THE MYSTERY

First printed as a series of papers
in Things to Come, 1895–1896

By E. W. Bullinger, D.D.

Revised and Updated Edition

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To the Reader of This Edition

Dr. Ethelbert William Bullinger (1837–1913) wrote these six papers on "The Mystery" for *Things to Come*, the monthly magazine he edited from its first number in 1894 until his death. They ask one question and follow it through the Scriptures: what is the secret which the Apostle Paul calls "the mystery," "hid in God" from the ages and at last made known? He first settles the meaning of the word, which is not "something that cannot be understood," but a *secret*; he then sets out the secrets connected with the present interval between the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow; then the "great secret" itself, the Body of Christ, with its Head in heaven and its members on earth, its growth, and its end, to be "received up in glory"; then other passages which throw light upon it; then the practical conclusions that follow; and lastly the difference between the Body and the Bride.

The papers are still worth reading, and their great points stand. The secret was not revealed in the Prophets; it was made known by revelation, and above all through Paul. Its subject is the one Body, of Jew and Gentile together, joined to its Head in heaven. Those who are members of it are reckoned dead, risen, and seated with Christ, and their hope is not death but His appearing. And Scripture must be "rightly divided," so that what God revealed later is not read back into what He said before. But the papers were written more than a century ago, and here and there a reference, a fact, or a point of teaching does not stand when it is tested by the Scriptures and by what is now known.

Dr. Bullinger gave his readers the rule by which all of this must be handled. In his *How to Enjoy the Bible* he wrote:

> *"All that we have learned from our youth up must be tested and proved by the Word of God. Where we find it is true we must learn it over again, from God. And where it will not stand the test of His Word we must be not only content, but thankful to give it up; and receive Divine revelation in the place of man's imagination."*

That rule has governed every page of this edition. We cannot leave error standing if we can help it; and we believe Dr. Bullinger, who closes these papers by asking that "the Word of the Truth" be "rightly divided," would be the first to give up any word of his own that the Word of God does not support.

The book remains his. His words, his order, his headings, and his manner of speaking are kept. The text followed is a modern typed copy of the papers as they appeared in *Things to Come*; the introduction and the biographical note added to that copy by its modern publisher are not reproduced, for they are not Dr. Bullinger's. His references to the Scriptures are given in figures, as they are in that copy. Plain misprints in it, and a few words lost from it (as the closing words of Section III), have been put right without remark. His two Structures, of 1 Corinthians 12 and of 1 Timothy, are set out again in the form he

used in his other works. At the end of the book is the notice of his death printed in *Things to Come* in July 1913.

How the facts were checked. Counts of words in the Greek Old Testament were checked against a concordance of the Septuagint, and the readings of the Greek manuscripts against the standard critical editions of the New Testament. Where a fact, a date, or a reference is not right, the right one is set into his text and marked.

How the changes are marked. Every word that is not Dr. Bullinger's is printed in this green ink. Where a change falls inside one of his sentences, it is set between corner brackets, ⌜like this⌝[1]. Where a whole paragraph has been added or rewritten, it is green and needs no brackets. Each change carries a small green number. Click the number and you are taken to the Register of Revisions and Additions at the end of the book, which gives the page, the section, the wording as first printed, the wording as it now reads, and the reason for the change. Click the number in the Register and you are brought back to the place in the text.

Some changes concern the teaching of the book.

The day of Pentecost. Dr. Bullinger taught here that the Church did not begin at Pentecost, and that "the Church of God" in the Acts meant only the older "congregation." Luke and Paul say otherwise: on that day "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47); Saul "persecuted the church of God" before his calling (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13); and "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Cor. 12:13) was written while the Acts was still running. Those passages are revised. What remains is the heart of his argument: the fulness of the secret was made known afterwards, through Paul; and all through the Acts, side by side with the Church of God, the kingdom was offered again to Israel and refused.

The Body and the Bride. Dr. Bullinger rightly shows that Scripture never gives the Church the title "the Bride," and that the Bride of the Prophets is Israel. But he went further, and said that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom," and that Ephesians 5 does not picture it as the wife. Scripture does not say the first, and Ephesians 5 says the opposite: the Body is pictured as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). Those sentences are revised. The question is set out in full in the companion study *The Bride of Christ*.

God and His gift. Dr. Bullinger, with the teachers of his day, spoke of the Holy Spirit as a Person who guides, speaks, and acts, and once of "the three persons of the Godhead." The Scriptures say that they are "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21): God is the Speaker and the Teacher, and holy spirit is His gift, poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:33, 38). Where he writes that the Holy Spirit spoke or acted, the text now names God, or the gift He gives; where he uses the words of Scripture, they are kept. His own note on 1 Timothy 3:16, that the reading "God" is not the original, is kept, and the evidence of the manuscripts is added.

A few other points are noted where they fall: that every member of the Body, and not a part of it, will be caught up when the Lord descends; that the judgment from which the members are free is condemnation, not the judgment-seat of Christ; that the Church, though its commission is drawn from the Epistles, has a commission to preach; and that the gift poured out at Pentecost, with its manifestation, is given to every member of the Body. Where our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection is set out, His ascension is added, for God has "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

Our prayer is the one with which he closed: that we may know ourselves to be "very members incorporate in the Mystical Body" of God's Son, and wait for Him, "henceforth expecting."

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I. The Meaning of the Word Mystery

There is no subject of greater importance to the Church of God than that which, in the New Testament, is called "The Mystery": but it is not every Christian who is in a position to receive it. Only those who have believed God, and who have thus been justified as Abraham was by faith in His Word concerning the redeeming blood; and who, in "the obedience of faith," reckon themselves to be dead and risen again in Him, and whose citizenship is now in heaven – only these are the fit recipients of the wondrous revelation of the "Mystery of God and of Christ."

God's Gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ had been promised through the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures, as we read in Romans 1:1-3; but the Mystery of the Body of Christ had never been revealed, and did not therefore form the subject of Old Testament Prophecy. It was the subject of a special revelation to Apostles, and Prophets, and Saints through St. Paul, to whom and by whom this Mystery was first announced in mortal ears and it was communicated only to the Saints who had been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who had been justified by faith, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; only to those whom God, who is rich in mercy, was pleased to make known that which has hitherto been hidden in Himself, and was never previously revealed unto the sons of men.

When Christians left their first love in the earliest days of the history of Christendom, this precious revelation was apparently the first which became obscured and lost sight of. Then ⌜the true teaching concerning the gift of holy spirit in the Church⌝[1] became less and less clear, especially while the simple foundation of the truth of justification on the principle of faith alone was also being departed from. These precious truths – by the Lord's long-suffering patience and mercy, have been partially recovered in these last days out of the wonderful treasury of His Word, but never, perhaps, in their pristine freshness and clearness.

It is our object now, in dependence on the Lord's goodness, and ⌜reliance on God's guidance⌝[2], to do something to recover the blessed truth concerning the "Mystery," and thus endeavour to be a "good scribe," bringing out of the Master's treasures something that is old but yet new, and new but yet old.

It will be well at the outset to define our terms, and to have a clear understanding as to the meaning of the word. The word "Mystery" is not an English word at all; it is a Greek word, transliterated. True it has become Anglicized, and is in common use to-day, but its meaning has changed, and is very different from the meaning which the Greek word originally had, and still has of course, in the Scriptures. We use it of something which no one can understand. This is not altogether wrong if we add the thought – until he is initiated!

In the Greek, the word *musteerion* means simply "a secret." ⌜In the books of the Old Testament it occurs in the *Septuagint* only nine times, as the equivalent of the Aramaic word

raz, which means a secret (these chapters of Daniel are written in Aramaic).[13] It occurs in Dan. 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47 (twice), and in 4:9, and is translated "*secret*." It was the king's secret which had gone from king Nebuchadnezzar, and which no one could tell him, until God revealed it to Daniel.

The Apocryphal Books, while they are of no use for establishing doctrine, are of great use in showing the meaning and usage of words. In these books the word frequently occurs, and is used of the secrets of friends, the secrets of private life, and the secrets of a king; but always of a secret. Take a few examples:

> *Ecclus. 22:22*, "If thou hast opened thy mouth against thy friend, fear not, for there may be reconciliation; except for upbraiding, or pride, or disclosing of secrets, or a treacherous wound; for these things every friend will depart."
>
> *Ecclus. 27:16*, "Whoso discovereth secrets loseth his credit: and shall never find a friend to his mind."
>
> *Ecclus. 27:17*, "Love thy friend, and be faithful unto him; but if thou betrayest his secrets, follow no more after him."
>
> *Ecclus. 27:21*, "As for a wound, it may be bound up; and after reviling there may be reconcilement; but he that betrayeth secrets is without hope."
>
> *II Maccabees 13:21*, "But Rhodocus, who was in the Jews' host, disclosed the secrets to the enemies."
>
> *Wisdom 14:23*, "They slew their children… or used secret ceremonies."
>
> *Tobit 12:7, 11*, "It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honorable to reveal the works of God."
>
> *Judith 2:2*, "Nebuchadonosor called unto him all his officers, and communicated with them his secret counsel [lit. the secret of his will]," i.e., his plan as to the campaign on which they were about to set out.
>
> *Wisdom 2:22*, "As for the secrets of God, they [the wicked] knew them not."

Thus, it is perfectly clear and certain that the word Mystery, as used in the Scripture, is simply a secret. But by the end of the second century after Christ the word *musteerion* had acquired an additional use. It was used not only of a secret, but of a secret sign or symbol. In this sense the Greek fathers employed it to denote any such sign, whether of words or actions. They spoke of the offering of Isaac as a *musteerion*, i.e., a sign or symbol of the secret purpose of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ. And they used it interchangeably with the words *tupos*, type; *sumbolon*, symbol, and *parabolee*, parable. It has a sense, therefore, similar to these words.

[Justin Martyr (about A.D. 150)][14] says that in all false religions the serpent was represented as "a great symbol and *musteerion*" (Apol. i. 27). So in his reference to the Paschal Lamb, he says, "the *musteerion* therefore of the Lamb... was a type of Christ." Speaking of Isaiah 7:14, "*Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*," he says, "since this refers to the house of David, Isaiah has explained how that which was spoken by God to David, in a mystery, would actually come to pass. Perhaps" he adds, "you are not aware, my friends, of this – that there were many sayings written obscurely; or in parables; for secret signs; or in symbols, which the prophets who lived after the persons who said or did them, expounded" (Trypho, c. 68).

Other examples might be cited, but these are sufficient to show us how the word "mystery" had come to be used. It was practically synonymous with a symbol, and yet there was a slight difference. Perhaps a secret sign would best express it; and this was the usage of the word when the Revelation was given to John. Hence, in that book, we must give the word this signification. In Revelation 1:20, it is used of "*the mystery of the seven stars*," and in 17:5, 7, it is used of "*Babylon*." Thus in these things we are to see a secret sign of something which they were to represent.

It is remarkable also that soon after this we find the Latin version translating the word mystery (in Ephesians 5:32) by the word *sacramentum*, i.e., sacrament. From this it is positive that at that time the word *sacramentum* or sacrament meant merely a secret sign or symbol! It had not then acquired its later theological use; but the word "sacrament" had reference merely to a symbol, or a symbolical act, a secret sign, shewing forth the Lord's death.

The popular etymologies of the word are therefore all wrong and misleading. If the word (according to Tertullian) had any reference to a military oath, it was only because in the administration of that oath some secret sign was given or made which symbolically represented it. It is certain, therefore, that the modern and ecclesiastical use of the word "sacrament" is not only a gross misrepresentation of the truth, but it is founded on ignorance of the history of the word.

1) The Greek *musteerion* means a secret; and later a secret sign or symbol.

2) The Latin *sacramentum* is used in the *Vulgate* as the equivalent of *musteerion* in Eph. 5:32, therefore *sacramentum* meant, and means, a secret sign or symbol.

This gives us the true meaning of the word as used by the Reformers in one of their prayers. When they say "these holy mysteries," they mean "the special commemoratives of bread and wine," i.e., these signs and symbols which are used to "show forth the Lord's death." Thus, in our search for truth, two great errors are, at the outset, corrected: 1) The true meaning of the word Mystery in the Scriptures is not something that cannot be understood, but something kept secret – a secret truth or sign, revealed to those who are initiated; and 2) the theological word Sacrament is not some act of ecclesiastical jugglery, but a simple symbolical act, by which the Lord's people show forth their Lord's death.

We are now prepared to apply the meaning of the word mystery, thus ascertained, to the various passages in the New Testament where it is used.

II. The Secret of the Interval

There are several secrets which are there spoken of; and there is one that is called the "great secret" (Ephesians 5:32). They are all of them connected with the present interval between the first and second Advents of the Lord Jesus. That there was to be an interval at all between "*the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow*" (1 Peter 1:10-11; *cf.* Luke 24:26) was not revealed in the Old Testament. The "*sufferings*" themselves were not secret; neither was the "*glory that should follow*." Both were subjects of Old Testament prophecy. Both are there fully and plainly revealed. And what is very remarkable about those prophecies is this, that while we have many prophecies of the glory without any reference to the sufferings; we never have a prophecy of the sufferings without finding, in the immediate context, a reference to the coming glory.

