

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Otis Q. Sellers, Editor, June, 1936

VOL. I, NO. 1

[Archive Editor's Note: in the process of digitizing the printed pages, the original page numbers could not be maintained. To help compensate, a "Table of Contents" has been added to each Issue; these are also all summarized in a "MASTER TABLE OF CONTENTS", to facilitate any particular searches by the reader. An additional tool has been placed, also , a MASTER TOPICAL INDEX, which provides topics of each of the Volumes/Issues.. The reader should have ample resources to learn about any particular subject that Mr. Sellers wrote about. - - RDH/2004]

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TO THE READER

We take pleasure in submitting to your prayerful attention this, the first Issue of "The Word of Truth," which we purpose, God willing, to publish monthly. This periodical will be devoted to opening up the Word of God and through it we shall endeavor through the Lord's help to minister to the spiritual needs of many scattered believers. Will you pray that His blessing may attend our humble efforts to serve the

household of God. We are undertaking this work as a ministry unto the Lord in obedience, we believe, to *His* clear leading. Apart from the hearty sympathy and cooperation of all lovers of the "deep things of God" we cannot carry on. Any suggestions and criticisms will be welcomed and carefully considered.

WORD OF TRUTH

During the past year it has been the privilege of the writer to write and to put into print several pamphlets dealing with certain phases of the truth of the mystery, that glorious truth revealed *in* the last epistles written by the Apostle Paul. These pamphlets have been well received by hungry souls desiring to know more of these precious truths of which we have some small part *in* uncovering and recovering. Hundreds of letters have been received asking hundreds of questions on almost as many subjects. Many requests have been received for additional pamphlets. We appreciate these requests but we are not willing to rush *into* print a number of half-studied subjects just because there is a demand for them. However the heart of the writer goes out to the many believers, scattered here and there, who have some knowledge of these truths and are asking for further instruction and help. To fill this need *is* the *motive* behind this magazine.

This magazine is to be a personal message from the writer to the reader. We fully realize that we are lacking almost every qualification which is necessary to those who would write and send forth a periodical. We are forced to glory in our inabilities rather than *in* our abilities. From month to month we will set forth in these pages the results of our own studies in the Word of God. Our business is studying, teaching is a side line.

This little magazine will be sent free of charge to anyone, anywhere upon request. If after reading this number you desire to receive *it* regularly just send us word and your name will be placed on our regular readers list. You may send in the names of others also and we will send them a sample copy. Then if they desire to become regular readers they can send in their request for the magazine.

This magazine is to be supported by all to whom the truth of the rightly divided Word is precious. It will be issued monthly as the Lord supplies our needs for printing and mailing. We desire that the next issue shall be twelve pages, and the third issue sixteen pages

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

. The key that unlocks the treasures of God's Word and makes them the possession of the reader is a full recognition of the fact that there are different dispensations in the Scriptures. God's truth is always harmonious within the dispensations: Apart from a recognition of these dispensational differences, Scripture becomes contradictory and confusing. Just imagine the confusion of one who would try to obey the truth of these two verses. **Genesis 17:14, "The uncircumcised shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."** Then, **Galatians 6:2, "Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye**

be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

The superficial get around these verses by saying that one is Old Testament truth and the other is New Testament truth, but let us look at two verses within the limits of the New Testament. In **Matthew 5:5** we read, "**Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**" Then in **Colossians 3.2** we are told '**Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.**' Now just imagine the double mindedness of one who expects to inherit the earth and at the same time is attempting to get his mind off of things on the earth.

Or imagine the still greater confusion of a young man, desirous of marrying the girl of his choice, who reads in **1 Corinthians 7:27** the words of Paul by the Holy Spirit, "**Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife**"; And then goes on to read the words of the same apostle in **1 Timothy 5:14**, "**I will therefore that the younger women marry.**" Again, we repeat, we must distinguish the dispensations or the Scriptures will confuse and contradict.

To a certain extent, all believers are dispensationalists. They differ only in the extent to which they carry the truth of dispensational distinctions. Some repudiate and deny dispensational truth, nevertheless they are dispensationalists. Show them **Exodus 23:14**, "**Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.**" Ask them if they obey this divine commandment and the answer is in the negative. They will say it is a command to and for the Jews and is not one of God's requirements for believers today. Thus they are recognizing dispensational differences, they are dividing. the Word of Truth, they are dispensationalists, even though very weak ones. .

The experience of the writer is probably the experience of many believers. When we were first enlightened to see the fact of dispensational distinctions in the Word of God, and we accepted it as a spiritual principle, it was the beginning of a new and glorious day with our Bibles.

