

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q. SELLERS, Editor APRIL 1948

VOL. X, No. 3

Table of Contents

- * God's Declared Purposes
- * The Case of Judas Iscariot
- * The Conclusion of Mark's Gospel
- * The Editor to His Friends

GOD'S *DECLARED PURPOSES*

If a man desires to bring joy to the heart of God through his devotion to the truth; he must always keep in mind that God's purposes, sacred history, and divine truth are always in perfect agreement. Any belief held by man that does not agree with God's declared purposes and divinely inspired history is not the truth of God. On every hand we find men holding views which they insist were true in the thirty-three years covered by the book of Acts, yet these views are completely repugnant to the sacred history recorded in that book. They claim to base these ideas upon the epistles of Paul, which were written in that period; namely, Galatians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Corinthians and Romans. Nevertheless, their ideas are contradictory to the one book of history that covers those thirty-three years.

For example, many people believe that in these epistles the Apostle Paul reveals truths that Moses and the prophets knew nothing about, even those truths, which had been secrets hid in God. As proof of their position they point to the occurrences of the word *mystery* and *body* in these epistles. However, when we check this idea against the historical record of the book of Acts we find the Apostle declaring after he had written these epistles:

Having therefore obtained help of God. I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, SAYING NONE OTHER THINGS THAN THOSE WHICH THE PROPHETS AND MOSES DID SAY SHOULD COME: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. Acts 26:22-23.

Thus, when the idea is checked against sacred history it is found to be false. Therefore, it must be repudiated by all who desire only to walk in the truth.

Another example of this comes to mind. About a dozen years ago the writer was called upon to judge concerning the truth of an idea being presented by one teacher who held that a great change took place between Paul's writing of I Corinthians and his writing of II Corinthians. This teacher insisted that II Corinthians 5:1-8 set forth a radically different and new hope for the believer—a hope

quite different from that set forth in I Thessalonians 4:14-17 and I Corinthians 15:51-53; that, while the hope held forth in these earlier epistles was to be with the Lord by means of rapture or resurrection, a new hope is set forth in II Corinthians 5 which was that at death the believer would be "absent from the body and present with the Lord." He made much of the word *henceforth* in II Corinthians 5:16 as being indicative of a change in hope from that time on.

The idea was attractive, and many were believing it because that was the way they desired it to be. But the moment I checked the idea against sacred history it proved to be false. It can be demonstrated that II Corinthians was written at about the same time as the events recorded in Acts 20:1-5. If we travel through the four years of history recorded between Acts 20 and 28, we come to a point where Paul declares that it is for "the hope of Israel" that he is a prisoner in chains. Therefore, if the Apostle Paul were setting forth a new hope in II Corinthians 5, he himself was not a partaker of it four years later. Thus, when the idea is checked against divine history it is seen to be only an attractive human idea and not the truth of God. Such things as sacred history have been given to us as a divine safeguard for the truth. If its testimony is ignored, men can fasten almost any interpretation they desire upon a passage, but if the witness of sacred history is recognized it will help lead them to the truth.

Even so it is with the declared purposes of God. Any idea we hold as truth must be in complete harmony with His declarations concerning His purposes; otherwise, they must be identified with error and not with truth. When God's purposes are known and fully recognized, the truth will usually be simple and understandable. The constant debate concerning what God was doing in the Acts period could be settled at once if men would permit Him to speak from His Word and give testimony concerning His own works.

If a man is seen digging in the earth, an observer may decide he is looking for buried treasure, another may think he is a fisherman digging for bait, while a third may insist that he is planting a tree. Every man has a right to his own opinion; and yet no man has a right to form an opinion contrary to the facts, if it is generally known that the man digging is a builder and that it is his announced purpose to build a house on that location.

Even so it is with the operations of God. In regard to the work that God was doing in the Acts period, no man has a right to form an opinion concerning it contrary to God's declared purposes. Our interpretations of what God was doing must be in full harmony with His revelation concerning His purpose. Divine truth, divine purpose and divine history will always be in harmony.

The Divine Purposes

To avoid confusion it seems well to state that the word *purpose* is used as a noun in the title of this study. The dictionary defines *purpose* as "that which one sets before himself as an object to be attained; the end or aim to be kept in view in any plan, measure, exertion or operation." From this it can be seen that when we work toward a desired goal, we work with a purpose. A purpose fulfilled ceases to be a purpose. It is because of this truth that Ephesians 3:11 is such a poor translation. It speaks there of an "eternal purpose" as if God will always be purposing but will never reach His goal. Since God does reach His goal, since He does fulfill His purposes, there can be no "eternal purposes" with God. Ephesians 3:11 should read, "In accord with the purpose of the eons which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Bible as a whole deals with God's great purpose in the eons. It reveals to us that which God has set before Himself as an object to be attained, and even gives us a look into the future to show that He will accomplish His purpose. It tells us of the desired goal He has in view, no matter what may be His work or operation.

It has already been set forth in previous issues of this magazine that it is the purpose of God to bring in **a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:13)**. This is God's greatest purpose and His greatest promise. It is His all-embracing purpose. Every other purpose of God will be found to fit into this all-inclusive purpose. This is fully declared in **Ecclesiastes 3:14-15** which reads in a literal version:

I know that whatsoever God does it is in relationship to the Eon. Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it. God does it; therefore, let Him be feared. That which has been is now, and that which is to be has already been, and God earnestly seeks that which has been driven away. (For a fuller treatment of this see *The Word of Truth* Volume VII, Number 2).

Once a purpose has been determined upon, it can usually be best accomplished by a series of lesser purposes, all moving toward the greater goal. For example, a young man who has determined to be a physician must reach his goal through shorter goals. He will probably determine upon four years in pre-medical school, three years in medical school, one-year internship, and whatever else may be required for him to reach his ultimate goal.

Even so it is with God's great purpose to bring about a new heavens and a new earth. This goal is reached through the accomplishment of other purposes, all moving toward this great end. These are steps toward the goal; nevertheless, each one is complete in itself, and stands as a finished work. One such accomplishment as this is seen in God's purpose to provide a Redeemer, a ransom for men from sin and death. This declared goal of God was reached when Jesus Christ cried, "It is finished," and yielded up His spirit while hanging on the Cross. Following this, it was God's declared purpose to raise Him from the dead. This purpose reached its end three days and three nights later when God brought Him forth from the tomb. The accomplishment of His death and resurrection made possible the operations of God toward other goals or purposes, each one of which finds its place in the all-embracing purpose of God in the new heavens and new earth. Some of these purposes we will now consider. The reader is asked to note carefully that only "some" are being considered, and that the numbering is only for the purpose of presenting them consecutively in this study.

