

Sunday, September 15, 2013—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 107 The Grace Movement Continues to Organize: C.R. Stam and *The Berean Searchlight*

General Review

- We began our last term by looking at the breakup of the Niagara Bible Conference and the writing, publication, and impact of the *Scofield Reference Bible* by C.I Scofield. Then we considered the emergence of the Acts 28 position by reviewing the writings of E.W. Bullinger, Sir Robert Anderson, and Charles Welch. After that we discussed the early dispensational witness of H.A. Ironside in *The Mysteries of God* (1908) and *Sailing With Paul* (1913). In addition we studied the life and ministry of Lewis Sperry Chafer and the founding of Dallas Theological Seminary.
- The majority of our time was spent tracing the origin of the Grace Movement as a subgroup within American Dispensational Premillennial Fundamentalism. This study led us to consider the life and writings of Harry Bultema, C.R. Stam, and most notably J.C. O’Hair. We spent many weeks chronicling the development of J.C. O’Hair’s theology as he moved from Acts 2 (???? to early 1930s) towards Acts 28 (1935), before he ultimately landed on the position that the church began before Paul wrote Romans (July, 1937 to April, 1938). In addition, we also surveyed the early baptism controversies of the early 1930s.
- When we last had class in June we studied how, once the mid-Acts position was identified, a movement soon sprang up around the position. The first attempt at formal organization was found in the formation of the Worldwide Grace Testimony mission in January, 1939.

Review of C.R. Stam’s Early Ministry

- We have already seen the following in Lesson 87 regarding Stam’s life and ministry.
- 1926—came to understand the blessed truth of the mystery with its one body and one baptism through the ministry of a New York investment consultant Mr. Erling C. Olsen, president of *Fitch Investors Service*.
- Mr. Olsen later gave the Stam family a copy of J.C. O’Hair’s two messages, one entitled *Jesus Christ a Ministry of the Circumcision*, and the other, *The Twelve Apostles and Paul* (booklet dates from 1927).
- 1930—became Pastor of Preakness Community Church in Preakness, New Jersey in 1930.
- 1932—shortly after accepting the pastorate in Preakness, Stam wrote a booklet titled *Water Baptism, Is It Included in God’s Program for This Age?* in an attempt to explain the baptism controversy that was beginning to swirl. (Stam, *Controversy*, 22)

- 1933—Stam enters a controversy with Dr. Grey Barnhouse over his appointment to speak on the subject of water baptism at Harry Bultema’s church in Muskegon Michigan.
- 1933—while in Michigan, Stam visits the home of M.R. DeHaan who was already beginning to question his no-water stance on baptism.
- 1934-1940—Stam continues to pastor Preakness Bible Church and carry on correspondence with Barnhouse over the subject of water baptism. In addition, Stam writes a few small booklets and pamphlets during the time period on subjects related to the one baptism and Pauline truth.

The Berean Searchlight

- Volume I Number 1 of *The Berean Searchlight* appeared in March, 1940. It was an “organ of Preakness Community Church” of Preakness, N.J. and was edited by the Pastor (Stam).
- The first issue was only four pages long and contained two articles by Pastor Stam, “The Nobel Bereans” and “Studies in Colossians.”
- Volume I Number 2 (April, 1940) offers its reader insight into Stam’s associations outside of New Jersey. On the back page Stam informs his readers that Pastor J.C. O’Hair would be speaking at Preakness Community Church the week of April 8th to commemorate the second anniversary of their new church building. In addition, Stam spent two weeks in March (1940) traveling and preaching in the Mid-West. First he was at Harry Bultema’s First Berean Church of Muskegon, MI where he addressed an audience of well over a thousand people. Between March 14th and 21st Stam was at North Shore Church in Chicago ministering the work of Pastor J.C. O’Hair.
- Volume I Number 5 (July, 1940) contains quotations from William R. Newell’s commentary on Romans as well as a death announcement for his father Peter Stam (June, 10, 1940).
- Volume I Number 6 (August, 1940) addresses rumors that Peter Stam died of a broken heart because Cornelius had departed the faith with respect to water baptism.
- Volume I Number 7 (September, 1940) contains a list of available booklets authored by Pastor Stam. According to this issue the following booklets by Stam were in print by September, 1940. We have included both the titles and the short description offered for each booklet:
 - *The Death of the Cross*—A meditation on Calvary
 - *Coming to Christ and Bringing Others*—An exposition of two significant gospel stories
 - *Water Baptism*—Is it included in God’s program for this age?
 - *More About Baptism*—An answer to Pastor Drew’s booklet “About Baptism”
 - *The Christian Public Should Know*—Correspondence on Baptism with one of America’s Leading Bible teachers.