The prophets who prophesied, and all who heard or read their words, were perfectly well acquainted with these two great facts; but they were wholly ignorant as to what interval, if any, should separate them. They knew not whether the "*glory*" would follow immediately upon the "*sufferings*" or whether there would be an interval of one year, or ten years, or a hundred, or a thousand years between them. There was nothing to tell them. Hence, they were doubtless perplexed. ⌜We are, indeed, told by God (1 Peter 1:10-11)[15] that they "*enquired and searched diligently as to what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow.*" But there was nothing that could throw any light on the "*manner of time*" which should elapse, between the sufferings and the glory. It was clear that they could not be simultaneous. But "*what manner of time*" could there be between them? One way out of the difficulty was to suggest that there would be two Messiahs. One, Messiah-ben-Joseph, who should suffer, and another, Messiah-ben-David, who should have the glory. Some think that the question of John the Baptist, in Matthew 11:3, referred to this ancient tradition when he sent two of his disciples to ask, "*Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?*"

Modern critics might have suggested another alternative, but the difficulty was there. The "*manner of time*" was untrackable. That is the meaning of the word "*unsearchable*" in Ephesians 3:8, where we read of "*the unsearchable riches of Christ*." True, the riches of Christ are "*unsearchable*." No one can estimate what riches have been laid up in Christ for those who are the members of His body.

How vast the riches we possess
In Christ the Lord our Righteousness.

Yet this is not what is meant in Ephesians 3:8. The word here rendered "*unsearchable*" occurs only in one other place, Romans 11:33, and there it is rendered "*past finding out*." It is *anexichniastos* (Gr.), and means that which cannot be explored.

The word rendered "*unsearchable*" in Romans 11:33, is a different word altogether *anexereuneetos* (Gr.) and means, past comprehension.

No one could find out "*what, or what manner of time*" should elapse between "*the sufferings and the glory*." It was past finding out.

There were riches which could be explored. Many promises and prophecies connected with Christ could be understood, searched out, traced, and enjoyed by the faithful. The prophets conveyed their readers from hill-top to hill-top, but the valley that lay between could not be explored. Its mines of wealth could not be discovered. Its riches could not be searched. We, who by grace, have been initiated into the secret, and who have the key to unlock those treasures, can know something about these riches of (or pertaining to) Christ; but there were other riches connected with Christ that were untrackable – past finding out.

Connected with this secret of the present interval, and, indeed, forming part of it, there were, as we have said, several other secrets:

(1) THE DURATION OF ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS (Romans 11:25)

That blindness was to happen to Israel was no secret. It was plainly revealed in the Old Testament. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah had a glorious vision of Israel's King preparatory to the solemn mission which he received:

> "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long?" (Isaiah 6:9-11).

"How long?" Yes, that was the great and anxious question of Isaiah. The prophet "*searched and inquired diligently as to what manner of time*" was signified. "How long?" he asked, shall this blindness happen to Israel?

That decree of judicial blindness was pronounced under most impressive circumstances. There was everything which could add solemnity and importance to the occasion. Then when we come to the New Testament we find the prophecy three times referred to: Matthew 13:14, 15; John 12:40; and Acts 28:26.[r] (It is also echoed in Mark 4:12 and Luke 8:10.)[16] [r]The three citations are remarkably connected with God, with His Son, and with the spirit by which He spoke.[17] In Matthew 13:14 it is the prophetic Word of Jehovah which is referred to. In John 12:40, we learn that it was Christ's glory that Isaiah saw. In Acts 28:25 we read, "*Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias*." So this blindness itself was the subject of special revelation, and was no secret. It was there revealed that it was to last as long as the land remained desolate; but there was one thing connected with it which was kept secret, and that was afterwards revealed in Romans 11:25, where, speaking of this blindness, it is written,

> "*I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that blindness in part hath happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*"

Here the secret was revealed, and the answer is at length given to the question "How long?" We are no longer "ignorant" as to the duration of this "blindness in part"; we know its decree was announced, and we know when it will come to an end.

(2) "THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM" (Matthew 13:11, 35)

It was no secret that the kingdom, so long prophesied, should be rejected; that the King should not be received; that Messiah should be "cut off," and not then receive the kingdom. All this was a plain matter of Divine revelation. Many prophecies declare this; but what was to happen to the kingdom during the rejection of the King was not revealed; this was kept secret. There can be no kingdom without a king, therefore, while he is away, the kingdom must be in abeyance.

In the Old Testament we have the kingdom prophesied. In the Gospels and Acts we have the kingdom rejected. In the Epistles we have the interval between this rejection, and the future setting up of the kingdom in Divine power, judgment, and glory, which is foreshewn in the Apocalypse.

In the Epistles we have the interval, but chiefly in its relation to the Church. We do not learn in them what was to happen to the kingdom; the secrets concerning this are not there revealed. It is in Matthew 13 that the Lord Jesus, in seven parables, describes the course of the kingdom from the first sowing of its seed by the Son of Man, to the final setting up of the throne of His glory; and this without any reference whatever to the Church.

The Church, as we shall presently see, is not the subject of these parables, being itself another secret, emphatically called "the great secret." These parables concern the kingdom, and we are clearly told why they were spoken, and what was their subject as well as their object. In verse 10, the disciples came and said unto Him, "*Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?*" He answered and said unto them, "*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries*" (i.e., of course, the secrets) "*of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given*," etc. Then in verse 34, we read:

> "*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet* ⌜[Psalm 78:2]⌝[18], *saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*"

Hence, in these seven parables, we have the revelation of the secrets concerning the kingdom of heaven; *i.e.*, what would happen in consequence of and after its rejection, and we are told that these things had been kept secret all through the ages. Furthermore, when

the Lord Jesus spake in parables, He spake, not to reveal the secrets to the multitudes, but to hide them; and also that His disciples and we might afterwards understand.

It is clear, therefore, that we are not to look for the Church in these parables, but that, whatever we may learn from them, we must distinguish between these "secrets of the kingdom" and the "great secret" concerning Christ and the Church.

(3) "THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY" (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

The rejection of the kingdom would, we are taught, lead up, at the time of the end, to the "*time of Jacob's trouble*" (Jeremiah 30:7), when the Man of Sin will be revealed. He will be manifested in his own appointed season. But we are told also that even now, yea, even when the revelation was given in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, that the secret of lawlessness was already at work. Even now we see this secret purpose working. Lawlessness is already being developed. We see it in the Family, in Society, in the church, and in the State.

If we were asked to describe the one great feature which characterizes our times, we must say it is lawlessness. And this is the working of the secret counsel and purpose of the coming Antichrist, whose open manifestation will be the signal for the closing of this present interval, and whose final destruction will usher in the kingdom of Heaven. For then (i.e., in the days of the seventh angel when he is about to sound), "*the mystery* [or secret counsel] *of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets*" (Revelation 10:7).

(4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA

Before we consider the great secret of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, of "Christ Mystical," let us consider the usage of the *Ecclesia*. Even as our English word "Church" is used in various senses, so also is the word *Ecclesia* in the Word of God. We speak of a particular Church (as the Church of Rome or England, Jerusalem or Antioch): we speak of a building as a Church; we use the word of the whole body of professing Christians, and also of the select portion of true believers among them. So, in the Scriptures, the word "*Church*" (*ecclesia*) is used (not indeed in the same sense) but in several different ways.

The Greek word *Ecclesia* ⌜occurs seventy-five times (seventy-seven in the text now generally printed) in the *Septuagint*⌝[9] translation of the Old Testament, and is used as the rendering of five different Hebrew words. As it is used to represent one of these seventy times, we need not concern ourselves with the other four words. ⌜This Hebrew word is *cahal*, which sounds like our English word "call," though the two are not related.⌝[10] It means to call together, to assemble, or gather together, and is used of any assembly gathered together for any purpose. This Hebrew word *cahal* occurs 123 times, and is rendered "*congregation*" 86 times; "*assembly*" 17; "*company*" 17; and "*multitude*" 3 times. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 28:3, "*that thou mayest be a multitude* [margin, assembly] *of people*," i.e., a called-out people. This is

what Israel was: a people called out and assembled from all other peoples. In Genesis 49:6, we read,

> "*O my soul, come not thou into their secret* [Council or Senate]; *unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united*."

Here the word *cahal* is used not of all Israel as called out from the nations, but of the assembly of those called out to form the Tribal Council of Simeon and Levi. Then, it is used of the worshippers or those called out from Israel, and assembled before the Tabernacle and Temple, and in this sense is usually rendered "*congregation*." This is the meaning of the word in Psalms 22:22, "*In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee*," and in verse 25, "*My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation*." ⌜This is the usage of the word in the Gospels, before the new use which God was going to make of the word began on the day of Pentecost.⌝[11] When Christ said, "*Upon this rock I will build My* ***Ecclesia***," He did not use the word in the exclusive sense in which it was afterwards to be used, but in the older and larger use of the word, which would embrace the whole assembly of His people, while not excluding the future application and restriction of the word to the Body of Christ when that secret should have been in due season revealed. ⌜When Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:55), speaks of the⌝[12] *Ecclesia* in the Wilderness (Acts 7:38), he means the congregation of Israel.

When the Lord added to the *Ecclesia* daily (Acts 2:47), He added to the Church of God, which began on that day of Pentecost; for "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 12:13). When Saul "*persecuted the* ***Ecclesia*** *of God*," he persecuted that same Church; just as Jezebel and others persecuted the Lord's people in times past. Its members did not yet know the fulness of their calling. That was afterwards made known through Paul himself.[13]

So when, in 1 Corinthians 15:9, the Apostle says that he "*persecuted the Church of God*," he speaks of the Church of God as it was from Pentecost, though he did not then know what he was afterwards to receive by special revelation concerning it. He is speaking of a past act in his life which took place before the revelation of the secret, and his words must be interpreted accordingly. We must not read into any of these passages that which was the subject of a subsequent revelation. The word *Ecclesia* in the Old Testament and the Gospels must therefore be taken in the sense of its earlier usage, as meaning simply the congregation or assembly of the Lord's people; while in the Acts it is the Church of God, called out from Pentecost, whose full calling, as the one Body, was afterwards made known by God Himself through Paul.[14]

This brings us to consider

(5) THE GREAT SECRET

There are three important Scriptures in which the "great" secret is specially and formally revealed. And there are others which contain definite teaching concerning it, receiving light

from it, and throwing light upon it. We will consider each in due order.

(a) Passages which formally reveal the secret.

Colossians 1:24-28a

> *"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ* [i.e., Christ mystical, not personal] *in my flesh for* ***his body's sake****, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation* [marg. Stewardship] *of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery* [i.e., the secret] *which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery* [or secret] *among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom…"*

In chap. 2:2-3 The Apostle strives that they

> *"…being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of* [or have full knowledge of] *the mystery* [or secret] *of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*

Here, we learn that this secret had never before been made known, and that to make it known was to "fully preach the Word of God." Hence, to-day, the Word of God is not "fully preached" unless the Secret be proclaimed.

Rom. 16:25-26

> *"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery* [i.e., the secret]*, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith* [i.e., on the principle of faith obedience]…"

Here, observe, that the same secret is referred to as being made known by a special revelation, and as having been kept in eternal silence, not a word having been breathed concerning it before.

We get here an additional fact: In Colossians 1, it was revealed in the first instance to the Apostle Paul. Here it is made known also by "prophetic writings." There is no article used with either "writings" or "prophets." These were not the Old Testament writings, because they are only "*now… made known*." They are not the Old Testament prophets, because the word is not *propheetōn*, but *propheetikōn*; not the noun but the adjective, and should be rendered "by means of prophetic writings." These writings were given through the prophets in the early days of the Church. The Lord Jesus had said, "*Behold I send unto you*

prophets" (Matt. 23:34); "*I will send them prophets and apostles*" (Luke 11:49). This promise was duly fulfilled, for we read in Ephesians 4:8, 11,

> "*…when He ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men… and He gave some apostles, and some prophets.*"

In 2 Peter 1:19, we have a reference to "the prophetic word" of these prophets, and a contrast also with the Old Testament prophecy in verse 21. In 3:16, also, it may be these writings which are referred to.

Ephesians 3:1-11

> "*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation* [marg. Stewardship] *of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery* [i.e., the secret]; (*as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery* [or secret] *of* [or concerning] *Christ*) *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body* [i.e., a joint-body], *and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable* [untrackable] *riches of Christ; And to make all men see* [Greek, to enlighten all as to] *what is the fellowship* [marg. stewardship] *of the mystery* [or secret], *which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose* [marg. purpose of the ages] *which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:*"

This is the scripture which more fully than any other gives the particulars concerning the revelation of the Great Secret. "*As it is* [hath] *now* [been] *revealed*." This cannot possibly mean, as some have thought, that it had been revealed before in a certain manner, but not in the same manner as it is now. Because it is distinctly and emphatically declared again and again, here and elsewhere, that it had not been revealed at all.

