

-THE PAST YEAR-

Last year was a year of beginnings for us. It was about last April that we began the class at my home. I remember that some folks came from beyond Plymouth to the first meeting. Then in July came out the first issue of the paper, TRUTH FOR TODAY. We managed to get out one each month, making 6 issues for 1948.

Last spring I began substituting for Mr. Bowser, who teaches the class in Bremen, and kept that up until in September. Sept. 27, Mr. Otis Q. Sellers, Bible teacher and editor of THE WORD OF TRUTH, spoke to the class in Bremen at the town hall.

My first broadcast was given over station WRSW Sept. 28. Fourteen of these weekly programs were given in 1948.

After all the bills were paid for 1948 we had a balance left in the bank of \$77.06, or almost sufficient to run us 2 months. We are thankful that this could be accomplished without making any appeals for money. The Lord provides.

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-ALL TRUTH-

Just about 20 years ago, a little magazine came to my attention, just how I came to get it I do not remember. Anyway it did not last long and was discontinued in 1932. But in it I came across the truth of right division of the Word. It was brot out that there was a distinct change of dispensation at the end of Acts. It was made plain that there was a difference between the church of God during the Acts period and the church which is His Body during the present period. I saw for the first time that there was a difference between the bride and the body of the Bridegroom.

But this was not by any means the most important thing I found out. I discovered that I had been teaching and hoping in the wrong hope. I did not take up readily with this new teaching. I had already been exposed to enough false teaching that I had learned to

watch my step and search the Word of God to prove all things. I had had some valuable Bible courses in college and had read my Bible from almost the time I learned to read. So it took me about 10 years to work out and formulate an outline of the main dispensations so that everything in the Word would fit in without any contradictions. I was finally convinced that Acts 28:28 was a dispensational dividing line. Then I saw plainly that no church began at Pentecost, as I had been taught. It could not be proven by one statement from the Bible. The hard part to learn and accept was the fact that after Acts began a dispensation of grace where salvation was absolutely a gift from God and free from all works of the law, such as church ordinances.

The reason I had not realized these things before was that I had not noticed that God had dealt in a special way with His people Israel. I had made no difference between Jew and Gentile. I had not seen that there were several future resurrections instead of just one. I did not see that there were different spheres or places of blessing in the resurrections. I thot all good folks went to heaven and the Devil got the rest. It was hard to admit that I was all wrong. It would have been easier to have learned it right in the first place instead of having to unlearn a lot of things and starting over.

Then too, I had never had the real peace of fellowship with my Lord until I better understood His Word. Then I began to find some of the unsearchable riches of Christ. My doubts and fears began to melt away. I began to realize that His Holy Spirit was with me and teaching me and leading me into the ALL TRUTH which had been promised. Now I am trying to get others to see and understand these things that they may have a joy and peace in their lives which they have never known before. But, above all, I want them to have the hope of Col. 3:4, MANIFESTATION IN GLORY.

-FAITH-

Faith is believing what God has said and then conforming one's life to what God has said. A mere belief may be passive, but faith implies action. I might believe that there was a God, but it might not bring about any responsive action on my part. I might not believe what He has said. There are some people that I believe exist. I have met them and talked with them. I have heard them talk, but I have no confidence in the truth of what they say. Then I have no faith in them.

God made some definite promises to Abraham. Abraham believed what God said. It was counted unto him for righteousness. That belief caused him to act. He acted as if the things which God promised were actually going to happen. He organized his whole life with that in view. That is why he lived in tents, temporary dwellings. He was looking for a city whose builder and maker was God, which was going to be let down out of heaven some day. He felt that he was only a pilgrim and a stranger here. He did not build a great mansion in the city and settle down as if that was all there was to life.

A person's actions and manner of life soon betray his faith. His heart will be where his treasures are.

Faith (the Latin is CREDO, I believe, hence credit) is based upon a promise of some kind. It expects an action of some kind from the one believed in.

Israel in the wilderness had a promise of a land flowing with milk and honey. They did not believe God. They sent in spies to see if it could really be true. They were looking for evidence. Many today are the same. They continually look for evidence and experience instead of having faith in what God has said. Such are no better than Israel in the wilderness. It must be noticed that only those received the promise who believed. The rest fell in the wilderness and

missed the joy which was set before them.

During the period covered by Acts a new hope was offered to Israel. This was a heavenly hope. This was another promised land. It was only to those who were counted as spiritual Israel. It was only to those who would believe the Word and act upon it. This hope was a great city, the New Jerusalem. It was to be obtained either by an earlier resurrection than that of the Last Day or if still living they would experience being caught up into the air to meet the Lord along with those who would be resurrected. This was a definite promise. It had to be believed and claimed by faith. Nothing was said about how they lived otherwise. It was not obtained by any good works. Caleb and Joshua did not enter Canaan because of their heroic deeds, but because they had faith. They believed what God had said about the land and believed that God would give it to them. They would not hesitate to enter in upon the promise. In each case it was a matter of a definite promise being made and the response of one who would claim it in faith.

