

The Word of Truth Ministry Presents

Special Full Length Studies

#SS24

The Glory of the One Baptism

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

Throughout the nineteen hundred years of the Church's history certain great Biblical doctrines have become matters of frequent controversy and conflict.

At such times, men have (often) turned to the Bible for the expressed purpose of finding support for their particular view rather than to discover what God has revealed in the written Word.

Now the subject of **baptism** has been a constantly recurring question down through the centuries. It has long been a storm center of more than ordinary disturbance.

Men who take their stand with one or other of the sides of this controversy (both sides begin to ransack the Word of God for proof texts to buttress their theories) care not for all that the Word reveals, but for that only which supports their contention. The verses that can be used to support their theories are magnified and exalted and verses that are used to give aid to the opposite theory are minimized and not infrequently ignored.

If one half of a verse supports their position and the other half hinders it, men who claim to have a love and honor for the Word have been known not to be adverse to quoting just that part that gives aid to their theory.

Inasmuch as at the present time there exists an almost bitter strife on the subject of baptism, it would seem impossible for anyone involved in the controversy in any manner, to write freed from all passion and prejudice. But the purpose of the present writer is to attempt an honest, thoroughgoing analysis of the question. After my manuscript is complete a final careful reading will be given, and if, at that time, I discover I have failed to write apart from prejudice and bitter controversial spirit, I shall discard my manuscript.

Furthermore, in the event that my manuscript finds its way into print, and any reader can point out wherein I have been guilty of dealing unfaithfully with God's Word, I am fully prepared to destroy the entire output.

Method of Treatment

The plan I propose to employ in dealing with the subject is as follows:

Each verse in the New Testament wherein the word baptism occurs, will be first

quoted and then analyzed. Due regard will be given to the context of each verse. Nothing will be read into the verses. No human thoughts will be allowed to mix with God's thoughts during the process of analysis, and no truth in the verses that can be discovered by the writer will be intentionally left out.

The analysis will be simple for it is the writer's contention that the general truths in God's revelation are clearly to be seen upon the surface. The details are hidden deep, but our interest is in the general truths revealed in God's Word that relate to baptism. The Word will be permitted to speak for itself.

After the analysis the truth will be synthesized, that is, the separate parts of the truth gleaned from the Scripture will be brought together to form a single revelation of truth. Here, again, care will be exercised, so that nothing may creep in that was not brought forward in the analysis.

The admonition of 2 Timothy 2:15 will be diligently observed and the Word of Truth will be rightly divided.

Thus by analysis, synthesis and the right division of Scripture we will attempt to find the truth in God's Word concerning baptism. God will honor, I feel sure, and bless such an effort. He has guaranteed knowledge of the truth to willing souls.

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." John 7:17 R.V.

Let those readers who hold theories be ready to surrender them should they prove contrary to the Word of God. Let those who hold no theories stand ready to learn as we search God's Word together.

Two Great Classes

It has been said people may be divided into two distinct groups with regard to their treatment of the Bible.

1. Those who place the Bible above everything.
2. Those who place something above the Bible.

The writer casts his lot wholeheartedly with the first group, even though it may be small. My appeal is to the Word and to the Word alone. No help can be promised to those who place tradition, creeds, church history and ecclesiastical practice over and above the Word of God.

I have divided the truth into three dispensational divisions. First, the period before the cross; second, the Acts period; and third, the "dispensation of the Mystery." (See Eph. 3:9 R.V.) Unless these divisions are recognized, truth concerning - baptism becomes contradictory. If these divisions are accepted, then all contradictions

immediately disappear.

No study will be entered into regarding the mode of water baptism. This fact alone will make this pamphlet unique among those dealing with the subject.

BEFORE THE CROSS

I would open the subject with an examination of those verses relative to John's water baptism. From these verses we shall gain an understanding as to the origin, meaning and purpose of the water baptism as administered by the forerunner of the Messiah.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:1-2.

"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

"But when He saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to His baptism, He said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." Matt. 3 :5-8.

This, then, is the **first** mention of baptism in the New Testament. Here it is vitally connected with the kingdom of the heavens. John preached repentance because this kingdom was drawing nigh. Those who repented were baptized in the river Jordan. Those who were baptized confessed their sins.

When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John's baptism, he demanded of them fruit worthy of repentance. This was demanded also of the multitude as is brought out in the parallel passage.

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

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." Luke 3:3-7-8.

It is customary today to require faith first and then baptism may follow, but it is patent that John demanded "fruits worthy of repentance" before he would baptize those who came to him.

Just what John required can be easily discovered, for in view of this requirement the people asked him, "What shall we do then?"

"He answered and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And He said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you." Luke 3:10-13.

These verses show the character of the works demanded by John. It is plain that these demands had to do with the coming kingdom. Is it required of a man today to strip himself of all but one shirt as a prerequisite for baptism? Those who worship in self will take John's baptism but seemingly want nothing to do with the accompanying requirements.

Baptism as administered by John must be distinguished from the "divers baptisms" of the Old Testament. Some teachers, in their zeal to do away with water baptism for the present dispensation, have sought to make John's baptism one of the ceremonial washings of the Old Testament. This distinction is set forth in many verses.

"The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." Matt. 21:25-26.

In the parallel passages we read:

"The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me." Mark 11:30.

"The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" Luke 20:4.

Here it is distinctly called "the baptism of John." This title would be out of place if John's baptism was one of the Levitical washings. John's baptism was from heaven, given by revelation for a distinct purpose in connection with the coming of Israel's Messiah.

"And I knew Him not: but HE THAT SENT ME TO BAPTIZE WITH WATER the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John 1:33.

This verse shows that John's baptism was administered as the result of a Divine commission given to him personally.

Many have attempted to connect John's baptism with the "sprinkling with clean water" mentioned in Ezekiel.

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be -clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Ezek.36:24-25.

There is a positive time element in these verses" and John's baptism was taking place before Israel was regathered. This promise will have no fulfillment until the regathering of Israel in the land is complete.

John's baptism stands alone. It came not out of the Old Testament but from heaven. He was not fulfilling an Old Testament commission, but a commission given to him.

The sprinkling of Ezekiel 36 will be done by the Lord Himself. The Lord never baptized anyone while on earth nor since that time. This fact points to the future for the fulfillment of the promise.

The Purpose of John's Baptism

We meet with the following emphatic statements in the Gospel of John:

"And they asked Him, and said unto Him, WHY BAPTIZEST THOU THEN, if Thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

"John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not."

"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."

"And I knew Him not: but THAT HE SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST TO ISRAEL, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John 1 :25, 26, 28 and 31.

The last verse indicates the chief, if not the sole end of John's water baptism. All human opinions must fall before John's own declarative statement concerning the purpose of the baptism he administered.

The divine religion of Judaism in every part of it, both in the spirit and the letter, pointed to the coming of a promised Messiah. He was to be a King who would reign over Israel.

"Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Rom. 15:8.

