

# GOD'S GRACE PROGRAM

## Should A Christian Eat Ham and Eggs? and Some Other Questions

Quite a foolish question this, "Should a Christian eat ham and eggs?" I recently asked this question of a group of Christians in a Bible class. Of course, it was asked then, as it is now, to cause thought as to how Christians are to select from the Bible all that God expects them to obey and practice in this age of grace. One answer was, "Yes, if the Christian has a fairly good income." But the question is not, "can a Christian afford to eat ham and eggs?" The question is, "has a Christian the Bible right to eat ham and eggs?" If your answer is yes, then answer this question, "Have God's people always had the Bible right to eat ham and eggs or ham without eggs?" Well, let's save the ham and eggs for the last course and ask and answer some other questions.

1 . . . According to the Bible should God's people be circumcised? Answer: Genesis 17:13 and 14 . . . "He must needs be circumcised . . . And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant." Now read Acts 11:1 to 5, nearly 2000 years later: Eleven apostles of Christ condemned Peter for giving the Lord's message to an uncircumcised Gentile. Then note Galatians 6:15, still 15 years later, and Philippians 3:3, more than 20 years later: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything." For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." According to Luke 2:21, Jesus Christ was circumcised when He was eight days old; and, according to Romans 15:8, Christ was a Minister to the circumcision. So we learn that when we say a Christian is one who follows the Lord Jesus Christ, the statement is to be qualified, for the Christian, in this age of grace, is not to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in circumcision. But he is spiritually circumcised with Christ's circumcision and baptized with Christ's baptism. (Colossians 2:11 and 12). However, no man not circumcised would have been received as a disciple by Christ or baptized with water while Christ was here in the flesh on earth. Our answer is, that circumcision was required of God's people in a former dispensation; but not in this present dispensation. Religiously it is forbidden.

2 . . . Should one Christian stone to death another Christian who is found gathering sticks at some time between Friday sun-down and Saturday sun-down? Well, let's hear the Word of God: "While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day . . . And the Lord said unto Moses, the man shall surely be put to death . . .

And all the congregation brought him without the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.” It was at one time Scriptural for God’s people to stone to death a fellow-Israelite found gathering sticks on the sabbath. But we say, we are not the children of Israel in the wilderness and Israel’s sabbath is not the Christian’s sabbath. To the Christian God now says, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the sabbath.” (Colossians 2:16). “Which are a shadow of things to come.” (Colossians 2:17). We, as Christians, do not live in the “shadow” days of Israel. Then how are we to know which of the meats and drinks, and divers baptisms and carnal ordinances of Hebrews 9:10 are for the obedience and practice of members of the Church of Christ during this age of grace? The disciples of Christ obeyed and practiced all of them while Christ was in their midst as Jesus of Nazareth. (Acts 2:22). While the Lord Jesus was on earth He religiously and regularly attended the services in the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish sabbath. (Luke 4:16). Should Christians follow Christ? Are Christians followers of Christ? Paul said, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (I Corinthians 11:1). He also said, “Ye observe days, and months, and times and years: I am afraid of you.” (Galatians 4:10 and 11). Should Christians observe lent religiously?

3 . . . Should a Christian bring a pigeon or a turtledove to be offered unto God? Hear the plain Word of God: “If he be not able to bring a lamb, then shall he bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord; one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.” Leviticus 5:7 . . . 1:14 . . . 5:11 . . . 14:22 . . . 14:30 . . . 15:14) . . . Genesis 15:9). In Leviticus 12:1 to 8 we read the plain command of God concerning the Israelitish women when a child was born unto her. “She shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons.” Now when Jesus Christ was a little baby His parents brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord and they offered the sacrifice, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” (Luke 2:24). If Christians are followers of Christ, why do they not bring turtledoves and pigeons to the preacher when they ask him to stand in the church building and dedicate their babies? Where is Christian’s Scripture for the dedication of babies in this age of grace, without doves and pigeons? Let’s not go to man’s traditions but to God’s Word.

