

# THE “PLAN OF SALVATION” AS AN ACCORDION PHRASE

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Excerpted from “The True ‘Plan of Salvation’”

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The plan of salvation is misunderstood and confused in groups like the United Pentecostal Church because of the way the phrase, the “plan of salvation,” and accompanying language, is *inconsistently used* among its writers and preachers. As we mentioned in the section on Dispensationalism above and in the paper How We Read the Bible<sup>1</sup>, the *UPCI sees the plan of salvation as unfolding in a sequence of revelations (or “illuminations” as some would prefer) in the Church Age*. A person is thus saved by “walking in the light available,” i.e. obeying all that is required of them within a given dispensation. This salvation truth increases as “greater light” is given by God until it is completed at the Second Coming of Christ.

This interpretive grid predominated later Holiness teaching and early Pentecostalism. This is the system of interpretation which informed Frank J. Ewart when he formulated the basic Oneness doctrines:

How has the Pentecostal platform been formed as far? The first plank was “the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.” How did God nail down this plank? By giving the Scriptural experience, and this proved the glorious harbinger of greater light. The planks of “Divine healing,” “baptism by immersion,” and the “pre-millennial coming of the Lord,” were quickly added. God has graciously perpetuated his work by reconstructing the “Pentecostal platform.” This platform, in conformity with the name, is the platform given to Peter on the day of Pentecost, when he used the keys and opened the door into the present dispensation. This platform must be completed before Jesus comes. We find God working along the same lines as of old. “He taketh away the first

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.inchistalone.org/HowWeReadI.htm>

that he may establish the second,’<sup>2</sup>

Ewart explains the practical way this shedding of new light occurred:

He first gave the true light to a few, and then signally expressed His approval by a startling revival through the instrumentality of the new teaching.<sup>3</sup>

### **UPCI Modified Dispensationalism**

The most serious argument I have with the dispensational interpretation is that it confuses and often creates an unbiblical view of the Gospel. In the UPCI version of “modified” dispensationalism, *salvation can be different for different groups - depending on the era of the Church Age in which they lived.* This understanding requires Pentecostals to use the word “Gospel” with a number of unbiblical modifiers. The modifier “full” was commonly attached to “Gospel” by many early Pentecostals. The idea of the “full Gospel” is a Holiness idea which was passed on to Pentecostals and applied by Oneness Pentecostals to their view of Acts 2:38. (Cp. “Can the Gospel Be Fractured?”) As a result of this, UPCI writers speak of the “entire Gospel” as if, at one time, there was a less than entire Gospel, and “more entire” Gospel at another:

When Paul returned to Ephesus, he found several disciples who had not received the entire gospel.<sup>4</sup>

The Bible speaks precisely about the Gospel as the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-14). It also speaks broadly about the Gospel as all of the blessings of God which pertain to the Work of Christ in redemption. Thus, as fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace could be seen as part of the good news of Christ. We could say that the Second Coming of Christ is good news. Everything Christ does for us is good news in one sense. The problem develops when we begin to define the Gospel more as the blessing of Christ’s Work rather than as the Work of Christ itself. Then

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<sup>2</sup>Frank J. Ewart, “Defending Heresies,” *The Good Report*, 1912, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>“The Water Way,” *Century Series*, Word Aflame Adult Teacher, Vol. 7, (Hazelwood, MO: Pentecostal Publishing House, 2000), p. 73.

we begin to speak a strange or foreign language to the Bible. We begin to think of the Gospel as being applied or coming in stages. It alters our view of the Gospel into something that occurs through levels of revelation played out in stages of history.

All the aspects of our redemption were achieved for us by Christ through His death, resurrection and ascension (Hebrews 9:28). He is our salvation (Luke 2:30; Acts 4:12). This includes the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14), the imputation of Christ’s righteousness (Romans 4:24), the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 3:17), Adoption and Sonship (Romans 8:14; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:4), Victory (2 Cor. 2:14), spiritual gifts (Ephesians 1:3, 4:8), the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9), the ministry of the Church (2 Cor. 5:18), the Second Coming of Christ (Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28), Heaven (1 Peter 1:3,4) and eternal life (1 John 5:11). All of these are our’s through what Christ did (Ephesians 1:3). How do we obtain these things? We receive these things “in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:6; Galatians 3:26) We are placed “in Christ” through faith. (Ephesians 1:12,13). This faith consists of trusting in Him alone as the only Lord and Savior.

All of these are progressively understood and fulfilled over the course of time. This is where many people misunderstand the meaning of salvation and the Gospel. The fact that we are not fully sanctified or mature in the benefits of salvation does not mean that we need a new revelation or deeper truth than the biblical Gospel of Christ. It only means that we have not come to full understanding of the richness of what it means to be in Christ. It means that one has not fully grasped the depth of one’s justification. We have already been granted all the blessings of Christ, but we must grow into realizing them. Not through a new “part,” level or revelation of the Gospel. Rather, it comes through faith in the Gospel that we already know and believe.

