

WATER BAPTISM A WITNESS TO THE WORLD

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH SUCH A DOCTRINE?

The Christian is God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Ephesians 2:10. The Christian should witness to the world and to other Christians that he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Every Christian should walk in newness of life and should constantly put off the old man and put on the new man. These plain instructions are written in God's Book. Romans 6:4 . . . Ephesians 4:22 to 30 . . . Colossians 3:9 and 10.

The Christian is a member of the Body of Christ. Whether or not the Christian is affiliated with some sectarian church organization, he should know that during this present period and economy of grace God recognizes one and only one true Bible Church, the Body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:22 and 23. God's will is that there should be no schism (division) in the Body. I Corinthians 12:25. Every Christian should be very careful to avoid anything that will cause division in the Body of Christ. "So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Romans 12:5. "There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Ephesians 4:4. Members of this one Body are thus instructed in Ephesians 4:3. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Christians cannot obey this third verse unless they obey the second verse; "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." It is sad to say that many Christians have substituted pride and prejudice and envy and even hatred.

Diogenes should come back with his lantern and while looking for an honest man he should try to find one unprejudiced Christian. Of course all Christians are to some extent the victims of sectarian tradition. It is to be deplored that men of God, who know that in Ephesians and Colossians God has given us His death blow to sectarianism, will defend their denominational affiliation with some unscriptural argument. Moreover, because of their compromise in the matter of endorsing a sectarian church many of them either teach and practice some sectarian tradition which they know to be unsound doctrine or, for personal gain, they refuse to offer a word of protest against some unscriptural denominational teaching or practice. Every spiritual, intelligent student of the Scriptures knows full well that there is no Presbyterian church, no Lutheran church, no Baptist church, no Catholic church, no Protestant church, no Interdenominational church in the Bible. There are outstanding men of God in all of these denominations, who claim that they are contending earnestly for the one faith once for all delivered to the saints. But the fact of the matter is, that no man of God is earnestly contending for the one faith of Ephesians 4:5, if he is not contending for the one Body of Ephesians 4:4. These two are inseparably joined with one God the Father, one Christ the Head, one Holy Spirit, one hope and one baptism. Every true, faithful, spiritual, loyal servant of the Lord should earnestly contend for this seven-fold unity.

When we ask the question, why is it that the men of God, who call themselves Fundamentalists, do not earnestly contend for this seven-fold unity, we all know the answers! . . . "Tradition" . . . "Lack of Courage" . . . "Desire for Personal Advantage" . . . "Diplomacy" . . . "Ignorance" . . . "Pride." But when these men shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ they will not find that any of these excuses will be accepted by the judge. We remember the words of

the judge when He was here on earth: “They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”, John 12:43.

GOD’S KNOWLEDGE—THE CHRISTIAN’S BEHAVIOR

“The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity.” II Timothy 2:19. There are some Christians who are such expert critics and judges that they can separate the saved from the unsaved church-members; that is, they think they can. But that judgment belongs to the omniscient God. He knoweth them that are His. In the matter of departing from iniquity, some Christians do more departing than do others. But God’s high and holy standard for all Christians is, that they abstain from all appearances of evil; that they walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called. No person has to depart from iniquity, or do anything to prove to God that he is saved. When a person is saved he is saved by God in God’s way, and God certainly knows whether or not He has saved the person. But when that person testifies to his fellowman that he is saved, that fellow-man should see the evidences of the Divine transformation that takes place when a sinner becomes a saint by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. That saved person should walk in the Spirit and fulfil the righteousness of the law; that is, he should manifest the fruit of the Spirit. He is created in Christ Jesus unto good works and God has ordained that he should walk in those good works. Ephesians 2:10. The Christian should depart from iniquity.