That this Messiah should be manifest to Israel, (that is, evident to Israel's sight and obvious to Israel's understanding) John had come baptizing with water.

Every diligent student of the Word of God will at once realize that during the present dispensation, God is not trying to make the Messiah manifest to Israel. The Spirit of God is working with individual Jews just as He is working with individual Gentiles. God's purposes for the nation are in abeyance. He has pronounced upon the nation, as a whole, a sentence of judicial blindness. It would be strange, indeed, if God is both blinding and attempting to make Israel see her Messiah at one and the same time. Since John's water baptism was to make the Messiah plain to Israel's sight, it can have no place during the time when all God's dealings and purposes for Israel are suspended.

The very purpose of John's baptism proves that it was distinct from the "divers baptisms" imposed by the law.. Israel, as a whole, were partaking of these baptisms every day. It would naturally require a new and distinct baptism to make Messiah manifest to Israel.

Baptism Unto Repentance

Further light on the meaning of John's administration of water baptism is given in other Scripture passages:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." Matt. 3:11.

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." Mark 1 :4-5.

John was heralding the baptism of repentance which resulted in the remission of sins. Those baptized also confessed their sins. John's preaching and practice is somewhat different from the message God has given for the present dispensation. The reader, I feel sure, is able to see the difference Between "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" and having "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace."

John's baptism was unto repentance and not unto Christ. There is a baptism unto Christ, but this we shall consider later.

The moral and spiritual condition of Israel, in John's day, was indeed sad. God's indictment, spoken by Isaiah, was still standing.

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." Isaiah 1 :4.

Thus their baptism declared that God spoke the truth when He said this about Israel.

"And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Luke 7:29-30.

The nation, as a whole, needed to repent and were called by John to do so. Some responded to his call, and these were baptized, **thereby becoming identified with the repentant part of Israel.** Not only did they become a separate company but they became identified with the Coming One. They were already identified with the nation of Israel by birth. They were identified with Israel's covenant hopes by circumcision. Now they go on and become identified with the Messiah and the repentant ones by baptism. Repentance on the part of Israel was the prime requisite for national blessing. See **Deut. 30:1-5.**

Baptism of Jesus

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

"But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Matt. 3: 13-16.

Of this baptism of Jesus, by John, we read in Mark: **"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan." Mark 1:9.**

Luke also records the same event:

"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened." Luke 3:21.

Jesus Christ, by birth and circumcision was identified with the nation of Israel. But He desired to be identified with the repentant part of the nation. It was John's duty to

baptize the believing remnant. It was our Lord's duty to be identified with that remnant. Thus, by receiving baptism at the hands of John, every claim of righteous duty was met.

Today, much is made of "following Christ in baptism." It is insisted that our Lord set us an example to emulate. I would warn the reader to beware of all this "service in self will" and loose talk about following the Lord in baptism.

It is simply self will to select one phase in the life of our Lord and attempt thus to follow Him in the matter of our own choosing, and at the same time completely ignore and utterly fail to follow Him in other things.

Bear in mind that our Lord was not only baptized but that He was also circumcised. (Luke 2:21.) He kept the Jewish sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. It was His custom to go to the synagogue on the sabbath day. (Luke 4:16) He observed the feast of passover, from the age of twelve until the time of His death. (See Luke 2 :41 and 22: 15) He was punctilious in His observance of the least precept of the Mosaic law. (Matt. 8:4)

If we are to follow Him, then let us follow wholly His examples and not just select some particular example.

What right has one to judge any of the present day sects that have elected to follow our Lord in His observance of the Jewish sabbath, if the one who judges has elected to follow Him in baptism?

BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

Our next task is to consider and analyze the verses relating to "**the baptism in the Holy Ghost.**"

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matt. 3: 11.

This is a promise of prophecy and made to Israelites only. The promise is a baptism in the Holy Ghost.

The parallel passages from the Gospel records follow:

"I indeed have baptized you with (in) water: but He shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost." Mark 1 :8.

"John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with (in) water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Ghost and with fire." Luke 3:16.

"And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John' 1 :33.

And now comes the important task of finding out the exact meaning of the phrase "baptism with (in) the Holy Ghost."

The expression "the Holy Ghost" used in the four parallel passages is the translation of the Greek words "pneuma hagion." This expression is, found fifty-four times in the New Testament and is translated "the Holy Ghost" or "the Holy Spirit" in each passage.

There is another term, however, which appears many more times; it is "to pneuma to hagion," that translated literally means "the Spirit the Holy."

The reader can at once see that there is a difference between "pneuma hagion" and "to pneuma to hagion."

If the term "pneuma hagion" means "the Holy Spirit" then how shall we regard "to pneuma to hagion"? The majority of Bible teachers would doubtless reply by saying that they both mean one and the same thing; that is, the Holy Spirit Himself. But if this be true, then what becomes of the claim for verbal inspiration if two definite articles have no meaning or value whatsoever?

The translators have taken the term "pneuma hagion" and translated it "the Holy Spirit" always using the definite article and capital letters. Then when they come to the stronger term "to pneuma to hagion" they cannot give a stronger rendering. Thus the value of verbal inspiration is completely lost to the reader of the English versions, as far as the subject under consideration is concerned.

A study of the passages wherein the terms appear will show that "to pneuma to hagion" refers to "the Holy Spirit," that is, the Spirit Himself, as a person. The term "pneuma hagion," however, is His power which may be manifested in various ways.

Now with this distinction before use we will attempt to find the meaning of "He shall baptize you in pneuma hagion." This will be done by comparing scripture with scripture.

In **Luke 24 :49** we read:

"And, behold, I send THE PROMISE OF MY FATHER upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, till ye be endued (clothed) with POWER FROM ON HIGH."

Here we find the "promise of the Father" is designated "power from on high."

In Acts 1:4 the Lord again commands the apostles:

"That they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the PROMISE OF THE FATHER, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me."

In both passages they were commanded to wait in Jerusalem, and the purpose of their waiting was the fulfillment of the promise made by the Father. This promise is spoken of as "power from on high" and is identical with "pneuma hagian." We go on to read in the next verse:

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with pneuma hagian not many days hence." Acts 1 :5.

Thus by comparing "spiritual things with spiritual things" we find that **"baptism in pneuma hagian" is a baptism in power from on high.**

The term *pneuma hagian* is power from on high and the term *to pneuma to hagian* is the Spirit Himself. The first is His power, the second is His person; the first is the gift, the second is the Giver; the first is His work and the second is the Worker, even the Spirit Himself.

In the Old Testament God sets forth a work which is to be done by His nation Israel. This is the work of redeeming and filling the earth with His glory. A work so great and so vast that it can only be done by a people who have been clothed with or baptized in Divine power. A baptism in this power is essential to the work or it will never be accomplished. The baptism in Divine power was a promise made to the nation of Israel. It took place upon the believing remnant in the Acts period. It manifested itself in such things as tongues, miracles and healings. It belonged to Israel but the Gentiles received it when they became partakers of Israel's spiritual things. (See Romans 15:27.) They had the same manifestations. This was to provoke Israel to jealousy, for God, through the Acts period, is seen still dealing with His people.