If we admit such a thing as an “entire gospel,” then, there is implied a partial or incomplete gospel. From the beginning, the language and teaching of a “full” Gospel was rejected by many non-Pentecostal Christians:

Finally, Fundamentalists have generally been concerned about an attitude of spiritual superiority that characterizes Pentecostal teaching. There is almost an arrogance to the claim that Pentecostalism has the "full gospel." The implication is that non-Pentecostals have only a partial gospel. Such an idea is unscriptural. Paul told the Colossian believers, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power"

(Col. 2:10). The salvation of Christ through the gospel is perfect and complete. Christians should grow in grace (II Pet. 3:18), but this growth is the realizing of what Christ has already granted to the believer. As Paul wrote, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12).<sup>5</sup>

Operating from the assumption that more is discovered to be in the gospel, as God further reveals it, during the Church Age, the UPCI and other Oneness teachers claim they have the final or completing part of the plan of salvation:

Paul did not attack or detract from the message that Apollos had brought to Ephesus; he only amplified their understanding by revealing the complete plan of salvation. They needed to believe on Christ Jesus, be baptized in His name for the remission of sins, and receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

The result of the “all the light available” doctrine, the partial and entire or full gospel notion, and the need for a “complete” plan of salvation teaching, is that the UPCI has to use “plan of salvation” as an accordion phrase. It is necessary because the phrase has to adapt to the instances where the idea of the plan of salvation changes in the Church Age. It has to expand to embrace those who don’t know the Acts 2:38 message and it has to shrink when referring to only those who obey Acts 2:38. Thus, the Gospel is like an accordion, expanded in one instance and contracted in another.

## **Conflicted Theologies**

These ideas create an unconscious, inherited conflict in the theologies of those who follow them.<sup>7</sup> This conflict arises from a struggle between, on the one hand, the UPCI’s dispensational

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<sup>5</sup>Dividing Line: *Understanding and Applying Biblical Separation*  
Chapter 10, “Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism,” Online, Accessed 18 June 2001 At:  
[http://www.itib.org/articles/dividing\\_line\\_10-4.html#13](http://www.itib.org/articles/dividing_line_10-4.html#13)

<sup>6</sup>“The Water Way,” *Century Series*, Word Aflame Adult Teacher, Vol. 7, (Hazelwood, MO: Pentecostal Publishing House, 2000), p. 73.

<sup>7</sup>I say unconscious because it is never addressed as a topic in any of the writings of the UPCI. When something is not given intentional reflection it still can have powerful influence while operating below the “radar” of consciousness. They appear to look at the history of interpretation as irrelevant to

heritage, and on the other, their Reformed legacy, which comes to them through the Keswick and Baptist roots of Pentecostalism. One of the best examples of this can be found in the writings of David Bernard. At times he expands the phrase - like an accordion - to include a more extensive “five steps” or “five phases” of God’s plan:

Romans 8:28-30 describes five steps in God’s eternal plan of salvation for fallen mankind: (1) Foreknowledge. God foreknew man would sin and would need salvation. He also foreknew that when He provided salvation, some would accept it. (2) Predestination. Because God foresaw this response, He planned from the foundation of the world to provide salvation through Christ’s atoning sacrifice (I Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8). Those who choose God’s plan are predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Christ. The church is ordained to be successful, but each individual must choose whether to be part of this foreordained plan or not. (3) Calling. Acting upon His plan, God has extended a call to all mankind (“whosoever will”) to be part of it. [p. 333] Romans 8 speaks of an effectual calling; only those who respond to God’s universal call actually become part of the church (Greek *ekklesia*, literally meaning “the called out ones”). (4) Justification. God then justifies those who accept His call. He declares them to be righteous, which entitles them to all the benefits of salvation. (5) Glorification. The last step is glorification, which is the ultimate work of sanctification. Romans 8 speaks of it in the past tense because in God’s mind it is an absolutely certain, predestined event for His church. At that time we will receive glorified bodies with absolutely perfect and sinless natures. When God’s plan is complete, we will have

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them. They do not believe it is necessary for them as a group of Christians to account for their method of interpretation nor for historical validation for their claims. They believe their method of interpretation is simply the plain teaching of the Word of God. This does not account for how they differ from others who claim the very same thing but come up with very different doctrines. The rationale behind this view can be seen in a statement by David Bernard: “why is it ‘incumbent’ upon the UPCI to cite historical evidence for the continuity of the full salvation experience? We derive our teaching from Scripture, not from church history, and its validity is not dependent upon historical inquiry.” (“Response to Keith Tolbert’s Paper Attacking UPCI” by David K. Bernard) Granted, all the doctrines of the church must be derived from Scripture. But Bernard misses the more obvious issue. If a group tells the rest of the Church that it has missed the real full truth for 1800 years, then it is very much incumbent upon that group to not only show a very high degree of knowledge of church history and quality expertise in historical theology, but it must show in very precise terms just how it has found the truth that the rest of the Church has missed.

complete, eternal deliverance from all the power and effects of sin.<sup>8</sup>

These “phases” have a more Evangelical “ring” to them, as though borrowed from the book of a Wesleyan evangelical writer. At other times, Bernard retracts the “accordion” half-way to speak of *his* view of “justification by faith” as the plan of God throughout both testaments of the Bible.

Throughout history, God has always provided salvation to man by grace through faith based on Christ’s atoning death. God has dealt with man in various ways through the ages, but all His dealings rest upon this plan. Our age has seen the fullness of grace such that we can call it the age of grace (John 1:17), but salvation has always been by God’s grace, not man’s works. The principle of faith has also become so clear that we can call this the age of faith (Galatians 3:23- 5), but God has always required faith. Abraham (before the law) and David (under the law) were justified by faith (Romans 4:1-9). Even though some Jews thought their salvation rested in the works of the law, keeping the law was never of any value without faith (Romans 2:29; 4:11-16; 9:30-32). Of course, saving faith always includes obedience, for faith is only genuine when put in action.<sup>9</sup>

To support this startling statement, verse 6 appeals to the words of David in Psalm 32:1-2. David is an example of someone under the law. By using both Abraham and David as examples, chapter 4 establishes that God’s plan of salvation was justification by faith both before and during the law. It is hardly surprising, then, for it still to be His plan today.<sup>10</sup>

### **Redefinition of Justification**

These quotes convey a tone more broadly found among evangelicals. However, Bernard does not define justification the same way. The injection of obedience into Bernard’s definition of justification would not be acceptable to most evangelicals. Yet, his acknowledgment of the language of justification is commendable in light of the fact that many Oneness Pentecostal do not even use that biblical term.

