

# WAS THE APOSTLE PAUL A PRESBYTERIAN, A CAMPBELLITE, A BAPTIST OR A PENTECOSTALIST?

## “GOD’S PURPOSE AND PROGRAM DURING THIS AGE OF GRACE

### WAS THE APOSTLE PAUL A PRESBYTERIAN?

It is the sincere desire of the writer that as we ask this question and seek to answer it from the Bible, we may be made to do some intelligent, spiritual, prayerful thinking and really know what it means to study God’s Holy Word and be workmen who need not to be ashamed, because we rightly divide that Word in obedience to II Timothy 2:15.

The Presbyterians get their name because of their form of church government. We read in I Timothy 5:17 that the PRESBYTERY laid hands on Timothy. The Greek word is “PRESBUTERION.” The Presbytery was a company of elders. The Greek word “PRESBUTEROS” is translated “ELDER” more than fifty times in the Bible. “PRESBUTES” means “an old man.” Every intelligent, unprejudiced Christian knows that Paul believed in the government of assemblies by elders, and in that sense Paul was a Presbyterian.

As to doctrine, the apostle Paul agreed with all spiritual, evangelical members of the Body of Christ as to the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth and eternal Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His once-for-all sacrifice for the sins of all the children of Adam, His bodily resurrection and His present position and ministry, far above all the heavens, Head over all things unto the Church Which is His Body. All such Christians agree with Paul that salvation from the penalty of sin is not by what man does, or can do, for God; but by what God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit do for the believing sinner. Therefore, they believe Paul’s salvation message in Ephesians 2:8 to 10, Titus 3:5 to 8 and Romans 4:4 and 5. They also agree with Paul that the same infinite abounding grace of the God of all grace that is adequate for the salvation of any and every sinner, who will come by faith to Christ and Calvary, is altogether sufficient for the holy walk of every member of the Body of Christ. God does expect the adoration, praise, worship and fruitful, faithful service of every redeemed believer.

Paul most heartily believed that members of the Body of Christ were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4 and 5 and II Timothy 1:9); that they were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son; called, justified and glorified. Paul was sure that not one of these Body-members could ever be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:28 to 31 and Romans 8:36 to 39). Believing as he did all of this, and that a person once saved could not be condemned with the world (I Corinthians 11:32), Paul was not a Methodist. Paul taught that the believer becomes a saint and receives the Holy Spirit at the time he believes the gospel of salvation (Ephesians 1:13 and 14) and that then and there he is

sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30). Paul clearly taught that God's grace and purpose were given believers in Christ Jesus before the world began. (II Timothy 1:9). Paul clearly taught the difference between being saved once-for-all by grace, not by works of righteousness, and being rewarded for works of righteousness done in the name of Christ. (I Corinthians 3:11 to 15; Titus 3:3 to 8; Titus 2:11 to 14; Colossians 3:17; Romans 4:4 and 5.)

## PAUL AND HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM

Several times we read of households baptized under the authority of Paul; the household of Lydia and the Philippian jailer, in Acts 16, and the household of Stephanas in I Corinthians 1:16. The Presbyterians are sure that there were some young children in these households and, because Isaac was only eight days old at the time he was circumcised, Paul must have baptized some young children, too young to intelligently exercise faith. The Presbyterians are sure that God would not have little children put under water and they seem to be positive that at the time the jailer was baptized, according to Acts 16:33, there was no way to immerse him. They know that many of the baptisms of Israel, mentioned in Hebrews 9:10, were sprinklings. Therefore, they believe that sprinkling is the Scriptural method of baptizing. But they will graciously receive a believer who has been immersed.

But all intelligent Bible students among the Presbyterians know that Paul taught and practiced many things not taught and practiced by Presbyterians.

## WAS THE APOSTLE PAUL A BAPTIST?

I have just received a religious magazine published by a religious preacher not many miles away. It was sent to me, because more than one-half of the magazine was supposed to answer the teachings of Pastor J. C. O'Hair concerning the Church, the Book of Acts and Water Baptism. However, the editor has now acknowledged that he was mistaken as to what he thought I do teach on these subjects. Although the editor is a member of The Independent Churches of America, he prints in his magazine message, "I am a Baptist." Under our Bill of Rights our brother has the right to be a Baptist. He knows that the apostle Paul wrote, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1) and "as a wise masterbuilder (architect) I have laid the foundation" (I Corinthians 3:10). He knows that Paul, in I Timothy 1:16, declared himself to be a pattern for believers. (Philippians 3:17). Therefore, our editor brother wanted to be in real good company and he printed in his message, "Paul was a Baptist unto the end." I am sure that the Presbyterians, Campbellites and Pentecostals, as well as some of us who do not have a denominational label, desire to challenge this statement. We ask for more proof than was presented in the magazine article mentioned.

Hear the proof that the IFCA editor presented. He quoted Acts 19:3 to 5, concerning some disciples whom Paul met at Ephesus. Paul asked them, "Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John (THE BAPTIST) verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Then our editor brother added that Paul would not accept that "CAMPBELLITE" baptism, and that Paul baptized "the whole gang over again." This is the proof our brother submits to prove that Paul was a Baptist, and not a Campbellite.

But why did not this Baptist editor quote the next verse, that is, Acts 19:6: “And when Paul had LAID HIS HANDS UPON THEM, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they SPAKE WITH TONGUES, and PROPHESED”? Then he might have quoted Acts 19:12: “So that from Paul’s body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” This is the same apostle Paul, who wrote, in I Corinthians 14:18 and I Corinthians 14:39, “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all” . . . “forbid not to speak with tongues.” This is the same apostle Paul, who gave this testimony concerning the water baptism which he received: “Arise, and be BAPTIZED, and WASH AWAY THY SINS.” (Acts 22:16). If Paul was a Baptist, was he not a Baptist Pentecostalist?