When the Holy Ghost came upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, Peter said:

"Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Acts 11:16.

The final reference to this particular baptism is found in I Cor. 12 :13.

"For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." I Cor. 12:13 R.V.

Having then all the verses before us it will prove helpful to see the harmony in all the references. The quotations are taken from the American Standard Version.

"He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." Matt. 3: 11.

"He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit." Mark 1 :8.

"He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." Luke 3: 16.

"The same is He that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit." John 1:33.

"Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Acts 1 :5.

"Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit." Acts 11:16.

"For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." I Cor. 12: 13.

These verses present the entire doctrine of the baptism in the Spirit. This baptism, as we shall see, has no place or purpose in "the Church which is His Body."

Much has been taught about this baptism that a careful study will demonstrate is not based upon Scripture. Many theories sound good as we hear them expounded but when we turn to the Scripture, not a hint can be found in their support.

In the monthly magazine, Revelation, for April 1933, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, on page 150 says:

"APPARENTLY NO ONE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT ACCOMPLISHES SO MUCH FOR THE BELIEVER AS DOES HIS BAPTISM, BY WHICH WE ARE JOINED TO THE LORD, AND BEING THUS IN HIM, WE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF ALL THAT HE IS, EVEN EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN CHRIST JESUS."

This statement has a pleasant sound, but in reality it is just so many words. The Spirit has no ministry of baptism. There is not a line of Scripture to support the contention.

John had a ministry of baptism and he baptized in water. Christ has a ministry of baptism and He baptized and will again baptize in *pneuma hagion*. But the Spirit has no ministry of baptism. Is there a Scripture passage that can be given to support the view?

Some would at once offer **I Corinthians 12: 13:**

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

This seems very good but it makes the whole doctrine of a baptism by the Spirit hang on the preposition BY. And since the Revised Version changes the preposition BY to **IN**, the contention that we are baptized by the Spirit into anything is at once destroyed.

Let us face the facts fairly. If fundamentalists must arrange for a baptism by the Holy Spirit to support a theological system, then let them not criticize the Roman Catholics who have arranged for a mass and purgatory as a helpful adjunct to their

peculiar theological system.

It is garbling Scripture to take the statement, "**Jesus Christ shall baptize you in pneuma hagon,**" and twist it into "The Holy Spirit shall baptize you into the Church, His Body."

Those believers who make up "the Church which is His Body" possess the Holy Spirit as the earnest *of* their inheritance and the Spirit is filling them, but the promise *of* "baptism in pneuma hagon" cannot be appropriated *by* the Church, His Body.

If we take the baptism in "pneuma hagon," then what about the **fire** that goes with it? Do we take the judgments also? Or does the Church just take the blessing and leave the judgment for Israel? They both go together. Not, *of* course, in point *of* time but certainly in reference to Israel. These things belong to Israel, and to those in the past or future who are identified with Israel and become partakers *of* Israel's spiritual blessings. (See Romans 15 :27.) Some day the baptism in Spirit will take place for the whole nation *of* Israel. Then they will know the Lord from the least to the greatest and God will employ His nation, endued with Divine power, to redeem and bless and fill the earth with His knowledge and glory.

Baptism of Christ's Death

In the verses thus far given, two distinct baptisms have been set forth. The **first** was "in water," usually designated as "**water baptism**"; and the **second**, in "pneuma hagon" or power from on high usually designated "**Spirit baptism.**" .

We come now to a consideration *of* **the third and greatest baptism**. This we find is set before us in the following verses, recording the actual words *of* the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But I have a BAPTISM TO BE BAPTIZED with; and how am I straitened (pressed) till it be accomplished!" Lnke 12:50.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was approaching the end *of* His earthly work with His greatest work yet to be accomplished. He has yet to *go* to the Cross *to* be the great sin bearer, *to* shed His blood for the redemption *of* lost mankind. He describes this approaching death as a "baptism to be baptized with." He is pressed in the Spirit and would have this accomplished.

This death baptism is clearly set forth in the two parallel passages I *now* quote.

A request had come from the mother of James and *John* that her "two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left," when He reigns in His kingdom.

"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am

baptized with? They say unto Him, we are able.

"And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed *of* my cup, and BE BAPTIZED WITH THE BAPTISM THAT I AM BAPTIZED WITH: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Matt. 20:22-23.

The parallel passage is in Mark 10 :38-39. There is little difference in the two passages.

"But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

"And they said unto Him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized." Mark 10:38-39.

Here, again, our Lord emphatically states, in a six-fold repetition of the Word, that His death upon the cross is to be a baptism.

This is in harmony with the great prophetic utterance concerning His death in the Psalms.

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Psalm 42:7.

The "waves and billows" refer to the waves and billows of God's wrath against sin. On Calvary's cross the sin hating, sin punishing God met the sin bearing Jesus, laden with your sins and mine, and God visited Him with punishment in our place and stead. This was His death baptism. His death was our death. Thus His baptism was actually our baptism.

He promises that James and John shall drink of the same cup that He drinks of, and be baptized with the same baptism He is baptized with." Not another like it, but "the baptism I am baptized with."

These verses do not teach that James and John are to die as martyrs. It is probably true that both were martyred but these verses have no reference to their physical death. His cup and His baptism were something far greater than physical death.

The cup may refer to His inward sufferings, and the baptism to His outward sufferings. Together they speak of all that He suffered for sin upon the cross.

The phrase "baptized with the baptism I am baptized with" speaks of identification with and participation in Christ's death upon the Cross.

When He died, God reckoned James and John as being on the Cross and dying with Him. But not only is this true of James and John, it is true of you and me and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle in the letter to the Romans says:

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." Romans 6:8.

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him." Romans 6:6 R.V.

**"Dying with Jesus by death reckoned mine,
Living with Jesus a new life Divine.
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine
Moment by moment, O Lord I am thine."**

We died with Christ, and when He died we died with Him. His death was a baptism, and when He was baptized in death we, too, were baptized with Him. God so reckoned us, and now we reckon ourselves, **"I am crucified with Christ." Gal. 2:20.**

The death baptism of Christ, of which we were made partakers is the important baptism of the New Testament. Just as the cross is the most important event in the Word of God, so also the baptism that took place there is the most important baptism in the Word of God. Who, among those who glory in the Cross, could disagree with this statement?

Let us now set these three baptisms before us.

WATER BAPTISM-JORDAN
SPIRIT BAPTISM-THE UPPER ROOM
DEATH BAPTISM-CALVARY

Let the reader meditate upon these events and he will agree when I say that Calvary is more precious in the sight of God than the River Jordan or the upper room at Pentecost. Let him meditate upon what happened at Calvary and what Calvary means to a world of lost sinners, and he will join with the poet in singing:

"In the Cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sacred story, Gathers round His head sublime."