"*That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and* [fellow-members] *of the same body* [i.e., a joint-body]." Fellow members of the body – *sussōmos*. This is a peculiar ecclesiastical word which occurs only here. ⌜It does not mean that Gentiles were added, as lesser members, to a Jewish body already in existence; but that these, with Jewish believers (2:13-15), form one joint-body, being made in Christ – "*Of twain, one new man*" (Ephesians 2:15). That one Body had been formed by one spirit from the day of Pentecost (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 12:5); what is here first made fully known is the secret of it.⌝[15]

There can be no doubt from this scripture that we have not a mere reference to the Gospel. The Gospel was never kept a secret. The good news of salvation through Christ alone, the seed of the woman, was revealed from the earliest times (Genesis 3:15), and it was preached unto Abraham (Galatians 3:8). Neither could it have been the mere fact that Gentiles were to be blessed with Israel: for this was never kept secret. The very first blessing that was promised to Israel through Abraham, contained the promise of blessing for the Gentiles also. "*In thee* [and in thy seed – 28:14] *and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3). Again, speaking of Abraham (Genesis 18:18), Jehovah says: "…*all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him*." Over and over again is this promise repeated (See Genesis 22:18; 26:4, etc.).

The prophets of Israel constantly had this as the burden of their message. They told of the time when ⌜"*all nations shall call Him blessed*" (Psalm 72:17)⌝[16].

> "*God be merciful unto us and bless us; And cause His face to shine upon us; That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations*" (Psalm 67:1, 2).

In Romans 15:8-9a, it is distinctly declared that

> "*Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy...*"

As it is written (not as it hath been kept secret !)

> "*Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the Gentiles* (*the heathen*), *and sing praises unto Thy name*" (Psalms 18:49)

And again He saith:

> "*Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people*" (Deuteronomy 32:43a)

and again:

> "*O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.*" (Psalms 117:1)

and again Isaiah saith:

> "*And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*" (Isaiah 11:10)

Such passages might be multiplied, but there is one (Isaiah 49:6) which very solemnly connects Gentile blessing with the atoning work of Christ:

> "*And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the ends of the earth.*" (Isaiah 49:6)

No wonder Simeon said:

> "*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel*." (Luke 2:29-32)

Gentile blessing was no more a secret than Israel's blessing. The same word that revealed the one, revealed the other also. It is impossible, therefore, for us to believe that the great secret, specially revealed with so much solemnity, and so formally in the New Testament, referred merely to Gentile blessing, as such. This was not "*hid in God*": this was not "*hid from ages and from generations*": this was not "kept in silence through times eternal": it could not be said of this, that "*in other ages it was not made known*." Language is useless if such expressions can possibly refer to that which was never hidden; never kept in silence; but was "*made known*" from the earliest times.

No! this was the secret: that a people should be taken out from among both Jews and Gentiles, who should with Christ be made (*sussōmos*) ⌜a joint-body in Christ (Ephesians 3:6) – a Body of which⌝[17] Christ should be the glorious head in heaven, and His people – the members of that body on the earth – "*one new man*."

This was the secret which was revealed to God's "*holy apostles and prophets by the spirit*," and which had never entered into the heart or mind of mortal man – CHRIST MYSTICAL.

III. The Body of Christ

This brings us to consider the "*great*" secret – "*The Body of Christ*," "*Christ and the Church*" – Christ, the glorious Head of the Body in heaven, and His people the members of it on the earth. Twice it is called "*great*" – the "*great*" secret. In Ephesians 5:32 and 1 Timothy 3:16. Not a word was heard of this until it was specially revealed to and through the Apostle Paul. We have considered the three great Scriptures wherein this special revelation is contained.

(1) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BODY

There are two other scriptures which further develop the special figure under which the secret is presented, *viz*., a Body. These are 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. In the former of these the subject is most completely set forth, in the following manner:

A | 12:1-11. THE CHURCH and the nine spiritual evidences (manifestation) given to it.
B | 12:12-17. THE BODY. Its unity.
B | 12:18-27. THE BODY. Its members.
A | 12:28-31. THE CHURCH and nine spiritual matters exemplified.
(A and *A*: nine enumerations.)

Here in A and *A* we have the Church – while in B and *B* we have the Body – to illustrate the blessed unity which exists betwixt Christ and His people.

"*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ* [or lit. "The Christ"]" (I Corinthians 12:12). This cannot of course be Christ Personal; it can be only what we, for the sake of convenience, term Christ Mystical.

Then how do saved sinners become members of this wondrous Body? Not according to the tenets of a Semi-Pelagian and Arminian Gospel, but according to the Free Grace of God: "for in one spirit are we all (i.e., the writer, and the "saints" to whom he wrote, and all of whom it can be said that they are) baptized into one Body… and have all been made to drink into one spirit." This is the source whence the unity and oneness of the Body springs.⌜ These words were written to the saints at Corinth while the Acts was still running its course; the one Body, so formed, had existed from the day of Pentecost.⌝[18]

The members of the Body of Christ are those who have believed God's testimony (as Abraham believed it), as to their lost condition as sinners, as to the great salvation which is in Christ the Savior; and who have reckoned themselves as having died when He died, and risen again when He rose; ⌜thus identified with Christ (not in His birth and life in the flesh, as some teach, but) in His death, His resurrection, and His ascension (Ephesians 2:5, 6).⌝[19] This is the truth which is bound up with the meaning of "*the Body of Christ*." One part of a body cannot die, and the rest of the body go on living: one member cannot be amputated,

and yet the body be a complete body. Hence, the expression "*in Christ*" means to be in Christ Mystical.

There is no other way of being "*in Christ*." We cannot be in Christ personal, we can be "*in Christ*" only by being members of His Mystical Body. Therefore, if we are "*in Him*" – when He, the Head, died; then we, the members, must, in the eternal purpose and judgment of God, have died in Him. When He, the Head, rose again; then we, the members, must be risen in Him. If He, the Head, is in Heaven; then we, the members, are seated in the heavenlies in Him.

We must not stop to follow out this wondrous truth, but we must surely be arrested by the thought, and ask, Are all who "profess and call themselves Christians" really members of Christ's Body? Have they by faith reckoned themselves to be dead and risen with Christ? Do they all know that having died with Christ they need not die at all? Do you rejoice in the fact that death and judgment are past and over⌜ [i.e., condemnation, Romans 8:1; the judgment-seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:10, is for the trial of service and its reward, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15]⌝[20] for the members of Christ's Body? Are they aware that the end of the Body of Christ is that the body will be "*received up in glory*" – to meet the descending Lord? Is this the hope of the great multitude of professors? It is not for us to judge individuals, but this we know as a fact, that the "gathering together with Christ in the clouds" (the so-called "Rapture") is a truth which concerns only the Body of Christ! ⌜and therefore whether each who professes the name of Christ is indeed a member of that Body becomes a most solemn question, demands a searching consideration, and calls for a serious answer. For every member of it, whether he has understood the secret or not, will be "caught up together" when the Lord descends: "we shall all be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).⌝[21]

The day is drawing near when the Body will be completed, and the members gathered together as one. But now they are in tribulation. Oh what grief and bitterness and murmuring and discontent is manifested as to the position which the members occupy in the Body! They forget that it does not say, they have been placed "*as it hath pleased them*," but it is written "*God hath set the members, every one of them in the Body,* ***as it hath pleased Him***" (verse 18).

Now, the members judge one another, some they "*think to be less honorable*" than others. Ah! Foolish thinkers. It matters not what "we think," but what they are in God's esteem. Then, what a precious lesson we lose through our selfishness. We read (verse 26) "*if one member suffer all the members suffer with it*," and we restrict this to the mutual sympathy of the members, to the exclusion of the Head. The truth is, He suffered, and we suffered with Him. He is honoured, and we are honoured in Him. "*It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him*" (2 Timothy 2:11, 12). And what is more – there is that precious truth in 1 Corinthians 12:21. The Head cannot say to the feet, "*I have no need of you.*" How wonderful that the great and glorious

Head in heaven cannot say to the weakest, feeblest, humblest, member upon earth, "*I have no need of you.*" It is too wonderful for us to comprehend; but so it is, and we can only bow our heads, and worship.

(2) THE GROWTH OF THE BODY

We read that this all comes from the Head in heaven. He has been exalted by God who "*gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all* [i.e., all the members of His Body with all spiritual gifts and graces]" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). This is exactly what is expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:6 "*There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all* [these gifts] *in all* [the members of His Body]." There is no force in the expression "*all in all*" unless we supply the necessary words of this elliptical term from the immediate context.

The Head of the natural body is physiologically the source of all feeling and influence to the whole natural body. The brain is not confined to the head. The nerves (though slightly different in structure, the chief difference being that the nerve fibers are insulated by a sheath in the members, but not in the brain) are the continuation of the brain, and they keep up a mysterious connection between the head and all the members of the body. And when a member is injured or in pain, a message is at once sent up to the brain, and succor and sympathy are immediately given. It is probably this connection that is referred to in those physiological verses which, whatever be their meaning, we believe to be in advance of human science. It is this which causes the present renderings to be so unintelligible, and which renders their correct translations so difficult. We will try and make it clear by giving our own version. The first is, Ephesians 4:16.

The subject is "*the edifying* [building up] *of the Body of Christ*" (verse 12), "*unto a perfect man*" (verse 13), that the members "*may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined* [continually fitted] *together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth* [every sensation of the supply], *according to the effectual working in the measure of every part* [a working corresponding to the measure of each individual part], *maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love* [brings about the growth of the body with a view to the building up of itself in love]" (verses 15-16).

"Fitted together and compacted by every sensation". The Greek word *haphee*, a touching, Lat. *Junctura*, occurs only here and in the other passage (Colossians 2:19). It is not a "*joint*," but a nexus, or connection, by which supply is passed on from one organ to another! And not so much the parts in contact, not so much the actual touching of the parts as the mutual relation between them. ⌜Galen (second century, A.D.)⌝[22] says the body "owes its compactness partly to the articulation (*arthron*), and partly to the attachment (*sumphusis*, *symphosis*)." ⌜Aristotle (fourth century, B.C.)⌝[23] speaks of two kinds of union, contact and (*symphusis*) cohesion. So that it is the contact between the various parts which conveys the necessary supply, with special reference to the adaptation and mutual sympathy and

influence of the parts in contact. Aristotle speaks of this as *patheetika* (full of feeling, or sensitive), and we have tried to express it all by the word "*sensation*."

The other passage is Colossians 2:19, "*And not holding the Head, from which* [or from Whom] *all the body by joints and bands* [through the junctures and ligaments] *having nourishment ministered* [being bountifully supplied], *and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God* [i.e., the increase wrought by God]." It is not merely unity which is taught here, but growth. This is the ultimate result of the intermediate processes.

The origin of all is God, who hath given Christ to be the Head over all things to this wondrous Body. Christ, the Head, is the source of all, but the members of the Body are made and used as deliverers of communication in their mutual relation to Him and to one another. The discoveries of modern physiology both give and receive light from the marvelous accuracy of these divine words. ⌜But the words God has given here are connected directly with spiritual truth. The Apostle goes on at once⌝[24] to teach the important truth and to draw the practical conclusion in the next chapter (Colossians 3).

"*Wherefore if ye died with Christ… why… are ye subject to the ordinances… of man*" (Colossians 2:20, 22)? Why do you allow men to bind you with vows and pledges and badges, saying to you, "*Touch not, taste not, and handle not*" (:21)? All these things perish, as man's commandments and doctrines perish. Hence, if this be so, if ye died jointly with Christ from the elements of the world; if ye were raised (not have been raised) jointly with Christ, what follows? Why, then, as the Head of the Body is in heaven, the members of the Body are there "*in Christ*." Our aims, and mind, and thoughts, will be heavenly not earthly. For (I say it again) "*ye are dead*" (Colossians 3:3) and you are now, as to your standing before God, living in another sphere, and on another plane where all is spiritual. Carnal rules and ordinances do not enter into the growth of this Body at all. All is spiritual, heavenly, and eternal.

(3) THE END OF THE BODY

And if this be the growth of the Body, what of its end? What will be "the perfect man?" When will this Body be completed and what will happen? The natural end of the natural body is dissolution: Will that be the end of this Body? What is its revealed end? It is all a matter of Revelation. The secret of the Body has so far been revealed, as to its place in the purposes of God, as to its constitution, and as to its growth. Now, as to its end, another special revelation is needed; and it is given. It flows naturally from its relation to Christ as shown in Colossians 3. Seeing that the members died jointly in Christ, and rose in Christ, our life is in Christ. Though we may fall asleep our "*life is hid with Christ in God*." Therefore, the next thing is "*when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested in glory*" (Colossians 3:1-4). It were impossible to be otherwise, inasmuch as the Head and members cannot be separated. Hence, the secret is revealed in 1 Corinthians 15:51: "*Behold, I show you a Mystery*," i.e.,

"BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A SECRET!"