If a handsome reward should be offered for an honest, sincere Christian, who is really an unprejudiced Berean (Acts 17:11), perhaps the reward would go unclaimed. Perhaps no group of Christians is more prejudiced than the zealous immersionists among the Fundamentalists, ninety-eight percent of whom would agree with the Baptist editor whom we have mentioned. They know that, so far as the Bible record is concerned, the last men who received water baptism were the TWELVE MEN of Acts 19:7; and that those men received Holy Spirit baptism by the imposition of hands and then spoke in tongues. In Acts 19:2 to 6 we read of THREE BAPTISMS. In Ephesians 4:4 and 5, we learn that there is ONE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST, and ONE BAPTISM. Now this question, if our editor brother is a Baptist because of Acts 19:2 to 5, why is he not a Pentecostalist because of Acts 19:6, I Corinthians 14:18 and 39 and I Corinthians 12:28? We quote I Corinthians 12:28: “And God hath set some in the CHURCH, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that MIRACLES, then GIFTS OF HEALINGS, helps, governments, DIVERSITIES OF TONGUES.” If God set in the CHURCH, MIRACLES, HEALINGS and TONGUES, who set them out? They were there when Paul baptized those twelve men, which our brother is sure proved that Paul was a Baptist and not a Campbellite. It is because of this unsound Bible teaching that the members of the IFCA, as well as other zealous immersionists among the Fundamentalists, have no Scriptural antidote for the wild fanaticism which is being carried on by several varieties of Pentecostalists in this country and spreading all over the foreign mission fields, as well as in this land. Not one of these Baptist Fundamentalists, when immersing a person, would be bold or foolish enough to say, “arise and be baptized and wash away your sins.” And how they do twist the words which the Lord gave Peter to preach on the day of Pentecost, “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.” (Acts 2:38). They have the audacity and presumption to revise this message and preach, “repent, be saved by grace, without water baptism, and when you are born again by faith and you have received the Holy Spirit within, as the evidence of your salvation, we will immerse you; and thereby you will witness to the world that you were saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves.”

God deliver us from handling His Word deceitfully. We particularly mention the Baptist Fundamentalists, because they have assumed leadership of the Fundamental “grace” movements in this country. But note what they do to Mark 16:14 to 18, which they claim is the Lord’s commission under which they carry on their “grace” program and message. They preach, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved and shall then be BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION, as a witness to the world.” What right have they to revise and abridge the Lord’s commission, “He that believeth and is BAPTIZED shall be SAVED, and THESE SIGNS shall follow them that believe?” Note the SIGNS: casting out

demons, speaking with tongues, laying hands on the sick for the restoration to health and no harm from poison. And let us keep in mind that 25 years later Paul thanked God that he spake in tongues and said, “forbid not to speak with tongues.” In that same First Corinthians the same Paul thanked God that he had baptized very few and that Christ sent him not to baptize. (I Corinthians 1:14 to 17).

Where is the IFCA or other Baptist pastor, who thanks God that he baptized very few and who thanks God that he speaks with tongues more than any of his church-members, or who preaches, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and these miracles follow,” or who preaches Acts 2:38, or Acts 22:16, or who carries on the program of Acts 19:2 to 12, or the program of Acts 8:5 to 15, where we learn that Philip was in Samaria preaching and performing miracles; that the people, who believed, received the Holy Spirit days later by the imposition of hands?

Why did our editor brother speak of the baptism by John the Baptist as “Campbellite” baptism? Because of the language of Luke 3:3, “preaching the BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.” But why not quote Acts 13:24 and John 1:31, to prove that John’s baptism was for Israel; that Christ might be made manifest unto Israel? Our editor brother had better not let the Southern Baptists know that he makes a “Campbellite” out of John the Baptist; for they get their name from him. In truth John is the only Baptist in the Bible, and he died before the Body of Christ had its historic beginning. John was not a Pentecostalist; for he performed no miracles. (John 10:41). The Campbellites or the Lutherans might claim him. But pray tell what is the difference between John the Baptist’s message, “preaching baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,” and Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost, “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins”? The Lutherans and Campbellites accept Acts 2:38 as is, and Mark 16:15 to 16; but not the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18. The Pentecostalists accept the entire program. They are willing to throw tradition and church history to the wind and go right back to the Book of Acts for their religious program, beginning with the Pentecost of Acts 2.

Presently we shall look into the full “sign” program of Acts and show God’s explanation for the absence of miracles and signs in the dispensation of grace. But here we quote from an article which appeared in the Moody Monthly in July, 1937:

## SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS—A WORD OF WARNING

“Only as we recognize and understand the place which Israel holds in the divine scheme of revelation, can we read and understand aright the Book of Acts.

IT IS A COMMON ERROR TO ASSUME THAT THE REJECTION AND CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST WAS THE HISTORICAL CRISIS AT WHICH ISRAEL WAS SET ASIDE.

When we come into the Acts we at once discover that a place of repentance was granted to Israel, and a ‘blotting out of sins’ was preached to them through the Messiah whom they had rejected and crucified. Acts 2:14, 22, 36. Doubtless repentance would have brought them ‘times of refreshing’ and ‘the times of restitution of all things’ spoken of by all the ‘prophets since the world began,’ Acts 3:19 to 21. That was the Pentecostal proclamation of the Divine amnesty for the guilty people of Jerusalem, and their answer to it was the stoning of Stephen. Acts 7.”

“The simple answer is that in this Book (Acts), we have the Divine record of the Pentecostal dispensation and that transition period was now ended. And here we notice a very significant fact, which surely can not be said to be accidental, that in the New Testament Books

written after the date of Acts 28, there is not a word to be found about Spirit manifestations except as a warning, such as I Timothy 4:1 and 2. Therefore, we heartily agree with the late Sir Robert Anderson when he says:

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

“That explains why the Apostle Paul performed no miracles in Rome, did not even speak in tongues.”

“It is only as we understand the dispensation character of the inspired Books which marks the transition period between the gospels and the setting aside of Israel, that we can understand the mystery of the silence of God in this dispensation of grace.”

### NO LANGUAGE MIRACLES TODAY

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

While in the judgment of some of us, this dispensationalism is rather extreme, yet the writer, Mr. George Douglas, and Sir Robert Anderson, the author of “The Silence of God,” have set forth the general Divine principle that accounts for the absence of signs in God’s present-day “grace” program. It is a question, whether or not it is correct to designate the period covered by the 28 chapters of Acts, as “The Pentecostal Period” or “Dispensation.” I understand, however, that neither Mr. Douglas nor Sir Robert Anderson agreed with Dr. E. W. Bullinger that a new and different Body had its historic beginning after the close of the Acts period. They contended that God’s program for His Church during the period covered by the Book of Acts included signs, visions, tongues and other miracles, and that a “signless” program was God’s order after the close of the “transition” in Acts. In my judgment Dr. Bullinger erred in teaching that the Body of Ephesians was not the Body of I Corinthians 12.

### COMMENTS OF OTHER FUNDAMENTALISTS

One of the most gifted Bible teachers of all of the members of the IFCA made these statements in “THE VOICE,” their monthly magazine:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” It was God’s Message to Israel, during the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, AND THROUGH THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE BOOK OF ACTS.”

“The Kingdom is not at hand today, and will not be at hand again until the Tribulation, immediately prior to Christ’s coming to establish that Kingdom, when the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached once again (See Matthew 24:14). It is thus. because healing miracles

are credentials of the Kingdom testimony that Paul's healing power waned in the closing days of his ministry."

