

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTISQ.SELLERS, Editor, JULY 1938

VOL. II, No. 10

Table of Contents

- * A Testimony
- * The Recovery of Truth
- * Answers to Correspondents
- * The Order of Events
- * Notes on I Corinthians
- * When That Which is Perfect
- * The Way of Truth
- * The Editor to His Friends

A TESTIMONY

The feeling that some will be helped by reading certain experiences of the Editor in relationship to the truth of a rightly divided Word is the reason for this personal testimony.

Early in the year 1921, I entered the Moody Bible Institute as a student, a very young man as to physical age and not more than fourteen months as to spiritual age. In the few months that had passed since finding Jesus Christ as my Savior I had been greatly helped in my understanding, my assurance, and my spiritual life through reading certain books by Dr. James M. Gray. It was only natural that my desire to see this servant of God was almost intense and I was happy to discover that he would be the teacher in one of my first classes. Like many new students I was somewhat confused by the unfamiliar maze of buildings and got into the wrong classroom. When Dr. Gray did not appear on the platform I made inquiry and found that my class was meeting in the Auditorium. Rushing across the courtyard I found the class in session and Dr. Gray already teaching. And even though I was trying to find a seat and listen at the same time his words made an impression on me that could not be erased. He was saying, as near as I can remember, these words. "Young men - read the book. Read it repeatedly, read it independently, read it carefully, read it prayerfully. Young men - read the book."

After that day I heard these words repeated many times. He enlarged upon them, stressed them, and emphasized them until the value of this method of knowing the Word of God was so impressed upon my mind that from that day to this, these words express my chief method of Bible study.

When a thing is tried and its value discovered it is only logical that its use be continued. Having no knowledge of God's Word, except a few Bible stories learned in childhood, I determined to try this method with one book and keep at it until the thing became a familiar path. The book selected was Galatians and being a rapid reader it was not long until I had traveled through the book one hundred times. Being normal (I trust) as to my powers of perception and having an average memory I became entirely familiar with all that it said even though I had very little understanding of what it meant. But at least I knew what Paul had said, what Peter had done, what the Galatians had done, etc. It became as familiar to me as some of the paths of my childhood days when every bush and stone was a familiar friend.

An incident that happened at that time did much to impress upon me the value of knowing a book in this manner. Attending a church service I heard the speaker set forth a certain proposition and then declare that it was clearly taught in the Galatian epistle. But the moment he said it I desired to arise and state with all the force of my being that no such teaching could be found in the Galatian epistle. He could tell that to an audience that was ignorant of the contents of the Galatians but he could not tell it to a twenty year old boy who had just read through the epistle one-hundred times.

Thus the value of what God had said was impressed on my mind. I had labored over Galatians that it might become as familiar to me as the twenty-third psalm, so I asked myself the question of why it could not be that every book in the Word of God should be as familiar to me as Galatians. And the answer was that if the entire book did not become as familiar as Galatians it would be because of my own laziness, carelessness and neglect. Thus began a program which has continued for seventeen years and will continue as long as God gives a clear mind to do it. My first and most important task, is to become entirely familiar with all that God has said. We cannot all be scholars or theologians but we can be familiar with the Word of God.

An illustration of the value of thus knowing the Word of God will not be amiss. Every week I travel to Chicago then from Chicago to Rockford, Illinois. About one-hundred-twenty round trips have been made between Grand Rapids and Chicago and Rockford. I judge no one will reject it when I say that I am entirely familiar with the country between these two points--that is, as far as one can become familiar from a train window or an automobile.

Now if I should hear someone speak of the great wheat crops raised between Grand Rapids and Chicago I would know at once that he was in error even though he may be the best educated and informed man in America. I would not hesitate to contradict him for I know that very little wheat is raised between these points.

When men come to us with that stock statement, "Does it not say somewhere in the Bible something like this?", and then give some ridiculous statement of something entirely foreign to the Word, we should be able to say without hesitation, "No, it does not say that."

This is the familiarity that everyone of us should have with the Word of God. It can only come from going over it again and again, the parts that make no appeal to the mind as well as the interesting parts. If any object that this would take a lifetime I answer that it would be a life well spent. We must read it repeatedly, we must read it independently, we

must read it prayerfully, read until it becomes so familiar that we immediately know what harmonizes with the Word of God and what is contrary to it. This does not mean snap judgment.

For example, recently I listened to a radio preacher on the subject of eternal punishment. He spoke with fervor and assurance. He attempted to describe in detail just how the lost would be punished. But I could say with all assurance that there is no such message in the word of God. What it says about the wrath of God and what that preacher said are poles apart.

But to return to my testimony, it was with the sole desire of becoming familiar, and with no desire to interpret or understand all details. I began my study of the Word of God. Before long I was burning with the desire to understand. I was becoming familiar with what God had said and my desire was now to know what He meant. This changed my ministry from one of getting sermons and preaching them, to a ministry of teaching the Word of God. The constant reading of the Word of God, teaching its various books, facing the questions that arose from such ministry caused a new and exceedingly important problem to arise. Every bit of reading, study and teaching constantly added to a pile of unanswered questions, unsolved problems, and difficulties that could not be overcome.

The growing familiarity with the Word of God increased my conviction that there were many plain statements in the Word of God which I had no room for in all my thinking. I was well acquainted with many plain passages and if I accepted what they taught it would contradict and set aside some teaching that I held very dear. I searched the writings of men but could find no satisfactory help on the multitude of questions, problems and difficulties.