What is it? "*We shall not all sleep*." What? Not though "*it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27)? Must we not die? No! blessed be God. It is not necessary! The members of the Body were judged with the Head, and were "*crucified with Christ*," and therefore there is no reason why they should ever die at all, and no reason why they should ever come into judgment (Romans 8:1). They may "*fall asleep*," but "*not all*." But whether alive or asleep,

> "*...we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed*" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

"*I would not have you ignorant... concerning them which are asleep... if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so* [we are to believe that] *them also which sleep in Jesus will God* [through Jesus] *bring with Him* [from the dead, i.e., as He brought Jesus again from the dead]. *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent* [get before] *them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first* [i.e., before the living are changed]*: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together* [i.e., at one and the same time] *with them in the clouds, to* [for the purpose of] *meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Oh! What a blessed truth to be initiated into. Well may He say, "Behold I tell you a secret." "I would not have you ignorant" of it.

This, then, is the end of the Body of Christ on earth. "*The perfect man*" is formed; the Body is complete, and when it becomes completed, it is received up in glory! We have already considered the three great passages which reveal it. But there is a fourth, and it sums up the whole round of doctrine contained in the revelation of it, with special reference to the end of the Christ Mystical.

1 Timothy 3:16

GREAT IS THE MYSTERY! of godliness, i.e., of the true Faith, which [Mystery] was manifested in the flesh. The R.V. gives "He who" in the text, and rightly says in the margin, "The word God, in place of He who, rests on no sufficient ancient evidence. Some ancient authorities read which." This is our belief. We believe that the original word was *Ho*, which, neuter, to agree with the word *musterion*, which is also neuter. Then some scribe, not understanding the sense added, an "S," thus turning it into *hos*, which made it masculine, who, or He who, though the sense is thus made more obscure. Finally, some later scribe put a little mark in the "O," thus making it into *Th*, and making the two letters *ThS* an abbreviation of the word *Theos*, God. A microscope reveals the fact that the little mark in the

"O," in the Alexandrine MS. is in different ink, and was evidently added by a later hand. This, we believe, to be the evolution of the reading, and that originally it was simply "O," which. This passage is generally taken of Christ personal. But if read, as we submit it ought to be read, of Christ Mystical, then in the six sentences we have the whole truth, concerning the Body, revealed.

The evidence of the manuscripts may now be stated more exactly. The oldest manuscripts, as first written, read *hos*, "who" (so the Sinaitic, the Ephraem, and very probably the Alexandrine); "which," *ho*, is the reading of the Claromontane manuscript as first written, and of the Latin versions; "God" is not found, in its first hand, in any manuscript earlier than the eighth or ninth century. Whether the little stroke in the Alexandrine manuscript was added by a later hand can no longer be settled from the page itself, which is much worn. Either way, the reading "God" is not what the Apostle wrote. With "who," the six sentences speak first of Christ personal, as Dr. Bullinger himself goes on to say; and what is true of the Head is, as he shows, true of the members also.[25]

The place occupied by the "*revelation of the mystery*" in 1 Timothy 3:16 will be best understood by the important position it occupies in contrast with the "*mystery of iniquity*." When viewed in the position given to it in the Epistle, the two central numbers, E and E, the two Mysteries or Secrets of God and Satan, are seen to stand in solemn and awful opposition.

THE STRUCTURE OF 1 TIMOTHY

A | 1:1-2. Benediction.
B | 1:3-20. Doctrine.
C | 2-3:13. Discipline.
D | 3:14-15. Intended visit and interval.
E | 3:16. The Mystery of Godliness.
E | 4:1-2. The Mystery of Iniquity.
D | 4:13-16. Intended visit and interval.
C | 5-6:2. Discipline.
B | 6:3-21-. Doctrine.
A | 6:-21. Benediction.

We have what is true of Christ personally, of course; but we have more; we include what is true of the members as well, if we take it as referring to the Body of Christ – the Head and the members. What is it?

1. "MANIFESTED IN FLESH." - True of the members, and true of the Head (Romans 1:3).

2. "JUSTIFIED IN SPIRIT." - True of Head, and members as set forth in Romans 5:12-8:39.

3. "APPEARED TO ANGELS." - This is explained by Ephesians 3:10, where we are told that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenlies, God is making known His manifold

wisdom by means of the Church.

4. "PROCLAIMED AMONG THE GENTILES," - not merely Christ personal, but the Body of Christ, is now proclaimed, "*made known to all nations*" (Romans 16:26), "*made known among the Gentiles*" (Colossians 1:27), preached "*among the Gentiles*" (Ephesians 3:8).

5. "BELIEVED IN THE WORLD." - It is made known "*for the obedience of faith*" (Romans 16:26) [i.e., faith-obedience].

6. "RECEIVED UP IN GLORY." – "*If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together, also with Him*" (Romans 8:17). "*For whom He justified, them He also glorified*" (Romans 8:30).

This then is the end of the Christ Mystical, as it was of Christ personal. The members are waiting to be "*received up in glory*," as the Head was. This is our hope, our "*blessed hope*," so that waiting for God's Son from heaven is part of our Christian position. It enters into the very foundation of our standing in Christ.

It is not the mere study of prophecy, which may, or may not, be taken up by Christians as an "extra subject," but it is the warp and woof of our Christian standing in Christ. The three pairs of statements may be thus contrasted:

> Nos. 1 and 2. Though manifested in the "flesh," we know what it is to be "justified" as to the spirit.
>
> Nos. 3 and 4. It is being made known to angelic beings in heaven above; and it is being proclaimed to men on earth beneath.
>
> Nos. 5 and 6. By grace, we believe the wondrous testimony now while in the world, and we are waiting to be "*received up in glory*."

IV. Other Passages Relating to the Secret

We have now considered the four important passages which contain the revelation of the great secret, *viz*., Romans 16:25, 26; Ephesians 3:1-11; Colossians 1:24-27, and 1 Timothy 3:16. Yet there are other passages which refer to it and throw light upon it. Some writers treat these as all referring to so many different mysteries; but we shall see that they all refer to and throw light upon that which is called THE GREAT MYSTERY (except of course those we have already considered, connected with the Present interval, the Kingdom, Israel's blindness, and the Mystery of Iniquity.)

(1) EPHESIANS 1:9-11

Here we read how the same grace which wrought redemption and forgiveness for His people, has also caused us to abound "*in all wisdom and knowledge*."

What is this wisdom? "*Having made known unto us the mystery of His will*." These words convey no sense to the English reader, unless we translate (instead of transliterate) the word *mystery*, *viz*., His secret purpose, *i.e*., the secret which He hath willed of His good pleasure. God has now caused us to abound in all wisdom because He has revealed to us His secret purpose "*which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one* [re-unite under one Head] *all things in Christ; both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him, in Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*."

Here we have the great secret and its purpose referred to, and in verse 22-23 we are told how the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory "*hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all* [the members of that Body] *in all*."

(2) EPHESIANS 6:19

Here the Apostle prays "*that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the secret of the gospel*," *i.e*., the doctrine *of* the Christ Mystical, which is the great secret and the great subject of the gospel. It was specially the good news revealed to and made known by Paul according to what he calls "*my gospel*" (Romans 16:25). It was in a very special manner his gospel.

The gospel – the good news of a Saviour for lost sinners – was (as we have already seen) never a secret. It was "*preached before unto Abraham*" (Galatians 3:8), and all the saints of God rejoiced in it. Nonetheless the good news concerning the *Body of Christ* was kept secret, and then became, and could be called, Paul's special gospel to be "*made known among all nations*." It is the good news of the Christ Mystical. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 4:4, it is called "*the*

glorious gospel of Christ," i.e., the gospel of Christ's glory. God highly exalted Him and gave Him to be the Head of the Body. This is now "*the mystery* [secret] *of the gospel*."

(3) COLOSSIANS 2:2

Here it is called "*the mystery of God*" [God's secret], i.e., the secret which God purposed, and kept in silence through times eternal and in His own good time made known. He prays for these Colossian Saints that they "*might be comforted*" and "*knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God* [i.e. God's secret] *in whom* [marg. wherein] *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*." That is to say, all the treasures of divine wisdom are contained in the Mystery – i.e., Christ Mystical. This is the secret, which, according to

(4) 1 TIMOTHY 3:9

We are to hold, as the essence of "*the Faith*." "*Holding the Mystery* (the secret) *of the faith in a pure conscience*." Here again the great secret of Christ Mystical is the central object of the Christian Faith.

These are all passages which refer to the great secret, but there is one other which is full of instruction for us,:

(5) 1 CORINTHIANS 2 AND 3

True, the word Mystery is not in the Received Text, but according to the R.V. and all the great Critical Greek Texts we must read the word *musthrion* (*musteerion*), secret, instead of *marturion* (*marturion*), testimony, in 1 Corinthians 2:1. It will be seen that there is but little difference between the two words – just one or two letters changed by some scribe who did not understand the Mystery, made the word "Testimony," instead of "Mystery."

It is worthy of remark how the ignorance of this mystery on the part of scribes has led to so much confusion of the Text in the passages which refer to it.

The condition of the Corinthian saints was such that they were not spiritually fitted to receive instruction in this wondrous truth. When the first epistle was written to them, the apostle explained this to them, and says: "*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God* (i.e., God's Secret). *For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*." Instead of declaring to them the Mystery, he had to confine himself to the simplest truths of the Gospel. He preached only a crucified Saviour. He could not declare all the great truths involved in a risen and glorified Saviour. He had preached "*the Gospel of the grace of God*," but he could not proclaim "the gospel of the glory of Christ." The reason why he "could not", he now proceeds to explain.

"*My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom… howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect* [or that are initiated]." This word "perfect" was the technical term for those who were initiated into the ancient and wrong heathen "mysteries", or "the wisdom of this world." I could not speak "wisdom" to you, he says, "howbeit we do speak wisdom to those who are initiated into it," "…*yet not the wisdom of this world,… but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery* [secret], *even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory* [i.e., with a view to our glory]" (2:6-7) Here is again a reference to the great secret, which had been hidden in God, and ordained by Him before the ages. "*None of the princes of this world knew*" about it, he says, for "*it is written eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed it unto us by His spirit*..." (2:8-10).

These words are usually taken in a general sense, as teaching that the natural man cannot receive spiritual things. This fact is perfectly true, of course, as is definitely stated elsewhere and further on. But it is not what these words say here. these words have a special reference to the "*hidden wisdom*," i.e. the Mystery, and what is stated here is, that no human being ever dreamed of it. It never entered the head or heart of mortal man. "BUT GOD HATH REVEALED THEM [it] BY HIS SPIRIT." It will be noted that the word "them" (in verse 10) is in italics, and we are quite at liberty to insert the word "it" as referring to the secret (as indeed the R.V. suggests in the margin). Then he goes on to explain what is the essence of a secret, in verses 10 and 11, and argues that as no one can tell what a man's secret was unless He had been pleased to reveal it.

This He has done, as verse 12-13 states: "*Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy spirit teacheth comparing spiritual things with spiritual* [declaring to spiritual persons things]." Why? Because the next verse goes on to explain that "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*."

"Declaring to spiritual persons spiritual things": the three words which follow have been variously rendered and interpreted. In the Greek they are *pneumatikois*, *pneumatika*, *sunkrinontes*. The first word is in the dative case, masc., plural "to spiritual [persons]." The second word is in the accusative case, neuter, plural, "spiritual [things]," and the third word is peculiar. The A.V. and R.V. render it "comparing," but the R.V. margin suggests "combining" or "interpreting." It occurs only here and in 2 Corinthians 10:12 in New Testament, and means literally to separate and compound anew; hence to explain a thing, as is done when one takes it to pieces and puts it together again; to explain by comparing one thing with another; or to compare with a view to explaining; to expound, make known, declare. It is used in Numbers 15:34 of those who had caught the man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, and it says: "they put him in ward because it was not declared what should

be done to him." The word in this sentence is used to represent the word "declared." Hence, it means to declare, make known, explain, or expound. The words here mean simply this that we speak the words "which the holy spirit teacheth, declaring spiritual things to spiritual persons."

Westcott and Hort, in their Greek Text, preserve an ancient reading, but not being supported by the other MSS., they put it in the margin. It is *pneumatikos*, spiritually; and would read, "declaring spiritual things in a spiritual manner."

Then chapter 3:1 comes in, taking up the thought where it was left in 2:1, "*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it* [or to receive it], *neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are yet not carnal and walk as men* [or marg., according to men]? *For while one saith, I am of Paul' and another, I am of Apollos: are ye not carnal*?" (3:1-4).

The great central truth of the whole argument is that these Corinthian Christians were taken up with "Bodies" of men, as we now call them, and they were therefore totally unfitted to receive the truth of the "one Body" of Christ. While they were putting the members in the place of the Head they were carnal and not spiritual, and therefore not in a position to have the truth concerning "God's Mystery" declared to them. Hence, when the Apostle went to Corinth he determined not to go beyond the simplest elementary gospel teaching, to feed them with milk, to proclaim a crucified Saviour; for they were not in a condition to hear about the glorified Saviour – "*the gospel of the glory of Christ*" (2 Corinthians 4:4) - and all the glorious things which are freely given to us of God, and which He has prepared with a view to their glory, the glory of the members of the Body in Christ, their glorified Head in heaven.

