

## THINGS NEW AND OLD

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:52*

When our Lord had finished His familiar discourse on "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," He said:

*"Therefore, every scribe which is instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is an householder, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matthew 13:52).*

A new era had just dawned in the world's history. A new message was being proclaimed. John the Baptist had begun to cry: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" The Lord Jesus and the twelve had taken up the same message.

Some listened eagerly; others turned away—among them many of the scribes, the Bible teachers of the day. They did not welcome any new teaching. Yet Christ's message of the kingdom in no way conflicted with the Old Testament Scriptures. Indeed, it was based on the Old Testament and confirmed by it. This is why our Lord reminded His hearers that the right kind of scribe would bring forth out of the treasure-house of Scripture, things both new and old.

How this lesson is needed today! Some cast away precious treasures out of the Bible, contending that they are old and out of date. Others, while clinging tenaciously to old truths, reject new light. While mere professors of religion too often cast aside old truths with the complaint that they are outworn, true professors often reject new light simply because it is new. They vie with each other to be orthodox instead of vying to find more light from the unfathomable Word of God.

Is it possible that we have drained the Well of Scripture dry? Are there no more stones in that exhaustless Mine? Have any of us received all the light that shines from the Holy Bible?

Then, cost what it may, let's keep digging into the Scripture, that as we minister to others we may bring forth out of the Divine Treasure-house things BOTH NEW AND OLD.

*Cornelius R. Stam*

## SPEAKING WITH NEW TONGUES

*Scripture Reading: Mark 16:17*

Christendom is all astir. It seems that the most vibrant, moving, active, alive people therein are "speaking with new tongues." I had a business acquaintance say recently that of all the gifts he had received from the Lord, he felt the gift of tongues to be most precious! Although he admitted that he did not know what he was saying when speaking in tongues, it was such an exhilarating experience that it was the pinnacle of his spiritual life! His joy was dismay to me. What delusion — pawned off as blessing from God! — and His greatest gifts of grace go unappreciated. Where does Calvary fit into the tongues movement?

These pleas fall on deaf ears, unless we show the true meaning of tongues. These "new tongues" are really also called "other tongues" (Greek word *hetros*) in Acts 2:4. These were languages, not "new" or "different" in the sense that they had never been heard before or that they were new to the hearers. It is plain from Acts 2:8 that these languages were well-known to those who listened. These languages were new to the speakers — different from those they were accustomed to speak. This was a miracle, accompanying the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to Israel at Pentecost.

While these gifts and their exercise were genuine and miraculous, they are a fraud today; for that program and the gifts demonstrating God's dealings with Israel are long past. Apart from the demonstration of these miraculous powers to authenticate Paul's ministry, they have ceased with the completed revelation of God's program of pure grace—to and through Paul. When the perfect, completed revelation of God's grace was given to Paul in his later letters, that which was in part—tongues, etc.— was done away (I Corinthians 13:10). The only thing new about tongues today is their use to mislead a new generation even more unfamiliar with the Bible. May God help us all to be true Bereans and search the Scriptures better! Better to listen with new ears than to attempt new tongues.

*Ivan L. Burgener*

## THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:28*

"For this is my blood of the new covenant (KJV *testament*) which is shed for many for remission of sins."

Hebrew 8 tells us that the New Covenant is in contrast to the Old Covenant (verses 8-13) and Hebrews 9 that the blood of Christ initiates the New Covenant (verses 14-18). Hebrews 10 shows that remission of sins was a promise of the New Covenant (verse 18).

The Old Covenant was *with* Israel, and the New Covenant was *for* Israel. The blood which initiated the New Covenant was the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which was poured out at Calvary. Many Bible students have been careful to note the distinctions regarding promises and covenants with Israel in contrast to God's dealing with His people today, the Body of Christ. Indeed, because the mass of Christendom has failed to see the distinct character of the ministry of Paul, some who *have* seen this have emphasized some of these differences to the point that they have made distinctions that are not there.

