

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q. SELLERS. Editor March – June, 1942

Volume VI, No. 6

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DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

Radio Message - Station WAIT, Chicago, March 9, 1943

The word *dispensation* is an eminently Scriptural term. Those who object to it must remember that they are objecting to something that has a positive place in the Word of God. It never appears in the creeds of the professing church, but it does appear in the Bible. There are those who object to it because they are ignorant of its meaning. When such objections are made it becomes our duty to instruct the objector in the great facts revealed in Scripture in regard to dispensational truth. When the objection is willful, made in spite of knowledge and light, it may become our duty to expose such objectors for their unfaithful handling of the Word of God.

In **Ephesians 3:2** we read:

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me you-ward."

One does not need to be a profound scholar in order. to learn from this **that there is such a thing as *the dispensation of the grace of God.*** This verse alone establishes the fact of dispensational truth. The man of faith who reads this passage will take God at His Word and act upon it by walking in the light of this truth.

Because it has been condemned by men whose only desire is to protect some established creed or cherished belief many professing Christians are very shy of dispensational truth. Yet if they realized it, they are really dispensationalists themselves.

Any person is a dispensationalist who trusts in the blood of Christ for his redemption rather than bringing an animal sacrifice. Anybody who says that certain practices were God's will at one time, but are not the will of God now, is a dispensationalist. Therefore, to a certain degree, every Christian is a dispensationalist.

Most Christians never read the Bible. But if they do read it through, they cannot fail to come to the conclusion that God's will is not the same for all times, therefore, it becomes our solemn and imperative duty to know God's will for the present time. They will also see that God's revealed will and purpose for one body of people may not be His will and purpose for another body of people.

Common sense tells us immediately that the two truths set forth in the following passages are contradictory:

"Every man child among you shall be circumcised." Gen. 17:10.

"If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Gal. 5:2.

Some, apart from any thought, would say at once that the first of these commandments was for the Jews, while the second is for the Gentiles. However, they fail to see that the man Abram, to whom the command of circumcision was given, was not a Jew in the sense of any meaning that can be attached to that term. He was the same kind of a man as the Galatians, to whom Paul spoke so strongly against this ancient rite.

The one who has made "all Scripture" his study, knows very well that all of God's commandments are not for us, and he also knows that God's commandments to one people may not be binding upon another people.

If I am to know and do the will of God, it becomes necessary for me to settle once and for all just who and what I am in the sight of God. And I must settle this matter by the word of God in such a way that it will leave no doubts to continually arise and harass me in my walk and service.

If, in the sight of God, my faith in the Lord Jesus has made me an Israelite, then certain things are binding upon me, certain commandments must be kept by me, and certain statements in the Word are true of me. Beyond all question, God has revealed His will for those who before Him are Israelites.

If, before God, my faith in the Lord Jesus has made me a member of that out-calling (church) of God which is so prominent in the Acts and in the epistles written during the Acts period, then God's will for me is clear and His commandments to me are very definite. For example, if I have been called into the Church of God as a Jew, I must remain one in all things, and if I have been called into it as a Gentile, then I must abide in that calling. See I Cor, 7:17 to 22.

If God has called me to be a Baptist, a Catholic or a Methodist, then my duty is exceedingly clear. I must do what Baptists are expected to do, or what the Catholic church expects of its members, or, just be a good Methodist.

However, if God has called me into "the Church which is His body" of which Jesus Christ is the Head, if I have answered that call by faith and now can truly confess that I am a member of that high calling, then God's will for me is clear and my course is plain. I will not need to be hopelessly confused when self-appointed lords over God's heritage try to place me under compulsion to obey some specific command that God gave to Israel or to the Church of God of the Acts period. I will be able to resist the attempt of all ecclesiastics who would try to have me walk according to the rules of their church. I can take my place as a member of the Church which is His body, and insist that my one duty is to walk worthily of the calling wherewith I am called.

When one seeks to learn his true position before God, out of all the positions revealed in the Word, he is a student of dispensational truth. Dispensational truth makes an honest and serious attempt to distinguish between positions that differ. We cannot be everything before God. Therefore, we must be one thing.

When one seeks to know God's will for the present time, and God's commandments for the present time, it makes one a student of dispensational truth. Such study is fundamental to any clear understanding of the whole of God's Word. Apart from it the Bible will always be a confused book, fined with contradictory statements and commands.

In **Acts 15** we have the record of certain men who came from Judea and worked havoc among the Gentile believers by insisting, **"Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."** When these men were challenged they could point to "chapter and verse" in support of their teaching. One can easily visualize the calm assurance of these Judaizing teachers as they unrolled the sacred scroll of the book of Genesis and pointed triumphantly to the place where it said, **"Every man child among you shall be circumcised."** They could also point to the example of Christ, who was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21), and use this to argue that all who follow Him should do likewise. And the only answer to them would have been to "rightly divide" the Word of Truth. Their arguments were true in regard to the Jews, but they had no bearing upon the Gentile believers who stood as a separate group before God.