At last I felt that all further study of the Word was useless unless I answered the questions, cleared up the difficulties and solved the problems. For several years a conviction had been growing that I was trying to interpret all Scripture to make it harmonize with my beliefs. I dreaded the thought, but the realization grew that the time was coming when I would have to make my beliefs harmonize with the Word of God.

It will probably help create a better understanding on the part of my readers if a number of these questions, problems and difficulties are set forth. Only a few are given and they will be set forth in about the order that they appear in the New Testament. I did not create these problems for they came as a result of careful and prayerful study of the Word. No sympathy is expected from those superficial ministers who have done no penetrating study and therefore have confronted no problems. These put a premium on ignorance. But I am sure I will find sympathy from all who have sought to make all truth their portion.

1. Matt. 1:21. Why does it say "save his people" from their sins? The teaching of some that this limited His work to certain elect did not satisfy my spirit.

2. Matt. 3:11-12. Gladly did I accept the baptism in the Holy Ghost as a promise to the Church, but even more gladly did I leave the "fire" for Israel. It did not seem right to take the good and leave the bad for another calling.

3. Matt. 5:42. What could be done with these very explicit words of Christ? To

reject them as not being fitted to the present social and economic scheme seemed to be very loose handling of His commands.

4. Matt. 13:11. How could these mysteries (secrets) of the kingdom of heaven be made to teach a present "kingdom of heaven in mystery form? " To me the term "kingdom of the heavens" meant (and still means) a kingdom which has its origin, source and authority in the heavens. I tried hard to do it but I could not believe that Christendom is the kingdom of heaven in mystery form.

5. Matt. 13:45. How could the pearl of great price be the Church and yet be a likeness of the kingdom of heaven? It did not seem right to teach that the Church is not the kingdom and then deny it by applying this parable to the Church. All the fine arguments concerning how a pearl is formed did not help to solve my problems.

6. Matt. 15:24. Our Lord said He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Why accept this as true here but deny its truth at every other point in his ministry? Why not let it have its full force and influence in our consideration of every day of His three years of ministry?

7. Matt. 16:19. Concerning this statement I believed that the Lord meant what He said and said just what He meant. I could not believe that the power given through these words was limited to Peter preaching the gospel to the Jews and to the Gentile Cornelius. But where could such power find a place in the present administration?

8. Matt. 18:15-18. If these verses speak of "discipline in the future church," then where is the power of binding and loosing? To me it was always the very height of things ridiculous *to* hold that such strong words as "binding" and "loosing" simply meant the admission to or exclusion from church membership or fellowship. And just how could one so excluded become to us as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer?

9. Matt. 18:19. I was sorely distressed at the apparent failure of the prayer-promises of the gospels. This verse along with Matt. 21:20 and John 14:14 caused me much exercise of mind. The Lord could *not* have spoken plainer. I refused *to* explain these promises by reading into them certain conditions which the Lord had not placed there. We had heard it said over and over that these promises were just like checks on a bank. But NO ONE had ever demonstrated them *to* be so. I had enjoyed many striking answers to prayer, and I had heard others relate striking answers, yet these were striking because they were exceptional. They were not the general answers that we might expect. The conviction grew that it might be well *to* apply dispensational truth to all that God had spoken concerning prayer.

10. Mark 16:15-18. Gladly would I have accepted the suggestion of Scofield that these verses are an interpolation. but I knew from a personal investigation of all the evidence that this passage was in the original text. Why, therefore, should verse fifteen be emphasized as the marching orders of the Church while the remaining verses were ignored?

11. Luke 12:32-33. It was generally held that the little Rock was the Church. Yet we were supposed to accept this without accepting that the Church was to be given to the kingdom. We were also to refuse the instructions- "**sell that ye have and give alms.**"

12. John 4:22. When did salvation cease to be of the Jews? I knew that it was of the Jews when the Lord spoke these words but it is not of the Jews now. Could it be that the change came at Acts 28:28 when the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles?

13. John 14:12. This promise was to those who believed on Him. But where were the believers who could do the works which He did? The common explanation that the reference here is to "spiritual works" did not afford any help. We could not do the spiritual works that He did-let alone the greater works.

14. John 20:23. Words could not be plainer than these, yet the history of the Protestant Churches is a long record of attempts to discount their force and explain them away. These exceedingly strong words were also made by many to mean the receiving or excluding men from churches. Inasmuch as I was always very skeptical concerning the authority of the church it was impossible to believe this explanation. It seemed logical to believe that these words must have been true at one time but were not true now. The belief that the Church began at Pentecost left no time or room for them to have been true.

15. Acts 2:16. This absolute declaration that the events of Pentecost were spoken of by the prophet Joel stood in direct contradiction to the belief that these events marked the birthday of the Church. How this could be an event spoken of by Joel, and yet be the beginning of a secret hid in God was a major difficulty.

16. Acts 2:38. All who know the gospel of the grace of God also know that this verse is diametrically opposed to the truth, revealed in Romans and Ephesians.

17. Acts 2:44. This record demonstrates that the disciples took the Lord at His word when He said, "sell that ye have and give alms." How was I to believe that this was the beginning of the Church, and also believe that it did not give the order for the Church?

18. Acts 3:24-26. Every time I read these verses they contradicted my belief that Israel fell and was set aside at the Cross. How could I accept the truth revealed here and yet believe that the Cross marked the final judgment of Israel?

19. Acts 4:32-35. Do these verses reveal God's will for His own today? I could not believe that they did, but had no scriptural reason for so believing.

