

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q, SELLERS, Editor, JUNE-JULY, 1939

VOL. III, No.6

Table of Contents

- * **The Unfolding of The Secret**
 - * **Head Over All**
 - * **God – Given Faith**
 - * **Notes on 1 Corinthians**
 - * **Universal Reconciliation**
 - * **Our Friends Say**
- * **The Editor to His Friends**

THE UNFOLDING OF THE SECRET

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; hut the honor of kings is to search out a matter." Pro, 25:2.

These words came by divine inspiration, from the wisest man that ever lived. It is evident to all who study the Bible that were it God's desire but to impart information concerning the way of life and proper behavior, He could have done so in a much simpler way than that which He has chosen to give us the truth. We know that God has hidden His truth, and that this is for His glory. We do not rail against Him for having done so. He could have given us a revelation that was as simple as a child's primer, but He chose to do otherwise. Furthermore, we know that kings, upon whom are heaped every honor, can receive yet greater honor by searching out the things that God has concealed in His Word.

Most professing Christians do not study and do not search. Some Christians have been led to channel their entire lives into the task of searching out and setting forth the truth that God has placed within the book we call the Bible. To such men, those things which may properly be regarded as Biblical difficulties, contradictions and problems, become simply Biblical phenomena, and all such are to be investigated until they yield the secrets they contain. The mass of men may not care to even consider their findings, there may be no demand for the truth discovered, no interest in it, no sale for it; yet, the true student ignores all this and continues his studies. His prayer is ever, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of -thy law." When these are beheld he desires to show them to others, but if they refuse to see he turns back to the Word and regales his own spirit in the truth of God.

Every advance that man has made during the past centuries has come, as a rule, as the result of some investigator noticing a strange thing and then laboring upon it until that strange thing became understandable. This was the spirit of Moses when he discovered a bush on fire that was not consumed. Here was a phenomenon that he did not understand. He could have dismissed it with the statement that it was his business to feed the sheep, and not to investigate burning bushes. Let us notice his actions and the results.

"And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." Exodus 2:3-4.

We will do well to follow the example of Moses. Let us not hesitate to "turn aside" and give the time, exercise, labor and prayer that is required every time we come upon a strange thing in the Word of God. Let the questions, problems and difficulties be *burning bushes* out of which God may speak His message unto us.

This advice will probably fall unheeded upon the ears of those whose chief desire is for sermonic material, or those who are always looking for the simple things to feed babes who do not even intend to grow into spiritual manhood. The so-called faith of many Christians seems to be so delicate and fragile a flower that their ministers feel that the least cool wind of deeper truth, discussion or controversy would cause it to shed its petals on the ground.

Problems of interpretation do not exist for those who generalize concerning the truth, or for those who use only parts of the Bible. Those who never become specific concerning anything, and those who deal with self-chosen portions are always able to steer clear of anything that may present a difficulty.

Increasing our range of Bible study and being specific with the subjects we consider will cause such an increase of problems and difficulties that men who are easily discouraged will hurry back to the familiar ground of favorite texts, and confine their times with the Word to so-called *devotional reading*.

The moment that "all Scripture" becomes our field of study we discover that unanswered questions and unsolved problems increase at such an alarming rate that we may well wonder at first whether our faithful studies are producing clarity or confusion. The worthy student does not create problems of interpretation; he rather seeks to solve the problems which penetrating study of "all Scripture" are sure to impose. Naturally, to the person who has not studied, and therefore confronted no problems, the work of the true student seems divisive and superimposed. He feels that it is nothing more or less than *hair-splitting*.

Those students who regard problems of interpretation as Biblical phenomena, and seek to discover the truth that rests behind them, will, in the end, be forced to obey the injunction, "rightly to divide the Word of truth" or else abandon their studies. Those who divide the Word, in any way, are dispensationalists. Therefore, any person is a dispensationalist who refuses circumcision as a rite for the present time. Any person is a dispensationalist who trusts the blood of Christ rather than bringing an animal sacrifice. It must be admitted that all Christians are to a certain degree - dispensationalists.