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<sup>8</sup>David K. Bernard, *The New Birth*, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1984), p. 333-334.

<sup>9</sup>David. K. Bernard, *Essentials of the New Birth*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup>David K. Bernard, *The Message of Romans*, p. 106.

Regrettably, his definition of justification is a complete departure from Christian orthodoxy, the Reformation, and more seriously, the teaching of the New Testament.

More often, though, the plan of salvation in Bernard’s writings is contracted fully to denote only the specific elements of Acts 2:38:

Oneness Pentecostals base their doctrine of salvation on the Bible, which they regard as their sole authority in this matter. The major Oneness groups hold that repentance, water baptism in Jesus’ name, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit constitute “the plan of salvation” for New Testament believers. While there are differences between groups and even within groups on the proper theological characterization of these three steps of faith, there is agreement that God commands everyone to obey them.<sup>11</sup>

Only those who have followed the UPCI interpretation of Acts 2:38 are considered “true believers” by Bernard and most of the UPCI.

Of course, believing is a process that first begins with hearing of the Word of God and continues throughout a Christian’s walk with God. When the Bible uses the term “believer,” it is referring to someone who has experienced the full plan of salvation. (See Acts 2:38.) There are many instances where people have believed to some degree but have not believed to the extent of obeying God’s plan of salvation. As a result, they cannot be called true believers.<sup>12</sup>

### **Conflict Between ‘Restorationist’ and ‘Remnant’ Views of Christian History**

Not only is the phrase “plan of salvation” treated as an accordion phrase, but Bernard tends to mesh together two conflicted, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, interpretations of Christian History: the restorationist view, and the remnant view. The restorationist view sees the history of the church consisting of a steady decline into apostasy from the time of the Apostles until the Dark Ages.

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<sup>11</sup>David. K. Bernard, “The Whole Gospel: Oneness Pentecostal Perspectives on Christian Initiation,” Society for Pentecostal Studies, Collected Papers: “Teaching to Make Disciples,” Mar. 8-10, Tulsa, OK., p. 450.

<sup>12</sup>“The Water Way,” *Century Series*, Word Aflame Adult Teacher, Vol. 7, (Hazelwood, MO: Pentecostal Publishing House, 2000), p. 73. The author (names are not given) of this lesson must be quoting from David K. Bernard, *In Search of Holiness*, p. 240-241.

Then at the Reformation, God begins to restore the historical Church to its original condition over the following centuries. In each century God restores an original truth from the earliest Church which was lost in the spiritual decline of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, the truths of salvation are reconstituted in stages within the Church over long eras of time. According to the UPCI, it was not until the end-times at the turn of the 20th century that the time was right for God to completely restore all the Apostolic truth as was in the original.

On the other hand, the remnant view of Church history is that God has preserved a number, sometimes more, other times less, who retain the original apostolic truths and status of the Church. They have transmitted these truths and spirituality to each succeeded generation, although most generations have not received it well:

The Bible reveals only one plan of salvation for the entire New Testament church age, and the Bible has been available throughout church history. Historical accounts from the early post-Apostolic age have also been available to later generations, and they confirm the apostolic message of baptism in Jesus’ name and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with tongues. Furthermore, it appears that these doctrines have existed throughout church history.<sup>13</sup>

The last several quotes show the full “contraction” of the plan of salvation to the UPCI model. They seem driven by a dispensational and restorationist impulse. Instead of salvation coming to all eras of time through justification by faith, salvation in the UPCI model is obtained by obeying God’s “full” plan (dispensational). Only those who “obey God’s plan” (Acts 2:38) are the “true believers.” For Bernard, it is a plan that has been hidden from the church only to be restored by fresh discovery in the present era of Church history. This irregular and inconsistent use of the phrase “plan of salvation” has contributed to the confused way others in the UPCI tend to describe and explain it. For a more extensive treatment on David Bernard’s interpretation of the “plan of salvation,” see my separate article: “The ‘Plan of Salvation’ as an Accordion Phrase”<sup>14</sup>

I must repeat, it is not whether the “revelation” comes from Scripture that is at issue, but *how*

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<sup>13</sup>Dividing Line: Understanding and Applying Biblical Separation  
Chapter 10, “Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism,” Online, Accessed 18 June 2001 At:  
[http://www.itib.org/articles/dividing\\_line\\_10-4.html#13](http://www.itib.org/articles/dividing_line_10-4.html#13)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.inchristalone.org/AccordionPhrase.htm>

*the Scripture itself is interpreted as containing different messages or “revelations” for different dispensations - especially the dispensation of the Church itself. The story of the Bible is progressive – it moves toward Christ. The understanding about God’s plan also unfolds through history. Each phase of Old Testament history draws upon the other to expand the knowledge about what God is doing. Nevertheless, that is not the same as God revealing contrasting plans of salvation through history. The progressive nature of the Bible provides a graduated revelation of salvation by Christ and not the incremental appropriation of salvation by Humanity.*

### **The Status of the “Unborn”**

It is well known by students of early Oneness Pentecostal history that a struggle existed among New Birth advocates in defining the status of those who did not accept or follow the Acts 2:38 plan. Frank J. Ewart, Garfield T. Haywood, Andrew D. Urshan, et. al. provide evidence through their writings of conflicted statements as to the destination of those who fail to hear or follow the Oneness Pentecostal, New Birth message.

