

Sunday, June 9, 2013—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 106 The Grace Movement Begins to Organize: The Formation of the Worldwide Grace Testimony

The Dispensational Razzle-Dazzle

- In April, 1938 J.C. O’Hair published *The Dispensational Razzle-Dazzle* in which built upon the early Mid-Acts views expressed in *God’s Reign of Grace* (see Lesson 105 for details). The majority of *Razzle-Dazzle* is taken up with answer H.A. Ironside’s book *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*. The booklet contains reprints from two letters dated April, 18 and April 28, 1938 addressed to Pastor O’Hair.
- Much of what O’Hair writes in *Razzle-Dazzle* that is critical of Ironside can be found in earlier publications such as *Wrongly Deriding Christian Brethren*. Our interest is in pages forty three through forty six where O’Hair discusses the dispensational standing of Israel during the Acts period.
 - “What two-fold purpose of God concerning Israel was being carried on while Christ was on earth? Note concerning individual Israelites in the Gospel of John—“many believed” 7:31—“many believed” 8:31—“many believed” 10:42—“many believed” 12:42.

While the kingdom was being offered to the Nation Israel and being rejected, many of the individual Israelites were believing. Was not the same two-fold program being carried on in the first seven chapters of Acts? Christ said in Matthew 10:5 to 8 and 15:24 that His message was for Israel only. Was not this God’s order during the first nine chapters of Acts?

Never did Israel enjoy more liberty, more gracious treatment, or better protection from Rome than they did during the “Acts” period. The high-priest continued in his office. Israel’s Jerusalem temple stood. Both saved and unsaved Jews attended the temple services. James, the Lord’s brother, sanctioned the circumcision of the Jews. Note Acts 18:21 and 20:16, that Paul wanted to be present at the Jewish feast more than twenty-five years after the events recorded in Acts 2. . .

Read carefully what Dr. Scofield believed concerning the signgifts of I Corinthians: “THE SIGN-GIFTS OF I CORINTHIANS WERE OPERATIVE ONLY DURING THE BOOK OF ACTS PERIOD.” Personally I take my stand with Dr. Scofield and against the hyper-dispensationalism of Dr. E. W. Bullinger and Mr. Douglas and the Moody Monthly of July 1937. I also take my stand against the hyper-dispensationalism of “the Voice” and one of its editors, in July 1937.

I heartily agree with Dr. Scofield concerning the transition and signs. I most heartily disagree with Dr. Bullinger as to two different Churches, one from Acts 2 to Acts 28:31 and another different Church (Body) thereafter.

Any intelligent student of the Scriptures, who will prayerfully and carefully study Acts 3:12 to 26, will say Israel was still the favored nation after Pentecost. The Gentiles were still aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, still the dogs of Matthew 15:26. Peter said, “Ye are the children of the covenant.” Acts 3:25. Yes, they were serpents and vipers in Matthew 23:33. But our blindness is only surpassed by Israel’s blindness when we cannot see that the prayer of Christ on the cross gave the Nation Israel another chance beginning with Pentecost. Note carefully Acts 5:31: “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Now think of reading the dispensation of the mystery into Acts 5:31, or into the words of Acts 3:26 “Israel”; “unto you first.” There can be no Jew first in the dispensation of the mystery.

There is a great difference between the judgment of Matthew 23 “serpents” “vipers”—“your house is left unto you desolate” and the Acts message of mercy and affection “ye are the children of the covenant” “I wot that ye did it through ignorance AS DID YOUR RULERS”—“Unto you first”. Christ exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel. Acts 3:12 to 26. And Acts 5:31. Pray tell, where would the dispensation of the grace of God for you Gentiles come in here (Ephesians 3:1 to 3)? You say “Something wrong”. Surely this is the dispensational Razzle-Dazzle. Now note—“AS DID YOUR RULERS.” Was God willing to forgive the rulers? There are no rulers in the dispensation of grace. Our ministry of reconciliation is to individual sinners. There is no difference now between the Gentile and the ordinary Jew, or the rulers. When God offered salvation to rulers of Israel He was dealing with the Nation. So the Lord, in the first chapters of Acts, was dealing with Israel in a two-fold manner, the same as He was in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the kingdom offer for the Nation, individual salvation for the individual Jew. This has nothing to do with God’s purpose during this parenthesis. This program will not fit into Paul’s “unsearchable riches” program, “the dispensation of the mystery hid in God” ages before God’s earthly people were chosen. Ephesians 3:8 and 9.