Note how this fact is stated in Romans 6:13 . . . “But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” “Alive from the dead.” What a transformation! What a wonderful change! What a blessed experience! “Alive from the dead.” “Raised to walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4. Now note the seeming paradoxical statement concerning the Christians, who are “alive from the dead”: “for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “Ye are dead.” Here we learn that the Christian is both alive and dead. He is dead with Christ and, in Christ, he is alive unto God. “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Galatians 2:20. The Christian is crucified unto the world and unto the law. “His old man was crucified with Christ.” Romans 6:6.

Note again this glorious truth linked with another glorious truth: “Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:5 and 6. What a glorious position. In the heavenlies. Who put the Christian way up there? God. When does God do this for the sinner who believes the gospel? Just the very moment the believer receives Christ and is saved by God’s grace he passes out of death into life, out of Adam into Christ, out of darkness into light. At that very same moment he is crucified with Christ, dead with Christ, raised with Christ and seated in the heavenlies with Christ. None of this Divine work is done because of the believer’s worthiness or spiritual behavior; but it is all by God’s grace and by God’s power. Because God is rich in mercy and because of His great love for sinners and the fact that God will have all men to be saved. Ephesians 2:4 and I Timothy 2:4 to 6. No Christian can be dead, raised and seated in the heavenlies with Christ without being buried with Christ. This burial takes place the very moment the sinner is saved by God’s grace and by faith in Christ’s shed blood.

Now if the Christian wants to obey the Scriptures and witness to his fellow men that he is seated in the heavenlies in Christ, what must he do? The Bible has a very definite answer. “If ye

then be raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” “Put to death your members which are upon the earth.” Colossians 3:1 to 6. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

IS A WATER WITNESS NECESSARY?

Does God desire that the Christian should be both spiritual and religious? Does God desire that the Christian should receive from the hands of another Christian a baptism by water to witness to the world that he is seated in the heavenlies in Christ? Every Christian should know that no work of righteousness and no religious ceremony is required for the sinner’s salvation. If one Christian baptizes with water another Christian, the water ceremony is the work done by one man and received by another man. According to Ephesians 2:8 to 10, Titus 3:5 to 8, Romans 4:3 to 5, man cannot help save himself by anything that he can do for himself. No religious work that any other person can do for him will help to save him. The true messenger of grace can pray for the sinner to whom he proclaims the gospel of the grace of God. But he prays that God will, by the Holy Spirit, cause the sinner to believe and be saved. The believing sinner is justified without a cause by God’s grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:24. No servant of the Lord should be ignorant or conceited enough to believe that he can do one thing to make the redemptive work of Jesus Christ more perfect or efficacious. When the sinner is saved by God he is complete in Christ and all of his sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. Colossians 2:10 and 13 and Ephesians 4:32.

The greatest of all Christians was also the greatest missionary, evangelist and Bible-teacher of all ages. He spent at least one year and a half in a very large city. God gave to that missionary, Paul, many people in the city of Corinth. He wrote to the Christians in that city and said that he thanked God that he baptized very few of them. “I know not whether I baptized any other.” I Corinthians 1:16. In this same Epistle this same man of God wrote, “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” I Corinthians 9:22. There was surely not one single thing that Paul would not have done to help men to be saved and then to help them to witness to the world that they were saved. Can you imagine Paul having written, “I do not know whether or not I helped more than five or six of you to witness to the world that ye have been baptized into the Body of Christ; in fact, I thank God that I didn’t?” If water baptism were as important as some of our zealous baptizers of today seem to think, Paul would never have written the words recorded in I Corinthians 1:14 to 17. But Paul did write:

ROMANS 6:3 AND 4

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

God’s mighty power raised Christ far above principalities and powers where He is seated in the heavenlies. Ephesians 1:19 to 23. In these verses we learn that that same mighty power of God is to upward. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, as well as in the sixth chapter of Romans, the Holy Spirit has revealed to the Christians the glorious fact of their identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension.