A seminal leader of the Oneness movement was **Garfield Thomas Haywood** (1880-1931). He believed that one was saved by faith in Christ alone until after his conversion to the Oneness doctrine by Glenn A. Cook.<sup>15</sup> He struggled with the implications of this New Issue. His students often

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<sup>15</sup>In *The Good Report*, March 1914, page 4, which was published in Los Angeles, CA by Frank Ewart and R. E. McAlister, Haywood wrote an article entitled: "The Simple Gospel." In it he said that "the gospel has been corrupted from its primitive simplicity," and then he quoted these verses: "But God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Repent ye and believe the gospel!" These verses are standard Baptist "believe only" texts. They were used by Durham, who was a Baptist. Durham had a direct effect on Haywood's Finished Work theology. The following is a telling paragraph in this article: "In face of these fundamental truths what more are we to do than to go forth and tell the story of Jesus how He came and dwelt among us, sharing our sorrows, our burdens, our cares, and last of all how the Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, and he bore them away to Calvary and suffered and died in our stead. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and chastisement that we should have received fell upon Him. Though He had done no violence, yet for our sake He suffered, and it pleased the Father to

asked him about the status of those who do not follow the Oneness view of salvation:

The one question that is so often asked is, ‘are all those people who thought they were born of the Spirit, and were not, lost?’ No, not by any means. They shall be given eternal life in the resurrection if they walked in all the light that was given them while they lived. God is a just Judge, and there is not unrighteousness in Him. But those who refuse to walk in the light shall be overtaken with darkness. (John 13:35, 36; see also John 15:22-24).<sup>16</sup>

This quotation shows Haywood’s assumption that some who are not born of the Spirit will yet be saved. He is speaking about salvation in the Church Age as dispensations-within-the-dispensation of the Church. This is a radical new step in the dispensational view. The Pentecostals adopted the “walking-in-all-the-light-available” idea to explain the relationship between non-Pentecostals, who were justified, and Pentecostals who had received the “full blessing of Pentecost,” – a subsequent Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking with tongues. The former were considered saved in the manner that all are saved in the Church dispensation - by faith in Christ. However, the latter had appropriated more of the blessing of their salvation.

### **Radicalized Dispensationalism**

Haywood radicalized this Pentecostal modified dispensationalism into progressive stages of salvation. Now there was not only more than one way to be saved in the history of the world (*a la* dispensationalism), but there were progressive stages of salvation possible since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There was a further qualification. Those who had not heard the Oneness message, e.g. Luther, Wesley, etc., were saved by the “light” they followed. But, those, being saved after Luther or Wesley’s manner, who later hear the Acts 2:38 message, can no longer be saved by the former way, but must go on into the newer light. If not, they will fall into darkness, as Haywood states.

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bruise Him. So that He could be just and yet free every man from under the sentence that was passed upon him through the fall of Adam. And now though our sins be as scarlet, as soon as we believe, they become as white as snow.” Haywood’s quote indicates that he did not yet look to Acts 2:38 or to the radical New Birth for salvation, but that he was still a "Finished Work" Pentecostal.

<sup>16</sup>G. T. Haywood, *The Birth of the Spirit in the Days of the Apostles*, (Indianapolis, IN: Christ Temple Book Store, n. d.), p. 12.

Since, in the Church Age the truth of salvation was progressive, only those who progressed with the truth were saved. Therefore, the message of the gospel was a moving target and changed as the newer revelations or “insights” were given from God. Under this view of salvation history, there is no one timeless Gospel given to all generations of Christians.

The eccentric nature of this teaching must be understood clearly. This is a unique alteration of dispensational and Pentecostal thought. It is constructed to account for the Oneness New Birth doctrine. The general Pentecostal view of dispensationalism did not deny the salvation of non-Pentecostals. It might have questioned their piety, spirituality, and understanding of Scripture, but, it did not outright reject their salvation. However, the Oneness position, while leaving room for “saints” of past time prior to the Oneness revelation, nevertheless, denies the salvation of those who do not accept their Acts 2:38 interpretation of salvation.

#### **A. D. Urshan’s Struggle to Define the ‘Saved’**

**Andrew David Urshan (1884-1967)** conscientiously wrestled with the same issue. In his book *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*,<sup>17</sup> he included a set of questions at the end addressing the