4 . . . Why do Christians select only two or three things from the several hundred commands in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, and never obey the plain teachings of the Scriptures concerning the burnt offerings, the peace offerings, the meat offerings, the trespass offerings, the sin offerings, the bullocks, the calves, the lambs, the lamp-stands, the shewbread, the oil, the holyplace, the most holyplace, the priests, the high-priests, the brazen altar, the altar of incense, the feast of Passover, the feast of Firstfruits and Unleavened Bread, the feast of Pentecost, the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Atonement, the feast of Tabernacles and many other things that God absolutely demanded in Israel’s religious program? We give one short answer: “Ye are not under the law, ye are under grace.” (Romans 6:14). “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1). “The law having a shadow of good things to come.” (Hebrews 10:1 to 10). (Galatians 3:24 and 25).

5 . . . Now for a most important question; while the Lord Jesus Christ was here in the flesh in the midst of Israel, did He interfere with the sacrifice of animals by Israel's priests or did He tell His disciples that they were not under the law, but under grace? The answer is, in Galatians 4:4, that Christ was made under the law, and in Matthew 5:17 and 18, that Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law, and in Matthew 23:1 to 3, where He instructed the apostles to recognize the seat of Moses and submit to the authority of those who sat in Moses's seat. In this respect it is interesting to read Hebrews 9:17: "For a testament (covenant) is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth."

6 . . . Should a Christian take a gift to the priest according to the law or leave his gift at the altar? The disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were instructed to do both while He was here on earth in the midst of Israel. Hear His own plain words: "Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded thee." (Matthew 8:4). "Therefore if thou bring thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 6:23 and 24). If Christians are to obey and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, how are they to obey these instructions in this age of grace? The word translated "altar" is from the word meaning "slaughter" or "sacrifice." The Christian's altar is Calvary and in the light of Calvary he knows that he is not his own, that he is bought with a price and he should bring many gifts in the name of Christ, but he has no altar and no earthly priest in this age of grace. Meats and drinks, divers baptisms and carnal ordinances were imposed on Israel until the time of reformation. (Hebrews 9:10). The time of reformation had not come at the time Christ lived on earth as a religious Israelite in the midst of His own nation, under the law.

7 . . . In this age of grace should Christians preach these messages which we find in Luke's Gospel: "he that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none"; "carry neither purse nor script, nor shoes; and heal the sick"; "sell that ye have and give alms"; "strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 3:11 . . . 10:4 to 9 . . . Luke 12:33 and 13:24). All of these commands were given while the King was in the midst of the "kingdom" nation, at the time He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; "go not into the way of the Gentiles." (Matthew 15:24 and 10:5 and 6). According to the message of "all" grace in Romans 4:4 and 5, Ephesians 2:8 to 10, Titus 3:5 to 8, II Timothy 1:9, no person need strive (agonize) to be saved it is all by grace, without works, striving, religion, or even praying the publican's prayer, which was prayed before Christ went to Calvary. In the ministry and gospel of reconciliation the Christian beseeches, persuades and prays the sinner to be reconciled to God by receiving Christ. (II Corinthians 5:13 to 21). As a child of God, the Christian should minister to those in need. (Romans 12:10 to 13). God, the Father, does not deal with His sons, under grace, as He dealt with servants, under the law. Under grace, it is not "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not"; but "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God."

8 . . . Should a Christian in this age of grace obey and practice the commission of Christ in Matthew 10:5 to 8, "as ye go, preach, saying 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand'; heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons provide neither gold nor silver in your purses,

nor script for your journey, neither two coats nor shoes?" It is strange that so many Christians obey and practice some other messages proclaimed by Christ on earth; but they ignore this and eliminate it from their religious program without explanation or apology. Should Christians attempt to carry on this program? It is a part of the inspired Word of God. Most assuredly if the Lord did not give to the members of the Body of Christ, through the apostle Paul with his dispensation of grace for Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1 to 9), a spiritual program that superseded, rather than supplemented, His commands and commissions to Israel when He was Jesus of Nazareth, the Man approved of God in their midst, (Acts 2:22), and if a Christian is one who obeys those commands and commissions, there are no Christians on earth. Members of the Body of Christ, who rightly divide the Word of truth, (II Timothy 2:15), will not join in the slogan, "back to Jesus of Nazareth" or "back to Pentecost"; but will believe I Corinthians 3:10, that Paul, as the wise masterbuilder (architect) laid the foundation and Christians are to build together with him. Then they will know the difference between Matthew 10:5 to 9 and Titus 2:11 to 14: "the kingdom of heaven at hand for Israel", "go not into the way of the Gentiles", and "the grace of God at hand for all." The kingdom of heaven, which was at hand when Christ was here on earth, will again be at hand, but not during this parenthetical age and dispensation of grace.