20. Acts 5:1-11. Ananias and Sapphira died for misrepresenting their gifts to the Lord. But how can we reconcile God's severe judgment of them with its complete absence today? Could it be that they lived under a different dispensation? A positive answer to this would solve the problem, but it was necessary to believe that the present dispensation began at the Cross in order to be considered orthodox. And how I dreaded to be called unorthodox and feared to be called a heretic. Thank God that fear is gone.

21. Acts 12:20-25. This death judgment came because this ruler failed to give God the glory. Do rulers today always give God the glory? Why then are they not judged as this ruler was? God's dealings with Herod pointed definitely to the fact of a different dispensation, but I was unwilling to follow out this intimation of truth.

22. Acts 16:3. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy after he had contended so strongly against the circumcision of Titus?

23. Acts 18:18. Why did Paul shave his head? I could not accept the explanation that he was out of the will of God in so doing. This explanation was used too many times concerning too many things in the life of Paul. At one time the thought came to me that it may be that we are trying to force Paul to live according to a dispensation that did not then prevail.

24. Acts 18: 21. Why MUST he keep this feast?

25. Acts 21:18-25. The overwhelming evidence of these verses pointed to two orders of believers in the Acts period with distinct walks for each order. But if this was true then it should still be true today. The fact remained that it was true then but not true today. All this pointed to a dispensational change at Acts 28:28 but I was loathe to accept this.

26. Acts 22:16. In all that I believed there was no place where the truth of this passage would fit. It was evident that my conception of baptism was quite different from the conception of godly Ananias.

27. Acts 28:20. Why was Paul's hope the hope of Israel? Is the hope of Israel and the hope of the Church one and the same?

28. Rom. 1:16. How could the gospel be to the Jew first if the Gentiles were "joint partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel" as stated in Eph. 3:6? How could God make this distinction in an administration of grace?

29. Rom. 3:1-2. Where could the truth of this verse find a place today? Could the Jew have the advantage and could circumcision be profitable? When did this advantage cease?

30. Rom. 9:4-5. Inasmuch as it is clearly stated that the adoption, glory, covenants, giving of the law, service, promises, the fathers and the Messiah belong to Israel-how could the church claim ownership of any one of these things?

31. Rom. 11:17. Do the words "grafted into a good olive tree" describe our exalted position as members of the Church which is His body? If so, could we be cut out as described in verse twenty-one?

32. Rom. 11:25. If today Israel is only partially blind, and the Gentiles totally blind, then why are so many Gentiles and so few Jews saved? When did this partial blindness of Israel end and their total blindness begin?

33. Rom. 15:27. Are we partakers of Israel's spiritual things or do we have our own distinct blessings in Christ? Are we in debt to Israel? If both our salvation and blessings are all of grace why should we be in debt? Can grace incur a debt?

34. I Cor. 7:8. This definite command, I had not heeded. Nor could I as a minister of the Word teach others to heed it. Yet it appeared in an epistle which I had been led to believe was the very charter of the church.

35. I Cor. 7:17-20. These verses establish a very clear distinction between the saved Jew and the saved Gentile. It was impossible for me to believe that such a distinction exists today. But this distinction did exist when Corinthians was written. When did it cease to exist?

36. I Cor. 7:29. This verse stating that "the time is short," along with the "short work" of Rom. 9:28; "the end of all things is at hand" of I Peter 4:7; "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" of James 5:8; the "little while" of John 16:16; the "little while" of Hebrews 10:37 produced problems that seemed beyond solution. It was apparent that these men knew nothing of the postponement of the Kingdom at the Cross. Those explanations that satisfied so many credulous minds did not satisfy mine. I was not satisfied to say that "a thousand years is as one day" therefore it had been only two days since the Lord departed.

37. I Cor. 7:29. Does this verse set forth the attitude of a believing husband toward his wife?

38. I Cor. 10:1. How could this statement be made to a group of believing Gentiles?

39. 1 Cor. 11:29-30. How can we account for the absence of this judgment in the present dispensation?

40. I Cor. 12:28. Where are the gifts that God had set in the church?

41. 1 Cor. 14:5. Is this Paul's desire for the members of the Church which is His body?

42. 1 Cor. 14:39. How can we obey this explicit command? I had no desire to prophesy, and would have forbidden anyone to even try to speak in tongues in any meeting for which I was responsible.

43. 1 Cor. 15:52. What is the significance of the time element in this verse? Why is it completely ignored, explained away, and set aside? Why so much emphasis on every other word but no emphasis on "the last trump"?

44. 2 Cor. 5:16. Do not these words mark a very definite change in the message of the apostle Paul?

45. Gal. 2:7. This passage reveals two gospels related to two distinct groups. When did this condition end? Could this be superseded by the "one faith" of Eph. 4:5?

46. Gal. 3:7. Are we, the members of the Church which is His body, children of Abraham? If so, will the children be blessed above the father? I could never say "father Abraham" and feel I was speaking the truth.

47. Gal. 3:29. Are we heirs according to the promise God made to Abraham? If so, did God begin to do a new thing some time after the Cross? If our hope and position and blessings are identical with those of a godly Jew of the Old Testament, then why glory in what transcendent grace has done for us as members of the Body?

48. Gal. 4:29. I could not believe that Jerusalem which is above is the mother of the members of the Church which is His body-either spiritually, literally or figuratively. And to sing "O mother, dear Jerusalem" was absolutely repugnant to me.