No intelligent student of the Word of God would even intimate that water baptism in any way aids in the Christian's identification with Christ. But such a student does know that this identification is accomplished by a baptism, which is the work of God. There are many spiritual Lutherans and spiritual Presbyterians and spiritual Methodists, all members of the Body of Christ in spite of their sectarian affiliations. The great majority of these saved Lutherans, Presbyterians and Methodists were sprinkled with a few drops of water in infancy. Therefore, when they were subjected to their sectarian water ceremonies they were not witnessing to the fact that they had believed the gospel and had become members of the Body of Christ. But when they did finally exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, years after they were sprinkled, they were baptized into the death of Christ, and were buried with Him by baptism. According to the immersionists, their sprinkling baptism was not valid; in fact it was not baptism at all, because sprinkling could not be the symbol of a burial. Moreover their water ceremony was out of place, because of the fact they received their unscriptural baptism years before they were buried with Christ by the Divine baptism. In many parts of this country some of the zealous immersionists declare that they can not recognize such alien baptism and in spite of the fact that the saved Lutherans, saved Presbyterians and saved Methodists are in the same Body with these immersed church-members, these immersionists consider it unholy to sit with them at the Lord's table or give them the right hand of fellowship in the matter of church-membership. So there is schism in the Body because of baptism. Unity is on the basis of one baptism.

Obviously these close-communion, or close-baptism, immersionists would not have received the twelve apostles into their fellowship, for those twelve faithful men were baptized with water several years before Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. In John 20:9 we learn that even the chiefs of the twelve apostles did not know the Scripture that Jesus Christ was to be raised from the dead. When the women learned at the open sepulchre that Christ had been raised from the dead and told the apostles of the fact, the apostles believed them not as the report seemed to them to be an idle tale . . . Luke 24:11. In Luke 18:31 to 34 we learn that several years after the twelve apostles were baptized with water they understood nothing of the meaning of death and the resurrection of Christ. So we are sure that when the twelve apostles were baptized unto repentance for the remission of sins they were not witnessing to the world that they had been baptized into the death of Christ, had been buried with Him by baptism and had been raised to walk in newness of life. If this fantastical teaching concerning Romans 6:3 and 4 were Scriptural instead of a man-made theory, surely the twelve apostles should have been rebaptized with water after the Lord Jesus Christ was raised by the glory of the Father. Generally the sectarian Christians who contend earnestly for the watery grave as a witness to the world have much to say about:

FOLLOWING THE LORD JESUS IN BAPTISM

Again we say that if Christians are to go down into a watery grave to show that they have died with Christ, have been buried with Christ and raised with Christ and they insist that all Christians should follow the Lord Jesus in baptism, then Christ should have received His water baptism after His death and resurrection. But they know that Christ was baptized with water several years before His death and resurrection and of course this is God's refutation of this somewhat modern and fantastical interpretation of Romans 6:3 and 4. It is a blessed experience when the scales drop from the eyes of these blind followers of the blind and they find that they have been contending for tradition instead of for sound Bible doctrine. What a deliverance when

they are taught the blessed truth of the one Divine baptism of Ephesians 4:5. Many outstanding men of God, even among the Fundamentalists, handle the Word of God deceitfully in order to support their mode and interpretation and meaning of water baptism. Many have come to the conclusion that they are teaching a theory, but pride will not let them confess and forsake their blunder. Others are like Peter, “fearing them of the circumcision,” and for personal advantage refuse to preach and practice their convictions. There are, however, many zealous immersionists who are sincere, but sincerely wrong in their interpretation of Romans 6:3 and 4. They admit that they do not follow the Lord Jesus in circumcision. They admit that He was made under the law, that He lived under the law and that He died under the law, that He recognized those who sat in Moses’ seat. Matthew 23:1 to 4 and Galatians 4:4. They admit that Jesus of Nazareth went regularly to the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath. Luke 4:16. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed a Minister of the circumcision. Romans 15:8. He told those to whom He ministered to obey the law and visit the priests with a gift. Matthew 8:1 to 4. The immersionists ignore all of these commands and limit their ceremonies, under the slogan, “follow the Lord Jesus,” to water baptism. But then of course when they read John 1:31, and learn the meaning of water baptism in that former dispensation, they are puzzled a bit, but turn to tradition and forget the Word of God rightly divided.

