,” is definitely not to help get anyone into heaven or into the one true Bible Church, not to aid one little bit in the salvation of one single sinner. But many of these same “grace” messengers will not deny that water baptism does cause them to have an ungracious, if not a Pharisaical, attitude toward other “grace” messengers who do not agree with their interpretation of water baptism. When Christians mix religion with grace the religion in their mixture causes them to be less gracious toward other Christians who teach unmixed grace.

In the matter of water baptism, as well as concerning all Bible doctrines, God’s will concerning His children is expressed in this wonderful verse:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be Perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” I Corinthians 1:10.

All Christians, who believe in water baptism for this present economy and age of grace, should get together and agree on one formula, one method and one interpretation of the meaning of their ceremony and be sure that all agrees with the Word of God, rightly divided.

Some preachers say, “We know why we baptize. We baptize for the remission of sins.” But even the most zealous immersionists, who are “grace” preachers, are unanimous in their agreement, that John’s message and Peter’s message of Acts 2:38, “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins,” has no place in Paul’s dispensation of grace message.

All Bible Christians are agreed as to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the eternal Deity and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, His all sufficient redemptive work, by His sacrificial death and resurrection and coming again, the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, the personality of Satan, eternal perdition for the lost and eternal glory for the saved, the all-sufficiency of God’s grace for the sinner’s redemption and for the believer’s spiritual walk and good works; that every Christian should walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called, departing from iniquity. Therefore, they are agreed on the six unities in the one unity of Ephesians 4:3 to 7, but concerning the seventh unity there is much disunity; “the one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5, which is the work of the great God.

As we proceed with this study, we shall learn that water baptism is either far more important, or far less important, than present-day “grace” preachers attach to this religious work of man. Already we know that there is no one clear, definite, valid answer to the question, “why Christians baptize,” but that there are many indefinite, contradictory, unsatisfactory answers.

Lesson Number Two

DIVERS BAPTISMS

Let us compare the “DIVERS BAPTISMS” of Hebrews 9:10 with the “ONE BAPTISM” of Ephesians 4:5:

Note Hebrews 9:10:

“Only in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms (baptismos), and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation.”

We have Scriptural right to speak of this program as “the religion of the Jews.” It was imposed after Jehovah had given the ten commandments to Israel. That was when Moses was eighty years old. Exodus 7:7. That was 430 years after Abram (Abraham) was justified by faith, without the deeds of the law and without religion. Galatians 3:17 and Galatians 3:6 to 8. The carnal ordinances, mentioned in Hebrews 9:10, were not imposed upon Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel) or upon any of Israel’s twelve sons. Circumcision was imposed upon Abram when he was ninety-nine years old and became Abraham. Genesis 17. Abram was justified, or declared righteous, in uncircumcision. Romans 4:7 to 10. God did not impose upon Abraham the divers baptisms of Hebrews 9:10.

In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy we read of the divers baptisms which God, through Moses, imposed upon Israel under the law. Those baptisms are called “sprinklings,” “anointings,” “pourings” and “washings.” Therefore, the baptisms, mentioned in Hebrews 9:10, were not necessarily “immersings.” “Baptism” in Hebrews 9:10 does not mean “immersion.”

Let us now see if the baptisms of Hebrews 6:2 are the same as the divers baptisms of Hebrews 9:10. The word, in both Scriptures, is used in the plural.

Note Hebrews 6:1 and 2:

“Therefore leaving the principles (the first things) of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms.”

The perfection mentioned in this Scripture has no reference to spiritual behavior in a separated life, but to the perfection in the matter of progressive revelation, from the first things spoken by Christ to the truth of Ephesians 4:13 and Colossians 1:24 to 28. This progress means leaving behind “baptisms” (plural) and going on to the “ONE BAPTISM” of Ephesians 4:5.

There is a difference between “divers baptisms” and “one baptism.” And if we are instructed to go on from the first things spoken by Christ unto perfection, our slogan should not be, “back to Jesus on earth,” but “on with Christ’s revelations from heaven to and through Paul.” The truth spoken by Jesus on earth must be interpreted, appropriated and applied in the light of the later teachings of Christ, by revelation, to members of His Body.

This, of course, means that the four baptisms of Luke 3:16 and Luke 12:50 must be studied in the light of the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. To stimulate your thinking compare these four baptisms in Luke with the one baptism of Ephesians, and if you think right, you will relate the baptism of Luke 12:50 to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

“One Body, and one Spirit . . . one hope of your calling . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”

Surely, no intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures would teach two Christs or two Holy Spirits or two Fathers. But there are Christians, who claim to be intelligent and spiritual, who teach at least two baptisms, and more and more those, who cherish the” denominational water ceremony, are teaching that the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is water baptism. They must thus corrupt and wrest the Scriptures to support their theories. Therefore, with them water baptism is the one baptism. But they believe also in the Divine baptism of I Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 6:3. One plus one are two. As Baptists acknowledge that believers can become members of the one Body of Ephesians 4:4 without water baptism, but cannot become members

of the Baptist church without water baptism, they therefore, teach two churches as well as two baptisms. They, like many other denominational churches, are really carrying on a church program in competition with the Church program of the Lord Jesus. Christ is interested in building one and only one Church during this age and economy of grace. And where this truth is recorded (Ephesians 4:11 to 13 and 4:4) the Holy Spirit declares there is one baptism.

According to Ephesians 4:5, how many baptisms are there? One. In our next lesson we shall see how this one baptism is related to the baptism in Luke 12:50, Romans 6:3 to 6 and Colossians 2:11 and 12.

But let us keep in mind that baptism was not a new ceremony with Israel when John the Baptist came preaching baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, that Christ might be made manifest to Israel. Luke 3:3—John 1:31—Acts 13:24. A new meaning was given to water baptism then; but the meaning has not changed when Peter preached to Israel the same baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins in Acts 2:38, after the death of Christ.

Keep in mind also Israel's divers baptisms in Hebrews 9:10 and 6:2, and the five or six other baptisms for Israel while Christ was on earth (Luke 3:16, 12:50 Matthew 20:23). Ask yourself the question, which of these divers baptisms is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5?

Lesson Number Three

THE DIVINE BAPTISM

“There is one baptism.” Ephesians 4:5.

Now carefully note Romans 6:3:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”

In Romans 6:6 we note what takes place in the believer's life as the result of this baptism; “our old man was crucified.” No sane, spiritual Christian believes that water baptism, which one human being receives from another human being, will produce such a transformation. This is a supernatural baptism and not a natural baptism. This is a work from above by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. No man can baptize another person into Jesus Christ; for this means to pass out of Adam, and to become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:9.

All “grace” messengers, whether Baptists, Plymouth Brethren, Presbyterians, or “grace” messengers affiliated with some undenominational organization, agree with this statement; that there is no water in Romans 6:3. But some of them insist that there is water in Romans 6:4 and 5, and that these verses teach definitely that the water ceremony must be a burial in water or it is not valid. However, the immersionists admit that saved Presbyterians and Lutherans, although not buried in water, have been buried with Christ by baptism and have been raised to walk in newness of life. In this admission, they invalidate their interpretation of Romans 6:4 and 5. If a sprinkled Christian can walk in newness of life just as spiritually as can an immersed Christian because each has been buried with Christ by baptism, then what efficacy or merit is there in the burial in water? If there is water in Romans 6:4 and 5, and a burial in water is obligatory,

immersed Baptists should have no fellowship with sprinkled Presbyterians, even though the Baptists acknowledge that the Presbyterians are with them in the Body of Christ, and immersed Baptists are consistent in boycotting and dis-fellowshipping members of the Body of Christ, who, with them, have been baptized into Christ by a Divine baptism, but believe that Ephesians 4:5 means that the one Divine baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4 and Ephesians 4:5 is the one and only baptism required for unity in Christ for Christian fellowship and Body-membership. The operation of Romans 6:3 to 6 is all one operation and if there is water in Romans 6:4, there is water in Romans 6:3, and this means that Ephesians 2:8 and 9 is not true.

Now let us note carefully Luke 12:50 and Matthew 20:22 and 23:

“But I (Jesus) have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.”

“But Jesus answered and said, ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, we are able.” “And He saith unto them, ye shall drink indeed of my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.”

In Luke 12:50 the Lord Jesus spoke of His death on the cross of Calvary as His baptism. Christ was baptized into death when He cried, “finished” and yielded up the ghost.

In Matthew 20:22 and 23 the Lord Jesus told John and his brother James that they would be baptized with His baptism. John and James and Jesus Christ had already received John’s water baptism. John and James on the day of Pentecost received Holy Spirit baptism. Acts 1:5. But neither of these baptisms had anything to do with the baptism of Matthew 20:23. We read in Acts 12:1 and 2:

“Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John, with the sword.”

When James died by a sword in Herod’s hand he was baptized. So a disciple of Christ can be baptized by a sword. James’ death was his third baptism, in addition to the “divers baptisms” of Hebrews 9:10 which he had practiced as a religious Jew. But as the death of Christ was called Christ’s “baptism,” so the death of James was called James’ “baptism.” So we should be very careful not to limit the meaning of the word “baptism.” Christ’s baptism in Matthew 20:22 and 23 was neither water nor Holy Spirit.