If the words of Scripture are not divided in regard to the times in which they apply and to the people to whom they apply, that which was given to lead us into truth will only lead us into confusion. Every male child must be circumcised (Gen.17:14), but if he is circumcised then Christ will profit him nothing (Gal. 5:2). That which is declared to be profitable (Rom. 3:1-2), is also declared to be of no profit (Gal. 5:2). We must keep the feasts three times each year (Ex. 23:14), but we must not be subject to ordinances (Col. 2:20). We must sell what we have and give alms (Luke 12:33), but we must also provide for our own (I Tim. 5:8). We must beat our plowshares into swords and our pruning hooks into spears (Joel 3:10), at the same time we are beating our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks (Isa. 2:4). The widow will discover that she is advised to remain in that state (I Cor. 7:8), while she is also advised to marry (I Tim. 5:14). Thus it is that God's Word becomes contradictory and confusing when we fail to give due heed to the great principle set forth in **2 Timothy 2:15. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."**

The first duty of the child of God is to become familiar with the Word of God. The majority want interpretation and understanding, and despise the efforts by which familiarity is gained. The right to interpret any part of the Word belongs only to those who are familiar with the whole of it, and God's gift of understanding is only for those who have gained this familiarity. When one knows what God has said in His Word, when he has attained to some measure of familiarity with the whole of God's revelation, the matter of right division becomes exceedingly simple when the task is honestly and sincerely approached without bias and prejudice.

As the record of God's ways with the human race begins to unfold in the Word of God, it can be seen that God is dealing with mankind as a whole upon a certain basis. Man has an inherent knowledge of right and wrong. Therefore it was his duty to "fear God and work righteousness."

At the call of Abraham God began to deal with the descendants of Abraham in a special and peculiar way, while His basis of dealing with the rest of mankind remained unaltered and unchanged. The record of God's peculiar dealings with one branch of the human race, the people of Israel, is the theme that dominates the Word of God from Genesis 12 to Acts 28:28. Even God's dealings with the Gentiles in the Acts period was for the purpose of provoking Israel to jealousy and emulation.

At the close of the book of Acts we discover that "the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles." This provided a new basis in which God deals with the world in view of the fact that He has given His Son and this Son has died for mankind.

Today, we are forced to divide the human race into three groups:

Those who have never heard of Christ, but who do have the inherent knowledge of God and of right and wrong. They are responsible to act upon this light.

Those who have heard the gospel of Christ and have put their faith in Him. This group makes up the many who are called, and their hope is glorious.

Then we have a smaller group who have been both called and out-called. These now form the out-calling which is His body.

When these great truths are understood and believed, they will convince us of the utter futility of expecting men who insist that they are Baptists, Methodists or Presbyterians to walk as members of the Church which is His body. Even the *called* cannot be expected to walk as the *out-called*. The one who by faith knows that he is a member of the Church which is His body will have no difficulty in determining what God expects of him as the worthy walk of His calling. The conflict and confusion comes from trying to be one thing before God and another thing before men.

Our Lord said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," but most men believe they have discovered a way of doing this. They deceive themselves. He said, "No servant can serve two masters," but some are sure this can be done. They also deceive themselves. And no man can walk in harmony with the truth of two different churches. We can never expect to get the pure truth of the Church which is His body from those who serve other churches.

Once we determine from the Word the Church of which God has made us members, the matter of the will of God for us becomes exceedingly simple. Some men call this "extreme dispensationalism." We call it "going all the way with God."

TRUTH FROM THE SCRIPTURES

(Continued from Vol. VI, No. 5)

In this study I have truth to present which is of the greatest possible importance. It has been such a blessing to me that there is real joy in the prospect of passing it on to those to whom I minister by means of the printed page. I cannot help but long for a "gift of teaching" such as was possessed by some in the Acts period so that I might accurately, properly and fully set forth this great truth. But knowing there is no such thing as the gift of teaching today, I can only present these truths to the best of my ability and with the help of the Spirit.

Even if I do succeed in presenting these truths faithfully and accurately, I know that they will fall upon many minds for the first time. And since unaccustomed light presented to unprepared eyes is apt to blind at first, some are apt to see these truths in exaggerated and distorted forms, then reject their own exaggerations and distortions. Time alone will permit us to see truly, therefore, I would warn all against both the immediate acceptance or rejection of anything said in these studies.

Certain words will appear quite often in this article, and, while these words are familiar, they are apt to be misunderstood by the reader. It seems wise, therefore, to define several of these terms.

By the term *world* I do not mean either the land mass or the planet. This is the translation of the Greek word *kosmos* and it means an orderly working arrangement. If we take all the parts of an automobile engine and spread them out we will have gears, pistons, shafts, etc. We will not have an

engine. But if these are fitted together in an orderly arrangement that works we have an engine. Likewise, when in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and fitted them together in an orderly working arrangement, it produced an order, a system or a world. Everything in the heavens and earth were a part of this system or world.

When the reader comes upon the word *world* in these studies he must, think of the heavens and the earth forming a working order. If this seems too involved for the beginner, then let him think of *the creation*. That is, that which God created in the beginning.

The words *disruption* and *overthrow* used in these studies are identical in meaning and are used synonymously. Both of these refer to that cataclysm that took place after the creation of the heavens and the earth. This cataclysm brought about the condition described in Genesis 1:2. "The earth became waste and empty."

There was a *world* before the disruption. That *world* was destroyed by the disruption. It does not exist now, and it will never exist again. The present *world* is a corruption of that which God made when He restored the creation and placed Adam in the garden in Eden. The *world* is now what it is because of the entrance of sin and death. "The Kingdom cleans up the present world. In the new heavens and the new earth we have a new and different world.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH

In our previous study we considered the original creation as set forth in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." No description of this original creation can be found in the Word of God. We are not told what it was like, but of these things we can be sure. It was worthy of its Divine Creator, it was as perfect as its Maker, it reflected all His perfections, it was all that God desired it to be, and it satisfied God. This creation was not a step toward a goal. It was the goal itself. It was not a beginning. It was the fullness.