This too is a bit too extreme for some of us. But again it is the general principle that must be employed for the intelligent understanding of the difference between the gifts of I Corinthians 12:8 to 11 and Ephesians 4:8 to 11. It is well to keep in mind the fact that during the period covered by the Book of Acts Paul wrote First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, Galatians, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians and Romans. So these Epistles are not numbered with Paul's "Prison Epistles," sometimes called "Paul's Latest or Last Epistles."

Mr. I. R. Dean was considered a very able and spiritual expositor of the Scriptures. We quote a few words from his writings:

"Messiah was first offered to Israel and rejected. This offer was to be made both before and after His resurrection."

"HE MUST BE OFFERED TO ISRAEL, AFTER HIS RESURRECTION AS THEIR MESSIAH, BEFORE THE NATION IS SET ASIDE."

"CHRIST WHILE ON EARTH DID NOT PREACH THE SAME GOSPEL THAT HE REVEALED AFTER HIS ASCENSION. THAT IS VERY CLEAR."

Perhaps, one of the most inexcusable blunders that Bible teachers have made is their failure to teach that Israel was given the opportunity to receive the sure mercies of David, Christ, in resurrection, as well as in incarnation, before God revealed through Paul "the dispensation of the mystery" mentioned in Ephesians 3:9. Apparently they have ignored Acts 5:29 to 32 and Acts 13:30 to 46. Israel committed four outstanding sins, according to Matthew 23:31, Matthew 21:35 and 36, Acts 7:51 and 52, I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16, Matthew 21:37, Acts 3:14 and 15, Acts 2:23: **FIRST:** They killed their prophets, God's prophets. **SECOND:** They killed God's Son, the Prince of Life. **THIRD:** They resisted and blasphemed the Holy Spirit. **FOURTH:** They forbade the apostles to preach the gospel to Gentiles. The first two sins were **PARDONABLE**. (Matthew 12:31 and 32; Luke 23:34; Acts 3:16 to 19; Acts 4:24 to 29). The last two sins were so **UNPARDONABLE** that they brought the awful judgment upon Israel mentioned in Acts 28:25 to 28 and Romans 11:5 to 9. It was not when Israel committed the **PARDONABLE** sins that reconciliation was sent to Gentiles or that the Gentiles obtained mercy because of Israel's unbelief (Romans 11:30 and 11:15). Israel was cast away and the gospel of grace was sent to Gentiles when Israel had committed the two **UNPARDONABLE** sins. Then "the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles" of Ephesians 3:1 to 4, "the dispensation of the mystery" of Ephesians 3:9, began.

Dr. H. A. Ironside is considered one of the outstanding able Bible expositors among the Fundamentalists. We quote from his **NOTES ON ROMANS**, his comments on Romans 16:25 and 26:

"The Mystery was not hid in the Scriptures to be brought to light eventually; but we are distinctly told it was hid in God until such time as He chose to manifest it."

"This was not until Israel had been given every opportunity to receive Christ **BOTH IN INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION**. When they definitely refused Him, God made known what had been in His heart from eternity, that from all nations, Jews and Gentiles, He would redeem and take out an elect company who would, by the Spirit's baptism, be formed into one Body."

How important it is that we know this truth which our brother has so clearly presented. We emphasize his true words, "**BOTH IN INCARNATION AND IN RESURRECTION.**"

Commenting on the same two verses, Romans 16:25 and 26, another outstanding, able Bible expositor among the Fundamentalists, Dr. William L. Pettingill, wrote:

“Now to Him that is of power to establish you (Romans 16:25 to 27). This closing paragraph is of great doctrinal importance as touching the person of Christ. (1) God is of power to establish His people; (2) He establishes them according to Paul’s gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ; (3) This preaching of Jesus Christ by which God establishes His people must be a preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery! There is much preaching of Jesus Christ which does not establish God’s people, because it is not according to Paul’s gospel, nor according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but was made manifest by revelation to the apostle Paul. (compare Ephesians 3:1 to 7).

Surely every intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures should know that the salvation messages in Luke 13:24 and 25, Luke 18:18 to 24, Matthew 24:13, Mark 16:14 to 18, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:34 to 36 and many other messages should be studied and interpreted and applied in the light of Ephesians 2:8 to 10, II Timothy 1:9, and in the light of Paul’s “MY GOSPEL,” mentioned in Romans 16:25 and 26 and II Timothy 2:7 to 9, the message for which Paul was the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for Gentiles, the message which he called “the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19 and 20). Christians are to be established by Paul’s “MY GOSPEL,” so that they will no longer be children tossed to and fro. (Ephesians 4:14.) Paul said, “I have laid the foundation” . . . “I am the wise masterbuilder.” (I Corinthians 3:10). As our brother Pettingill has stated, there are many Christians who are not established, because they are not established in that GOSPEL which was according to the revelation of the mystery.

Concerning the same Scripture, Roman 16:25 and 26, we quote the comments from Mr. William R. Newell (his book on Romans)

“You can judge any man’s teaching by this rule-is he Pauline? Does his doctrine start and end according to those statements of Christian doctrine uttered by the apostle Paul? No matter how wonderful a man may seem to be in his gifts and apparent consecration, if his gospel is not Pauline, it is not the gospel and we might as well get our minds settled at once on that point.”

“For instance, if you were to take Paul’s Epistles out of the Bible, you cannot find anything about the Church, the Body of Christ, for no other apostle mentions the Body of Christ.”

“Would that we had grace to defend just as vigorously this great message today, FOR IT HAS MANY ENEMIES and even real friends who do not yet see it clearly; and there are others, who like Peter (Galatians 2:11), THROUGH FEAR OF OTHERS, ARE READY TO COMPROMISE: and tone down the gospel of God.”

To say the least, it is unfortunate and deplorable that any servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is supposed to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4), would so change conviction to convenience, because he either prefers the praise of men to the praise of God (John 12:43) or fears religious leaders and their persecutions (Galatians 2:11 to 13; 1:10), as to tone down God’s message, or keep silent concerning truth revealed to them by the Holy Spirit.

For some reason the Moody Colportage Association has suddenly discontinued the publication and distribution of a pamphlet which they have printed, in several editions, since 1920. This pamphlet contains a message from the pen of Mr. A. E. Bishop, and in order that many Christians might read this message, the Colportage Association for more than 25 years has printed in the “Foreword” the unreserved, wholehearted endorsement of Dr. C. I. Scofield as to the sanity and urgent need of Mr. Bishop’s explanation for the absence of signs and miracles of the “Acts” period from God’s “grace” message and program since the close of the Book of Acts.