In the sixth chapter of Romans we are told what happened to Christ when He received His death baptism on the cross. “For in that He died, He died unto sin once.” In this same chapter we are told what happens to the believer, who receives his death baptism, baptism into the death of Christ, that baptism by which the believer is identified with Christ in crucifixion, burial and resurrection. “For he that is dead is freed from sin.” The believer is not dead with Christ and freed from sin because of any water ceremony from the hands of man. Nor is any water ceremony required by God in order that the crucified, buried and risen believer may prove to God or to man that his old man has been crucified with Christ, that he has become a new creature in Christ by God’s workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). If there is any water baptism in the sixth chapter of Romans, then water baptism is no symbol, figure or witness, but is altogether meritorious and efficacious, in that it takes the believer out of Adam and puts him in Christ and crucifies the believer’s old man and raises the believer to walk in newness of life. To read a water ceremony into the sixth of Romans is not only an indictment against every spiritual

Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran and every saved member of the Reformed churches, but it causes the baptized believer to frustrate the grace of God; for those who read a watery burial into this chapter exclude from their church membership other believers redeemed by God's grace and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This "witness" teaching is a man-made theory without scriptural support.

Christians do not have to follow Jesus Christ in baptism, for they are baptized into His death and into Him and into His Joint-body (Ephesians 3:6) the very moment they by faith accept His death baptism. The very moment the believer is saved by God's grace he is crucified and dead with Christ and he is raised up so high that he is seated in the heavenlies in Christ (Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 3:1 to 3, and Philippians 3:20 and 21). This all takes place when the individual receives Christ and His death baptism. Between the death and the resurrection of the believer comes his burial. So the very moment the individual meets Christ at Calvary by God's grace and power he is buried with Christ by baptism. This he proves by walking in newness of life; by putting on the new man and putting off the old man in his daily walk.

Now note Colossians 2:10 to 12:

"And ye are complete in Him, Which is the Head of all principality and power; in Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead."

The circumcision of Christ is the believer's circumcision; but it is not physical. The baptism of Christ (His death) is the believer's baptism. The believer is not raised to walk in newness of life by the operation of man and water, but through the faith of the operation of the same God who raised Christ from the dead. There are some zealous immersionists, who are so determined to impose their water ceremony on their fellow-believers, that they read water baptism in to Colossians 2:12. They do not seem to believe that the believer is complete in Christ, without water.

By the simplest principle of Bible exegesis, if the baptism of Colossians 2:12 is physical, so also is the circumcision of Colossians 2:11. If there are two baptisms in 2:12, spiritual and physical, these are two circumcisions in 2:11.

Jesus Christ was circumcised physically and baptized physically and His custom was to attend the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath. Luke 4:16. If the Christian is to follow Christ in physical baptism, he should also follow Him in physical circumcision and to the synagogue on Saturday. From the ministry of John the Baptist until Peter preached to Cornelius, about seven years after Christ received His death baptism on the cross, no man was baptized who had not been circumcised. Acts 11:1 to 5 proves this. Therefore, we may be sure that the eunuch, baptized by Phillip, was a proselyte to the Jew's religion. In Acts 19:3 to 6 we have the last Scripture record of any one who received water baptism. But in Acts 21:18 to 28 we learn that believers were still being circumcised. Paul, who was sent not to baptize, circumcised Timothy. Acts 16:3. This we can see the error of the Presbyterians' teaching that water baptism took the place of circumcision. They teach that because little infant Israelites were circumcised, household baptism, mentioned in Acts 11:14 and 15 and 10:48, Acts 16:15, Acts 16:31 to 34, Acts 18:3 and I Corinthians 1:16, means the baptism of the children of believing parents.

Those who oppose household baptism, including the baptism of little children, quote Mark 16:16 and Acts 8:12 to support what they call believer's baptism or baptismal regeneration by faith in baptism. In Acts 8:12 we read that men and women were baptized; but nothing is said about the children.

"There is a division among the people because of baptism." No one thing has ever been so successfully used by Satan to create disunity and bitterness and make Pharisaical Christians as has water baptism. Not three per cent of Christians have been Bereans in accepting what they believe and practice concerning their water ceremony. More than seventy-five per cent of Christians have not been immersed. More than this large number of Christians cannot give any intelligent Scriptural reason why they were baptized.

Again in the language of I Corinthians 8:8, "for neither if we baptize, are we the better; neither if we baptize not, are we the worse." No matter what mode and significance one group of Christians gives to water baptism, that group will be opposed, if not hated, by various other groups who give different meanings to the ceremony. Moreover, each group considers the water baptism of the other groups as not only alien baptism, but an unscriptural ceremony, the theory of some man or group of men not led by the Holy Spirit. Surely water baptism has made more Christian Pharisees than any other Christian doctrine or practice.

As we behold all the different water baptisms practiced in the name of Christ, let us remember His death baptism on the cross and the one death baptism of Romans 6:3 to 6 and Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12 and believe Colossians 2:10, that we are complete in Christ. Christ is our redemption, our holiness, our righteousness, our peace, our life, our hope. We are in Him and He is in us. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world when there was no water. II Timothy 1:9 and 10. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies, where there is no water; and there with Him we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1:3. Christ's baptism is the believer's baptism as Christ's riches are the believer's riches and no religious ceremony of man can add one iota to the believer's perfection and completeness in Christ. Water baptism makes a believer religious but neither righteous nor spiritual. We are accepted in Christ. Ephesians 1:6 and 7. God accepts His baptism as our baptism.

When the immersionists, among "grace" messengers, acknowledge that the saved sprinkled believer is dead and buried and raised with Christ to walk in newness of life by the Divine baptism, without going down into the watery grave, he not only acknowledges that immersion contributes nothing to a believer's salvation or spiritual walk, but that it is unimportant.

One of the very first steps that Christians must take, if they are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, is to get their various water ceremonies out of the way and unite on the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5. It is unfortunate when a Christian is a member of some denominational church that must contend for its peculiar water theory to protect and perpetuate its unscriptural sectarian name, when he knows that the Bible Church is never called by that name. Such is, the curse of sectarian traditions.

Lesson Number Four

A WITNESS TO THE WORLD

There is not one place in the Scriptures where the word “witness” or “testimony” is used in connection with water baptism. According to Romans 6:3 to 6 the believer is dead and buried and raised to walk in newness of life, and his old man has been crucified. The work of Romans 6:3 to 6 is a supernatural work and all of it is accomplished in one Divine operation, the very same operation of Colossians 2:12 and 2:10 and 11.

What witness is the world interested in and what does God want the sinner to witness? God wants the sinner to know that the believer is a saint, a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is God’s own Divine work. Ephesians 2:10. How is the believer to prove this? Hear God’s Word.

Ephesians 4:22 to 32:

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak for every man truth with his neighbors; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole stand no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Read this and re-read it. When a believer goes into water and is baptized, or if water is put on his head only, he proves absolutely nothing to the sinners. But when he walks in newness of life and puts off the old man and puts on the new man and obeys Ephesians 4:22 to 32, the unbeliever will see the believer’s good works and glorify God in the day of visitation. The good works of Ephesians 2:10 prove the believer is a new creature.

Note how the Thessalonians proved that they were saved. I Thessalonians 1:7 to 10:

“So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves shew of its what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Again note in Colossians 3:1 to 6 how Christians are to witness that they have died with Christ, that they have been buried and raised to walk in newness of life, as explained in Ephesians 2:5 and 6, which we quote first:

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ.”

Now carefully note the believer's witness to prove to the sinner that he has been saved by grace without works. Colossians 3:1 to 6:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"

All down through the Christian centuries Christian leaders have Mixed in human theories with Scriptural doctrines. Their followers have become religious and superstitious and fanatical.

It is so difficult for any denominationalist to search the Scriptures unmixed with prejudice and preconceived opinions and decisions produced by sectarian tradition.

Remember Acts 17:11:

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

In the midst of this water-baptism confusion some Christians may feel like Jonah, all wrapped about with weeds. In his predicament he said, "salvation is of the Lord." Let us turn from all these human theories and inventions to the Lord's one glorious saving baptism in Ephesians 4:5.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring 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."

Water baptism never helped anyone to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he was called. In Christ Jesus neither baptism availeth anything, nor "unbaptism"; but a new creature.

Lesson Number Five

THE SO-CALLED GREAT COMMISSION

Anything that the Lord Jesus committed to His apostles was great because He was, and is, a great Christ. In II Timothy 1:12 (in the original text) Paul spoke of that which Christ had committed to him, as "my deposit." That was a great deposit. Paul described that deposit in Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and Colossians 1:24 to 26. In I Corinthians 9:17 Paul declared that a dispensation was committed unto him. That indeed was a great commission. Paul declared in Galatians 1:11 and 12, how and from Whom he received his grace gospel. In Romans 2:16, 16:25 and 26, and in II Timothy 2:8 Paul wrote of "my gospel." In Romans 11:13 Paul declared himself to be, not one of the apostles to the Gentiles, but "the apostle of the Gentiles." Read also Romans 15:16, Acts 22:17 to 21, Galatians 2:7 and Ephesians 3:8.