In Genesis 1:2 we have the description of a chaotic earth. This was not what God created in the beginning, it was not like its Maker it revealed none of its perfections, it did not satisfy God. That which delighted God and satisfied His heart is no longer seen once we leave the first verse of Genesis. The earth was a ruin and, darkness covered the face of the deep.

The Hebrew words used to describe this state are the words *tohu* and *bohu*. As stated in the previous study, if all occurrences of *tohu* and *bohu* are considered it will show that these words are related to severe judgment. Things that are *tohu* and *bohu* become that way as a result of judgment being visited upon them.

In our later studies we will consider the partial restoration that took place in the time when man was created. But that has been corrupted and even today it bears the marks of judgment. The present order is not well pleasing to God, and even the glories of the millennial Kingdom will not satisfy His heart. God will again find complete satisfaction only in that glorious period called "the new heaven and the new earth." This is the goal toward which He is ever moving. The glories of this time will outshine the Kingdom eon as the noon-day sun outshines the candle.

In **2 Peter 3:13** we read:

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The epistles of Peter were written to Israelites who believed in the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. Their immediate hope was in the millennial Kingdom, but if they were fully instructed in the truth of

God, they knew that this was not God's final goal for them. The Kingdom eon was only a corridor, a thousand years in length, leading to a greater and more blessed state, the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, Peter, emphatically stated that they were looking for a new heavens and new earth wherein righteousness would be dwelling. Righteousness will rule in the Kingdom eon, but it will make its home in the new heavens and the new earth.

The preaching and teaching of the past and present has had little to say about the new heavens and new earth. People have been taught to look for a better earth or a home in heaven. No expectation or concern has ever been created in their minds in regard to this glorious eon which is the very goal of God's plans and purposes. The thing that Peter looked for is not looked for by men of today.

In Revelation 21 we find a description of the new heavens and the new earth. And, while we are forced to use two names to describe this, nevertheless, we must not think of the heavens and earth being widely separated in that time. We must think of these two as being a unit, so much so that in that time he who lives upon the earth will also live in the heavens.

This chapter (Revelation 21) introduces a new eon. The Kingdom eon is past when this section opens. The former heavens and earth have passed away and a new heavens and earth come upon the scene. The holy city New Jerusalem, which had been in the heavens during the Kingdom eon, is seen coming down from God out of heaven, having been made ready for its new location; The dwelling place of God is then with mankind, and He will dwell with them. This places the heavens upon the earth. All things are made new. The goal of the universe has been reached.

Too much stress cannot be placed upon the importance of knowing, understanding and appreciating these great truths. The truth concerning the original creation and the truth concerning the final creation when taken together present to us the beginning and the end of the Word of God. If the first is not known, the beginning is not known, and if the second truth is unknown, then the end is unknown. If we have no knowledge of the beginning and end of God's revelation, we will flounder in helpless confusion when we try to understand that which lies between. A simple chart may be of help in visualizing these great truths:

The World That Was	*	The World That Is	*	The World That Shall
Original Heavens and	*	Present Heavens and	*	Be New Heavens and
Earth	*	Earth	*	Earth

The first upright line(*) marks the overthrow or the disruption of the original creation. The original creation is spoken of in 2 Peter 3:5 and the overthrow in 3:6. The present heavens and earth are mentioned in 2 Peter 3:7, and their end (marked by the second upright line) is referred to in the same passage. The new heavens and the new earth are spoken of. in 2 Peter 3:13. These facts lead us to a consideration of the most important truth in the Word of God.

In **1 Peter 1:19-20** we read:

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot Who verily was foreordained (foreknown) before the foundation (overthrow) of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

Here we learn that Jesus Christ was foreknown as a sacrificial lamb before the overthrow of the world. Before God overthrew or disrupted His original creation, the death of Christ was foreknown. It is His death that makes possible the new heavens and the new earth, and His death was essentially related to this great accomplishment. Therefore let us look at it in this light with the help of another chart.

The World That Was	*	The Death of Jesus	*	The World That Shall
Original Heavens and	*	Christ the Lamb of	*	Be New Heavens
<u>Earth</u>	*	<u>God</u>	*	<u>and Earth</u>

We must consider carefully the full significance of Peter's statement that *the* death of Christ as the Lamb of God was foreknown before the overthrow of the world. He did not say that the death of Christ was foreknown while the world was still in its original state; or, that it was foreknown before man was created, or before man had sinned. These statements would have been true, but this is not what he stated. Peter's statement links the death of Christ primarily to the great fact that the world was to be overthrown. His statement reveals that when the world was yet in its original state but its disruption was imminent, it was foreknown that Christ would die. Therefore, we may boldly declare that the first great reason for the death of Christ was to bring in again *a* world that would satisfy God. And God was willing that this should be, for this is the first great truth expressed in **John 3:16**:

"God so loved the world (kosmos) that He gave His only begotten Son."

And in the gift of that Son we now know that such plentiful provision was made that His death would not only bring in the eon of the new heavens and earth, it would guarantee a place in that eon to everyone who believes in Him.

"That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting (eonian) life."

These are the two separate but closely related truths set forth in John 3:16. The death of Christ makes possible that glorious state, and man's faith in that Christ will guarantee him a place in that state.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

For many centuries men have been fed upon a diet of preaching and teaching, which, because it always ministered to their pride, has been cheerfully received by them. They have been taught that they were of such infinite value in the sight of God, that He gave His Son to die for them. They have been led to believe that they were so exceedingly precious that God received full value in exchange when He gave His Son for their ransom. It is certainly true that the death of Christ was for the sins of men, but it was not because of man's value that God was moved to give His Son.