9 . . . Should a Christian obey Matthew 5:40 to 42: "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also . . . And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two . . . Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away?" A very wealthy Christian lady told me she was baptized in water because Christ was and that she followed Him in baptism and she obeyed His command. I quoted Matthew 5:42 and demanded a thousand dollars of her, but she didn't give me a penny. If a Christian is one who follows and obeys Jesus of Nazareth in His teachings in Matthew, as the Christian is told to do, in the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, then it is not optional with the Christian as to what orders in Matthew he considers binding and what orders he wholly ignores. Every intelligent Christian must believe that God, Who is not the author of confusion, has some spiritual, intelligent, principle for the interpretation, appropriation and application of the Holy Scriptures, all of Which are God-breathed and for instruction in righteousness. In the original, in Philippians 1:10, God instructs His children, "test things that differ." Jesus of Nazareth, a Man in the midst of Israel by miracles (Acts 2:22), is certainly different from the mystery, "Christ in the Gentile, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27).

10 . . . Is Matthew 6:15 and Matthew 18:34 and 35 true for Christians in this age of grace, "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"; "and his Lord was angry and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him; so likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses?" How does this fit into Ephesians 2:8 and 9, "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, Not of works lest any man should boast," or into Ephesians 1:6 and 7, "made us accepted in the Beloved, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us?" Which shall be your slogan, "back to Jesus," or "on with Paul," which means on from Jesus of Nazareth the minister of the circumcision, under the law, to

Ephesians 3:8, the unsearchable riches of Christ for the Gentiles. Note this “forgiveness” message in the dispensation of grace; “Be ye kind one to another,. tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32. “By Jesus Christ all who believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:39). The “forgiveness” message in the ‘Our Father’ prayer was given by Christ to Israel under the law. Under the economy of grace believing sinners are forgiven wholly and solely on the grounds of grace and faith in the finished work of Christ, and not because of whom or what the believer forgives or any other deed of kindness or religious ceremony. The believing sinner is forgiven all his sins, “for Christ’s sake,” and then he is asked to forgive any and all who sin against him; but not as a condition of deliverance from God’s anger and wrath.

11 . . . Is any Christian in this age of grace commanded to tarry at Jerusalem or at any other city “until ye be endued with power from on high,” which meant to wait for the advent of the Holy Spirit? (Luke 24:49 . . . Acts 1:5 and 1:8 . . . Acts 2:16 to 18). The 120 disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13 to 15) were saved in the days of the Son of man before the Son of man was glorified and therefore before the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven. (John 7:37 and 38 . . . John 16:7 to 12 and John 14:14 to 20). At the time they were saved Jews and Gentiles were not being baptized by one Spirit into one Body, the Joint-Body of Ephesians 3:6, because the Body did not exist except in the eternal purpose of God and Jesus of Nazareth was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. (I Corinthians 12:13 and Matthew 15:24). In this dispensation and age of grace the very moment the sinner, by faith, receives Christ he receives all of the Holy Spirit, the anointing, the sealing and the baptism, which means membership in the true Bible Church, or Body of Christ. (II Corinthians 1:21 and 22, Ephesians 1:13 and 4 . . I John 2:26 to 28 and I Corinthians 12:13). God’s Word is very plain. There is one Body, One Spirit and one baptism. No one is saved who has not received Holy Spirit baptism. Thus we see that the Holy Spirit is very much a dispensational study. In Acts 5:29 to 32 we learn that Israel had to accept the resurrected Christ as Israel’s Prince and Saviour, in order to receive the Holy Spirit. In the “all” grace message the sinner has simply to believe the gospel of his salvation. (Ephesians 1:13 and 14 . . . Galatians 3:14). In grace, the Holy Spirit, righteousness, salvation and eternal life are all the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, without striving, doing, praying or behaving. Then Christians, who live in the Spirit, are told to walk in the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit and are expected to manifest the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25 . . . Ephesians 5:18 and Galatians 5:22 to 24). What Paul asked the Jewish believers in Acts 19:2 was not, “have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed,” but “believing received ye the Holy Spirit?” They had not heard the gospel of grace and had not experienced the Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5 . . Romans 6:3 . . . Colossians 2:12.