NO WATER IN THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS

The baptism in the sixth chapter of Romans is meritorious and efficacious. If there is water baptism in Romans 6:3 and 4, then water baptism is essential to salvation, for the baptism there takes the sinner out of Adam and places him in Christ, in Whom he is a new creature. Mr. Kenneth Wuest, one of the leading Bible teachers in the Moody Bible Institute, printed in the Moody Monthly an exegesis of this wonderful chapter. He remarked that the very Greek construction in the original text would eliminate any water from these verses. Perhaps, about fifty percent of evangelical Christians would agree with this man of God, that there is no water in that chapter, and far more than fifty percent of them would agree that all members of the Body of Christ have experienced Romans 6:3 and 4 whether they have been sprinkled, immersed or have refused any form of water baptism. Surely when Saul of Tarsus was told to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins he was not instructed by the Holy Spirit that he was witnessing to the world that he had been buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life. Surely when Peter and the Eleven preached Acts 2:38, repent and be baptized and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, they did not tell those three thousand Jews to be immersed to show that they were members of the Body of Christ. Surely this watery grave witness theory is tradition and not sound doctrine.

NO WATER IN EPHESIANS 4:5

As “immersion witness” interpretation of Romans 6:4 is contrary to sound doctrine, so also is the teaching of certain immersionists who are putting up a desperate but losing battle to hold on to their cherished religious ceremony by reading water into the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. They say that the Bible plainly states that, “there is one baptism”; but they believe in two baptisms. They say the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 must be water. Of course they do not believe in two Bodies or two Christs; just two baptisms. The Bible states in plain language,

“there is one baptism.” If that one baptism is water, then water baptism will baptize a sinner into the one Body of Christ.

The outstanding teacher of doctrine in the Moody Bible Institute very recently taught publicly, that which any spiritual, intelligent Christian should know; that there is no water in Ephesians 4:5. Another very bitter immersionist, a real fighting Fundamentalist, declared that if there is no water in Ephesians 4:5, then we will have difficulty proving that water baptism is for this age and dispensation of grace. Both of these men of God will readily admit that any sinner who will believe the gospel of the grace of God and receive Christ will go to heaven as a redeemed sinner, that the believer becomes a member of the one true Bible Church without any kind of water baptism. The second man has no patience with any Christian who will not accept his immersion ceremony. The first man stated just this past week that he believed that the mode of baptism is unimportant, the thing that is important is to be baptized with water whether it is sprinkling, pouring or dipping. He declared any one of them to be Scriptural. Just to think of such utter confusion, such unsound teaching from a man who has charge of so many young men who are going out to teach the Word of God. It must be obvious to any thinking Christian, that if sprinkling a few drops of water on the head of an infant or of an adult, with the explanation that this water ceremony supplanted and superseded circumcision, is Scriptural, then the new theory that the believer should go down in to a watery grave to witness to the world that he has been buried and raised with Christ, is worse than absurd; it is ridiculous. If the Presbyterian teaching is Scriptural, surely no girls or women should be sprinkled; for girls and women were not circumcised.

Then a man of God, who is pastor of a large congregation in Chicago, has just stated in writing that the three thousand Jews who were saved on the day of Pentecost were born again before they obeyed Acts 2:38, but they were not saved until after they obeyed Peter’s commands and were baptized. He has also written that water baptism was a kingdom ordinance. He teaches the watery grave theory, that going into a tank of water is a witness to the world that the Christian’s old man has been put to death. He hasn’t a verse of Scripture to support his teaching, but he seems to think that it must be true because he has taught it for some years. It is not difficult to arouse his old man by exposing his water baptism fallacy. He doesn’t like it a bit. Pride is a great barrier. It seems next to impossible for an outstanding Bible teacher to say, “I have been wrong,” even when he knows in his heart that he has been. What a hindrance to the Lord’s work. Younger preachers, who consider the outstanding Bible teacher an authority on Bible doctrine, follow him in his erroneous teaching and continue to propagate the error. But according to I John 2:26 to 28, God will not excuse those who are seduced.

BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES

Moses led the children of Israel, adults and children, across the Red Sea. The water did not touch the Israelites, but the Egyptians were immersed into death. They were not raised to walk in newness of life. If the Israelites were baptized in that sea, it was truly a “dry” baptism. But “they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” I Corinthians 10:1 to 6. They were convinced by these two great miracles that Moses was the Lord’s chosen leader and deliverer and these two great miracles caused them to accept and follow the leadership of Moses. According to Acts 2:22, by wonders and miracles God sought to persuade Israel to receive His Son as their Messiah and Deliverer. In the same way He sought to persuade Israel to receive the twelve apostles as His authorized witnesses to that nation. Hebrews 2:3 to 6.

“THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE.”

After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead He appeared to the eleven apostles (before Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas) and commanded them, saying, “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.” Mark 16:14 to 18.

After Jesus Christ had died and was raised from the dead, the twelve apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues as they testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ and concerning their salvation. They witnessed these great facts by performing miracles, even raising the dead. They healed the sick and the lame. They had jail deliverances. They talked with angels. They had visions from God. But they did not receive water baptism to witness their death and resurrection with Christ. They never received what some Christians call “Christian baptism.”

Signs, visions, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles are joined with water baptism. The Corinthians were baptized and all the sign-gifts were exercised by them. I Corinthians 12:8 to 12. They were the least spiritual of all of the saints of Paul’s day, so far as we have any Bible record. But they healed the sick and performed miracles. They spoke with tongues. When the Philippian jailer was baptized there was a miraculous earthquake. When Cornelius was baptized he had spoken with tongues. When Phillip baptized in the eighth chapter of Acts he performed many miracles. When he baptized the eunuch the angel of the Lord appeared. When Paul baptized the twelve Jews in Acts 19:1 to 6 he laid hands on them and they spoke with tongues and then he miraculously healed with handkerchiefs and aprons. Acts 19:11 and 12.

Christians cannot witness the resurrection of Christ by duplicating or perpetuating the miracles performed by the apostles or even by the carnal Corinthians. Some man of God has truly said, if the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 are the credentials of a Christian, no Christian has lived on earth since the death of the last apostle. Dr. C. I. Scofield’s teaching concerning the signs and miracles of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 is expressed in this language: “The sign-gifts of I Corinthians Twelve were operative only during the period covered by the Book of Acts.”

All Christians today must be numbered with the blessed who have not seen but who believe, who walk not by sight but by faith, and they are to witness the death and resurrection of Christ and their own death and resurrection with Him by seeking those things which are above, by walking in newness of life, by putting to death the deeds of the flesh. Water baptism will not convince those who witness the ceremony that the person baptized has experienced a Divine transformation.

In Colossians 1:5 and 6 and Colossians 1:23 we learn that Paul had supervision over the testimony to every creature under heaven, in all the world. In the Book of Acts we read of four of Paul’s missionary journeys in obedience to Acts 22:17 to 21. But in the Book of Acts we find no record of any missionary journeys by Peter and the Eleven. They remained in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1 . . . Acts 15:1 to 19. They agreed with Paul that they would confine their testimony to Israel. Galatians 2:9.

The Chicago pastor of the large congregation of Fundamentalists, to whom I referred, has recently stated in writing that the reason why the twelve apostles did not obey the commission of

Mark 16:14 to 18 during the first years in the Book of Acts was, that they were unspiritual and unfaithful, and while there is no record in the Book of Acts that they did finally obey the so-called great commission, the writings of some church fathers indicate that they did finally reach other lands. This same pastor in his "Revelation," is sure that the Church of Ephesus is the apostolic Church, an ideal and pattern for Christians, and thus Christians are urged by this pastor to follow men who were unspiritual and unfaithful for seven or eight years. What an unjust indictment against men who were filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly said, "we must obey God rather than men." This simply proves the extent to which men will go to support their pet theories. "Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Mark 7:7.