And those who glory in the Cross will glory in the baptism that took place there. And yet the baptism that took place at the Cross is almost universally ignored.

There are verses in the Scriptures wherein baptism is mentioned without stating which baptism is meant. The discussion invariably centers about the alternatives, whether or not water baptism or Spirit baptism is meant. Little consideration or

thought is given that the verses may refer to the greatest and most important of all baptisms, the death baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the believer in Christ is made a partaker.

In the book "Oneness with Christ" Bishop W. R. Nicholson says,
"THE BAPTISM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE RULING BAPTISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND IS ALWAYS TO BE UNDERSTOOD EXCEPT WHERE THE LANGUAGE OR CONTEXT MAKES EVIDENT THE CONTRARY."

The reader will at once see how this statement crowds out the greatest baptism of the New Testament, and crowds it out by a baptism which has no Scripture to support it.

In most verses where baptism is mentioned, the language or context makes it plain at once whether water, Spirit, or Christ's death baptism is meant. In a few important verses, which one of the several baptisms is meant is not immediately evident. It may be that God so ordered this that it might be a test to see just where we would put the glory. He certainly desires us to glory in the Cross and to put the baptism that took place at the Cross in all verses where water or Spirit is not plainly designated.

I believe all who exalt the Cross, and glory in identification with Christ in His death, will do well to take the stand that the ruling baptism of the New Testament is our death baptism with Christ, and is always to be understood in all verses unless the language or context makes evident the contrary.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

James and John had been baptized in water. At the Cross they were baptized with Christ in His death baptism. Fifty days later they were baptized in Spirit. It is evident that if James and John were here today and we were to inquire of them concerning the importance of these three baptisms, they would answer by glorying in the one that took place upon the Cross. Yes, the very one that is ignored and crowded out today.

We must be careful not to fall into the error of uniting "Spirit baptism" and "Christ's death baptism" and speaking of "being baptized by the Spirit into the death of Christ," as so many do today. This is joining together two things that God has not united. There is not a line of Scripture to support the theory. Every verse that deals with the subject proves that while Christ baptizes in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit does not baptize into anything. Again, I repeat, the Spirit has no baptism.

John and James did not have to wait until Pentecost to be made partakers of Christ's death baptism. This was finished at the Cross. They were required to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism in the Spirit, but not for the one of the Cross.

Yes, it was finished. at the Cross. Finished for James and John and finished for you and me. There the waves and billows of God's wrath poured over Him for our sins. God counted us as being there and dying with Him. Consider the glory of this baptism. What hope for poor lost sinners? And think of the glorious fact that we, too, were baptized with Him.

"With Christ we died to sin,
Lay buried in the tomb
But quickened now with Him, our Life,
We stand beyond our doom!

"Our God in wondrous love,
Hath raised us who were dead;
And, in the heavenlies, made us sit
In Christ our living Head"

BAPTISM AFTER THE CROSS

The So-Called Great Commission

In considering the passages which refer to baptism, given after the Cross of Christ, the commission given in Matthew is so important that it requires a somewhat extended analysis.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world:' Matt. 28: 18-20.

This passage is usually referred to as "the Great Commission" but actually it is neither greater nor smaller than the commission given in Mark 16:16 and Luke 24:46-47.

There are so many conflicting opinions concerning this passage and it has been so wretchedly twisted and misapplied, that some doubt is entertained as to the possibility of ever getting believers to consider what God has revealed apart from their preconceptions.

In studying this passage we will proceed upon the principle that God says what He means and that God means what He says. He does not say one thing and mean another. God uses words to reveal His thoughts.

It is plain that in this commission, our Lord commands the DISCIPLING OF ALL THE NATIONS (See Revised Version). I cannot trick my mind into believing that when the Lord said "disciple all the nations" that He really meant to preach the Gospel to individuals or groups, or that he who preaches the Gospel is discipling all the nations.

If "disciple all the nations" can be made to mean "preach the Gospel of the grace of God," then language means absolutely nothing, and any part of God's Word can be so altered as to mean anything man would have it to mean; and therefore is of no value as a revelation of God's truth.

The nations were to be disciplined by "baptizing THEM in the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The pronoun **them** refers evidently to the nations. Pronouns refer to nouns. To make the pronoun **them** refer to individuals instead of nations violates the simplest law of language.

The present is not the time when God is discipling nations. Neither is it the time when He has instructed His servants to attempt the task. This dispensation will close without a single nation having been disciplined. Why should God order us to do something which He has emphatically stated cannot be until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again?

The present, then, is the time when God would have the good news of salvation by grace proclaimed to every person, that there might be taken out from among Israel and the nations a people to make up "the Church which is His Body."

Many Bible teachers insist that this is a commission for today; but we are forced to turn from them back to those teachers who were instructed by the risen Lord during the forty days of His resurrection ministry. Here we discover that not one was working under the commission recorded in Matthew. For fully eight years they did not go to "the nations"; and what is most significant, not a single baptism in the Acts period was administered in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The "Great Commission" was never obeyed on any occasion recorded in the New Testament where baptism took place.

If due consideration is given to the truths revealed in these verses, no attempt will be made to force them, as a commission, upon the Church of the present dispensation.

Enduement Promised

The statement, "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth," **is the signal for the commencement of this commission**; it will become operative and effective immediately when this declaration is fulfilled.

In the Divine counsels, it has been said; "Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet," yet the Spirit immediately informs us "we see not yet all things put under Him" (Heb. 2:8). The time is coming when the Lord Jesus Christ will take the

gift of this great power and will reign. (Rev. 11 :17.) When this takes place the commission, as given in Matthew, will become effective.

Extent of the Commission

The disciples are commanded to disciple ALL THE NATIONS. **The term "all the nations" never includes Israel.** Israel was called out from among and separated from the nations. It has been plainly stated that Israel "shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23 :9.) Thus under this commission they are not sent to Israel.

When all power in heaven and earth is exercised by the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel will be restored to her land under His rule. They will know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. In that day Israel will need no discipling.

"They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 31 :34.

The Great Commission recognized the foregoing condition as fulfilled, so Israel is not included in the discipling. This commission is to saved and restored Israel and it sends her to disciple all the nations. When all Israel knows, all Israel will be qualified to make disciples and to teach.

Teach All Things Commanded

An examination of the instructions that the Lord gave will reveal many things that are out of place in the present dispensation. When the Lord said "all things," He did not mean that those who work under this commission should select some things and arbitrarily ignore the rest.

Let us examine three things our Lord commanded while on earth.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

Matt. 5:42.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." Matt. 6 :25.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. SELL THAT YE HAVE AND GIVE ALMS." Luke 12:32-33.

To teach these commands in the present dispensation will only bring in hopeless confusion.