The First Purpose

On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, we witness the first operation of God in relationship to a declared purpose that we have every reason to believe was fully consummated in the thirty-three years of the Acts period. In other words, when we come to the end of Acts there has been no failure in any sense of the word. There is nothing lacking. God has done everything He set out to do. His immediate goal for that time has been reached, and everything is ready for the next step or goal. When God's purposes in the Acts period are understood, when it is seen that everything God set out to do has been accomplished, it causes every chapter of the book of Acts and every epistle written during that period to glow with a new glory. What God did in the Acts period stands as a finished purpose. It had to be done, but it will never need to be done again.

It was God's declared purpose, prophesied in the Old Testament and directly stated in the New, to save or bless a remnant in Israel. This was the declared purpose God was accomplishing in the Acts period, and it was completed in those thirty-three years

In the prophecy of Isaiah we read: **For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption (full end) decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption (consummation) even determined, in the midst of all the land. Isaiah 10:22-23.**

Inasmuch as this prophecy evidently applies to a time still future, one would hardly dare to apply it to the work of God in the Acts period, if it were not for the fact that the Spirit of God has made such an application in **Romans 9:27**. There, Paul declares concerning the work of God among Israel in the Acts period:

Easias (Isaiah) also crieth concerning Israel. Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea a remnant shall be saved (blessed).

To appreciate the truth of this passage we must realize that the word *save* here cannot be limited to forgiveness, but must be understood in its larger sense of bless. (See pamphlet on Acts 28:28-A *Dispensational Boundary Line* by Otis Q. Sellers, page36, for a note concerning the meaning of the word *save*).

From these words of Paul we know that it was NOT God's purpose toward Israel in the Acts period to bless the whole number of Israelites. Even though they were as numerous as the sand of the sea, only a remnant would be blessed. In the Old Testament it was God's declared purpose to bless all the seed of Abraham, and it is still His purpose to do this. But this is NOT what He was doing or seeking to do in the Acts period. It was His predetermined and declared purpose in that time to bless (or save) only a small number, that is, a remnant. Those blessed were a predetermined company. See Romans 11:7. God predetermined that a remnant should be blessed, and in the Acts period He predetermined the individuals who should be blessed in the remnant.

The full recognition of this great truth will prove it to be the key that unlocks many passages in the epistles written in the Acts period. Apart from this truth there can be no honest interpretation of Romans 9, 10, and 11, for it is in these chapters that we find Paul's defense of his teaching concerning this.

In Paul's day, even as today, many refused to believe that God's purposes in the Acts period had respect only to a portion and that it concerned only a remnant in Israel. They insisted that it would be unrighteous for God to limit Himself to blessing only a remnant. It appears that many sincere Israelites found justification for their non-acceptance of Christ because of the fact that God had promised in the Old Testament to bless all Israel, and it was evident that He was deliberately blessing only a portion in the Acts period. The Spirit of God leads Paul to fully meet these objections, and his defense will be found in chapters 9 to 11 of the Roman epistle. It will be enlightening for us to briefly consider these chapters at this point.

Inasmuch as the objectors' strongest argument was against the teaching that God had made choice of (elected) certain Israelites for blessing, Paul answers them by showing that this same thing had happened many times before. The truth of these instances, his critics readily acknowledged.

Paul begins in Romans 9:6 by showing that God had passed by Ishmael and made choice of Isaac saying, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Rom. 9:7). Furthermore, he declares that this is not the only example. He gives the example of Esau and Jacob. Before they were born, God made choice of Jacob and passed by Esau, saying to Rebecca, "The elder shall serve the younger." Romans 9:9-11.

These great instances of God making choice of one and passing by another were readily accepted as being truth by all in Israel. They believed God had done this very thing. Nevertheless, they were holding up their hands in horror at the very thought of God doing such a thing in the day in which they lived. They insisted that the act of God blessing an elect remnant and passing by the balance would be unrighteous upon His part. Nevertheless, they readily believed He had done this very thing in the early days of their history. Why then did they not charge God with unrighteousness when He chose Isaac and Jacob, and passed by Ishmael and Esau? Paul's argument is unanswerable.

Following this, Paul's arguments increase in strength. He recalls God's declaration to Moses that He will have mercy and compassion on whosoever He wills, then sets forth Pharaoh as an example that God hardens whomsoever He wills, a judgment Pharaoh fully deserved. Romans 9:15-18.

No Israelite in the Acts period had any real claim upon God's mercy. They had violated the terms of His covenant, and had rejected and crucified the Lord of glory. They were all vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Nevertheless, He had endured with much patience these vessels of wrath, while at the same time He was making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory. See Romans 9:22-23. Some of these vessels of mercy were Jews and some were Gentiles, a fact we will consider later. Romans 9:24.

Having cited these great Scriptural facts, Paul quotes two passages from Hosea which show that the believing remnant in Israel had become "His people," "His beloved," and "His sons." They had not been this before, but these words described them at the time Paul wrote Romans. The preaching of the crucified and risen Messiah, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Acts period had brought into prominence a remnant which before that time had not been distinguished in any way from the mass of the nation. This remnant became in Jehovah's eyes His people and His nation. Peter's words are in harmony with the words of Paul concerning this:

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. I Peter 2:9 Resultant Version.

The quotation is from Hosea are followed by the one from Isaiah which states God's purpose to bless a remnant (Rom.9:27). In Romans 11:5 Paul declares that there is already a remnant according to the election (choice) of grace; and in verse 7 he states emphatically that Israel as a whole had not obtained "that which he seeketh for; but the election (chosen) has obtained it and the rest were blinded."