However, before going very far with dispensational truth we accepted several dispensational theories which led us into bondage. We speak from personal experience. The writer accepted, held and taught an incorrect and unscriptural definition of a dispensation as follows: "A dispensation is a period of time during which God is dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, in respect to the two questions of sin and man's responsibility. Each dispensation ends in judgment, marking man's utter failure."

Next we accepted and taught an unscriptural theory of seven dispensations which were named as follows: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace and Kingdom.

In our personal study of God's Word we discovered many dispensational facts but instead of following out those facts to see where they would lead us we wrested those facts and forced them to lead us somewhere within the limits of our preconceived idea of seven dispensations.

While studying Galatians we were led to see the truth of Galatians 3:19, that the law was added to the promise and that promise did not end at Sinai or with the bondage in Egypt. However, this truth contradicted our dispensational theory so we set aside our findings as we were wedded to the theory of seven dispensations.

Then while reading the Revised Version of Ephesians 3:9 we discovered that there is a "dispensation of the mystery" but we did not follow out this intimation of truth as we had no room for a "dispensation of the mystery" in our theory of seven dispensations.

Then there came the time when, through reading "The Silence of God" by Sir Robert Anderson, we were led to see the unique character of the Pentecostal dispensation, that dispensation which is covered by the Book of Acts. This truth helped us to win a doctrinal battle in a denominational church with certain advocates of faith healing and tongues. But we refused to follow this truth out to its logical conclusions and accept all its consequences. We saw at once that this truth if sincerely followed would lead us out of our pleasant denominational pastorate. So again we turned back to our theory of seven dispensations. If we had gone on then we would have soon arrived at a knowledge of the most glorious, precious, reviving, purifying, establishing portion of dispensational truth—the truth concerning "the dispensation of the mystery."

In **Ephesians 3:9 (R.V.)** Paul tells of his final commission which was "**To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages has been hid in God.**" But how much have you ever heard concerning a dispensation of the mystery." This most important dispensation of all is confused, covered up or eliminated by the theory of seven dispensations. Its very character would be destroyed by the definition of a dispensation commonly held today. The dispensation of the mystery is not, strictly speaking, a period of time; in it God is not dealing with men concerning sin and man's responsibility, God is dealing in Grace; God is not now testing men, He has judged man; the dispensation of the mystery will not end in judgment.

These are the facts that have forced us to repudiate both the definition of a dispensation and the theory of seven dispensations which are commonly held today.

Some will ask if we have anything better to offer. We believe we have and to the setting forth of these things that concern the dispensation, of the mystery the pages of this magazine will be devoted.

THE COMPLETED WORD

It is generally believed that the Gospel of John, the three epistles of John and the book of Revelation were written after A.D. 90. This would be some twenty or twenty-five years after the death of the Apostle Paul and his writing of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 2nd Timothy. It is also commonly believed that Revelation was the last book of the Bible to be written and that this book completed the Word of God and closed the canon of Scripture. These dates are based wholly upon tradition and they are not supported by any form of true evidence. The dates in all reference Bibles were placed there by men and they form no part of the inspired Word of God.

In **Colossians 1:25** the Apostle Paul makes an announcement concerning a definite ministry and a glorious privilege which by grace had been committed unto him. To him was given an administration or dispensation to complete the Word of God. For over 1500 years God had been giving His word in many parts through many writers. He had used Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Matthew Luke, John, Peter, Paul and many others to add parts to His marvelous revelation. But the time came when the Word of God is nearing completion and Paul announces that to him has been given the honor and privilege of writing the last words, of placing the capstone on the pyramid of divine truth, of completing the Word of God.

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of

the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church: whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given me for you to fulfill (complete or fill up) the word of God: even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." Col. 1:24-26.

Here we have something, definitely revealed in the Word which is flatly contradicted by that which is believed and taught by men. They teach that it was John who wrote God's final words and that it was John, and not Paul who brought the Word of God to its fullness or completion. If the dates given in most reference Bibles are correct, if the assumption of most Bible teachers is true, then Paul's claim that to him was given the dispensation of completing the Word of God is nothing more than an idle and empty boast.

At the present time a popular religious magazine is running an exposition of the book of Revelation under the title of "God's Last Word." Such a title misrepresents the book of Revelation and cannot be true unless Paul was mistaken and it was John's ministry, and not Paul's to complete the Word of God.

Let us suppose that the reader desires to purchase a Bible. Going to the bookstore you select one of suitable binding, paper and type. Upon arriving home you make a more careful examination of your purchase and discover that the Gospel of John, the epistles of John and the book of Revelation are missing.