Have we not here a practical subject for our own hearts? What is our condition before God? Are we taken up with "bodies" and divisions which men have made, and called by their own names, or the names which man has given them? If so, we too are not, spiritually, in a proper condition to hear or receive "the mystery of God." No wonder the blessed truth so early dropped out of the creed of the Church of God! No wonder, when, in our day, it has been revived, so few care to know it. No wonder that many resent its revival; for it judges our Ecclesiastical position to the very core. It makes nothing of the sects and denominations for which the majority are contending; it writes folly upon our most cherished idols. No wonder Christians are torn and divided and scattered, ⌜when they do not "*discern the Body*" (1 Corinthians 11:29)⌝[26]. No wonder the air is filled with false schemes for re-uniting the scattered sects when such gross darkness prevails as to what is, subjectively, "*the unity*" of the Spirit, and objectively, the union of the members with one Head of the Body in the glory which is about to be revealed.

Oh, to get back to this primitive truth! Here, and here alone, is the secret of the Re-union; for though scattered among the sects, and regarded by men as totally separated, the members of this Body are already and really "*one in Christ*." This is the only real union that exists in the world, and the more truly believers can now realize their position as "*dead with Christ*," "*risen with Christ*," and thus "*one with Christ*," and "*in Christ*," the more real unity will there be among the members themselves, one with another.

V. Practical Conclusions

When once we have grasped the great secret of God, we have a key to open several other difficult subjects, which have been made difficult and dark through the shutting out of the only light that could explain them. Many false notions have sprung up, as the necessary consequence of having lost the truth of the Mystery.

(1) WHY WAS THE SECRET KEPT?

But first let us ask, why was the great doctrine of the "Mystery" ever kept secret at all? Why did God hide it in Himself, so that no one could possibly discover it till He chose to reveal it? The reason is clear. Had it not been kept secret, the Jews would have had a reason for their rejection of Christ again in the Acts of the Apostles! They could have pleaded that they were only fulfilling the prophecies, and would have lost at once all their responsibility. True, the rejection of Christ was foretold, but there was not a word about their rejection of the renewed offer of the King and the Kingdom, which was made authoritatively after the Ascension.

⌜In Acts 3:18 God, by Peter, reminds⌝[1][27] the nation how "*those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled*." There was an end of the matter, so far as Old Testament prophecies were concerned. Christ had suffered, but now, as to His entering into His glory, and fulfilling all the prophecies concerning that glory which was to follow, what of these? What hindered their fulfillment? Why should there be delay in their accomplishment?

The condition had been laid down in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and reiterated all through the Prophets that "Repentance" – National Repentance – must precede national blessing. The call goes forth therefore in the very next verse. "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*." (:19-21).

The question is, Was this most formal offer merely a mockery? Suppose they had obeyed that call and repented, and turned to the Lord, would not the times of refreshing have come from His presence? Would He not have sent Jesus Christ? And in that case would not all that He had spoken by His prophets have been fulfilled? True, Christ had suffered; the Heavens had received Him, but not for ever; only "until" Israel should repent, and turn to the Lord. Can we believe that this offer so formally and solemnly made was unreal?

We cannot so believe. Israel was responsible before God for the rejection of that offer; but, had the consequence of their rejection of that offer been previously made known, such responsibility would have been impossible. Therefore, was the secret purpose of God hidden in Himself: therefore was it kept secret during times eternal; ⌜and only as Israel

refused to repent – and thus rejected the offer to send Jesus Christ from Heaven – was the secret of God made known in its fulness, through Paul.[28]

We must never adopt any system of interpretation which would have necessitated that rejection of Christ by Israel. Had the secret been revealed before, they would have been compelled to reject Christ, and they could not have been held responsible for that rejection. Their present dispersion with all its sufferings, is in consequence of that rejection, and God is righteous in all His acts.

(2) A KEY TO OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

The second consequence which flows from the doctrine of the mystery is this: Had Israel obeyed the call in Acts 3:19-21, and the Lord Jesus had been sent, there is not a prophecy in the Old Testament or in the Gospels which would not have been fulfilled! This is a great truth and an important principle far-reaching in its results. It tells us that the Gospels are the conclusion of the Old Testament history, and not the commencement of Church teaching; except of course, so far as Christ crucified is the foundation of all blessing, whether for Creation, for Israel, or the Church of God.

The Gospels are a record of the rejection of Christ on the part of Israel, and not a record of the foundation of the Church. This exposes the follies of those who seek to apply the Sermon on the Mount to the Church and the world during this present dispensation; and who would build up "the New Theology" on "the teaching of Jesus," instead of on the teaching peculiar to this dispensation. It reveals to us the mistakes and errors of those who go back to the historic Gospels to preach the "Come-to-Jesus Gospel," instead of preaching the Gospel from the Pauline Epistles, which are specially given to the Church for Church teaching and Gospel preaching. Those who adopt the former plan are those who generally more or less ignore the latter. It explains the cause of the difficulties of those who seek to derive from the Acts of the Apostles a system of "Church Government," ⌜while that book records the history of the Church of God from Pentecost, side by side with the renewed offer of the King and the Kingdom to Israel, and Israel's rejection of it; and it closes with⌝[29] the solemn recital of Isaiah 6:9, as to Israel's judicial blindness, and the great declaration, "*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it*" (Acts 28:28).

It seems impossible for us to fix the date of the revelation of the mystery to Paul, or to say in what part of the Acts it should be placed. He received his gospel "*by the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (Galatians 1:11, 12); he was already speaking "*the wisdom of God in a mystery*" among the initiated when he wrote to Corinth (1 Corinthians 2:7); and he wrote of "*the revelation of the mystery*" in his Epistle to the Romans (16:25); and all this while the Acts was still running its course. The important dispensational chapter is Acts 13, where we have the solemn epoch-marking words pronounced to the Jews, "*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" (verse 46). The Gentiles, as such, had been brought in and blessed long before this; but now, a special work connected with the Mystery was about to be commenced, as is clear from verse 1, where "Barnabas and Saul" had been separated by God Himself for the work "*whereunto* (He says) *I have called them*" (verse 2).[30]

There can be no doubt that the Acts of the Apostles (as man calls the book) ⌜records the history of two things running side by side: the Kingdom, offered again to Israel and rejected; and the Church of God, which began at Pentecost, and grew while that offer was refused.⌝[31]

(3) THE TRUE PLACE OF PENTECOST

It also sets in its true light the day of Pentecost. That the Church dates from Pentecost is not a tradition only; it is proved from the Word of God, for on that day "*the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47). But Pentecost had another side, which tradition has forgotten. Had Israel repented in response to the call in Acts 3:18-19, then what about Pentecost? What would it have been then? Had Christ come in His glory in "the Day of the Lord," then what about Pentecost and the Church? The fact is that then Joel 2 would have been fulfilled, for there the outpouring of the spirit is distinctly declared to be the ushering in of the day of the Lord. In Acts 2, therefore, Peter could say of that outpouring, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel*" (verse 16); and had the nation repented, the rest of Joel's prophecy, the wonders in heaven and "*the great and notable day of the Lord*" (verse 20), would have followed.[32]

The preliminary events before the Day of the Lord then took place. Everything was in readiness, and hence in Acts 3, as in Matthew 3 the call went forth, "*Repent*." When the King had come it was, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*"; but they refused to repent, and rejected the Kingdom. Now, once again, on the ground of Atonement made, the call goes forth in Acts 3, and it is the same as before – "*Repent*" – that the King may be sent. Again, they refuse to repent and reject the King. Thus the Acts of the Apostles is, like the Gospels, a historical record of the rejection of the King and the Kingdom by Israel, and this explains how it was that God rejected Israel for a season, while He revealed and made known His secret purpose concerning the Church.

Pentecost thus is shown to have two sides. To the nation it was the first-fruits of Joel's prophecy, and a pledge of the kingdom offered again. To those who believed, it was the beginning of the Church of God; for on that day the gift of holy spirit was poured out which every member of the Body receives (Acts 2:33, 38; Ephesians 1:13), and whose manifestation "*is given to every man to profit withal*" (1 Corinthians 12:7). But the teaching concerning that gift, its working, and its right use in the Church, is given in the Pauline Epistles, which are expressly given for the guidance, teaching, blessing and building up of the Church; and all the modern talk about "Pentecostal blessings," and "Pentecostal enduement," etc., which seeks from the narrative of Acts 2 some blessing beyond what God has already given to every member of the Body, must be tested by those Epistles. All that Christians need of

teaching concerning the gift of holy spirit and its working is fully contained and revealed in the Epistles, which are written for that purpose.[33]

(4) RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

We thus have a fourfold key for the interpretation of the Old Testament, the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Apocalypse. We are not (when interpreting Scripture) to read into it that which was the subject of subsequent revelation! This principle cannot be over-estimated in its power to clear our understanding of the Word of God. Why is there so much confusion in reading the Word? Why are there so many conflicting opinions? Why so many "schools of thought," and divergent "views"? It is because we do not "rightly divide" the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).

That Word is "the Word of Truth," and this is why we are bidden to "rightly divide" it. If therefore we fail thus to divide it, it is impossible for us to have "truth"; and we cannot fail to have error. We must "rightly divide" off the Old Testament, Gospels, the Acts, and the Apocalypse from the teaching concerning the Church of God. We must not read Church truth into the Old Testament. We must not read teaching concerning the "Mystery" into the Gospels and Acts.

If teachers had always thus divided the Word, we should never have confused Israel with the Church, or the Kingdom with the Church. We should never have put the "extension of Christ's kingdom" for the spread of the Gospel. We should never have taken "*the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven*" as being synonymous with "*the Gospel of the Grace of God*"; or have supposed that the former is being, or could be, preached now, thus perverting Matthew 24:14. We should never have taken Matthew 24 as referring to the Church of God; or have supposed that the Church would be on the earth during the great Tribulation therein described. We should not have based our missionary effort on Psalm 2:8 or Matthew 28:19-20, for we should have seen that "the Great Commission, as it has been called, was obeyed, by those to whom it was first given (see Colossians 1:6, 23; Romans 10:18, Titus 2:11), and will be completely fulfilled in the time of Matthew 24.

The commission for the Church's missionary effort must be drawn from the Epistles which are especially written for the Church's guidance and instruction, and not from the Gospels or any Scripture prior, at least, to Acts 3.[r] And the Church is not without its own commission: God *"hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ"* (2 Corinthians 5:19, 20); and *"how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (Romans 10:14). The work the Lord gave the eleven, to make Him known among all nations, is the same work to which the members of the Body are now sent; and His words to them may still stir us to it, so long as we take our commission and our message from the Epistles.[1] [34]

The closing verses of Mark would never have been mutilated by all of its various readings had they not been wrongly taken for Church teaching.⌜ (These verses, 16:9-20, are absent from the two oldest complete manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and some copies end at verse 8 or give a shorter ending; careful readers still differ as to whether Mark wrote them.)⌝[35] It was, we believe, the difficulties created by thus interpreting the verses that led to the rejection of the passage rather than to the rejection of the false principle of interpretation. The fact being that ⌜the commission in verses 15-18 was obeyed⌝[36] by those to whom it was given, and the signs predicted did follow in those who believed.

The Church afterwards took this commission as specially given to itself to carry out, not seeing the signs following, and questioned the genuineness of the Scripture which predicted them, rather than its own wisdom in thus misapplying it. Kingdom truth in the Sermon on the Mount would never have been taken as Church teaching, and thus infidels and the world would have been deprived of one of their readiest weapons against the Bible. The Church would never have been put into the judgment of Matthew 25, which concerns only gentile nations and says nothing at all about resurrection.

Even infidels can see plainly (as the majority of Christians cannot) that a judgment based on works can have no connection with a Church whose standing is in grace. The truth, instead of being "rightly divided" dispensationally, is thus made to become a source of error; and things which differ and are each true in their proper place, are robbed of all their meaning by being confounded together. We should have had clearer views of the Apocalypse, and have seen that it referred to the setting up of the rejected Kingdom with power and in judgment after the Church shall have been removed; and that the end of the Church being revealed in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4, it could have no part or place on the earth during the events which take place in "*the Day of the Lord*."

We should not go to the Gospels or Acts for passages concerning the coming of Christ, as "the hope of the Church," while in the Epistles alone is that coming set forth as the Church's hope. We should never have made the death of man our goal, instead of the appearing of "*Christ, our Life*" (Colossians 3). We should never have taken dissolution instead of ascension as our hope (1 Thessalonians 4), and then we should have never been driven to hymn books as the source of Christian epitaphs, instead of the Pauline Epistles. We should not have confounded the special revelation of that resurrection which is connected with the mystery in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, with what is known as "the First Resurrection."