Before God’s message of reconciliation could be sent to the nations in all the world Israel’s blindness and rejection had to take place. “Barjesus (the child of Jehovah-Saviour) must be blind for a season.” Then the Gentile will be astonished because of God’s judgment upon the Jew and believe (Acts 13:7 to 15). Saul must become Paul. Then Paul will say: “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46. Then Paul will write: “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:11. “For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.” Romans 11:30.

Then we go on to Acts 18:6: “And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean:

from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles” and the climax of Acts 28:25 to 28. And then about 70 A. D. came fulfillment of Luke 21:20 to 24 (quotes the passage). . .

How foolish then to have Israel’s house desolate on the day of Pentecost because of the words of Matthew 23:38 “your house is left unto you desolate.” This should be studied with Luke 21:20 to 24, and the events of Acts where Israel is still the favored people of God with priority rights. There are no Jewish priority rights in “the dispensation of the mystery.”

Never forget the importance of knowing the truth of Romans 11:12 and 11:15: “Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?” “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Peter and the Eleven never preached reconciliation. This doctrine is mentioned in the Scripture for the first time in Romans 5:10 and 11 and II Corinthians 5:17 to 21 (also in Colossians 1:20 and 21 and Ephesians 2:13 to 21.)

An offer of repentance to Israel “every one of you” (Acts 2:38 and 3:26) is not the ministry of reconciliation for Gentiles because Israel was cast away.

How important it is to know that the message of grace and reconciliation was sent to Gentiles after Israel had committed the unpardonable sin. The casting away of Israel brought reconciliation for Gentiles. Israel’s unpardonable sin was committed against the testimony of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts 5:32. Certainly Israel did not commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit, mentioned in Matthew 12:31, before the message of Stephen in Acts 7. Acts 3:12 to 26 and Acts 5:29 to 32 is proof that the sins Israel had committed, including the murder of the Son of God, were pardonable. Now note carefully Acts 3:14 to 18: (quotes the passage)

In these verses we learn two reasons why God would forgive Israel for their sin against the Son of man. They committed this sin in ignorance. It was pardonable. By sinning against the Son of man Israel accomplished the foreordained purpose of God in giving His Son in death for the sins of His people.

We will never begin to understand “the mystery” until we understand that salvation by grace was sent to Gentiles when Israel committed the unpardonable sin.

Note in Acts 5:32 that the Holy Spirit had come to witness to Israel that Jesus was the Christ; that the Son of man against Whom Israel had sinned had been exalted to God’s right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour to give to Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins.

What would now happen if they should sin against the Holy Spirit? That sin would not be forgiven, but it would bring in the reign of grace for Gentiles: “For if the casting away of

them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

In Acts 7 Stephen, filled with the Spirit, saw the Son of man standing in heaven and Israel sinned against the Holy Spirit and thereby committed the unpardonable sin.

Little wonder that our brother does not think that there was a transition in Acts when he has Israel committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit before the Holy Spirit came. But because of his ignorance of the Scriptures, it does not necessarily follow that he is an "unspiritual theorist" as he called other Christian brethren."