The title of this pamphlet is: TONGUES, SIGNS AND VISIONS NOT GOD'S ORDER FOR TODAY"

Presently we shall quote many of the statements printed in Mr. Bishop' pamphlet, but here just one short paragraph

"In the latest Epistles of Paul not only is it noticeable that the sign gift. are nowhere in manifestation, but A DIFFERENT ORDER is brought forth by the Holy Spirit for the correction of prevailing hobbies and fanaticisms."

Hear it! A NEW PROGRAM AFTER THE CLOSE OF ACTS.

Here we learn that Mr. Bishop gives us the only intelligent antidote for the counterfeit sign program of the fanatical Pentecostalists. During the period covered by the Book of Acts we learn, in I Corinthians 12:8 to 11, that seven different "sign" gifts were exercised by members of the Body of Christ. In I Corinthians 3, and 5, and 6, and 11, and 14 we learn that the Corinthians were perhaps the least spiritual of any saints during that transitional period. They exercised all of the gifts, whereas not the most consecrated, devout, fruitful, spiritual men of God exercise any of the "sign" gifts today. When we quote Mr. Bishop's other statements we shall learn why. We shall also learn that the apostle Paul, according to the Divine truth revealed in his "Prison" Epistles, was neither a Presbyterian, a Campbellite, a Baptist nor a Pentecostalist. Although all of these different denominational Christians might claim Paul during the "Acts" period, it is strange that the Campbellites or the Baptists would want to claim a man who said, "Christ sent me not to baptize," . . . "I thank God I baptized very few of you." And certainly the Baptists do not like that language in Paul's testimony, "Arise and be baptized, and WASH away your sins." This would be more to the liking of the Campbellites; because in their water ceremony the water performs a miracle, as mixed with faith it washes away sins. This is the only miracle in the Acts period, the Campbellites seem to want.

## THE PENTECOSTALIST MENACE

There are different varieties of Pentecostalists, some of them being less fanatical than others. Many of them are sincere in contending for the entire program of the Book of Acts and Mark 16:14 to 18 with the slogan, "Jesus Christ, The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever." (Hebrews 13:8). In many communities at home and abroad the fanatical Pentecostalists are zealously determined that others shall experience their same delusion; and they are indeed proving a menace to many of God's servants and Christian assemblies. But sarcasm and ridicule and boycott will not deliver them from their delusion. But if they will be Bereans (Acts 17:11), Mr. Bishop's pamphlet will show them the error of their way.

### THE SIGNS, VISIONS, ANGELIC VISITATIONS, TONGUES. JAIL DELIVERANCES, HEALINGS IN ACTS

Before we quote at length from Mr. Bishop's pamphlet we submit here some of the SUPERNATURAL DEMONSTRATIONS in the Book of Acts and some religious practices not in Paul's Prison Epistles

1—"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began



to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”

2—“And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.”

3—“And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,”

4—“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

5—“Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.”

6—“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

7—“And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.”

8—“And as he (Saul) journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.”

9—“the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.”

10—“Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.”

11—“And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven:”

12—“He saw the vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God:”

13—“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.” “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,”

14—“And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.”

15—“And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.” “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.”

16—“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”

17—“And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.”

18—“And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.” “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles. secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

19—“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds:”

20—“And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

21—“Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all. And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”

22—“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

23—“And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”

24—“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they

changed their minds, and said that he was a god, In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:"

Perhaps you have observed that, with the exception of the ministries of Stephen and Philip, either Peter or Paul was generally present when the special miracles (recorded) were performed during the Book of Acts period. (Note Hebrews 2:3 to 5 and II Corinthians 12:12). The Lord permitted Paul to duplicate such miracles as Peter performed, such as raising one lame from birth, healing by bodily contact or presence, raising the dead, miraculous jail deliverances, trances and visions, speaking with tongues, and other similar miracles.

Here is another noteworthy and significant fact. With the death of one of the Twelve apostles, James, (Acts 12:1 and 2), there is a sense in which the Twelve disappear as the human actors in the Book of Acts. There the curtain goes down on their special ministry. Thereafter they are mentioned only when they have dealings with the apostle Paul. All of the last sixteen chapters of Acts give us the record of the sayings and doings of one man. the apostle Paul, and only such persons as have dealings with the apostle Paul; perhaps, we should say the acts of the risen Lord and the Holy Spirit by the apostle Paul. There had to be TWELVE apostles, Peter and the Eleven, from Acts 2:1 to Acts 12:1. Therefore, it was altogether necessary that a successor be chosen to take the place of Judas. (Acts 1:16 to 26). So when Judas died a successor was chosen. When James died (Acts 12:1) no successor was chosen. The number "TWELVE" speaks of Israel.

As the curtain went down on the TWELVE with the death of James, so in a sense, the curtain went down on Paul with the sudden close of the twenty-eighth chapter of Acts. Paul did plenty of talking and acting between the close of Acts and his death. Luke, the author of Acts, was with Paul during those "Post-Acts" days (II Timothy 4:11). But the Lord did not want Luke to write, in Acts, what Paul said and did when he was in jail for the mystery. Therefore, Paul's written ministry was "Acts" and "Post-Acts"; first before Luke's final word in Acts; and then from the close of Acts until Paul's farewell address. Why do we find no record of any missionary journeys of the Twelve outside of Israel's land in the Book of Acts?

In Acts 28:31 we read that Paul was in Rome, "preaching the kingdom of God." When we read this statement, let us keep in mind a statement from the pen of Dr. H. A. Ironside: "Let the reader not fall into a mistake very commonly made today; the kingdom is not the church (Body)." There are times when the Bible speaks of the kingdom in connection with the Church. In this connection our brother said in his book on Baptism, "That baptism is not, properly speaking, a Church ordinance, I also admit and teach, because unlike the Lord's Supper, baptism had a place BEFORE THE CHURCH BEGAN, and will have one AFTER IT HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY." He also said, "Christian baptism certainly did begin with the Resurrection. The twelve apostles, so far as I know, were not baptized over again." So our brother has stated that the TWELVE apostles never received "Christian" baptism. Concerning the "baptism death" and burial of the believer in Romans 6:3 to 6, our brother has printed in his book on Baptism: "It is not, of course, that the unimmersed are not buried with Christ, if believers. All such have died with Him, been buried with Him and raised with Him." This is sound teaching and I am sure that all intelligent, spiritual Christians know that the believer is baptized into Christ's death, and is buried with Christ by baptism, is raised and seated in the heavenlies, the very moment he meets

God, by faith, at Calvary. But this is not clearly taught in the Book of Acts. Baptisms in Acts must be studied in the light of Paul's 'Post-Acts' Epistles.

