

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA.55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

"Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
(Luke 6:46) These were the challenging words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, men who had cast their lot with Him. Yet, when I meditate upon these words, I must honestly acknowledge that while I do call Him my Lord, declare that I am a believer in Him, and a follower of Him, I know quite well that I do not do some things He said, that I have never tried to do them, and have no intention of making such an attempt. If I am asked how I can justify my confession with my actions, I will point to the great Biblical principle of dispensational truth.

For example, the One I acknowledge to be my Lord unequivocally declared in Matt. 5:42, **"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."** I have never made this directive to be a rule of my life, and I do not intend to do so. And while I love to help others, and do help others in their needs, I have always been extremely prudent in such things. Yet, I feel no guilt because of my failure to comply with the words of my Lord, and will accept no criticism for not doing so. Again, I will point to the Biblical principle of dispensational truth.

When the Lord Jesus sent forth His twelve disciples, He commanded them not to take any road that would lead them to the nations, not to enter into any Samaritan city, to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to herald as they went that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, to heal the sick, to cleanse the leper, to raise the dead, to cast out devils, to do it all without charge, and to take no money of any kind with them (Matt. 10:5-10) .

In my own ministry I travel quite a bit; and each time I go forth, I ignore or violate all these commands. Furthermore, it is my personal knowledge that most ministers do the same; and, yet, we feel no guilt in so doing. This is

because we believe in and practice dispensational truth. Although, many simply practice it while at the same time ridiculing it and denying any belief in it.

In connection with a warning concerning the deceitfulness of riches, our Lord declared to His disciples, "**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). Now, if anyone who professes to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ desires to follow these instructions, it is his privilege to do so; but I have no such intentions. And there is no need for a line to form at my door seeking such gratuities. If any challenge my conduct and charge me with hypocrisy, I will patiently teach them the facts of dispensational truth.

While dispensational truth is ridiculed by many, especially church theologians, I proudly confess that I am a dispensationalist in my handling and interpretation of the sacred Scriptures. Furthermore, I do not believe that anyone can live a consistent Christian life in harmony with the Word of God, unless he is a dispensationalist. This does not mean that I blindly follow such partial dispensationalism as that set forth in *The Scofield Reference Bible*, or that I adhere to a more advanced dispensationalism as that set forth in *The Companion Bible*. I did start out as a Scofield follower fifty-seven years ago, but in time realized that he did not go far enough in a good thing, he being too tightly bound up with the English school of dispensationalism represented by J. N. Darby, F. W. Grant, and C. H. Mackintosh. Their ideas were crystallized, popularized, and practically fixed as absolute truth by Scofield in the footnotes of *The Scofield Reference Bible*. His development of their teachings into a theory of seven dispensations is not a viable interpretation that can be held very long if one continues to study the Word.

While I honor E. W. Bullinger as much as I honor any man who ever put pen to paper to declare the truth; yet, his writings fail to give true direction and leadership to those who would go on in advanced dispensational truth. He made a great change and a positive step forward in his dispensational position about five years before his death, but did not have the time or health to develop and set forth his latest findings. His early writings do not *reflect* his final dispensational position. This can be partly found in a book called, "The Foundations of Dispensational Truth," which sets forth certain studies he wrote during the last five years of his life. But this book is only an

introduction to what he planned to say, and one chapter in it is not even his own work. He was not the writer of the chapter on "Three Spheres of Future Glory."

Bullinger's small pamphlet on "The Mystery" was revised by someone after his death; but who did the revising, I have not been able to find out. *The Companion Bible*, a most excellent production, is his work only as far as the Gospel of John chapter 10; and from this point on, it is so sketchy and weak that it is useless. The excellent appendixes in the last part of it are all his work, and they make the volume worth whatever it costs. . In view of the above facts, let no one say that I am a follower of Bullinger simply because we do come together on the great truth that Acts 28:28 is a dispensational boundary line.