I Am With You

This assuredly has an important bearing on the "Great Commission." Our Lord Jesus Christ promised to be with them all the days when they were discipling, baptizing and teaching. Is this promise of His personal presence being fulfilled in this present dispensation? Was not His personal presence with them another signal for the commission to become operative? He was going away and was to send the Holy Spirit to be with them during His absence. The promise of His presence is so strongly personal and definite that it is certainly wresting the Word to interpret that presence as being spiritual or delegated to the Holy Spirit.

The first person pronoun, I, is very emphatic. If the words "I am with you" speak of a presence in the Spirit and not in person, then the words "I will come again" may mean a spiritual and not a personal coming.

Believers today, by the hundreds, make the first to be a spiritual presence because they desire it to mean a spiritual presence, and make the second to mean a personal coming, because they want it to mean a personal coming.

Away with this attempt to make God's Word mean what man wants it to mean. "I am with you" means a personal presence, and "I will come again" means a personal coming-nothing could be plainer.

Paul and the Great Commission

If the commission in Matthew is a commission for today, then by what authority could Paul declare, "**CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE.**" In the Matthew commission the command is to baptize. It is plain that Paul recognized this commission to be a prophecy and not then in effect.

The Roman Catholic Church is the only church that has ever really attempted to disciple all nations. Rome cares little for the individual, but much for the nations. She would make them Roman Catholic nations. Her attempt has caused bloodshed and fearful torture.

In saying that the Matthew commission is not for this age, no reference is thereby made to missionary activities, but to the basis only upon which such activities are carried on. The command of Christ is not damaged in seeing it as a commission for a future time. Like the instructions and prayer in Matthew 24: 15-21, there it stands in all its truth and power, just as it has stood through all the centuries, waiting for that moment when it will be obeyed (as it has never yet been obeyed) and fulfilled to the very letter.

THE ACTS PERIOD

During the period covered by the four Gospel records the opportunity for repentance and baptism was offered to a small group of Jews in and about Jerusalem. These saw the miracles and had the opportunity to receive the Messiah and become identified with Him by baptism.

The majority of the members of the Jewish nation were scattered in countries far away from the place where John and Christ preached and the mighty works were done. The Romans did not permit too many Jews to remain in Palestine lest they should rebel against the dominion of Rome. Thus there were more Jews out of the land than in the land. These Jews out of the land could not be judged and set aside for rejecting the Messiah for the majority did not even know that He had actually come.

No attempt was made to reach these dispersed Jews before the Cross for the real offer of Messiah was to be the offer of the crucified Messiah who had fulfilled all the prophecies concerning His suffering, and was about to enter into His glory. This offer was not to be confined to the land but was to be made in all its fullness in the whole then known world. This offer was to be confirmed with greater works than those performed by Christ while on earth. (See John 14:12, Hebrews 2:4.)

It can be seen that there would have been little value in offering the Messiah before the Cross to all of scattered Israel. The offer would have had to be repeated after His death, there being no offence of the Cross connected with the living Messiah.

This is seen plainly by the multitude who believed when they saw His miracles (John 2:23) as compared with the little handful of 120 who gathered on the day of Pentecost.

The Book of Acts is the record of God's great offer of the crucified Messiah to the nation of Israel, and this witness was confirmed by mighty signs and wonders.

Those who received the Messiah must be publicly identified with Him and His remnant, and this public identification was by baptism in water. At first the offer was to Jews alone but as the majority reject their crucified Messiah, He was preached to and received by the Gentiles. These Gentiles were baptized and thus identified with the Messiah and the repentant ones in Israel. The purpose of this was to provoke Israel to jealousy and emulation.

When the offer was complete and the crucified Messiah was rejected by Israel as a whole, a judgment of blindness was pronounced upon the nation.

If history had followed the order of events prophesized in the Old Testament, the rejection of Messiah would have been followed by the time of "Jacob's trouble." But God held up the whole prophetic program and revealed a purpose hitherto kept secret. The calling out the Church, which is His Body, is now taking place. This present purpose is known as the "dispensation of the Mystery (Secret)."

When judgment is pronounced in Acts 28, the record closes abruptly with the salvation of God being sent to the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus Christ is now being

preached to the world as a Saviour and as the Head of the Church which is His Body, and not as a Messiah.

The Acts period has its own unique commission and constitution. Everything in the Acts period is in harmony with that constitution. It was given by our Lord in Mark 16:15-18.

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:15-18.

Here our Lord gives the commission and order for the Acts period, the period when the crucified Messiah was being presented and God was confirming the Word with signs following.

In the Verses now under consideration baptism is essentially connected with faith. Many have tried to nullify this verse by pointing out that baptism is not mentioned in a negative way in the last half of the sixteenth verse. But interpretation of that sort is Scripture juggling in its worst form.

The condition is stipulated upon which one can be saved. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The Lord also states the conditions upon which one shall be condemned. "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Let it be remembered that no one has ever been saved, in any dispensation, on any other ground than the finished work of Christ on Calvary. Before the Cross men trusted in what Christ would do. Since the Cross men must trust in what He has done. But at different times God has required that certain things must accompany salvation, and in the dispensation when God was, offering the crucified Messiah as the one raised up to sit upon David's throne, He required that baptism should accompany salvation.

If in the Acts period a man believed but refused to be baptized, he would have come short of the Divine requirements. His faith would have been a faith without works, and such faith was indeed dead. It could not save.

When the Scriptures of the Acts period (Acts and Early Epistles) are examined it will be discovered that all teaching and practice is in perfect accord with the commission and constitution of that period.

It was in the Acts period that the promised baptism in Spirit took place. Thus three baptisms are before us throughout the period. As the period neared its end and as a result of Israel's stumbling and sin, the reconciling of the world was revealed, and the gospel of the grace of God is revealed in all its fullness; our identification with Christ in His death baptism is set forth in its glory.

Baptism in Acts

Having considered Acts 1:5 we now pass on to the next reference. **"Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." Acts 1:22.**

After the selection of Matthias and the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter begins a message directed to "Yemen of Israel." As the message comes to a close and the men of Israel have cried out saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the answer is given.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

Theologians have attempted to distinguish between John's baptism and what they designate, Christian baptism. But it is plain in this first sermon preached after the resurrection of Christ that there is no difference. John baptized unto repentance for the remission of sins, and Peter calls upon his hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

Peter demanded a change of mind upon the part of those who crucified the Lord of glory; but this is not all that was required. They must publicly identify themselves with Him by water baptism. This will result in the remission of their sins. God meant what He said through Peter, and there could have been no remission of sins apart from the baptism demanded.

"Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2:41.

There are many sincere people who believe that here is an apostolic example which should be followed even now. They insist that they who gladly receive Christ's Word today should also be baptized. But God does not permit us to take an example that appeals to us and deliberately ignore other examples set forth in the same verses.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts 2 :44-45.

Crisis in Jerusalem

The crucified and risen Messiah was rejected by the Jerusalem Jews and a crisis was caused by the stoning of Stephen. A scattering took place and believers went everywhere preaching the Word.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached the Messiah unto them. Many miracles were performed, unclean spirits were cast out and many lame and sick were healed. (Acts 1:5-7.)