Of course you would return such a Bible to the bookstore and even though the clerk insists that the cover is good, the type clear, and the paper durable you could not be persuaded to keep the Bible. You would insist that it was not complete. No Bible is complete if the writings of John are missing.

The translators are at some variance as to the rendering of Colossians 1:25. The Authorized version has the word "fulfill" and the Revised version gives the same rendering. There seems to have been some hesitation on the part of translators to render the Greek word "pleroosai" with the words "to complete" which is exactly what it does mean. This rendering would be directly contrary to the traditional dates for the writings of John. The same Greek word is found in Col 2:10 where it is rendered "complete." Scofield correctly changes the word "fulfill" to "complete" in the marginal notes of his reference Bible.

We grant that the question, of the commonly received dates for the writings of John, is deserving of some consideration. Without fear of successful contradiction we do not hesitate to state that there is not one iota of evidence, except tradition, to prove the late dates for John's Gospel or the three epistles that bear his name. All the information that we have as to the dates of these writings is contained in the writings themselves. There is no external evidence. The reader who possesses a Bible has all the evidence before him.

As to the date of the book of Revelation there is some little external evidence but it is equally divided between an earlier and a later date.

First of all, there is the familiar statement of Irenaeus that it, or its author (there is no word inserted to indicate whether Irenaeus is referring to the Revelation or John), was seen about the end of the reign of the Emperor Domitian. This is considered by many to be conclusive proof of the later date, about 96 A. D.

Then there is the Syriac version, existing copies of which are considered older than any existing Greek manuscript. The heading to the book of Revelation in this version

reads: "The Revelation which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero the Emperor." This would set the date between A. D. 54 and 68.

Thus we see that there are two lines of evidence, both very weak and unconvincing, one pointing to an early date and the other to a later date. However, we turn away from all such evidence for it is meaningless. It is given here only to show the reader the type of evidence upon which traditional dates are established and handed down by so called scholars to be received without question. We repudiate all such evidence and the conclusions based thereon and turn to the Word of God and declare, not for an early date, but for a time of writing which precedes the revelation of the mystery in Colossians and Ephesians. It was Paul's ministry to complete the Word of God and all of John's writings had to be finished before Paul was led to put into writing the truth of the mystery.

We do not and will not attempt to establish any teaching which we hold by an appeal to the date when a certain book was supposed to have been written. Any teaching which is based upon a date is a teaching based upon a foundation of sand. We are not dealing with dates but with times. Certain internal evidence in the New Testament books has led us to the following definite conclusions as to the times in which certain books were written.

We hold from the internal evidence, that Paul wrote 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Galatians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians and Romans before he went to Jerusalem and on to Rome as recorded in Acts, chapters 21 to 28. This was before the fall of Israel and before that very important pronouncement in Acts 28:28 which sent the salvation of God to the Gentiles and completely reversed the truths expressed in John 4:22 and Acts 13:26.

After Acts 28:28 Paul wrote seven epistles more, namely; 1 Timothy, Titus, Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Timothy. It is both our conviction and contention that when Paul wrote 2 Timothy he closed the canon of Scripture and filled up or completed the Word of God. Every other book had to be written before this time for nothing can be added to completion.

There are those who claim that Paul's statement, that he completed the Word of God, is not to be understood as meaning that he wrote the final books of the Bible. However if this is not the meaning then just what does his statement mean. How could Paul complete the Word of God and not write the final books of it. If John wrote the last book then he completed the Word of God and Paul's statement is false.

Then there are those who say that Paul could not have written his last epistles after John wrote Revelation because the Spirit speaking through John pronounces a curse upon any Who adds to God's Word. An examination of Revelation 22:18 will reveal that John is speaking of the "words of the prophecy of this book" and not to the Word of God as a whole.

One Bible teacher claims that 2 Peter was written after Paul's epistles, for Peter makes reference to "all his (Paul's) epistles" in 2 Peter 3:16. Thus, it is argued, Paul's epistles must all have been in writing at the time Peter wrote this. This argument is certainly unconvincing. You may speak of "all my pamphlets," This will mean all the pamphlets I have written up to the present time, Peter could use the phrase "all his epistles" and refer to any number of Paul's epistles, whether two, seven or thirteen had been written.