In II Corinthians 5:18 to 20, the apostle Paul spoke of a great commission, the ministry of reconciliation. This was just as great as the "great commission" of Matthew 28:19 and 20, but it

was not committed to Peter and the Eleven. It was first committed to Paul when Israel was set aside, because Israel would not receive God's Word concerning the resurrected Christ, because of Israel's blindness and unbelief. This we are told in Acts 13:45 and 46, Acts 13:32 to 35, Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:15 and 11:11. The great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 was given before Israel committed the unpardonable sin. The great commission of II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 was given after Israel committed that unpardonable sin. When and because Israel committed that great sin reconciliation was sent to Gentiles.

When the resurrected Christ spoke to the twelve apostles in Matthew 28:19 and 20 and in Mark 16:14 to 18, God's "kingdom" nation was to have another opportunity to repent and have Christ as Prince and Saviour. Acts 5:29 to 32, Acts 3:19 to 21. This was because of Acts 3:18 and Luke 23:34. Therefore, Christ said to the Twelve, "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matthew 28:20. Right after this these same apostles asked the same Christ, "wilt Thou at this time again restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6. This proves that they had received no instructions concerning this parenthetical "Church" age in which we now live. They knew not the first thing of the truth of Ephesians 3:1 to 3, which was not committed to Peter and the Eleven. Note these verses:

"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 a fore in few words; Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ.)"

Years after the resurrection of Christ the risen Lord committed unto Paul "the dispensation of the grace of God" and "the unsearchable riches of Christ" for the Gentiles. This commission was altogether different from the commission in Matthew 28:19 and 20 and in Mark 16:14 to 18. In Matthew 24:14 when the gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in all nations the end would come.

Read what Paul accomplished:

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." Colossians 1:5 and 6.

"If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Colossians 1:23.

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." II Timothy 4:17.

Note where the gospel had been preached under Paul's supervision. Note Romans 15:16 to 21, 11:13 and Ephesians 3:1.

All of this was quite different from the work of the twelve apostles among the Gentiles. Moreover the end mentioned in Matthew 24:14 did not come. Note Peter's own words in Acts 10:28 and in Acts 15:7:

“And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Acts 10:28.

“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 word of the gospel, and believe.” Acts 15:7.

One mouth of the twelve mouths preached to one household of Gentiles. Then Peter agreed to go to Jews. Galatians 2:9.

Note Peter’s agreement with Paul at the time he declared that God chose his mouth to speak to the household of Cornelius. (Acts 15:7):

“And when James, Peter 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.” Galatians 2:9.

Now, several questions. We learn in Acts 8:1 that the twelve apostles remained in Jerusalem. They were still there in Acts 15:1 to 19. At that time they agreed to go to the Jews. Galatians 2:9. How then could they have remained in the land of Israel, preaching to Israelites, and have obeyed Matthew 28:19 to 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18? According to the “Acts” record, did the twelve apostles disciple all nations?

We quote these commissions:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, ever unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:19 and 20.

“And afterward He appeared unto the Eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hand on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:14 to 18.

As you think of these commissions, think again of Peter’s statement that it was not lawful for him to go to Gentiles (Acts 10:28) and read Acts 11:1 to 5. And think seriously of Acts 15:7 and Galatians 2:9. We quote these verses again because of their importance in this Bible study:

“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 Gentile; by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.” Acts 15:7.

“And when James, Peter 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.” Galatians 2:9.

According to the general interpretation given to the great commission all of the apostles and all the members of the Body of Christ that lived after them were to go all over the world and preach to every creature, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—“disciple all

nations, baptizing them unto, or into, the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” But for some reason God chose one mouth, of the twelve mouths of the twelve apostles, to preach to a company of religious Gentiles, who loved Israel, who worked righteousness, who feared God, whose works and prayers ascended to heaven as a memorial. Acts 10:1 to 4 and 22—Acts 10:34. And when this one mouth, Peter’s, was opened to preach to Cornelius and his household, why were the other eleven mouths opened to condemn this man Peter who opened his mouth? Acts 10:32 to 35—Acts 11:1 to 5? If the twelve apostles understood that they were ordered in the great commission of Matthew 28:18 and 19 to preach the gospel of grace to both Jews and Gentiles, why the attitude and action of eleven of them against Peter when he preached to Cornelius about seven years after Pentecost? Yes, seven years after Peter opened his mouth on the day of Pentecost the other eleven stood against him condemning him for speaking to Gentiles. Acts 2:14—2:22—2:36.

There is no record in the Book of Acts of any missionary journeys of Peter and the Eleven outside of the land of the Jews. There is no record that any of them preached to Gentiles, except to proselytes, (Acts 2:10) and Peter’s message to the household of Cornelius. In fact, after Paul received his commission in Acts 13:2, there is no reference to the activities of Peter and his fellow-apostles, not even one statement except as they had dealings with Paul, whom the Lord Jesus sent far hence to the Gentiles. Acts 22:17 to 21. His several missionary journeys away from Israel’s land are recorded in Acts. Note Romans 15:16 to 21 and 11:13 and I Timothy 2:5 and 6.

But let us keep in mind that Paul received his commission and his gospel and his dispensation and his deposit, by revelation. And remember, Paul’s own testimony, “Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel.” I Corinthians 1:17. This is quite different from Matthew 28:19 and 20 and Mark 16:14 to 18, wherein apostles were sent to disciple and baptize.

Note again Mark 16:16 and 17:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.”

No servant of the Lord should dare to alter or abridge God’s Word. The Lord’s message and program is clear “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and these signs shall follow.” Think of the thousands, who claim to be God’s servants, who preach, “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized, and no signs shall follow.” Apparently their consciences are not troubled with the wresting of the Scriptures to help them to hold on to some water baptism theory; which they seem to cherish over and above any desire to obey Ephesians 4:1 to 6 and 3:9 and II Timothy 2:15.

If the Church is working under the commission of Mark 16:14 to 18 in this age of grace, the Pentecostals are the only religion; group trying to carry on the full program of Mark 16:14 to 18. They are ignorant of God’s “grace” program in Ephesians 3:1 to 11 and have not the faintest idea of the meaning of “the dispensation of the grace of God” which they frustrate with their counterfeit signs and fanaticism.

But at that they are more consistent than are the Fundamentalists, who quote Mark 16:14 to 18 for their Divine authority for practicing water baptism, and wholly ignore Mark 16:17 and 18 after rearranging Mark 16:16 to support their “baptism” program.

However, outstanding Bible teachers such as Mr. John N. Darby, Dr. James M. Gray, Dr. William L. Pettingill and others have seen and taught that the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 has no place in “the dispensation of the Grace of God” of Ephesians 3:1 to 9. They taught that this commission would have been carried out, if Israel had repented and received the resurrected Christ as their Prince and Saviour. They taught that it will be in force after this present Church age has come to the culmination of Titus 2:13 and Ephesians 4:13. Paul never taught members of the Body of Christ to observe many of the “all things” of Matthew 28:20.

Lesson Number Six

HOUSEHOLD IMMERSION

The Reformed, the Christian Reformed, the Lutheran, the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches believe in household baptism by sprinkling; that is, they all sprinkle the little children of believers who are members of their church organizations. The Swedish Covenant church practices infant sprinkling.

The Plymouth Brethren are divided as to their teaching concerning water baptism. The greater part of them believe in what they call “believer’s baptism,” teaching that no young child should be baptized with, or in, water until that child can and does intelligently believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. They do not consider sprinkling Scriptural baptism, which they insist is immersion. Some of their most capable and spiritual leaders, however, teach “household baptism,” by immersion, for parents and their little children. They support their teaching and practice by quotation I Corinthians 10:1 and 2:

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the clouds, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

In what sense were the Israelites baptized unto Moses in, or by, the cloud and in the sea? Were they immersed unto Moses? The explanation of this statement is stated in Exodus 14:31:

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

When did the Israelites believe Moses? When they saw the miracle of the clouds and the miracle in the sea. This was right after the Passover. In this connection let us read John 2:23 . . . John 5:36:

“Now when He (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast, many (Israelites) believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.”

“The same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.”

By Christ’s miracles some Israelites were baptized unto Him.

Why did God perform miracles by the hands of Jesus Christ? The answer is in Acts 2:22; to convince Israel that Jesus Christ was God’s Sent-One. Why did God perform miracles by the hand; of Moses? To convince Israel that Moses was His sent-one. The two great miracles; mentioned in I Corinthians 10:2, did convince them. Thus by these mighty works of God the Israelites were baptized unto Moses.

The miracle of the cloud is described in Exodus 13:21 and 22 right after the Passover. Then followed the other great miracle, described in Exodus 14:16 to 31. "Lift up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." Then note in Exodus 14:19 to 21 how the miracle of the cloud helped in the miracle of the sea. "The children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea." Exodus 14:27.

If that "sea" experience foreshadowed immersion, there should be no water in the baptistery. The baptism should be a dry one. The Israelites did not get wet. Israelitish parents and children went on dry land.

It was the Egyptians who were immersed in water, but they not rise to walk in newness of life. They were baptized into death. God baptized them into death. But God baptized the children of Israel unto Moses by His two great miracles. Israel accepted Moses as God's leader, because of God's miracles, which God did in the midst of Israel, by the hand of Moses.

Certainly the blind followers of the blind leaders in the fanciful interpretation of I Corinthians 10:1 and 2 have been anything but Bereans. Think of the fallacy of teaching that little infants should be immersed in a bath-tub or baptistery, because baby Israelites went across the Red Sea on dry land with their parents. There should be no water in the tub or baptistery.