The Founding of the World Wide Grace Testimony

- By 1939, thanks to the efforts of O'Hair, Baker, and others a Mid-Acts dispensational position had been identified and was in the process of being ironed out. This position was distinct from both the traditional Acts 2 position and the Acts 28 viewpoint advocated by Bullinger and Welch. In the July, 1974 issue of *Truth Magazine*, the periodical of the Grace Gospel Fellowship Mr. Ray Reich, the librarian at Grace Bible College authored an essay titled "Our Grace Heritage." In this article, Mr. Reich distinguished between the "grace message" and the "grace movement." Among other things Reich stated the following:
 - "The Grace Movement and the Grace Message are terms which need to be clarified. The word Grace has become attached to these two expressions simply because they are both involved with what the Scripture calls "the dispensation of the grace of God." God has been gracious in all past dispensations, but in the present one he has exhibited the exceeding riches of His grace. All true believers in Jesus Christ have experienced and have known something about the grace of God, but not all have come into the full knowledge of this body of truth, which God has called the Mystery and which He was pleased to reveal through the epistles of Paul. The Grace Message therefore is that unique body of truth found in the Pauline scriptures which stands in contrast to the rest of the scriptures, and the Grace Movement is the phenomenon of the past few decades in particular in which many Christians have become involved in studying and propagating this unique truth." (Reich, 3)
- According to Reich, "the first organizational effort of those who gathered to study these truths concerning the dispensation of the mystery was a missionary one. . . There were, however, a number of preliminary years of experiences which antedated the founding of the Worldwide Grace Testimony Mission in 1939." (Reich, 7) Reich identified Pastor J.C. O'Hair as being largely responsible for this "preliminary" work. Furthermore, Reich outlines three primary avenues that laid the groundwork for the formation of the mission in 1939: 1) O'Hair's radio ministry, 2) O'Hair's writing ministry, 3) and Bible Conferences devoted to dispensational Bible study. (Reich, 7)

- The immediate catalyst for the formation of the mission in 1939 was events on foreign mission fields, according to Reich.
 - “These views spread (dispensational views) to the foreign mission field. In the Congo, missionary F.E. Holland, who had been supported through Mr. O’Hair’s ministry, took a stand for a the Grace Message. Soon two other missionaries in the same area, Mr. Otto Deming and Mr. F.P. Pickett, aligned themselves with Mr. Holland. The home boards under which these missionaries served withdrew their support because they would no practice water baptism upon the native converts and left them stranded. This act was providential in leading to the formation of a new mission board under which missionaries would be free to preach and practice the dispensation which had been committed to the Apostle Paul for the Body of Christ.” (Reich, 7)
- “In 1939 Mr. O’Hair called an organizational meeting at North Shore Church for the purpose of supporting these and other missionaries who had or would take a stand for the Grace Message. The name chosen for the new mission board was *Worldwide Grace Testimony*, a missionary society for the furtherance of the Pauline gospel.” (Reich, 8) Reich records both the officers that were chosen as well as other prominent grace pastors who attended the meeting.
 - Officers: Theodore Holtorf (President), Charles F. Baker (Secretary), Chris H. Sonneveldt Sr. (Treasurer). The following year businessmen Mr. K.J. Brouwer and Mr. T.R. Huston joined the board. Huston served as the Treasurer until his death in 1954.
 - Attendees: J.C. O’Hair, Harry Bultema, Bert Baker, T. Leonard Lewis, E.W. McCaslin, J.H. Symons, and missionaries Mr. and Mrs. F.E. Holland. (Reich, 8)
- In addition to opening up mission fields in the Belgian Congo, Puerto Rico, and Japan many home missionaries labored under the auspices of the Worldwide Grace Testimony, according to Reich. In addition, Grace Publications was founded as an auxiliary enterprise of the Mission. The purpose of Grace Publications was to produce literature for both foreign and home mission fields. In 1964 Worldwide Grace Testimony shortened its name to Grace Mission, Inc. (Reich, 8-9) presently in 2013 the mission is known as Grace Ministries International or GMI.
- Over time other Grace orientated missionary organizations came into existence.
 - 1951—Bethedas Mission was founded by Pastor H.B. Prince
 - 1955—Thigns to Come Mission was founded by Mr. J. Herbert Palmer
 - 1955—Pirson Mission Association was founded by Mr. Joe Mason
- After the formation of Worldwide Grace Testimony (WGT) in 1939, Pastor O’Hair drafted a booklet titled, *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism and The Worldwide Grace Testimony*. Ascribing an exact date for this pamphlet is difficult. The opening line reads “**For more than twenty years** the Moody Bible Institute has been publishing and distributing a pamphlet by Mr. A.E. Bishop entitled “Tongues, Sign and Visions, Not God’s Order for Today.” This statement indicates a

date of at least 1941, since the Bishop booklet was originally published in 1920. However, the last page suggests a possible later date of at least 1944, because it advertises *How to Understand the Bible* (1944) and *The Lost Precious Gem* also from 1944 as being available.