49. Gal. 6:16. A definite group in the Acts period bore the title "Israel of God." What group today bears this title?

50. Eph. 3. What could this "mystery" be which was so important to Paul but (at that time) so meaningless to me?

51. Phil. 3:8. How could Paul say he desired to win Christ after having known Him for thirty years?

52. Phil. 3:11. After so many years, had he not attained to the resurrection? What could this mean? If after his life of saintship and service he was still in doubt as to his part in the resurrection, no one of us could ever dream of attaining it.

53. Heb. 8:4. These words written some thirty years after the Cross states explicitly that if the Lord was on earth he would not be a priest because there were priests who offered gifts and sacrifices according to the law. How could this be true if the law was done away at the Cross?

54. Heb. 11:35. These saints by their faithfulness obtained a better resurrection. But where in our teaching could we find room for a better resurrection?

55. 1 Peter 2:9. Is the church which is His body a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation? It was simple to give these titles to the church, but it created a major problem when the meaning of these terms was discovered.

56. 1 John 1:9. In this passage forgiveness is dependent on confession. If this passage is part of the gospel of the grace of God, what happens if we do not confess our sins? Will they be forgiven in spite of our failure?

57. 11 John 2:18. Was John mistaken, or did something enter in to delay the conclusion of the age?

58. 1 John 5:16. What sin is unto death? How are we to know when we see a man sin whether it is unto death or not? Can there be a sin unto death in an administration of grace?

59. 3 John 7. Why did they take nothing from the Gentiles? Is this recorded as an example for us?

These fifty-nine propositions represent a small portion of the questions, problems and difficulties that came as a result of faithful reading and study of the Scriptures. Those who use the Bible as a text book for sermon material, those who use it as a source of buttressing texts to support their own ideas, or those who read it to extract from its pages some predetermined sense will probably feel that these difficulties were superimposed. Many superficial students will ridicule the fact that the problems and questions exist which I have set forth. I was advised by many to forget them. But to me these things were of vital importance for I was assured that everyone of them was an intimation of truth. To find the answer to a question was to find truth, to solve a problem was to uncover truth and to clear away a difficulty was simply to clear a path that would lead to greater truth.

Some of these difficulties I have presented to well known Bible teachers but they seemed loathe to admit that such problems or difficulties existed. And if I pressed the matter they seemed to resent it as an attack against their doctrinal position. Their writings passed by these difficulties without even so much as a nod of recognition, and their messages seemed to be prepared with studious care to avoid all such problems.

As I considered these matters I felt many times that I saw a way that would give aid in clearing up almost every point but it seemed so radical, so revolutionary, and so far reaching in its consequences that I hesitated to venture on such a path until I was sure of my ground.

Finally a change in residence brought me into contact with more than a score of Christian workers who were vexed by some of the same problems, and the day came when we were called together in conference to consider some of the questions which I have set forth. This sincere effort was misunderstood by certain leading fundamentalist ministers and their disfavor was so strong that a leading fundamentalist organization issued a blacklist of every man who had part in this conference. Being branded as unorthodox ended once and for all the desire to be orthodox. Being disfellowshipped by that religious system which is so powerful and popular today ended forever the desire to maintain this fellowship. For the first time in my life I was free from every bond, visible and invisible, denominational and undenominational.

It was only a matter of days after this for me to discover that all my difficulties were the result of trying to maintain an unscriptural partial division of the Word of God, and that I had refused to *follow out* dispensational truth to all its conclusions and accept all its consequences.

I began a new study of the Word and this time it was unhindered and uncircumscribed. I was free to believe all that I found and was able to let every part of the Scripture mean all that it could mean.

The results of this are well known to all who have read the pages of "The Word of Truth." The following propositions, however, will summarize certain outstanding things which I now hold and declare to be the truth.

The full acceptance of these general principles proved to be the key which unlocked the doors of truth and solved every problem, answered every question, and cleared up every difficulty set forth in the foregoing pages.

1. The nation of Israel did not fall at the Cross. The Savior's prayer for forgiveness was heard and a distinct ministry was performed among Israel for thirty-three years after the Cross. The fall of Israel is marked by the divine pronouncement at Acts 28:25-28. At this point Israel entered into a "Lo-ammi" period which continues today.

2. The out-calling of the Church which is His body began at Acts 28:28 and not at Pentecost. The Church or body of the Acts period is to be differentiated from the Church or body of the dispensation of the Mystery. During the Acts period an elect remnant was being called out of Israel and "a people" was being taken out of the Gentiles but neither of these are the Church which is His body. These two groups were distinct and kept so by God. The walk of one was not the same as the other. Every member of both groups had been baptized into one Spirit and this made them one body. This body is the Church of God but it is not the joint body revealed in Ephesians.

3. The thirty-three year period by the book of Acts is a unique dispensation or administration and it is not to be confounded with the administration of grace which began at Acts 28:28. Tongues, healings and such gifts have no place in the sphere of the Church which is His body.

4. The great tribulation, the Second Coming and the Kingdom were imminent during the Acts period. They were at hand but all three were postponed by the revelation of a new purpose at Acts 28:28.

5. The present dispensation, its purpose and its out-calling were secrets hid in God until they were revealed to the apostle Paul. The present dispensation is parenthetical in its character and is never reckoned in time.

6. There are three spheres of blessing and three spheres of future glory. These are the earth, the heavens and a place that is far above all heavens. The place above all heavens is the sphere of God's present out-calling.

7. That water baptism is an ordinance that has neither place nor purpose in the present dispensation.

8. That the service which men commonly call the Lord's Supper is in reality the Passover, and the Passover has no place in the present out-calling of God.