I am sure that you can see that there are more unscriptural theories and more disunity and disagreement concerning water baptism than concerning any other Bible doctrine unless it is the believer's relation to the law. Many Christian preachers, who have led deluded Christians from "under the law," have led them from "under the law" to "under the water," and the work has to be done all over. There is not a preacher living, practicing water baptism, who clearly sees "the dispensation of the grace of God" mentioned in Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

Baptizing Christians, who are opposed to either sprinkling or immersing young children, quote Acts 8:12, Acts 8:37, and 18:8 to prove that faith and salvation should precede water baptism; and, therefore, no young child, who cannot intelligently exercise faith in Christ, should be baptized.

Baptizing Christians, who teach and practice infant baptism quote Acts 10:44 and 11:14, and Acts 16:15, and Acts 16:31, and Acts 18:8, and I Corinthians 1:16, in all of which Scriptures there is mention of the households. Their argument is, that there must have been some young children in some of these households, who were baptized with their believing parents. They admit that they support their doctrine by inference and deduction and not by any clear, definite Bible statement that babies should be baptized.

WATER BAPTISM IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, gave his testimony concerning his own baptism with water. God sent the message, "be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." No "grace" messenger, who teaches believer's baptism, believes that he or another servant of the Lord should tell his fellow-man to be baptized. "and wash away thy sins." Certainly Paul's baptism was not a witness to the world and Ananias needed no witness. God had told him about Saul.

We have observed in Acts 8:5 to 15 that Phillip, the evangelist and deacon, preached Christ unto the people in Samaria. Acts 11:19 seems to prove that those to whom Phillip preached in Samaria were Jews. When they believed what Phillip preached they were baptized with water. Some days later they received the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands. No grace messenger, who teaches believer's baptism, believes that any person should be baptized with water until he has first received the Holy Spirit. The order in Acts 8:5 to 15 does not fit into the dispensation of grace. Ephesians 3:1 to 3.

Now note Acts 2:41 and 44 and 45:

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need.”

No grace messenger, who teaches believer's baptism, preaches Acts 2:38: “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The “grace” messenger teaches that the believer should give evidence that he has received the Holy Spirit before the Lord's servant baptizes him with water. The “grace” preacher does not believe that baptized believers should dispose of all real estate and other property and bring the money to the preacher to be deposited in the common treasury. So they acknowledge that a change in God's baptism message and communism has taken place since Peter and the Eleven preached on the day of Pentecost. Another fact that is noteworthy and significant is, that there is no scripture proof that any servant of the Lord used the baptism formula of Matthew 28:19 and 20, during the Acts period, “baptizing them into, or unto, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

We referred to the baptism of the eunuch by Philip, in Acts 8:38. We know from Acts 10:28 and 11:1 to 18, that the eunuch was not an uncircumcised heathen when Philip preached to him. Cornelius, was the first uncircumcised Gentile baptized by the apostles, so far as the Bible records their ministry. The eunuch belonged to the group in Acts 2:10, called proselytes. Some of them were undoubtedly included in the three thousand baptized ones in Acts 2:41.

THE BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSE

Concerning Peter's experience with Cornelius and his house, note Peter's explanation to his fellow-apostles, who condemned him for preaching to Cornelius some seven years after Pentecost: “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning.” Note also the words of Peter in Acts 11:12, “nothing doubting.” These words have real meaning. They were used by the Lord when He spake to Peter in the housetop vision at the time He sent Peter to Cornelius: “Get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.” Acts 10:20.

When religious Christians, who teach water-baptism regeneration, try to reconcile their doctrine with Cornelius' experience in Acts 10:44 to 48, they fail utterly. Note Acts 10:44, that the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the Word. That Peter might doubt nothing, God had the believing uncircumcised Gentiles speak in tongues as evidence that they had been baptized

with, or in the Holy Spirit. The Jews accepted this as evidence from God. Therefore the question of Peter when he baptized the Spirit-filled Gentiles with water. Acts 10:47:

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?”

The Jews require a sign. God gave Peter a sign, proving that Cornelius and his household had received the same Holy Spirit, before they received water baptism, that the Jews had received after they received water baptism. Up to Acts 10:48 there is no Scriptural proof that a single uncircumcised man had been baptized: and there is no Scriptural proof that any Jew received the Holy Spirit until after he was baptized with water, with the possible exception of Saul who was born out of due time. Acts 9:17 and 18.

In Acts 16:13 to 15 we find the record of the baptisms of a religious woman, with her house. Lydia worshipped God. Paul met her and she was baptized at a “Sabbath” gathering. Before she heard and believed Paul’s message and was baptized she was worshipping God. She was, therefore, associated with worshipping Jews.

In Acts 16:26 to 33 we find the record of Paul’s miraculous jail deliverance in connection with the baptizing of the jailer and his household. Such supernatural miracles accompanied water baptism during Christ’s earthly ministry and the ministries of the apostles during the transitional period covered by the Book of Acts. This we shall consider in our next chapter. As also we shall consider the, baptizing of the Corinthians in Acts 18:8 and the twelve Jews in Acts 19:3 to 6.

Lesson Number Seven

WATER BAPTISM—MIRACLES—SIGN GIFTS

Let us carefully read these Scriptures:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16: 16 to 18.

“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.” Acts 18:8.

SIGNS AMONG THE CORINTHIANS

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits: to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all of these worketh that one and selfsame dividing to every man severally as He will.” I Corinthians 12:8 to 11.

“And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” I Corinthians 12:28.

WATER—TONGUES—MIRACLES

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” Acts 19:4 to 6.

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” Acts 19:11 and 12.

After Paul pronounced God’s judgment upon Israel, as recorded in Acts 28:25 to 28, Paul wrote six or seven Epistles. These Epistles have been called Paul’s “Prison Epistles”; Ephesians, Philippians, Titus, Timothy, Philemon and Colossians.

For some reason there is no mention of signs, miracles, tongues, sign-healings or sign-gifts in these Prison Epistles, written after the Divine judgment of Acts 28:25 to 28. Neither is there any reference to any of the several baptisms of the “Acts” period, except the one “death” baptism of Romans 6:3. Read Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 1:12. The Lord’s workman, who does not see the difference between God’s spiritual program for members of the Body of Christ, before and after Acts 28:28, certainly has not obeyed II Timothy 2:15; nor has he “put away childish things.” I Corinthians 13:11.

We have learned that the last Bible record of baptism with water is in Acts 19:3 to 6 and there those, who were baptized, received the Holy Spirit by imposition of hands, and then they spoke with tongues. They were Israelites, for they had received John’s baptism. Acts 13:24—19:2 to 4.

There, in the same chapter, verses 11 and 12, we read how people were physically healed by handkerchiefs and aprons touched by Paul. Compare this with II Timothy 4:20. What Scriptural right has any Christian preacher to contend earnestly for one thing in this entire program, water baptism, and ridicule, or at least ignore, the other religious things, signs, tongues, healing and other miracles that accompanied water baptism?

That Baptist Fundamentalist, who permitted and encouraged a religious man for several years to use his church-building to bless handkerchiefs to heal the sick, was consistent, because many Baptist, had been baptized in the baptistery in that same church-building. This pastor discontinued the handkerchief ceremony because of the criticism of fellow-Christians. He should have discontinued the water baptism with the “handkerchief” healing. But if he had done away with his religious water ceremony, his troubles would have been worse than criticism. Some religious brethren would have disfellowshipped him, boycotted him and even slandered him, treated him as a publican or a heathen. This is often the fruit of water-baptism.

Baptism and miraculous healing, with or without handkerchiefs, are linked together in the Bible. Many zealous waterbaptism “Christians” are expert persecutors. Religious Christians

simply cannot tolerate an unmixed message and program of grace and, therefore, they cannot tolerate the messenger who proclaims it.

Any sound exegesis that will eliminate signs, visions, tongues, healings and miracles from God's "grace" program will eliminate water baptism.

In every chapter where there is the record of water baptism, there is in the same chapter something religiously Jewish, or a sign, or a miracle. When the Philippian jailor was baptized there was a miraculous sign from God, a God-sent earthquake. The angel of the Lord was present when the Eunuch was baptized, Peter had a housetop vision and Cornelius spoke with tongues when Cornelius was baptized. Then think of the baptized Corinthians.

The Corinthians believed and were baptized. They were the least spiritual of all the saints during the "Acts" period. They were carnal. There was division among them. They defrauded one another. I Corinthians 3:1 to 4, 6:7 to 9. They partook of the Lord's Supper so unworthily that they had to be severely chastized by God. I Corinthians 11:27 to 32. Many ate meat offered to idols. They were so stingy they would not support Paul. Yet the signs followed them. They spoke in tongues, healed the sick, and performed miracles. I Corinthians 12:8 to 11. Was this because they were more spiritual than Christians to 1943? Certainly not. It was because they were living in the "transitional" sign period. Compare God's message of mercy to Israel in Acts chapters 2 to 7, and God's message of judgment upon Israel some thirty years later. Acts 28:25 to 28. The Jews require a sign. Water and miracles were God's signs to Israel. John 1:31, Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:2 to 5.

Can you not see that a Christian preacher is not consistent, though he may believe that he is honest and sincere, when he changes Mark 16:16 to 18 to read "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized; and no signs shall follow?"