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<sup>17</sup>Evangelist Andrew D. Urshan, *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*, (Cochrane, WI, self-published, 1941), pp. 13-15. There are several books by Andrew Urshan on the New Birth. In 1921 he published *The Doctrine of the New Birth or The Perfect Way to Eternal Life*, (Cochrane, WI: Witness of God Publishers, 1921). The next was the first one above. That edition was reprinted in its original format, except, this time, with the questions being edited by Apostolic Book Publishers, Florissant, MO (with no date). It was later reformatted and republished by Apostolic Book Publishers, Portland, OR, with no copyright date again. The significance of this publication history is that there were editorial changes made from the original which were not made by the author. These changes effectively excised controversial statements by A. D. Urshan which would not be very popular with the leaders and members of the UPCI today. The comments of Urshan would cause the present and future generations to ask questions that present leaders would be hard pressed to answer. It also would cause those who read them to wonder why one of the earliest Oneness leaders, thinkers and writers would make such statements as contrary to the present UPCI position. What is disconcerting is that this redaction is another example in a pattern of doctrinal “corrections” made by unknown editors to the effect of making the past views of important Oneness writers line-up with the current UPCI theology. This should be very disconcerting to those within, as well as to those without the Oneness movement. The facts of history are truth. If one modifies the record of history to fit the current interpretations then truth is sacrificed, no matter how noble the motivation. This is more than a legal or ethical question. It

same basic issue with which Haywood wrestled. He presents the questions and then follows them with these answers:

**Q. What is the position of those who have believed in Christ but have never been immersed in Jesus name, and have not received the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues?**

A. These belong to the kingdom of heaven; these are the good seed in that kingdom; these can go on and be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus and Cornelius once were of that type of men, also the Ephesians that Paul baptized. See Acts 19:1-16.

**Q. Would these folks be lost if they had not gone on to the water and Spirit birth?**

A. No, for when they continued to walk in the light they had, they consequently entered into the deeper and higher divine experiences. 1 John 1:4-7. Also John 8:31-36.<sup>18</sup>

Remember, as we stated above, that the key distinction of dispensationalism is the two plans of God, one for Israel and one for the Church. Because of this, dispensationalists make a distinction between Jesus’ statements, “the kingdom of God,” and “the kingdom of heaven.” They asserted that one referred to Israel while the other referred to the Church. This was a significant error of biblical interpretation.<sup>19</sup> Urshan, working from this misunderstanding, modified the dispensational interpretation, saying that the two phrases apply to groups *within* the Church Age. One group - those of the “kingdom of heaven” - were those who believed in God or Christ, but did not follow the Oneness view of the New Birth. The second group was the “kingdom of God,” who followed Acts 2:38 and were born of water and Spirit. Thus, you can have two ways to be saved in the same Gospel dispensation:

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goes to the heart of the fundamental integrity of those called by God to guard the truth.

<sup>18</sup>Evangelist Andrew D. Urshan, *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*, (Cochrane, WI, self-published, 1941), p. 13.

<sup>19</sup>Dispensationalists did this without sound biblical exegesis. Both these phrases refer to the same thing. Matthew uses “kingdom of heaven” because, being Jewish and writing to a Jewish audience, he could not use the sacred name “God.” Therefore, he did as all Jewish teachers did: he substituted a euphemism for God which was the word “heaven.” Heaven is the place where God dwells. Thus, Matthew refers to God’s kingdom by speaking of the place where He dwells. This is a common Jewish practice of showing pious reverence for the name of God.

**Q. Can one be called a child of God before he is born of the Spirit?**

A. Yes, just as a baby is a child of the parents before birth when conceived, likewise those who have a real conversion or conception of the word in their life. Of these it is said, ‘Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His son into your heart, crying, Abba Father.’ This is the Holy Ghost language. See Gal. 4:6,7.<sup>20</sup>

Here the relationship between salvation and the New Birth are confused. Urshan believes that the New Birth can take place after “real conversion.” One can be converted, or have some “conception of the word in their life” without being born again. This seems to fly in the face of what Jesus taught. One could not even see the kingdom of God without being born again. New Birth is required for one to even receive the knowledge of the Gospel. Urshan appears to be making an attempt to explain his position by saying the levels of salvation are like the physical birth process. That is, one who has not followed Acts 2:38 but has had “a real conversion” is saved just as a child, conceived in the mother’s womb, is still a child. But, the child still needs to be born. Those who are saved by faith prior to the “revelation” of the Acts 2:38 message are children of God only if they go on to accept the Oneness Acts 2:38 message. If the childbirth analogy holds true, those who do not go on to follow the Acts 2:38 steps will be still-born. But, are they the true “Spirit born” children at all?

**Q. The folks that believe on Christ’s name and repent but are not baptized by water and the Spirit, where do they stand?**

A. They stand on the same ground that the saints of the Old Testament stood; they were saved by faith not receiving the promise of the Spirit. They are not the real Spirit born children of God and adopted children. See Heb. 11:30, and 1 Sam. 12:20-22, etc.<sup>21</sup>

This answer by Urshan confounds his answer given to the previous question above. Here he states that those in the Church Age who have not followed the Oneness interpretation of Acts 2:38 are saved like the Old Testament believers. But, then he states they are not, “real Spirit born children.” This view has people being saved without being the “real Spirit born children of God.” This is because he cannot harmonize his understanding of Acts 2:38 with the concept of salvation in the Old Testament.

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<sup>20</sup>Urshan, *Apostolic Faith* . . . p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>Urshan, *Apostolic Faith* . . . p. 14.

The Bible indicates that the Old Testament believers are saved by faith in the promise of the Savior to come (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:18-25). Those who believe after Christ’s coming are saved by faith that looks back to the work of Christ.

The thing that complicates this issue is that those who believe *after* Christ’s incarnation are baptized with the Spirit *after* his Ascension. This is a problematic reality for many Bible readers. They don’t see the Book of Acts as a transitional record - reporting how the Old Testament believers were incorporated into the New Testament Church. They interpret certain occurrences in Acts as universal obligations or privileges for all future Christians. The problem is cleared up when it is explained that those on the Day of Pentecost, in the upper room, were Old Testament believers. They needed to be baptized with the Spirit after believing, because they could not be so baptized with the Spirit until after Christ’s Ascension.