The first resurrection was, as we have shown, no secret. The Old Testament clearly reveals it, and it would have place just the same (as it will yet take place), had Israel accepted the offer in Acts 3:18-19, and had there been no Church at all. The one is quite independent of the other, and they would never have been confounded had the truth of the "Mystery" been discerned.

We should not have taken the "breaking of bread" in the Acts of the Apostles, and exalted it into the place of the Lord's Supper, had we seen that it has nothing to do with a Church ordinance; or had we known that it was and remains until today the common and universal Hebrew idiom for partaking of an ordinary meal together. We should never have taken John 6 as containing teaching as to the Lord's Supper, which had not then been instituted, but seeing that such an interpretation of the Gospels is incompatible with the doctrine of the Mystery, we should have studied that Scripture afresh, and scientifically in the light of figurative language, and have seen that the figures of *Metonymy* and *Enallagé*, and the Hebrew idiom as to eating and drinking clearly explain it as referring to that spiritual receiving, partaking of and "inwardly digesting" of Christ and His words as the bread or support of spiritual life.

As to the Lord's Supper itself, have we not fallen into many errors, "not discerning the Lord's Body" (i.e., Christ Mystical)? See 1 Corinthians 11:29. For "*the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ*?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). This must refer to Christ Mystical, as the next verse goes on to explain, "*For we being many are one bread* [loaf], *and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread* [loaf]."

That is to say, the bread, or loaf, which we break sets forth our communion not with Christ Personal (which is the source of all of the errors with the Lord's supper), but the communion and fellowship of all the members of Christ Mystical – the one loaf setting forth the fellow-partnership of all the members with one another and with Christ the Head of the Body in Glory, with Whom we hope shortly to be, and hence "*as often as ye* [we] *eat* [break] *this bread*," we "*shew forth the Lord's death till He come*" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

This is what is meant by "*discerning the Lord's Body*" (1 Corinthians 11:29). So, this verse does not refer to the body of Christ Personal at all, but simply to "the Body," i.e., Christ Mystical, which the members of the Body are to discriminate when they eat of that bread and drink of that cup. These and many other mistakes would never have been made had the true doctrine of the Mystery been preserved and held by the Church of God, and had "*the Word of the Truth*" been consequently rightly divided.

VI. The Body and the Bride

There is another error which the doctrine of the Mystery corrects – though there is certainly some little excuse for its having been so generally entertained – and that is, the identification of "*the Body*" with "*the Bride*." We have already seen that had Israel repented and turned to the Lord (Acts 3:18-19), there is not an Old Testament prophecy which would not have been fulfilled. Furthermore, the "Bride" is the subject of Old Testament prophecy. Therefore, had Israel repented, and there had been no Church of God, there would still have been the Bride according to the prophetic Word. Many are the prophecies of the Bride in the Old Testament, and hence some who cannot ignore this fact and yet cling to the modern idea of the Body being the Bride, believe there are, or will be, two Brides: the Bride of Jehovah and the Bride of the Lamb. Surely, though, it is not necessary, in the absence of direct Scripture testimony, to adopt an interpretation which involves so unscriptural a solution. The Bride in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea is Israel, or at any rate the elect of Israel – those who were "*partakers of the heavenly calling*" in Israel. We read in Isaiah 54:5,

> *"Thy Maker is thine husband; The LORD of hosts is his name"* (see also :6-8)

Isaiah 62:4-5,

> *"Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."*

Jeremiah 3:14,

> *"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you…"*

Hosea 2:16, 19-20,

> *"And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that* ⌜*thou shalt call me Ishi* [i.e., my husband]⌝[37]*; and shalt call me no more Baali* ⌜[i.e., my master]… *And I will betroth*⌝[38] *thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD."*

These and other passages clearly prophesy that an election of Israel shall be the Bride. Had, then, the call in Acts 3:18-19 been obeyed, these prophecies must have had their fulfillment, quite irrespective of any Church. Here again we come upon the solution of another great difficulty. The Old Testament saints are a great burden to expositors of New Testament truth. What to do with them is one of the commonest questions and difficulties which arises in the mind of the Bible student. That there has been an elect body all through the Old Testament history we have abundant evidence.

While all of the promises to Israel as a nation were earthly, there were always those who lived "by faith" and "died in faith," and were "*partakers of the heavenly calling*" (Hebrews 3:1). These looked for no earthly portion, but they looked forward with a heavenly hope to a heavenly blessing. "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country... a better country, that is, an* ***heavenly****: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them* ***a city***" (Hebrews 11:13-16). Of Abraham it is said, "*For he looked for* ***a city*** *which hath* ***foundations****, whose builder and maker is God*" (:10).

Now when we turn to Revelation 21, we read that one of the seven angels said to John, "*Come hither, I will shew thee the* ***bride****, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great* ***city****, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious...*" (:9-11). What are we to understand but that this "city" – which is declared to be the "*bride, the Lamb's wife*" – is the city for which all of those who were partakers of the Heavenly Calling looked, and that these elect saints of the Old Testament will form the Bride. This "*Holy Jerusalem*" may contain the Church or Body of Christ, as well as the Bride, inasmuch as "*the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, are the Temple of it*" (:22), and "*the Lamb is the Light thereof*" (:23); but it is not necessary on this account that we should identify them. The "*Lamb*" is the special title of the Lord Jesus in relation to Israel, and the elect of Israel, and especially to the Bride (see Revelation 19:7-9 and the Parables of the Marriage, and the Marriage-Supper in the Gospels).

It will also be noted that the names "***on*** *the* ***gates*** *of the city*" (i.e., the visible parts of the city), are the "*names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel*" (Revelation 21:12), while the names "***in*** *the* ***foundations***" (the invisible parts of the city) are "*the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*" (:14). This again carries us back to the Gospels (Matthew 19:28), to the solemn words of the Lord Jesus in answer to a specific enquiry as to the portion of the Twelve Apostles, "*Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

Here in Revelation 21 we have the Regeneration (the new heaven and the new earth), we have the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. We ask, what has this to do with the Church the Body of Christ?! and has it not to do only and solely with the Holy City and with the Bride of the Lamb? ⌜The promise of Christ to the Twelve Apostles has never been abrogated; it stands, though the Apostles were themselves of the Church of God from Pentecost. The Church is the Body of Christ; yet the Twelve, by a comparison of Matthew 19:28 with Revelation 21:14, have their thrones in the kingdom and their names in the foundations of the city which is the Bride.⌝[39] (This effectually disposes of the figment of "Apostolic Succession," which would never have been seriously entertained had not the

truth connected with the Mystery been lost. Furthermore, we ought to note that, ⌜while the Twelve Apostles have this place in the kingdom,⌝[40] the Apostle Paul was especially raised up to a singular and different position altogether, and is identified with the Mystery.)

In harmony also with this is the teaching of Ephesians 5:25-33. Christians, in their selfishness, attempt to rob others of their place as the Bride, ⌜and thus lose sight of their own still "better" place as the Body of Christ.⌝[41] "Verily they have their reward!" The Bride and the Bridegroom, though in a sense one, are yet surely distinct. Also, it is clear from all of the Scriptures relating to the Mystery that ⌜the members of Christ's Body are never called the Bride: their name is the Body of Christ; whereas the elect Old Testament saints will have their place in the Bride.⌝[42] See Isaiah 12:6, "*Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant* [marg. inhabitress] *of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.*"

In Revelation 22:3 we read, "...*the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*..." Of the glory of this Holy City other Scriptures speak. See Isaiah 60:3, 14, 19-20; Revelation 21:23-24, 27; Isaiah 54:11-12. (This is referred to again in Isaiah 4:5, when Jehovah shall have purged away the filth of the daughters of Zion; it is added "*for upon* [beyond] *all the glory there shall be a defence* [the CHUPPAH or the marriage canopy]" mentioned elsewhere only in Psalms 19:5 and Joel 2:16; and referring to Isaiah 26. The CHUPPAH is the bridal canopy beneath which the nuptial ceremonies are performed to this day.)

True, the Apostle might address the saints concerning his desire to present them "*as a chaste virgin to Christ*" (2 Corinthians 11:2); yet this no more declares that the Church is the Bride of Christ than that the Apostle himself was their father (1 Corinthians 4:15), or that he was their mother (Galatians 4:19). In the one case he spoke of the painful anxiety of a mother; in another of the loving care of a father; while in 2 Corinthians 11:2, he spoke of the jealousy of the friend of a bridegroom.

The "Mystery" was a totally different thing. So, in Ephesians 5:28-30a, the argument is that husbands ought to love their wives: "*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body*," i.e., as Christ loves His own Body, the Church; so ought husbands to love their own selves, because they and their wives are "*one flesh*." Thus the "*great secret*" is employed as an argument as to the reciprocal duties of husbands and wives. ⌜It is not said that the Church is "the Bride." But the wife in the picture is the husband's own body; and the words "*members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*" (verse 30) are Adam's words of Eve (Genesis 2:23), who was at once his wife and taken from his own body. So the Church, being Christ's Body, is pictured as His wife: *as* Christ loves His Body (the Church), so husbands ought to love their bodies (their wives).⌝[43]

⌜What is clear and certain is that the Church is the Body of Christ Himself; that is its name; and though the Apostle pictures that Body as a wife loved by her husband, the title of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," is never given to it.⌝[44] It is a remarkable example of the perversity

of expositors who, while they hold that the Bride is the Church, persist in interpreting the parable of the ten virgins as though the Bride's attendant "Virgins" are also the Church. Who ever heard of an Eastern Bride going "to meet" the Bridegroom? The Virgins, "*her companions*," went but not the Bride. So our expositors can hold whichever of these two positions they please, but clearly, they are not entitled to hold them both. The "Bride" must be distinct from "the virgins her companions that follow her."

If we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we see that the Church is neither the one nor the other, and that the subsequent revelation of the "Mystery" cannot be read into either Psalms 45 or Matthew 25, which are perfectly clear as they stand and must have been capable of a plain interpretation to the first hearers or readers of those words quite apart from the truth subsequently revealed. The Mystery was "*hid in God*." It does not say that it was hidden in the Scripture, but "*hid in God*" Himself. There can be therefore no types of it in the Old Testament, inasmuch as types teach, and were meant to teach doctrines; but if truths and doctrines, which are elsewhere clearly revealed in the New Testament, can be illustrated from the Old Testament, that is quite another matter. The illustration and application of Old Testament scripture to the Church is quite lawful and profitable, so long as it is kept distinct from interpretation. It is one thing to see an illustration of the Church in the Old Testament; but it is quite another thing to say that there is revealed that which God distinctly declares was not revealed!

Genesis 24 has been, for example, widely taken as typical of Christ and the Church. Isaac is taken as the bridegroom, and Rebekah as the Church or the bride. True, the chapter is illustrative, but not of the Church. The bridegroom and the bride were both "ready" before either was called to the marriage. The bride was found in the house of Abraham's brother. Very special injunctions were given that she was not to be of "the Canaanites." "But," said Abraham to Eliezer, "*thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac… thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence.*" Great emphasis is placed on this important condition in :3-4, 7, 37-38. Abraham and Nahor were brothers, and by Isaac's marriage with Rebekah, and Jacob's marriage with her brother Laban's daughters, Leah and Rachel, the whole house of Nahor was absorbed into the family of Abraham! Gentiles were expressly shut out when this typical wife was chosen, and Isaac on receiving his bride took her at once "*into his mother Sarah's tent*," thus forming the ground of the type as expounded in Galatians 4:21-31.

Rebekah therefore represents, not the Church or Body of Christ, but that great cloud of witnesses (the Old Testament saints), who in the old dispensation sacrificed, as she did, all worldly advantages for the Lord's sake. It is for these He is preparing that "*city which hath foundations*," and of which He Himself is the divine architect. Truly, it is said of these, "*And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out* [as Rebekah came]*, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city*"

(Hebrews 11:15-16). "*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*" (:39-40).

Now, we maintain that this "*better thing*" cannot be the same as the good thing. The comparative term distinguishes between two things, and necessitates the existence of two. The one, as the Bride, will have a good place, a grand place, a place of honor and glory as the Lamb's wife in the holy Jerusalem; but the Church the Body of Christ, will have "some better thing," ⌜a position of greater glory and honor, as the Body of Christ, seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6).⌝[45] It is for this consummation that the members of His Body now wait. We are, by the wondrous position which grace has given us, necessarily cut off from all "Bodies" which are of human origination, and from all Ecclesiastical organizations.

We do not seek to restore corporate testimony, for no such restoration of what man had ruined was ever promised. The corporate failure is complete. There is no authority in the Word for reestablishing it, and all attempts to do so have ended in disaster, and in a widening of the breach between brethren. The "*unity of the Spirit*" is now only subjective. There is no such thing as an objective unity of the Spirit which we can "join." The real truth of the "Mystery" received into the heart raises the members of the Body far above all human plans and hopes of union or of re-union. It takes us up at once into the heavenlies, seats us there with Christ, so that like Him we are "henceforth expecting."