Some Christians, who are not well instructed in the spiritual content of Scripture feel that a division into Old and New Testaments is sufficient. Others feel that it is enough to divide at the Cross or the day of Pentecost. These do not see the necessity of recognizing other and deeper distinctions, which confront the careful student of the Word of God. A division into Old and New Testaments solves none of the problems that confront us when we open the book of Matthew, and a division at Pentecost does not solve the problems that arise when we carefully study the epistles.

The penetrating study of the epistles will force a division at Acts 28:28. This is the final division that can be made. But will this division solve the problems that confront the student of the seven last epistles of Paul? namely: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Spiritual honesty will force us to admit that this last possible division does not solve all the problems that arise from the study of these epistles. In fact, the Acts 28 :28 division does more to solve the problems that arise in the books written before that time than in those that were written after it. However, let us trace through the New Testament that we might enter into a full understanding of the problem that confronts us in studying the seven last epistles of Paul.

The Four Gospels

Those who preach on carefully selected texts from the four gospels know nothing of the problems that arise when these four books are studied as a whole. They can wax eloquent on a passage such as - "**Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**"; but they dodge a major problem by not going one sentence beyond this and preaching on, "**Sell that ye have, and give alms.**" They can generalize for years about following the example of Christ, and they will face no problems if they do not become specific and set forth such examples as His circumcision; that He never married, that He owned no home, or that He went to the synagogue every Sabbath day.

The sincere student and teacher of Scripture cannot begin where he pleases and leave off where he pleases. Therefore, when he reads "**Sell that ye have and give alms**" he is faced with the problem of a direct command that he does not obey, and cannot, therefore, advise others to obey.

But this is only one of the problems of the four gospels. They are found on almost every page. There is the command of Christ **to give and lend without restraint** (Matt. 5:42); His words concerning the power to **bind and loose** (Matt. 16:19); the command that one who offends shall, after certain steps, **become as a Gentile** and a **tax gatherer** (Matt. 18:17); the command to pray concerning **flight on the Sabbath** (Matt. 24:20); the words of Christ concerning **signs that should follow believers** (Mark 16:17-18); the statement that **salvation is of the Jews** (John 4:22); the promise concerning "greater works" (John 14:12); the explicit statement of Christ concerning **the remission and retaining of sins** (John 20:23). These are a few of the more obvious problems that face the student of the four gospels; and they are mentioned solely for the purpose of illustration. There are a host of others more difficult than these, which do not appear so plain. but face us the moment careful investigation begins.

However, the complete dispensationalist has discovered that there are no problems existing in the four gospels that will not yield to prayerful and persistent study if, first of all, certain dispensational truths are fully recognized. We must recognize that when we

pass from Malachi to Matthew that the setting, the people, the land and the dispensation are the same; that the four gospels record the ministry of Jesus Christ the Son of Abraham, the Son of David and the Son of God; that He was Israel's promised Messiah; that He came to confirm the promises made to the fathers; that these gospels record the ministry of one who was not sent to any save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This recognition does not rob us of the four gospels, but it will bring us into possession of every particle of truth they contain.

The Acts

Those who study Acts simply as history and who generalize concerning the truth it contains are not bothered with any problems of interpretation. Those who study it word for word as a revelation from God face numerous problems. These problems have been set forth before in our pages, and we have shown that there is no problem in the book that will not yield to proper investigation if we, first of all, recognize that Israel did not lose her favored position at the Cross; and that the book of Acts is the record of a unique administration, not to be confounded with the present administration of the grace of God.

The Epistles of the Acts Period

The epistles of James, Jude, John, Peter and the first six epistles of Paul abound in problems that vex the student. These problems vanish when we recognize that these were written during the Pentecostal administration, under a different order from God's present order; that there was a gospel of the circumcision and a gospel of the uncircumcision, both of which were superseded in the Acts period by the gospel of the grace of God. This is revealed in Romans.

Paul's Final Epistles

The statement "the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles" brought about a radical change. That it should be sent to the Gentiles was unknown and unprophesied. The statement came without any advance warning. After this statement was made Paul wrote 1 Timothy, Titus, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon and 2 Timothy. These epistles begin to yield their message the moment we recognize Acts 28:28 as the dispensational dividing line. Failure to do this forces the student to try to adjust the position of the saved as stated in Ephesians down to the level of the position of believers as stated in Romans. In Ephesians they are members of the Church, which is His body, while in Romans they were graft into Israel's good olive tree.