- It is important to note that from the very beginning Stam and *The Berean Searchlight* were thoroughly mid-Acts in their dispensational stance. Stam and his co-authors William and Charles Heinze were clear that the dispensation of grace had been committed to the Apostle Paul and that the church did not begin in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost and was not the subject of prophecy.
- Volume I Number 11 (January, 1941) “Studies in Colossians” by C.R. Stam
 - “. . . See Paul’s words in I Tim. 2:5-6, “for there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME.” And note the words that follow, “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” Every Christian should know that neither Christ on earth, nor Peter in the early chapter of acts proclaimed the message of reconciliation, the world-wide offer of God’s grace. This message could not go forth until it had become evident that God was to set aside His people Israel, placing all the children of Adam on the same level. In Old Testament times, the only way of approach to God for any man was through the Hebrew nation. This was true when our Lord was on earth, but shortly after Israel’s leaders had stoned Stephan and sinned against the Holy Spirit, (Acts 7:51), God began to set them aside and raised up Paul to go to the Gentiles. Not until then did the rejected Lord reveal God’s hidden purpose of grace. . . Indeed it is not until we reach the tenth chapter of Acts that the first Gentiles are saved and in Acts 11:19 we find that, until then, believers had gone “preaching the Word to none but the Jews only.” This, of course, includes Philip’s ministry in Samaria. But, in Acts 13 Paul is sent on his first missionary journey and, though it was his practice to go to the Jews first, he constantly had to turn away from them to the Gentiles.
- Volume 1 Number 12 (February, 1941) contains an important article by William Heinze titled “Is The Body of Christ the Fulfillment of Prophecy?”
 - “Most Premillenarian Christians believe that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, (Col. 1:24), is the fulfillment of prophecy. This belief persists in spite of the fact that many accepted Bible scholars (including Dr. Ironside, Dr. Gaebelien, Dr. Pettingill) teach that the Body of Christ was a secret hid in God until it was revealed by our ascended Lord to the apostle Paul. . . Paul reveals how Christ was also raised from the dead according to another purpose, a secret, eternal purpose of God which he calls MY GOSPEL because it was first made known to him by revelation (Eph. 3:1-11). . . When God’s son, Israel (Ex. 4:22), failed to bring forth fruit unto God under the law there was only One left who fulfilled those demands and that One was Christ, God’s eternal Son. When God’s son Israel, committed the unpardonable sin after the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, all prophecy and promise were humanly speaking, blacked out, leaving the only hope of their fulfillment in heaven in the Person of the rejected Christ. All of the promises now center in Him. But, the Mystery, God’s secret eternal purpose also centers in Him.

- Volume 1 Number 12 (February, 1941) also continues Stam’s article “Studies in Colossians,” in which he makes the following important statements.
 - “The glorified Lord from heaven committed a message to Paul which he had not committed to the twelve apostles. This cannot be denied in the light of such plain Scriptures as Rom. 16:25, Gal. 1:11-12, 2:27, Eph. 3:1-9, Col. 1:20-29, II Tim. 2:8-9. . . It is true that the twelve apostles had been sent to “every creature” (Mark 16:15), but they were directed to begin at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47) and since Jerusalem would not receive their message they could not proceed with the program our Lord had outlined for them, (“Jerusalem. . . Judea. . . Samaria. . . the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8). It was for this reason that their headquarters remained at Jerusalem and it was for this reason that God raised up Paul to carry out a new program. Whereas they were sent with the “gospel of the kingdom” and the “gospel of the circumcision” Paul was sent to preach the “gospel of the uncircumcision,” the “word of reconciliation,” the “gospel of the grace of God” . . . The attitude of the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia was typical of the attitude of Israel as a nation and Paul’s word to the Pisidian Jews indicates what God was doing through him. As they contradicted and blasphemed, Paul said, “It was necessary that the Word of God would 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). Unquestionably, all Old Testament prophecy puts the Jew at the head of the nations as the one nation through which all nations will be blessed. This is why the twelve were told to begin their ministry at Jerusalem. But, with the turning of Paul to the Gentiles, we have something quite different. He admits that it was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to the Jews, BUT, since they reject it, he will go to the Gentiles nevertheless. What we have here is not the blessing of the Gentiles through Israel, but the blessing of the Gentiles in spite of Israel. God here begins to unfold the mystery; His hidden purpose in Christ (*only made possible through the cross*) that places Jew and Gentile on the same level (Rom. 3:22-24, 10:12, 11:32) offering salvation by GRACE to individuals from both; “for to make IN HIMSELF—OF TWAIN—ONE NEW MAN, so making peace; and that He might REONCILE BOTH UNTO GOD—IN ONE BODY—BY THE CROSS, having slain the enmity thereby.”
- Much more work needs to be done in analyzing the doctrinal contents of *The Berean Searchlight* but for the purposes of this class we will confine ourselves to Volume 1. The important point here is that from the very beginning of the magazine Stam was advocating for the mid-Acts view.