Dr. Ironside has printed this very gracious statement, "A brother who believes quite differently to me on Baptism may have far more fervent love for the Lord Jesus than I. Together we can enjoy sweetest fellowship, while respecting each other's conscience as to a question that has provoked much strife in the Church." Until Christians reach an agreement as to the meaning of ONE BAPTISM for Christian unity in Ephesians 4:4 and 5, as there are more than twenty different interpretations and practices as to water baptism, they must endeavor fervently to respect each other's conscience, realizing that conscience must not take the place of II Timothy 2:15 and Ephesians 4:3 to 6. But undoubtedly some kind of religious UNO seems necessary.

Dr. Ironside has made a statement concerning miracles in the Book of Acts, which helps a little to see that signs waned with the close of the "Acts" period. But it is not sufficiently clear to give us a definite rule to explain the absence of signs in God's "grace" program. He said:

"God has never promised in His Word that miracles and signs would remain in the Church to the end of the dispensation."

"However, it is perfectly plain that the nearer we get to the close of Acts, the less we have in the way of signs and wonders. This is to be expected."

#### NOW FOR THE BISHOP-SCOFIELD-MOODY PAMPHLET

This printed message was placed in my hands about 24 years ago, and I still believe that it is the only Scriptural explanation as to why spiritual, faithful men of God in this age of grace are not carrying on the full "Acts" program and are not expected to. Note carefully the following statements in this pamphlet:

1—"Also after careful restudies of the book of Acts and of the Epistles written before its close, I am convinced that those who contend for a purely kingdom dispensation covering the book of Acts period are as much deceived by Satan as are those who contend that the sign gifts are still in the church and would be in manifestation everywhere if God's people were in a healthy spiritual state and exercising faith to that end."

2—"For some years after Pentecost the church was exclusively Jewish, clinging to their rites and ceremonies, the converts sometimes receiving the Holy Spirit subsequent to their conversion, by the imposition of the apostolic hands." (Acts 8:14 to 17.)

3—"There is no foundation in the Word of God for the prevailing popular doctrine of 'divine healing':" "It is not true that healing is as much the will of God for every Christian as salvation is for the unsaved. Some of the choicest of saints by the elective will of God, have been patient sufferers for years upon sick beds:"

4—"A careful study of the epistles, especially of the latest epistles of Paul, which give the normal course of the church during the present dispensation, would dismount all from their hobbies, eliminate the last vestige of Judaism from their lives and teachings, and would adjust things in general, placing secondary things in their place and first things where they belong."

5—"Is it the Spirit of God or Satan who attempts to revive the sign-gifts that were divinely retired after having fulfilled their purpose? Every widespread attempt to revive them has, without exception, resulted in confusion, divisions, injury and disgrace."

6—"Is it the Spirit of God or Satan who turns the eyes of sincere Christians back to Pentecost and away from the goal placed before them in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians?"

7—“In the latest epistles of Paul not only is it noticeable that the sign gifts are nowhere in manifestation, but a different order is brought forth by the Holy Spirit for the correction of prevailing hobbies and fanaticisms.”

8—“This was an overlapping of the former and present dispensations, AS SOME YEARS ELAPSED BEFORE THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE TOOK ITS NORMAL COURSE.”

9—“There is a corrective passage in God’s Word for every error, every heresy, every delusion, every hobby, every fanaticism, and every unbalanced position.”

10—“In contrast with the sign-gifts of I Corinthians 12, limited to a portion of the believers and operative only during the book of Acts period, let us note the non-sign gifts of Ephesians 4:10:”

11—“The fact that the Bible does not give a hint of the manifestation of the sign-gifts after the close of the book of Acts, must carry convincing evidence to the careful student who compares scripture with scripture, that they have been retired.”

12—“If we give heed to this fact, it will be easy for us to see later on why God, who is sovereign in the giving of signs, afterwards retired completely the sign gifts:”

13—“Is it the spirit of God or Satan, who turns the eyes of sincere Christians back to Pentecost and away from the goal placed before them in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians?”

14—“A careful study of the epistles, especially of the latest epistles of Paul, give the normal course of the church during the present dispensation:”

For the cure of the fanaticism of “Healing-Sign-Tongues” Christians no message in print is more needed than these true statements of Mr. Bishop.

The following statement of Mr. John Darby concerning the so-called great commission of Matthew 28:19 and 20 does not adequately answer the “sign” question:

“The accomplishment of the Commission here in Matthew has been interrupted but there is the promise to be with those who went forth in it to the end of the age. Nor do I doubt it will be so. This testimony will go forth to the nations before the Lord comes. The brethren will carry it to warn the nations. The commission was given, but we find no accomplishment of it. It connects the testimony with the Jewish remnant owned by a risen Lord of all, with the earth and his earthly directions, and for the present it has in fact given place to a heavenly commission, and the Church of God.”

As we said, the following statement of Sir Robert Anderson in his “Silence of God” may be too extreme but in that book he does show that signs ceased with the close of Acts and why.

“My contention is that the Acts, as a whole, is the record of a temporary and transitional dispensation in which blessing was again offered to the Jew and again rejected.” “As indicated in these pages it gives the clew to the right understanding of the Acts of the Apostles—A Book which is primarily the record, not, as commonly supposed, of the founding of the Christian Church, but of the apostasy of the favored Nation.” (Quoted from the Silence of God.)

## THE JOINT-BODY—THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

In Ephesians 3:6 we read of “Sussomos,” the joint-Body (not same Body). This Body is in a “MYSTERY” setting. (Ephesians 3:3 and 4 and Ephesians 3:9.) Therefore, we have the Scriptural right to speak of the Body of Christ as “the Church of the Mystery.”

In Ephesians 1:21 to 23 and Romans 12:4 and 5 and Colossians 1:25 and 26 we learn that the Body of Christ is the Church. But in Acts 7:38, Hebrews 2:12, Psalms 22:22, and Matthew

18:17 we learn that the Church is not always the Body of Christ. Compare I Corinthians 12:13 with Matthew 25:34 and 40 and Acts 9:4.

Christians, who insist that the Body of Christ was a Church foretold by Israel's prophets, do not, and cannot, make others see "the dispensation of the mystery" in obedience to Ephesians 3:9.

We trust that the wonderful truth set forth in the statements from the pen of Dr. H. A. Ironside, which we here quote, will help the reader-to see the dispensational place of the Church of the Mystery

1—"Christ's ministers are to be stewards of the mysteries of God, not merely preachers of what people so often call the simple gospel."

2—"Preachers of Old Testament truths, which they offer in place of New Testament mysteries, would not find it so easy to go on confusing the people of God, if there was real exercise of conscience among those who are content to be styled 'the laity' and who seldom read their Bible for themselves, and endeavor to rightly divide the Word of Truth."

