

THE FUNDAMENTALISTS HIERARCHY AND KINDERGARTEN

RELIGIOUS TNT
PRESENT DAY WATER BAPTISM CONTROVERSY

THE A.B.C.'S OF DISPENSATIONALISM

THE FUNDAMENTALISTS' HIERARCHY AND KINDERGARTEN

All Christians are necessarily "Bible" Christians. Every organization, group and individual, claiming to propagate Christianity, quote from the Bible to support their interpretations and applications of Christian doctrines. Most assuredly any individual would be inconsistent, if not unintelligent, to claim to be a Christian, and at the same time repudiate the Divine authority of the Bible and the real Christ of the Bible.

There are certain men, called Christians, who desire to be known as "Intellectuals." They consider themselves sufficiently educated and qualified, not only to criticize the Bible but to separate truth from fiction. They offer their different theories of inspiration of the truth contained in the Bible and seem to have satisfactory explanations for the fiction, myths and errors which they find mixed with the truth. In the opinion of these so-called "Intellectuals", belief in the literal, verbal inspiration of the Bible is the mark of ignorance. But the orthodox Christian, who holds to the plenary inspiration of the Bible, looks upon the "Liberal" as unreal, that is; he questions both his spiritual wisdom and consistency, as well as the genuineness of his Christianity.

It must be said against the "Liberal", or "Modernist", that the individual who rejects the verbal inspiration of the Bible generally repudiates the eternal Deity of Jesus Christ and rejects the Bible way of salvation, by grace through faith in His sacrificial work. According to the Bible, there is no other way in which a sinner can be saved. But the so-called "Intellectual", or "Liberal", does not hesitate to eliminate, as both uninspired and unessential, any and every Scripture referring to salvation from sin and its consequences by God's grace and Christ redemptive work on the cross. He prefers his doctrine of salvation by character and looks upon Jesus as a helper rather than a Saviour.

No intelligent religious expert has ever been wise enough to disprove the Bible statement, that all Scripture is God-breathed. Neither has any one of them been intellectual enough to invalidate the Bible record of Jesus Christ. But think of the lamentable, if not irrational, act of a religious man, who claims to be a Bible Christian and endeavors or desires to disprove the verbal inspiration of the Bible and delights in his repudiation of the eternal Deity of the Son of God. Certainly such an attitude is anything but the mark of intelligence.

While almost every effort to teach an unregenerated religious man spiritual truths will meet with failure, and while any attempt to convince him that all seeming contradictions will disappear by applying the “Dispensational” principle to Bible Study, will likely prove futile; still it is true that his intellectual difficulties would be greatly reduced if he could be taught that God’s method of elimination from Christianity all Bible truths that are irreconcilable with this present Dispensation, or Reign of Grace is II Timothy 2:15. “Undispensational” rather than “uninspired, is the intelligent and Scriptural explanation.

On the other hand it is regrettable that the truly orthodox Christian should be so inconsistent and unwise as to make light of “Dispensationalism” while affiliated with some orthodox or “Fundamentalist” movement that has adopted a doctrinal platform for the interpretation and application of what is generally called New Testament truth. For every such company of believers proves by creeds or statement of doctrine, that they are “Dispensationalists.” Every intelligent so-called New Testament saint, who claims to be a Christian on the authority of the New Testament Scriptures, is likewise on the authority of the same New Testament Scriptures, a “Dispensationalist”, whether or not he is aware of the fact and intelligently informed as to how to apply the principle of “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” We submit only one proof of the hundreds of proofs that might be mentioned.

The Lord ordered Gideon to smite the Midianites with the sword and David to smite the Philistines. To His apostles the Lord said, “Put up thy sword.” To the apostles, was given the Sword of the Spirit. David was a man after God’s own heart. David was just as much in the will of God when he used the carnal weapons to destroy God’s enemies as Paul was when he used the Sword of the Spirit. They lived in different Dispensations. A man after God’s heart today must say, “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” By what principle do we account for God’s different programs? “Dispensationalism” is the answer. This principle must be recognized with the principle of progressive revelation, and be properly applied, for the elimination from the present-day believer’s doctrine and practice every detail of every God-given program for the people of God from Abel to Paul that does not belong to this Dispensation of Grace.

Orthodox Christians are agreed that the “Book of Acts” program was a New Testament program. But about ninety-nine per cent of these orthodox Christians, without explanation, apology or excuse, without any good and sufficient Scriptural reason, have agreed that “Twentieth Century” New Testament saints cannot and need not perpetuate the God-given program which was for the New Testament saints during that period of thirty years after Pentecost. It may be the proof of spiritual wisdom, of a sound mind and Scriptural intelligence to eliminate from the adopted doctrinal platforms of our Christian organizations today all of the program of the Book of Acts which does not properly belong to this Dispensation. But, first of all, to admit this is, to admit that there has been a most radical Dispensational change since the “Book of Acts” period closed. Then there should be an intelligent and satisfactory application of the “Dispensational” principle, which would give to the Christian God’s reason for the absence of the signs, gifts, visions, ceremonies and apostolic messages, which were part of God’s program for that period, but which are not for this present period. Any intelligent student of the Word of God must, therefore, see the wisdom and necessity of just as an important Dispensational change with the close of the Book of Acts as with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To account for the cessation and elimination from the church today, the Book of Acts program, requires the application of “Dispensationalism” equally as much as does the explanation of the cessation of Israel’s Sabbath, priesthood and temple worship, with the death of their Messiah.

Therefore, for the true interpretation and application of Divine truth the principle of “Dispensationalism” must be carried to the close of the “Book of Acts” period.

To account for the absence in the Christian Church today of the God-given programs for God’s people of other periods on the grounds of “uninspired” is unintelligent and unspiritual. It is pure infidelity. To account for their absence on the grounds of “undispensational” is intelligent and spiritual; because it is according to the will and the Word of God.

For centuries many precious truths of God’s Book were lost from even consecrated saints, who were identified with some church-organization propagating a corruption of the Word of God, mixed with the traditions of deluded human leaders and with denominational creeds. In all of these man-made organizations there have been rulers and dictators, either self-appointed or selected by fellow-members of the organization. As lords over God’s heritage, these hierarchies have forbidden or discouraged the undenominational or individual searching of the Scriptures, not only disfellowshipping and excommunicating Spirit-led saints for daring to disobey their orders, but often adding bitter denunciations, condemnations, rebukes and persecutions.

Because of the men of God who have not feared these zealous but deceived religious leaders, and have been unwilling, for Christ’s sake, to obey the mandates of these unscriptural hierarchies, many of the precious truths of the Bible have been recovered for the Church, but by no means all of them. In the same manner, and under somewhat the same circumstances, others must be, and will be, recovered.

During recent years there has been a breaking-away from the leading so-called evangelical denominations, because the religious leaders of these denominations have organized under a super-hierarchy who not only refuse to place the proper emphasis on evangelical truth but scoff at the doctrine of the “blessed hope” and ridicule any and all “Dispensational” Bible study. The Christians who are satisfied to remain in these organizations are helpless and fruitless so far as the recovery of truth is concerned. The spiritual saints in these organizations who value the knowledge of the Word of God more than they esteem the respect of their denominational leaders and more than they love their denominations, and who are willing to join in the task of uncovering and recovering God’s truth, will find themselves, sooner or later, outside of the denominational organizations. Thousands have already stepped out from denominational control and interference. They have found relief, liberty and desirable fellowship with other spiritual and faithful saints who are not afraid to contend for the faith once-for-all delivered unto the saints and rejoice in the “blessed hope,” seeking, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to rightly divide the Word of truth. They affirm their unqualified faith in the plenary inspiration of the Bible and take such an uncompromising stand for all of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, that they are called “Fundamentalists”. They are careful to become identified with either an Undenominational gathering, uncontrolled by any man or group of men, or with some independent denominational assembly that has withdrawn from the authority of the denominational hierarchy. Blessed is such liberty.

We do praise God for the courageous, spiritual men and women of God who have thus separated themselves and for the Fundamentalist preachers and teachers in these Undenominational and Independent assemblies.

But what do we see now in these “separation” movements? Surely, and not so slowly, dictators are arising; hierarchies are being formed. Thus the federation of Undenominational assemblies will become a denomination. Not only will the advancement and recovery of God’s truth cease and the Fundamentalist followers be discouraged in their desire to obey God’s Word, going on to perfection, but in some cases the leading of the Holy Spirit will be forbidden even

unto the threat of excommunication. To go beyond the Dispensational interpretations of Fundamentalists' associations will not be tolerated. They are already exercising their authority in their determination to stop the recovery of God's truth; in some cases by unfair means.

The Fundamentalists' hierarchies today are keeping many of God's people from "that which is perfect." Sad, but true it is, that more than ninety per cent of Christians, who study the Bible, accept the interpretations of Bible teachers.

Just this week a Christian brother said to me, "I secretly accepted "Body" truth some time ago, but up to now have had some doubts, because the Fundamentalist leaders did not believe it. But from now on I shall follow the Holy Spirit instead of the Fundamentalist leaders, and shall accept and teach this most blessed and glorious truth, concerning which most Christians are so ignorant."

Many Christians, even preachers, accept the decisions and interpretations of outstanding Bible teachers of reputation without submitting their teachings to the Berean test. And how sad it is when these teachers come to consider themselves the highest authority in the interpretation of the Scriptures or the final court of appeal on the subject of "Dispensationalism." Surely much of the teaching and practice among Christians is based upon Historic Christianity or the traditions of church fathers rather than on the clear teaching of the Word of God. We do praise God for much that has been cleared up for us by the Premillennial Fundamentalist leaders of the last generation and of this present generation. But there is much yet to be cleared, and Christians should not be held in "infant" or "milk" truth when the Lord wants them to go on to perfection, to truth that is for those who are "full age" or perfect, on to the "strong meat." Hebrews 5:12 to Hebrews 6:2.

Because the Fundamentalist leaders today, for the most part, are making no effort to advance in the recovery of God's truth that has been lost since the first century, and because they warn and intimidate Christians against what they call "Ultra-dispensationalism", both leaders and followers are kept in ignorance as to some of the glorious truths of God's Book; thus the recovery of truth is being retarded. Thereby God's people are being robbed of the joy and satisfaction of that Dispensational understanding of the Word of God that will account for many of the seeming contradictions of the Book and that will explain the why of one program from Pentecost to the close of the "Book of Acts" period and another program from Acts 28:28 to the present time. There was good and sufficient reason why the Holy Spirit waited for Paul's last Epistle before He said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the truth of God." II Timothy 2:15. This had primary reference to the radical change between the early ministry of Paul and his closing ministry.