It is continually taught that the question of human sin and transgressions were primary considerations in the death of Christ. In fact, most people believe that these were the only considerations in His sacrifice. This idea has led to the frightful teaching that since the death of Christ was foreknown before man was ever created (and it was), therefore, it was foreknown that man would sin and a sacrifice or a redeemer was prepared in advance. If this is true then man could do nothing but sin, since his sin was foreknown, therefore, predetermined by God. If this is true then Adam was commanded not to do something that he could not but do, therefore he was punished for something he could not avoid. If this is justice, then our conceptions of justice are not the same as those held by God.

By the very nature of the case, things foreknown by God are predetermined by Him. He foreknew the death of Christ, therefore, He determined it (1 Peter 3:16, Acts 2:23). This *truth* is also found in Romans 8:28.

This will lead some to say that since God foreknows everything, everything is predetermined. True, if everything is foreknown by God, then everything is predetermined by Him. However, we must remember that God is not a man. He can choose to remember or to forget, while man cannot do either. What man tries to remember, he forgets, and what he tries to forget, he remembers. God can determine to know or not to know. He can determine to foreknow or not to foreknow. He is sovereign, and is not bound by the laws that we are.

There will be more on this in later studies, this being only an introductory word to set my readers thinking.

One of the most important truths we will ever learn is that the question of human sin and transgression were secondary in the sacrifice of Christ. And they are not only secondary in importance, but they are secondary in the sense that they were not even in view when that sacrifice was first known and determined upon.

It must be kept firmly in mind that God found perfect and complete satisfaction in His original creation, the original heavens and earth. But the disobedience of one Lucifer (Isa.14:12) caused God to determine to judge him and the original creation. Before this judgment (the overthrow of the world) it was foreknown that One would be faithful and obedient. This obedience would glorify God and result in bringing in a renewed heaven and earth in which God would again be perfectly and completely satisfied.

The first great purpose and desire of Christ in His death was to glorify God by complete and perfect obedience to the will of God. He accomplished this in His sacrifice, and this gave His death its infinite value. In fact, such value that a million charges equal to the sin of all men could be levied against it without exhausting its power.

Lucifer never had any reason for being disobedient. He sinned while in a perfect environment. Christ was sorely tempted while in this corrupt world, but was obedient to the extreme, even unto death. And it is in His death that we find our redemption.

The sacrifice of Christ was not predetermined to provide us with a redeemer. He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweetsmelling savor (Eph.5:2). His death would have been a fragrant odor to God, even if man had never appeared on the scene. When man did appear and sinned, the death of Christ was of such infinite value that man's sin could be taken care of by His sacrifice. It did not need to be enlarged. That sacrifice which glorified God was sufficient to pay for the sins of men.

The sacrifice of Christ has many aspects. We do wrong when we exalt and emphasize that aspect wherein He died for our sins to the exclusion of all others. It can only be our egoism that causes us to do this. That aspect of His death which was related to our sin and transgression may be the most important to us, but it is not the most important to God. We must learn to view this through the eyes of God. This can best be done by considering those great portrayals of His sacrifice as set forth in the opening chapters of Leviticus.

No one offering could properly portray all the varied aspects of the sacrifice of Christ, therefore, it is presented to us in five great offerings. These are called the burnt, meal, peace, sin and trespass offerings. If these are carefully studied, our conception of the death of Christ will be greatly enlarged.

The first offering was the burnt offering. It was - entirely Godward and nothing in it was for man. It pleased God and it glorified God, but it was not related to the sin of man. These things are also true of the next two offerings, the meal and peace offerings. When we come to the last two offerings, these were for man's benefit, and they were related to his sin and trespass. But these come last and not first.

When the new heavens and the new earth are a reality, the greatest and most important purpose in the death of Christ will have been realized.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." John 3:16.

"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved (delivered)."

"To wit, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19.

THE PRESENT HEAVENS AND EARTH

In 2 Peter 3:7 we read of "the heavens and the earth which are now." These form an orderly working arrangement and can be called a *world* or *system*. The student should fix the following terms firmly in his mind and his spiritual vocabulary. The heavens and earth, the world, the order, the creation. These all mean the same thing, even though they set forth different aspects. We can say:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning God created the world.

In the beginning God created the order.

In the beginning God created creation.

The original heavens and earth were a world, an order, a creation. The heavens and earth that are now are a world, an order, a creation. The new heavens and earth will be a world, an order, a creation.

The present heavens and earth are a creation, even though God used the material that was created in the beginning. We must not make the mistake of insisting that *creation* is to bring something into existence out of nothing. God created man, but He used material in doing it.

The original heavens and earth were a creation, the present heavens and earth are a creation even though God used the same material that made up the former creation, and the new heavens and earth will be a new creation, brought about by a complete transformation or metamorphosis of everything in the present heavens and earth. Even the heavenly Jerusalem of the Kingdom eon will have to be "made ready" before it can enter the new heavens and new earth.

The statement in **Genesis 1:2, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,"** marks the beginning of the work that brought in the present creation. The water was created in the beginning, but it overflowed the land mass.

The record beginning with Genesis 1:2 has the earth particularly in view in order to make it a habitation for man, The present creation was made to be man's training and developing ground.

It is to produce the inhabitants for the new heavens and the new earth. God's original creation had been inhabited by angelic and spirit beings, but God's final creation is to have for its inhabitants the highest of all beings, human beings. This provides a positive clue to the answer to the question, "Why was man created." Or to state differently, "What was God's purposes in the creation of man." It becomes evident that God will bring out of the human race a people for His new heavens and new earth.