3—"Now if the mystery be for those who have faith to obey, it is certainly of vast importance that every child of God be instructed as to its true character."

4—"There is no difference between what I am teaching now and what I have taught through all the years."

5—"There is one Body and I know of no other. Nor does this result in unkind feelings or hard critical thought concerning others, equally dear to Christ, who may not be enlightened upon this great mystery. The very fact that we are all members one of another should hinder this."

6—"The mystery of the church as the Body of Christ was never made known in Old Testament times, nor yet in the days when our Lord was on earth. We are told distinctly it had been 'hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.' The divine method of making it known was by a special revelation to the apostle Paul as he tells us in Ephesians 3:"

7—"It is a great truth that the Lord is teaching many over again in the present day, after it has been buried in the rubbish of ecclesiastical tradition for centuries, that God has a Church upon earth. It is our part, then, not to be making churches but to acknowledge what He has already made . . . . Into this membership man cannot admit, but the Lord only."

8—"That the nations would be brought to own His sway through Israel, is clearly taught; but that He would be doing a special work among them, while the Jew is set aside, was a secret hid in God. To understand it is to enter into the truth for the present dispensation:"

9—"The mystery is not simply centered in the term 'body,' but whatever expression may be used, the mystery is, that during this present age all distinction between believing Jews and believing Gentiles is done away in Christ:"

10—"But this doctrine of the one body is never referred to by any other apostle than Paul. He calls it 'the dispensation of the mystery' which he had especially been entrusted with."

11—"Only when a new revelation from God is given, does a dispensation change."

12—"The whole counsel of God was not made known until Paul received this revelation of the mystery."

"It was a special revelation given not to the twelve, but to him as the apostle of the new dispensation."

13—“The mystery was not something of difficult, mysterious character, but a sacred secret never before known to mankind until in due time opened up by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul.”

“It was not hid in the Scriptures to be brought to light eventually; but we are distinctly told it was hid in God until such time as He chose to manifest it.” “This was not until Israel had been given every opportunity to receive Christ both in incarnation and in resurrection.”

14—“Throughout the writings of the apostle Paul he again and again refers to a wondrous secret which he designates in a special way as ‘the mystery’ or ‘the great mystery.’ Other mysteries he treats of, as we have seen, but there is one that is preeminently such. It occupies much of his ministry, and is clearly THE CHIEF GEM in the diadem of the truth of Christianity; yet for centuries it was almost entirely LOST SIGHT OF.”

15—“The Old Testament Scriptures clearly predicted the calling of the Gentiles, but always in subjection to Israel.” “Let the reader not fall into a mistake very commonly made today. The kingdom is not the Church (Body).”

“The mystery, on the other hand, is spiritual and belongs to heaven. A break in God’s ways having come in, He now makes known His hidden purpose.”

“The mystery formed no part of the revelation of the previous dispensation. Had it been otherwise, Paul could not rightly have written that it was “kept secret since the world began.” “He (Paul) learned it not from the former Scriptures, but by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.”

“A truth never before made known. The Old Testament will be searched in vain for it. It is not there, because it was hid in God.”

16—“To the epistles of Paul alone do we turn for the revelation of this mystery. He was the special vessel chosen to make known the heavenly calling. The twelve were, as we have seen, connected primarily with the testimony to Israel. Paul, as one born out of due time, was selected to be the messenger to the nations, announcing the distinctive truths of the present dispensation.”

17—“It was A SPECIAL REVELATION GIVEN NOT TO THE TWELVE, BUT TO HIM (Paul) as the Apostle of the new dispensation.”

18—“Peter never preached the mystery of the Body so far as the record goes. That was a special revelation to Paul.”

“On Page 74 of my book on the mysteries of God, I am speaking of the body, and this, of course was made alone to the Apostle Paul that he might communicate it to others.”

The above statements from the pen of Dr. H. A. Ironside are clear and Scripturally sound, and I agree wholly with the dispensationalism quoted from his writings. If every Fundamentalist would proclaim these glorious truths and obey Ephesians 3:9, a glorious revival would follow. But alas! how true is Dr. Ironside’s statement concerning one of God’s great mysteries. He writes

“Not a saint in a hundred knows the difference between the two terms” . . . “the bulk of professing believers know little or nothing”. . . “unquestionably the onus of blame rests upon the guides, who, professing to be Christ’s ministers, are anything but stewards of the mysteries of God” . . . “preachers would not find it so easy to go on confusing the people of God, if there was real exercise of conscience among those who are content to be styled the laity, and who seldom read the Bible for themselves and endeavor to rightly divide the Word of Truth.”

For Christians who really desire to rightly divide the Word of Truth, most important are Dr. Ironside’s statements, that a new dispensation begins with a new revelation, that the



revelation concerning the dispensation of the mystery, which began after Israel rejected Christ in resurrection, was given to Paul, and not to Peter or any other apostle or prophet, but to Paul, the apostle of the new dispensation, to pass on to others. The mystery as Dr. Ironside wrote is the CHIEF GEM in the diadem of the truth of Christianity.

It is for us, as Bereans, to learn in the Bible when Israel had been given every opportunity to receive Christ in resurrection and there mark the historic beginning of the Church of the Mystery, which Dr. Ironside states is “THE MYSTERY, GLORIOUS, INCONCEIVABLY AND TRANSCENDENTLY GRAND.”

Take in these adverbs and adjectives. And there is here no exaggeration. Note these other remarks of Dr. Ironside, in the same book:

“Paul learned it by direct revelation from Christ in glory.”

“To understand it is to enter into the truth for the present dispensation.”

“That those already saved might be taught what was of such great importance to all who would be, not dwarfs, but fully developed or perfect men in Christ Jesus.”

“May we more fully enter into what is so precious to His great heart of love.”

“In the Epistle to the Romans the mystery is not developed. We must turn to Ephesians especially for that.”

“It is to the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians we must turn for the further unfolding of this mystery.”

Then concerning Colossians 1:24 to 27 our brother states:

“What is especially insisted on here is that the mystery is the great truth that completes the Word of God.”

“It was his devotion to the revelation of the mystery which is part of the dispensation of the grace of God, that resulted in his (Paul’s) imprisonment”

The quotation above from the pen of Dr. Ironside, “THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT I AM TEACHING NOW AND WHAT I HAVE TAUGHT THROUGH ALL THE YEARS,” is from a personal letter to me from Dr. Ironside written after he had published his second edition of “Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth.”