Surely we believe that no one part of the Bible is more inspired than another; and we know that much of Divine truth in Psalms, much in the teachings of Moses and the prophets, should be appropriated and applied by every member of the Body of Christ. Yet all of us are agreed that much of Israel's Old Scriptures cannot be applied to the Body of Christ. How can any intelligent student of the Word of God know just which of the Beatitudes, which of the Kingdom Parables, and what part of the Kingdom Gospel preached and taught by the Lord Jesus on earth can be, and should be, applied to members of the Body of Christ, except in the light of what we call "Pauline" truth, which is "Christ" truth. Is it not a fact, that some things that the Lord Jesus taught while on earth properly belonged to the Church of God during the "Acts" period, but would not fit into "Mystery" or "Body" Dispensation of Ephesians, Colossians, Timothy, etc.? Do we not have in the "Acts" period that which the Holy Spirit designates "that which is in part", and in the "Mystery" Dispensation, "that which is perfect?" Is it not obvious

that we should study “that which is in part” in the light of “that which is perfect?” Surely Christ chose Paul to bring to completion His blessed truth? Colossians 1:24 to 26. Surely we are all agreed that much of the truth, much of the program, of the Book of Acts and the “Acts” period, all God-given, is not for the practice of the members of the body of Christ today. Not to admit this, is the mark of profound ignorance: to admit it, is to admit that a radical change took place with the close of the “Acts” period. Therefore, the sensible Scriptural method of interpretation is to bring over from all preceding Dispensations all the truth of God that will fit into this Dispensation of Grace, into “Body” truth.

One of our leading Fundamentalist preachers, upon his return from the far Northwest of this country, said, “out on the Pacific Coast there are many towns where Fundamentalism and Fanaticism are considered synonymous.” He said that the “Tongues” and “Healing” movements are playing havoc with Fundamentalism. I asked him if the Fundamentalists, who agree with the Pentecostals that the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost, have any Scriptural corrective for their delusions. Surely these religious Christians are sincere and conscientious and are earnestly endeavoring to perpetuate or recover the signs of the Acts Pentecostal Church program.

I have recently received a letter from a Baptist preacher in which he stated that Pentecostalism had so wrecked Fundamentalism in his own city and in the neighboring towns that he had to seek for the scriptural corrective to safeguard his own work. He found that the scriptural answer to their counterfeit signs, visions and religious program was the Acts “transition” period. “But” said he, “I found that the Scriptural explanation for the elimination of signs, miraculous healing and visions would likewise apply to water baptism; and to be consistent, that too must go.” Needless to say, his persecution immediately began.

The adopted doctrinal constitution of every Evangelical organization, or the creed of every one of the several hundred denominations proves that Christians do not believe or practice much of what the Lord gave Israel to believe and practice, under the reign of Law, or what the Lord Jesus on earth gave His apostles and disciples to believe and practice, or what the risen Lord and His apostles gave Christians to believe and practice for about thirty years after the resurrection of Christ. Thus, all prove that they are Dispensationalists; but instead of giving an intelligent Scriptural explanation for selecting some of the truth and program of the Lord Jesus on earth and some of the truth and program of the “Acts” period, and rejecting some of the same truths and programs, they do it on the grounds of tradition. What the Christian Church has been doing for centuries must be God’s program for today, is their argument.

The real opposition to intelligent Dispensationalism is now coming from Fundamentalists who insist that Israel was set aside at Calvary and the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost; and yet any one of them can be shown, in a few moments that they have eliminated from their own program that part of the program of the “Acts” period that Paul said, “shall be done away”. Many of these Dispensationalists misunderstand and misrepresent the so-called, “Ultradispensationalists”, saying that they seek to take away from Christians the Four Gospels and the Book of Acts and the Book of James and Paul’s first six Epistles. The so-called “Ultradispensationalists” seek to take away from Christians not a single line of truth that most Dispensationalists say is not for the members of the Body of Christ, except water baptism. And no one thing keeps Christians from receiving God’s truth, rightly divided, as does their determination not to let go of that kingdom ceremony. All agree that water baptism had a God-given place during the earthly ministry of the Saviour and the “Acts” transitional period, while God’s order was “to the Jew first” and while signs and visions and miraculous gifts were

in order. But to eliminate from the program of the Church today the signs, visions and miraculous gifts of the “Acts” period and hold on to a water ceremony that was given to Israel, and which was God’s order until Israel was set aside, is not rightly dividing the Word of truth.

To teach that the Lord Jesus, in His Matthew commission, which is called “the great Commission”, gave the program for the Body of Christ, or committed to His Twelve, in that commission, the same message and ministry that Paul called the “Dispensation of Grace” for Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1 to 9), is not rightly dividing the Word of truth.

To teach that there is no difference between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God is such stupidity that any intelligent student of the Word of God would find it difficult to respect the ability of the teacher. But what about the difference between Peter’s “circumcision” gospel and Paul’s “uncircumcision” gospel? Galatians 2:7 and 9. Must not the gospel and program of Luke 9:6 and Mark 16:16 to 18 be studied in the light of I Timothy 1:11 and 5:23? Certainly the kingdom program, with signs, was carried over into the “Acts” period and suddenly ceased. When? With Acts 28:28. Acts 28:28 is the dividing line between “that which is in part” and “that which is perfect”. When the inspired truth of the Four Gospels and the Book of Acts, the Epistle of James, and the first six Epistles of Paul (written during the Acts period) is studied in the light of God’s truth in Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Timothy and Titus, written after Acts 28:28, the believer learns that very much of the message and program of God before Acts 28:28 is compatible with God’s written revelation thereafter, and is for the acceptance and practice of the believer just as much as is the later revelation. With the exception of water baptism, most Dispensationalists do not carry over from the “Acts” period into the later period any part of that program that the so-called Ultradispensationalists do not carry over. The difference is that the Dispensationalists eliminate, without scriptural explanation, and the “Ultras” give an intelligent scriptural reason. “Rightly Dividing” is a better reason than the tradition of the fathers.

Then “that which is perfect” must refer to the truth of Paul’s last Epistles concerning the Mystery, the believer’s position and possessions “in Christ”, in the upper-heavenlies, accepted in Christ, complete in Christ, hid with Christ in God, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; waiting to appear with Christ in glory. This all was, and is, accomplished by the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, which identifies the sinner saved by grace with Christ in death, burial, resurrection and heavenly citizenship; risen to seek those things above and seated there with Christ, who is Head over all things unto the Church which is His Body. Ephesians 1:19 to 21—2:5—4:3 and 4. Colossians 3:1 to 4. The key words to Ephesians are “Gentiles”; “Grace”; “Body”; “Mystery”; “Heavenlies”; “In Christ”.

In connection with this “manhood” truth, note the Lord’s exhortation to the members of His Body; “That we be no more infants, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” Ephesians 4:14. Think of the sincere Christian in “tongues” movements today. They are earnestly seeking a place in the “infant” program. They prefer “that which was in part” to “that which is perfect”. They choose the “infant” Dispensation rather than the “manhood” Dispensation. They also include visions, miracles, healings, casting out demons, in their program.

If Hebrews, late in the life and ministry of Paul, were exhorted to go from the “milk” truth to the “meat” truth, how much more should Gentile members of the Body of Christ, with the knowledge of the truth of Ephesians, obey that exhortation; especially since the “milk” truth of Hebrews 5:12 to 6:2 was never given to Gentile members of the Body of Christ. When those

doctrines were preached to Israel, there was no Body and the Dispensation of Grace for Gentiles had not been ushered in.

The principle of the doctrine of Christ (the first word taught by Christ) was spoken to Israel, while the Saviour, under the Law, was a minister of the circumcision, sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Inasmuch as the Lord Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel and that Salvation was not sent unto the Gentiles until some years after His death, there is no reason why any Spirit-filled, properly taught, member of the Body of Christ should be exhorted to leave truth that was not spoken to him and:

GO ON TO PERFECTION—HEBREWS 6:1 and 2.

It should be needless to say that this exhortation refers neither to the spiritual conduct of the believer today nor to his gradual progress in the knowledge of the Word of God from the time of his new birth; as does I Peter 2:1 and 2. It refers to perfection in doctrine rather than to perfection in conduct. It refers to that which every Bible student believes, “Progressive revelation”. For surely all Christians know that the inspired Word of God came from God an the installment plan. The Old Testament saints knew of repentance, washings or baptisms, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment, laying on of hands. All of these Divine truths were brought over into the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth; and some of them into the “Book of Acts” period. But God’s people before Christ’s revelation through Paul, did not know of the out-resurrection from the dead, faith in Christ, the coming of the Lord FOR the Church and WITH the Church; of the repentance that Paul preached in connection with the Gospel of the Grace of God, of the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5, after water baptism had ceased. They did not know that the imposition of hands would cease with the revelation of the Mystery and that the earthly reign of Christ would fall in between the calling on high, the rapture, and the White Throne Judgment, where the wicked dead would be consigned to the sorrows of the second death. Israel knew of the resurrection of the dead but not of the resurrection from the dead or of the out-resurrection of Philippians 3:11,

Why should a Gentile believer have to leave things which were not given him? What Gentile laid hands an any one? Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, gave to the Gentiles Christ’s message and program for them. Paul was sent by Christ. Paul was sent by Christ not to baptize. Gentile believers were to follow Paul in that which was in part in his pre-prison Epistles and “Acts” ministry and then in that which is perfect.

WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS. I CORINTHIANS 13:11.

A very simple, and yet a most import principle which must be observed in the intelligent study and understanding of the Word of God, is the interpretation of any Scripture in the light of the immediate context.

What did the Apostle Paul mean by the words, “When I was an infant I spoke as an infant, I understood as an infant”? I Corinthians 13:11. The answer is in the three verses preceding the eleventh verse. Prophecies, tongues and knowledge shall be done away. “That which is in part shall be done away. If “prophecies, tongues and knowledge”, mentioned with other gifts in I Corinthians 12:8 to 10, are to be done away, and “that which is in part” shall be done away, then some of the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 10, if not all of them, were to be done

away. When? When “that which is perfect” is come. Remaining “with that which is perfect” are faith, hope and love. I Corinthians 13:13. Pray tell, if the members of the Body of Christ, during this Dispensation of Grace, have genuine faith in Christ; if they have Christ within the hope of glory; if they are daily conscious of the love of Christ and are manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, why spoil it with religion, or seek that which was in part?

The Apostle Paul was chosen by the risen and glorified Christ to preach the unsearchable (untraceable) riches of Christ and to fulfill (bring to completion) the Word of God. Ephesians 3:8 and 9. Colossians 1:25. Paul began his ministry with the message of confirmation. Then the Lord added the message of revelation. After Israel was set aside, with the close of the “Book of Acts” period, and Paul was in Rome, the risen Lord led him to cease his message of confirmation, with signs; and to continue with his message of revelation, without signs, ceremonies or religion. Signs, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit belonged to the ministry and message of confirmation; to that which was in part: to the infant period. Hebrews 2:3 and 4. After the close of the “Book of Acts” period, Paul’s Epistles, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus and Timothy were filled with faith, hope and love. But, in them there is a marked absence of the signs and gifts and religion, which belonged to that which was in part.

Let us then advance with the recovery of the glorious Body truth and not permit any hierarchy to hold us in kindergarten truth.

RELIGIOUS TNT

WHAT MEANETH THIS PRESENT DAY CONTROVERSY ABOUT WATER BAPTISM?

**WATER BAPTISM WAS TO IDENTIFY BELIEVING GENTILES WITH ISRAEL.
HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM IS TO IDENTIFY BELIEVING GENTILES WITH CHRIST.**

Are you a member of the Body of Christ? If so, do you believe that members of the Body of Christ should be baptized in or with water? Can you give Scriptural authority and support for your answer? Why should a believer be baptized today? How should he be baptized? By whom should he be baptized? Is the “One Baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 water baptism? As long as a believer is baptized, does it make any difference whether he is baptized by sprinkling, pouring or immersing? Were the Twelve Apostles baptized with what is commonly termed New Testament believer’s baptism; that is, after the death and resurrection of Christ? Why did John the Baptist baptize, according to John 1:31? Did John baptize any Gentiles? Were any Gentiles saved while Jesus was on earth?