But, as we have stated before, the Acts 28:28 division leaves us with many problems in these epistles for which we must find a satisfactory solution. Let us notice a few of these.

1. In 1 Timothy, there is reference to bishops and deacons. In Philippians, the bishops and deacons are addressed. In Titus, we find that he is instructed to appoint elders in every city. The elders that ruled well are to be counted worthy of double honor. It is evident that these were offices of no small importance and that they take a place of prominence after Acts 28:28 that they did not have before. Now, those who are instructed in the truth of the Church which is His body realize that if we establish these offices today and recognize the position and authority of such, we destroy the unity of the Spirit by giving or yielding to one believer spiritual authority over another. By so doing we violate the words "one Lord" and deny the truth of a joint body. A joint body is one in

which every member is the peer of every other member. This problem is a major one. and it is not solved by saying that this order passed when the Church became apostate.

2. The outstanding truth of Ephesians concerns a calling that has its destiny and blessings in a sphere that is far above all that is of the heavens. Yet, in Philippians we read that our citizenship is in the heavens, and in Colossians we read of the hope that is laid up for us in the heavens. Both of these truths can hardly be true of the same calling.

3. In 1 Timothy 4: 14 we read of a gift that was in Timothy by the laying on of hands of the presbytery. In 2 Timothy 1:6 Timothy is told to stir up the gift that was in him by the putting on of Paul's hands. In Ephesians we read of gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. If one of these gifts are here today **they should all be here**. We are convinced that no gifts such as these exist today. Capable teachers can be found, but **God given teachers do not exist**. Man today recognizes a gift according to a man's ability to teach. In Scripture the gift was what a man taught, not the ability to set it forth in an attractive manner. If there is a single teacher today that is God given then it is time for all of us to cease our bungling efforts and go sit at the feet of the man who has his teaching as the gift of God.

But what is the solution of this problem? It does not help to arbitrarily state that the apostles and prophets are gone, and that evangelists, pastors and teachers remain.

4. The salutations of the seven last epistles of Paul present another phenomenon. Four are addressed to individuals and three are addressed to groups, but the inspired addresses of these three are not the same. The student of Scripture asks - Why? and feels that behind this phenomenon is a message from God.

5. In Ephesians the message travels back and forth between *we* and *ye*. This makes a distinction that cannot be ignored. Just what is the distinction in the groups called *we* and *ye*.

It becomes increasingly evident to those who have recognized Acts 28:28 as a dispensational dividing line, that in studying the seven last epistles of Paul we need a method of treatment which will allow every question to be answered and every problem to be solved. This method must not leave us stalemated before certain problems with no alternative left except to explain them away. The proper method of treating these epistles will cause every statement in them to glow with a new light and glory as the truth unfolds. Setting forth such a method of treatment will be our purpose in this series of studies.

To Be Continued, Vol. III, No. 7

HEAD OVER ALL

The most important truth in relationship to the Church which is His body does not concern its beginning, its membership, its hope or its destiny. The supreme truth is the revelation of Jesus Christ as Head over all to the Church, which is His body. This is the supreme revelation of Colossians and Ephesians; it is found in no other book, and were it not for these two epistles this grand truth would be unknown.

That Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church which is His body is a point of doctrine upon which all can agree. There is no argument here; no cause for debate. Those who do not believe this simply do not believe the Book. There is no room here for differences of opinion or interpretation - He is the Head. This is one truth that all believers should enter into, assimilate, enjoy and walk in the light of it.

But, alas, how few have entered into it and how few are walking in the light of it. The truth concerning the Head is actually being held down and minimized by other truths from the Word of God. This will be demonstrated in the course of this article. First of all let us consider some of the truth concerning our Head.

In Colossians we read:

"And He is the Head of the Body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all things He might have preeminence." Col. 1:20.

This passage emphatically states that the Lord Jesus is the Head of the body, the Church. This is a relationship that He bears to no other body or out-calling. He is revealed as the Messiah, the King and the Shepherd of Israel; He' is revealed as the High Priest and Advocate of the Church of God; but the relationship of Head is reserved for the Church which is His body alone.