GOD MADE MAN

The crowning act of the present creation was the forming of man. God created man with the intent that he should have dominion, power and authority over the earth and the things of the earth. He was instructed to be fruitful, to multiply, to replenish and subdue the earth (Gen.1:28). Then, it is revealed:

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed" Genesis 2:8.

This simple statement abounds in intimations of truth, and these should be followed out. The statement that a garden was planted in the east part of Eden, forces upon us the question, "What was Eden." It was not the garden, since the garden was planted in the east part of it.

In the original creation the land mass of the earth was a unit. That is, it was one great island. It was not broken up into continents and islands as it is today. The land mass was one, raising itself through the waters, as set forth in 2 Peter 3:5. This land mass in its entirety was Eden.

In the overthrow or disruption of the original creation the land was overflowed with water, causing the original order to be destroyed. Therefore, one of the first acts of God in the second creation was to say:

"Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear." Genesis 1:9.

Thus it was that Eden came forth again from under the waters that covered it. It came forth to be the training and proving ground for man.

In Ezekiel 28:13 God declares of "the king of Tyrus" (Satan) that he has "been in Eden the garden of God." This refers to the land of the original creation, which was called Eden and described as being the garden of God. We must not fail to make clear distinctions between "the garden planted in Eden" and "Eden the garden of God." In the original creation, the whole of Eden was a garden. In the second creation one small part in the east of Eden was a garden.

In America our word *garden* has to do primarily with a plot of ground where vegetables are raised. If we do use it in connection with flowers, we usually qualify it by speaking of a flower garden. The Hebrew word, translated *garden* in Genesis 2:8 and Ezekiel 28:13 means a *park*, yet the word *park* comes far short of expressing the truth. The one word that will express the full force of the truth is the Greek word *paradeisos*. This word occurs in the Septuagint Version twenty-eight times. In nine it represents the Hebrew word "Eden"; and in nineteen places the Hebrew word *garden*. From these facts we are able to develop the following truths.

In the original creation the whole land mass was called Eden, and all of Eden was a paradise, the very paradise of God.

In the second creation, after the land mass (Eden) was brought forth from under the waters, God planted a paradise in the east part of Eden (the land), and a river went out of Eden to water this paradise. The man God created was placed in this paradise and was commanded *to* dress and keep it. This means literally to *keep safe* or *preserve*. It was *to* this paradise that the Lord God came near the close of each day. Genesis 3:8.

To recapitulate, in the original creation the land mass was Eden, and the whole of Eden was a paradise. In the second creation the land mass is still Eden, but it was not a paradise. A paradise was planted in the east part of it, and there the man was placed. In the new earth (the third creation) the land will still be Eden, and every inch of it will be a paradise, even the dwelling place of God.

The word *paradise* appears just three times in the New Testament.

In Revelation 2:7 it is held forth as being the ultimate reward of the overcomers. This is the paradise of the new heavens and new earth.

In 2 Corinthians 12:3 Paul tells us that he was transported to (not caught up) the third heaven. Then he restates this same truth by saying that he was caught away to paradise. These positive statements locate paradise in the third heaven, thus identifying it with the new heavens and new earth. In Genesis, we see paradise lost, and in Revelation 21 we see paradise restored. These two great facts open and close the Word of God, therefore, all that comes between must be in some way related to them. Happy is the one who learns this. Why make the mistake of opening God's truth with the creation of man and ending it with the Kingdom?

In Luke 24:43 the Lord Jesus said to the dying malefactor, "Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The location of paradise can be determined from 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. Our Lord must have referred to that paradise. Therefore, the dying malefactor had the promise from His lips that he would be with Him in the new heavens and new earth. If God's promises are fulfilled to the letter, then this man's hope will be realized when paradise is restored.

THE TWO TREES

In the second creation the whole earth was fruitful. It brought forth grass, herb and fruit tree, all yielding fruit with their seed in them. But in the paradise that God planted in Eden was every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. It was a botanical and zoological paradise. It revealed to man what the whole earth had been in the original creation, it showed him what had satisfied and delighted God, and it gave him a pattern from which to work in performing his God-appointed task of replenishing and subduing the earth. The garden in Eden was a model of what God would have the whole of the earth be.

By the sovereignty of God, Adam was given the power of choice and determination. Only a sovereign being can grant freedom or withhold it. It is a mistake to think that a sovereign being never grants liberty and freedom to his subjects.

In the paradise that God planted in Eden were two important trees, **the tree of life** and **the tree of knowledge of good and evil**. These trees were so designated by God, and this made it so that to eat of one would bring the guarantee of life and the eating of the other brought the guarantee of the knowledge of good and evil. When man was placed in the garden he was told that he could freely eat of every tree in it. God was not deceiving him. Adam was given the freedom of choice and determination in regard to the eating of all these trees. However, he was specifically told:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17.

This brings us to consideration of two great questions: "What is life?" and "What is the knowledge of good and evil?"

WHAT IS LIFE?

A dictionary will show that the word *life* has at least a dozen distinct meanings in English. Any word as strong and important as this is bound to have many derived meanings and figurative uses. However, our study will concern the word in its primary and basic meaning. It is used in this manner in the following passages.

"In Him was life." John 1:4.

"For as the Father has life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26.

"Seeing He giveth to all life." Acts 17:25.

"He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12.

Therefore, our questions to be answered are, what is this thing that the Father has in Himself, that He gave to the Son and the Son has in Himself, that God gives to all, yet is possessed only by those who have the Son?