As we read of the sign-gifts to I Corinthians 12:28, we should covet those gifts more than any religious water ceremony, if it God's will that these gifts should be exercised by members of the Church of the Mystery, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6. Note again I Corinthians 12:28: "And God hath set some in the Church first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

If God set these in the Body of Christ, who set them out? If preachers believe that there should be sign-healing, sign-tongues, and sign-miracles in the Church, they should confess with shame their negligence and unbelief and they should adjust their spiritual lives and pray for sufficient faith and power and begin their sign ministry at once. Preachers have absolutely no right, as leaders of God's people, to keep their followers ignorant or disobedient or unfaithful concerning these sign-gifts. If these gifts should be exercised by members of the Body of Christ, the people should be told. If they are not in God's grace program today, Christians should be taught this by their pastors and teachers. These leaders have no right to eliminate or ignore these sign-gifts without explanation or apology.

It is in the same Epistle, I Corinthians 4:1 to 4, we are told that Christ's ministers are supposed to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. Such a steward should teach his followers that these gifts were not found among the Corinthians, because they were unusually spiritual or exceptionally faithful; for they were neither. I Corinthians 3:1 to 3 and 6:6 to 9. And they should rightly divide the Word of Truth and teach their followers why these sign, had their proper place in the Church during the "transition," "sign" period, covered by the Book of Acts,

and were not in God's spiritual program after the "Acts" period. I Corinthians 13:8, Philippians 2:25 to 30, II Timothy 4:20, I Timothy 5:23. They should be taught the meaning of I Corinthians 13:8 to 13 and Ephesians 4:14.

This age of grace, this parenthetical Church age, is a signless and a timeless and a "religion-less" age. There was a mixture of Paul's "confirmation" ministry and his "revelation" ministry concerning the dispensation of the mystery during the Acts period. After Acts 28:25 to 28 the Church entered into the signless period. With the change from the many signs, during the "Acts" period, to no signs thereafter, came the change from the several baptisms of the Acts" period to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. The same exegesis that eliminates the signs after Acts 28 eliminates water baptism.

Some one has truly said, "if the signs of Mark 16:16, 17 and are the credentials of a Christian, no Christian has lived for more than 1800 years." When these signs ceased to follow, water baptism no longer was necessary. If water baptism is for this age, so also are tongues, angelic visitations, miraculous jail deliverances, casting out demons, anointing with oil, miraculous physical healings, raising the dead, imposition of hands, the surrender of houses and lots, and the death penalty for lying to the Holy Spirit and partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily.

If we use the slogan, "follow the Lord in baptism," let us follow Him in circumcision, let us attend the Jewish synagogue on Saturday and let us wash feet and live under the law and take our gifts to the priest. Matthew 8:3 to 6. Luke 4:16.

Again, if this present economy and age of grace began with Peter and Pentecost and if that was the ideal Christian Church, then the Pentecostal message and program must be the ideal message and program and we should preach what no grace messenger preaches: . . . Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive a the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38. And we should by all means follow Acts 4:34 and 35: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need . . ."

Let us resolve, by the grace of God, that we will no longer be blind-leaders of the blind, or blind-followers of the blind-leaders. Let us resolve to obey Ephesians 4:1 to 6 in God's way:

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that; ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, 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, and in you all."

If we are under the commission of Mark 16:14 to 18, let us neither alter nor abridge it. Let us not teach "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." The verse does not so read. And let us be honest and either preach signs with water, or no signs and no water. The same exegesis that eliminates the signs eliminates water baptism

If we go to II Corinthians 5:16 to 21 for our commission, we will be delivered from error and confusion.

Let us again carefully note the full program of Mark 16:16 to 18:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

If baptism belongs to this age of grace, so also does the healing with handkerchiefs or with oil or with hands. The same apostles, who were told to baptize, were told to raise the dead and cast out demons. Matthew 10:8. These apostles spoke with tongues and were visited by angels and healed the sick and pronounced judgments upon God’s enemies and performed divers miracles. Divers miracles and divers baptisms are joined together in the Scriptures.

So again the question, by what Divine principle or Scriptural exegesis can Christian preachers arbitrarily and capriciously select water baptism for the Church of the mystery and disregard those signs from the Lord that He Himself coupled with baptism?

Lesson Number Eight

CONFUSION AND DISUNITY AMONG CHRISTIANS

The Roman Catholics generally baptize by sprinkling. The water is first made holy by a religious ceremony by the Catholic priest. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, the application of Catholic water by the Catholic priest takes care of original sin. With the Roman Catholics all other baptisms by other Christians are alien, invalid and worse than worthless. According to this teaching, the holy water performs a miracle.

Then we might group the Reformed church, the Christian Reformed, the Swedish Covenant, the Presbyterian and the Lutheran churches all of whom claim to be Covenant churches, all of whom teach and practice water baptism by sprinkling, and all of whom sprinkle the infant children of parents who are members of their churches.

Of these churches, the Presbyterian and Swedish Covenant churches would not give the same value, importance and efficacy to the water, as would others. In these two churches the officers would receive into their membership believers who had been immersed by some other denominational preacher.

The Covenant churches teach that New Testament believers are the seed and children of Abraham, and as the Abrahamic covenant is being fulfilled in this New Testament Church age, members of the New Testament Church and their offspring are God’s covenant children. Under the Abrahamic covenant the children of Israel were circumcised. The Presbyterians and other covenant Christians teach that as circumcision was the seal of the Old Covenant, so baptism by sprinkling is the seal of the New Covenant. They support their teaching concerning infant baptism with the household baptisms, mentioned in Acts 10:47, Acts 16:15, Acts 16:31, 1 Corinthians 1:14 to 16.

Dr. Albertus Pieters, one of the outstanding doctrinaires to the Reformed Church, contends earnestly for the sprinkling of infants in the “covenant” families, but in writing on the subject he admits that infant baptism is taught by inference rather than by any clear definite statement in the Bible. The majority of the preachers to the Reformed Church and the Christian

Reformed believe that water baptism for infants is efficacious and, therefore, essential, if that infant is to be included in the covenant. In a sense, this ceremony makes the infant a member of the church of its parents.

By reading Ephesians 1:13 and 14 and Ephesians 4:30 and II Corinthians 1:21 and 22 we learn that the Holy Spirit is God's seal in this day of grace; and not water. Those who are sealed are those who believe the gospel of salvation. No infant is capable of doing this. There is no Scriptural proof that God seals little children whether or not water is sprinkled on them.

The religious ceremony, in which a drop or two of water is sprinkled on the baby, takes but a few moments, and the water does not remain on the body of the child, whereas circumcision remains in the flesh from the eighth day of the child's life until death. Only the male Israelites were circumcised. Why baptize little baby girls or women? Moreover, beginning with the baptism of John, several years before Christ died, until Peter baptized Cornelius about seven years after Christ died, no male disciple of Christ was baptized with water who had not first been circumcised. There is not one verse of Scripture to support the teaching that water baptism supplanted or superseded circumcision, or that water baptism is the evidence that the baptized one has become a member of the New Covenant Church. This is a sectarian theory, but not a Divine fact.

With the Lutherans, there is more value and importance and efficacy in water baptism, whether it be the baptism of infants or adult baptisms, than with the other churches which we grouped with them.

One of the outstanding Lutheran preachers broadcasts over many stations on Sunday afternoon. In one of his broadcasts he quoted Mark 16:16, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He sought to prove by this that the water baptism was essential to salvation. He did not teach that water baptism alone would save but he did teach dogmatically that faith, without water, would not save; that faith and water baptism were both essential to salvation. If he believes this, then of course he cannot believe Romans 4:4 and 5, Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and Titus 3:5 to 8; for when one person puts water on another person that is work done by one person and received by another.

But in Mark 16:16, which reads, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," there is no justification, not even the slightest excuse, for putting water on a helpless little infant who cannot exercise faith. In Mark 16:16 there is not the slightest hint that the parent can exercise "proxy" faith for the infant and then subject the infant to a water ceremony. To be sure the adult of Lutherans are more consistent in the use of Mark 16:16 than are the Baptists, for the Baptists are forced to change the order to support their doctrine and so they preach, "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." This is not the order in Mark 16:16, and the Baptists have no right whatever to alter or abridge God's Word to support their water theory. If water will not save a person, unless coupled with faith, the sprinkling of an infant Lutheran is not only worthless, but is Lutheran tradition, contrary to sound doctrine in the Word of God. Many Lutherans teach that infant baptism makes the infant a member of the Lutheran church and tides the child over until the day of confirmation. This may be the Lutheran way making a person a member of the Lutheran church but it certainly is not the Bible way of making a person a member of the Bible Church. Read I Corinthians 12:12 and 13 and Ephesians 2:4 to 10. Read also I Corinthians 1:17,

the words of the greatest soul-winner of all times and learn from Paul's testimony (I Corinthians 9:20 to 25) that there was not one iota of saving value in water baptism.

The disciples of Alexander Campbell are members of "The Christian Church," also sometimes called "The Church of Christ." Other denominations refer to them as "Campbellites." Some of the groups call themselves "The Disciples of Christ." They agree with the Lutherans that both faith and water baptism are essential to salvation. But they most heartily disagree with the Lutherans as to the amount of water that is necessary to make a saint out of a sinner, and call sprinkling a heresy and the sprinkling of infants worse than heresy. With them, no one is saved who is not born of the water by being buried in the water. So they teach water regeneration. If what they teach concerning water baptism and losing your salvation is true, one would have to live in a submarine to keep saved. Of course they wholly ignore Acts 10:44 and 48, I Corinthians 1:14 and 17, Ephesians 2:8 and 9, and Romans 11:6, and know not the first thing about the gospel and dispensation of the grace of God revealed to Paul for the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 to 4, Acts 20:24.