One of the keys to a proper balance in understanding the Word is this, "the *blood* of the New Covenant." That blood was shed *one* time. It is true that there were many deaths and pictures of the one death and what it accomplished. That *one* death was for Abel, Moses, Paul, you and me. It was *one* death yet in the purpose of God that death had innumerable ramifications.

That blood was not only for the "remission of sins" of those under the New Covenant, but also of those for 2000 years before Israel and 2000 years since Israel's fall. The New Covenant is dispensational, but the "blood" is transdispensational.

*David Herrmann*

*Notes:*

## THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH

*Scripture Reading: II Thessalonians 2:10*

In II Thessalonians 2:10, St. Paul declares that the apostates of the coming age will "perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they may be saved." This is something worth considering very seriously.

God calls this present dispensation "the dispensation of the grace of God" (Ephesians 3:2). During this dispensation, faithful Christians are proclaiming "the gospel [good news] of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). This is the message of God's grace and love in giving Christ to die for our sins so that we might be saved from its penalty and power.

All, however, do not believe this glorious message or accept God's grace in Christ. These, the apostle declares, will be left behind when our Lord comes, at the close of this age; to catch His own away. Because they rejected the truth and the love it proclaimed, God will give them up "that they might believe a lie" and put their faith in Anti-christ, "that they all might be damned who believed not the truth" (II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

It was infinite love that brought Christ to Calvary to suffer shame and disgrace for our sins, and this love is being proclaimed in this dispensation of Grace. But this dispensation may be brought to a close at any time and bring in the day of God's wrath. How important then to accept God's love and trust His Son without delay! "Behold, NOW is the accepted time....Behold NOW is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

*Cornelius R. Stam*

*Notes:*

**DEPRIVED OF THE TRUTH**

*Scripture Reading: I Timothy 6:5*

"...destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

From this verse comes a seed of thought I'm sure many of us have questioned before, "supposing that gain is godliness." Job wondered why the wicked prospered and the righteous suffered. Oft the believer wonders why such-and-such a denomination prospers when its adherents see and stand for so little Pauline truth. If ever a generation, in the history of the church, based "truth" on results produced (gain), it's today. I speak of the so-called "evangelical camp" of theology. They reason something like this: unless you can show results (in the form of numbers, converts, decisions, workers, etc.) your validity (godliness) is in question.

Now, we say we have the truth; let us guard then, that we fall not into the category of those (destitute of the truth) who equate gain with godliness. Paul learned to count "gain," as "loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7). Again, we are not to see "gain," but rather the "loss of all things." Where were Paul's masses (gain) of converts in Asia (II Timothy 1:15) near the end of his ministry?

This is a hard pill for the flesh to swallow, not always to see results (as man counts results). Perhaps this area of "the truth" is most difficult for some "grace folk" to see. Surely the fault does not lie with the truth, nor the special dispensation of it by Paul. This then, is no time to rely on method, approach or strategy nor a shift (or drift) from the preaching of Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery (Romans 16:25). Too often we try to make our niche in the service of the Lord appear "gain." Let's be faithful, telling it as it is. This, beloved, is the truth!

*Rollin Wilson, Jr*

*Notes:*

**THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION**

*Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 15:42-44*

What we have before us is clearly a contrast. Let me set out the contrasting figures to better illustrate the teaching of the passage. Regarding the resurrection of man's body we are told:

It is sown in corruption;  
It is RAISED in incorruption.  
It is sown in dishonour;  
It is RAISED in glory.  
It is sown in weakness;  
It is RAISED in power.  
It is sown a natural body;  
It is RAISED a spiritual body.

Obviously, two different bodies are being spoken of. The great contrast is between the original earthy body, tainted by sin, and the new forthcoming body exalted in glory.

The apostle employs this graphic and dramatic method of teaching here to emphasize his primary point at the end of verse 44: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."

How thrilling to comprehend that the grave is not the end! The believer has more than mere certainty of life after death. God has promised a glorious life in a glorified body to those who trust in Him.