From this we learn the exact nature of the work God was doing among Israel in the Acts period. He had a purpose concerning Israel but it concerned only a remnant at that time. He began on the day of Pentecost to produce this small company of people. This was a predetermined and prophesied purpose. Because of God's word to Israel in the covenants, this work had to be finished in a very short time. It would not have been righteous for God to have continued too long in the act of blessing a small chosen group and blinding the rest. This would have violated the covenants God made with Abraham. In view of this, Paul tells Israel in **Romans 9:28:**

For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

It was a right thing for God to bless a remnant and blind the mass of Israel since this remnant was to be used in connection with the blessing of all Israel, but it could not go on forever that way. God's purpose to bless a remnant was complete by the time the Acts period came to a close. God has NOT been working on this purpose for the 2000 years that has elapsed since the Acts period ended. He finished that work. He cut it short in righteousness. He made a short work upon the earth. It was completed in thirty-three years. This was the out-calling (church) He said He would build in Matthew 16 :18. Men murdered the greater part of this out-calling, but the powers of the state of death (gates of hell) shall never prevail against it. God will raise everyone of them from the dead, and they will fulfill the purpose for which they were called.

The Second Purpose

A careful reading of the early chapters of Acts will bring the conviction that from Acts 1 to Acts 10, God was dealing only with the people of Israel. The word *monopoly* can be written of this period

so far as Israel and the gospel are concerned. The benefits that resulted from the death and resurrection of Christ were offered only to Israel. At Acts 10 God began an operation among the Gentiles, and Israel no longer had a monopoly on the benefits of the gospel. Nevertheless, the gospel after Acts 10 was to the Jew first, so the word *priority* must be written over the period from Acts 10 to Acts 28. From Acts 10 onward God was doing a prophesied and predetermined work among the Gentiles. Thus, after Acts 10 we see two distinct purposes of God being worked out at the same time. He was working among Israel to produce the remnant and His efforts were being crowned with complete success. He was working among the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name, and He was accomplishing that which He set out to do. These two companies, Jewish vessels of mercy, and Gentile vessels of mercy are seen together in **Romans 9:24:**

Even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

This great purpose of God to pay a visit to the Gentiles and take out from among them a people for His name is set forth by James in **Acts 15:13, 14:**

And after they had held their peace James answered saying. Men and brethren hearken unto me: Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.

In these words we have an express declaration of God's purpose. He, beginning with the house of Cornelius, paid a visit to the Gentiles with the goal in view of taking out of them a people for His name. Since none of God's purposes ever fail or come short, the purpose He had in view when He visited the Gentiles did not fail or come short. These Gentiles are a special company of believers, brought into relationship with Israel, blessed with Israel's blessings, baptized by Israelites with a water baptism that identified them with the repentant believing ones in Israel. They were positively a part of that work set forth in Romans 9:23-30, that is, a part of that "short work" the Lord was to make upon the earth. This work among the Gentiles could not righteously continue too long. Since God had not cast aside His people, since He was still dealing with them on the basis of the covenants, it was contrary to these covenants that blessings should come to the Gentiles apart from the blessing of all Israel. Therefore, this work also had to be a short work. It was finished and cut short in righteousness. Thus, at the close of the Acts period we find that two of God's declared purposes have reached their goal. He has called and blessed a remnant in Israel, and He has taken from among the Gentiles a people for His name. Two great steps have been taken and will never need to be repeated.

The words of the prophets are in harmony with this, and many Scripture passages shed light upon it. This is especially true of the typical significance of the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost was in reality the feast of firstfruits. It was called Pentecost after the Greek numeral signifying *fifty*, as it came fifty days after the Passover. It is a picture of the firstfruit from the nation of Israel, the two wave loaves signifying the two companies of believers (Jews and Gentiles) that were blessed by God. This work of God, taking the firstfruits from Israel, began on the day of Pentecost and continued until the close of Acts. It began in respect to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. Firstfruit has to do with a portion and not with the full harvest. James declared of believing Israel:

Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. James 1:18.

It will greatly help our understanding of many passages in the early epistles if we realize that every Israelite who became a part of the remnant in the Acts period was chosen (elected) according to the foreknowledge of God. Peter declares this in his first epistle:

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. I Peter 1:2.

That there was to be a remnant was made known by God in the prophecy of Isaiah. Those who were to be a part of this remnant were chosen (elected) in the Acts period. Of this Paul emphatically states:

For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified them He also glorified. Romans 8:29.30.

In the Acts period it was God's purpose to accomplish a certain work in a short space. This space of time we now know to have been just thirty-three years. In view of this nothing could be left to human will or decision. God could not call and in grace permit men to refuse. Therefore, with a foreknowledge which could "mean nothing short of foredecision," God predetermined to call certain ones according to His purpose to bless a remnant. Nothing was permitted to stand in the way of or to hinder His work. Those whom He predetermined, He also called; those whom He called, He also justified; those whom He justified, He also glorified.

Before the Acts period God called, but permitted men to refuse to answer. See Proverbs 1:24. Since the Acts period closed, God calls men and they are free to refuse to respond. But this could not have been in the Acts period. That period was a strange administration in many ways, not just because in it God confirmed the Word with signs following. It was a period in which God was fulfilling prophecy and accomplishing certain purposes. It is tragic indeed that men have taken the specific truths that belong to the Acts period and have tried to apply them to the present dispensation of the grace of God. The result has been nothing but confusion.

The Third Purpose

The completion of God's purposes to bless a remnant of Israel and to take a people from the Gentiles for His name, made possible the beginning of operations on the next declared purpose. This purpose is set forth in **Acts 15:16**:

After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof. and I will set it up.

This according to prophecy was the next step in order. However, not one iota of work has been done on this purpose since the close. of the book of Acts. The unexpected and unpredicted happened at **Acts 28:28** when the Apostle Paul was moved by the Spirit of God to declare:

Be it known therefore unto you. that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles. and that they will hear it.

These words brought about a postponement of the divine program that was prophesied in the Old Testament, and brought in .a purpose and an administration the truth of which had been a secret hid in God. It is evident that it is God's purpose in the present administration to show grace to the world by means of the gospel. Unrestricted by covenants, unhindered by commitments made to Israel, unhampered by fixed times, God is offering to all men alike that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. Anyone can hear, anyone can receive, all who receive may carry it to others. God's great purpose in this present time is to show grace, to demonstrate beyond all question that He is a God of grace. This is the administration of the grace of God. Every blessing man now possesses finds its source and channel in the grace of God. Every act of His is an act of grace. If He cannot act in grace He will not act at all. The time will yet come when all men will know that for at least 1900 years God has acted only in grace toward men. He has during this time

shown them a love and favor they did not deserve. Nothing that man has done in those years has caused Him to change in the least His present method of dealing with the human race. The ungodly with their ungodly deeds, all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him, the blasphemy of men's lips, the murmurings of their hearts- none of these has caused him to cease to act graciously. He has not failed in His purpose to demonstrate that He is a God of grace! (See pamphlet on *The Dispensation of the Grace of God* by Otis Q. Sellers for a fuller treatment of this subject.)