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:39, 39 NIV)

After Christ's ascension, all believers were baptized with the Spirit at the time of their faith in Christ, and not at a moment subsequent to it. Cornelius in Acts 10 is a perfect example of those who are baptized with the Spirit upon hearing and believing the Gospel.<sup>22</sup>

What is remarkable about Urshan’s statements is that he claims that those NOT born of the Spirit could still, 1) have a “real conversion”; 2) be a real “conception of the word”; 3) be a “child of God”; 4) belong to the “kingdom of heaven”; and 5) be “saved through faith.” Yet, those not born of the Spirit are like Old Testament saint. They are “saved by faith not receiving the promise of the Spirit.” Because of this, they are not “real Spirit born children of God and adopted children.” The contradictory statements in these few quotes illustrates the conflicted nature of the UPCI interpretation of Acts 2:38 with orthodox Christian teaching. Urshan further remarks:

**Q. Can one be saved and not be born again?**

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<sup>22</sup>One might ask “What about Acts 8 and Samaria?” I address this in my work on “What Does It Mean to be ‘Born Again’?”

A. The word “saved” conveys a greater meaning than generally known. It implies deliverance from sin and also God Himself coming into our life. See Isa. 12:1. Yes, some can be delivered from hell though not being born of God, just like the Old Testament saints were saved through faith though not being born again. The thief on the cross may represent this class of saved ones who had not knowledge of the doctrine of the full salvation neither had a chance to perform it, his recognition of Christ and faith in Him saved him.<sup>23</sup>

Again, Urshan applies what is *only* pertinent to the Old Testament believers – to those who are believers after Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension. He believes that those who are saved through trusting in the work of the Cross of Christ are saved only from hell, but are not necessarily born of God. The thief on the Cross is not an example of anyone today or those “who had not knowledge of the full salvation,” because he died in the period *before* the resurrection and ascension of Christ. He was an Old Testament believer. His problem was not a lack of full salvation. His problem was he died before the work of Christ was *finished*. Therefore, he was saved by trusting in the promise of what Christ *would* do. This cannot apply to anyone today.

This radical modification of dispensationalism was necessary for the Oneness writers because there was no other way to resolve the problem of the non-New Birth Christian. They had only two options: 1) the New Birth is the only way to be saved and all other Christians including Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Spurgeon, as well as Charles Parham, William Seymour, and William Durham are not saved, and literally are not going to Heaven but Hell; or 2) they could be saved by obeying differing degrees of revelation within the Church Age. Many early Oneness writers opted for the latter, even though it introduced a radical form of biblical interpretation to Christian history. Today, many Oneness teachers share this position, but there are significant numbers who say that there is only one way to be saved in the Church Age and that is by obeying Acts 2:38. Thus, the attempt to account for “non-Acts 2:38” or non New Birth Christians is resolved by excluding them from the Church altogether.

### **Frank J. Ewart**

Of the three men mentioned above, **Frank Ewart** (1875-1947) was the premier and most original thinker about these questions. I wish to give extra space to him in my paper “The Oneness-

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<sup>23</sup>Urshan, *Apostolic Faith* . . . p. 14.

New Birth “Revelation” of Frank Ewart.”<sup>24</sup> This study deals with the historical events which led to Ewart’s “revelation” and his personal explanations of his new understanding. In this paper I attempt to show how Ewart’s approach to Scripture led him to formulate a form of the Oneness-New Birth doctrine, and then later, to go beyond it to even more unorthodox doctrines. This paper is very crucial to understanding Oneness theology and the UPCI view of the plan of salvation.

### **Ewart’s Problem with Justification**

His fundamentally flawed view of human nature led Ewart to minimize justification by faith. For Ewart the New Birth is no mere “legal” transaction, wherein Mankind is restored from having broken God’s Law. “If it were merely a question of broken law, the New Birth would not be necessary, but now the fact of the nature faces man.”<sup>25</sup> He assumes, because Ephesians 2:3 calls sinful people “children of wrath,” that Paul implies all humans by nature are like Satan. This verse would best be understood to refer to the judgment of God upon humanity because of their disobedience, which incurs the wrath of God. Nevertheless, because he operates on this premise, it leads him into other inordinate or unorthodox views.

Adoption alone would not meet the issue for as this is purely legal, it does not effect the nature at all. Man must be born from above, he must have a new nature. Forgiveness of sins will not meet the issue. God might forgive a man for what he has done, but He cannot forgive him for what he is. Forgiveness deals only with the transgressions, but this is the cause of the transgressions. This devil nature fact; “this family of satan fact,’ demands more that forgiveness for what we have done. It is not what man has done that condemns him but what he is; what we do is the product or fruit of what we are.<sup>26</sup>

This completely agrees with E. W. Kenyon who stated: “Fallen man is not judged by God for what he DOES, but because of what he is.”<sup>27</sup> E. W. Kenyon’s doctrine of identification has a direct

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.inchristalone.org/RevelationFJE.htm>

<sup>25</sup> Frank J. Ewart, “The New Birth,” p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Dale H. Simmons, *E. W. Kenyon and the Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty*, (Lanham, Md: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997), p. 28.

and significant influence on Ewart’s pastor, William H. Durham, and Ewart himself. The Oneness Pentecostal doctrine of Acts 2:38 as the “plan of salvation” cannot be properly accounted for in history without acknowledging Kenyon’s contribution to it.