Therefore, without apology, I proudly declare that I am a dispensationalist, one who is not tied up to any fixed dispensational system. I will freely admit that I have gone further than most men in dispensational interpretations. And if this leads anyone to brand me as a "hyper-dispensationalist," I will not bother to deny it. However, I will ask if any man can go too far in a good and true principle of interpretation? And, if one can, then who sets the boundary line and declares that all who cross his predetermined mark are "ultra-dispensationalists"? **"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?"** (Rom. 14:4), is still a proper question to ask of all who so say. I intend to go as far in dispensational truth as my studies lead me, and all who know me also know that I will not knowingly go beyond the Word of God.

In my opinion it can truly be said that when the first seeds of dispensational Bible study were sown, many enemies came in and sowed noxious weeds among them. Misrepresentations of dispensational principles have ever been rife. However, the greatest damage was done when excusable errors were made that would have straightened themselves out if men had continued their studies. For example, the erroneous idea of dividing all mankind into three classes, Jew, Gentile, and church of God, based upon the K. J. V. translation of 1 Cor. 10:32, would never have been fixed as a Biblical truth if some leader had checked the original and found that it says Greeks, not Gentiles. Nevertheless, at some point some leader, who probably was afraid of losing face if he admitted his error, would seem to yell "freeze"; and half-studied ideas were locked in permanently. From that time forth all who continued to study or question the idea were disfellowshipped and branded as heretics.

It is also a matter of history that dispensational Bible study started off on the wrong foot due to erroneous and garbled semantics. No one seemed to trouble himself about having a pattern of sound words, as Paul exhorted Timothy to do in 2 Tim. 1: 13. The very word *dispensation* was misunderstood and an erroneous definition was fixed upon it, one which ignored altogether the meaning of the elements of the Greek word *oikonomia*. This was defined as being a period of time during which man is tested in respect to obedience of some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven of these periods were set forth, but careful examination caused them to disintegrate. For example, the idea that human government came to an end when God called Abraham is an utterly impossible idea to maintain.

However, as already suggested, the most serious handicap was in the word *dispensation* itself. At the time the *King James Version* was translated, the word *dispense* meant to administer, to regulate, to govern; and the word *dispensation* signified the plan, the method, or the manner of administering or governing. These meanings fit the word *oikonomia* very well, and it is somewhat evident that this is what the translators had in mind when they used the word *dispensation*. But these definitions are now obsolete. New meanings have become attached to both *dispense* and *dispensation*, and these are constantly being read into passages where these words are found. Scofield took the word *dispensation* and used it to describe a new idea of his own, an idea that is in no way related to the Greek word *oikonomia*.

This word is made up of *Gikas*, a house; and *nomos*, law. Note that it is "house" not "family." The occurrence of *Gikas* in this word has led some to insist that this limits God's dispensational dealings to His household; that is, His children, the members of His family. This is an error which more study would automatically correct, since New Testament usage flatly contradicts the idea. See Romans 16:23 where Erastus is described as being "administrator (*oikonomos*) of the city." Those who would limit *oikonomia* to the administration of a family because the element *Gikas* appears in it are guilty of closing their eyes to the Pauline usage of this word as found in the Roman epistle.

A dispensation is therefore, an administration; or to simplify it, a manner or method of dealing. And it can best be understood by asking the questions: What is God's manner or method of dealing with mankind at the present time? or What is God's present dispensation? Does He always reward the

good and punish the wicked? Does every transgression and disobedience receive a just recompence of reward? Is He dealing with mankind on the basis of absolute justice administered alike to one and all?

I believe the answers to these questions are obvious. From the Word of God, we know that God's present administration is one of grace (Eph. 3:2). His method of dealing with all men is to show love and favor to the undeserving. He is doing this passively, and He is doing this actively; but if He cannot act in grace, He will not act at all. He has a purpose in this. But that will be the subject of another study.

END ISSUE NO. SB056