The Seventh Day Adventists, the Christian Apostolic Church, the Russellites, some of the Brethren (Drunkards), some of the Mennonites, some of the Pentecostals and others use Mark 16:16 to support their teaching that water baptism is essential for salvation. They say it must be faith and water.

While the disciples of Alexander Campbell teach that water-baptism is essential to get into the Body of Christ and into heaven, the Baptists teach that water baptism is not necessary for either; but it is necessary to get into the Baptist church (the New Testament Church) and with them the New Testament Church is the Body of Christ. They try to explain their contradiction by saying that water baptism does not admit the believer into Christ's invisible Church but into His visible Church.

Most of the Premillenarians among the Baptists, who preach "grace," agree with the Plymouth Brethren who stand for believer's baptism, and they put water where the Holy Spirit did not put it in Romans 6:3 to 6. They are very much undecided and divided as to whether or not there is any water in Colossians 2:12 and in Ephesians 4:5. They say no water in Romans 6:3.

"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?"

They are unanimous that this is a Divine baptism

Many of them say, but there is water in Romans 6:4 and 5

"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

But when questioned they agree that there is also the Divine along with the water, in these two verses. By any sane exegesis of these verses we must admit that if there are two baptisms Romans 6:4 and 5 there are two baptisms in Romans 6:3; for it is all accomplished in one instantaneous operation. The very moment the believer is baptized into the death of Christ he is buried and raised and planted, whether or not he subsequently receives sprinkling or immersion or anything to supplement Divine baptism that produces the transformation. If there is an water

in Romans 6:1 to 8, that water is meritorious and efficacious; and Ephesians 2:10 should read that the new creature is God's and man's workmanship, Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism.

Lesson Number Nine

A GOOD CONSCIENCE—BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD

Let us study I Peter 3:20 and 21 and I Corinthians 15:29 and 30:

“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?”

In Titus 3:5 to 8 we learn that we are saved by the washing of regeneration. In Romans 4:5 we learn that believers, who work not, receive God's righteousness. In II Timothy 1:9 we read that believers are saved according to God's grace and eternal purpose, but not according to our works. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:9. So water baptism does not help any one to be saved.

Paul was sent to preach the gospel of the grace of God, that Divine message by which the vilest sinner could be saved, without any kind of religious doings. But “by grace through faith.” Romans 5:20. Paul was sent not to baptize, and never once did he intimate that some fellow-servant with him did the baptizing to add something to salvation by grace. Never once did Paul ever intimate that the believer saved by grace should be baptized with water as a testimony or a witness. If water baptism had such a meaning then Paul in I Corinthians 1:14 to 17 thanked God that he had helped very few of them to witness their identification with Christ to the world. Paul's final message concerning baptism is very clear, “there is one baptism.” Ephesians 4:5. Salvation is by baptism (by grace) without works, therefore the baptism in this age of grace is Divine and not what man does for man. To add to this Divine baptism man's water baptism makes Ephesians 4:5 untrue. To give a dozen different meanings to water baptism confuses saints as well as the world.

In obedience to II Timothy 2:15 “rightly dividing the word of truth,” the servants of God, and all the children of God, should study Peter's ministry in the light of Paul's ministry, especially in the light of Paul's declaration in Ephesians 3:1 to 4 and Ephesians 3:8 to 4:14. The dispensation of the grace of God is, to a sense, the key to the Scriptures. Peter acknowledged that some of Paul's statements were hard to be understood. II Peter 3:14 to 16. Let us remember that Paul was a masterbuilder and his instructions were, to take heed how we build. I Corinthians 3:10.

In a sense God, the great Builder, Who is building a great House (the Body of Christ), has made Paul His foreman.

Note I Peter 1:1, “to the strangers scattered.” In the original we learn that Peter wrote to “the dispersion,” “the dispersed among the Gentiles.” John 7:35. They were Israelites. Peter was the minister of the circumcision. Note Galatians 2:9:

“And when James, Peter and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

Note Galatians 2:7 and 8:

“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.)”

Note Peter’s message to Cornelius in Acts 10:34 and 35:

“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.”

Compare this with Paul’s unmixed “grace” message in Titus 3:5, “not by works of righteousness which we have done.” Also in Romans 4:4 and 5 and II Timothy 1:9.

Unto Peter was committed the gospel of the circumcision. He addressed His Epistle to the circumcision although of course then: is truth in this Epistle for Gentiles. Peter was sent to baptize. Paul was sent not to baptize.

How are we to reconcile Peter’s message in Acts 2:38 “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins” with I Peter 3:21?:

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

In Acts 2:38 water baptism was something more than the answer of a good conscience; it was coupled with repentance, “for the remission of sins.”

Water baptism is coupled with faith for salvation in Mark 16:16. Water baptism was a requirement for Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2:38. In I Peter 3:21 there was no saving value in the water. If, with Peter, water baptism was the answer of a good conscience, and with Paul it was a testimony or witness to the world, then it did not have the same meaning to the two apostles. Paul’s own baptism had neither meaning. “And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away this sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” If Ananias baptized Saul God had already told him about Saul’s salvation and no water was needed. His baptism was to wash away sins, whatever that meant.

But now for the “like figure.” Who were immersed in the flood? Not Noah and his family. Every other human being was immersed. All the unsaved were baptized into death, but they were not raised to walk in newness of life. They perished under the water. Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord and was not baptized in water. He was saved from the water in a dry ark. The ark was above water. The ark was water-proof. The water did not touch righteous Noah and his loved ones. Noah was not saved because of what he did in the ark, but because he was in the ark. God shut him in and saved him from the water. Christ is the Christian’s judgment-proof ark.

We are in Christ. Note God’s words: “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1. “And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all

principality and power.” Colossians 2:10. Believers are in God’s judgment-proof ark, (Christ), saved from the wrath to come. Must we go in water after we are in Christ? For what? We are complete in Christ. Many grace messengers of the Lord tell a believer, who is in Christ, to put on some old clothing and old shoes to go into a tank of water! There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ; not to them who go in the water. What Bible teacher can tell us what mode of water baptism was figured in Noah’s experience?

Immersionists insist that sprinkling and pouring can be in no sense the right figure. But immersionists are not agreed as to what is figured by water baptism. If it is a factor in salvation as taught by many immersionists, water baptism is no figure, but the real thing. Other immersionists are divided as to whether it is a door of entrance into the visible church, a witness of the believers’ death, and burial with Christ, or the answer of a good conscience, or the outward sign of an inward Divine work. Let’s get together.

In what sense was Noah sprinkled or immersed when we read that he was in the ark before God sent down the rain? The sinner were sprinkled and immersed but Noah was saved from the water. The true figure was that Noah was in the ark, declared righteous by God, and we are in Christ declared righteous by God, without condemnation, accepted in the Beloved; complete in Him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. This is all the believer, by a baptism and a circumcision not made with hands, through the faith of the operation of God. Colossians 2:11 and 12.

Surely the Baptists and the Disciples (of Alexander Campbell) could engage in a long debate as to the meaning of I Peter 3:21 First—“The like figure.” Second—“Baptism doth also now save us.” Third—“Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” Fourth—“The answer of a good conscience toward God.” Is water baptism a figure or a symbol? If baptism was foreshadowed by that which saved Noah, then “baptism doth also now save us.” Is this water baptism? Does, or does not, water baptism save or even help to save, a believing sinner? If the baptism, which doth now save us, water, then water baptism is absolutely essential for the sinner’s salvation and is no figure or testimony. The verse states, “baptism doth also now save us.” If this is water, then those Christians, who teach that salvation is by a Divine baptism without human hands, are false prophets and heretics to be shunned and denounced.

But other Scriptures explain clearly that salvation and eternal life are God’s free gifts to believers who work not and that they, are saved by grace without water. The baptism that saves a sinner in this day of grace is God’s baptism and not man’s.

BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD

Now note I Corinthians 15:29: “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?”

The argument of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 15:12 to 19 and 15:29 to 32 is a big “if.” “IF” Christ has not been raised from the dead. “IF” Christ’s body remained in the sepulchre and did not ascend to heaven, then saints have no resurrection hope. “IF” the sleeping saints are not going to be raised in incorruptible bodies, Christ is not in a body in heaven, and His apostles were false witnesses when they taught that the dead in Christ and the living saints would receive glorified bodies like Christ’s glorified body. “IF” there is to be no resurrection of the body and

Christ is not in a body in heaven, Christianity is worse than fiction or superstition and the Christian's faith and preaching and all his sacrifices, sufferings and Christian deeds are in vain, and he is of all men most miserable. Let us cease to perpetuate Christianity, if there is no resurrection hope, if those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, gone forever. Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die, if the dead rise not.

What shall they do which are baptized for the dead?

The Latter Day Saints (Mormons) use, or misuse, this verse to teach vicarious baptism, that a living descendant can answer to God for an ancestor who died without Mormon baptism. And many Mormons have been baptized in water for relatives and other who did not have the advantage, or disadvantage, of the errors in the Book of Mormons.