REVISING GOD'S MESSAGE

The Bible speaks of men who wrest the Scriptures, of men who corrupt the Word of God, of men who handle the Word of God deceitfully. By what authority do zealous baptizers change the order of Mark 16:14 to 18 to support their programs? The order of the Lord's commission is clearly stated: First, "he that believeth." Second, "and is baptized." Third, "shall be saved." Fourth, "And these signs shall follow them that believe." Now note the change of order as arbitrarily adopted and propagated by the great majority of Fundamentalists. First, "he that believeth." Second, "and is saved." Third, "must be baptized by immersion to witness that he has died and been raised with Christ." Fourth, "no signs to follow."

Is this not handling the Word of God deceitfully? Is there any sound Bible exegesis that will eliminate from the program of the Body of Christ during this present age and economy of grace the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18 and the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 that will not eliminate the water baptism that is inseparably connected with the signs and miracles, visions and tongues?

SIX BAPTISMS IN MATTHEW—ONE BAPTISM IN EPHESIANS

Note carefully the three baptisms in Matthew 3:11. John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance . . . He (Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Note the death baptism of Jesus Christ and the martyrdom baptism of James, the brother of John, predicted in Matthew 20 and Luke 12: "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able." "And He (Christ) said unto them, ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." Matthew 20:20 to 22. "But I (Christ) have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I straitened (pressed) till it be accomplished."

Here Christ spoke of his death on the cross and the death which James was to suffer at the hands of Herod. "And he (Herod) killed James the brother of John with the sword." Acts 12:2. On Calvary's cross Christ was baptized. By the sword of Herod James was baptized. James had already been baptized with John's baptism some years before Christ was baptized on the cross. This was water baptism unto repentance. Then after death baptism of Christ James received Holy Spirit baptism. Acts 1:5.

Now note in the so-called great commission the command of the risen Christ: "Baptizing them into, or unto, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19.

So we have observed that at least six different baptisms are mentioned in the Book of Matthew. But in Ephesians 4:5 we read, “there is one baptism.” Now this interesting question, “which one of the several baptisms of Matthew is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5?” The answer today from many Fundamentalists is, that Ephesians 4:5 is Christian water baptism, different from John’s water baptism, and therefore, the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is a baptism different from any of the baptisms of Matthew. And of course they teach that it is different from the divers baptisms of Hebrews 9:10. Any intelligent student of the Bible, who rightly divides the Word of truth, knows from Hebrews 9:10 and Hebrews 6:1 to 3 that there were other baptisms in Matthew to which we have not referred.

But let us keep in mind that the Lord Jesus Himself declared that when James had his head cut off he was baptized. How foolish then to contend that baptism has one definite meaning in the Bible. Note again still another meaning in I Corinthians 10:2 and 3.

The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is the one Divine baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4, of Colossians 2:12 and of Galatians 3:27 and has nothing to do with any water ceremony from the hands of man.

How interesting to compare Luke 12:50, Christ’s death baptism on the cross, with the Romans 6:3 and 4, the believer’s death baptism with Christ at Calvary, and see that this death baptism is the baptism in the message and program of grace. And how ungracious, as well as unscriptural, it is for some zealous water Christian to malign and condemn some other member of the Body of Christ who refuses to permit him to impose his fantastical interpretation and religious ceremony on him.

A GREATER GREAT COMMISSION

In II Corinthians 5:16 the apostle Paul said concerning Christ: “yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.” In II Corinthians 5:18 and 19 we read . . . “God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” . . . “Hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” In these verses and in Romans 5:10 and 11, reconciliation is mentioned twenty-five years after Christ gave the commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20. More than fifteen years after Christ gave that commission to the Twelve, Paul went up to Jerusalem, by revelation, to tell the apostles in that city about the gospel of the uncircumcision which was committed unto him. Galatians 2:1 to 7.