Before you continue reading this message, see if you can answer the above questions to your own satisfaction.

Whether water baptism was by sprinkling, pouring or immersing, our contention is, that it was sanctioned by the Lord only during the period from John the Baptist to Paul’s ministry in Rome, until the close of the “Book of Acts” period. The word “contention” is purposely used. We have asked you why you believe what you do? We will state why we believe what we do; that is, that water baptism for believing Gentiles was to identify them with Israel, whereas Holy Spirit baptism is to identify believing Gentiles with Christ. Our proof is not so difficult by the

clear teaching of the Word of God, but because of the tradition of church fathers and denominational creeds.

Many Christians would express their belief concerning water baptism, if they were sure as to their belief. Others seem sure, but keep silent.

Fundamentalism has, in the East, one of its great champions. He is a real honest-to-goodness contender for the faith. Ask him what he believes about the Virgin Birth. You will get a straight and clear answer. He will plainly express his uncompromising opposition to Postmillennialism, Second Work of Grace, Healing in the Atonement, Anglo-Israelism, Arminianism, Tongues, and a mixture of Law with Grace. But ask that dear brother this question, "what do you believe about water baptism?" His answer has been, and will perhaps continue to be, "I prefer not to express my views." He has told a few intimate friends that he believes in "Household" baptism, water baptism for believing adults and their children, by immersion. Why does he prefer not to tell the public what he believes? A Bible teacher should tell what he believes on this subject, if he knows what and why he believes what he does, if he knows why. Some of us have gotten into rather serious trouble for doing this very thing; but the trouble has not been with the Lord; it has been with brethren who disagree with us and who also disagree among themselves. No one thing has ever caused more division, strife and bitterness among Christians than water baptism. But it is mentioned many times in God's Word and every Christian should have a conviction, based on scriptural knowledge.

There is another beloved brother, residing in the same city in the East, who is a very able Bible teacher. This brother teaches that Water Baptism is a burial with Christ; and signifies that his old man was crucified with Christ and buried by Baptism. But the beloved brother recently manifested his old man in no uncertain manner because one of his Christian friends dared to challenge his interpretation of water baptism. He was almost in a rage before the conversation ended. The very symbol of the crucifixion of his old man made his friend realize that there was plenty of the old man left, for he was manifested in no uncertain manner. He threatened to disfellowship his friend, if he questioned his scriptural position again.

We have in this city a very able teacher, who is also an outstanding Fundamentalist. He has written many books. He teaches "Believer's" baptism. He has the courage of his convictions. He gives them orally and in his written ministry. He is uncompromisingly opposed to "Household" baptism. He has written that sprinkling infants is decidedly unscriptural, and is a false teaching borrowed from Rome. He teaches that the Body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost; but that Israel and the Body of Christ are separate and distinct. He teaches that Israel as a Nation was set aside with the words of the Lord Jesus, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:38. His strongest argument for water baptism for the Body of Christ is the Great Commission and the burial of Romans 6:4.

In one of his radio broadcasts this able teacher and pastor said, "I have an Ultradispensationalist friend, who teaches that water baptism is not for this age. When you meet and hear such a man, shun him and have no fellowship with him." Many dear brethren have followed his advice. He teaches that the "One" baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is water baptism. In that radio message he made water baptism the basis of fellowship. I give him credit for being sincere; although I still believe that he was, and is, sincerely wrong. I think he is sincerely wrong in reading water baptism into Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12, and Ephesians 4:5. He is such an able teacher in many things that it would be a blessed thing to have him criticize and change his own writings before his books fall into the hands of men in the next generation, if the Lord tarries; for even superficial students of the Word of God will be able to Scripturally criticize and

correct his teaching concerning water baptism. A young man said recently, “ I believe what I do about water baptism because of the teaching of . . .” this able man, to whom we have referred. Ninety per cent of preachers believe what they have been taught by other preachers to believe. They can see, that nothing will arouse the old man like the discussion of that which our brother claims is the symbol of the old man’s death and burial.

There are many immersionists in the Fundamentalists’ ranks, including this brother, who agree with me absolutely, that salvation is wholly and solely by pure grace, through faith in the once-for-all sacrifice and resurrection of the sinless Son of God, and that water baptism in no way aids a sinner’s salvation and has nothing to do with his becoming a member of the Body of Christ. Invariably they say, “Certainly I do not believe that water baptism is essential to salvation . . . but . . .” But what? Not one of their “buts” will stand the test of the Word of God rightly divided.

But what? “It is the outward symbol of an inward work of grace.” But no Scripture. Then they ask, “But is that not inferred?” “It is a witness to the world.” But no Scripture. “It is the mark of separation.” But this is man’s word, not the Word of God. Ninety per cent of baptized people show no signs of separation. “It is the proof that a man has put on Christ.” Have Mormons, Russelites, Adventists put on Christ? Have all baptized people put on Christ? “It is the proof or symbol that the believer is identified with Christ in death, burial and resurrection.” Not so, for all truly saved people, who have never been immersed, have that proof within, the Holy Spirit. Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit; not with water. Every believer is identified with Christ by Holy Spirit baptism; the “One” baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Water baptism signified, up to the close of the “Book of Acts” period, that Gentile believers were identified with Israel in the promises God made concerning Gentile salvation in connection with His Nation. After the “Act’s” period, Gentile salvation was independent of those covenants.

Some time ago I was explaining to one of the outstanding men of God my position and my Scriptural reasons for my stand. He said, “You have a convincing argument, but I wouldn’t teach it.” His reason was that it causes division. There are a number of Fundamentalists who believe as I do, but they keep silent for the sake of unity. They are endeavoring to keep the unity; but on the wrong basis. Ephesians 4:3. The question is, “Is it God’s Word rightly divided?” If it is, God is infinitely more concerned about having His truth proclaimed than He is in the unity of a group of men where His truth is being opposed or suppressed. If it is not God’s Word, let’s have the answer. Let not the answer be that the Christian church has been practicing the rite for centuries. What saith the Scriptures?

Several days ago a Baptist said, “I’ll admit that baptism is not necessary to become a member of the Church, which is Christ’s Body, but it is necessary to become a member of the Baptist Church.” Inasmuch as there is no Baptist Church in the Bible, no searcher after God’s truth is interested in the requirements of the Baptist denomination or in the creeds of any denominational organization. An interdenominational Christian organization seeking the support of Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Nazarenes, Pentecostals, Plymouth Brethren and Independent Fundamentalists, and others, must necessarily keep silent on the question of eternal security and other doctrines including water baptism, and must be careful not to offend any of the differing brethren by taking an open, dogmatic, uncompromising stand on controversial doctrines. The leaders of such organizations must ignore Galatians 1:10. But some of us say that it is a sin to ignore God’s will for His servants, expressed in this verse.

“Unity” is mentioned three times in God’s Word; Psalms 133:1, Ephesians 4:3 and 4:13. “Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” “Endeavouring to

keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” “Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . unto a perfect man.”

There are millions of Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Reformists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists and others, who have never been buried in water. Therefore, if baptism in Romans 6:4 is a water-burial, and if Ephesians 4:5 is a water-burial, there can be no unity on the basis of water: and those who have not been immersed in water have never been buried by baptism with Christ into death. But all intelligent students of the Word of God know that the moment a sinner believes unto salvation he is buried by the true baptism.

One of our leading Bible Schools publishes a monthly magazine. They receive and answer questions. Recently a question concerning “water baptism” was sent in. They refused to answer the question on the grounds that “water baptism is a controversial question. Such an attitude suggests that Fundamentalists today should keep silent on controversial questions. Fundamentalists, in contending for the faith, for the message of redemption by grace, and the Blessed Hope, enter heartily into controversial questions. But because they have many different and conflicting views concerning water baptism, and especially because they fear that their followers will hear a message that will show the often fallacy of their views, they not only forbid a discussion of the subject but actually discourage any Christian who might be inclined to listen to the Scriptural correction. In some cases there is more than discouragement; there is persecution not in the Spirit nor of the Spirit. Perhaps you know immersionists, whose old man has been buried by baptism, who become very ungracious when others disagree with them in the matter of water baptism. And all of us will admit that we do not like to have our cherished interpretations challenged, to say nothing of having them Scripturally disproved. But surely men of God are not to keep silent on the subject of water baptism because it is a controversial subject and causes division. If they keep silent for the same reason on the subject of Premillennialism or Eternal Security or Divine Healing or Tongues, Israel and the Church, how can the Word of God be taught? Nearly every outstanding Fundamentalist Bible teacher believes and teaches that the Body of Christ is not Israel; he teaches against general healing in the atonement; against tongues; and teaches that the believer once saved is eternally secure. But very few of them agree exactly concerning water baptism. If water baptism causes discord instead of unity among thoroughly fundamental evangelical, spiritual Bible teachers, who agree on the blessed truths of the Bible, should they continue to silence its discussion or see if they are not Scripturally wrong in holding on to it?

It is not difficult to see why a member of some church denomination must agree with the “water baptism belief of that denomination, or why, if he should differ with that belief, that he must not express that difference if he desires to enjoy denominational fellowship. But the Bible is not a denominational Bible and any denominational creed will limit the denominational Christian in his Bible study.

How can an interdenominational organization expect support from a number of different denominations and take an uncompromising stand on controversial subjects. If they do not take such a stand, but rather refuse to openly express their convictions because of a desire to please men, they can be the servants of the Lord only in a limited way and can not expect to influence those whom they teach to have a real Holy Spirit conviction on some Bible truths. Every Christian’s duty is set forth in Galatians 1:10.

To be uncompromising necessarily means to be unpopular. Interdenominational unity is impossible without compromise. To compromise is to disobey the Word of God. The Christian’s duty is clear.

Recently my radio contract with an Interdenominational Christian organization was canceled. My choice was to obey the Holy Spirit or please men. In the opinion and decision of the man who deprived me of the right of broadcasting the message of Christ, without religion, the contract was not canceled because of disobeying the Holy Spirit but because certain denominational brethren were opposed to the message. A Baptist brother in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, said that he wanted some of the credit, at least, for getting me off of that radio station. Well, he has it; but the end is not yet. Let us admit that the policy of the Institute was such that they felt compelled to terminate the broadcasting contract, and perhaps the policy of the Institute should have kept them from entering into the broadcast in the first place. The contract was entered into with full knowledge of what I had been teaching about water baptism, and what I would continue to preach on that subject; for the matter was discussed at length, at the time the broadcasting agreement was made, with the man of highest authority.

At the time the beloved and honoured brother very graciously gave me permission to broadcast over his station we had a very interesting conversation about "water baptism". There was lying on his desk my printed message, "Much, Little and No Water." He called my attention to his pencil notations. He said, I have gone through that message very carefully twice and have marked it all the way through. He remarked, "that's a splendid message." He said, "Go slow and you will win your brethren."