Hence, we are not concerned with prophecy as such, as a mere subject of study. To look for Christ's appearing is the very essence of our Christian standing. It is the very breath of the Christian's life. We "*wait for God's Son from heaven*" and long for Him to appear so that we may be "*received up in Glory*."

May we now conclude, in the words of an ancient prayer, and say and confess that "We are very members incorporate in the Mystical Body of Thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of Thy everlasting Kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of Thy dear Son." Amen.

In Memoriam

The following notice of Dr. Bullinger's death was printed in *Things to Come*, the magazine in which these papers first appeared, in July, 1913.[46]



THINGS TO COME.

No. 229. JULY, 1913 Vol. XIX. No. 7.

The late Dr. E. W. Bullinger

IT is with profound grief that we announce the death, on June 6th, after a brief illness, of Dr. Bullinger, the Editor of this magazine from its commencement nineteen years ago.

Its first number appeared in July, 1894, and its volumes ran from July to June, until the tenth, which comprised eighteen numbers, July, 1903, to December, 1904, so as to make the volume close with the year for convenience of subscribers, and of publishers' arrangements.

It was originally projected as the organ of some prophetic conferences, which were being held in various places at that time. But these were not continued, as the Committee which organized them did not receive adequate financial support, and, with the consent of the three other trustees, by whom *Things to Come* was controlled, Dr. Bullinger assumed the whole responsibility of continuing it.

He has carried it on to the present time, writing a considerable part of each issue, though he would have been the last to forget the support and assistance of his friends and co-workers.

He has thus become endeared to many, not only in the British Isles, but also in the Colonies, in the United States, and on the Continent, who rejoice in the light on Divine Truth which his teaching has brought them.

And he was worthy of such love and regard, for he was a man who desired to love all who love the Lord.

He loved and was beloved, and those who knew him best loved him most.

He was singularly unselfish, and cared nothing for his own reputation, save as it might affect the Trinitarian Bible Society, of which he was the devoted and honoured secretary for over forty-six years.

A certain type of Christians, more jealous for their denominational standards than careful to compare them with the Word of God, frequently attacked him, but he did not trouble to defend himself. He was only concerned lest this hostility should injure the Society. It is a curious phenomenon of the human mind that persons should be found to withdraw their support from a Society, with the avowed and well-established principles of which they are in perfect agreement, because one of its officials, absolutely loyal to those principles, holds independent views on matters which are, or should be, open questions among Christians. Strange logic! But perhaps, one ought not be surprised. It is of the very essence of priestcraft which reigns, not only in the Vatican, but even in the "upper room," to be intolerant of any opinion which runs counter to accepted traditions.

Dr. Bullinger was a man of commanding intellect, and possessed that genius which has been defined as "an infinite capacity for taking pains."

His untiring industry was shown in his life-long habit of rising between four and five in the morning, and thus he had often done a good day's work when others had scarcely begun theirs.

He carried the affairs of the Trinitarian Bible Society at his fingers' ends, besides conducting this magazine and performing other literary work as well.

Of the latter, *The Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, on account of which Archbishop Tait conferred on him the degree of D.D., is his greatest work.

But *Number in Scripture*, *Figures of Speech used in the Bible*, and *The Witness of the Stars* led him into fields where there were few footprints of other labourers.

Perhaps the most interesting and widely-read work of his is one produced when he had reached the age of threescore and ten, *How to enjoy the Bible*, interesting both from the circumstances which gave rise to it (as narrated in the preface) and for the valuable principles of interpretation it unfolds. Many of his other publications were reprints from *Things to Come*.

He was an accomplished musician, and besides composing a large number of hymn tunes, he collected, while in Brittany, several old Breton tunes, which he transcribed from the lips of the peasantry and harmonized. These are used in the churches of the Breton Evangelical mission, a work in which he took the deepest interest.

While abroad for his health in the early part of the present year, he paid a visit to Trémel, the headquarters of that mission, as well as to the Spanish Evangelical Mission at Figueras, another work which was dear to his heart.

Another visit he paid while abroad was to Vilvorde in Belgium, to confer with M. Valat, the secretary of the Belgian Bible Society, in regard to the memorial to William Tyndale. He was greatly disappointed that the response to the appeal for this memorial had not been more successful, and was considering just before his death further efforts for securing its completion.

Dr. Bullinger was a man of one Book—THE BOOK. He lived to interpret it and to promote its circulation throughout the world.

His faithfulness to its absolute authority and its verbal inspiration, constituted him a doughty champion of that cause, on which depend all our confidence in God for the present, and with which are bound up all our hopes for the time to come.

Amid a large gathering of his friends, he was laid to rest in Hampstead Cemetery on the 11th of June there to await the "Upward Call," of which he so often spoke and wrote.

"A prince and a great man has fallen," and we, who, amid the gathering darkness, remain behind, can only say, with bowed heads, "the righteous is taken away from the evil."

Register of Revisions and Additions

Every change made in this edition is listed here in the order in which it appears. The page given is the page of this edition. “As first printed” gives Dr. Bullinger’s wording; “As it now reads” gives the wording now in the text, which is printed there in green. Click a number to return to the place in the text.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
1	6	Revision	I. The Meaning of the Word Mystery	*the true teaching concerning the Holy Spirit in the Church*	the true teaching concerning the gift of holy spirit in the Church	The Scriptures are given "by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21): God is the Speaker and the Teacher, and holy spirit is His gift (Acts 2:33, 38). Where Dr. Bullinger speaks of the Holy Spirit as a Person who guides, speaks, or acts, the text now names God, or the gift He gives; for "to us there is but one God, the Father" (1 Cor. 8:6; Deut. 6:4). Where he uses the words of Scripture, they are kept as written.
2	6	Revision	I. The Meaning of the Word Mystery	*reliance on the Holy Spirit’s guidance*	reliance on God’s guidance	See the reason given at No. 1.
3	6	Revision	I. The Meaning of the Word Mystery	*It occurs in the Septuagint only nine times as the equivalent of the Hebrew word ratz, which means to conceal hence, a secret.*	In the books of the Old Testament it occurs in the *Septuagint* only nine times, as the equivalent of the Aramaic word *raz*, which means a secret (these chapters of Daniel are written in Aramaic).	The word in Daniel is the Aramaic רָז (raz), "secret," found only in the Aramaic part of the book (Dan. 2:4 to 7:28). The nine occurrences in Daniel are confirmed (Septuagint concordance). The Septuagint as a whole also contains the Apocryphal books, where, as he goes on to show, the word is frequent; so the "nine times" belongs to the books of the Old Testament.
4	7	Revision	I. The Meaning of the Word Mystery	*Justin Martyr (A.D. 148)*	Justin Martyr (about A.D. 150)	Justin's First Apology is now generally dated about A.D. 150–155. His quotations from the Apology (ch. 27) and from the Dialogue with Trypho (chs. 40 and 68) are confirmed.
5	10	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval	*We are, indeed, told by the holy spirit (1 Peter 1:10-11)*	We are, indeed, told by God (1 Peter 1:10-11)	See the reason given at No. 1.
6	11	Addition	II. The Secret of the Interval, (1) THE DURATION OF ISRAEL’S BLINDNESS (Romans 11:25)	—	(It is also echoed in Mark 4:12 and Luke 8:10.)	Isaiah 6:9, 10 is cited at length in the three places he names, and echoed in Mark 4:12 and Luke 8:10.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
7	11	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (1) THE DURATION OF ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS (Romans 11:25)	*The three citations are remarkably connected with the three persons of the Godhead.*	The three citations are remarkably connected with God, with His Son, and with the spirit by which He spoke.	Scripture does not speak of "persons of the Godhead": "to us there is but one God, the Father ... and one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6). In Acts 28:25 "the Holy Ghost" who "spake by Esaias" is God speaking by His spirit through the prophet (2 Pet. 1:21). His observation on the three citations is kept.
8	12	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (2) "THE SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM" (Matthew 13:11, 35)	[*Psalms 88:2*]	[Psalm 78:2]	"I will open my mouth in a parable" is Psalm 78:2.
9	13	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA	*occurs seventy-five times in the Septuagint*	occurs seventy-five times (seventy-seven in the text now generally printed) in the *Septuagint*	Counted in the Septuagint concordance of the books of the Old Testament (Rahlfs' text): ekklēsia 77 times in 73 verses. The reckoning differs between editions of the Septuagint; his figure is kept beside it.
10	13	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA	*This Hebrew word is cahal from which we have our English word "call."*	This Hebrew word is *cahal*, which sounds like our English word "call," though the two are not related.	The English "call" comes from the Old Norse kalla, not from the Hebrew; the likeness of sound is a coincidence. His point is carried by the Greek: ekklēsia is from ek, "out," and kaleō, "to call," a people called out.
11	14	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA	*This is the usage of the word in the Gospels, and even in the Acts of the Apostles before the new use, which the Holy Spirit was going to make of the word, was revealed.*	This is the usage of the word in the Gospels, before the new use which God was going to make of the word began on the day of Pentecost.	The Church of God began on the day of Pentecost: "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47); Saul "persecuted the church of God" before his calling (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13); and "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Cor. 12:13) was written while the Acts was still running. What God made known afterwards through Paul was the fulness of the secret concerning that Body (Eph. 3:3-6). His great point stands: the secret was not revealed in the Prophets. Where he speaks of the Holy Spirit making a new use of the word, the text names God. See the reason given at No. 1.
12	14	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA	*When the Spirit by Stephen speaks of the*	When Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:55), speaks of the	See the reason given at No. 1.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
13	14	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA	*When the Lord added to the Ecclesia daily (Acts 2:47), He added to the number of those who assembled themselves together for His worship. When Saul "persecuted the Ecclesia of God," he persecuted the assembly of those who feared God, just as Jezebel and others persecuted them in times past.*	When the Lord added to the Ecclesia daily (Acts 2:47), He added to the Church of God, which began on that day of Pentecost; for "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 12:13). When Saul "persecuted the Ecclesia of God," he persecuted that ...	The Church of God began on the day of Pentecost: "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47); Saul "persecuted the church of God" before his calling (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13); and "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Cor. 12:13) was written while the Acts was still running. What God made known afterwards through Paul was the fulness of the secret concerning that Body (Eph. 3:3-6). His great point stands: the secret was not revealed in the Prophets.
14	14	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (4) THE SECRET OF ECCLESIA	*So when, in I Corinthians 15:9, the Apostle says that he "persecuted the Church of God," the word Ecclesia is not used in the sense which it subsequently acquired ... and therefore the word Ecclesia in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Acts must be taken in the sense of its earlier usage as ...*	So when, in 1 Corinthians 15:9, the Apostle says that he "persecuted the Church of God," he speaks of the Church of God as it was from Pentecost, though he did not then know what he was afterwards to receive by special revelation concerning it. He is speaking of a past act in his life which took ...	The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13). See the note on the Ecclesia in Section II. He held that the Ecclesia of the Acts was only the "congregation" of the older usage; Luke and Paul call it "the church of God." His rule, that later revelation must not be read back into earlier Scripture, is kept.
15	16	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (a) Passages which formally reveal the secret	*It does not mean that there was a body already previously in existence and that others became afterwards in due time members of it. But that these, with Jewish believers (2:13-15), should form a joint-body, being made in Christ – "Of twain, one new man." (Ephesians 2:15).*	It does not mean that Gentiles were added, as lesser members, to a Jewish body already in existence; but that these, with Jewish believers (2:13-15), form one joint-body, being made in Christ – *"Of twain, one new man"* (Ephesians 2:15). That one Body had been formed by one spirit from the day ...	The one Body was in existence before Ephesians was written: "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Cor. 12:13), and "we, being many, are one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5). What the word sussōmos excludes is a body into which Gentiles are admitted on a lower footing. The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13). See the note on the Ecclesia in Section II.
16	17	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (a) Passages which formally reveal the secret	*"all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psalms 72:14)*	*"all nations shall call Him blessed"* (Psalm 72:17)	"All nations shall call him blessed" is Psalm 72:17.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
17	18	Revision	II. The Secret of the Interval, (a) Passages which formally reveal the secret	*a joint-body in Christ (Ephesians 3:9) – a peculiar ecclesiastical word which occurs only here: it does not mean that there was a body already previously in existence and that others became afterwards in due time members of it, a Body of which*	a joint-body in Christ (Ephesians 3:6) – a Body of which	Sussōmos is in Eph. 3:6, not 3:9. The clause about the word, repeated here from above, where it is revised, is not repeated.
18	19	Addition	III. The Body of Christ, (1) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BODY	—	These words were written to the saints at Corinth while the Acts was still running its course; the one Body, so formed, had existed from the day of Pentecost.	The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13). See the note on the Ecclesia in Section II.
19	19	Revision	III. The Body of Christ, (1) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BODY	*thus identified with Christ (not in His incarnation, which is the modern heresy, but) in His death and resurrection.*	thus identified with Christ (not in His birth and life in the flesh, as some teach, but) in His death, His resurrection, and His ascension (Ephesians 2:5, 6).	Scripture speaks of the Lord as "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4) and the Word "made flesh" (John 1:14), not of an "incarnation" of God. His point stands: we are identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, not in His birth. The Ascension is added, for God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6), as he goes on to say.
20	20	Addition	III. The Body of Christ, (1) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BODY	—	[i.e., condemnation, Romans 8:1; the judgment-seat of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:10, is for the trial of service and its reward, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15]	Believers "must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10), not for condemnation (Rom. 8:1; John 5:24) but for the trial of their work and its reward (1 Cor. 3:13-15). Dr. Bullinger speaks of it so in his Ten Sermons on the Second Advent.
21	20	Revision	III. The Body of Christ, (1) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BODY	*and therefore whether all Christians will be taken up when Christ comes forth into the air; or whether any will be left, becomes a most solemn question, demands a searching consideration, and calls for a serious answer.*	and therefore whether each who professes the name of Christ is indeed a member of that Body becomes a most solemn question, demands a searching consideration, and calls for a serious answer. For every member of it, whether he has understood the secret or not, will be “caught up together” when the ...	Scripture does not teach that some members of the Body will be left behind: "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51), and "the dead in Christ" and "we which are alive" are caught up "together" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Membership rests on the new birth (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:13), not on knowledge of the Mystery. His question is kept as a question about membership.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
22	21	Revision	III. The Body of Christ, (2) THE GROWTH OF THE BODY	*Galen (second century, B.C.)*	Galen (second century, A.D.)	Galen of Pergamum lived about A.D. 129–216.
23	21	Revision	III. The Body of Christ, (2) THE GROWTH OF THE BODY	*Aristotle (A.D. 356)*	Aristotle (fourth century, B.C.)	Aristotle lived 384–322 B.C.
24	22	Revision	III. The Body of Christ, (2) THE GROWTH OF THE BODY	*But the words of the Holy Spirit here are connected directly with spiritual truth. He goes on at once*	But the words God has given here are connected directly with spiritual truth. The Apostle goes on at once	See the reason given at No. 1.
25	24	Addition	III. The Body of Christ, (3) THE END OF THE BODY	—	The evidence of the manuscripts may now be stated more exactly. The oldest manuscripts, as first written, read hos, "who" (so the Sinaitic, the Ephraem, and very probably the Alexandrine); "which," ho, is the reading of the Claromontane manuscript as first written, and of the Latin versions; "God" ...	The evidence of the manuscripts can now be given more exactly than in 1896, and it is added so that the reader may weigh his argument.
26	29	Revision	IV. Other Passages Relating to the Secret, (5) 1 CORINTHIANS 2 AND 3	*when they "discern the Body" (1 Corinthians 11:29)*	when they do not *"discern the Body"* (1 Corinthians 11:29)	1 Cor. 11:29 speaks of "not discerning the Lord's body." The "not" has dropped out of the copy; his own words in Section V show his meaning.
27	31	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (1) WHY WAS THE SECRET KEPT?	*In Acts 3:18 the Holy Ghost, by Peter reminds*	In Acts 3:18 God, by Peter, reminds	See the reason given at No. 1.
28	32	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (1) WHY WAS THE SECRET KEPT?	*and not until Israel had definitely refused to repent - and thus, rejected the offer to send Jesus Christ from Heaven - not until then, was the secret of God revealed.*	and only as Israel refused to repent – and thus rejected the offer to send Jesus Christ from Heaven – was the secret of God made known in its fulness, through Paul.	Paul received his gospel "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12) during the Acts, years before Israel's last refusal at Rome (Acts 28:25-28); the renewed offer to Israel and the calling of the Church ran side by side. The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13). See the note on the Ecclesia in Section II. His point stands: the secret was not revealed in the Prophets, so Israel's responsibility was real.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
29	32	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (2) A KEY TO OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION	*while that book records the history of the transitional period between the rejection of Christ by Israel, the rejection of Israel by God, and closes with*	while that book records the history of the Church of God from Pentecost, side by side with the renewed offer of the King and the Kingdom to Israel, and Israel's rejection of it; and it closes with	The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13). See the note on the Ecclesia in Section II.
30	33	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (2) A KEY TO OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION	*From 2 Corinthians 12:1-7 it would appear that "the abundance of the revelations" was given "above fourteen years." This was written about A.D. 60, and fourteen years before would bring it to A.D. 46, which would synchronize with the important dispensational chapter, Acts 13 ... separated by the ...*	It seems impossible for us to fix the date of the revelation of the mystery to Paul, or to say in what part of the Acts it should be placed. He received his gospel "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11, 12); he was already speaking "the wisdom of God in a mystery" among the initiated ...	Dr. Bullinger dated the revelation from 2 Cor. 12:1-7, but nothing in that passage says that the vision concerned the Mystery: there Paul "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (12:4), whereas the Mystery he wrote down (Eph. 3:3). 2 Corinthians is also now dated about A.D. 55–57, not 60. His Acts 13 epoch is kept. "The Holy Spirit Himself (it is God Himself)" now reads "God Himself," as his own parenthesis says.
31	33	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (2) A KEY TO OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION	*records the transitional history between the rejection of the Kingdom, and the setting up of the Church.*	records the history of two things running side by side: the Kingdom, offered again to Israel and rejected; and the Church of God, which began at Pentecost, and grew while that offer was refused.	The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13). See the note on the Ecclesia in Section II. The renewed offer of the kingdom ran beside the Church through the Acts; it did not come before it.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
32	33	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (3) THE TRUE PLACE OF PENTECOST	*It also removes another popular tradition that the Church dates from Pentecost! It is only a traditional interpretation on the part of man, and is destitute of any authority unless it can be proved to be so from the Word of God. ... The fact is that then Joel 2 would have been fulfilled, for there ...*	It also sets in its true light the day of Pentecost. That the Church dates from Pentecost is not a tradition only; it is proved from the Word of God, for on that day "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). But Pentecost had another side, which tradition has ...	The Church of God began on the day of Pentecost: "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47); Saul "persecuted the church of God" before his calling (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13); and "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Cor. 12:13) was written while the Acts was still running. What God made known afterwards through Paul was the fulness of the secret concerning that Body (Eph. 3:3-6). His great point stands: the secret was not revealed in the Prophets. Peter said of the outpouring, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16); the wonders in heaven and "the great and notable day of the Lord" (2:20) did not then come.
33	34	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (3) THE TRUE PLACE OF PENTECOST	*Pentecost thus is shown to have nothing whatever to do with the Church; and all the modern talk about "Pentecostal blessings," and "Pentecostal enduement," etc., and the awful heresy of the "Pentecostal league" are all based on a Scripture which does not refer to the Church of God at all; and those ...*	Pentecost thus is shown to have two sides. To the nation it was the first-fruits of Joel's prophecy, and a pledge of the kingdom offered again. To those who believed, it was the beginning of the Church of God; for on that day the gift of holy spirit was poured out which every member of the Body ...	The Church of God began at Pentecost (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; 15:9; Gal. 1:13), and the gift poured out on that day is the gift of every believer (Acts 2:38, 39; Eph. 1:13), with its manifestation given "to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:7-11; 14). Dr. Bullinger's charge of "awful heresy" against the Pentecostal League (a holiness prayer union founded in 1891) is withdrawn. His point, that the Church's teaching concerning the gift is given in the Pauline Epistles, is kept. "The teaching of the Holy Ghost" and "the work and power of the Holy Spirit" now read "the gift of holy spirit and its working": see the first note of this kind.
34	34	Addition	V. Practical Conclusions, (4) RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD	—	And the Church is not without its own commission: God *"hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ"* (2 Corinthians 5:19, 20); and *"how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (Romans 10:14). The work the Lord gave the eleven, to make Him ...	The Epistles give the Church its own commission (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Rom. 10:14, 15). His point, that the Gospel commission was first given to the eleven and obeyed by them, is kept; the addition guards against reading him as though the Church had no commission to preach.