In Romans 11:15 we learn when and why the new commission of reconciliation was given for Gentiles. When and because Israel was set aside. When God set aside His religious nation His religious program waned and passed away. Every intelligent student of the Word of God knows that the Gentiles received salvation, reconciliation and Divine mercy because of Israel’s blindness and unbelief and because they fell and were cast away. Romans 11:30, Romans 11:13 and Romans 11:15. The great commission for this dispensation and age of grace came after Paul received his orders in Acts 13:2.

The most blessed truth in all the Bible for saints is almost wholly unknown to more than ninety-eight percent of Christians, the blessed revealed mystery of God’s will. Ephesians 1:9. Paul suffered intense agony for this mystery. Ephesians 6:19 and 20. Colossians 4:3 and 4. Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles with the dispensation of the grace of God and the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ephesians 3:1 to 3 and Ephesians 3:8. God desires that every Christian should see what is “the dispensation of the mystery.” Ephesians 3:9. But the sad fact is, that most of our Christian leaders prefer their religious water ceremony to the glorious

truth of Ephesians and Colossians and so they do not even begin to obey Ephesians 3:9. There is not a Christian preacher today, who puts himself under the great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20, who fixes the time of Israel's fall at the cross, or who practices water baptism in any form, who is making any effort to make his fellow-Christians see the truth of the mystery. But all of the outstanding zealous immersionists among the Fundamentalists are persecuting and boycotting and disfellowshipping men of God who are joining in Paul's prayers, Ephesians 1:17 to 23, Ephesians 6:19 to 21, and Colossians 4:3 and 4, who are endeavoring to obey Ephesians 3:9 to 11. For some of them, yea most of them, we should pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; but for some we pray, "forgive them for they are too cowardly to preach what they know to be the truth."

We have twice referred to a Chicago pastor. I have written him personally what I know to be the truth, that he is the greatest human hindrance to the recovery of Pauline truth in this country. This is because so many other Christian workers look to his leadership and follow him in his error. In his own printed book he states that the mystery, this present dispensation, did not begin until the nation Israel had every opportunity to receive or reject Christ after He was raised from the dead. He has written me that he still believes all he has printed in this book. In another book he bitterly and ungraciously condemns any Christian brother who makes this same statement. In the last mentioned book he has printed seventeen contradictions of statements he has in his other books, and yet he now states that he believes all of the seventeen statements and all of the other statements which these seventeen plainly contradict. God's servants are supposed to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God and not lead followers into such confusion. I am sure that the one thing that keeps a confession from the heart and the lips of this man of God is pride. What a wonderful service to God and the Church he would do, if he would make an open confession! But he prefers to join with other religious Fundamentalists with the slogan:

MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS

Note the verse, Romans 16:17, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them." In the very next chapter, I Corinthians 1:10, the apostle Paul again said, "Now I beseech you, brethren." "By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

This sounds something like the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ for His disciples in John 17:21: "That they all may be one; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

What blessed unity! What Christian idealism! Beautiful theory, isn't it? When we behold the disunity and lack of Christian fellowship and lack of love, the divisions and controversies, surely we turn for solace to Ephesians 5:25 to 27 and Ephesians 4:13 where we learn that the Lord is going to present the one Body unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; that it should be holy and without blemish." "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Do you know of any one thing that has caused more disunity and bitterness than have the twenty or more sectarian, religious water ceremonies with which the Church of Jesus Christ is afflicted? The devil has had a wonderful time using water baptism to divide members of the one Body.

When Paul instructed the Roman saints to mark them that cause divisions, he also wrote in Romans 12:4 and 5: “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”

If a group of those Roman saints had set up a Baptist church or any other sectarian church, they would have been marked. They were in one Body, joined to Christ, the living Head in glory, and all members one of another.