When the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, the man was not a living soul. Man had every feature that men possess today. He had brain, eyes, ears, nose, hands and feet. But the brain could not reason; the eyes could not see; the ears could not hear; the nose could not smell; the hands could not labor; the feet could not move. Man was lacking no organ, but he needed yet something from God to make him a living soul. This one thing was withheld when man was created, and then bestowed upon him in a distinct operation. God breathed into the man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It is called "the breath of life" here, nevertheless, the gift was life for that is the meaning the figure was intended to convey.

The first truth that we are able to establish concerning *life* is that it has its source in God, and it is bestowed upon all living souls. Life is God's greatest and most important gift to man, therefore it is our most precious possession. Even Christ would mean nothing to us if we did not have life. All the blessings of the present would be worthless, and no blessings could be enjoyed in the life to come without the possession of life. Therefore, no fact can be more important to us than that we now have life.

It is of major importance that all men should recognize and acknowledge just where this thing called life comes from. It comes *to* us with every breath we draw. But where does it come from? Is it in the air? Do we have it in ourselves? Can we be cut off from it? .

There is no source of life but God. Everybody who has life, the sinner as well as the saint, receives his life from God. This is not given to him once and for all, for no man has life in himself. He is dependent upon some outside source for the moment by moment impartation of it. It is not in the air, even though it comes to us as we breathe. And we can be cut off from it.

Life is something that continually flows from God to all living souls, and if it is cut off from us, or if we are cut off from it, then we cease to live. This is the testimony of Paul, given to the men on Mars' Hill:

"Seeing He giveth to all life, and breath; and all things. . . For in Him we live, and move and have our being." Acts 17:25-28.

In the book of Job, Elihu states:

"If He set his heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath: All flesh shall perish, and man shall turn again unto dust." Job 34:14-15.

We are forced to regard with some suspicion all statements made by Job's friends, yet I will challenge anyone to prove that Elihu's statement is not the truth. Man's continuance in life, his continuance among the living, is dependent upon God continuing to give him life.

At present you and I, in common with all living souls have life coming to us from God on every breath, and this is our utmost most precious possession. However, tragedy of tragedies; this life has already been forfeited and the time is coming when God will take it back to Himself. We cannot hold on to it one moment beyond the day that God will determine to withdraw it. This withdrawal of life is the judgment that comes upon all men because of the sin of Adam. This withdrawal of life is not a blessing. It is appointed unto man once to die. And since there have been only two exceptions to this rule among all mankind, you and I can hardly hope to be exempted from this divine judgment.

It is as if one had purchased an automobile on the installment plan. Failing to make the payments agreed upon, his creditors take the necessary legal steps to repossess the car. The court issues a judgment against the buyer and the car is forfeited. They may come after it in one day, one week or one month. This matters little as it has already been forfeited, but every day the man continues to use it is a day of grace in which the judgment is not executed. When the creditor does come after it the man cannot insist on having it one more day. He may want it, he may have need for it, but it has been forfeited because of his failure.

Even so it is of this life we now possess. It has been declared forfeit because of Adam's sin. And there is no fact of human experience more evident than that God does take this life back to Himself. No matter how much man may desire to live, no matter how much he may need to live, he cannot extend the possession of life one hour beyond that time when it is determined that it shall return to God who gave it.

Since this life, our most precious possession, has been forfeited, since we cannot retain it forever, then the most important consideration of all human existence is the need of getting another life to replace the one we now have. In other words, since this life must end we need to make sure that we will live again.

Shoes do not last forever, so when we see them wearing out we give definite thought to replacing them. Should we not also give thought to replacing this life which is not going to be with us forever. This life, the vital principle from God that makes us living souls, cannot be retained. It is lost to us because of Adam's sin. We cannot replace or restore it, then when this life returns to God who gave it the man will return to the soil never to come from it again. Man will have reached his complete and total end upon the day of his death. Yes, it is true, if the dead rise not even those who sleep in Christ have perished.

And it is just at this point that the religious world as a whole (Christendom included) has made its one great mistake -- a mistake that has made it impossible for them to ever understand the Word of God. The world believes that once men are born and exist as living souls they have life that they can never get rid of. This idea travels under the name of man's inherent or natural immortality. It is held that no one ever dies, since at death men will live on in bliss or misery, but they live. Thus the two great issues in the Word of God, those of life and death, have been changed to some imaginary issues about heaven and hell. Today, life has come to be the equivalent of heaven and death has come to mean hell. Thus, the wages of sin is death is supposed to mean you will live eternally in hell. And of course, if life can never be lost, there is no need to think about securing another to take its place.

As one who proclaims the Word it is my solemn duty to set forth that the life of every man has been forfeited because of Adam's sin. And it brings me the greatest possible joy to proclaim that One has undertaken to restore to every man that which was lost through Adam's transgression. Jesus Christ by His obedience even unto death has purchased and secured another life for every man. Everyone whose life is lost because of Adam's sin will have another life because of the righteousness of Christ. This is the truth expressed in the following passages:

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Romans 5:18.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:21-22.

We cannot back down a single inch here. Every man who has ever died in Adam will be made alive in Christ. The second "all" of 1 Cor. 15:22 is just as far reaching as the first *all*. Just as life has gone out from God to all men, even so it will be that life will go out from Christ to all men.

However, life in Christ does not mean forgiveness, redemption or salvation. Men have so long taken *life* to mean salvation that to them life in Christ can mean nothing but salvation in Christ. John 5:28-29 reveals that the time is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. This does not call them to salvation. It calls them to life, for they that hear shall live -- and all shall hear. They are not dead, since they "live."

But what or where is the source of their life? It is not in them since only God and Christ have life in themselves. They were alive at one time in God, but they died, and the life they had returned to God that gave it.