To two of our mutual friends this man of God, whom we all love and honour, said, concerning the same printed message, "Mr. O'Hair's message on baptism should be heard by the Fundamentalist brethren of this country and if they should refuse him a place on a conference program where I was invited to take part, I would refuse to speak

Under date of March 21, 1933, I received from this man of God a letter, from which I quote:

"Yes, I am reading and with much interest your booklet 'Much Little, No Water', and although I do not go all the way with you, I regard it as a fine piece of exegesis. Your fault is, if you will forgive me, that you are too intense."

Another letter from him, dated March 27th, 1933, contained this statement:

"Coming now to the question of your teaching about baptism, you are not to be condemned but contrariwise commended if you believe it is the truth. But on the other hand you should expect opposition from those who do not agree with you."

So our broadcasting contract was entered into with full knowledge as to my understanding and teaching concerning water baptism. I made no promises as to how much or how little I would say about the subject over the radio. However, during all the months I was using their broadcasting facilities I never preached a message on the subject, and referred very seldom to the subject, and when I did it was in no ungracious manner and never in the spirit of controversy. After I had been broadcasting for more than two months I called at the office of our beloved brother and asked him if he had had any protests or complaints. He replied that one brother had been to see him, but there had been nothing of a serious nature. He then said that if any one should register a complaint, he would ask for evidence, because he himself never listened to the radio message, and he would ask me to be present and hear the complainant. However, I was later notified of the termination of the contract, and no opportunity whatever was given me to give a word of explanation concerning any criticism or complaints that had been registered against me. I was not asked for any answer to any statements written by men who opposed my views on water baptism, although I afterwards learned that some of them were absolutely untrue.

I was not deprived of the right of broadcasting because the man who granted me that privilege disagreed with me on water baptism, which disagreement is stated, in quotations from his letters, but because others disagreed with me. If the majority of the friends of the Institute had agreed with me, that Christ without water is sufficient in this day of Grace, the broadcasting contract would not have been canceled. It was not a conviction concerning Bible doctrine; it was the policy of an Interdenominational organization to please men, especially the majority.

Figuratively and literally then, we can speak of Water Baptism as “Religious TNT.” Nothing will stir up the old man more than a discussion of water baptism. And nothing will do more to cause division among members of the Body of Christ, called The New Man. The Lord wants no schism in the Body. But water baptism has caused a pitiable and deplorable schism; and it exists whether or not the subject is discussed. There are more than a dozen different interpretations of the mode and signification of water baptism among spiritual brethren. The schism cannot be healed by ignoring the subject, if it can be healed at all. The unity among spiritual brethren should be kept on the basis of one baptism. Ephesians 4:5. If that is water baptism, all spiritual brethren should agree. That one baptism should cause spiritual brethren to be one in Christ, in fellowship. Water baptism causes division, strife and bitter feelings. It has come to be a kind of a religious dynamite, “handle with care subject”, even a forbidden subject, in Fundamentalist circles.

Then literally water baptism is TNT; that is Truth-Not-Truth.” Circumcision is Truth-Not-Truth. Circumcision was given by God for one period and forbidden in another. Genesis 17:8, Galatians 6:12 and 5:11 and 12. Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision: He is now Head of the Church in which there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. Romans 15:8. Israel’s Sabbath was a God-given Sabbath. God has not given that Sabbath to the Body of Christ. Much Truth given to Israel, in the past and concerning their future restoration with possession of Canaan, under King David, is for the instruction of members of the Body of Christ; but not for their personal appropriation and application. Even years after the resurrection of Christ there was one order for believing Israelites and another for believing Gentiles. Acts 15:19 and 21:25. I Corinthians 9:20 and 21. Surely no Grace preacher today would preach, with Divine authority, Matthew 10:6 to 8 . . . Matthew 23:1 to 3 . . . Acts 3:19 to 21 . . . Acts 10:35. No Grace preacher today would be guided by visions and miraculous signs; nor can he experience what believers experienced in the way of angelic visitations, supernatural demonstrations, the divers miracles of the Book of Acts period. To even the superficial student of the Bible it is evident that God’s Truth for one period, or dispensation, is not His Truth for another period.

Now the question, “Was water baptism God’s order and requirement for one period, and is not for this present Dispensation of Grace?”

We would all admit that the “divers baptisms” of Hebrews 9:10 belonged to Israel, a part of their Old Testament religion, and are not for this dispensation or age. We look at Christian baptism as having begun with the ministry of John the Baptist, although there is, by no means agreement among brethren that John’s water baptism can be called “Christian” baptism. John’s baptism was to manifest Israel’s Messiah to Israel. John 1:31. It was unto repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:4. Matthew 3:11. Luke 3:3. To be sure there was grace in John’s message, but baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins is not compatible with the pure message of Grace given by the risen Christ to Paul, for Gentile sinners. Even Grace preachers, who cling to water baptism agree that Acts 2:38 is not our message of Grace or even a part of it; “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.” It was God-given Truth for Israel on the day

of Pentecost and for some years thereafter. If a Christian applies water to a believing sinner to aid in his salvation, and that water helps to save him, then Ephesians 2:8 and 9 are not true, that a sinner is saved by grace, through faith, without works. Water baptism is most decidedly works” and generally regarded as “good works”, “very good works.” So Grace preachers will not baptize on the authority of Mark 16:16, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Therefore, it is immediately agreed to by all Grace preachers that water baptism does not have the same signification in this Dispensation of Grace that it had while Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision on earth, or the meaning given to it by the Twelve when they preached to Israel on the day of Pentecost. No Grace preacher preaches water baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins; knowing that such a message would frustrate the grace of God and indicate that the sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient for the sinner’s redemption. No Grace preacher would for one moment think of trying in any way to supplement the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, when presenting the Gospel to a sinner. Every Grace preacher believes that the very moment the sinner believes the Gospel of Grace, he receives the Holy Spirit, and that by that one baptism alone he is immediately identified with Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection, and is immediately seated with Christ, in Christ, in the heavenlies.

Every true messenger of the Lord, either evangelist or Bible teacher, knows that no water baptism is required to unite a believing sinner to Christ or to place him in the Body of Christ. God, by the Holy Spirit, gives the increase, and, by the same Holy Spirit, chooses the believer unto salvation. II Thessalonians 2:13. The very moment the sinner believes the Gospel and receives Christ he is sealed with the Holy Spirit. He becomes immediately a member of the Body of Christ, and is then and there identified with Christ in His death, His burial, His resurrection and His position in the upper-heavenlies. Ephesians 2:6. If the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby this transformation takes place is called “Holy Spirit baptism,” then Holy Spirit baptism identifies the believer with Christ. Every believing sinner, regardless of his belief or practice concerning water baptism, is thus identified with Christ. Moreover, we all admit that that is the all important thing. And we all admit that it is difficult to find any particular Bible verses instructing us how to join some denominational church-organization. Their officers have the authority to keep out of their organization one who is not baptized according to their constitution. But the Body of Christ is not an organization. Unsaved men can get into church-organizations, even though they have been baptized with water; but there are no unsaved members of the Body of Christ, even though they have never received water baptism.

Holy Spirit baptism, in Paul’s day, was to identify believing Gentiles with Christ. In Paul’s day, during the “Book of Acts” period, believing Gentiles were identified with Christ with believing Israelites by Holy Spirit baptism. But during that transition period they were also identified with Israel by water baptism.

Water baptism was preached and practiced by John the Baptist to manifest Christ to Israel. John 1:31. John baptized Israelites only. Luke 1:16 and 80, Acts 13:24.

The first Gentile to be joined to Israel was Cornelius, about eleven years after John began to baptize Israelites. To Cornelius was preached the Word that was sent to Israel. Acts 10:36.

The Lord Jesus was sent only to Israel. Matthew 15:24. Peter was sent to preach Christ to Cornelius. Paul was sent by Christ to preach to Gentiles. The Twelve were specifically instructed, while the Lord Jesus was in their midst, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles”. Matthew 10:5. Ten years after He forbade them to go to Gentiles it was not yet lawful for them to come unto Gentiles. Acts 10:28. So, any student of the Word of God who puts the year of

Gentile salvation before that day, about 41 AD, that the twelve rejoiced because repentance unto life was granted unto the household of Cornelius, according to Acts 11:18, is unscriptural.

Hear the words of the Lord Jesus, “Let the children first be filled”. Mark 7:27. They were not filled while the Lord Jesus was on earth. It was after He went back to glory that Peter preached a message unto Jews only, “unto you first”. Acts 3:26 It was more than ten years still later when Paul in a synagogue in Asia, said to an assembly of Jews, “It was necessary that the lord of God should first have been spoken unto you (Israel)”. Acts 13:46.

The children (Israel) were to be cast into darkness, according to Matthew 8:11 and 12, and so they were about 62 A.D. Acts 28:25 to 28. The judgment is recorded in Romans 11:7 and 8—Romans 11:25, written about 60 A.D. But the children were not cast into darkness immediately after the death of Christ. For although He said, “your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:28), and “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you” (Matthew 21:43), they were addressed in a message of mercy months thereafter, in Jerusalem, as “Ye are the children”. Acts 3:24 and 25. The children were still being filled. All the time Israel was being filled—up to the time they were cast into darkness—a dispensation of signs and ceremonies continued. Israel’s water baptism continued with the dispensation of signs. Water baptism is found just as long as the message was preached to Israel “Jesus is Messiah”. When signs and God’s religious program ceases, so does water baptism.

The Lord Jesus forbade His apostles to testify to Israel that He ways Messiah in the third year of His ministry. Matthew 16:20. If He did not rescind that order, the Twelve were out of the will of God in Acts 2:36. And most undoubtedly the Apostle Paul was disobeying this clear command of the Lord in Acts 18:5 and in Acts 28:23.

The order was rescinded; the pronounced judgment was postponed from Calvary to the close of the “Book of Acts” period. The kingdom was not, yet taken away from Israel at the time their Messiah died. Their house was not left unto them desolate until some years later. Why? For two reasons. The death of Christ was foreordained and according to Israel’s prophets. And Israel’s rulers did it through ignorance. Acts 3:14 to 17. So the Father heard His Son’s prayer, “forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34. The armies of Matthew 22:7 were not sent until God had extended mercy and a new offer of the Kingdom to Israel for more than thirty years after the death of Christ.

Israel’s doom was pronounced in the year 62 A.D. . . . Acts 28:25 to 27. Then the children were cast into darkness. Then the Kingdom was taken away from them. God had been very gracious. He had also sent salvation to Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. He had permitted Paul to become a Jew in order to win them. But they would not have this man to reign over them. And Luke 21:24 has found fulfillment from about 68 A.D. down to the present time, with the worse to come.

But with that judgment of darkness pronounced upon Israel, there came a wonderful message for Gentiles—”The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles”. Acts 28:28.

What did that mean? In Matthew 10:5 there was no message for Gentiles. Up to the conversion of Cornelius there was no message for the Gentiles. But about 45 A.D. a door of hope had been opened for Gentiles. Acts 14:27. Many thousands had been saved from among the Gentiles between 45 A. D. and 63 A.D. when Acts 28:28 was declared. Therefore, the statement of Acts 28:28 must have a very special meaning that most of us have not given to it. The meaning is plain in the light of Paul’s Epistles written after that declaration. Read about Gentile salvation in those Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians. Titus and Timothy; then compare with Gentile salvation in the Book of Acts and in Paul’s first six Epistles.

