

-THE BIBLE SAYS SO-

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, ...and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." Exodus 32:27.

"Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm." 1 Sam. 2:31.

"Every man child among you shall be circumcised." Gen. 17:10.

"Sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor." Mark 10:21.

"Owe no man anything." Rom. 13:8.

"There is no God." Psa. 14:1.

"Hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 23:40.

"Woe unto you lawyers." Luke 11:52.

"To die is gain." Phil. 1:21.

"All things work together for good." Rom. 8:28.

"Judas went and hanged himself. Go and do thou likewise." Matt. 27:5 and Luke 10:37.

Many more quotations could be made similar to the above. These should bring to mind the fact that in quoting Scripture we should rightly divide the Word. This dividing must be made according to context and according to dispensations.

By disregarding these simple rules, the Bible can be made to prove most anything. But such a workman will eventually be ashamed.

Lack of right division is the prime reason for the confusion and great number of sects and denominations we have today. Most of the confusion stems from just one place where the right division is not made. That is the dispensational division of Acts 28:28. If this one point is observed, it is certainly marvellous how well folks will agree on all other points. If all understood and observed this one division, the walls of enmity between denominations would disappear almost over night.

How often we have heard folks put forth a pet theory and then prove it by saying, "The Bible says so." It is better to find all the Bible says before stating doctrine.

-WHAT IS...THE MYSTERY?-

There are a number of mysteries in the Word, but we have reference here to a special one found in Eph. and Col. It was a mystery hidden from ages and generations. It was a mystery that was hidden in God.

A mystery is a secret which is revealed when the time is ripe. It is a secret which is revealed to initiates. The Lord told His disciples that it was given unto them to know the mysteries of the kingdom. This knowledge was not revealed to the multitudes. So it is today. The secret is not revealed to any save those whom the Holy Spirit has chosen.

God kept it a well-guarded secret that there would ever be any way for Gentiles to be blessed outside of some relationship to Israel. It was never revealed to the prophets of the Old Testament. There is no hint of such a thing anywhere in their writings. It is not revealed anywhere in the Gospels. There Christ says that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He told the apostles that He was sending them just as He had been sent. There is no place in their program for Gentiles.

The secret was not revealed at any time during Acts. It is true that blessing came to Gentiles in Acts, but this blessing came only as they identified themselves with the remnant, repentent Israel. This was done by believing and being baptized in water.

Not until every offer of the New Covenant had been rejected by Israel was it made known that God was going to deal directly with the Gentiles. It was then revealed that the death of the Lord on the tree was effective in reconciling the nations to God. It was then revealed that a Gentile could be saved by grace thru faith without being identified with repentent Israel and being baptized in water.

The mystery also included the news that Jews no longer had to repent and be baptized in water. They too could now be saved by grace. They no longer have the promises.

-THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW-

The law was added because of transgression. What was it added to and what was the transgression?

By His strong arm God delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt. This was their redemption.

At Sinai, God proposed an agreement. The terms of this agreement were given to Moses and he in turn told them to the people. It all sounded good to the people and 3 different times they said they would keep their part of the bargain. So the covenant was made and was ratified by the sprinkling of blood.

In this covenant, the people were to keep the ten words, or the ten commandments. If this were done, then they were to become a peculiar treasure and were to be a priestly nation. They were put on probation for 40 days.

There was a certain day when God said He would bless Israel. They were to prepare themselves for this great blessing. I do not know what this blessing was to be. But I am sure that it had something to do with enabling them to be a peculiar treasure and a priestly nation. It may have been that they were to be empowered like as at Pentecost for their work. It may be that we will never know what was in store for them.

But when the day came for the blessing and Moses was coming down the mount, the people were naked, dancing round a golden calf. This was the great transgression. It was because of this great sin that law was added. It was added to a broken covenant. The great transgression was idolatry. They had broken the 1st and 2nd commands.

Because they failed; because of the great transgression, Israel never became the peculiar treasure which God promised they would. They never became a priestly nation among the Gentiles.

The law was added to guide the conduct of a sinful generation. They carried about in the ark a reminder of the broken covenant. The law was to teach them their shortcomings and lead them to accept Christ and the New Covenant.

-THE GENTILE IN ACTS-

From the giving of the law at Sinai till the time of the 10th chapter of Acts, no Gentile could receive blessing of God except he be circumcised and become subject to the law of Israel. In other words, He could not be blest as a Gentile, but had to become one of Israel.

So it was not until Peter opened the doors of the kingdom to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, (Acts 10) that a Gentile could be blest as such. There were no Gentiles in the church until after Cornelius was admitted. So Cornelius had the distinction of being the first Gentile member of any New Testament church.

Peter had to give an account of his actions before the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11). But the witness of the Holy Spirit in these converts was so strong that the Jewish Christians were convinced that Peter had done rightly.

Paul and Barnabas set out on their first missionary journey. In all the churches they visited Gentiles were saved. The number of Gentiles was increasing at Antioch. The Jewish Christians were troubled. They could not understand why Gentiles were not subject to the law. So a council was called at Jerusalem to settle the matter, (Acts 15).

The chief witness here seemed to be Peter. He reminded them of the former meeting and his recital of the events at the house of Cornelius. Then Paul and Barnabas told of their missionary journey and how God had blest the Gentiles.

After this, James took the floor and reasoned from the prophets that this was in order. So a decision was made. The Gentiles were to be free of the requirements of the law except for four things (Acts 15:29).

So during Acts 10-28 there was a wall of separation between Jew and Gentile in the church. It was a wall made up of racial difference, observance of rites (Passover, circumcision, etc.) and no Gentile could hold office or take part in service (Rom. 9:4). No Gentile could enter the Temple (Acts 21:28).