As a result of the grace that God has shown in offering the boon of the gospel indiscriminately to all men, millions have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and have come into possession of redemption and forgiveness. This brings to them the guarantee of "eternal" or eonian life, that is, life in that glorious eon of the new heavens and new earth. Thus God's purpose to demonstrate His grace in this administration is related to His all inclusive purpose to bring in a new heavens and new earth. The new heavens and the new earth will be populated with redeemed and forgiven men, many of whom will be those brought to God in this dispensation of His grace.

Furthermore, out of the redeemed of the dispensation of grace, God is producing by means of an out-calling, a company of believers who in the coming eons will be peculiarly related to Christ as His complement. This company is "the church (outcalling) which is His body." The purpose of their peculiar blessing is set forth in **Ephesians 2:6-7**.

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places In Christ Jesus: that in the ages (eons) to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

How glorious is this truth- -- that a company of saints will memorialize and declare in the coming eons that grace which God manifested in the present dispensation. Here, the truth we speak about God's grace may be rejected. There, it will not, it cannot be denied. Now, the truth about grace is on the scaffold. Then, it will be nearest to the throne.

The Fourth Purpose

The purpose, which would normally have been third in order, becomes fourth because of the insertion into the prophetic program of the dispensation of the grace of God. We have noted already that this purpose is set forth in the words of James:

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof. and I will set it up. Acts 15:16.

To avoid confusion of thoughts, the reader must keep in mind that the entire dispensation of the grace of God comes in between His visit to the Gentiles and His return to build again the tabernacle of David. Furthermore, it must be carefully noted that the work God is doing among the Gentiles today is not the same as He was doing in the Acts period when He visited the Gentiles to take out from among them a people for His name. The Gentile believer of today is not of the same calling as those Gentiles who believed in the Acts period. No more so than the soldier of World War II is identical in calling with the soldier of World War I. There may be many points of comparison, but so long as there is one point of distinction, there is a difference.

The "return" referred to in Acts 15:16 has nothing to do with the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is in contrast with the word *visit*. He visited the Gentiles to do a work among them, and when the purpose of this visit was complete, he was to return to Israel for another definite work among them. Of course this would mean the temporary cessation of divine activity among the Gentiles, and that is exactly what it would have meant if God had continued in His prophesied purposes. However, the sending of the salvation of God to the Gentiles, in connection with a purpose that had been kept

secret, caused an activity of God among the Gentiles that was more intense than they had ever experienced before. This work of God continues unabated today, and it is best described as God seeking the lost. When the salvation of God is taken from the Gentiles and is restored to His people Israel, it will mean a cessation of God's work of seeking among the Gentiles, and an intense activity of God among Israel such as He never has done before. The results will be amazing, as we will consider later.

God's visit to the Gentiles in the Acts period was "in Spirit," not in person, and His return to Israel to rebuild David's tabernacle will be "in Spirit" and not in person. The rebuilding of the tabernacle of David takes place before the second coming of Christ. His return to the earth from heaven is a personal, visible return, even as His ascension into heaven was personal and visible. See Acts 1:11.

The words of Acts 15:16 give clear indication that "the tabernacle of David" must be something that existed before, and has fallen down. Otherwise it could not be "built again" and "set up." The further fact that He is to build again the RUINS proves this beyond question. This passage places before us the task of discovering from the Word of God the meaning of the term "tabernacle of David." There is no truth in the idea that this means the millennial kingdom. The kingdom that God will yet establish upon the earth has never existed before, it has never fallen down, no "ruins" of it are in existence. **We can eliminate at once the idea that the tabernacle of David is synonymous with the millennial kingdom.** What then does it mean?

The Greek word translated "tabernacle" here is the word *skene*. This word in a slightly different form appears in John 1:14 where it should read, "the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us." The same Greek word also occurs in Revelation 12:12 where it should read: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens and ye that tabernacle in them." In the first passage the word *tabernacle* has to do with people, as indicated by the pronoun *us*, and in the second passage it has to do with a realm, the heavens. If a man should say that he tabernacles in Los Angeles, it would mean that he lives out his life upon all that is included in the name, Los Angeles; its streets, buildings, hills, valleys, people, institutions, laws, and climate.

From the Greek word *skene* we get our word *scene*, and this is the best clue to the meaning of this word *tabernacle* in Acts 15:16. It is God's purpose to restore the Davidic scene - - that is, that state or scene set up by David in which Israel lived and played her part for so many years.

Students of the historical books of the Old Testament can quickly identify certain scenes in the history of Israel. There is the Egyptian scene, the Wilderness scene, the Joshuaic scene, the Judicial scene, the Saulitic scene, the Davidic scene, the divided kingdom scene, and the Babylonian captivity scene. It is hardly necessary to say that the Egyptian scene speaks of the situation, condition, and circumstances that prevailed while Israel was in bondage to Pharaoh. If almost 900 years later, instead of going into Babylonian captivity, Israel had gone into Egyptian captivity again, this would have been a restoration of the Egyptian scene. The reign of Saul was no part of the Davidic scene, but the reign of Solomon, David's son, was a very definite part of it. Solomon lived his life and reigned over Israel upon a scene that was established by God under David. The Davidic scene disappeared to such an extent when the kingdom was divided under Rehoboam, that it could no longer be called the Davidic scene. Some things belonging to the Davidic scene remained, but it was no longer the Davidic scene.

It was under King David that Israel first became a settled nation under a ruler raised up by God. The dynasty, or ruling house was established by God. They came into conflict with many nations but always emerged victorious without any great loss upon their part. They were a self-governing people, shaping their economy as led by God, denying altogether the influences of surrounding nations. They had a settled place of worship, and great plans for the building of a magnificent temple. The materials were being collected by David, and the temple was erected in the reign of

David's son, Solomon. Under David, Israel's political center was established in Jerusalem. Many nations at that time made contributions to Israel's wealth and glory. Of Solomon's kingdom, the queen of Sheba said:

And she said to the King. It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came and mine eyes had seen it: and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame, which I heard.