9. That the apostle Paul lived under two dispensations, and that he was first called as one of the elect remnant of Israelites in the Church of God. Also that when the revelation of a new purpose with its higher calling was revealed to him he turned his back upon his position and pressed toward the high calling with its blessings, hope and resurrection.

These nine propositions set forth some of the things I most surely believe. The acceptance of them has made the Bible what God intended it should be - a simple, comprehensible revelation of Himself and His purposes to His people. May the God of all grace be pleased to use this testimony to the enlightenment of all who believe that He has spoken to men through His Word.

The End

THE RECOVERY OF TRUTH

Those who labor at the task of uncovering and recovering the truth of God are not limited to certain subjects. All truth is our aim, all Scripture is our field of labor and every subject dealt with in the pages of God's book is open for study, examination and investigation. As long as truth is desired the work will continue but the moment that truth is no longer the chief desire the work ceases. The possession of truth on any subject is sufficient reward for any labor we may spend in securing it. There may be no sale for it, no demand for it, it may not be considered a worthwhile commodity in Christendom but we remember that we are ordered to buy the truth and sell it not.

In our labors for the recovery of truth we have found encouragement in the following words.

"As a result of centuries of darkness and superstition, practically every precious truth of the Scriptures was overwhelmed by the ecclesiastical rubbish gradually accumulated. When at last the reformers were raised up to recall God's people to God's own Word, they found themselves confronted by just such a task as that which Nehemiah had to face; and ever since, when there has been a settling down on the part of God's people, the rubbish has accumulated at an alarming rate, human tradition soon swamping what was of God; and so the need of persistent, devoted, prayerful toil, to separate the precious from the vile has been ever manifest. Carnal professors will mock so-called liberals will demonstrate their bitter hatred of everything holy, but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, and find all needed grace to stand in the evil day, and to distinguish what is really divine and what is but of man in the great mounds of mingled truth and error, lying: all about the ruined wall that once separated Church and world. Every fresh attempt to 'try the things that differ' will provoke the ire of the worldly-religious mass; but what is of God is of too much value to be surrendered at the behest of fleshly foes."

We have found the truth of these words from actual experience. We are convinced that every precious truth in the Scripture has been corrupted by ecclesiastical rubbish gradually accumulated. We know that the rubbish continues to accumulate at an alarming rate, and that human tradition is swamping the truth of God. We are giving persistent, devoted and prayerful toil, to separate the precious from the vile. This is our ministry. We are mocked, ridiculed and even hated because of our labors but have found all needed grace to continue. And much grace has been given to enable us to distinguish what is really divine and what is but of man in the great mounds of mingled truth and error. We do not intend to surrender a single inch of ground gained at the behest of any foe.

It is hard for us to believe that the man who wrote the paragraph quoted (in smaller type above) is the same man who wrote that unfraternal pamphlet called "Wrongly Dividing the Word! of Truth," But it was, for the quotation above is from "**Notes on the Book of "Nehemiah" by B. A. Ironside, pages 55-56.**

In our labors of uncovering the truth we began about four years ago to seek the answer to the question "What is the Soul? " During these years we have considered everyone of the 752 occurrences of the Hebrew word for soul **NEPHESH**, also the 103 occurrences of the Greek word **PSUCHE**. This study led us to search out the truth concerning the spirit and breath of life. These studies led us to consider the subject of death, sheol, hades, gehenna, the lake of fire and the second death. On every one of these subjects we found "great mounds of mingled truth and error." On each subject we have labored to "distinguish between what is really divine and what is of man."

Much labor has been spent on the subject of "Hell." The question- - how much that men teach concerning this is in God's Word--has ever been before us. We must have an exact Scriptural answer to the question, -What is the wages of sin?

For four years we have maintained a discreet silence on these subjects. But now that silence is ended and we are teaching, studying, testing and seasoning our findings. The Chicago class first, Rockford next and finally Grand Rapids. Our findings are being written in the rough and some day they will appear in pamphlet form. Just when this will be we cannot say but we seek the prayers of all our brethren in this exceedingly heavy task. There is a continued cry for help on this subject and we do not intend to refuse this help if we can give it.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

P.L.A.-New York. All Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is inspired of God. The very words were God breathed. This we believe and permit it to have its full influence upon our studies in the Word of God. We will never take second place to any man in the matter of believing that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God. Some who cannot refute our message concerning the right division of the word of truth have deliberately falsified by saying that I hold that only certain books are inspired. They feel that any wrong done to one with whom they disagree is a high form of good. The command "speak every man truth with his neighbor" does not apply with them when they deal with one who is not of their theological group. However, we do not complain for it was with the determination that we "could take it" that we entered upon the task of uncovering and recovering the truth buried under the rubbish heaps of tradition.

Recently in a conversation with a brother in Christ, we were able to show him, much to his amazement, that our attitude towards God's Word was identical with his. We both "divided," but he divided only when it was convenient and pleasant, or when it supported a doctrine he held. We divide at all times whether convenient or pleasant or just the reverse and accept all the conclusions and consequences that come from such a course.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS

The Word of God sets forth events which in the future will surely come to pass. The believer who is taught by all Scripture soon becomes interested in these things. Many who have been awakened to the importance of prophetic truth have soon found themselves in frightful confusion. This has come from the sermons they have heard and the pamphlets they have read. In the most of these there is no order, no progression of truth, no logical and reasonable sequence of events. Many who claim to be teachers of prophecy are simply peddlers of sensational drivel culled from the secular press. Their messages are composed of indefinite and confusing statements about the prophetic significance of current events, especially current events in European countries. The exact

truth concerning things to come will never be known to those men whose chief source of information is the daily newspaper. Sane, Scriptural, carefully prepared studies on prophetic themes will never be out of place. Such messages are seldom heard, neither are they desired by those whose chief delight is the sensational.