12 . . . Just how much of the message of Mark 16:14 to 18 is the Christian to proclaim and practice in this age or dispensation of grace? Let us carefully read this commission which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave to His eleven apostles: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature . . . He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned . . . and these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if

they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." This language is so plain that there is no reason or excuse for misunderstanding; and most certainly no Christian has any Bible right to revise and abridge this order to read, "he that believeth and is saved shall be baptized and no signs shall follow." But the fact is, that all of the outstanding evangelical "grace" preachers, who teach Mark 16:14 to 18 is the commission under which the members of the Body of Christ are working, have arbitrarily revised and abridged the commission to so read. If such a change is not handling the Word of God deceitfully, it is certainly handling it ignorantly. Several million Christians, who believe in baptismal regeneration but not in the miracles, quote, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and no signs shall follow." Then the number of Christians, who are unwilling to give up any part of the commission is increasing. They teach baptismal regeneration and they are trying to speak in other tongues, heal the sick, cast out demons and occasionally they attempt to raise the dead or handle some snakes. Are they not consistent, if this commission is for Christians in this age of grace? By comparing Mark 16:14 to 18, with Acts 8:1, Galatians 2:9, Colossians 1:5 and 6 and 1:23, we will learn that the evangelizing of the heathen or Gentiles outside of the land of the Jews was committed to Paul, but he did not preach to them, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Paul preached the grace of God without religion and Paul was not sent to baptize. (I Corinthians 1:17). The grace gospel, "not of yourselves," "not of works," is quite different from "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." If Christians are to preach and practice Mark 16:14 to 18, they should not alter or abbreviate it; but preach signs with the water ceremony. Read Acts 8:5 to 15.

13 . . Should a Christian preach and practice Acts 2:38 and 2:44 and 45: "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" . . . "and all that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need."? They sold their houses and lots and laid the money down at the feet of the apostles. Acts 4:34 and 35. The Christians, who try to obey Mark 16:14 to 18, without revising or abridging the Lord's command, likewise preach Acts 2:38 without any change. But they refuse to sell their houses and lots and give the money to the preachers. So even these Christians are not consistent. But they are as consistent as are the "grace" messengers who change Acts 2:38 to read "repent and be saved and receive the Holy Spirit and then be baptized with water to witness that you have received the Holy Spirit." Thus we see that whether Christians go back to Pentecost to prove water baptism, without signs, or with signs, the leaders and the followers get into a state of utter confusion. God's "all" grace message and program in Paul's last Epistles will deliver Christians from this confusion. In rightly dividing the Word of truth, the intelligent student of the Scriptures should not only see the great difference between law and grace, but the great difference between the program of God during the years covered by the Book of Acts and in Paul's prison Epistles written after the close of the Acts period.

14 . . Should a Christian follow the order and program of Acts 19:2 to 12? In these verses we learn that Paul laid hands on some of Christ's disciples after they were baptized and they thereby received the Holy Spirit and spake in tongues and then many sick people were healed by

applying handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul's body. These disciples had three baptisms, including John's baptism. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:5, that there is one baptism. Several years after the program of Acts 19:2 to 12 Paul wrote Timothy to take wine for his oft sicknesses and wrote him also that he had left Trophimus at Miletum sick. (I Timothy 5:23 and II Timothy 4:20). Thus we learn that miraculous healing was God's order in one period of time and not in another. Why did not Paul touch a handkerchief to his body and then tell Timothy to touch his body with it? The order in Acts 19:2 to 6 is much like Acts 8:5 to 15. Remember Acts 19:2 to 5 is the last record of Christians being baptized with water and is very definitely connected with imposition of hands for Holy Spirit baptism, tongues and healing.

15 . . . Should a Christian lay hands on the sick, or tell the sick to take wine or put handkerchiefs on the sick or anoint the sick with oil or just pray for the sick? We read in James 5:14, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing (smearing) him with oil in the name of the Lord." When we read this verse, let us remember the words of the writer of this Epistle, James, when he said that the Christian Jews were not to trouble Christian Gentiles with Jewish religious practices. Acts 15:19. Then let us note in Galatians 2:9, that James was a minister of the circumcision. It was James who instructed Paul, in Acts 21:23 to 28, to shave his head and take a Jewish vow; but both he and Paul were positive that the Christian Gentiles were to observe no such thing. (Acts 21:25). James addressed his Epistle to the Twelve Tribes of Israel and wrote concerning their synagogue meetings. (The word assembly in James 2:2 should be synagogue). There is no record in the Bible that Christian Gentiles anointed with oil or were anointed with oil. The spiritual, intelligent student of the Scriptures knows the difference between "sign" healing (I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and 12:28) and elective healing (Philippians 2:25 to 28), and knows that the omnipotent God can and does heal, but not as He did during the years Christ was on earth and during the transitional "sign" age of the Book of Acts.