You say, "ridiculous." To which we say, "amen." For we know that if the writer of this Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul, had such little interest in the baptism of the living, as he tells us in the same Epistle (I Corinthians 1:14 to 17), he was not teaching such nonsense as Mormon vicarious baptism for the dead.

Paul was the Holy Spirit's human instrument to teach in the fifteenth tenth chapter of First Corinthians, that a Christian should be steadfast, unmovable, abounding in the Lord's work; that the Christian should put all of himself, soul, body and spirit, in the Lord's service, because there is to be a resurrection because he has a hope laid up in heaven. If no resurrection, why not cease all Christian activities and let Christianity vanish from the earth? Why bring other sinners into the delusion, to follow a Christ who remained dead and therefore could not save anyone?

If the evangelists cease to evangelize and the sinners do not hear and believe, then no one would be saved and certainly no one would then be baptized into Christ. If the dead rise not, why should other false witnesses take the place of the false witnesses who die and perish and go right on being deceived and deceiving others? Such were Christians, Paul argued, if Christ was not raised.

Whatever other interpretation we may give to the words, "baptized for the dead," we are sure that vicarious water baptism is an absurd theory and by the context we are sure that the argument is, cease to believe and preach Christianity, if Christ was not raised and Christians are not going to put on incorruptibility. If there is to be no resurrection, it is folly to perpetuate Christianity.

We are glad that the Lord Jesus Christ is the living Man (in a glorified body) far above and that we are going to be like Him in bodies like unto His body of glory, and we are going to appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1 to 4.

Lesson Number Ten

WATER BAPTISM AND DEATH BAPTISM

Two baptisms of the Lord Jesus are recorded in the Gospel of Luke, in Luke 3:21 and in Luke 12:50. Note first concerning John the Baptist in Luke 3:3:

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

Then note Luke 3:21:

“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to Pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.”

We are told in John 1:31 why John came baptizing with water: that Christ should be made manifest to Israel. Note Acts 13:23 to 26 and Hebrews 2:16 and 17 and Romans 15:8.

Then we read in Matthew 16:20 that Christ instructed His apostles not to tell any one that He was Israel’s Messiah. When He was to be made manifest to Israel there was to be baptizing with water. But with Christ’s orders in Matthew 16:20 there was no need for water baptism. Therefore, in the last twelve chapters of Matthew we find no record that any one received water baptism.

A great change is marked in the next verse. Note the statement Matthew 16:21, “from that time,” the same words are used in Matthew 4:17. Compare these two verses: “From that time the kingdom of heaven was at hand.” “From that time” Christ would be the Stone rejected by the builders and would go not to David’s throne (Luke 1:27 to 33) but to Calvary’s cross. Matthew 16:21 to 24. With the proclamation of the Kingdom, water baptism was announced. Matthew 3:2 to 16.

In Luke 12:52, where the same change is marked, the words, “from that time forth” are not used, but “for from henceforth,” meaning the same thing.

Now note carefully Christ’s reference to His “death” baptism with His words “from henceforth.”

“But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished? Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division.” Luke 12:50 and 51.

From the proclamation of the Kingdom, “from that time forth,” water baptism was for Israel, but with the change in Luke 12:50 to 52 and Matthew 16:20, “from henceforth,” no water baptism until after Christ’s prayer on the cross (Luke 23:34) and a new proclamation of the Kingdom. Acts 3:19 to 21. Acts 2:36 to 38. This “Acts” message was for all the house of Israel. Now Peter does what Christ told him not to do in Matthew 16:20. He told Israel Jesus was the Christ and he baptized. Acts 2:36 and 2:38. Compare Matthew 16:20 with Acts 2:36.

The peace on earth, mentioned in Luke 2:14, has been postponed until the King comes back to Israel, until the kingdom of heaven is again at hand. Luke 21:24 to 31. But the words “from henceforth” in Luke 12:52 tell the story that “from henceforth” instead of Israel’s peace, Christ’s baptism, that is, Christ’s death on the cross, and no peace on earth; but division. Compare Luke 2:14, 1:27 to 33 with Luke 12:50 to 52.

In the last twelve chapters of Luke, from the time Christ foretold His baptism on the cross until He on that cross cried, “finished,” there is no record that any one received water baptism. John 1:31 and Matthew 16:20 explain why. So from Luke 3:3 to Luke 12:50 we go from water baptism for the remission of sins to Christ’s death baptism. His shed blood for the remission of sins.

And again from Acts 2:38 to Romans 6:3 we go on from water baptism for the remission of sins to that death baptism that identifies the believer with Christ in His death baptism.

Note Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:3

“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 Spirit.”

“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”

There was as great a difference between being baptized with water by man for the remission of sins and being baptized by the Lord into the death of Christ, as there was between John’s water baptism for the remission of sins, a religious kingdom ordinance, and the baptism of Christ when He yielded up the ghost on the cross.

When John the Baptist baptized with water, for the remission of sins, he declared that Christ would baptize in or with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Luke 3:3 and Luke 3:16.

We see that the message of Luke 3:3 and 3:16 to Israel was the same as the message of Peter and the Eleven to Israel on the day of Pentecost, “baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins,” Holy Spirit baptism following.

And surely we should see how the death baptism of Luke 12:50 and the death baptism of Romans 6:3 are related and are the important, efficacious and abiding baptisms.

Water baptism was a religious ceremony. Israel was God’s religious nation. Religious ceremonies are no longer to be practiced. This age of grace in which we now live is a timeless and a signless age and a “religionless” age. The death baptism of Romans 6:3 and the reconciliation for Gentiles in Romans 11:15 mark a great change. And after that we find the clear revelation of “the dispensation of the mystery,” which God wants all men to see.

The word “mystery” is used several times in the Scriptures where the Church, or Body, of Christ is described. Ephesians 1:9 and 1:22 and 23. Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and 6 and 9. Colossians 1:24 to 27. We have the same Scriptural right to speak of “the Church of the mystery,” as we have to speak of “the mystery of the Church,” for the Body of Christ, with its hope and calling, was God’s mystery (secret) until it was revealed to and through Paul.

The Church in Ephesians 3:6 is called the “Joint-Body,” and God’s will is that all Christians should see “what is the dispensation of the mystery,” that is, see that the Church of the mystery was not foretold by Israel’s prophets, that the Church age is an unprophesied, timeless period. The church was elected before the world began. Romans 8:28 and 29—Ephesians 1:4.

Many prophecies are yet to be fulfilled in connection with Israel and the Kingdom, after the culmination described in Ephesians 4:13, which will close this parenthetical “Church” age. Then God will have some very important dealings with His religious nation. The commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 will be in God’s coming Kingdom program.

The reason why the great majority of Christians do not know the truth concerning water baptism, and some other even more important doctrines, is because they have made the serious dispensational blunder of assuming, or presuming, that Israel was set aside right after Christ pronounced His judgment upon them in Matthew 23:33 to 38. It is so important to compare Matthew 12:31 to 33 with Acts 3:12 to 26 and Acts 5:29 to 32 and Acts 13:45 and 46 and learn the difference between Israel’s pardonable sin and Israel’s unpardonable sin. Christ’s prayer for Israel on the cross (Luke 23:34) was efficacious for Israel’s rulers. It made Israel’s sin against the Son of Man pardonable. They killed the Prince of Life. Acts 3:14 and 15. Because of Christ’s prayer on the cross and because of the facts stated in Acts 2:23 and Acts 3:18 and Acts 4:27 and

28, God not only offered salvation to the individual Jews, who with wicked hands slew Jesus Christ (Acts 2:23), if they would repent but if the rulers would repent with the people, God would send Jesus Christ back from heaven to establish the kingdom of heaven. Acts 3:19 to 21.

If Peter had had any knowledge whatever of the “dispensation of the mystery,” concerning this parenthetical Church age, he never would have preached Acts 3:19 to 26 or Acts 5:29 to 32. But another important fact is to know that Christ’s prayer, which brought, another Kingdom offer to Israel, rescinded Christ’s charge in Matthew 16:20 and postponed the judgment upon Israel which Christ pronounced in Matthew 23:33 and 38. And so water baptism was again preached, “be baptized for the remission of sins.”

When we compare Matthew 22:7 and Luke 21:20, we learn that Israel’s house was not left desolate, until long after Pentecost. Why were Israelites serpents in Matthew 23:33 and children of the covenant in Acts 3:25? Because of Christ’s prayer. Luke 23:34.

In Acts 2:36, Acts 5:29 to 31, Acts 9:22, Acts 17:3, we learn that the twelve apostles and Paul were telling Israel that Jesus was Christ. The Lord Jesus, in Matthew 16:20, told them not to do this. But his prayer on the cross and His command in Acts 1:8 rescinded this. Note Acts 2:36. Then study in Acts 3:12 to 26 and Acts 5:29 to 32 and in Acts 13:45 and 46, and see that God was giving Israel the opportunity to repent and receive Christ as their Prince and Saviour. It was with this message that water baptism was preached and practiced.

Note again that after the death baptism of Christ was mentioned in Luke 12:50, no water baptism was mentioned until Christ experienced that baptism at Calvary. So after the death baptism mentioned in Romans 6:3, we find not a single record that any one received water baptism. Later we read God’s declaration, “there is one baptism,” and that one baptism is death baptism; the death, baptism of Romans 6:3 to 6 that identifies the new creation with Christ in death, burial and resurrection.