For a clear understanding of things to come some definite order of events must be established in the mind of the students. Our God is a God of order and all He has revealed will take place at set times according to a well established order. The frightful confusion that exists in present day interpretations of prophetic Scripture has resulted from disordered sermons on a multitude of events, all heaped together and mixed well. Such confusion can never come from orderly study of the Word of God.

The article on "Things to Come" in the April-May issue of "The Word of Truth" brought numerous requests for help concerning the order of the events set forth in the prophetic portions of the word. One reader asked us to fill in the spaces between the four future resurrections. Inasmuch as an article on this subject was already in the course of preparation, it seemed well to complete it and set forth in outline what we believe will be the order of prophesied events.

First of all, let us state that the believer in the Lord Jesus need not be terrified by all the frightful things that the prophets of doom insist are going to come to pass. Until God Himself makes a radical change no strange things will happen. Note we say no STRANGE things will happen. By this we do not mean that changes will not occur, but we do insist that the changes will be such changes as the world has been passing through for several thousand years. New names may be given old things, but this does not make them new. What our fathers called "hard-times" we call a "depression," and act as if some new and strange thing had happened unto us. But even the word "depression" has grown obsolete and we are now supposed to call the same thing a "recession" and act as if it was the first time such a thing ever occurred.

We should keep in mind that times of want, revolutions, wars of aggression and civil wars are not something new under the sun. And even though forms of crime and sin have changed yet crime and sin are not new.

We believe that the conditions described in 2 Tim. 3:13 prevail today and have prevailed for many years. Even though they grow in intensity, yet they are not new. These are the conditions we can expect to prevail until God completes His purpose under the present administration of calling out the Church which is His body.

And so even though many fiery trials await us in the future we will remember the admonition set forth in **1 Peter 4:12**, "**Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.**"

It has been our blessed privilege to be saved and called under the administration of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2). Not only have we been saved by grace but our calling is of grace and we are living under an administration of pure grace. The present administration, in both character and time element, is not the subject of prophecy. It was a secret (mystery) hid in God, but revealed. to the Apostle Paul and recorded for our learning in his final epistles. It is never reckoned in any time calculations in the Bible.

and this fact alone is sufficient to explain the complete and disgraceful failure of all who have attempted to set dates for the happening of any prophesied event.

The last statement above applies especially to those fundamentalists who were pointing to 1934 as a so-called prophetic year. Certainly they are workmen who need to be ashamed.

The present dispensation is a parenthesis. It began at Acts 28:28 with the pronouncement that "the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles." Those who deny an administrative (dispensational) change at Acts 28:28 are either willfully blind or ignorant of the order that prevailed during that period of which Acts is the history.

The present dispensation gets its character from certain great truths which have prevailed during its course. Some of these truths are the presence of one body which is a joint body; a joint allotment which all enjoy on the basis of absolute equality; only one Lord or authority; only one faith; one baptism; one God and Father of all. The present dispensation is an administration of pure grace during which all judgment is in abeyance. It is the time of the postponed tribulation, the postponed Second coming of Christ and the postponed kingdom. It is a period during which Israel is in a "Lo ammi," or, a "not my people" condition. During this period an unsaved Jew and an unsaved Gentile have identically the same standing before God. The gospel is not to the Jew first but to all men alike. Absolute grace can recognize no distinctions. The Israelite is no longer partially blind as was true in the Acts period. Acts 28:26-28 pronounces a sentence of judicial blindness. Today both Jew and Gentile are totally blind.

Twice before in our writings we have made this statement concerning the total spiritual blindness of Israel and both times it has resulted in numerous letters trying to refute it. Most of them insist that if the Jew is totally blind none of them could be saved. Then they point to certain instances of Jewish salvation and so feel that they have refuted our position that the Jew was partially blind in the Pentecostal Administration but totally blind now. In answer to all such arguments we would say: **"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God."**

They closed their own eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and this resulted in the sentence of judicial blindness, but it did not put God at any disadvantage. Partial blindness would give a man some advantage and greatly simplify the task of the messenger but God can open the eyes of those who are totally blind in the spiritual sense.

But the present dispensation is not to continue, and we come now to a consideration of the events that mark its close as well as the beginning of a different administration. This dispensation, being one of pure grace and the coming one manifestly one of great judgments it is preposterous to think that there is no dispensational change. The event that marks the close of this dispensation is: The Out-Resurrection - Out from among the dead.

It is commonly held that the next great event in connection with unfulfilled prophecy is the resurrection and rapture set forth in 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Inasmuch as our reasons for believing that this event occurs at the end of the great tribulation have been set forth before in these pages it is not necessary for us to repeat them here. We make a clear distinction between the resurrection spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:16 and the one revealed

in Phil. 3:11. Our chief reason for this distinction is that Paul would not express a burning desire to advance (attain) to a resurrection if the hope of that resurrection was already his sure and certain possession. There is not the least expression of doubt as to his place in that resurrection revealed in Thessalonians. In speaking of it, it is evident that Paul is as sure that he will be a participant in that resurrection as he is sure of his own salvation.