Happy are thy men happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee king to do judgment and justice.

And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

Truly, under the rule of David and Solomon, the blessing of God was upon Israel as at no other time. To restore that condition, that scene, that tabernacle, is the declared purpose of God. It appears that this will take place in about this manner: First, the salvation of God, which was sent to the Gentiles at Acts 28:28, will leave the Gentiles and return to Israel. The result of this will be such great blessing upon Israel that they will be restored to their own land as a settled nation. They will be an autonomous nation under judges raised up by God, shaping their economy as led by God. They will plan a temple, collect the materials and actually rebuild it on its ancient site. They will prosper greatly, for many nations will make contributions to Israel's wealth. Secondly, God does a peculiar spiritual work among the people of Israel, which will result in practically every Jew on earth acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Messiah. This spiritual work, however, is another declared purpose, which will next be considered.

Before completing our consideration of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, a word of admonition will not be amiss. God has said through James that He will rebuild the tabernacle of David. Just what this tabernacle is, is open to question. An interpretation has been set forth here that is believed to be the correct one. The idea declared here is that it will be the Davidic scene in general, but not in particular. The teaching here must not be pushed to an extreme which would make it speak of particular things rather than general truths. What the Lord will do for Israel in the future will cause many Israelites to exclaim, "This is just like it was in the days of David." While the Davidic throne cannot be restored until the coming of the Lord; nevertheless, apart from a king, Israel will enjoy wise rulers raised up by God. These will compare with the judges as recorded in Judges 2:16-18. That they will be restored is declared in Isaiah 1:26. Since it is well known that Israel's previous history is typical of her future history, we find the anti type of the judges appearing in a future day. In the past it was the judges; then Saul, the people's choice; then David as God's choice for the throne. In Israel's future history it will be wise judges raised up by God; then the Antichrist, the world's choice; then the One chosen by God to rule over this world, even the Lord Jesus.

Continued, Vol. X, No. 4

THE CASE OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

by Hershey Julien

(Editor's Note: During the past six months it has been my privilege to meet with Hershey Julien, Elroy Robinson, Herbert Baudistel, and John Ribbens, four mornings each week for definite study of the Word of God. Our fellowship together has been of great spiritual profit, especially so when we have dealt with the obscure and difficult things that every honest student knows abound in the sacred Scriptures. In the course of our studies in Acts, the age-old problem of Judas Iscariot came before us. In connection with this I declared it was my conviction that there are no problems or difficulties in the Bible, which will not clear up if free men with truth only as their goal will give sufficient study and consideration to them. We did this with the case of Judas Iscariot with the result that we feel no difficulties or problems remain. Mr. Julien, who gave much thought and study to the subject was asked to put our collective findings into written form so that many more might receive benefit from our joint labors. He has done this admirably well. I commend his study to every reader. O.Q.S.)

The manner of the death of Judas Iscariot has been a problem to readers of the Bible for centuries. This difficulty arises from an apparent contradiction between the account given by Matthew in his Gospel and the words of Luke in Acts 1. **Matthew says that Judas "went and hanged himself,"** while the writer of **Acts says of him, "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out:** Many and ingenious have been the attempts to reconcile these accounts. One of the more lurid explanations is included in the *Companion Bible* notes on Acts 1:18, where Dr. John Lightfoot is quoted as having said:

The devil, immediately after Judas cast back his money into the temple, caught him up into the air, strangled him, threw him headlong, and dashed him in pieces on the ground.

In the early part of the seventeenth century when Dr. Lightfoot lived, it may have been possible for men to accept as truth such flights of the imagination as this, but today the searcher for truth requires an explanation of the case of Judas which is more in harmony with the statements of Scripture. Man's imagination is unreliable, and it has no place in the interpretation of Scripture except where it fills in the evident links between two statements of fact. We must, therefore, rely wholly upon the Bible for the true solution to this apparent contradiction found in its pages. Let us first look at the record as set forth by Matthew:

Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, "The field of blood," unto this day. Matthew 27:3-8.

This is Matthew's simple, straightforward account of what took place. It presents no problems, as it is almost what one would expect should happen under such circumstances. The difficulty arises when we add to this account the testimony given in the Acts:

Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity: and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem: insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. Acts 1:18-19.

The commonest explanation of this difficulty is that when Judas hanged himself, the rope broke, causing him to fall with such force that he burst asunder in the midst so that his intestines spilled out. This seems almost to be a flippant explanation of an honest difficulty. It is open to serious question, and comes under the category of an explanation in desperation for want of a better one.

These passages present two great problems. The first, How did Judas die? The second is that of the field. Matthew reports that the chief priests bought a field with the thirty pieces of silver, which Judas returned to them, while Luke in Acts says that Judas bought a field with the reward of iniquity. Since both fields were given the name of "the field of blood," they appear to be the same field. This is not necessarily so; nevertheless, we are face to face with the problems: (1) Were there one or two fields purchased, (2) If one field, then who bought it, Judas or the chief priests, (3) Where did the money come from?

We shall approach these two problems, (1) Judas' death, and (2) the purchase of a field, seeking for the simplest solution agreeable to the Word of God. Our procedure for arriving at such a solution will be twofold: (1) to work out a more accurate translation of the Greek original in which Matthew and Acts were written, and (2) to reconstruct the story of Judas' last days on the basis of the facts given in the Bible.

The Translation

Matthew 27:3-8. The translation given in the King James Version is satisfactory, but can be improved by changing "he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple" to "tossing the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, he departed." It should be noted in verses 7 and 8 that the Greek word translated *field* three times is *agros*. This means simply a field, an open plot of ground. This field purchased by the chief priests came to be popularly called *agros haimatos*, "field of blood," or "bloody field," because it was well known that the chief priests had purchased it with the price of blood. Observe that the name it received was Greek.

Acts 1:18, 19. The King James Version of verse 18 is more of an accommodation than a translation. . The Greek expression rendered "falling headlong" seems to have been a puzzle to ancient as well as modern translators. The word translated "headlong", *prenes*, occurs only here in the New Testament. As used by secular Greek authors, it is apparent that it does mean "headlong," but it is usually found in connection with the verbs *falling and lying*: In the Greek of Acts 1:18 there is no word for "falling," and the insertion of it by the translators only increases the difficulty. The word so translated in the King James Version, *genomenos*, means *becoming* and does not mean *falling*. Since "becoming headlong" hardly makes sense, the translators resorted to "falling headlong." This is not true to the Greek. What, then, can *prenes* mean when it is used with the word *becoming*?