Christ is also the head of every man. Adam was the federal head of the race but lost his leadership in the fall. By death and resurrection Jesus Christ is now the head of the Adamic family. But this is not to be confused with His position as Head of the Church, which is His body.

In Ephesians we read:

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1:22-23.

This passage is important because it corrects a popular error. Today, many believers are unable to give Christ the preeminent place as Head because they feel that this is just one office among many. Failing to recognize the distinctive character and position of the Church which is His body, they speak of Him as their Shepherd, their Intercessor, their Advocate, their High Priest and their King. Thus His glorious office as Head must take its place along with other offices. It is true that Christ is all these things; He holds every one of these offices; but He is not all these things to the Church which is His body for He has been made .HEAD OVER ALL to the present body.

In sermon and song today much emphasis is placed on Christ as Shepherd, High Priest, Advocate and King; while the Head is unhonored and unsung. There is not a song in the average song book that concerns and glorifies Christ as the Head. True - now and then the Head is mentioned - but only mentioned. All growth for members of the Church, which is His body is to be in the Head. This demonstrates the importance of this office.

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." Eph.4:15.

All ministry for the Church which is His body is performed by Jesus Christ as the Head. He never steps out of this office to do anything that He does for us.

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4:16.

Ephesians 2 shows us that as Saviour, Christ meets our every need as sinners; Ephesians 4 shows us that as Head, Christ meets our every need as saints. We may confidently challenge anyone to show us a need that Jesus Christ cannot and does not supply as Head.

We insist that Jesus Christ has one office in relationship to the members of the Church, which is His body and that office is Head. All we will ever need from the hour of salvation to the hour of manifestation in glory He will supply as Head. To us this is not just one of His offices, it is His one and only office.

Jesus Christ is the great High Priest. The Church which is His body never had a priest, has no High Priest and therefore.. has no great High Priest. A priest is for those who are at a distance. It has always spoken of distance, and always will. We have been made nigh by the blood of Christ and, therefore, have no need of priestly work. However, yielding the point for the sake of argument we can still insist that if we need any ministry that a priest performs for the people, Christ will perform it for us as our Head.

Christ is revealed as the Advocate; but we have no Advocate neither do we need an Advocate. Any ministry that we require that is contained in the word Advocate, Christ will perform for us as our Head.

A man does not dishonor his wife, neither does he deny her any glory when he insists that she is not his cook. not his laundress, not his housekeeper. And the man who properly honors his wife will insist that she is none of these things. This does not mean that such wives do no cooking, no cleaning and no washing. It simply means that the one who does these things is a wife and she does them as wife without assuming some new relationship for the work she is to do. She is not cook for a time, housekeeper for a time and then laundress for a time. She is wife all the time.

Even so it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not deny Him any honor when we insist that He is not our Intercessor even though He does this work for us. Since He has been made Head over all, we insist that He is only our Head. All He ever does for us He does as Head. Let us ask, is this making too much of the Head? The answer will demonstrate into how much "Head truth" the so-called "body-truth" preachers have entered. .

GOD-GIVEN FAITH

Christianity is the popular religion of the western world. It is so popular that, as a rule, it can be embraced without cost or suffering. Suffering sometimes comes because the convert does not embrace a particular kind of Christianity - for example, he becomes a Baptist instead of a Methodist or Catholic, and he may suffer from his associates because of this, but it is not because he embraced the Christian religion.

The whole structure of Christianity is based upon a few passages from the Bible, a few sayings of Christ, a few ordinances He is supposed to have left, and a few days and seasons that are to be observed. It has many forms and many beliefs, so that some form or some belief can be found to suit the natural temperament of all who claim to be Christian. It is very flexible, attractive and convenient. An old heathen tradition or a modern custom can be grafted on it at any time, and these never seem out of place. Christendom is big, it owns much property, it has work to be done and it will pay those who do it. It may give a small man a few dollars each week for preaching a sermon or it may provide a strong man with an excellent living. There are few indeed who dare to live for God wholly separated from it. Even those who cannot fellowship it fully remain near enough that they may scramble for a crumb that may drop from its table.

Those who make up Christendom are Christian in name, but the majority do not know Christ in life or experience. Since Christianity is a popular religion men embrace it as an avenue of gain or a badge of respectability. It will bring them business, give them standing in the community or secure them votes in an election. Men who never attend church do so with much fanfare and publicity as soon as they are nominated for high office. The average professing Christian would repudiate Christianity in a moment and line up with that which promises greater dividends if they felt it would pay them to do so.