How ridiculous it would have been for Paul to have desired to "attain to Phenice" (Acts 27:12) if the ship on which he was traveling had arrived there already. And how ridiculous it would be for him to desire to attain to the hope of a resurrection if he already possessed that hope.

A correspondent writes that we are staking everything on one brief verse of Scripture. And we answer- "Why not?" Could it be more true if God had written a full epistle concerning it? The believer who cannot rest his faith upon one passage would not be able to rest it upon one hundred passages.

We would, however, emphasize this fact. We are not staking all on a single passage which has been removed from its context. Phil. 3:11 is not sufficient, but it is sufficient when due consideration has been given to all that precedes and follows it. In the preceding verses Paul is counting as refuse the very things that were gain to him during the Acts period. In the verses that follow Phil. 3:11 his forgetting the things which are behind and pressing toward the goal and the prize he seeks is a place in a new calling, even the on-high calling.

The out-resurrection of Phil. 3:11 will be next to take place among the great events set forth in the Word of God. But this resurrection is in no way connected with or linked up to other events. It is a signless, dateless, timeless event. We have no way of telling whether it is near or far. Some have been inclined to reject the testimony concerning it because of this. They feel it is too vague and indefinite. They have heard so much concerning the Thessalonian rapture and have been taught that every line of their daily papers gives positive evidence of its nearness. But we would remind these that time has proven that all men have set forth as positive signs of the imminency of the Thessalonian rapture have so far proven false and misleading. Things that were supposed to be positive signs one month are discarded to make room for a new crop of positive signs the following month.

Well do we remember the first sermon we heard on the signs of the times. The year was 1916, and the speaker joining current events to Scripture passages demonstrated that every sign pointed to our Lord's imminent coming. He closed his message with a vague prediction that it would probably be in 1917. And we have noticed that ever since that year all attempts to read the so-called signs of the times (our, own attempts included) have resulted in workmen who need to be ashamed.

The expositors of the Thessalonian hope with all its so-called positive signs are not able to say whether it is one year or one-hundred years away. Thus we who hope in that event described in Phil. 3:11 are no more indefinite and vague than those who are looking at signs. We do not know when this event will take place but we rest assured that the day is coming when the living and sleeping members of the Church which is His body will

swiftly, noiselessly and without observation join the Head of the body in a place that is far above all that is of the heavens. It is our conviction that the transfer of the members of the body from earth to glory will be a secret transfer. Nothing in the way of sights will attend this glorious event. It will have very little effect on the world as a whole. True believers are not so numerous as many would have us think. If we eliminate all the superficial professors the number is small indeed. But the disappearance of the living along with the disturbed graves of the resurrected will be sufficient and positive evidence to all that remain that something miraculous has taken place. The import of this will be denied and explained away, but some who are disturbed by it will be divinely turned to the Word of God for the explanation of it. If so, they will discover that God has completed His purposes in the administration of grace and that a different purpose and a different administration has begun.

The writer would venture to say that within thirty days after the disappearance of the body members that the world will have settled down once more to its routine of eating, working, drinking, sinning, etc. The popular churches will be as full and as prosperous as ever before. But one fact remains, the administration of grace is closed, the out-calling of the Body is at an end, the time of God's silence is over, and there will soon be manifested the beginning of those things which in a few decades will end in the coming of the King and the establishing of the Kingdom.

(Continued in Vol. III, No. 3)

NOTES ON 1 CORINTHIANS

10:1. "I would not have that you should be ignorant" means "I would have you remember" or "I would not that you should be forgetful." These facts were part of their national history and while the facts might be remembered yet the lessons taught by them were apt to be forgotten.

10:2. Baptized unto Moses could mean that they were the body of Moses. This would be in harmony with Jude 9. But we would not press this point.

10:3-4. These words make it clear that literal meat can be spiritual meat and literal water can be spiritual water. Thus a spiritual body is a literal body of flesh and bones.

10:5-10. The Israelites were desirous of evil things; they were fornicators; they put the Lord on trial to see how far they could go before He would punish them; they were discontented. The Corinthians were ensnared in these same sins.

10: 11. These things had a typical meaning and they had been written for the admonition of those upon whom the ends of the ages had come, This statement is in harmony with Paul's words in 1 Cor. 7:29. The kingdom had not yet been postponed.

10:12-15. During the first part of the Acts period the Apostles declared a gospel which was related to the circumcision. The Apostle Paul began his ministry with a gospel related to the uncircumcision. At 2 Cor. 5:14-21 a definite change is made and Paul proclaims a gospel which he details in Romans. This is not the "gospel of the uncircum-

cision" for this new message is "to the Jew first," Romans sets forth the absolute security of the saved sinner but it is the first book which does so. It transcends everything that was ever written before revealing heights and depths of grace hitherto unknown. It reveals a plan of salvation not for the elect, not for lost sheep, not for covenant people-but a plan of salvation for ungodly, for aliens, for strangers from the covenants, for the hopeless, for the sinner. The note of insecurity which seems to be apparent in 1 Cor. 10-12 is not found in Romans, Let us not camp in 1 Cor, 10 but recognize the principle of progressive revelation and go on to perfection. The perfection of truth concerning the salvation of sinners is in Romans, the perfection of truth concerning the position of the saved is in Ephesians.

10:16. We will look in vain for a cup that can be called a "cup of blessing" today, and we also will look in vain for a man who can bless a cup. In the Roman Church we expect the priests to practice such deception upon the people, but why should such deception be practiced in the Protestant Church?

10:17. Partaking of one bread made them one body. This is a clear example of how the word body is used in Corinthians. See also 1 Cor. 6:16.