- The purpose of this pamphlet was to address charges being leveled against the mission by H.A. Ironside and others that the WGT were Bullingerites. According to a listing on Google Books, *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism and The Worldwide Grace Testimony* dates from 1940. While the *Grace History Project* has not to date been able to one hundred percent corroborate this date it does make good historical sense that it would date from late 1939 or 1940 since the WGT did not exist until 1939.
- In defending the WGT against their attackers, O’Hair clearly outlines the dispensational beliefs of the Mission and its supporters. An analysis of these statements clearly indicates that the WGT was a Mid-Acts institution organized around a Mid-Acts dispensational approach to Scripture.
 - “The World Wide Grace Testimony teaches that the dispensation of the grace of God did not begin with Peter and Pentecost, but with the Apostle Paul after Israel had rejected Christ in resurrection, as well as in incarnation; but they teach that this was before Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, therefore before the close of the Acts period. . .

The World Wide Grace Testimony emphasizes the fact that there is a difference between grace in a dispensation and “the dispensation of the grace of God” given to Paul by revelation. (Ephesians 3:1 to 4). They differ in their dispensationalism from other Fundamentalists who say that “the dispensation of the grace of God” began with Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost and with Dr. Bullinger who taught that it did not begin until after the close of Acts. They agree with the Fundamentalist leader, referred to as “the archbishop of fundamentalism,” that it began after Israel rejected Christ in resurrection. Every Premillenarian is a dispensationalist and they all believe Romans 11:30, Romans 11:11 and Romans 11:15, that the gospel of grace was sent to Gentiles by Paul when and because of Israel’s unbelief and fall, when and because Israel was cast away. They differ as to the date of Israel’s fall. The World Wide Grace Testimony teaches that Acts 3:12 to 26, Acts 5:29 to 32, Luke 23:34, Acts 13:29 to 36, and Acts 13:45 and 46 prove that the fall of Israel did not take place until after the ministry of Peter and the Eleven to Israel and the household of Cornelius, recorded in the first eleven chapters of Acts, that during the years covered by those eleven chapters the Twelve were using the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Certainly Acts 10:28 and Acts 11:1 to 4 and 19 prove that the Twelve had not received the dispensation mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 3:1 to 4.

The World Wide Grace Testimony teaches that every line and word in the Bible is for every member of the Body of Christ, but that every line and word is not about that Body, and therefore, all of the Bible which is not about the Church must be studied, applied and appropriated in the light of the Bible that is about the Body of Christ and in no other way

can Christians walk worthy of the calling wherewith they are called and be of love and power and a sound mind. (Ephesians 4:1 and 2—II Timothy 1:7).”

- Also contained within *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism and The Worldwide Grace Testimony* is a copy of the complete doctrine platform of the Worldwide Grace Testimony. Those interested in reviewing the doctrinal statement of the Grace Movement’s first organized group are encouraged to review the doctrinal statement found in Appendix A at the end of this lesson.

Works Cited

O’Hair, J.C. *The Dispensational Razzle-Dazzle*. April, 1938.

O’Hair, J.C. *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism and The Worldwide Grace Testimony*.

Reich, Ray. “Our Grace Heritage” found in *Truth Magazine*. July, 1974 Volume XXV, No. 2.

Appendix A

Doctrinal Statement of the Worldwide Grace Testimony

Taken from *Pentecostalism, Bullingerism and the Worldwide Grace Testimony* by Pastor J.C. O'Hair

In order that you may know what is taught by the World Wide Grace Testimony, we print hereunder our adopted doctrinal platform:

“A Missionary Society for the furtherance of the Pauline Gospel.”

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Introductory: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 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 you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of of. the gift of Christ.” (Ephesians. 4:1 to 7).

We affirm that the seven-fold unity expressed in this passage is the Holy Spirit’s DOCTRINAL STATEMENT for the Church which is the Body of Christ. We believe that all expressions of doctrinal position and requirements for this Dispensation of the Grace of God must be in full accord with the Holy Spirit’s outline. We recognize other doctrinal unities for other dispensations, but we affirm that Ephesians 4:4 to 6 stands alone as the Doctrinal Unity for this dispensation. Desiring to be in full accord with the mind of the Spirit, we hold and require the following doctrinal beliefs.