The average professing Christian deserves little credit for being one, and less credit for believing what he does. They are Christians because they were born in a so-called Christian country, and they embrace certain beliefs because circumstances so arranged it. If these had been born in Turkey they would have been Muslims, and if born in Japan they would have worshipped their ancestors. In many cases their peculiar brand of Christianity is based upon the country in which they were born. Those born in the Netherlands are usually Calvinists, and those born in Norway and Sweden are usually Arminians. If such as these had been born in Italy they would have been Catholics and believed in purgatory and priestly confession, of sin.

In this great conglomeration of Christendom is found a small band of people, known only to God, who are believing with a faith that is not their own and did not result from circumstances of birth and temperament. They are believing with a faith that is the gift of God.

We are sure that the reader is able to make distinctions between a dairyman and a man who keeps a cow, a fisherman and a man who goes fishing now and then, a farmer and the man who raises a few vegetables. Even so we should make a clear distinction between a believer and those who believe certain things.

The average professing Christian believes certain things, but this does not make him a believer. King Agrippa believed certain things but he was not a believer; the devils also believe certain things (Jas. 2:19), but they are not believers. A man may believe certain things, and in addition to this may become a Baptist, a Methodist or a Presbyterian, but even this will not constitute him a believer.

In Genesis 1 we read that **"God said, Let there be light: and there was light."** Paul takes this as an illustration and says:

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6.

Men have no light until God says "Let there be light," and men are not believers until they come into possession of a faith that is the gift of God.

The writer can look back over his own experience and state that he has always believed certain things. He has always believed that the Bible was the Word of God, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that He was virgin born, that He died on the Cross for the sins of the world. These things have always been believed and were never doubted. But he was not saved until the day came that God wrought a miracle and gave him the faith that made him a believer.

We are believers, believing is our business, and many of us have learned to tolerate nothing that interferes with our business. We refuse to enter into any fellowship from which men can cast us out because of something we believe. We are believers as the result of a God-given faith. This faith grows in response to training and exercise. It can atrophy, even if it cannot die. It is a gift of God and it will not be taken away. By it we have assumed a right attitude toward ourselves and toward God. By it we have been saved. Because it is God's gift to us it must not be despised or neglected.

God given faith refuses to act except upon the Word of God. Its sphere of operation is the written Word. Man may say - "I have faith it will come out right," or "I have faith he will get well" or "I have faith this venture will be successful." But God-given faith cannot act apart from a positive statement in the Word of God. God-given faith is naked, unaided, unsupported, without any prop or mixture. It needs no ceremony, ritual or external forms. It needs no sign or vision to sustain it. Its positive requirements are freedom and exercise.

The believer makes his greatest mistake when he circumscribes his faith, or permits others to do so. He feels he should require his faith to develop according to one of the great creeds of Christendom or along the lines of a certain denomination. He feels he should not permit it to believe anything except that which his chosen denomination believes. He cannot permit his faith to investigate for fear it may be led to believe something that he considers an error. He cannot even permit his faith to accept plain statements of the Word of God until it has the approval of some honored teacher. There are many saved people who do not have a single belief that they can righteously claim as their own.

In times past the Chinese tried to control the growth and shape of their women's feet. By birth the Chinese babies were given perfect feet, but the parents felt that these feet should not be permitted to grow as nature intended. The feet, therefore, were bound until they developed into painful monstrosities upon which the owners could hardly stand, let alone walk.

Even so it often is with God-given faith. Seldom if ever is it permitted to exercise and develop itself as God intended. Self appointed guardians of the faith stand ready to take charge of it at once. It is not permitted to believe certain things. It must be bound so that it grows to be Baptist, Lutheran or Methodist. It grows into a monstrosity upon which the believer cannot stand unsupported. To walk by it is impossible.

Many true believers have never exercised the faith that God gave them. The work that God intended their faith to do they have delegated to others, usually an assembly. They believe only what the assembly believes. They never judge or discern a matter; this is left to the assembly. If the assembly says a thing is right, that makes it right; and if the assembly says a thing is wrong, that makes it wrong.