The setting-aside of Israel is recorded in Romans 11:7 to 15. Reconciliation was sent to the Gentiles when God set aside Israel. Romans 11:15. With the first mention of the reconciliation of Roman, 5:10 and 11, II Corinthians 5:16 to 21, Colossians 1:20 and 21, water baptism was not again practiced, so far as there is any Bible record. The last record is in Acts 19:3 to 6, not very long before Paul wrote in Romans concerning Adam, reconciliation, the casting away and blindness of Israel, and death baptism. Note Acts 19:5 and 6.

“When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

These twelve were Jews who had received John’s water baptism.

As we read this last record of a water baptism, surely we present thought-provoking question when we ask, why if Christians continue to teach and practice water baptism, they do not teach that Holy Spirit baptism should follow water baptism and the imposition of hands and speaking of tongues?

Note the order: 1—Water baptism. 2—Imposition of hands. 3—Holy Spirit baptism. 4—Speaking with tongues.

Romans 6:3 to 6 and 11:15 and II Corinthians 5:16 to 18 were written after that last recorded baptizing with water. And these who were baptized in Acts 19:3 to 6 were Israelites who had known only the baptism of John, which was not for Gentiles.

In this study, recognize the sin of Israel called their unpardonable sin. This sin ushered in the new dispensation. Their sin in rejecting, and crucifying Christ, killing the Prince of Life, was their pardonable sin against the Son of Man. Their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and resisting Him and rejecting His witness to Israel that God had raised up Jesus from the dead to be Israel's Prince and Saviour (Acts 5:32, Matthew 2:31 to 33) was their unpardonable sin.

Lesson Number Eleven

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST AND WATER BAPTISM

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST

The intelligent, spiritual, unprejudiced student of the Scriptures should admit that water baptism was a part of Israel's religious program. While the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth He was the Minister of the circumcision to confirm God's promises to Israel. Romans 15:8. In Ephesians 3:8 we have this testimony of the apostle Paul:

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ.”

There is a very great difference between the confirmation ministry of Christ and His apostles to Israel, with a prophesied message and program, and Paul a minister to the Gentiles, preaching the unprophesied riches of Christ. During the period covered by the Book of Acts, Paul wrote Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. In Romans 11:13 he called himself “the apostle of the Gentiles.” During the “Acts” period, Paul had a twofold ministry to Gentiles and Israel, a ministry of confirmation, or that which was in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and a ministry of revelation, truth which no prophet of Israel foretold or knew. The twelve apostles had a ministry of confirmation. Hebrews 2:3 to 5. During the earthly ministry of Christ to Israel and during the period, covered by the Book of Acts, Peter and his fellow-apostles were carrying on their confirmation ministry and Paul was carrying on his two-fold ministry. During that transitional period, water baptism, signs, tongues, miracles, visions and supernatural visitations and judgments all were included in God's program, first for Israel and the Kingdom and then for members of the Body of Christ.

After the close of Acts the Lord led Paul to reveal to members of His Body “the mystery of God's will” (Ephesians 1:9), “the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3:1 to 4), “the dispensation of the mystery” (Ephesians 3:9), “the mystery of Christ and the Church, one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31 and 32), “the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19 and 20), “the mystery among the Gentiles” (Colossians 1:27), “God's grace and purpose given to members of the Body of Christ before the world began” (II Timothy 1:9), “the eternal purpose of God in Christ” (Ephesians 3:11, 1:9 and 11).

The only baptism that has any place in the unmixed “revelation” ministry and program is the one Divine “death” baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

Many servants of the Lord have seen that the “Law” dispensation was temporary and parenthetical (Galatians 3:19) and have rejoiced in the truth of Romans 6:14, “ye are under grace.” They have resolved that they will stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free and will no longer be entangled with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1). They delight to lead entangled religious people from “under the law” to “under grace,” although they have found their task no easy one. But when they lead them; from “under the law” to “under the water,” the work has to be done over. And it is more difficult to lead religious people from “under the water” than to lead them from “under the law.” Jesus Christ was made under the law and came to fulfill the law. He was baptized with water to fulfill all righteousness. Galatians 4:4 and Matthew 5:17 and 18. Israel was God’s “law” nation and God’s religious nation. Christ in the flesh, under the law, was sent to Israel only. Matthew 15:24. During the Book of Acts God’s order was, “to the Jew only” up to Acts 10:28, Acts 11:19. After Acts 13:46, “to the Jew first” and “also to the Gentiles.” Therefore, in the Book of Acts, we find an overlapping, “transitional” period with one order to the believing Jews and another to the believing Gentiles. Acts 21:24 and 25. There was an overlapping of the law and religion while God’s order was to the Jew first. I Corinthians 9:20 to 25, Acts 16:3, Acts 10:28, Acts 22:12, Acts 18:18, Acts 21:18 to 28. Acts 23:4 and 5.

When God set aside His religious nation, he sent reconciliation to the Gentiles. Romans 11:15. The Gentiles obtained mercy, because of Israel’s unbelief and blindness, because Israel was set aside. Romans 11:30, Romans 11:7 to 11, Acts 13:46, 18:5 and 6.

A blindness is happened to Israel. Romans 11:25. But an awful blindness has also happened to many Christian preachers, who teach that Israel was set aside before Pentecost. They also teach that on that day “the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles” (Ephesians 3:1 to 4 and “the dispensation of the mystery” (Ephesians 3:9), (that eternal secret purpose of God, not made known to any of Israel’s prophets), began when Peter and the Eleven (Acts 2:14) proclaimed to all the house of Israel (Acts 2:36), a prophesied message of confirmation. No servant of the Lord, who knows the truth as to when Israel was set aside, teaches or practices water baptism in the dispensation of grace. No servant of the Lord, who teaches and practices water baptism, makes any effort to obey Ephesians 3:9: And to make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hash been hid in God.” There is no place for water baptism or any religious doings in “the dispensation of the mystery,” which is that grace and purpose of God, given members of the Body of Christ before the world began. II Timothy and Romans 8:28 and 29. With the end of the “Acts” transitional period God’s order was no longer “to the Jews first”; for God sent blindness upon His religious nation. Romans 11:7 to 11. Most of the servants of the Lord, among grace messengers, who teach and practice water baptism, also teach that God’s order still is “to the Jew first,” which of course is absurd in the light of Acts 28:25 to 28.

One great blunder accounts for many other blunders among the servants of the Lord today, including the false teaching that there is water in the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, and this great blunder is the assumption, or presumption, that the fall of Israel, described in Romans 11:9 to 15 took place at Calvary or before, because of Christ’s words in Matthew 23:33 and 38. God’s answer to this fallacy is Acts 5:29 to 32, Acts 13:23 and 32 to 26 and 13:46. To fix the date of the Fall of Israel before those significant words of Paul in Acts 13:46, “lo, we turn to the

Gentiles,” is indeed a great blunder. Read Acts 13:39 to 41. The fall of Israel is told in Romans, written at least twenty-five years after Christ’s death. It is in that Book that we hear of “reconciliation.” Romans 5:10 and 11. Romans 11:15. “Reconciliation” for Gentiles when and because Israel was set aside.

With the first mention of “reconciliation” for Gentiles we have the mention of Adam. The other apostles did not refer to Adam. Unto Peter was committed the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 1:7. That was quite different from the message of reconciliation for the Gentiles, the children of Adam. And after Israel’s setting-aside Israelites had to come as Gentiles. Grace and righteousness and life reign through Jesus Christ for Jews and Gentiles alike. Romans 5:21 and 10:12 to 15. No difference. With this first mention of reconciliation with Adam (Romans 5:11 and 12), we have no more records of any water baptisms. With the message of “reconciliation” came the message of “the new creation.” Behold all things new. This meant a new commission. II Corinthians 5:16 to 21. Note the double “henceforth” in II Corinthians 5:16. And with this new message a new interpretation to baptism. Death baptism. Romans 6:3.

No denomination can boast of more evangelical fundamentalists than can the Baptists. But no denominational company of evangelical Christians are as uncompromisingly and aggressively opposed to the distinctive Body truth revealed to and through the apostle Paul as are the Premillennial Baptists. The Postmillenarians among all denominations have not the slightest knowledge of “the dispensation of the mystery.” If they did have, they would not be Postmillenarians. But all Premillenarians are essentially dispensationalists. The Premillennial Baptists are determined to protect and perpetuate their denominational label, “Baptist,” and in their determined efforts they must hold on to water baptism. They, therefore, recognize and teach two churches the Body of Christ and the Baptist denomination. They have two baptisms, the first, God’s baptism for membership in God’s Church, and another baptism for membership in the Baptist denomination.

As long as they carry on this unscriptural program they will never obey Ephesians 3:9. Many of their leaders publicly and viciously condemn and malign and misrepresent the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus, who have prayed the prayers of Ephesians 1:16 to 23 and 3:14 to 21 have seen in Ephesians 3:9 the most wonderful and glorious truth for saints in all of the Scriptures and are as equally determined make other Christians see what God wants them to see, the eternal purpose of God, being accomplished in this parenthetical age. Today every pastor and Bible teacher should proclaim “the unsearchable riches Christ” and contend for one Church and one baptism.