In resurrection men will be alive in Christ. This does not redeem them. All men live today in Gail; but all are not redeemed. And if to "live in God" does not signify redemption, then life in Christ does not signify it. And if God takes back the life He gave to men, even so can Christ take back the life He will be giving to men. When He does this, men will die the second death.

There was a tree in the garden of Eden, which, if man ate of its fruit, would guarantee the perpetuation of the life that God gave to man. It would mean that man and his descendants would live on until the time of that new heavens and new earth wherein no possibility of death could ever enter. But the man ate of the tree that would bring death, so he was thrust out of the garden lest he should eat of the tree of life and live for that glorious eon.

Since all life is of God it cannot be understood or defined. Its secret is locked up with God. But we can know much about it, and of these things that can be known we do well to take heed.

(To Be Continued - - Vol. VII, No. 1)

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****If the words SAMPLE Copy are stamped on the front page of this magazine, it means that your name is only on our sample list. If the one who receives this magazine will return the card enclosed with all sample copies, his name will be placed on our regular readers' list and he will receive all future issues of the magazine. Five hundred copies of this issue are being sent out as samples, and it is hoped that this will produce five hundred new readers.

****This issue of *The Word of Truth* goes forth quite late. Many friends have written to find out what has caused the delay. It can be stated in few words. The Editor is the cause of the delay. He is the bottleneck which delays production of the magazine. If some way could be found to eliminate him, each issue could go forth on time. But the shortage of manpower due to the war makes it difficult to find anyone who wants his job.

****A good friend of this witness, who out of his limited means has regularly and faithfully supported this testimony, recently informed me that since he did not want his support of the work to end when he died, he had written in his will that *The Word of Truth* should receive a certain amount. It was good that he mentioned this, for I fear that I never would have received the money. This magazine is not incorporated, therefore it has no legal existence or standing: Any bequests for this work should be made to Otis Q. Sellers { **ARCHIVER'S INSERT - - now, "The Word of Truth Ministry"**) If other friends of this witness should feel inclined to follow this brother's example, I assure them that their bequests will be faithfully and carefully used to disseminate the message of the Word of God. (**ARCHIVER'S INSERT – SUCH ASSURANCE IS STILL PROVIDED**)

****This issue of *The Word of Truth* goes to a host of new readers, and it brings me much joy to have them among that number to whom I minister the Word of God by means of the printed page. As these are new friends, there are some things about me that I feel they should know.

****Four times every week I minister the Word of God to *The Gospel Fellowship* in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where I make my home. Every other Monday I travel to Chicago, Illinois, where I conduct a Bible Class, then on Tuesday I go on to Rockford, Illinois, for a class. I prepare six radio messages every week; then in my spare time I write this magazine. About one hundred pieces of mail are received each week, and while many of these are book orders or requests for the magazine, quite a number of them are of such nature that they demand an answer. All this labor involves me in numerous administrative details. In addition to all this I turn out a pamphlet now and then, conduct extra classes, and go out for a week of Bible teaching ministry.

In all this work, I am doing the very things I like to do and want to do, so it is never burdensome. However, there is never enough time for all of it, so quite often correspondence that requires my personal attention is sadly neglected. This may cause some friends to feel that they are slighted, but I am sure that they will always be quite patient with me when they have an overall picture of my task.

So much time and effort has been given to the task of financing the radio ministry, that the magazine funds have been neglected. It will be greatly appreciated if all the friends of this witness will send in a gift. This will keep the witness from being troubled by a deficit through the summer months.

*****Thoughts at Random.* Mr. Gardiner received 25 shillings from New Zealand on January 12, 1943, but no information reached him concerning the sender. Will the friend who sent this correspond with him? . . . I spent a very enjoyable week in Philadelphia from May 3 to 10, ministering the Word of God . . . Have not been able to buy the addressing equipment due to war-time restrictions on sale of new ones and no satisfactory used machine has turned up . . . If present plans work out I will be able to make my broadcasts in person instead of by transcription. This will make the radio ministry more effective. . . I wonder if Mr. Gardiner ever regrets having undertaken to represent me in Britain? The book business has been good there, involving much work. Some people jump on his neck because of what I teach. I must say he has been a great help to me.

****My pamphlet, *The Plan of Salvation*, has been reprinted in New Zealand. It is identical in size and format with the one issued here. Four thousand copies are now available for distribution from Mr. William Barron, "Waiohika" Private Bag, Gisborne, New Zealand. This has been made possible through the graciousness of Mr. Barron personally.

****Two new pamphlets are advertised in the circular that accompanies this issue. *The Study of Human Destiny* is a reprint from Volume 4, Number 2, and it becomes the introduction to the series of booklets on man's nature and destiny. This article was used of the Lord to awaken many when it first appeared in the magazine. A flood of extra requests for that issue of the magazine used up all available copies. The contents of this pamphlet were given in four messages over Station WAIT from April 14 to 17, 1943.

****The pamphlet *Six Messages on the Resurrection of the Dead* is six radio messages that were given over the radio as the world celebrated what they call holy week, Good Friday and Easter. There was an immediate response to the truths presented. By this I do not mean that a lot of stony-ground hearers accepted the truth at once. I mean that many evidenced their interest by ordering these two pamphlets in order to study out the matter further.

****I am gratified because of the interest shown by the readers of *The Word of Truth* in our two missionaries, Miss Pearl Brookman and Miss Mary Morgan. At present they are experiencing great difficulties. The government has moved into their section to build a great bomber base, floods have caused great suffering, and Miss Morgan has taken ill and will need prolonged treatment. Pray for them. I rejoice that their work has appealed to so many.