We have watched some of these when in a moment of faith they have broken loose from their bonds and tried to walk alone. But when it became the duty of their faith to believe, to judge and to discern, their faith was not able to do it. This was work in which they were not trained. They had neither strength nor skill for such work. And in the end they became frightened and rushed about looking for a new teacher to follow or a new assembly to take control of them.

Today, faith is little understood. In religious circles it means assent to a doctrine. Religious systems require their adherents subscribe to a set of doctrinal beliefs before the convert has had time to go to the Word of God. Even the minister had to have his beliefs first and do his studying afterward. That which should be the results of study is required to be there before the study begins. Defending these stereotyped doctrinal platforms is supposed to be defending the faith. Contending for them is regarded to be the same as contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

We who believe have learned that faith is not assent to certain teachings. We know that our faith is the gift of God. It is not natural, not inherited. It causes us to take God at His Word and act upon it. It causes complete surrender of ourselves to the truth, the grace and purpose of God. It is the principle by which we live. It is not something apart from our daily lives and interests. It makes no distinctions between sacred and secular for it pervades all life.

"The just shall live by faith."

GOD-GIVEN REPENTANCE

It grows increasingly evident that among many who possess God - given faith there is need for God - given repentance. They have entered into and entrenched themselves in a position where everyone of their social, commercial and religious interests are opposed to their entering into the truth. They have become deeply prejudiced against whole bodies of truth about which they know little or nothing. Even if we could answer everyone of their questions, refute every criticism and triumph in every debate it would not cause them to acknowledge the truth. They have determined to make no change.

Our course of action toward such as these is laid out for us by the Apostle Paul.

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but he gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. 2:24-25.

The evil forces which surround those to whom God has given faith have so worked that they have been forced into positions where they are not entirely satisfied. They doubt the correctness of their positions, and often despise the things they are forced to fellowship,

yet they cannot acknowledge their error and extricate themselves because of the price they will have to pay for their freedom. If such as these ever acknowledge the truth and walk in the light of it, it will be when God gives them repentance.

NOTES ON 1 CORINTHIANS

(continued from Vol. III, No. 5)

12:1-2. In this passage we have, in the *Authorized Version*, an emphatic statement that the Corinthian believers were Gentiles. In I Cor. 10:1-2 there is a statement that could not be true of Gentiles, and it positively identifies the Corinthians as Jews. This creates a problem, for we cannot believe both of these. The Corinthian saints were either Jews that believed or Gentiles that believed. Most expositors solve the problem by accepting the statement of 12:2 since they wish it to be true and they gloss over or generalize concerning the explicit statements on chapter 10:1 and 2. This question is important, for if I Corinthians were written to Gentiles that believed then the Gentiles have at least one oracle from God, and, the argument of Paul concerning Jewish advantage in Romans 3:2 breaks down. It seems strange indeed, that if Paul had been the transmitter of oracles from God to the Gentiles that he would have argued for Jewish superiority chiefly on the ground that to them had been committed the oracles of God. And, even if the bulk of the oracles had been committed to Jews, and only one or two sent to the Gentiles, then the Gentiles have the latest oracles and the argument for Jewish advantage breaks down. We are convinced that at the time Romans was written the Gentiles possessed no oracles that had been committed to them by God.

Every version of I Cor. 12:2 reads about the same. There is one feature that all versions seem to have in common, and this feature is a fault. The word **pros** is found in the Greek, but its presence in this verse is not recognized in any of the leading versions. This word is not unimportant for it is a preposition meaning **toward** or *in the direction of*. Another important fact is the presence of two words from the same family, **egethe**, meaning *ye were led*; and **apogomenoi**, meaning *being led away*. The presence of these two words, so much alike, in a short sentence seems to have puzzled the translators. They crowd them in but it causes their versions to become confused. If they recognized the word **pros** their versions would be still more confusing.

The Greek of I Cor. 12:2 is as follows: ***Oidate hoti hote ethne ete pros ta eidola ta aphona has an egesthe apagomenoi.*** Let us consider the meanings of these words one by one. **Oidate** means, *you know*; **hoti** means, *that*; **hote** means, *when*; **ethne** means, *Gentiles (or nations)*; **ete** means, *you were*; **pros** means, *toward*; **ta** means, *the*; **eidola** means, *idols*; **ta aphona** means, *the dumb*; **hos** means, *as*; **an** is a particle denoting a contingency like our word *if*; **egesthe** means, *ye were led*; **apagomenoi** means, *being led away*.