A clue is found in the Apocrypha, where the same word, with only a slight change in spelling, is used in the Greek (Septuagint) translation of *The Wisdom of Solomon* and is translated "swollen." The context speaks of the end of the ungodly, saying:

. . . the Lord will laugh them to scorn. And afterward they will become a dishonored corpse. and be insulted among the dead forever: He will burst them open. dumb and SWOLLEN. The Wisdom of Solomon 4:18.19.

While we do not consider the Apocrypha to be teaching *from God*, nevertheless, as literature it is of value in discovering what certain Greek words meant in the times before and after the advent of Christ. Some may feel that *headlong* and *swollen* are so different in meaning that both meanings could not be attached to the same Greek word. But they are not as diverse as they at first appear. A

man lying headlong is one lying prone or extended. From extended may be derived the meaning *stretched, or swollen*.

This translation in Acts 1:18 makes sense and is true to the Greek. The verse then reads in part: "and becoming swollen, he burst asunder in the midst." Among modern translators both Moffatt and Goodspeed have translated *prenes* in this sense. Moffatt renders it, "but swelling up he burst in two" and Goodspeed, "his body swelled up and burst open in the middle."

References:

Jamei Moffatt, *The New Testament, A New Translation* (New York: Harper, 1922), p. 290.

Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The New Testament, An American Translation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. Ill. See also the article on Acts 1:18 by the same author in his *Problems of New Testament Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939, p. 122f.

We need also to consider the "field" mentioned in both verses 18 and 19. As pointed *out* above, this field is not necessarily to be identified with the one mentioned in Matthew 27:7,8, merely because both were called "bloody." The field bought by the priests and the field bought by Judas could not be the same. Even different words are used in the Greek to describe them. The word for "field" in Acts 1:18, 19 is *chorion*. It means a place, estate, property, with improvements implied. Judas did not buy an open field, but an estate.

The Story of Judas' Suicide Re-told

With a more accurate translation before us, we are now ready to *put* together the facts given in the two Bible accounts about Judas. We shall see that the accounts are not contradictory, but give information, which fits together to make a simple, straightforward story.

Acts 1:18 tells that Judas purchased a country place with the reward, or *wages*, of iniquity. This money cannot have been the thirty pieces of silver received for betraying the Lord, because that was returned to the temple and later spent by the chief priests. Judas never spent a penny of this. What, then, were the *wages of iniquity* which Judas used for the purchase of a country place? This becomes clear when we remember the charge made against Judas in John 12. This passage tells how a week before the Lord's death He ate supper in Bethany at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Mary anointed the Lord with costly ointment, but Judas objected, saying:

Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? John 12:5.

The Spirit of God explains this remark by declaring:

This he said not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. John 12:6.

From this it is evident that Judas was in the habit of embezzling money from the fund, which he kept for the Lord and the disciples. The more money he handled, the more he could steal. Hence his regret that the precious ointment was not converted to cash and entrusted to his care. Over a period of three years as treasurer for funds supporting thirteen or more men, Judas would have opportunity to pilfer quite a little sum. This would especially be the case if gifts were sometimes given to the fund for distribution to the poor. Money stolen in this way made up the *wages of iniquity* with which Judas purchased a little country property.

This purchase is alone enough to make it evident that Judas had no real faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord had said to His disciples:

Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, . . . For where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Luke 12:32-34.

Judas gave no heed to this admonition, since with stolen funds he was acquiring a property. This became his treasure, and his heart was in it—not with the Lord and the disciples. Judas did not believe the Lord's promise to give them the kingdom. He remained one of the disciples for the *wages of iniquity*, which he could draw in stealing from the common fund. No doubt he reasoned with himself that when this misled group of dreamers was scattered and impoverished, because they had forsaken all (Matt. 19:27) to follow the Lord Jesus, then he, Judas, would be able to settle down quietly on a little country acreage and end his days in economic security. So while the other disciples sold all and placed the proceeds in the common treasury to be distributed as alms, Judas was stealing a part of the funds and secretly buying a place for himself. The purchase would have to be secret; or his thievery would have been suspected, and his lack of obedience to the Lord would have come to light. When a man holding funds in trust begins to spend money freely, or to make big investments on his own account, a quiet inquiry is usually made to be sure that he is spending his own money. Judas could not let it be known that he had bought a place, or some practical man, like doubting Thomas, would have called for an audit of the books; and some blunt man, like Peter, would have asked why Judas was buying and holding instead of selling and giving.

It is clear from the record that by the time of the Lord's last Passover in Jerusalem, Judas was seeking a way to end his connection with the little band of disciples so that he could go off and settle down on his country place. We gain this information from Acts 1:25, which not only records the chief motive Judas had in betraying the Lord, but also proves that he had purchased his place before the betrayal. This verse is part of the prayer made by the 120 disciples in which, they requested God to make choice between Justus and Matthias.

That he may take part (the place) of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell. that he might go to his own place. Acts 1:25.

The clear statement of this verse is that Judas fell from his PLACE with the other eleven apostles in order that he might go to HIS OWN PLACE. The word *place (topos)* appears twice in the Greek of Acts 1:25. By this play upon the word, the Spirit of God emphasizes what Judas gave up for the sake of a house and lot. This will not seem strange to those who have noticed many times that a man's interest in the things of the Lord often ends when he buys a little house. By betraying the Leader into the hands of the Jewish rulers, Judas could break up the band, and retire to that little country home he had bought with the wages of iniquity. This he decided to do; and during the supper at which the Lord was eating the Passover with His disciples, He dismissed Judas to do it quickly (John 13:27). Events apparently took a different course than Judas expected or desired. He had intended the Lord to be arrested so that the band of disciples would break up and leave him free to settle down in security. But the betrayal led to more than this. Judas knew as well as anyone that the Lord had done nothing worthy of death; nevertheless He was condemned. When Judas saw this, he repented. He wanted the Lord to be arrested, not put to death. When that became a certainty, it was more than even the conscience of Judas could bear. He hastened to the chief priests and elders seeking to return the money, which was the price of the blood of the Lamb of God. These wicked men, with less conscience than even Judas, cared neither that an innocent man had been condemned, nor that a sinner was repenting. They would not take the money. Then Judas made sure they would have to deal with it. He threw it into the sanctuary where only the priests could go. This is recorded in Matthew 27:5, and the word there translated *temple* is not the frequently used word *hieron*, which means the whole temple area into which all Israelites could go, but *naos*, indicating the sacred edifice near the center of the temple area. This was surrounded by a wall, inside which only the

priests could go. Thus by casting the money over the wall into the priests' court, he put the matter of its disposition squarely up to them. They only had access to it, and they would have to dispose of it.