Salvation had been sent to Gentiles in connection with Israel and Israel's promises, covenants and Kingdom. But after Acts 28:28, there was to be, and there was, a radical change. Compare Acts 10:43, Acts 15:14 to 17, Acts 23:18, Galatians 3:29, Romans 11:17 and 24, Romans 15:10 to 12, Gentile salvation during the "Book of Acts" period, with Ephesians 2:1 to 13, Ephesians 3:5 to 9, Colossians 1:26 and 27, II Timothy 1:9, written after Acts 28:28.

Are we the children of Abraham? Are we part of the olive tree? Are we members of the Body of Christ in fulfillment of Amos 9:11 and 12, referred to in Acts 15:14 to 17—or in fulfillment of kingdom salvation referred to in Romans 15:10 and 12?

Some time ago a mutual friend brought me face to face with a godly fundamental preacher who was decidedly an "Antidispensationalist". In his judgment I was not only a "Dispensationalist" but an "Ultradispensationalist". I asked him to set forth his objections to my position. His reply was that I was trying to take the Old Testament Scriptures, the Gospels and some of the Book of Acts, and the Epistle of James away from Christians. I replied that I had no desire to take away from any Christian one single word in the Bible. I emphatically declared myself as opposed to the Red Letter New Testament because I believed that the Book of Genesis, the Book of Revelation, and every line of Scripture between the two Books were just as much the inspired Word of God as were the words, that God spoke in His Son; that we have a more sure word of prophecy.

Certainly we would never have had the Epistle to the Galatians, from the mind of the Spirit and the pen of Paul, if it had not been for the fact that the believers in the churches of Galatia were mixing with God's message intended for them the message of God which was not intended for them.

I asked this brother, who is an outstanding Fundamentalist Bible-teacher, to sit down with me for a little while and open the Book of Matthew. We turned to Matthew 23:1 to 3 where the disciples were instructed by the Lord to observe the commandments of the hypocrites and corrupt leaders because they sat in the Seat of Moses. Then we turned to Matthew 8:4 where the Lord Jesus commanded the healed leper to show himself to the priest. Then we turned to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:5, and asked him if he thought that meek members of the body of Christ would inherit the earth; and Matthew 5:9, "are we the children of God because we are peacemakers, or because Christ made peace by the blood of His cross". I asked him if he taught and practiced Matthew 6:25, Matthew 5:40 to 42, Matthew 5:24, Matthew 6:17, Matthew 5:29 and 30. I asked him concerning other Scriptures, and to every question he replied, "no, I do not preach and practice those commandments because they are not compatible with our message of grace".

When he asked the question that so many have asked, "What about the Gospel of John, for instance, John 3:16, John 3:18, John 5:24, John 10:28?" I replied, "Your answer is my answer. All of John and other Scriptures which fit into the message of pure grace are truth for the Body of Christ." Then I stated my position in these words, "I believe that, some of the Psalms were spoken peculiarly to Israel in their land and had to do with the people in the past under the Law, or with the same people in the future, under the glorious reign of their King; and, therefore, they could never have primary reference or direct application to the members of the Body of Christ without corrupting the Scriptures beyond understanding. But, on the other hand, there were certain Psalms, wholly compatible with Body truth, and should be appropriated and applied by every member of the Body of Christ. This is true concerning every Book in the Bible. This is true concerning the four Gospels. This is true concerning the Epistle of James and the Book of Acts.

Then I added, “There must be some intelligent Divine method for the guidance of the believer today as to what inspired Scriptures must be appropriated for the faith and practice of the members of the Body of Christ, and what Scriptures must be eliminated (not from his faith) from his practice. Surely the answer to this is, that every line of Scripture is for the appropriation and application of every member of the Body of Christ that will stand the test of the final truth given by the risen Lord, through the Apostle Paul, for and to the members of His Body.”

After some time in searching the Word together, the Fundamentalist brother acknowledged that the Lord Jesus was a Jew while He was on earth; that He was under the Law; and that Christians today are not under the Law. The Lord Jesus was a minister of the circumcision while He was an earth; but now He is seated in the upper-heavenlies as Head of the Church, in which there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. We should not follow the Lord Jesus in circumcision, Luke 2:21; we should not follow the Lord’s accustomed practice of going to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day. Luke 4:16. Read Matthew 10:5 to 8. That message is not for Gentiles and was never sent by Divine authority to the Gentiles by Paul. Observe a most important part of that program set forth in Matthew 10:8, which we quote: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.” Is this for us to obey today?

But now let us consider the Scriptures to prove the statement that water baptism was to identify believing Gentiles with Israel during the “Acts” dispensation.

“REJOICE, YE GENTILES. WITH HIS PEOPLE.” ROMANS 15:10.

There is a difference between Gentile salvation during “the Dispensation of the Son of Man” on earth, “the Dispensation of the Acts,” and “the Dispensation of the Mystery”, which followed the close of the “Book of Acts” period, and has continued unto this day.

“Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people”. How can we today? There is not an average of one Israelite in every forty Gentile assemblies. But how different during the thirty-five years from the ministry of John the Baptist to Paul’s imprisonment at Rome.

There were some proselytes to the Jews’ religion when the Lord Jesus was here among men. Acts 2:10. And if a Gentile had been saved while the Saviour was a minister of the circumcision, he would have become a Jew by religion and not a member of the Body of Ephesians and Colossians.

Were not the Twelve apostles plainly commanded, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles”, while their Messiah was in the midst of Israel? Matthew 10:15. If they had gone to Gentiles, would they not have been disobedient?

Certainly from the resurrection of Christ to the salvation of the household of Cornelius no Gentiles rejoiced with God’s people Israel. There were proselytes on the day of Pentecost and Cornelius had been rejoicing with Israel to some degree, before Peter preached to him, about 41 A.D. Acts 10:2 and 22. To Cornelius, Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9. Peter had no other gospel to proclaim. So most assuredly, when the Twelve glorified God for letting Cornelius join them, Cornelius and his friends rejoiced with Israel. Acts 11:18 and 10:36. In 41 A.D. there was one Gentile family in the Church of God with thousands and thousands of Israelites. Acts 2:41—Acts 4:4—Acts 5:14—6:1 Acts 4:19. Christ had been raised to give repentance to Israel. Acts 5:31. There were no Gentile apostles, prophets or preachers— one proselyte deacon. Acts 6:5. The Twelve were Israelites, as were the Seventy. The One Hundred and Twenty were Israelites, as were Paul, Barnabas, Mark and Silas. So any saved

Gentile had to rejoice with God's people. The first company of Greeks saved through Paul's preaching were in the Jews' synagogue, Acts 14:1. Certainly they had to acknowledge that salvation was of the Jews and rejoice with them.

When the multitudes of Acts 5:14 were added to the Lord they were all Jews. They were divided into four classes, Hebrews, Grecians, proselytes and strangers of Rome. Then Jews of Samaria were added. Acts 8:5 to 13. Then an Ethiopian proselyte. Acts 8:27 to 40. Then Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9:18. Then the first Gentiles; the family of Cornelius, undoubtedly uncircumcised proselytes. All of the people first added to the Lord in Antioch in Syria, Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Athens, Philippi and Ephesus were Jews. Paul's custom was Jew first. Acts 17:2. The Gentile believers, added to the Lord, were added to Israel, up to the close of the "Acts" Dispensation.

"Who are Israelites—and the covenants—and the promises?" Romans 9:4. God hath not cast away His people, said Paul, "I also am an Israelite". Romans 11:1 and 2. "At this present time (year 60 A.D.) also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Romans 11:5. "Some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them". Romans 11:17. "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people". "If thou were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature, into a good olive tree". Romans 11:24. If the "Olive Tree" is Israel, there is a sense in which the—Church of God, during the "Acts" Dispensation, was Israel. Even the believing Gentiles, who, during that period were identified with Israel in fulfillment of Israel's prophecies, were the children of Abraham. Galatians 3:7. But as Abraham was declared righteous in uncircumcision, Gentile believers were not to be circumcised. Romans 4:5 to 15. Gentile believers, during the period from Pentecost to Acts 28:28, were Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29. The promise belonged to Israel. The Gentiles rejoiced with His people. Therefore, signs and water baptism were in order. Acts 15:12—Romans 15:18 and 19—Galatians 3:5. The Gentile believers shared with believing Jews in the Church of God the several gifts of the Spirit, which gifts were to be done away when that which was in part passed away. I Corinthians 12:8 to 10 and 13:8 to 13.

They were united in a body, under the New Covenant ministry. I Corinthians 12:13—II Corinthians 3:1 to 12. That covenant was for Israel. Jeremiah 31:31 to 35—Hebrews 8:8 to 11. Are our Premillennial Fundamentalist brethren, who try to keep the Body of Christ in the "Acts" Dispensation, positive they can answer our Covenant brethren who say that the New Testament Church is Israel? The so-called "Ultradispensationalists", who place the Body where the Scriptures place it, can answer them.

When Paul made that declaration to close the "Acts" Dispensation, in Acts 28:25, 27, he added in Acts 28:28, "The salvation of God is sent unto Gentiles". Compare this with Matthew 10:5; Acts 11:18; Acts 14:27; Acts 15:14 to 17; Acts 13:46; Acts 18:6; Romans 11:11 and 30.

The salvation of God was sent to Cornelius the Gentile, in 41 A. D. Paul preached to Gentiles in 45 A. D. Acts 14:1. Therefore, when in, in 62 A. D. Paul declared, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles", salvation had been sent to them for more than twenty years. The meaning of Acts 28:28, in the light of Paul's Epistles written after that declaration, was that salvation would be sent to the nations, under different circumstances, with a revised message and additional revelation; that Gentile believers would thereafter be identified with Christ, independent of "His people" (Israel), or their covenants, or religion, or promises.

One Scripture for an example, in II Timothy 1:11 we find these words of Paul, "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles Note the

connection, “whereunto”. “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”. II Timothy 1:9. No blessing here because of Israel’s Abrahamic, Davidic or New Covenants, as in the “Acts” Dispensation; but God’s grace and purpose before the foundation of the world, not to identify believing Gentiles with Israel in their Kingdom hopes and promises, but with Christ. “Making of twain the New Man”. Ephesians 2:15.

Let us study this wonderful verse with Ephesians 2:13 and Colossians 1:26, emphasizing the word “now” in the two verses.

“BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YE WHO SOMETIMES WERE FAR OFF ARE MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.”

“EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS.”

Christ on earth said, “Before Abraham was I AM”, and before Abraham was Christ was foreordained to be God’s spotless Lamb. I Peter 1:18 and 19.

The sacrifice of Christ and the pure grace salvation of believing Gentiles, identified with the risen Christ in the upper heavenlies, was purposed by God before He made any promises to Abraham or Israel, before He ever created that Nation for His glory among nations, which they are yet to be; yea, given us in Christ before the foundation of the world. We were chosen in Him in the eternal ages and will be on exhibition to His grace and glory in the ages to come. Ephesians 1:4 and Galatians 2:7. The riches of Christ for Gentile believers, during the “Acts” period, were traceable through Israel’s Scriptures and history. The riches of Christ preached by Paul, after the close of the “Acts” Dispensation, were unsearchable or untraceable. We quote Ephesians 3:8 and 9, changing “Unsearchable” to “Untraceable” as it should read “Unto me, who am less than the least of His saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the untraceable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all thing by Jesus Christ”. The reason is given in Ephesians 3:5—3:8 and Colossians 1:26, which we quote:

“WHICH IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN UNTO THE SONS OF MEN, AS IT IS NOW REVEALED UNTO HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS BY THE SPIRIT.”