Before we turn to Ephesians 3:1 to 11, we again quote from the pen of Dr. Ironside, concerning Ephesians 3:

“THIS IS THE FULLEST DECLARATION, OR UNFOLDING, OF THIS PRECIOUS AND WONDROUS MYSTERY THAT WE HAVE IN ALL THE BIBLE. IT IS SO PLAIN THAT ONE WOULD SUPPOSE THAT EVERY SPIRITUAL MIND MUST SEE AT ONCE TO WHAT IT REFERS.”

Before we quote several verses from the third chapter of Ephesians, let us prayerfully consider Paul’s words in Colossians 4:3 and 4: “Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak ‘THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST,’ for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Concerning this MYSTERY, in the same Epistle, Colossians 1:25 and 26, we are told that this MYSTERY, which completed the Word of God, “hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.” This is confirmed in Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and Ephesians 3:9. In Ephesians 3:9 God’s servants are thus instructed: “Make all see what is the fellowship (dispensation) of the MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.”

There are several hundred thousand pastors and evangelists in this country. In several minutes we could name every one of them, who is obeying Ephesians 3:9 or who is praying for open doors and open mouths (Ephesians 6:19 and 20) for the proclamation of the MYSTERY.

We find that God's way of knowing the MYSTERY is set forth in Ephesians 1:16 to 23, prayer for the spirit of wisdom and revelation, to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened. Therefore, I do not fully agree with the following statement copied from the writings of Dr. H. A. Ironside's as to "so plain"

"It is so plain that one would suppose that every spiritual mind must see at once to what it refers. Yet the commentators and expositors generally are content to make it mean that in the present age God is extending to the Gentiles the same grace He offers the Jew, so that the former, by closing with His offer of grace, becomes a sharer in the kingdom promised to Israel."

But I most heartily agree with his statement that it is very important that every Christian be informed as to the true character of the MYSTERY and with the following statements from the pen of our brother:

"It was a SPECIAL REVELATION GIVEN NOT TO THE TWELVE, BUT TO HIM (Paul) as the Apostle of the new dispensation."

"To the Epistles of Paul alone do we turn for the revelation of this mystery"

Note again Dr. Ironside's words:

"Throughout the writings of the apostle Paul he again and again refers to a wondrous secret, which he designates in a special way as 'the mystery,' or 'the great mystery.'

"For centuries it was almost entirely lost sight of. In fact, until brought to the fore through the writings and the preaching and teaching of a distinguished ex-clergyman. Mr. J. N. Darby, in the early part of the last century, it is scarcely to be found in a single book or sermon throughout a period of sixteen hundred years!"

Here Mr. Darby is given credit for his courageous attempt to recover truth which Dr. Ironside, in another book, declares was buried in religious rubbish for centuries. We do thank God for Mr. Darby's wonderful ministry. He gave only a little light on the MYSTERY, but his disciples today seem determined to put out that light and close every door for the utterance of the MYSTERY for which Paul suffered in the Roman jail, as an evildoer. (II Timothy 2:7 to 9.) Many of them, as well as the Bible teachers of other groups of Fundamentalists are even challenging this statement of Dr. Ironside concerning THE MYSTERY:

"The Old Testament will be searched in vain for it. It is not there because it was the secret purpose of His heart, only to be revealed after the rejection of His Son."

And they would be put out of the camp if they should proclaim the truth, mentioned in Dr. Ironside's "Romans" "that the mystery was first revealed to Paul and that was after Israel had rejected Christ in resurrection, as well as in incarnation."

### "AS" IN EPHESIANS 3:5

THE WORD "AS" in Ephesians 3:5 seems to trouble some students of the Scriptures, but most of them really desire to be troubled with this "AS" concerning the MYSTERY, so they can fit the MYSTERY into their church programs which they are carrying on in competition with God's Church program recorded in Ephesians 4:9 to 13. Note the "AS"

"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."

The word "AS" here was not used to express comparative revelation. This we may learn by studying Ephesians 3:5 in the light of Colossians 1:25 and 26 and Ephesians 3:9 and Ephesians 3:8.

If the intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures should diligently and prayerfully study every word of the Bible from Genesis to Malachi, then Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, then all of the Book of Acts and every line from the pen of Peter, James and John, and then Paul's Epistles written before the close of the "Acts" period, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, Galatians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians and Romans, what could he possibly learn concerning the MYSTERY, or, as our brother Ironside puts it, "the true character of the MYSTERY"? After reading Paul's Prison Epistles such a student could then turn back to Romans 16:25 and 26, Romans 8:28 to 31, Roman 12:4 and 5 and II Corinthians 5:16 to 21, and I Corinthians 2:6 to 8 and I Corinthians 12:12 and 13, and see that the Holy Spirit was touching on the MYSTERY in those Scriptures; but with no clear revelation that would help the faithful steward of the mysteries of God to obey Ephesians 3:9 by making known "the dispensation of God's hidden mystery," which Paul plainly and dogmatically claims "by revelation He (Christ) made known unto ME." (Ephesians 3:3.) Paul the wise "masterbuilder" and "pattern" and "example" laid the foundation. (I Corinthians 3:10; I Timothy 1:16; I Corinthians 11:1).

Surely I Corinthians 12:12 and Romans 8:28 to 31 prove that Paul had received the revelation of the MYSTERY before he reached Rome as Christ's prisoner for the Gentiles.

Paul, in Romans 11:13, I Timothy 2:7, II Timothy 1:11, Romans 15:16, Ephesians 3:8, declares himself to be the apostle and preacher and teacher of the Gentiles.

Now note:

### THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE IN EPHESIANS 3:1 TO 3

"For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of 'THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD' which is given 'ME' to youward. How that by revelation He made known unto 'ME' the MYSTERY."

The risen Lord ordered Peter to preach to Cornelius and his household (Acts 15:7; Acts 10:28 to 37); but there was a difference between Peter's keys of the kingdom of heaven and Paul's DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD for Gentiles. Peter was a prisoner more than once; but he was not Christ's prisoner for the Gentiles. Peter agreed with Paul that he would go to Israel. (Galatians 2:9.)

How little do we really understand concerning the 'DISPENSATION OF GRACE.' As Mr. Newell remarked, it has many enemies, and many compromising Christians, through fear of the religious rulers, tone down the message of grace. He expressed the desire that we might have the courage to proclaim it. But let us keep in mind that when these enemies, among God's children, oppose those who proclaim this glorious truth, the faithful messengers are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 6:11 to 20.)

This MYSTERY of Christ has much to do with the principalities in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 1:19 to 23, Ephesians 4:11 to 13, Colossians 2:10 to 15, Ephesians 6:11 to 20, Ephesians 3:10.) Read in Ephesians 3:10 why members of the Body of Christ are to obey Ephesians 3:9 and why Satan, at the head of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies, is so bitterly opposed to this glorious truth. (Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:5 and 6.)