Stam’s Involvement in the Worldwide Grace Testimony

- Pastor’s Stam’s *The Christian Public Should Know* was reprinted in the April, 1940 edition of the *Worldwide Grace Testimony Quarterly*. Please recall from Lesson 106 that the Worldwide Grace Testimony had been founded in January, 1939.

- Also of interest in the April, 1940 edition of the *Worldwide Grace Testimony Quarterly* is a short article by Pastor Baker titled “The Transition In the Book of Acts.” This article was written by Pastor Baker to explain the included chart designed by Jobe Johnson of Milwaukee.
 - “The above chart is an abridgement of one designed by our brother Jobe Johnson of Milwaukee. It was considered worthy of a place in these pages chiefly because of the unique way in which it illustrates the “transition” in the Book of Acts. Many of the details have been omitted so as to make it as simple as possible.

Those who are “anti-dispensational” see no transition, but a continuous unfolding of the program outlined in the Gospel narratives. Others who hold the generally accepted dispensational view see the transition taking place between the Cross and Day of Pentecost. Some of this school would permit the transition to go as far as Cornelius in Acts 10. These views, however, do not agree with the scriptural record. There is no intimation of a change in program from the Kingdom to the Mystery taking place in the first ten chapter of the Acts; for there is a continued and bonafide offer of a kingdom specifically described by the Old Testament prophets.

The Transition plainly begins in Acts 13, with the out calling of a new and different Apostle, and the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles. Here the chart shows by means of a diagonal line how the Circumcision ministry of the Twelve Apostles decreases and is supplanted by the increasing Gentile ministry of the Apostle Paul. This continues until the end of the Book of Acts, where the former virtually comes to an end, and there is a complete ushering in of the present dispensation of the Mystery.

Some who have been called ultra-dispensationalists claim that there is no transition in the Book of Acts, but that Paul, from chapters 13 to 28 of Acts, carried out the same program as the Twelve, and then at the close of Acts there was an abrupt breaking off of that program in favor of the ministry of the Mystery. This view, however, appears to be just as incompatible with the facts, as do the other erroneous views which have been considered above.” (Baker in *Worldwide Grace Testimony Quarterly*, April, 1940)

- According to Pastor Stam’s *Memoirs* he served as the Pastor of the church in Preakness, NJ for thirteen years until 1943 when J.C. O’Hair asked him to travel the country teaching the Word under the auspices of the World Wide Grace Testimony. “The idea was to get a growing number of grace pastors and churches to know one another and promote fellowship among them.” During these years Stam traveled to every state in the Union (only 48 then) and four provinces of Canada. (Stam, *Memoirs*, 82)
- We also have in our possession a resolution drafted by the Worldwide Grace Testimony on May 16, 1944 by Secretary, Charles F. Baker. It also identifies Cornelius R. Stam as the missions Traveling Representative. The resolution reads in part:

- “Adopted by the Worldwide Grace Testimony at the Bible Conference conducted at the Open Bible Church of Riverdale, Illinois, May 16, 1944, Pastor J.C. O’Hair presiding.

Be it resolved that we, the members of the Worldwide Grace Testimony, request our Secretary, Pastor Charles F. Baker, to have the following letter printed and distributed to Christian brethren throughout this nation, especially to those who are willing to be known as Fundamentalists and Premillenarians; in order that they may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning us, are nothing, but that we ourselves also stand for all of the great fundamentals of the Christian Faith:” (Baker, *WWGT Resolution*)

- Part of Stam’s traveling ministry would have no doubt included the distribution of this Resolution.
- It was the combination of *The Berean Searchlight* publication and Stam’s work as a traveling representative of the Worldwide Grace Testimony that moved Stam into the forefront of the emerging Grace Movement.

Works Cited

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