

## Charges Commonly Made Against Dispensationalism

- 1) It rejects the unity of the Bible.

### Reply

The introductory pages of the SRB contain a seven-fold argument that the Bible is one book.

- 2) It rejects the unity of God's people.

### Reply

The idea that Israel means Israel and the church means the church is not confined to dispensationalists or premillennialists. Charles Hodge, a postmillennial covenant theologian, insisted that Israel always means the nation Israel, and is not a synonym for the church. He further showed that the nation Israel is due a future conversion (cf. Rom. 11:26). Hodge included Israel in the church, but opposed Calvin's idea that Israel was to be interpreted in a spiritualized sense as embracing all the elect. Many modern scholars who are not dispensationalists have abandoned the equation of Israel and the Church, much as Hodge did a century ago.

We recognize that the people of God of all ages have much in common since all belong to the kingdom of God and therefore must enter it by the new birth. All therefore are children of God who are in His family by the new birth. Doubtless in the eternal state the saints of God of all ages have far more in common than they have in difference. All this does not destroy the Biblical distinctions between Israel and the church.

- 3) It teaches more than one way of salvation.

### Reply

At this point Scofield deserves criticism (see his note on John 1:18, p. 115, SRB). This evidently does not represent the general teaching of Scofield regarding salvation for on Rom. 1:16 he says: "Salvation is by grace through faith, is a free gift, and wholly without works . . . The divine order is: first salvation, then works . . ." (p. 112).

An isolated statement can make Allis, Berkhof, Hodge, or Calvin appear to teach two ways of salvation. Allis wrote: "The Law is a declaration of the will of God for man's salvation." Berkhof wrote: "Grace offers escape from the law only as a condition of salvation." And in another place he says, "From the law . . . both as a means of obtaining eternal life and as a condemning power believers are set free in Christ." Hodge wrote: "We are no longer bound to be free from all sin, and to render perfect obedience to the law, as the condition of salvation." Calvin speaks of the Lord promising eternal life to those who would keep his law. Buswell observes: "We who adhere to 'covenant theology' or 'reformed theology', we who strongly emphasize the unity of the covenant of grace, should approach our brethren who teach, 'dispensationally,' . . . with greater persuasiveness if we humbly remembered that this 'dispensational' idea of eternal life offered by means of legal obedience is inadvertently found in the writings of some of our greatest reformed theologians."