****Those who have a vital interest and concern in proclaiming the truth that is in the Word of God, in the right division of that truth, and in making known the unique truth of the church which is His body, need to be brought together in some type of fellowship so that the collective force of our efforts can be applied unitedly in some one place or one direction. I have no desire to have any part in bringing into existence anything resembling a - church, a denomination, or an ecclesiastical organization. In Grand Rapids, Chicago and Rockford we have enjoyed good success in maintaining fellowships that are entirely separate from anything ecclesiastical. We have neither creed nor doctrinal statements which we are trying to force upon one another. We have no un scriptural officers bearing scriptural names, and no one is claiming to be an authority or to speak with authority within these groups. I am confident that something akin to these fellowships could be worked out on a national scale. There is work that needs to be done, and should be done by united effort, with each helper retaining and maintaining his complete individuality before God. Cities that are entirely untouched by this message could be made the object of these efforts, so that by every means available - radio, literature, newspaper publicity and Bible classes - they could be opened up for these truths. I will be glad to hear from my readers in regard to this, and will pass your ideas and suggestions on to those who are hoping to work out some basis of united action and fellowship.

THE RADIO MINISTRY

At the time this is written thirteen weeks of ministry have been completed on WAIT,. Chicago. There have been 78 broadcasts, one each week day from 10:15 a. m. to 10:30 a. m. It was evident at the end of the first week that this ministry was being used of the Lord.

All my ministry is performed with just one idea in mind – to be faithful in proclaiming the things I believe to be the truth. It is my determination to be faithful to this principle in the radio ministry, even if it brings an end to that testimony. I will not compromise or temporize, but will declare all that I believe to be the truth, cheerfully accepting all consequences that come from following such a course.

However, it is with joy that I can report that the ministry has been blessed and used of God beyond all my expectations. Of course, I do not measure success as many men do. By success I mean that in the past three months I have discovered hundreds of hungry souls who seemed to be ready and waiting for the truth I have to present. Here is the testimony of one:

"I heard your last three messages on the resurrection, and they were and are a world of comfort to me. My youngest son Paul was killed on a bombing mission in Australia. He was a first pilot on a four engine bomber. We received the dreadful message in a telegram last Christmas, and until I heard your blessed messages on the resurrection I felt lost and helpless. I am enclosing payment for twelve copies of your book, *The Resurrection of the Dead*. I want to pass these copies on to other bereaved mothers that they may have the blessing I have received."

Another listener writes:

"I want you to realize what a burden you have lifted from my mind through your clear and unbiased explanations of the Word of God. Where, in the past, I was bound by and blinded with ritualism and man made ordinances, I am now free to worship God and feed on His Word, as, it should be done, in reverence and simplicity. I pray God with all my heart that your ministry will give the peace and assurance to others that it has to me. Your exposition of Romans chapter six has given me a foundation that nothing could ever shake. I am happier than I have ever been in my life, since all my doubts and difficulties are being cleared away by real Bible, study."

I have many more such letters as these. New friends are being made every week. God is using the ministry to call many to faith in the things revealed in His Word. This ministry needs your spiritual and material support. It is not going to be easy for us to maintain it through the summer months. . The three groups to which I minister are giving sacrificially to the support of this ministry. But it is more than they can do alone so we especially need the help of others if the testimony is to continue.

OUR FRIENDS SAY

I am enjoying your magazine more and more as time goes by. The explanation of the various subjects are a delight and a blessing. The studies of the truth of the One Body and the right division of the Scripture are growing more fascinating every day. *Miss Matie Haendiges - New York.*

I would like for you to send 'me five copies of the last issue of "*The Word of Truth*". I think "Gathered to His People" is just fine. In *Studies in Ephesians* you have hit the nail right on the head. I'm simply rejoicing in it - for many times I have meditated upon this passage and asked questions about it, but this is the first time I have had a clear and concise interpretation of it. *Mrs. W. O. Smith- Virginia.*

At this Thanksgiving Season both Mrs. Standley and I wish to express to you our deep and sincere appreciation and thanks for every article written by you in all *The Word of Truth* magazines from Vol. I, No.1, of June, 1936, down to the present issue, and for every pamphlet of which you are the author, offered your readers during that period. Every one of these books and magazines were read carefully by me upon their receipt, two or three times, and often more. They were carefully preserved, and during the past summer the entire lot were reread in the light of the increased and accumulated enlightenment received. This was with much joy and spiritual profit, and we have reason to believe that God, in His grace and loving kindness, has caused us to be enlightened in His Word through your Ministry. *Mr. Joseph T. Standley - Alabama.*

May I express my grateful thanks for all the help you have given through the magazine, the very sight of which is a tonic. I find the message driving me more and more to the Word of God thereby deepening my assurance, giving me a firmer grasp of the glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ and His work. *Mr. J. H. Rawlings - England.*

As it has been such a long time since the much looked for magazine *The Word of Truth* came to hand, I have been wondering what is wrong. I do trust there is nothing hindering your great work for God and us His children, also that the much looked for and enjoyed magazine will soon be here once again. *Miss F. G. Durant- Argentine, South America.*

This is my first letter to you. I have often felt I should write to you and thank you for sending me your helpful magazine, *The Word of Truth*. I have received every copy so far, and each one has been a real joy to me. Your writings have helped me to a better understanding of God's Word, and have shown how to rightly divide it. *Miss I. Mason- New Zealand.*

End Vol. VI, No. 6

The End of Volume VI