Today in this land there are more than two hundred sectarian churches. Just where shall we begin to mark? We may be sure that the Roman Catholics marked Martin Luther for causing division. The Protestants since that time have rejoiced that Luther and his associates were willing to be marked.

The denominational, religious churches of England surely marked that great man of God, John Darby, when he recovered some glorious truths about the grace of God and the hope and calling of the Body of Christ. He was surely despised and persecuted by religious church-leaders. How sad that the Plymouth Brethren have gone back, rather than forward, with the recovery of Pauline truth. Mr. Darby saw something of the Church of the Mystery, and in his very last writings apparently he saw something of the difference between the Church of God of the early chapters of Acts and the Church of the Mystery, although he never cleared up in his writings the great blunder that the Church of the Mystery began with twelve Jewish apostles in a Jewish City on a Jewish feast day when twelve men stood up to address devout Jews from every nation under heaven, concerning the fulfillment of the Prophecies of Joel and of David, a message that concerned all the house of Israel. Acts 2:5 to 38.

There is in the State of Michigan an outstanding Fundamentalist who chuckled with delight when he was able to preach out of the Reformed and the Christian Reformed churches several hundred of their members. He thought he was surely serving God and humanity when he led those people away from babysprinkling and their legal mixture. He led them from “under the law” to “under the water.” But when many of his members heard the glorious gospel of the grace of God, the truth of one Divine baptism, and went from “under the water,” there was no chuckling with delight. He did not prove by his attitude and action that his old man had been buried in the water. But of course, the answer to the question, just who is to be marked and by whom, depends upon whose assembly or movement is divided. The servant who teaches no water baptism for today is teaching the truth that makes for Divine unity according to Ephesians 4:3 to 7.

There is in Chicago a pastor, an outstanding leader in the I.F.C.A. He too chuckled with delight when he preached some Postmillennial sectarian church members into an undenominational assembly of Premillenarians. He really felt proud of the fact that a number of members left several different church organizations in a city just west of Chicago, and he was sure he had been their benefactor. And apparently he was willing to cause divisions and to be marked. But now things are somewhat reversed and he is in the marking business. And, sad but true, he is not always fair in the use of his marker. The way to expose or refute error, is not to malign the messenger, but to show by the Word of God, rightly divided, the error of his teaching. And surely anyone who is going to mark his brother in the Lord should be willing to meet with that brother with an open Bible and talk the thing over. But strange to say, these men who are so busy marking their fellow Christians with misrepresentation with the cry of “Bullingerism” are afraid to gather with a group of Christians and try to adjust the differences. They know they can not defend their faulty dispensationalism. Again it is pride or tradition or personal advantage.

Yes, another man of God, with whom I labored in Missouri, is an outstanding leader in the I.F.C.A. I have never met a man who tried more schemes to preach people out of the churches of the city into his independent work and how he rejoiced with joy unspeakable as they would forsake their churches and line up to support his work. Now he joins with others to mark them who would lead his followers into the glorious and blessed truth of Ephesians and Colossians. For one reason, he knows that these messages are God's death blow to the prophetic messages with which he has built up his work, leaving his people ignorant of the meaning of Ephesians 3:8 to 11.

Would you say that men are inconsistent, if not hypocritical, who cry, "mark them that cause divisions by preaching no water baptism for this age," when they know that they have caused many divisions by preaching eternal security, predestination, Premillennialism, against speaking with tongues and Divine healing, against a mixture of the kingdom of heaven with the Body of Christ and a score of other controversial subjects? If these brethren were consistent and honest, they would not preach on anything that divides saints; therefore, they would not stand for any particular water ceremony.

Whether we are marked or not marked, let us, as Christian workers all obey Ephesians 3:9 to 11 and also Ephesians 4:3 to 7. Surely we should be preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ and teach all Christians to study all other Scriptures in the light of this Pauline truth.