The MYSTERY has to do with God's ETERNAL PURPOSE, the program of grace which God purposed in Christ before the world began, as to the heavenly position and possessions of members of the Body of Christ, (II Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 3:11; Ephesians 1:3 to

5; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:28 to 31); the “ONE NEW MAN” of Ephesians 2:15, the “PERFECT MAN” of Ephesians 4:13, the “FILLING-UP” of Christ of Ephesians 1:21 to 23.

## TWO FALSE CHARGES

Religious Christians, who are opposed to God’s message and program of grace, frequently accuse other Christians, who are endeavoring to obey Ephesians 3:9, of teaching that men were not saved by grace until Paul received his “grace” revelation from the glorified Christ in heaven, and of teaching that, because a believer once saved is saved for all eternity, he can be a careless, carnal and fruitless Christian knowing he cannot lose his salvation.

The Bible, in Genesis, tells us that Noah found “grace” in the sight of the Lord. Surely Abel and Seth and Enoch and Shem also did. When God changed Jacob to Israel, God certainly manifested His grace to Jacob. Abram, the uncircumcised heathen, was declared righteous in uncircumcision, without law, ritual or religion. (Romans 4:9 to 11; Galatians 3:6 to 8.) He was the pattern for the Gentiles saved by Paul’s gospel of the uncircumcision, which was decidedly grace. (Galatians 2:7; Galatians 3:8; Acts 20:24; Romans 3:24 to 27.)

For 1500 years, from Sinai to Calvary, in the blood-sprinkled mercy seat and otherwise, God manifested His grace to Israel, under the law. But in the light of Galatians 3:23; Romans 8:15; Hebrews 2:14 and 15; Matthew 23:1 to 3; Luke 18:31 to 35, even the babe in Christ should know the difference between “grace” in a dispensation and the “DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD” for heathen, who began to receive God’s mercy in the reign of full grace because of Israel’s unbelief. (Romans 11:30.) Let no Christian ever fail to study the dispensational importance of Romans 11:30 and Romans 11:15, studied with Acts 13:46, Acts 18:5 and 6 and Acts 28:25 to 28.

As to the other false charge, we state dogmatically the first important, glorious and

## FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH FOR MAN TO KNOW

Hear it. Man is not saved from the penalty of sin, from eternal conscious perdition, by what man does, or can do, for God; but by what God does for man; through the Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. This is the one truth that would bring the greatest joy, blessing and transformation to every member of the human race, if they would receive it into their believing hearts. Believers are made accepted (GRACED) in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:6 and 7; Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and Ephesians 2:13; II Timothy 1:9 and 10.) This is wholly apart from man’s good deeds or religious activities.

There is a difference between being religious and being spiritual; between “religious” Christians and “grace” Christians. “Grace” Christians accept all of Titus 2:11 to 14 and II Corinthians 9:8; “grace” for salvation from the lake of fire and “grace” for spiritual, gracious behaviour and fruitful service as God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We are in a glorious circle of eternal grace. (II Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8 to 10; Ephesians 2:7.)

## GRACE PLUS NOTHING

Let us be careful about repeating such a slogan. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all in the believing sinner’s salvation and the Tri-une God, the Word of God, and spiritual

men, with gifts from above, all work together to cause the saint to walk worthy of the calling wherewith he is called. (Ephesians 4:1.)

Think of preachers who testify and sing “grace plus nothing” and at the same time they are standing beside “a religious cemetery.” A cemetery is where dead people are buried. Many “grace” preachers bury the dead in a baptistery and still call themselves “grace” preachers and disfellowship other “grace” Christians who are satisfied with the death baptism, and resurrection they received from God at Calvary, which made them members of God’s one and only true Bible Church, the Body of Christ.

Here again the quotation from Dr. H. A. Ironside’s book, “Baptism”

“IT IS NOT, OF COURSE, THAT THE UNIMMERSED ARE NOT BURIED WITH CHRIST, IF BELIEVERS. ALL SUCH HAVE DIED WITH HIM, BEEN BURIED WITH HIM AND RAISED WITH HIM.”

Now I am sure that every unprejudiced, intelligent, spiritual Berean knows that Paul was not a Presbyterian; Paul was not a Campbellite; Paul was not a Baptist; Paul was not a Pentecostalist.

In Paul’s Prison Epistles, after God was through with His “sign” program, Paul contended for ONE BAPTISM together with ONE CHURCH. (Ephesians 4:4 and 5.) In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and in the Book of Acts signs, visions, miraculous healings, tongues are inseparably linked with water baptism. Any sound exegesis that will rule out the one will rule out the others.

There are many unsaved Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Campbellites, Episcopalians, Baptists and others, including thousands of preachers. Whether or not they preach one baptism, they have experienced only one baptism, not God’s “salvation” baptism; but human “water” baptism. In all of these denominations there are thousands who are members of the same Church to which Paul belonged at the time he wrote his first and his last Epistles. Everyone of them received God’s “salvation” baptism at Calvary. (Luke 12:50; Romans 6:3; I Corinthians 12:13). Before they received little or much water from their religious leaders they were complete in Christ, seated in the heavenlies in Christ. (Colossians 2:10; Ephesians 2:5 and 6.) Water will not help give life to a dead sinner, and it certainly will not help give more life to a living saint.

God’s program in this present “grace” dispensation (economy) calls for ONE BAPTISM. (Ephesians 4:4 and 5.) ONE BAPTISM does not mean “two baptisms,” one Divine and one human. I could not count the letters I have received from “water” Christians, saying, “Well, water baptism will not hurt a Christian, even if it does no good.” What an apology and argument for the ceremony.

God has one and only one Church, ONE BODY, in this age of grace. As Dr. Ironside so truthfully wrote, ‘Only God can receive a person into this Church.’ For membership in this eternal Divine Organism God requires no water ceremony or no religious act of any kind. All “grace” Christians, Baptists or others, state positively that water baptism is not necessary for salvation or for entrance into heaven and eternal glory. But they will agree that it divides members of the Body of Christ into sectarian groups (undenominational as well as denominational) and often causes them to be ungracious, if not bitter, toward other members of the same ONE BODY of Christ, which Christ will present unto Himself as a glorious, holy, spotless Church, without blemish, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame (blemish) before Him in love. (Ephesians 5:25 to 27; Ephesians 1:4 and 5.)

“They TWO shall be ONE FLESH—I speak a MYSTERY concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH (not churches).” (Ephesians 5:31 and 32.)

Let’s endeavor to keep the unity in God’s way, obeying Ephesians 4:3 to 6 and Ephesians 3:9 by praying Ephesians 1:16 to 23, Ephesians 6:19 and 20 and Colossians 4:3 and 4 and permitting the prayers to be answered in us.