So to Israel in the Old Testament was offered a land here on this earth. Those who had faith will inherit that land some day in resurrection. After the rejection of our Lord during His ministry, another hope was revealed. He would go and prepare a place for those who had faith in what He promised. That place was in heaven. That was a higher hope than ever was revealed in the law and the prophets. It was obtained only by faith in the promise. The apostles to the Circumcision preached this same promise or gospel. Even Paul at the first preached this gospel. We have no record that the 12 ever preached any other hope. Neither do we have any record that the 12 ever preached to Gentiles outside of the time that Peter preached to the household of Cornelius. All during the Acts period, what preach-

ing Paul did to the Gentiles was only secondary. It was always to the Jew first. At that time the Gentiles who believed were grafted into the olive tree which of course represented Israel. They then were partakers of the promises made to Abraham. This had always been open to Gentiles if they would first become Jews. But here in Acts the Gentiles were commanded not to become Jews by circumcision as they had always had to do before under the law.

Because of the answer to the prayer made on the cross, Israel were not only forgiven, but in the Acts period enjoyed greater blessing than ever before in their history. They spoke in tongues, healed the sick and performed all kinds of miracles. It was a great time for Israel. But as a nation they rejected the preaching of the Kingdom and the returning King, so in Acts 28:28 the apostle Paul closed the doors of the kingdom to the Jews. Since the Gentiles were grafted in, the door was then closed to them also. It is a very dark picture we have at this point. How can the world be evangelized if Israel have failed? They were the priestly nation. They had the Great Commission. None of these were for Gentiles.

So in about A.D. 58 was one of the greatest crises in world history. Would Christianity fail?

But God had a plan. It had been hid in Him from ages and generations. It had never been revealed to any of the prophets. There was not a breath or a hint of this plan until after Acts 28:28. Then the Lord appeared to Paul as He had promised on the Damascus road. He gave Paul a new revelation. It was this mystery or secret which had been hidden. In fact, there are two mysteries here revealed, but each is so bound up in the other that we do not think of trying to separate them. One is THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES or THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, and the other is THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL or CHRIST

AMONG THE GENTILES THE HOPE OF GLORY. God had given up the nations back in Gen. 11. His dealings with them from then on could only be thru the Jews as a priestly nation. The Jews never dreamed that God would ever deal directly with a Gentile. But here God does deal directly with Gentiles. It is by virtue of the reconciliation of the cross that He can again deal with them. Paul was the apostle of the reconciliation. To him was given the revelation that God would now deal with all nations on an equal footing, both Jew and Gentile.

When Israel as a nation was cut off at the end of Acts, the hope of Israel was also cut off. No one from then on could claim the New Jerusalem and the rapture as their hope. No one yet today can claim this hope. It is not offered. It is possible to profess hope in this promise which had been made to the nation Israel, but a thing cannot be received if it has not been promised or offered. No great amount of faith can change the plan. It must stand as it is.

Paul, in his ministry all during the Acts period, hoped in the hope of Israel. In both 1 Cor. and 1 Thess. he was looking forward to the rapture of the saints. But after this hope was taken from the nation at the end of Acts, then Paul no longer had a hope of being caught up alive, but hoped for an earlier resurrection from among the dead (Phil. 3:11). Instead of a hope of the New Jerusalem, he now hoped to be manifested with his Lord in glory (Col. 3:4). Instead of enjoying wandering up and down the streets of the New Jerusalem, he now hoped to be seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father in Glory which is far above all the heavens.

Friends, that is the only hope that is offered to you today. You will either take it by faith or you will not get it. So far as the Word reveals anything about the matter the only alternative is the Great White Throne Judgement. You

might or you might not receive eternal life there. It may be somewhat in question according to the description given. That is the last of the resurrections. All special blessings will be over by that time. You will miss the coronation in the super-heavens, the rapture of the saints of Israel, the supper of the Lamb, the Millennium. If I can judge rightly from the Word, those will only have terrestrial bodies and will not be able to visit any place outside of the earth. Neither will they be allowed in the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven to the new earth. It is not so much a matter of being lost as it is that one may suffer great loss.

Remember Lot. He lived in the city of Sodom. He was not very much repelled by its wickedness. He only tried to preach once. It was a failure. His own children laughed at his attempt. While he sowed to the flesh down in Sodom, his uncle Abraham was out in the hills with God and looking for a city. Lot was saved as by fire. We have no record that he ever knew about the city which was the hope of Abraham. He lost everything, even his reputation. Yet he was judged righteous and he will appear at the Great White Throne.

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

The foregoing article is just a bare outline of the subject. No proof texts were given as it would make it harder to read. Also it is not desirable to use proof texts. Texts must always be used with the contexts. The article is the result of years of study and hours of class teaching. With the limited space here it is impossible to make a detailed study of it. I would suggest that if you are at all interested in the subject which has so much to do with your destiny, get in a class and study the Word. What I have given here is just a suggestion of what you may find. You will receive no reward for believing what I have said, but it is believing what God has said that counts. My purpose is to goad you on to a study of God's Word.

The class meets each Sunday P.M. at my home at 2:30. This is 4 mi. south of Atwood, six miles west of Warsaw, or 7 miles northeast of Mentone on the Harrison Center Rd. You are welcome. The teaching is informal, the group small, and you may ask questions.

If this copy is marked SAMPLE on the front, it is the only one you will get unless you let us know if you wish to continue as a reader. A card will do. Please remember us in your prayers.

TRUTH FOR TODAY
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Sec. 562, P.L. & R.