Now if we put this in a word for word literal translation we have the following: ***Ye know that when Gentiles ye were toward the idols the dumb as ye were led being led away.***

The reader will see at once that this does not make sense, yet it is a literal word for word translation of 1 Cor. 12:2. In order to produce an idiomatic translation, these words must be recast, but we do not feel the need of casting any of them out. We present the following translation:

"You know that when you were led away toward the Gentiles, you were being led away to the dumb idols."

In behalf of this translation we would say that it is true to the Greek, it is true to the truth, it makes sense, it discards no inspired words, and it does not contradict 1 Cor. 10:1-2. It permits 1 Cor. 5:1 to stand in its natural manner and simple meaning.

In all other versions of this passage we have the Gentiles being led away to idols. It seems strange indeed to speak thus of Gentiles who had been steeped in idolatry for four millenniums. If these Corinthians were Gentiles, and if they were led away to idols, then what were they led away from? Remember, that the experience described in this passage happened in the lifetime of those to whom Paul was speaking.

Israel had a God who was not voiceless. He did not leave them without a word from Him. This was the Jews strongest argument that their God was the true God. Even their enemies were forced to admit the strength of this.

"For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." Deut. 32:31.

"Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire, as thou hast heard, and live." Deut. 4:33.

The natural tendency of the Jew was always toward the Gentiles. It was God's hand that kept them separate and distinct. Those who were out of the land were more inclined to give up their distinctive character. In fact they desired to give up their distinctive character and divinely ordained separation, but they had no desire to give up a God who had spoken, for a voiceless idol. In other words, they desired to adopt every characteristic of the Gentiles except their chief characteristic - idolatry. But this was impossible for Paul calls to their attention that when they were led away toward the Gentiles they were led away to dumb idols. They could not go toward the Gentiles without leaving God behind.

(continued, Vol. IV, No. 2)

UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION

Universal Reconciliation is a name commonly given to a system of teaching that contends for the complete restoration into God's love and favor of all members of the human race, all angels that sinned, and even Satan himself. Inasmuch as this seems to be the most radical and outstanding tenet of this system of teaching, those who follow it are called *Universal Reconciliationists*, and while they object to this term, yet, it seems to aptly designate and describe them.

The leading exponent of this system of teaching is Mr. A. E. Knoch, formerly of Los Angeles, California, but now residing in Germany. He is an able and zealous advocate of

his teachings. The publishing house of this group is *The Concordant Publishing Concern* of Los Angeles, Their magazine is called *Unsearchable Riches*. Mr. Knoch is the translator and editor of the *Concordant Version* of the New Testament. Mr. Adlai Loudy is an active evangelist and exponent of the doctrines of *Universal Reconciliation*, and Mr. George L. Rogers is a regular contributor to the publication of this group.

I am personally acquainted with many individuals who accept this system of teaching, and I believe that I possess and have carefully read all literature published by this group. This reading includes all available back numbers of their magazine and all notes in the *Concordant Version* of the New Testament; so I feel that I am not ignorant of or unfamiliar with their teachings. I shall try to state certain of these as set forth in their writings.

***Universal Reconciliation* does not hold men, angels and Satan shall go unpunished, but it does hold that the punishment is temporal and that it will come to an end. The theory necessarily demands a resurrection from the lake of fire, for it is absolutely essential to the doctrine that there shall be a deliverance from the second death.** For this important event they can supply no direct Scripture. We are asked to believe that it is inferred in certain passages, but as far as I am concerned this would cause me to violate an important principle in Bible study - never base doctrine on an inference.