16 . . . Should Christians expect visits from angels, supernatural demonstrations, miraculous jail deliverances, guidance by trances and visions, such as the disciples of Christ experienced during the period covered by the Book of Acts? Peter and Paul experienced jail deliverances with and without earthquakes and angels during the Acts period. After the close of that period Paul was in jail for a long time, but God did not deliver him either by angel or earthquake. During the Acts period God sent angels and visions to Philip and Cornelius and to others. But this is not in God's program in this dispensation of grace. Throughout most of the period covered by the Book of Acts God's order was. "to the Jew first." (Acts 3:26 . . . Acts 13:46 . . . Acts 18:6 . . . Romans 1:16). The Jews required a sign. During that period Paul became a Jew to the Jews, as one under the law to them that were under the law. He circumcised Timothy: he shaved his head with a vow at Cenchrea and again at Jerusalem where he spent seven days in the Jewish temple as a Jew; he apologized to Israel's high priest more than 25 years after Christ was raised from the dead. (Acts 16:1 to 3 . . . Acts 18:18 . . . Acts 21:24 to 29 . . . Acts 23:5 . . . I Corinthians 9:20 to 25). Paul did none of these things after his pronouncement for God upon Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28, at which time God's order was no longer, "to the Jew first." In this dispensation and age of grace the sons of Abraham have no special privileges or priority rights,

but must come with Gentiles, as the lost children of Adam. The Gentiles, in grace, are not required to take a place lower than Israel or in subjection to Israel. God's religious program is not for Christian Gentiles in this age of grace. Compare Matthew 15:24 to 28 with Romans 10:12 and Galatians 3:27 and 28 and Ephesians 2:16 to 22.

17 . . . Is a Christian today expected to exercise the sign-gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 12:7 to 11 and 12:28 . . . "the gifts of healing" . . . "the working of miracles" . . . "prophecy" "discerning of spirits" . . . "tongues" . . . "the interpretation of tongues"? In writing to these Corinthians Paul thanked God for two things; that he had baptized very few of them; that he spoke with tongues more than any of them. (I Corinthians 1:14 and 14:18). How many preachers in this day of grace thank God for the same reasons? Remember that the Corinthians were the least spiritual of any of those first-century Christians. (I Corinthians 3:1 to 4 . . . 5:1 to 5 . . . 6:5 to 7). Therefore, they did not exercise the sign-gifts because they were unusually spiritual or were possessed with extraordinary faith. The gifts in Ephesians 4:7 to 14, for the perfecting of the saints, to keep saints from being tossed children, and mentioned after the pronouncement of Acts 28:25 to 28, are quite different from the sign-gifts during the Acts period. This change throws light on I Corinthians 13:8 to 13 . . . "prophecies, tongues and knowledge shall pass away . . . faith, hope and love shall abide." If any one of the sign-gifts is to be exercised by Christians in this age of grace, all are to be exercised. Christians should believe in Divine healing, but not in Divine healers by religious people who claim to have the gift of healing. The argument that the sign-gifts are absent today because Christians in this twentieth century are not as spiritual and faithful as those first-century Corinthians is not valid. Carnal babes in Christ, who defraud one another, or not especially spiritual. What Christian today has not as much faith as that group of Christians, in Acts 12:5, 12 to 19, who prayed fervently for Peter's deliverance and when one of them told the others their prayers had been answered, they called her crazy? Read the fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians, and note their confusion in their tongues meeting, but they did speak with tongues.

18 . . . Is there not a great difference between righteousness under the law and righteousness under grace, a great difference between establishing righteousness and submitting unto God's established righteousness? Note Deuteronomy 6:25 . . . "It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us." This is very much the same as the message Peter, with the keys of the kingdom, preached to Cornelius "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." (Acts 10:34 and 35 and 10:4). But both are very different from Romans 4:5 and 3:28 and Titus 3:5 to 8 and II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and Galatians 3:16 and 3:21 and 2:21. "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" . . . "not by works of righteousness which we have done" . . . "not of works, lest any man should boast" . . . "if righteousness come by the law, Christ has died in vain." You doubtless have heard the statement, "what the law demanded grace provides." What the law could not do, because of man's weakness, Christ did do. (Romans 8:2 to 4 . . . Hebrews 7:19 . . . Romans 10:4 to 10 . . . Galatians 3:24 and 25). When God gave the law at Sinai, 2500 years after Adam sinned, He imposed a religious program upon Israel until the time of reformation.