"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles. and signs which were done.

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (pneuma hagion): (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Acts 8: 12-18.

Everything in this passage is in complete harmony with the Acts dispensation. Note, the preaching of the Messiah; the miracles performed by Philip; unclean spirits cast out, crying with a loud voice; palsied and lame healed; belief followed by the required baptism; prayer by the apostles that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost imparted by laying on of hands; judgment loosed upon Simon Magus by Peter; the angel of the Lord speaking unto Philip.

How much of this program has a place in. "the Church which is His Body"? What, might I ask, is the Biblical rule whereby one may include or exclude a teaching or practice? How can we scripturally retain water baptism and reject the rest?

Philip and the Eunuch

As we continue our examination of the eighth chapter of Acts we find other references to baptism.

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Acts 8:35-38.

The eunuch was obedient to the Divine requirement for salvation given in Mark 16:16. He believed and was baptized. Accompanying his baptism was a sign. Philip was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord and the eunuch saw Him no more.

The Baptism of Paul

The next reference brings before us the case of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Acts 9: 18.

The purpose and significance of Paul's baptism is found in his own statement before the multitude in Jerusalem.

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16.

This statement, recorded for our learning, makes it plain that Paul's baptism was a ceremonial washing, and had to do with the washing away of his sins. .

Does not this verse sound very strange to those who know the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace? However, it is in complete harmony with the purpose of baptism, from the beginning of John's ministry until the close of the Acts period.

John preached the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins; Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; Peter preached, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"; Paul was baptized to wash away his sins. All is in harmony; but if any of the foregoing statements are carried into the present dispensation, nothing but discord results.

Baptism of Cornelius

When the Jerusalem Jews rejected their Messiah, Peter received a vision which sent him to the house of Cornelius the Gentile. There he made use of the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles. Thus the Gentiles were grafted into the good olive tree and partook of the root and the fatness of the olive tree. (See Romans 11.) Through the stumbling of Israel, salvation came to the Gentiles. But God was not through dealing with His nation; all this was for the purpose of provoking Israel to jealousy and emulation. (See Romans 11:11.)

During Peter's message in the house of Cornelius, he made reference to John's water baptism.

"That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." Acts 10:37.

While Peter was speaking the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word. The Jews were astonished as they heard them speak with tongues.

"Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts 10:47-48.

Two notable results of John's baptism have been noted. It separated its subjects from the nation as a whole, and it formed them into a separate company. These two thoughts continue to be seen both in our Lord's ministry and that of the Twelve as recorded in the book of Acts. When Cornelius had received the gift of the Holy Spirit and thus evidence was given that God had acknowledged him, Peter at once asked who should forbid water that these should not be baptized. In other words, why should not these men of the nations become one with the baptized company at Jerusalem, since God had sealed them? Why should not these men be counted with the company who were to be delivered from the wrath about to be poured out upon Israel and the whole earth? Thus Gentiles became identified with the "Israel of God" and the Messiah.

The next reference to baptism in Acts takes us back to John's water baptism, but gives nothing additional in the way of doctrinal teaching.

"When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." Acts 13 :24.

Lydia's Household

Her experience is presented in the next reference.

"And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." Acts 16:15.

Thus Lydia is obedient to the Divine requirement of Mark 16:16.

The Jailor at Philippi

This man had asked the question "What must I do to be saved"? It should be noted that Paul and Silas not only told him to believe but they also spake unto him the Word of the Lord. (Acts-16:31-32.)

"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." Acts 16:33.

An examination of the entire chapter will prove the intensive Pentecostal character throughout.

The circumcision of Timothy by Paul. 16:3.

Decrees ordained by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. 16:4.

Paul and Silas forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. 16 :6.

A marvelous vision. 16:7.

Household baptism. 16:15 and 33.

Demon cast out. 16:18.

A marvelous and miraculous earthquake. 16:26.

Belief accompanied by immediate baptism. 16:15, 33.

Does this chapter reveal God's program for the present dispensation?

Paul at Corinth

Here the Apostle testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. When the Jews blasphemed, Paul turned to the Gentiles. It appears that one of the leading Jews was provoked to jealousy and emulation for we read:

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

The harmony between this and Mark 16:16 is evident at once. "Go preach. . . . he that believeth and is baptized." "Hearing. . . . believed. . . . and were baptized."

Could these Corinthians have been saved without water baptism? The answer is an emphatic NO! Can you and I be saved without water baptism? The answer is an emphatic YES! What explains this?

The explanation is simple. The Corinthians were saved during the administration (dispensation) when God was offering the crucified Messiah to Israel and confirming the Word with supernatural signs. You and I have been saved during the administration (dispensation) of the Mystery (secret) when God is calling out the "church which is His Body." The administrative change is marked by Acts 28:28.

Paul at Ephesus

We must not disassociate the Apostle's experience in this city from the ministry of Apollos. The break at the beginning of chapter 19 must not interfere with the flow of the narrative.

"This man (Apollos) was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the Spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, KNOWING ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN." Acts 18:25.

When Paul came to Ephesus he found certain disciples.

"And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? and they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that THEY SHOULD BELIEVE ON HIM which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Acts 19:3-4.

Before the Cross the order was to be baptized unto repentance and then believe on the One to come, that is, on Christ Jesus. After the Cross the order is reversed by our Lord. Having come 'and after rising from the dead, He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." ' ,

The baptism of these Ephesians had violated the Divine order and was, therefore, meaningless. Their work was without faith, and if faith without works is dead, works without faith is also dead.

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts 19:5.

The Pentecostal character of all this is clearly noted in the next verse.

"And when Paul LAID HIS HANDS upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they SPAKE WITH TONGUES, AND PROPHESED." Acts 19:6.

Water Baptism in the Epistles

Having examined the references to baptism in the Book of Acts we now turn to the epistles written during that period.

These references will be taken in chronological order.

"The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3:20-21.

This verse presents little difficulty when we take into consideration the significance of baptism in the period in which this epistle was written.

The days before the flood were days of God's longsuffering. Paul could say near the close of the Acts dispensation,

"But to Israel He saith, All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Romans 10:21.

According to both the Old and New Testaments, the time of Jacob's trouble would follow the Acts period. **The "dispensation of the Mystery" was still a secret hid in God.**

In the days of Noah the place of safety was with those in the ark. When the tempestuous judgments come upon the earth, which so much resemble the waters that beat upon the ark, the place of safety will be with those who are the baptized ones.

The Doctrine of Baptisms

In Hebrews 6: 1 the writer speaks of "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ" and going on to perfection. In connection with this he mentions "the doctrine of baptisms." This refers to the Levitical washings and has no bearing upon our subject. These verses should not be used as an argument against water baptism.

Divers Baptisms

In Hebrews 9 :10 there is a reference to baptism that does not appear in the English versions.

"Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings (baptisms) and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." Heb.9:10.

The writer cannot agree with those who use this verse as an argument against water baptism. The water baptism in the Gospels and Acts was NOT one of the "divers baptisms" connected with the tabernacle or temple. Neither can it be connected with the term "carnal ordinances." The term "ordinances" as applied to baptism and the Lord's Supper is of purely human invention and has no Scriptural authority whatsoever.

This passage cannot rightfully be used as an argument against water baptism. We ought not to allow our zeal to cause us to wrest the evident meaning of Scripture. .
The same thought applies to the next passage:

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." 1 Cor.. 1:13-16.

It is foolish to attempt to prove from these verses that the Apostle Paul did not baptize, or that he considered baptism in that period to be either unimportant or wrong. The fourteenth verse is only the first half of a sentence and should not be separated from the second half. It is not that Paul thanked God that the Corinthian believers were not baptized, but rather that he was thankful that he, personally, had had so little to do with it, seeing the Corinthians had turned the Divine ceremony into a party cry, and had gathered around the person who had baptized them, and made

them into party leaders. This Paul refused to countenance.

. .The next reference is important because of its bearing on the Commissions.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." I Cor. 1:17.

If Paul was working under the commission given in Matthew, he could not truthfully have said this. If he was laboring under the commission given in Mark, then his statement was true.

In Matthew they were sent to disciple and to baptize. In Mark they were sent to preach the Gospel, but the burden of baptism rested upon the one who believed. This verse, therefore, tells beyond doubt that **in the Acts dispensation, Paul was laboring under the commission given in the sixteenth chapter of Mark.**

Baptized Unto Moses

The next verse refers back to the passage of Israel through the Red Sea.

"And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." I Cor. 10:2.

The type finds its antitype in the death of Christ. Moses was with the sons of Israel in the cloud and in the sea. Even so were we associated and identified with our Lord in His baptism on the Cross.

Baptized for the Dead

The next verse completes the references to water baptism.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" I Cor. 15 :29.

This verse to the writer seems, as yet, difficult of explanation. It is to him an enigma, and he feels that it were best to admit he knows nothing of the matter rather than to follow the American custom of "saying something anyway."

The Summary

All references to water baptism in the New Testament are now before us. Of all the passages considered there are only seven (not including parallel passages) which give positive teaching as to the purpose and meaning of water baptism. In other words, a passage such as John 1 :28 provides no doctrinal teaching. The passages which give positive doctrinal teaching as to the purpose and significance of water baptism are the following:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." Matt. 3:11.

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Mark 1:4.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16.

"And I knew Him not: but that He should be manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John 1 :31.

"Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Acts 2:38.

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16.

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3:21.

These verses seem to be carefully selected proof texts, picked out by someone to support a theory that water baptism is essential to salvation. But the reader may examine every passage for himself and discover that these seven verses present the teaching of the New Testament as to the purpose and significance of water baptism.

These verses teach that water baptism was unto repentance; it was called the baptism of repentance; it was for the remission of sins; it was essentially connected with believing for salvation; it was for the purpose of making the Messiah manifest to Israel; it was a ceremonial washing and had saving power. That is, that it had saving power as regarding the wrath to come.

It is easy to say of water baptism such things as: Water baptism is a seal of believers; that it takes the place of circumcision; that it is a sign for unbelievers; that it is a confession of Christ; that it is a symbol of our death, burial and resurrection with Christ; that it is the door of entrance to the local church; that it is the initiatory ordinance of Christianity; that it is putting on the uniform of a Christian; that by it we are identified with a rejected Christ; that it is a burial with Christ; that it is a means of grace; that it is a testimony that you have received the teaching of grace for this day; that it brings you under God's covenanted mercy; etc.

The foregoing statements have been culled from statements on water baptism made by fundamentalist Bible teachers. Every statement is devoid of a single hint of support from Scripture. They are products of human reasoning made up in an attempt to decorate a Divine ceremony so that it will fit into the present dispensation where grace reigns in all its glory.

At least ninety-nine per cent of the things that are believed and taught concerning water baptism are destitute of any Scriptural support. Because they have no Scripture to support their various theories on water baptism, some Bible teachers have dared to ravage the verses which speak of our death baptism with Christ, and take the teaching and apply it to water baptism. Such would leave us without a line of teaching as to the extent and meaning and purpose of the most glorious baptism in the Word of God. Their theories must be supported at any cost, even to the extent of tarnishing the glory of His death baptism. These teachers would produce a class of believers who find more glory in a pool of water than they find in the Cross of Christ. They would give us to understand that after the great statements of Jesus Christ concerning His death baptism, made while He was on earth, that the matter was dropped and forgotten, for according to them there is not a reference in the epistles concerning this glorious baptism.

In the full revelation of salvation by grace given by the Apostle Paul, the death baptism of Christ and our union with Him finds its fullest unfolding. These verses will now be considered.

Baptized Into His Death

"For as many of you as have been baptized into (unto) Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3:27.

In Matthew 3 :11, water baptism is unto repentance. Here is a baptism which is unto Christ. Water baptism is not unto Christ. This verse carries us back to the Cross where we were baptized unto Christ in His death, and thus we put on Christ. One who would make this verse refer to water baptism has but a poor sense of spiritual values. This glorious baptism is brought out more fully in Romans.

"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 into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk .in newness of life." Rom. 6:3-4.

Here it is revealed that to be baptized into Jesus Christ is to be baptized into His death. Here we are on holy ground. The writer hesitates to say very much concerning these verses. He would rather depend upon the Holy Spirit to give the reader a glorious vision of the death baptism that took place at Calvary, from these verses.

We think once more of the Roman soldiers and the jeering, taunting mob. We hear again the blows of the hammer as the nails are driven through His blessed hands and feet. We see the Cross bearing its precious burden, as it is lifted up and dropped into the hole in the rock at the place called Golgotha. We press up close and see that thorn-pierced brow and bloodstreaked face; see Him as He suffers within Himself, at the

hands of man, at the hands of Satan and, strangest of all, at the hand of God. He is suffering for no sin of His own but for your sin and my sin. The waves and the billows of God's wrath are passing over Him. This is His death baptism and we are baptized into His death.

BAPTISM IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY(SECRET)

The careful Bible student will recognize a dispensational change at the close of the period covered by the Book of Acts. There is no change in salvation or the ground of salvation but there is a vast difference in the things and the position which accompanies salvation.

Before Acts 28:28 Paul wrote 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. **After** the dispensational change he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

Let us note some of these differences in truth before and after the Acts period.

The two orders for believers, "Jews which believe" and "Gentiles which believe" of the Acts period are no longer recognized, for individual Jew and Gentile become "reconciled both unto God in one Body." Acts 21 :20,25. Eph.2:16. See I Cor. 7:18-20 where it is plain that God required the distinctions between Jew and Gentile to be maintained. In Christ there was neither Jew nor Gentile, but there were both Jews and Gentiles in the "Church of God" during the Acts period.