THE BIBLE

The entire Bible in its original writings is verbally inspired of God, and is of plenary authority. (II Timothy 3:16 and 17; II Peter 1:21).

THE GODHEAD

There is ONE God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 4:24; John 10:30; Ephesians 4:6).

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ, who was in the form of God, was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He is the true God and true Man. Luke 1:35; Philippians 2:6 to 9; Romans 1:3 and 4) .

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

All men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, and are therefore totally unable to do anything pleasing to God. (Ephesians 2:1 to 3; Romans 8:7 and 8).

REDEMPTION

God justifies ungodly sinners by his grace, upon the ground of the blood of Christ, through the means of faith. This complete salvation is bestowed as the free gift of God apart from man's works. (Romans 3:24 to 28; Romans 5:1 and 9; Ephesians 2:8 and 9).

ETERNAL SECURITY

All the saved are eternally secure in Christ. (Colossians 2:10; Colossians 3:14; Philippians 1:6).

PERSONALITY AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin. By Him the believer is regenerated, baptized, sealed, indwelt, enlightened and empowered. John 16:8; Titus 3:5; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13, 17 and 18; Ephesians 3:16).

THE CHURCH

In the present dispensation there is only One Bible Church, which is called the Body of Christ, having a membership composed of all the saved. (I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22 and 23; Ephesians 3:6).

GIFTS

The only gifts necessary for the ministry of the Body of Christ are those enumerated in Ephesians 4:7 to 16.

WALK

By reason of Christ's victory over sin and of His indwelling Spirit, all of the saved may and should experience deliverance from the power of sin by obedience to Romans 6:11, but we deny that man's nature of sin is ever eradicated during this life. (Romans 6:6 to 14; Galatians 5:16 to 25; Romans 8:37; II Corinthians 2:14; II Corinthians 10:2 to 5).

LORD'S SUPPER

The communion of the Lords Supper as revealed through the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11:23 to 26 is for members of the Body of Christ to observe "until He comes." There is no place in Scripture where the Lord's Supper and Water Baptism are linked together either as ordinances or as sacraments for the Church.

BAPTISM

All saved persons have been made members of the Body of Christ by ONE Divine Baptism. By that One Baptism every member of the Body of Christ is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. In the light of the statement concerning the One Baptism in Ephesians 4:5, and the statement concerning Baptism in Colossians 2:12, and Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:17 that "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel," we affirm that Water Baptism has no place in God's spiritual program for the Body of Christ in this day of grace.

RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead, and at His coming He will raise all of the saved to everlasting glory, and at the end He will raise all of the lost to everlasting condemnation. Luke 24:39; I Corinthians 15:22 to 24; Revelations 20:11 to 15).

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ will be personal and pre-millennial. He will come first to receive the Church unto Himself, and then to receive His Millennial Kingdom over which He will reign. (I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18; Philippians 3:21; Revelations 19:11 to 20:10).

STATE OF THE DEAD

The Scriptures never extend the hope of salvation to the unsaved dead, but instead reveal that they will ever continue to exist in a state of conscious suffering. The teachings of Universalism, of probation after death, of annihilation of the unsaved dead, and of the unconscious state of the dead are opposed by us as being thoroughly unscriptural and dangerous doctrines. Luke 16:23 to 28; Romans 1:21 to 32; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 3:19; Colossians 3:6; II Thessalonians 1:9; II Corinthians 5:6 to 8; II Corinthians 12:3 and 4; Philippians 1:23; Revelations 14:11; Revelation 20:14 and 15).

MISSION

The mission and commission of the Church is to follow the Apostle Paul and the revelation of truth which our Lord Jesus Christ in glory gave to him for us. I Corinthians 4:16; I Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; I Thessalonians 1:6; Romans 11:13; Romans 15:16; Ephesians 3:1; I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11; II Timothy 2:2). That Gospel which Paul called “my gospel” in contrast to the gospel of the circumcision is God’s message for today. (Romans 2:16; Romans 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; Galatians 1:6 to 12; Galatians 2:2, 5 to 7). We, as Paul, should strive to preach the gospel in the regions beyond where Christ is not yet named. (Romans 15:20; II Corinthians 10:16).