(Romans 5:20 . . . Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 9:10). So from Sinai to the time of reformation God demanded both righteousness and religion. During the overlapping or transitional Acts period God permitted religion with righteousness. After the pronouncement upon Israel in Acts 28:25 to 28 God forbade religion mixed with righteousness. Righteousness is one requirement for heaven. Righteousness is God's free gift to the believing sinner. God wants no member of the Body of Christ, in this "all" grace age, to be religious. He wants Christians to be spiritual by being so controlled by the Holy Spirit that they shall fulfill the righteousness of the law. (Romans 8:4 . . . Galatians 5:22 to 25). Again read Galatians 3:24 and 25.

19 . . Now back to our original question, should a Christian eat ham and eggs?" Perhaps you heard the story of the weary and hungry Jew, who went into the country restaurant after he had been hunting for many hours. He was "meat" hungry, but much disturbed when the waiter told him they had no meat but ham. When he saw the plate of nice ham placed before the man sitting next to him, the Jew said, "Ham, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." In other words, the Jew, clinging to Moses, could not religiously eat ham; but the Jew realized that eating ham was no violation of the Principle of grace by which the Christian lives. When Jesus Christ was here on earth He was under the law, and took His place as a religious Jew under the law. (Galatians 4:4 . . . John 4:22 . . . Luke 4:16 . . . John 7:10). Therefore, neither Jesus Christ nor His disciples would have even thought of eating ham with their eggs, if they ate eggs, for Leviticus 11:7 and Deuteronomy 14:8 were binding upon every true and obedient Israelite. Note the prohibitions. "Shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof, and the swine: he is unclean unto thee . . . Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch." (Leviticus 11:4 to 8) . . . (Deuteronomy 14:8). So you can see why so-called orthodox Jews today use goose grease instead of lard from the hog. In I Timothy 4:3 to 5 God warns his children to beware of religious preachers with their meat prohibitions. So we see what God requires in one dispensation He forbids and prohibits in another dispensation. Therefore, dispensational Bible study is the only sane and satisfactory Bible study.

Religious Christians generally have a hobby. They go back to the Old Testament Scriptures, or to the Four Gospels, or to the overlapping period in the Book of Acts, and select from one to a dozen or more religious practices to mix in with the dispensation of the grace of God. They have a special hit-and-miss snatch-grab method that they employ; but have no sane, Scriptural explanation why they select what they do and eliminate from their religious programs scores of other religious practices in the same former dispensation. On the other hand there are some very unwise Christians, who ignorantly state that the Four Gospels are not for the Church in this age of grace. Every paragraph, word and syllable in the Bible is FOR the members of Christ's Body; but they are not all ABOUT members of the Body of Christ. God has an intelligent principle for Bible study (II Timothy 2:15). God's golden key is "the mystery of Christ" (the dispensation of the mystery) revealed to Paul by the glorified Christ and clearly revealed by Paul to saints in his prison Epistles. No faithful, spiritual member of the Body of Christ, who is an intelligent student of the Scriptures, will eliminate from God's present spiritual program any Bible truth or practice that is compatible with God's program and message of grace, and he will not bring over from a former dispensation anything that will frustrate the grace of God, pervert the grace gospel, or mix religion into God's "all" grace program. In the language

endorsed by Dr. C. I. Scofield the truth revealed to God's saints in the latest epistles of Paul, written after Paul reached Rome, gives the normal course of the Church and will deliver saints from hobbies and the last vestige of Judaism

If your hobby is healing, visions, tongues, baptismal regeneration, legal sabbath-keeping, no meat on Friday, no pork at any time, the observance of lent, calling the Church of the mystery "Israel", quoting Old Testament kingdom prophecies to show that the Lord's coming for His Church is at hand, or calling Sunday "The Lord's day" or confusing the kingdom of heaven with the Body of Christ, or preaching Peter's message on the day of Pentecost, or his message to Cornelius, the truth in Paul's prison Epistles will deliver you. And surely you agree with me that the Christian who boasts that he obeys all of the Bible is either dishonest or very ignorant.