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

“EVEN THE MYSTERY WHICH HATH BEEN HID FROM AGES AND FROM GENERATIONS, BUT NOW IS MADE MANIFEST TO HIS SAINTS.”

In Paul’s Epistles after Acts 28:28, he used the word “mystery” twelve times. The Mystery came not from Israel’s Scriptures but by revelation.

“HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY.”—Ephesians 3:3.

Therefore, we call the Dispensation after Acts 28:28, the “Mystery” Dispensation. But this does not mean that the truth of Ephesians, Colossians and Timothy should still be a secret hid in God. No, God wants every one of us to make all men see. Ephesians 3:9. Let’s try our best. It is a difficult task because religious people prefer the “Acts” Dispensation Religious ceremonies and signs and gifts passed out with the revelation of the Mystery. Water baptism was no longer needed to identify Gentile believers with Christ. They had something infinitely better, a heavenly position in Christ, with heavenly blessings, identified with Christ by a spiritual

baptism. Water baptism is one of the principal obstacles keeping God's saints from receiving this truth. Some of them would like to receive it, if they could hold on to water baptism. But that is impossible.

So up to the close of the "Acts" Dispensation it was "rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people."

How different when we come to the Now of Ephesians 2:13 and the order of Gentiles first and Israel second in Ephesians 2:17. Again referring to the verse: "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people", let us read the several other verses connected with this verse

ROMANS 15:8 TO 12:

"NOW I SAY THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS:

"AND THAT THE GENTILES MIGHT GLORIFY GOD FOR HIS MERCY; AS IT IS WRITTEN, FOR THIS CAUSE I WILL CONFESS TO THEE AMONG THE GENTILES, AND SING UNTO THY NAME.

"AND AGAIN HE SAITH, REJOICE YE GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.

"AND AGAIN, PRAISE THE LORD, ALL YE GENTILES; AND LAUD HIM, ALL YE PEOPLE.

"AND AGAIN, ESAIAS SAITH, THERE SHALL BE A ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE THAT SHALL RISE TO REIGN OVER THE GENTILES; IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES TRUST."

Notwithstanding the fact that the Apostle to the Gentiles received the Gospel for the nations by revelation (Galatians 1:11 and 12), from these verses in Romans 15:8 to 12, we are taught that Paul's ministry and message to the Gentiles had been the fulfillment of certain of Israel's Scriptures, prophecies written in the Old Covenant Dispensation, centuries before Christ came from heaven to earth. Those prophecies were not concerning the Body of Christ in the Dispensation of Grace. They were concerning Gentile salvation in connection with Israel's Kingdom; "the root of Jesse that was to reign over Gentiles". Those prophets were wholly ignorant of the Body of Christ and the Dispensation of Grace which the risen Christ committed to Paul, His prisoner for the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:1 and 5. "To me". Ephesians 3:3.

In light of the foregoing we must agree with men of God like John Darby, Dr. James M. Gray, Dr. Wm. L. Pettingill, Dr. A. C. Gaebelein and many other able teachers that the so-called Great Commission is intended for Israel and their kingdom program rather than for the Body of Christ during this dispensation.

Surely in the light of Galatians 1:11 and 12 and Galatians 2:1 to 9 and Ephesians 3:1 to 9, we can see that the Apostle Paul received from Christ, and then passed on to Timothy, a commission which superseded the commission of Matthew 28:19 to 20—Read II Timothy 2:2.

May we leave with you this suggestion that you read carefully Matthew 10:5, Matthew 19:28, Acts 10:28 with Galatians 2:7 to 9 and then it will be easy to understand why the Apostles remained at Jerusalem and addressed all their messages to Israel except Peter's one message to the household of Cornelius. But when Paul went to Jerusalem the Lord appeared to him and told him to get out of that city and go far hence to the Gentiles—Acts 22:17 to 22.

THE A-B-C's OF DISPENSATIONALISM

“ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED.”
THE DISPENSATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION.
II Timothy 2:15.

Every true Christian believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible; not only some of the Bible, but all of the Bible; but all Christians know that some truths that God intended for Israel, under the Law, cannot be applied to members of the Body of Christ in this Dispensation of Grace.

Every Christian who subscribes to the creed of some evangelical church organization and enjoys fellowship with other Christians on the basis of that creed is a “Dispensationalist”

Every evangelical Christian knows that during the Old Testament period of time Israelites were under the Law; whereas since the death and resurrection of Christ and the advent of the Holy Spirit members of the Body of Christ are in Christ, and are not under the Law. Therefore, to admit that Israelites, during a certain period of time, by Divine authority, were under the Law; and that by the same authority present-day believers are dead to the Law, delivered from the Law, not under the Law, is to admit that God’s program for His people, during one period, differs from His program for His people during another period. If we refer to these different periods as “Dispensations”, we are justified in calling ourselves “Dispensationalists.”

Consider, for example, the creeds and practices of the Presbyterians, Lutherans, Reformists and the Christian Reformed denomination. They teach and practice baptism by sprinkling for New Testament believers and their households. They believe that water baptism was given by the Lord to take the place of circumcision. Whether or not their teaching is Scriptural, such teaching makes them “Dispensationalists,” because they admit that that which rightfully belonged to God’s people during one economy has no place in another one.

We have only to read and compare Genesis 17:14 and Galatians 5:3 and 12 to learn that during one Dispensation God demanded circumcision as the basis of fellowship, with the specific instructions to “cut off” those who refused to submit to the rite; whereas in this Dispensation of Grace the same rite was not only forbidden but those who tried to practice it were to be “cut off”. The explanation is “Dispensationalism”.

Let us next consider the sabbath. In Exodus 31:14 to 17 is recorded the plain Word of God concerning the seventh-day sabbath given to Israel by Jehovah. It was a sign between Jehovah and Israel. There was a severe penalty for the violation of the holy commandment regarding the sabbath. But why is it that Christians today do not believe that God’s commandment to Israel concerning the seventh-day sabbath is binding? Whether or not Christians today call the first day of the week sabbath, they should be convinced, by their failure to obey God’s Sabbath commandment to Israel, that they are Dispensationalists. The sabbath given by the Lord, during one period, is not binding upon His people of another period.

Read Numbers 15:32 to 37 concerning the man stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath. This was the specific command of the Lord. But God’s dealing with humanity, under grace today, is altogether different. Why? A different Dispensation.

From Sinai to Calvary “meats and drinks, divers baptisms and carnal ordinances” were imposed on God’s people. Hebrews 9:10. This religious Dispensation began about 1500 B. C. When Christ died, about 33 A.D., Ephesians 2:14 and 15 was accomplished; “the law of commandments, in ordinances, was abolished.” “Blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances .

.. nailing it to the cross.” Colossians 2:14. Israel’s God-given religion of a past Dispensation is not for this Dispensation.

It is apparent to even the superficial student of the Bible that with the advent of the Lord Jesus a most radical change took place in God’s dealings with the human race. “The Law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” We must answer this most important question, if we would rightly divide the Word of truth: “Did this radical change come gradually by the commands and teachings of Jesus while He was the minister of the circumcision, sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, or suddenly by His death and resurrection?” “Was the middle-wall of partition between Israel and Gentiles standing until Christ died on the cross?” Ephesians 2:14 to 17. Colossians 2:14. This leads us to another question: “Did Jesus spend His earthly life under the New Covenant Dispensation or under the Old?” Where was the handwriting of ordinances nailed?

In I Corinthians 12:13 we are told that Jews and Greeks, by the Holy Spirit, are baptized into the Body of Christ. This was written about 58 A. D. But Jews and Greeks were not baptized into the Body of Christ while Jesus was on earth. Three reasons: “The Holy Spirit was not yet given. John 7:39. There was no Body of Christ. Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.” Matthew 10:5 and 15:24.

In Romans 10:12 God’s Word declares that there is no difference between the Jew and Greek. That was about 59 A. D. But in 32 A. D. Jesus called the Jews “Children” and “Sheep” and He called the Greeks “Dogs.” Matthew 15:22 to 27. There is a great difference between “Children” and “Dogs,” between “Sheep” and “Dogs”. What brought about this Dispensational change, and when was it brought about?

About 1900 B. C. God called Abram. From Abram, Isaac and Jacob came the Nation Israel created for God’s glory, in fulfillment of His promise to Abram. Isaiah 43:1 to 7. Genesis 12:2. Four hundred and thirty years after the call of Abram, in about 1492 B.C., more than one million Israelites were led out of Egypt by Moses. During the 2000 years, or more, from Adam’s fall to the year that the 70 Israelites went down to Egypt (Exodus 1:5), Israel did not exist. “From Adam to Moses,” was a period before the Law. Romans 5:14. During that period there were neither Jews nor the Jews’ religion. Therefore, for more than 2000 years there were no Israelites. But “from Adam to Moses” there were many saved people of God. If those people were not “Israel,” most assuredly they were not members of the Body of Christ, then there will be redeemed sinners in the ages to come belonging to neither Israel nor the Body of Christ. We must recognize one or more Dispensations in the program and purpose of God before the birth of Israel. With what group in eternity will Abel, Seth, Enoch, Shem and others be identified?

John the Baptist came baptizing with water. The significance of John’s baptism is told in his own words, as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, “That Christ might be made manifest to Israel.” John 1:31. While Jesus was on the earth the believers were not baptized with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:5. John 7:39. During that Dispensation there was one baptism, “Water.” During the “Book of Acts” period there were two baptisms, “Water and “Holy Spirit” baptism. During this present Dispensation, beginning with Ephesians 4:5, there is one baptism, “Holy Spirit.”

No intelligent Christian today preaches water baptism unto repentance for remission of sins. If it was a God-given message for one period, and is not today, then we must apply the Dispensational principle to the study of Water Baptism. Do you believe that water baptism is unto repentance for the remission of sins? If your answer is “No,” whether or not you believe that water baptism is still in God’s program, you are a Dispensationalist.

That God inaugurated a new program or ushered in a new Dispensation with the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, no real student of the Bible can or will deny. Neither will any student of the Bible deny that most of that program has been eliminated from the programs of present-day church organization. Why? Why do present-day church programs differ so much from the “Book of Acts” program? Now, meditate before you answer this question. If Christians today are living in the same Dispensation that God ushered in on the day of Pentecost—and most Dispensationalists so teach—what Divine right has any Christian church organization to eliminate from its program the messages and practices of the Church of God which began under the leadership and authority of Peter and the Eleven who were commissioned by the resurrected Christ?

If we have Divine right to ignore, alter or abbreviate that God-given program, it must be because of a Dispensational change since the days of Peter’s authority. If we are in the will of God for refusing to preach, as “undispensational” in this Dispensation of Grace, the message of Acts 2:38, “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins,” or the message of Acts 3:19 to 21, “repent and He will send Jesus Christ for the restitution of all things,” then we must admit that God’s message and program for today is quite different from the message which the Holy Spirit put into the heart and mouth of the Twelve on the day of Pentecost and for some years thereafter. Why do we not follow the order of Phillip, in Samaria, in the Eighth Chapter of Acts; miracles, faith, water baptism, imposition of hands, Holy Spirit baptism? If it is not the will of God that the Church of Christ today should observe the order of Acts 19:3 to 11, water baptism, imposition of hands, Holy Spirit baptism, speaking with tongues, healing the sick, casting out demons, etc., then we must confess that God has brought us into a new Dispensation quite different from the “Acts,” or “Pentecostal Church,” or “Apostolic” Dispensation. Yes, or No?