Having got rid of the thirty pieces of silver, Judas wanted to get away. Hundreds knew that he had betrayed the Lord. In a few more hours, the whole city would know of it. Where could he go to be alone, where he would not have to face his fellow disciples? There was only one place: the place he owned that none knew about but himself, the place he had bought with the money stolen during the time he was treasurer for the disciples of the Lord. Swiftly his feet carried him there. At last he was alone, alone with his thoughts, his memories, his conscience. He was away from all men, but he could not get away from himself. He was filled with shame and remorse over the deed he had done.

Never again could he face men-no he could not even face himself. And because Judas could not live with himself, there was only one thing left to do-die by himself, by his own hand. This he did. According to the record of Matthew he "went and hanged himself." In the very place where he expected to be so happy, he now dangled at the end of a rope.

In the days that followed, hundreds must have asked what had become of Judas. A check of the usual places that he frequented, produced no information. None of his former fellow disciples knew what had happened to him. In the first three days they were probably too burdened with grief to give him much thought. He had disappeared without a trace.

When the body of Judas was found, we are not told. How it came to be found, is not revealed. It is apparent, however, that it must have remained hanging there for some time, at least long enough for the natural processes of putrefaction to cause it to swell and burst open.

Property long vacant attracts investigation. It may have been that someone finally decided to take a look at this property where no activity was ever observed and no owner seen. At last the investigator came upon a most gruesome sight-a corpse, hanging by the neck, burst open in the middle, the intestines spilled upon the ground. The news spread, the corpse was identified as Judas, the betrayer. Men hesitated to describe the condition of the body when it was found, but this tragic scene so impressed "all the dwellers at Jerusalem" that they called the property in their Aramic dialect, "Aceldama," place of blood.

This name "Aceldama" further distinguishes the property, which Judas bought and made bloody in his death from that which the priests bought from a potter with the money which had been the price of blood. If any think it strange that two different fields received somewhat similar names, let them keep in mind the deep emotional feelings of aversion the Hebrew had concerning anything touched by blood in any way, and it will no longer be strange. The potter's field, bought by the priests as a cemetery for strangers, became notorious because its purchase price was identified with the blood of an innocent man. The country place, bought by Judas, became notorious because of the ghastly end to which he came there. Beyond all doubt, there were two fields. ..

In re-telling the story of Judas from the few facts briefly given in the New Testament, we have shown that there is no contradiction between the account given by Matthew in his Gospel and by Luke in the Acts. Matthew tells what a living man did-he hanged himself. Luke tells what happened to a dead man -he became swollen and burst in the middle. Matthew tells how Judas died. Luke tells the fate of his corpse.

Conclusion

The solution given above could have been related here more briefly, but this amount of space has been taken to show as clearly as possible an example of the method anyone can use in solving the historical problems, which confront the Bible student. Often in historical matters the facts given in

the Bible are few and given very briefly. It must necessarily be so, or else our Bible would contain such a mass of detail that it would be the size of the Encyclopedia Britannica instead of a book easily put into one volume. If a Bible reader sometimes desires more information on a subject, he must remember that God has given enough in His Word to accomplish His purpose. Therefore a desire for more material would seem to be outside the purpose of God. Instead, one would do well to pray for the help of the Spirit of God that he may use to the full the material which has been given, and gain an understanding of it in accord with the purpose for which it was given.

While the reader considers the case of Judas as an illustration of the historical problems in the Bible, let him also contrast it with the other general type of problems, which confront him in Bible study, those which relate to teaching. That which God would teach man, or *doctrine* as it is called, is of first importance. This truth is stated in the following verses:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (Timothy 3:16, 17)

Any history, which is related to the Word must be incidental to the purposes of giving teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. We can be sure that the perfect Word of God is free of historical errors, regardless of how many apparent problems are before the student owing to the brevity with which history is often treated. Here one comes to a great contrast between historical and doctrinal matters in the Word. History is often given briefly, but the doctrinal matters are treated with an abundance of information, and often there is repetition for the sake of emphasis. In doctrinal matters, the problem before the student is not the paucity of information, but the great mass of it! As an illustration of this, take the problem posed by the question, "What is the Soul?" There are 754 Old Testament occurrences of the Hebrew word and 105 occurrences of the Greek word. With this great mass of material to work with, the student finds, nevertheless, that throughout the Bible a single, consistent, logical view of the soul is given. This is a very remarkable fact when one considers that God gave the Scriptures through the instrumentality of some forty men writing over a period of about 1600 years. If it were a human book there certainly would be contradiction in this matter which is so much debated among men. The same sort of consistent doctrine is given throughout the Scriptures in all other matters of teaching. Sin, redemption, atonement, resurrection receive the same consistent treatment in God's Book. The agreement in these matters is one of the strongest means by which the book authenticates itself as the Word of the Living God. When one contrasts with these weighty matters of teaching the historical problems they are rightly seen to be of considerably less importance. On this account, it seems so pathetic that a great number of people, with only a superficial knowledge of the Book, use unsolved historical problems as a pretext for rejecting the Scriptures as the Word of God. Here has been given the solution to one of the most difficult of such problems as a demonstration of what can be done with them. At the same time the reader is urged to hold such matters as subordinate to the teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness which God would give him in the Word in order that he may be thoroughly equipped for all good works.

THE CONCLUSION OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The writer has seldom made use of these verses apart from someone raising the question of their authenticity. There is a marginal note in the **Revised Version** concerning Mark 16:9-20 as follows:

"The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel"

There is a footnote in the **Scofield Reference Bible** which states:

"The passage from verse 9 to the end is not found in the two most ancient manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and others have it with partial omissions and variations. But it is quoted by Irenaeus and Hippolytus in the second or third century."