### **Influence of E. W. Kenyon**

Instead of drawing all his ideas from the inspired doctrines of the Apostle Paul, or the sound and tested works of the fathers of the Reformation, or even the careful approach to the New Birth found in the writings of John Wesley and George Whitefield, Ewart drinks from the more untested and inventive waters of his one of his contemporaries – E. W. Kenyon. A significant number of Ewart’s eccentric notions appear to come directly from Kenyon’s novel teaching. This teaching is connected to a whole system of doctrines based on the assumption that the sinner’s nature is Satanic.

The first man was a spirit in God’s class. When he committed High Treason he became a partaker of Satan’s nature. He was actually born again, and he became a new Satanic creation. Because man is a spirit being, it was his spirit that partook of Satan’s nature. Before the fall in the Garden, during his fellowship with God, his spirit ruled him, and his senses were subject to his spirit. But, when he sinned, and his spirit received the nature of the Adversary; it became subordinated to his senses.<sup>28</sup>

In this statement, Kenyon claims that humans experience a “new birth” in the Fall. This shadow “new birth” is the equivalent of being born again of God, only in this case, one is sired by Satan. He reproduces his nature in the sinner. Because we have be born again to a satanic nature, Kenyon reasons, we have to be born again by God to a Divine nature. Scripture states that a sinner needs New Birth because he is dead spiritually because of sin (Ephesians 2:1-4). The idea of a sinner being born of a satanic nature cannot be found in the Bible, much less the teaching that it is the reason a sinner needs New Birth.

Kenyon was strongly influenced by most of the Keswick leaders. He interacted extensively with their ideas. Historically, many of the leaders of the Keswick theology, associated with D. L. Moody at the turn of the 20th century, held the “dualistic” view of the Christian nature. Their position was

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<sup>28</sup>E. W. Kenyon, *The Hidden Man*, (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, Inc., 1998), p.7.

contrastive to the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, which taught that a second work of grace was to be sought by all Christians and that it would bring total eradication of the sin nature. Instead, most Keswick thinkers believed that, through an experience subsequent to justification, called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (non-tongues-speaking), a Christian would be enabled to live victoriously over the sin nature. The sinful, or fallen nature was not removed through receiving this Baptism, but it was suppressed by the power of the Spirit indwelling the believer. Kenyon rejected both the Holiness and Keswick views, as Joe McIntyre writes:

. . . “Dual nature” is the idea that the believer receives a new nature in salvation, but also maintains an “old nature” or “sin nature.”) Although a great admirer of Moody’s warriors (particularly A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, and many of the teachers from Keswick), Kenyon also felt the dual nature teaching that the majority of them (and the Brethren) embraced could not be validated from Scripture. Kenyon went on to describe the second work of grace teaching and the failure that even Wesley himself recorded in his journal. In the same periodical in which the earlier quote appeared, Kenyon also indicated his reasons for rejecting the dual nature teaching that was taught by many in the Keswick movement. Kenyon continued to voice his admiration for his mentors, both in the Holiness and Keswick movements, printing articles and quotes from them in his periodical *Reality*. He did, however, challenge their teachings and offer his own perspective. His life had been changed by what he discovered personally, and he passed it on to his students and those who heard him. The other teachings had failed to bring Kenyon lasting victory. For Kenyon, the finished work meant man was a new creation. Man only had one nature, not two natures. As a new creation the old nature had passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). Man had become – through the new birth – righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24). The believer didn’t need a second work of grace to eradicate indwelling sin (as the Holiness people taught). It was taken out at the new birth when man became, in reality, a new creature. The believer’s needs after conversion were to submit to the lordship of Christ, receive the Holy Spirit, and renew his mind. A genuine submission of all to Christ’s lordship and a humbling of the mind to be taught by the Holy Spirit were a more biblical approach to sanctification in Kenyon’s perspective.<sup>29</sup>

I submit, that, in theology, when one operates from a false assumption - especially relative to fallen human nature - one will not have a correct Biblical basis for defining other doctrines -- e.g. the New Birth. This was true for Kenyon, as well as for Frank Ewart, who adopted this portion of

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<sup>29</sup>Joe McIntyre, *E. W. Kenyon: The True Story*, (Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1997), p. 200.

Kenyon’s theology wholesale. Ewart taught that, when Paul says, “all things become new,” and Christians are “new creations,” he means that their nature is changed from satanic nature to divine nature.

The old nature is of the devil and if this old nature is really taken out they are then children of God; if it were not taken out they would still be the children of the devil.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Significance of Kenyon’s Doctrine of Identification**

When we look at two of Kenyon’s chief works, we see how he lays out his doctrine of the two sides or dimensions of the New Birth:

The teaching of Identification is the legal side of our Redemption. It unveils to us what God did in Christ for us, from the time He went to the Cross, until He sat down on the right hand of the Father. The vital side of Redemption is what the Holy Spirit, through the Word, is doing in us now.<sup>31</sup>

It is very important that the believer know the difference between the legal side of redemption and the vital. The legal is always in the past tense. It is what God has done for us in Christ. The legal begins on the cross and ends when Christ sat down at the Right Hand of the Father. The vital begins with the New Birth and ends when we leave our personal habitation, the body, and go to be with the Lord. The vital is what He is doing in me today, taking the things of Christ and building them into me.<sup>32</sup>

The adoption of Kenyon’s ideas into Ewart’s thought is significant for a couple of reasons. First, it dispels any notion that Ewart’s doctrine was a direct revelation from Scripture. Not that Ewart expressed that this part of his theology was direct revelation from Scripture, but because those who are influenced by Ewart often claim as much about his distinctives. Obviously, he was working with the text

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<sup>30</sup>Frank J. Ewart, “The New Birth,” *The Good Report*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Sept. 1, 1913, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>E. W. Kenyon, *Identification: Romance in Redemption*, (Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1998), p. 7.