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35	35	Addition	V. Practical Conclusions, (4) RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD	—	(These verses, 16:9-20, are absent from the two oldest complete manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and some copies end at verse 8 or give a shorter ending; careful readers still differ as to whether Mark wrote them.)	The manuscript facts, as given in the standard critical editions, are added so that the reader may weigh his explanation. His reading of the passage stands.
36	35	Revision	V. Practical Conclusions, (4) RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD	*the commission in :18 was obeyed*	the commission in verses 15-18 was obeyed	The commission, with the signs, is Mark 16:15-18.
37	37	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*thou shalt call me Ishi* [*i.e., my Lord*]	thou shalt call me Ishi [i.e., my husband]	Ishi means "my husband"; Baali, "my master" or "my lord."
38	37	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	[*i.e., my Lord*]... *And I will betroth*	[i.e., my master]... *And I will betroth*	See the previous entry.
39	38	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*The promise of Christ to the Twelve Apostles has never been abrogated; and, we ask, what are we to do with it, if the Apostles form part of the Body of Christ? The Church is part of Christ, the Bridegroom; but the Apostles, by a comparison of Matthew 19:28 with Revelation 21:14, form part of the Bride.*	The promise of Christ to the Twelve Apostles has never been abrogated; it stands, though the Apostles were themselves of the Church of God from Pentecost. The Church is the Body of Christ; yet the Twelve, by a comparison of Matthew 19:28 with Revelation 21:14, have their thrones in the kingdom and ...	Scripture never says that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom." Its name in the Epistles is the Body of Christ, and in Eph. 5:28-32 Paul pictures that Body as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). What Scripture never does is give the Church the title "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," which belongs to the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10). The question is set out in full in the companion study The Bride of Christ. The Twelve were of the Church of God from Pentecost (Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 47); the promise of Matt. 19:28 is not withdrawn by that.
40	39	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*while the Twelve Apostles are thus separated from the Church,*	while the Twelve Apostles have this place in the kingdom,	See the previous entry.
41	39	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*as thus lose their own still "better" place as part of the Bridegroom.*	and thus lose sight of their own still "better" place as the Body of Christ.	Scripture never says that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom." Its name in the Epistles is the Body of Christ, and in Eph. 5:28-32 Paul pictures that Body as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). What Scripture never does is give the Church the title "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," which belongs to the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10). The question is set out in full in the companion study The Bride of Christ.

No.	Page	Type	Section	As first printed	As it now reads	Reason
42	39	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*the members of Christ's Body are not the Bride, but part of the Bridegroom Himself, whereas the elect Old Testament saints will form the Bride.*	the members of Christ's Body are never called the Bride: their name is the Body of Christ; whereas the elect Old Testament saints will have their place in the Bride.	Scripture never says that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom." Its name in the Epistles is the Body of Christ, and in Eph. 5:28-32 Paul pictures that Body as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). What Scripture never does is give the Church the title "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," which belongs to the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10). The question is set out in full in the companion study The Bride of Christ.
43	39	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*In neither case is it said that the Church is the wife, or that Christ is the husband; but that as Christ loves His Body (the Church), so husbands ought to love their bodies (their wives).*	It is not said that the Church is "the Bride." But the wife in the picture is the husband's own body; and the words "*members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*" (verse 30) are Adam's words of Eve (Genesis 2:23), who was at once his wife and taken from his own body. So the Church, ...	Eph. 5:22-33 sets Christ and the Church as the pattern of husband and wife, and verse 30 takes up Adam's words of Eve (Gen. 2:23): the Body is pictured as the wife. The title "the Bride" is never given to the Church. Scripture never says that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom." Its name in the Epistles is the Body of Christ, and in Eph. 5:28-32 Paul pictures that Body as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). What Scripture never does is give the Church the title "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," which belongs to the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10). The question is set out in full in the companion study The Bride of Christ.
44	39	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*What is clear and certain is that the Church is the Body of Christ Himself, and that the members of that Body being "in Christ" (mystical), are part of the bridegroom, and cannot possibly, therefore, be the Bride herself.*	What is clear and certain is that the Church is the Body of Christ Himself; that is its name; and though the Apostle pictures that Body as a wife loved by her husband, the title of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," is never given to it.	Scripture never says that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom." Its name in the Epistles is the Body of Christ, and in Eph. 5:28-32 Paul pictures that Body as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). What Scripture never does is give the Church the title "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," which belongs to the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10). The question is set out in full in the companion study The Bride of Christ.

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45	41	Revision	VI. The Body and the Bride	*a position of greater glory and honor, as part of the Bridegroom Himself.*	a position of greater glory and honor, as the Body of Christ, seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6).	Scripture never says that the Church is "part of the Bridegroom." Its name in the Epistles is the Body of Christ, and in Eph. 5:28-32 Paul pictures that Body as the wife, in the words Adam spoke of Eve (Gen. 2:23). What Scripture never does is give the Church the title "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," which belongs to the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9, 10). The question is set out in full in the companion study The Bride of Christ.
46	42	Addition	In Memoriam	—	The following notice of Dr. Bullinger's death was printed in Things to Come, the magazine in which these papers first appeared, in July, 1913.	The notice of Dr. Bullinger's death from Things to Come, July 1913, is added as a memorial; it is reproduced as printed.