10:18. Pentecost was the beginning of a great division in Israel. Here, unbelieving Israel is called "Israel after the flesh." In Gal. 6:16 believing Israel is called "the Israel of God." It is evident that neither of these groups contained the Gentile believers. These also formed a distinct group. Israel after the flesh continued to offer sacrifices for sin. They ate of these and this identified them with the temple altar. Heb. 13:10 reveals the altar for the Israel of God.

10:19-20. Even for the sake of argument he will not admit for a moment that a thing sacrificed to an idol is what it claims to be, or that an idol is a real thing. What he would teach is that idols are not idols but demons, and he does not want them to have any fellowship with demons. The word "Gentiles" in this passage is further evidence that Corinthians was written to Jews which believe.

10:21-22. The word "Lord's" here is not the adjective but the noun and should read "the table of the Lord." This is identical with Mal. 1:7.

(Continued, Vol. III, No. 1)

*****8

WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT

To interpret **I Cor. 13:10** (to be) of this present time is a grievous wresting of Scripture. In this passage we read: "**But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**"

This passage tells us "**WHEN that which is perfect is come, THEN that which is in part shall be done away.**" Any honest interpretation of the word "THEN" in verse 10 will include the truth of **verse 12**. There we read: "**For now we see through a glass, darkly but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**"

Seeing "face to face" and "knowing as also I am known" speak of conditions which are not true at present, but belong to the future beyond the resurrection. The use of this passage to exclude the gifts from the present time is not right, "**Tongues (vs. 8) shall cease**" WHEN that which is perfect shall come. Some are playing expository tricks with this verse and teaching that the present parenthesis in God's dealings is the time referred to in the words "that which is perfect." This cannot be a reference to the present time for we still see through a glass darkly and we know only in part.

The proper method of dealing with the question of tongues is to recognize and set forth clearly the purpose for which they were given, and then set forth the postponement of that purpose at Acts 28:28, There is not one line of Scripture that suggests that tongues have any place in God's present purposes for the Church which is His body.

At this point a word to those who believe there is a gift of tongues today may not be amiss. In the Bible a tongue means a language - nothing more and nothing less. **Acts 2:11** is proof of this.

"We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." The English tongue is the English language. There is nothing in the Bible about an "unknown tongue." You will note that in I Cor. 14 the word "unknown" is in italics every time it appears. This means the word is not in the Greek, but that it was supplied by the translator.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

A consideration of the word "choose" in the Word of God is profitable and interesting. In the Old Testament the word means to choose after testing. Joshua said to Israel. **"choose you this day whom ye will serve."** It is blessed to feel that we have not chosen Him and that He has chosen us. but we have chosen to serve Him and we will not be servants of men. We resent, with all our being, every letter received from those self - appointed directors who tell us that we should leave our present service and do this or that. One man thinks that we are quarreling about the way the buttons are sewed on the Christian uniform. He would not say this if we were in agreement with him. If so he would probably call our labors a defense of the faith. But since we do not agree with him he considers it to be a quarrel over buttons.

David said. "I have chosen the way of truth"; and we take his words as ours and proclaim to all that this is our choice and we will not be turned aside.

Each day we become more and more annoyed at the small value professing Christians place upon the possession of truth. Some fear that opportunities of service will end if they embrace certain things. They talk glibly about "the opportunities for service scattered everywhere about." yet they must hold a message they know is not true in order to have an opportunity for service.

It may be that some will understand us better if we say that we put truth, its possession, and the privilege of proclaiming it above every friendship, fellowship and opportunity for service. The truth is more important to us than any hearer or any reader. The truth is more important than any work we are doing to set it forth. We have chosen the way of truth. It is not a popular path. It is a rugged way beset with obstacles and difficulties. But it is our choice and by His grace we will stick to it.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****On August 15 the Editor and Mrs. Sellers will begin their first vacation in five years. It will be for two weeks and will consist of a motor trip through lower Ontario to Toronto, Niagara Falls, through Pennsylvania to Philadelphia, returning by way of Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. If we can be of any help to any group of believers during the course of our journey we will be glad to do so. Not being "great" and having no reputation for popularity to maintain we consider a few believers meeting in a home an excellent opportunity for service. Please write to us at once so we can arrange accordingly.

****Many letters are received warning us of the dangers of over-work and these words of fraternal interest are deeply appreciated. Our program is a very heavy one, but no part of it has been assumed for the purpose of making a show of great activity, and all our service is carried on with the conviction that it is just what our Lord desires us to do. Every part of the work is fully enjoyed and none of it has ever been burdensome. Truly, His yoke is easy and His burden is light. For two years we have never arose a single morning without facing more work than we could possibly do. There is, however, little danger of over-working. We take things as they come, have no worries, do all we can and do not assume the burden of either saving or reforming the world. The Editor enjoys the best of physical health and these past years of strenuous service have not lessened his six feet of height or erased or added to his one-hundred and seventy-five pounds. Pray that this excellent state of physical. mental and spiritual affairs will continue.

****We have completed four years of ministry in Rockford, Illinois, and now begin the fifth year. We have an attendance of about forty believers every Wednesday night and their devotion to the Word of God has been manifested by their faithful and regular attendance.

****The change of location of our Chicago class appears to have been a good move. The new meeting place is more accessible for a number of friends who are now attending regularly. The class meets every Tuesday night, 8:00 P. M. at Link Hall, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave.

END, Vol. II, No. 10

End, Volume II