In conclusion we would impress upon the reader how blessed it is to see that the

canon of Scripture was settled and closed by an inspired Apostle and not by a fallible uninspired church council. This truth will permit many to breathe a sigh of spiritual relief. When the writer first learned how the canon of Scripture was settled, he was not satisfied that any council had the right to say what books were inspired and should form a part of the holy Scriptures. It is now the belief of this writer that when, in A. D. 397, the council of Carthage published the present list of New Testament books which were then recognized as genuine, they were not establishing or settling the canon of Scripture, but simply recognizing a canon already established or settled by an inspired Apostle.

Thus, we take our stand that it was the books of Philipians, Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Timothy that were the last written. These reveal the mystery and complete the Word of God.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

It should be the earnest desire of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. This was the desire and fervent prayer of Epaphras for the believers in Colosse, and as his desire is recorded for our learning it is evident that this is both the desire and will of God for every one of His own.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Col. 4:12.

No matter what may be the present state of our spiritual lives, no matter how far short we may come from standing perfect and complete in all the will of God, yet the very presence of the life of Christ within us, impels and constrains us, to be all that God desires us to be, to do all that God desires us to do and to know all that God desires us to know.

There is one truth in the New Testament which is of great importance for concerning this truth God has said that He desires to make it known to His saints.

Now it is the conviction of all who have come to know God through Jesus Christ, His Son, that God has only our best interests at heart, and since there is one thing concerning which He has specifically said that He desires to make it known to His saints, it must be something of exceeding importance which if we know, it will be for our highest good. In **Colossians 1:25-26** we read: **"Even THE MYSTERY 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 among the Gentiles; which is Christ in (among) you the hope of the glory."**

In this passage we are told that God (even God who loves us so much that He gave His Son to die for us) desires to make known to His saints, not only the mystery but also its riches and glory.

How shall we answer God? Shall we answer Him by either saying or showing that we are not interested? Shall we refuse Him the time, study and prayer which may be necessary for the comprehension of the riches of the glory of this mystery? Shall this desire of God for us fail to be realized in us?

Does it not seem, the very fact that we are told that there is something that God desires to make known to His saints, that this would make every believer stop, carefully

consider and be aroused to make the most painstaking inquiry into this truth that God now wills to make known to His own? And yet the overwhelming majority of believers are totally ignorant and care not for this glorious truth that God would have them to know.

Several times the heart of the writer has been made heavy as he has been told by earnest Christian workers that they were "so busy preaching the gospel and winning souls that they had no time to give to any consideration of the truth of the mystery. Think of it, no time to study and to know the very thing which God so earnestly desires to make known unto them.

True it is, that God desires that lost men shall be saved and we cannot be too earnest in telling the lost of God's desire for their salvation. However let us take care, that in our zeal of proclaiming the desire of God for others, that we do not ignore the fact that God has also expressed a desire for us.

Paul's Burden for the Colossian Saints

This great desire of God for His own is brought out very forcibly, in another way, in the first two chapters of Paul's letter to the Colossian saints.

In the salutation Paul addressed them as saints and faithful brethren in Christ. He said that He gave thanks and prayed for them always. He complimented and commended them for their faith in Christ Jesus and for their love for all the saints. He said that they had heard the word of the truth of the gospel, and this they received for he went on to say that it had produced fruit in their lives since the day that they heard it and knew the grace of God in truth (Col.1:3-6). He later said that though he was absent from them in the flesh he was present with them in spirit and rejoiced as he observed their order (solid front-a military term) and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ (Col. 2:15).

Here was truly a spiritual and grown assembly. It assuredly seems that any assembly of believers that had reached such a state could not be short in anything of a very important nature. If no other information was given we could easily conclude that here was perfection in Christian life, knowledge and conduct.

However, even though they had heard the gospel, had received it and it was producing fruit in their lives, even though they had knowledge of the grace of God in truth, yet there was something beyond all this. This they did not know and it was imperative that they should know it. Therefore the apostle said: **"For I would that ye knew the great conflict (Gk.-agona) I have for you "Col. 2:1.**

Not some in the assembly in Colosse but the whole assembly is his burden. And what is this great desire, what is the cause of this struggle? These questions are answered in the next passage, but the truth is somewhat obscured by the Authorized Version translation.

"That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance .of understanding, that THEY MAY KNOW THE MYSTERY OF GOD, even Christ." Col. 2:2 R. V.

That the importance of knowing the mystery may be fully impressed upon our minds, let us go over the truth of the first two chapters of Colossians again.

The believers, in Colosse, were saints and faithful brethren; they had faith in Christ Jesus; they were not sectarian, they had love for all the saints; they had a hope laid up for them in heaven, this was dominating their lives, their hearts were not set on earthly

things; they had heard the word .of the truth of the gospel; the gospel produced fruit in their lives from the day that they heard it; they knew the grace of God in truth, yet Paul was undergoing a stupendous struggle that they might come to the knowledge of the mystery.