Mr. Knoch teaches that "the Church which is His body" began with the separation of Paul and Barnabas as recorded in Acts 13. He teaches a dispensational change at Acts 28:28, but begins the Church, which is His body before that time. He recognizes two baptisms, water and Spirit, in the Acts period, but eliminates water baptism from the present administration. He holds that in 1 Cor. 11 a service of bread and wine was given, and that this should be observed at the present time. This service he calls- "the Lord's dinner." He holds that all of Paul's epistles were written to Gentiles which believed; and so holds that the body mentioned in 1 Cor. 12 is the Church which is His body, and that the rapture and resurrection of 1 Thess. 4 describes the expectation of the Church which is His body. He rejects altogether the thought of three spheres of future glory, and holds that "the heavens" and "the earth" make up the Universe.

The Editor of *The Word of Truth* believes that whatever punishment is meted out at the great white throne it will be unending therefore, eternal. I do not believe in a resurrection from the lake of fire or the second death. I believe that there were three baptisms in the Acts period, and neither water nor Spirit baptism is for today. I believe that the "one baptism" in Ephesians is our identification with Christ in His death. I believe that the Thessalonian and Corinthian epistles were written to *Jews* that believe, and, therefore, 1 Thess. 4 does not describe our rapture or resurrection. I do not believe that any service of bread and wine was given to the Church, which is His body. I do believe in three spheres of future glory. Inasmuch as I do not agree with the teachings of *Universal Reconciliation* in its main principles, and on many minor details, it is evident I do not believe in *Universal Reconciliation*. The discoveries that have come to me as a result of the past six years of intensive study have led me further from it. It will not avail for any to try to discredit and hinder my ministry by saying that I am heading toward it. This is not true. The tendency is in the opposite direction.

OUR FRIENDS SAY

ENGLAND: I look forward eagerly to the arrival of *The Word of Truth*, often wishing it were more frequent. It is increasingly a source of blessing and help to me.

SCOTLAND: The magazine is much appreciated here, and we pray and believe that your faithful endeavor to "rightly divide the Word of truth" will have the blessing of the Lord upon it. Any voice raised, which among the many voices of today seeks to give Him the preeminence is indeed welcome.

ARGENTINA: Will you kindly continue sending your much appreciated and enjoyed magazine, *The Word of Truth*. It has cleared up many things for me.

NEW ZEALAND: Please find enclosed money order - being an expression of our fellowship with you in the splendid and helpful testimony you are presenting to the truth of the Mystery. Your ministry is singularly helpful.

CANADA: Your printed ministry continues to be an ever increasing source of delight to the hearts of those desiring a more perfect knowledge of our Lord in His ascension glory.

CALIFORNIA: Your ministry through *The Word of Truth* has blessed me in ever so many ways, and while I am unable to respond financially as much as I would like, yet, I am going to give to your work the small sum of one dollar every month. This is not my estimate of its value, but simply a token of my appreciation.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

******De Heerlijkheid van de Eene Doop.** This is the title of our pamphlet *The Glory of the One Baptism* as translated into the Dutch language. The work was done by Mr. G. J. Pauptit of Staphorst, Netherlands, and has been printed in pamphlet form for circulation among Dutch speaking people. We had no part in this effort except to grant permission for the translation. However, we find cause for rejoicing because of this widening of our testimony to the glory of the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

****The Editor's ministry during the coming weeks will be confined to *The Gospel Fellowship* in Grand Rapids. No classes will be held in Chicago during July and August, but we expect to resume the class there early in September. We will not be in Grand Rapids from August 14 to 31. Friends who may plan to visit us should note this schedule.

****Volume three of the magazine will not be bound until twelve numbers have been issued. As this issue is Number 6 the next bound volume will not be issued before the first of the coming year.

****The **Unfolding of the Secret** is the title of a new series of studies beginning in this issue. We believe that in these studies truth will be presented which will exceed in helpfulness anything that we have given in -our pages heretofore. The burden of these studies is to present a method of treatment and an approach to the seven epistles of Paul, which will cause these to yield their message to the student. This will require, in the

course of these studies, a brief exposition of each one of these seven epistles. A feature of this series of studies will be the publishing of a simple chart for purposes of illustrating the messages presented. This will probably be printed separately and enclosed with an issue of the magazine.

Originally, we planned to present these studies under title of *Progressive Revelation, and the Secret*. They were given under this title in Rockford, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Buffalo and Philadelphia. This has given us ample opportunity to season and develop the messages.

****Do not forget our material needs. Our witness is maintained by many small gifts from God's people.

End, Vol. III, No. 6