Jesus of Nazareth was a man in the midst of Israel, approved of God by signs. He was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. He was made under the Law. He was a minister of the circumcision, confirming promises to Israel. Romans 15:8. He instructed His apostles to preach, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” What next? The first command . . . “heal the sick.” Matthew 10:5 to 8. This was in the year 31 A. D. In the year 66 A. D. in the last message the risen Christ gave to Paul before his death: “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” II Timothy 4:20. Apostles were healing the sick in 31 A. D. Luke 9:6. Apostles were healing the sick in 34 A. D. Acts 5:12 to 15. Apostles were healing the sick in 56 A. D. Acts 19:11. Apostles were healing the sick in 60 A. D. Acts 28:8 Members of the Body of Christ had the gift of healing in the year 58 A. D. I Corinthians 12:8 and 9. But Apostles did not have the gift of healing in 66 A.D. II Timothy 4:20. No Christian today has the gift of healing. Neither does any Christian experience what the apostles and disciples experienced while Jesus was on earth and during the “Book of Acts” period, as to heavenly visions, angelic visitations, miraculous jail deliverances, pronouncing death judgments, casting out demons, raising the dead and performing miracles. What is the explanation? Is the explanation “Unbelief” or “Undispensational?” Surely “undispensational,” which means the “Sign” Dispensation, has been done away, in fulfillment of Corinthians 13:8. If that which is perfect has taken the place of that which is in part, in accordance with I Corinthians 13:10, then we have an intelligent exegesis and explanation of the absence, in Paul’s Prison Epistles, of the signs, ceremonies and covenants found in his first six Epistles, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, and as to why they are still absent among Christians.

There are four explanations as to why the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 are not following believers today.

First, “Uninspired”

Second, “Unintended”

Third, “Unbelief”

Fourth, “Undispensational.”

Some say Mark 16:17 and 18 are not in several of the original manuscripts. Therefore “uninspired.” Others say, the signs were to follow only apostles; not intended for believers. I Corinthians 12:8 and 9 refute and disprove this. Some say, that the signs would be here, if it were not for the unbelief among Christians. The fourth group says that signs do not belong to the Dispensation of Grace: since the close of the “Book of Acts” period; that a new dispensation of Grace, without any religious mixture, began after Paul said, in Acts 28:28, “the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.” Therefore, the answer to the absence of the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18, as well as the absence of the gifts of the Twelfth Chapter of I Corinthians is, “Undispensational.” What say you?

God’s Son was made under the Law. Galatians 4:4. Christ was born to occupy the throne of David and reign forever over the house of Jacob. Luke 1:31 to 39. When Jesus was eight days old He was circumcised. Luke 2:21. When Jesus was 30 years old He went on the sabbath into the synagogue as was His custom. Luke 4:16. Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God in the midst of Israel by miracles and signs. Acts 2:22. Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 15:24. Christ was a minister of the circumcision to confirm certain promises God, through His prophets, had made, to Israel. Romans 15:8. Christ, therefore, recognized those who sat in the seat of Moses. Matthew 23:1 to 3.

Christ was raised from the dead, according to the prophecy of David, to occupy the throne of David. Acts 2:25 to 32. Compare several messages of Christ, spoken while he was Jesus of Nazareth on earth, with several messages He spoke from heaven some years later through Paul. “Strive to enter in.” Luke 13:24. “He that shall endure to the end shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13. “If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.” Matthew 5:30. “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.” Matthew 6:14. “Shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded.” Matthew 8:4. “This do and thou shalt live.” Luke 10:28. Now the messages of Grace through Paul: “Justified without a cause by His grace.” Romans 3:24. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” Romans 10:9 and 10. “By grace are ye saved through faith . . . not of works.” Ephesians 2:8 and 9. “Who hath saved us . . . not according to our works, but according to His grace and purpose given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” II Timothy 1:9. “Having forgiven you all trespasses.” Colossians 2:13. “Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32.

Which message is for members of the Body of Christ today? The messages of pure Grace sent down from heaven by Christ, or the kingdom messages of Jesus spoken to Israel, which are not compatible with the later Grace message?

No sensible Christian ever made the statement that the Four Gospels are not for the Body of Christ. Many of the blessed truths spoken by Jesus on earth should be appropriated and applied by members of His Body. The same is true of the Psalms and all the Scriptures.

No intelligent, obedient Christian will teach that any one part of the Bible is any more inspired than any other portion. Neither will he say that any verse in all of the Scriptures is not for the Body of Christ, if that verse will stand the test of God’s truth for this Dispensation of Grace, which was committed to Paul. Ephesians 3:1 to 11.

THE FOUR GOSPELS—PAUL’S “MY GOSPEL” AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

HOW ABOUT THE “WHOSOEVER” OF JOHN THREE-SIXTEEN; AND THE “AS MANY AS” OF JOHN 1:12?

We are agreed that all intelligent Bible students are “Dispensationalists.” All Dispensationalists are agreed that the Body of Christ, referred to in Ephesians 1:19 to 22, did not exist—except in the eternal purpose of God—while Jesus of Nazareth was a man on earth, approved of God by miracles and signs in the midst of Israel. Acts 2:22.

Likewise all Dispensationalists are agreed that there is a difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom, mentioned in Matthew 4:23—9:35—24:14, and the “MY” Gospel of Paul, mentioned in Romans 2:16—16:25 and in II Timothy 2:8. Every Christian who makes any attempt to rightly divide the Word of truth, is sure that when Jesus of Nazareth announced to Israel, “the Kingdom of heaven is at hand,” in Matthew 4:17 and 10:7 and 8, He was not proclaiming either the continuation or the beginning of the Ephesians Body of Christ made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. “Go not into the way of the Gentiles,” was the command of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10:5.

HOW ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF JOHN OR THE GOSPEL IN JOHN?

There are in the Gospel of John sixteen chapters concerning the life, ministry and message of the Lord Jesus not mentioned in Matthew, Mark and Luke. We call Matthew, Mark and Luke, “the Synoptic Gospels.” “Synoptic” means presenting the same or a common view. It is not a difficult task to compare and harmonize the Lord’s Kingdom messages in the Synoptic Gospels, or to perceive wherein the Lord’s Kingdom messages in these three Records differ from the Gospel of Grace which the risen Christ afterward revealed to Paul. Galatians 1:11 and 12.

But the task that requires diligent, prayerful study is to harmonize the Lord’s ministry and message in John’s Gospel with the Synoptic Gospels, on the one hand, and with Paul’s Grace Gospel on the other hand. We certainly have in John’s Gospel a mixture of the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace, in spite of the fact that John, with Peter and other apostles, was a minister of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 to 9.

It is significant that the Sermon on the Mount, with the Golden Rule and the so-called Lord’s prayer, “Our Father”, is not to be found in John. In the very first chapter we are told that Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and “Behold the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world.” “He that believeth on the Son is not condemned,” is certainly a message of Grace. “He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life,” is certainly a message of Grace. John 3:16 and John 6:47. So also is John 5:24 and John 3:36 and John 10:9.

BUT NOW LET US COMPARE CAREFULLY AND RECONCILE

John 3:16 . . . “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”

WITH

Matthew 15:24 . . . “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

During the Old Testament period Gentiles were saved. They became Jews. Esther 8:17. They were called “proselytes.” They were Jews by religion. To some proselytes Peter and the Eleven preached on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:10. In spite of the fact that the Lord Jesus

specifically instructed His apostles “go not into the way of the Gentiles,” we must believe that if a penitent Gentile had really wanted to be saved, while Jesus was here on earth, as King of the Jews, while Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, surely he would have been saved. But we know that that saved Gentile would not have become a member of the Body of Christ. While repentance and restitution were being preached to Israel, before the Lord Jesus was crucified, a saved Gentile would have become a proselyte, a Jew by religion. Perhaps we have tried in vain to find in any of the Four Gospels the record of one Gentile who was saved while Jesus was on earth. We know that the Syrophenician woman, of great faith, and the centurion, of great faith, received for their loved ones; physical healing, but their blessings were only physical so far as we know. There was a difference between the Samaritans and the Gentiles. Then what about

“AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM TO THEM HE GAVE THE RIGHT
TO BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD.” John 1:12.

Let us compare the WHOSOEVER in John 3:16 with the WHOSOEVER of Acts 10:43 and Romans 10:13.

First—Year 31 A. D.—”For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Second—Year 41 A. D.—”To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

Third—Year 60 A. D.—”For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Wherever we find the message of salvation by grace, eternal life the gracious free gift of God, in the Gospel of John, we find in the same chapter that it is because of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read John 3:16 with John 3:14;

John 6:47 with John 6:51; John 10:28 with John 10:17 and 18. All sinners who were saved, from Abel to the thief on the cross were saved by the redemptive work of Christ;

But in the light of other Scriptures, we cannot teach that the WHOSOEVER of John 3:16 means that while the Saviour was on earth Jews and Gentiles alike were saved by the same Gospel of Grace that was preached by Paul after he told how God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles about twelve years after the death of Christ. Acts 14:27.

Let us consider several facts:

1. John the Baptist confined his ministry to Israel Luke 1:16—Luke 1:80—Acts 13:24.
2. Jesus was born King of the Jews and died King of the Jews. Matthew 2:2 and 27:37.
3. Jesus of Nazareth lived as a Jew, under the Law. Luke 2:21—2:40 to 50—Luke 4:16—John 4:22—John 7:10—Matthew 5:17—Luke 22:29 and 30—Luke 21:38—John 1:49—John 12:13—Acts 2:22—Romans 15:8—Galatians 4:4.
4. Even seven or eight years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus it was not lawful for His twelve apostles to go to a Gentile with the message. Acts 10:28. Peter and his associates were to be ministers to Israel with the Gospel of the circumcision. Galatians 2:7 and 9. For the first eight years after the death of Christ Peter and the Eleven addressed all their messages to Israel. Acts 2:5—2:14—2:22—2:36—3:22—3:12—3:25—5:30—7:2—7:44—7:53. During these years they preached the Word to none but Jews only. Acts 11:19.

About 41 A. D. Peter was authorized, by the vision on the housetop, to preach the WHOSOEVER message of Acts 10:43. So far as we have any record, from the days of John the Baptist, from the days that the apostles said to Jesus, concerning the Gentile woman “send her away” (Acts 15:23 and Matthew 15:23) the household of Cornelius was the only group of Gentiles to whom any of the Twelve had preached; and so far as the Book of Acts records their ministry, they preached no messages to Gentiles thereafter.