-CONFUSION UPON CONFUSION-

During the time of Acts 10-28 the Gentile Christians could not partake of the Passover which today many call the Lord's Supper. When directions were given for its observance, it was then ruled that no uncircumcised could ever have any part in it (Exodus 12:43-49).

This rule was to hold good FOREVER and we have no word anywhere that this was ever changed. It is quite probable that the last epistle written during the Acts was Romans. In Rom. 9:4 it is stated that service of God pertained to the Jews. This was a part of the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile at that time.

On the other hand, from Acts 10-28 Gentiles were baptized in water. Water baptism, as practiced in the NT was not a part of the law. It was instituted by John the Immerser. It was connected with repentance of the nation of Israel and the preaching of the kingdom of heaven. Those of Israel who repented and looked for the kingdom were baptized in water. Repentant Israel was only a very small remnant at any time.

Later, when Gentiles were admitted into the church of repentant Israel, they were also baptized in water. By being grafted in where some of the natural branches had been cut out, they thus signified their identification with repentant Israel.

There are many who believe that the dispensation of the mystery began at Pentecost. Most of them observe the Passover and water baptism.

Some believe that this dispensation began at Acts 13. They have discarded water baptism, but observe the Passover; just the opposite of what was actually done in the early church at Acts 13!

But this dispensation could not begin until Israel had been put back in the number of the nations and was no longer first. This happened at Acts 28:28. Today the observance of the Passover or water baptism can have no significance, either to Jew or Gentile. The observance of either is confusion.

-SUPPRESSION, ERADICATION, or GOD'S WAY?-

1. SUPPRESSION. Some folks are of the opinion that the only way to deal with the OLD MAN, the flesh, is to try to suppress all evil desires and lusts. Most people will find it a losing battle. The lusts of the flesh are a little too strong for the will in most instances. Also, there is not much time and energy left for service if one is engaged all the time in holding down and sitting on the OLD MAN. But the greatest fault in this system is that the One Who knows and judges the thots and intents of the heart will find no change within. The lusts and desires are still there.

2. ERADICATION. There are some who believe that by a process of sanctification (as they call it) the OLD MAN can be eradicated completely. They reckon the OLD MAN as dead. The trouble is that just about the time they think he is dead, he rises up and slaps them in the face. Just about the time an exponent of this system gets in a heated argument for it, the old nature asserts itself and he gets angry. Any time you try to reckon an enemy dead, he is pretty likely to be very much alive. If a man and wife, in whom the Adamic nature had been eradicated, were to have children, the children would not inherit the Adamic nature. They would be perfect and would have no need for salvation. We would soon have a super-race, and men would be as gods.

3. GOD'S WAY. "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin." Rom. 6:11. Do not try to suppress the sin; do not try to reckon it dead. But reckon YOURSELF dead to it. This word DEAD has the force here as it has where Abraham was as dead in so far as being able to become a father in his old age. If we reckon ourselves to be alive unto Christ, we can walk oblivious of sin about us. With our eyes on Christ, and our hands and feet busy in His service, the desires and lusts of the flesh can hardly make themselves heard. This is God's way, and the only successful way. Try it.

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

The condition of the Editor's 3 desks remains about the same. The hope of any improvement seems to be rather remote.

An exposition of the epistle of Paul to the Phil. is still the subject of the radio broadcasts. If in this area, tune in each Tue. nite at 7. It is on station WRSW at Warsaw and you will find it at 107.3 on the FM dial.

Mrs. Baker and I are still struggling to get the paper, TRUTH FOR TODAY, out each month. It is a busy time. Last summer we had to give up and combine two months into one. We hope that will not have to happen again.

The Bible class which meets at my home each Tue. nite at 7L45 is now studying BEFORE AND AFTER ACTS 28:28, and also carrying on the studies in Romans. We should like to have more of you come and join us in these interesting studies.

Goldie and Dot each had a male calf. The calves are running with their mothers in the pasture. In a little while they will get to take a trip to the big city. Some people like veal.

Some folks donated us another kid. Now we have 9.

Part of the corn field I spoke of last month was soon taken over by wild ducks. When the flood abated, I sowed the low place to Canary Grass. Almost stuck in the mud cultivating what corn was left. The hay has been made and the Su-

dan grass is coming nicely.

We are working on the mailing list so as to get it up to date. We hope to be able to get us an addressing machine soon. It will save us a lot of time each month.

We are glad to get the names and addresses of your relatives and friends who might be interested in the paper. We can send them sample copies. There is no charge or subscription price for it.

I expect to be in Muskegon, Mich. at the fellowship there Aug. 6 and 27. Hope to see all my good friends up there again.

Receipts for May: A48 \$1., A49 \$1., A50 \$25., A51 \$1., A52 \$2., A53 \$1., A54 \$5. The expenses for the month were \$45.32.

I have a complete stock of the publications of C. H. Welch that are now in print. A set of 10 of his pamphlets, \$1.37. Books; JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER, \$1.90. DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, \$1.25. THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD'S PRISONER, \$1.25. MIRACLE, PARABLE, AND SIGN, \$1.40. THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS, 75¢. Add about 10% to cover postage.

We believe in intercessory prayer and hope all of you will continue to pray for us and the ministry.

My home is on the Harrison Center Rd., 4 miles south of Atwood or 6 miles west of Warsaw.

I certainly have enjoyed your letters. They are a great encouragement to do better work.

OSCAR M. BAKER, R 2, Warsaw, Ind.

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