Now before any say that these verses are not authentic they should examine all the evidence in the case, for these verses should not be discredited simply because they prove embarrassing *to* our beliefs and we desire *to* be rid of them.

It is true that these verses are not in the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus manuscripts. These are the oldest two Greek manuscripts and they belong *to* the fourth century. And while no Biblical manuscripts go back of the fourth century, we have the works of men who studied and wrote on the New Testament, and their writings go back *to* the second and third centuries. If these verses are quoted by these men, then it is evident that they were in the manuscripts used by them in the second and third centuries. So if they are not found in fourth century manuscripts, it is evident that they were omitted during the intervening years between the so-called Church fathers and the earliest manuscripts.

These words are quoted by Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Hippolytus. All of these men wrote before 250 A.D. This is sufficient proof that the last twelve verses of Mark were in the manuscripts used by them at that time. It may be that these men had access to the originals.

The monumental work of Dean Burgon on this subject is worthy of careful study. He sets forth that (at the time of his studies) there are over 3,600 manuscripts that contain all or parts of the New Testament. About 620 of these contain the book of Mark and not one omits the last twelve verses.

We have spent some time in making a careful study of the photographic reproductions of the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts. Our study concerned the physical characteristics or what a printer would call "format." This study proved more than fascinating as we considered the last chapter *of* Mark. It is true that the last twelve verses are not in either manuscript, but that is not all the truth.

A close examination will reveal a fact generally known that the last four pages of Mark were written by a different scribe than the one who wrote the original manuscript. These four pages are conjugate leaves and these conjugate leaves are "caneel leaves." That is, they were written after the manuscript had been completed, in order to take the place of others, written by the original scribe, which for some reason were considered imperfect or spoiled. It is held by many that the original conclusion of Mark was torn out, and a shorter one substituted for it. The *text* here is spaced out on the last two pages *to* fill up the space. This is an admission that the book *of* Mark originally had a longer conclusion.

In the Vaticanus manuscript, one book follows another and not one inch of space is wasted. However, at the end of Mark 16:8 there is a blank column, the only one in the whole manuscript. The significance of this is obvious.

The Alexandrinus manuscript has the entire text from verse nine to the end.

Martin Luther did not know what to do with the book of James and so he attempted to cast doubt upon its place in the canon. Even so, men in the fourth century did not know what to do with the last twelve verses of Mark. They looked about and saw no trace of such spiritual gifts in existence. Thus they concluded that there must be something doubtful about the genuineness of these verses. Some

thought they were doubtful, some marked them as spurious, and other excluded them from their manuscripts. Just one more example of the confusion that has come from failure to divide rightly the word of truth.

So if evidence means anything, it is all in favor of the last twelve verses of Mark being the authentic words of our Lord Jesus Christ. That evidence which may be against them is confused, therefore worthless. Reprinted from Vol. I, No.9 of *The Word of Truth*.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****We have learned from experience that the readers of *The Word of Truth* are very much interested in "our affairs and how we do." See Ephesians 6:21. Many of them turn first to "The Editor to His Friends" and are quite disappointed when they do not find full information about our labors. In several issues we have practically eliminated this department, but this resulted in many protests. One friend wrote, "Since you cannot find time for personal letters, please do not deprive us of the information we get from the Editor's page." This explains one of the purposes of this department. It keeps our friends informed. We cannot expect them to support a work of which they know nothing.

****We have completed six months of ministry in Los Angeles and are happy to report that all departments of the work are progressing in a satisfactory manner. Each day finds us a little better established and adjusted to our new labors and situation. Our first great problem is always lack of time to do all the things -we want to do, and the second is lack of funds to do all that needs to be done.

****Our public witness to the truth in Los Angeles is called the *Los Angeles Bible Fellowship*. Meetings are held every Sunday morning at 11:00 A.M. and Sunday evening at 7:30 P.M. at 245 South Lucas Street. A devoted group is attending every service and are being taught in the Word. An administrative committee of five men and an advisory committee of sixteen men have been appointed. These twenty-one men will confer together in regard to all matters that concern the public testimony, and the committee administration will be responsible for working out all plans formulated for the advancement of the witness. .

****&We plan to begin radio ministry in Los Angeles on Monday, March 29. The station will be KWKW, 1430 Kc. The program will be heard six mornings each week from Monday to Saturday at 9:15 A.M. It will be called FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH THE BIBLE. This station can be heard anywhere in the Los Angeles area. The cost of this ministry will be supplied by the friends of the witness living in Southern California.

****After arriving in California we discovered that the name *Pacific Bible Institute* had been used for some time by a group in another city. The name was not registered in Los Angeles county and it would have been easy to register it and make it our property. But, we have dropped it altogether, and as soon as our printed matter is used up it will no longer appear in connection with our work. The new name of this department of our work will be *The Word of Truth Institute*. The name by which we designate this work is of little importance.

The Institute has met four mornings each week for two-and-a-half hours of intensive study and research in the Word of God. None of the men have missed a session from the beginning. The nature of our studies can be better understood if it is known that we devoted two entire sessions or five hours to Ephesians 4:7-11. We were not satisfied with any interpretation set forth in regard to this passage and labored to find an understanding of Paul's words which would explain this obscure and difficult portion. About seven hours were spent on II Corinthians 5:6-9, in an attempt to solve the two great problems of translation and meaning.

Due to obligations of some of the brethren in the Institute in regard to their families (these men are veterans, but none of them receive any support from the government), and to obligations of the Editor in regard to other ministry, we have felt it wise to give up for the time being our morning sessions. This step will also make it possible for us to enlarge the work of the Institute. A new class will now be studying every Tuesday night from 7:30 to 9:30. Thirty students have enrolled in this class and we are looking forward to many hours of pleasure and profit in studying together.

****Bound Volume 7 and 8 of *The Word of Truth* are now available. Due to the fact that the cost of binding has tripled, the price will be \$1.50 each. Volume 9 is not ready and we cannot say when it will be. Volume 7 and 8 were done in Grand Rapids by the binder who had previously done our work, then shipped to Los Angeles. Volume 9 will have to be bound here. This creates a problem as they must favor old customers in distributing the available cloth.

****We cannot at this time announce our itinerary in the Middle-west for the month of May. A special letter will be sent out later giving dates and places of meetings.

****We had hoped to reprint the article on *How God Redeems A Soul* in pamphlet form, but no funds are available for this purpose.

End Vol. X, No. 3