In the Acts period the Gentiles were permitted to hear a gospel of salvation sent to Israel, now Israelites are permitted to hear a salvation sent to the Gentiles. Acts 13 :26 and Acts 28 :28.

"The hope of Israel" is superseded by "the hope of His calling." Acts 28:20 and Eph. 1:18.

He who was a prisoner for the hope of Israel is now "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." Acts 28:20, Eph. 3:1.

The instruction not to marry in I Cor. 7:8 is **superseded** by advice to marry, in I Tim. 5:14.

Paul, who had said, "**none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come,**" now is revealing secrets which had been hid in God. Acts 26:22. Co1. 1 :25-26.

"Partakers of Israel's spiritual things" and "Blessed with faithful Abraham" are set aside by the higher truth "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heaven lies in

Christ." See Rom. 15 :27. Galatians 3 :9, Ephesians 1 :3.

The one who could heal by laying on hands or the use of a handkerchief is now forced to leave Trophimus at Miletum sick, and to advise his beloved Timothy to take a little wine for his repeated infirmities. See Acts 19:21,28:8-9, I Tim. 5:23,2 Tim. 4:20.

And of the three baptisms of the Acts period, two pass with the change of administration to give all the glory to the ONE baptism of the present Dispensation. (Eph. 4:5.)

One Baptism

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is ONE BODY, and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all." Eph. 4:3-6.

In the present dispensation there is ONE baptism. Many have struggled to find Spirit baptism in the words ONE SPIRIT, so that the one baptism can be made to mean water baptism. But this makes TWO baptisms, and that not only destroys the unity of the Spirit but crowds out our **death baptism** with Christ.

The attempts of Bible teachers to make one baptism mean two, remind us of "a juggler's attempt to place a ball at rest half way down an inclined plane. Ordinary folk would place it either at the top or at the bottom."

Ordinary people will always believe that one baptism is one, and two baptisms are two, and three are three.

The ONE BAPTISM of Ephesians 4:5 is identified for us in the only other verse dealing with baptism in the last seven epistles of Paul.

"And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power: in Whom also ye are CIRCUMCISED with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." Co!. 2: 10-12.

If we are buried WITH HIM in baptism, then it was His death baptism. Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; therefore, He is not buried with us in water baptism, but we were buried with Him in His baptism unto death on Calvary's Cross. This is the only baptism that has any place in the present dispensation .

Consideration of all passages bearing on the subject proves that there is no water baptism in Romans 6, Ephesians 4 and Colossians 2.

Christ Is All

If, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we find peace and joy in claiming no righteousness of our own but finding our righteousness in Him; in making no peace of our own but receiving the peace He has made; in trusting in no work of our own but resting in His finished work; in claiming no merit of our own but claiming His merit; in claiming no standing of our own but finding our standing in Him; in finding our death for sin in His death to sin, then let us go all the way that He may be everything and ourselves nothing. Let us find our one baptism in the death baptism of Christ. Let us have nothing of our own but find all in Him. Let us glory in our identification with Him in His death, burial and resurrection.

The End SS24

Appendix 1

The following verses, wherein baptism is mentioned were not quoted in any of the preceding pages. They are now given that the reader may have every verse before him for due consideration.

"And King Herod heard of Him; (for His Name was spread abroad): and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead." Mark 6:14.

"After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judaea; and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." John 3 :22-23.

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples), He left Judaea, and departed into Galilee." John 4:1-3.

"And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there He abode." John 10:40.

The reader can analyze these verses. They all refer to water baptism.

In three other places the word usually translated baptism is translated "wash" or "washing."

"And when they come from the market, except they wash (baptize), they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (baptizing) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Mark 7:4.

"For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of me_, as the washing (baptizing) of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do." Mark 7 :8.

"And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed (baptized) before dinner." Luke 11:38.

Appendix 2

A list of all verses in the New Testament wherein baptism is mentioned will be of aid to the reader in testing this pamphlet by God's Word.

Matthew 3:6,7,11,13-14, 16. 20:22-23. 21:25. 28:19.

Mark 1:4-5,8-9,6:14. 10:38-39. 11:30. 16:16.

Luke 3:3,7,12, 16,21. 7:29-30. 12:50. 20:4.

John 1:25-26,28,31,33. 3:22-23. 3:26. 4:1-2. 10:40.

Acts 1 :5, 22. 2:38, 41. 8:12, 13, 16, 36, 38. 9:18, 10:37, 47, 48. 11:16. 13:24.

16:15,33. 18:8. 18:25. 19:3,4,5. 22:16.

I Cor. 1:13, 14, 15, 16, 17. 10:2,12:13. 15:29.

I Peter 3 :21.

Hebrews 6:2.

Galatians 3 :27.

Romans 6 :3-4.

Colossians 2:12.

Ephesians 4:5.

Translated "wash" and "washing" in Mark 7 :1, 8. Luke 11 :38. Hebrews 9:10.

Appendix 3

Baptismal Regeneration

On the subject of baptismal regeneration, the sprinkling of infants, the words of Sir Robert Anderson are without equal.

"Here is an infant, born but yesterday, and yet so frail and sickly that its young life may flicker out at any moment. The question arises, If it should die, what is to be its future?"

"If it dies in its present condition, we are told it must be lost, heaven it cannot enter.

"But, we plead, the poor creature does not know its right hand from its left; it is absolutely innocent. Why should it be thus punished?"

"Personally innocent, yes, we are answered; but by natural generation it belongs to the fallen race, and Adam's sin must banish it to hell, unless by regeneration it is brought within the family of God. But by the sacrament of baptism this change can be brought about without delay or difficulty, and thus the child's salvation can be secured if death should seize on it. Anyone, perhaps can perform the rite; but, as this is a disputed point, it may be well to make assurance still more sure, and call in the aid of one who is divinely appointed to administer the sacraments.

"But suppose the man we summon to our aid should be false to his profession, and prove to be of evil character and immoral life?"

"That, we are assured, will in no way affect the validity of the sacrament, or the reality of the change which it will produce in the child. If the man be lawfully ordained, God will acknowledge him as His minister, notwithstanding.

"In a case of this kind nothing is gained by an appeal to passion. But will thoughtful and fair minds consider the matter, and honestly answer the question, whether even in the superstitions of Pagan races to whom we send out missionaries, there can be found a conception of God more unworthy, more revolting than this."

"What kind of a God is this that is thus presented to us? A Being, unjust, unloving, and cruel, who devotes an innocent and helpless infant to destruction. A Being, unreasonable, arbitrary, and capricious, who will change its eternal destiny if a few drops of water are sprinkled upon it, accompanied by the utterance of a few cabalistic words. An unholy, an immoral Being, for He employs and recognizes agents, no matter what their character and life may be.

And yet this gross and profane misrepresentation of God is an essential part of the historic religion of Christendom."

"The Bible or the Church, Pages 110-112.