Having seen that it is the desire of God to make known the mystery and that it was the struggle of the Apostle Paul that the saints should know it, it is indeed clear that the truth of the mystery is of the utmost spiritual importance, and that it is essential that we came to the knowledge of this great secret which had been hid but now is made manifest to the saints.

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ALL BIBLE TEACHERS AGREE

When the professor of biology is teaching the theory of evolution and comes to a point in the hypothesis for which proof is necessary but none available, he usually takes refuge behind the well worn canard that "all scientists are agreed." This makes an impression on the minds of immature students.

When the modernistic preacher is presenting Christ dishonoring philosophies and he arrives at some point which cannot be proven he defends his human reasoning by stating that "all scholars are agreed." This impresses the ignorant wisdom worshippers who sit in the pews.

When a fundamentalist preacher is contending for something that cannot be proven by the Word of God he often takes refuge behind the statement "all Bible teachers are agreed" or "it is the consensus of opinion among leading Bible teachers." This impresses most audiences and by the use of this artful dodge the speaker is usually able to establish his contention in the minds of the people.

We must remember that God has no "great Bible teachers," He has no leading Bible teachers. Some men have exalted themselves to these positions and a hero worshipping public has exalted others. However when we come to God's word all men are equal. God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

It is the firm belief of many that if God was to uncover truths, new to believers, which are hidden in His Word, that he would do it through the popular Bible teachers of today. They think they would read about it first in the pages of their favorite magazine.

God has not established the popular Bible teachers as a priestly class through whom He delivers his revelations to the common people. **1 Corinthians 1:27-29** is still true, **"But God hath chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence."**

FAITHFUL OR SUCCESSFUL

In all our witness for God, faithfulness is the one great requisite. It is not required of stewards that they be successful but it is required that they be faithful. We are not commissioned to accomplish certain things but we are commanded to be faithful in our testimony. God did not commission us to "save souls" but to "preach the Word." Saving souls is His prerogative, preaching the Word is our privilege. If men will not hear it, if they will not receive it, we are not told to seek for something else which they will hear and receive. Paul says "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" but nevertheless they are not told to find something they will endure but just continue to "preach the Word."

People today look for "results" and unless we are able to show some, or to present some report of our accomplishments our work is considered by all to be a failure. But we have nothing whatever to do with results. What we have to do with is our faithfulness. Results are God's responsibility but for our faithfulness, we are responsible.

Are we working for ourselves or for the Lord? If we are working for the Lord is it not for Him to know what His purposes are? Is it not for Him to decide what the results are to be?

THE EDITOR'S MINISTRY

****The Evanston class has been conducted every Monday for seventeen months. In connection with this class we have also, held a one-day Conference on the first Monday of each month. To these Conferences we have sought to bring together the brethren, who are ministering in many places for a day of fellowship in the truth of the Mystery. The regular class meetings will continue every Monday night through the summer. The monthly meetings will be resumed (D. V.) on the first Monday in October.

****The Rockford class has just completed its second year. Here we have a faithful band meeting every Tuesday night and they are hungry to know all that God would make known unto them. This class is the original unit of our present ministry and this among many other reasons makes it dear to the heart of the teacher.

****In our next issue we will have a correspondence page in which we will give extracts from letters written by us in answer to questions on Bible themes. The selections will be from such subjects as will be of general interest to all our readers. We will be happy to receive letters from any of our readers. Pray for us along the lines of Ephesians 6:19.

****The Grand Rapids testimony is a complete work. It is known as "The Gospel Fellowship." It has no membership and is composed of believers who come together to fellowship in the truth of God's Word. The believers who make up this fellowship have already been tested and they did not turn back in the day of battle. We have secured an excellent auditorium in the center of town and four services are conducted here each week.

****We now make our home in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where the greater part of our work is done. We leave Grand Rapids on Monday at noon and return on Wednesday afternoon. Our ministry requires us to travel 550 miles every week, preach the Word seven times. We are happy in our work and our ministry is indeed a pleasant one.

****The Radio broadcast is the latest addition to our ministry. We have started this as a step of faith. We are broadcasting as simple as possible, the truth which the Apostle Paul claims that he received direct from God, the dispensation of the mystery. This broadcast must be supported by those to whom this truth is precious. The station has a primary coverage of six million people. Here is a good piece of missionary work.

End, Vol. I, No. 1