*Timothy F. Conklin*

*Notes:*

## TAKING GOD AT HIS WORD

*Scripture Reading: II Timothy 2:15*

Because of a failure to understand God's purposes as outlined in the Scriptures, some have felt it necessary to alter many of the plainest statements of Holy Writ. Supposing that God could not have meant exactly what He said, they have concluded that these things must be interpreted in a "spiritual" sense.

Actually, there is nothing spiritual about failing to take God at His Word or seeking to explain away difficulties by arbitrarily altering what He has plainly said.

First, this would leave us at the mercy of theologians. If the Scriptures do not mean what they say, who has the authority to decide what they do mean? And how can we turn to the Word of God for light if it does not mean what it says and only trained theologians can tell us what it does mean?

Second, this altering of the Scriptures affects the veracity of God. It is a thrust at His very honor. If the obvious, natural meaning of the Old Testament promises are not to be depended upon, how can we depend upon any promise of God? Then, when He says: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). He may also mean something else instead of what He actually says.

Third, this "spiritualizing" of Scripture endorses apostasy, for it allows men to alter the meaning of God's Word according to their will.

The path to a true understanding and enjoyment of the Bible is not in altering but in "rightly dividing" it (II Timothy 2:15).

*Cornelius R. Stam*

*Notes:*

## FRUIT THAT ABOUNDS

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:17*

How the Apostle Paul rejoiced on behalf of the Church at Philippi in their labors of love! This faithful church in their love for Paul and the message of Grace more than once had come to the Apostle's aid. They participated in his sufferings and necessities in sending him financial relief. At Macedonia, their giving advanced the work of the Lord in the furtherance of the Gospel of the Grace of God (verse 15). At Thessalonica, their sending of a timely offering enabled Paul to flee Thessalonica and seek refuge at Berea (verse 16 confer with Acts 17:1-10).

This is what prompted Paul to say, "Not because I desire a gift." Paul was not greedy or seeking personal gain, but he desired *fruit* that might abound to their account. The word *fruit* is used in the Scriptures to denote *results* or that which is *produced*. To quote one author by way of example, We speak of "Punishment as the fruit of sin," "Poverty as the fruit of idleness," and "Happiness as the fruit of a virtuous life." Here we see sin *produces* punishment; idleness *produces* poverty; and a virtuous life *produces* happiness, so in the case of the Philippian believers, *faithfulness produces* reward.

The Apostle Paul rejoiced for them in their acts of kindness and faithfulness in service for Christ. The Apostle desired that their acts of kindness in providing for his needs might be put to their account, that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, they might be richly rewarded and reap the benefits of their fruitfulness. Would the great Apostle be able to commend our Grace Churches of the present as he did the Church at Philippi? Are we standing in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel as they did?

*Paul Sadler*

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## PAUL'S DISTINCTIVE COMMISSION

*Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:7-9*

There are three things said of the revelation given to Paul in our passage that point to the distinctiveness of his commission from the Lord. (His commission was distinctive because his message was distinctive.) The three things are... (1) It was a mystery. (2) It contained the unsearchable riches of Christ. (3) It was hid in God. They all really say about the same thing in three different ways for emphasis.

The revelation given to Paul was a "mystery" (verse 9). The word here for "mystery" is *musterion* in the Greek and means "not the mysterious (as with the English word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illuminated by His Spirit. In the ordinary sense a mystery implies knowledge withheld; its Scriptural significance is truth revealed" (Vine).

What Paul received from the Lord, he describes as "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (verse 8). The word "unsearchable" in the Greek is *anexichniaston* and has the literal meaning of "not to be tracked out" (Gingrich). In Romans 11:33, the only other place in the New Testament the word is found, it is translated "past finding out." The "riches of Christ" that Paul proclaimed cannot be "tracked out" in the Old Testament.

Finally, Paul says that this "mystery" was "from the beginning of the world hid in God" (verse 9). If it was "hid in God," was "unsearchable" but revealed to Paul, and was a "mystery," then Paul's commission was indeed distinctive.

*Donald W. Weffald*