Paul was to go to the uncircumcision, as he was instructed by Christ (Acts 22:21), with the Gospel of the uncircumcision. Galatians 2:7 and 9. He received the Gospel that he preached, by revelation from heaven. Galatians 1:11 and 12. He called it the Grace of Christ, the Gospel of the Grace of God, and finally the Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God. Galatians 1:6 . . . Acts 20:24, and I Timothy 1:11. In the year 64 A.D. Paul wrote to the Ephesians concerning the Mystery of the Gospel. Ephesians 6:19. In that Epistle to the Ephesians he set forth the pure Gospel of Grace, by which Gentile sinners were saved, independent of Israel’s covenants, ceremonies and religion. “By Grace . . . not of works”. Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

How different is Paul’s Gospel in Romans 3:24 to 28 Ephesians 2:8 and 9, and Titus 3:5 and II Timothy 1:9 and 10, from the Gospel program of Mark 16:16 to 18 and Peter’s message to Cornelius in Acts 10:35. The Eleven were commanded by the resurrected Christ to go and preach the Gospel, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Mark 16:16. This Message is faith plus baptism, unless the baptism is Holy Spirit baptism. In the light of Peter’s Message in Acts 2:38, it seems that water baptism was meant in Mark 16:16. Faith and water baptism for salvation is faith plus works, for when one man puts water on another man, as a factor in his salvation, that is work pure and simple. Mark 16:16 does not read, “he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized”. Peter preached to Cornelius that which Paul never preached to heathen; “in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.” Acts 10:35. Paul preached, “not by works of righteousness”; “justified without a cause by grace”; “not of works”; “not of works but according to God’s grace and purpose which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” This leads us to ask whether Peter preached the Gospel of the circumcision to Cornelius. Galatians 2:7 and Acts 10:35. And also we ask where is the record in the Book of Acts or in the Four Gospels, that Peter or any of the Twelve preached the Gospel of the uncircumcision, or the Gospel of the Grace of God, to any sinner. Their Message of Repentance and Restitution, preached to Israel, was not the same as Paul’s Message of Justification and Reconciliation; although there was much grace in the Lord’s offer to Israel in Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:14 to 26.

This leads us to compare Peter’s words in Acts 15:7 with the agreement of Galatians 2:7 and 9. “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.” “That we (Paul and Barnabas) should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.” Was Cornelius a proselyte? Read Acts 10:2 . . . 10:22 . . . 10:31. We must reconcile Acts 15:7 and Galatians 2:9 in the light of the Scriptures quoted above, and other Scriptures. Of this we may be sure, that from the days of John the Baptist to the message preached to Cornelius, more than 12 years later, no message of the gospel of the circumcision or the uncircumcision was preached to Gentiles by the Twelve; that Cornelius was the first Gentile to be saved. Acts 11:18. We must study Acts 15:7 and Acts 14:27 in the light of Galatians 2:7 and 9, and in the light of Romans 11:13 . . . 15:16 to 18 . . . Galatians 2:2 . . . Ephesians 3:1 . . . 3:8 . . . Colossians 1:24 to 27 . . . I Timothy 2:7 . . . 3:16 . . . II Timothy 1:11 and 4:17. Paul was the Lord’s ambassador, not with the keys of the kingdom of heaven but with the Ministry of

Reconciliation, the Dispensation of the Grace of God, and finally with the Mystery concerning Gentile salvation, apart from Israel's covenants; chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies; and concerning the Mystery of Christ and His Body, the Head and members seated in the heavenlies. The Twelve knew nothing of those glorious truths until after they were revealed to the Apostle Paul.

ANOTHER SIMPLE DISPENSATIONAL LESSON

“The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand”

“The Grace of God hath Appeared.”

John the Baptist preached, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The Lord Jesus preached, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The Twelve Apostles preached, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2 . . . Matthew 4:17 . . . Matthew 10:17.

The Lord gave another message to the Apostle Paul; “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Titus 2:11.

The Matthew messages were proclaimed before the Lord Jesus died on the cross. The Titus message was not proclaimed until some years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Now as to the salvation that was brought when the grace of God appeared to all men, we are quite certain. It was salvation by grace for any individual sinner, Jew or Gentile, salvation without the law, without works, even without a cause. It was salvation through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: that is, through faith in His shed blood. Romans 3:24 to 28. Now let us emphasize that this grace salvation was, and is, through faith in the blood of Christ. We know perfectly well, if we know God's message for today, that salvation for any kind of a sinner is all of grace, and all by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ.

But was there not a message of salvation in the preaching of John the Baptist, in the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth the Man approved of God in the midst of Israel, and in the preaching of the Twelve Apostles while their Messiah was in their midst? What salvation was in the proclamation, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand? Was that message for all men? If so, why did the Messiah specifically instruct His apostles, “go not in the way of the Gentiles?” Why did He say, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel?” Matthew 15:24 . . . Matthew 10:5. That message was for Israel. Of that we are sure, if we believe the words of the Lord Jesus. And moreover, that message was for the Nation Israel. The establishing of the kingdom depended upon the attitude and action of that Nation, with its rulers.

Now, answer this question, which you have undoubtedly answered before: “was the Lord offering to all men salvation by grace, through faith in His blood, when He said, “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?” In other words, in that kingdom message, did the Lord Jesus Christ say to individual Gentiles, or even to individual Israelites, “I am going to the cross of Calvary and put away sin by the sacrifice of Myself, and if you will here and now exercise faith in the blood that I am to shed within a few years, you will be saved by grace and become immediately a member of the Church which is My Body?” If that is what the Lord Jesus attempted or intended to say to the people when He said, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” most assuredly He used very vague language and there is little wonder that none who heard Him understood Him to preach salvation from sin by the grace of God, through faith in His blood.

Moreover if we should go to lost sinners today and preach to them what John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus and the Twelve Apostles preached while the Messiah was on earth, “repent,

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”, they would not understand us, and neither would the Lord use such a message to save their souls. Why? Was it not God’s own message to a people? Certainly so. It was God’s message for the period covered by the Four Gospels and for the people who lived under the law during that period, for the people who were waiting for a King and a Kingdom that had been promised to them by God for many centuries. But that message is wholly “undispensational” during this period of grace. The kingdom of heaven is not at hand. The grace of God hath appeared; and it hath not yet disappeared. But the kingdom of heaven is in abeyance. The kingdom proclaimed by the Lord when He was here on earth has been postponed. Again we see that God’s message and program for one period of time is “undispensational” during another period. Undoubtedly we know what called for the writing of the Epistle to the Galatians. Some very zealous religious people were determined to bring over from a former program of God some of the ceremonies and ordinances that were altogether out of place in the new dispensation. By the unholy mixture of legalism or Judaism with the grace of Christ another gospel was produced; the gospel of grace was perverted: the grace of God was frustrated. Therefore, we know that the Epistle to the Galatians was written to straighten out God’s people dispensationally.

No obedient and intelligent servant of the Lord would mix with the message of pure grace for this age the proclamation of the kingdom at hand. If you will open your Bible and read Luke 18:31 to 34, you will learn that the Lord Jesus, about two years after He instructed His Twelve Apostles to proclaim, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand”, told those same Apostles that He was going to Jerusalem and be crucified and buried and raised from the dead. He was telling them that His blood was to be shed. It is through faith in that shed blood that sinners are saved by grace. Did the Twelve Apostles understand what He was saying? Most assuredly not. The record is; “they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken.” Luke 18:3.

Now, think for a moment; if the most intimate disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had companied with Him all the time beginning with the baptism of John, did not know that He was going to offer Himself on the cross for the redemption of the human race, certainly neither they nor any other man or group of men had preached during the Lord’s day on earth, salvation by grace. It is absurd to state that they were preaching to others a message about which they knew nothing and which they did not themselves believe. To be convinced of this fact we have only to read Matthew 16:21 to 25 and John 20:9.

But during the years of the Lord’s earthly ministry the Apostles were preaching the gospel. They were not preaching the gospel of the grace of God to which Paul referred more than twenty years later. Acts 20:24. What gospel did they preach, and to whom did they preach it? They preached the gospel of the kingdom. Luke 9:6. And they did not preach to a single Gentile, while the Lord was on earth, so-far as we have any record. We too are preaching the gospel, but a message which was unknown to them, because the Lord had not revealed it to them at that time. How simple then is the lesson that the Lord would teach to all who claim to be gospel preachers today; do not go back to the earthly ministry of Jesus to get the message of redemption for lost sinners. Salvation by grace is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; through faith in His blood. We preach Christ crucified. The Twelve never preached that message to Israel during the earthly ministry of the Messiah. We preach the gospel; that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried and that He was raised again the third day. If a sinner is to be saved by grace, during this dispensation, he must believe in His heart that God hath raised Jesus from the dead. Romans 10:9. The Twelve did not believe that when the witnesses brought them the report,

although they had been with the Saviour for several years. Luke 24:11. If we must believe that God raised Christ from the dead, in order to be saved by grace, and the Twelve believed it not, it is so foolish, in the light of Luke 18:31 to 34. 24:11 and John 20:9, to say that the Twelve, while on earth, were preaching to individual Gentiles or Jews, salvation by grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. God surely would teach us the difference between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God. What is your answer to this question; “Should we preach to sinners today the gospel that the Twelve preached to Israel, while they were with their Messiah in the land of the Jews?” Of course, your answer is, “no”. Therefore, you are a Dispensationalist

When the Lord Jesus told His apostles that He was to be rejected of the elders, the Stone which the builders rejected, what did He mean? Luke 9:22 and 20:17. Rejected as what? Did He not come to be their Messiah and King, reigning on a throne? Was He not born to take the throne of David and reign over the house of Jacob forever, in a kingdom everlasting? Yes, if we are to believe the Scriptures. Luke 1:29 to 33. Isaiah 9:6 to 7. It was not a question of rejecting Him as a dying Saviour; but rejecting Him as a living King. After the death of the Lord Jesus individual Israelites rejected His precious blood; but before His death Israel did not reject His shed blood but rejected Him as King and Messiah—Messiah was to come—John 4:25. The kingdom of heaven was at hand because the King had arrived, the King of Israel.

The grace of God hath appeared to all men, with salvation, because the Saviour died and rose again. Quite a difference. I know it must be in your mind, how the Lord could have offered a kingdom to Israel, with Himself as King, if He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, if He had to die to fulfill Scriptures. Though the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was inevitable, according to God’s foreordained will and prophetic Word, and altogether necessary that the grace of God might appear to all men, with salvation, yet it cannot be Scripturally refuted that the King announced that His kingdom was at hand, because the time was fulfilled. Mark 1:14 and 15.

It is quite significant that in the messages which the risen Lord gave to the Apostle Paul, He made almost no reference to His earthly ministry except to say that He was of the seed of David, made under the law, a minister of the circumcision to confirm certain promises that God had made to Israel. Paul’s message of grace, his glorious gospel of the blessed God, was not the kingdom parables or the legal requirements in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, but was redemption through the shed blood of Christ. Must we not then come this side of the cross of Calvary for our grace message for this dispensation? Any superficial student of the Scriptures should know, without a doubt, that there is a most decided difference between that gospel which the Twelve were preaching, as recorded in Luke 9:6, and the “My” gospel of Paul, referred to in Romans 2:16 . . . 6:25 and in II Timothy 2:8. To mix the gospel of the Twelve with the gospel of Paul is to pervert the gospel; and that will subvert the soul. Acts 15:24.

We must apply to members of the Body of Christ all truth of the Four Gospels that is for the appropriation and application of these members in the light of Christ’s message to Paul concerning Grace for His Body.