<sup>32</sup>E. W. Kenyon, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, (Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1998), p. 179.

of Scripture throughout his arguments. But, he was doing it under the influence of Kenyon’s thought. He read Scripture and came to conclusions looking through the Bible-reading lens of Kenyon. Second, Kenyon’s distinction between legal and vital provided Ewart with the rationale for including the experience of being Baptized with the Spirit with the experiential and physically objective manifestation of tongues speech. By splitting the forensic side of salvation – justification by faith – from the experiential side – the Baptism of the Spirit (evidenced by the experience of speaking with tongues), Ewart put forward a need for a more “full salvation” than that presented by the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith. Beyond simple faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross (legal) a person needed to obtain and “experience” the indwelling work of the Spirit in the human heart (vital).

Here we see Ewart’s misunderstanding of the orthodox view of Justification by Faith and the adoption which takes place through it. He considers adoption as “purely legal.” This reductionism has serious consequences for his doctrine of salvation. The thrust of Ewart’s argument is that since sinners have a satanic nature, a purely legal declaration by God, e.g. that one is the child of God, is not sufficient because it does not change the sinner’s nature. That is why the New Birth, as Ewart understands it, is necessary for one to be truly saved. Otherwise, the proclamation by God that one is righteous or adopted is only a legal statement with no real change affected in the heart of the sinner. This is a failed understanding of the biblical doctrines of justification and adoption.

### **Justification and Adoption**

Ewart struggled with the forensic dimension of justification by faith. He could not accept the Reformation principle of *simul iustus et peccator* (same time just and sinner). Because he believed fallen humanity had a satanic nature, he could not conceive of a legal or imputed righteousness as sufficient salvation. Humanity’s nature was utterly corrupted and unless that nature was transformed by the Holy Spirit, a person could not be saved. Here Ewart walks into the monumental debate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformers. Roman Catholicism teaches that grace comes to the sinner by the infusion of supernatural substance into his soul. The magisterial Protestants rejected this and said that grace was not a substance but was God’s favor or graciousness merited by Christ’s work. For the Reformers, justification is a declaration by God and not the infusion of grace by the Holy Spirit in baptism. This infusion, the Catholic system maintains, takes place in the sacrament of water baptism. One is justified by cooperating with this infused grace (Holy Spirit) unto the performance of meritorious works. These works make one righteous, thus justification is being made righteous. However the Reformers argued that one is justified by the objective, imputed righteousness of Christ. This is, God declares the sinner righteous because she trusts in the finished work of Christ. In trusting Christ, the

righteousness of Christ is accounted to the sinner just as the sinner’s sins are accounted to Christ. The believer is not justified because they are made righteous through the process of cooperating with infused grace. They are declared or accounted righteous on the basis of the merits of Christ alone.

Roman Catholics rejected the idea of imputed righteousness and called it a “legal fiction.” This is, in essence, what Ewart did. Because he misunderstand the biblical doctrine of justification by faith, he borrowed the Roman Catholic model and modified it. He retained baptism as vital in the justification process, but inserted the Pentecostal Spirit-baptism in the place of Roman Catholic “infused” grace. Ewart was right in saying, “It is not what man has done that condemns him but what he is.” Nevertheless, he see justification as insufficient for salvation.

Ewart criticizes this idea (at the same time sinner and just) by saying that if a Christian had both the Divine nature and the satanic nature he would be a divided house. Hence, a Christian would be “heir of a home in heaven and in hell at once” and be forced to call God and Satan both father. Taking it a step further, he deplores the imputed righteousness view because he says that only death would then free the Christian from the satanic nature, making death, the tool of Satan, one’s savior. This is an old Holiness argument which was formed against those of Reformed or what would be Evangelical today.

At the end of this article, Ewart expresses a view that is the exact language and view of Kenyon. Notice how he uses the two terms “Legal” and “Vital” to describe the New Birth:

The New Birth is twofold, Legal and Vital. The legal part is done in the Courthouse of heaven, the vital in the body down here. The legal is the act of justifying or legally acquitting us, giving us a legal standing in the Commonwealth of Heaven. It is also the legal act of adopting us into the Family of God. This legal act is necessary to make sure our right to the vast inheritance that falls to each member of the family. The Vital part is the giving of Eternal life to us, the witness of the Spirit, the kiss of peace of the Father to His child.<sup>33</sup>

Ewart’s theology flows in the stream of the Roman Catholic thought – that justification is infused grace working to sanctify or *make* righteous. This position also agrees with the Pietist’s view that regeneration subsequent to justification is necessary for personal salvation. Ewart’s theology views justification by faith as only a part of our initial salvation. For him, one must receive the Pentecostal Baptism of the Spirit in order to be fully saved. For much more on Ewart’s view of the plan of salvation

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<sup>33</sup>Frank J. Ewart, “The New Birth,” p. 2.

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read “The Oneness-New Birth “Revelation” of Frank Ewart.”<sup>34</sup>

We will now go on to another important aspect of biblical interpretation relevant to Rev. Yohe’s statement. That subject is the proper use of typology in sound biblical interpretation.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.inchistalone.org/RevelationFJE.htm>