

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE

The articles which appeared in the last three issues of THE WORD OF TRUTH under titles of "According to My Gospel," "The Truth, the Whole Truth," "Ye are Clean." and "New Creation and New Birth," resulted in more letters of appreciation and commendation than any articles that have appeared heretofore. At the same time they brought forth many questions, requests for additional information and some letters of adverse criticism. Many texts were quoted to prove that the teaching was wrong, but it must be said that these letters of criticism without exception were guilty of violating two important rules of Biblical interpretation, First, they used isolated texts with no regard for the context; and second, they took truth belonging to the present and read it into the past.

On every hand we hear it stated with much assurance that the plan of salvation has always been the same. That no matter what has changed, the plan of salvation has remained the same. This belief can only be held by those ignorant of the Old Testament. The moment we turn from the New Testament and become familiar with the Old, such beliefs have to be abandoned.

It is so evident that it seems childish to say it, yet we must insist over and over again that those who lived on the other side of the Cross did not have the New Testament. Therefore, God's method of dealing with humanity before the Cross must be found in the first thirty-nine books of the Bible. It is not right to take the majestic truth revealed in Romans, where God sets forth a new basis of dealing with lost humanity, and read it back and enforce it upon men in Old Testament times.

In view of the importance of possessing accurate knowledge of God's present dealings with mankind, it seems wise to go over the ground once again, approaching the subject from a new angle, and including in the message in due order the questions and objections set forth by our correspondents. In doing so may writer and reader at all times face each issue fairly and squarely, settling one point at a time, and refusing to permit confusing side issues to enter in.

From Adam to Abraham

Adam represents the beginning of the human race and Abraham represents the beginning of the house of Israel. From Adam to Abraham, God was dealing without distinction with the whole human race. All men had the light of conscience and were responsible to perform all known good and to refrain from all known evil. They were subject to death because of Adam's sin.

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Romans 5:14.

But even though death was the lot of all men they had every opportunity to live again after resurrection.

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Romans 2:6-7.

The records of Genesis and Hebrews 11 demonstrates that some men went far beyond the "patient continuance in well doing" and exercised great faith which brought them special blessings. Those mentioned are Abel, Enoch, Methusaleh and Noah. But the tendency of mankind was away from God, and this tendency was so pronounced that it resulted in the conditions set forth in first chapter of Romans.

This chapter tells us of God given light and knowledge. The plain unmistakable statement is that "they knew God." Beginning with this fact Romans 1:21-23 sets forth a seven-fold giving up of God by man. Romans 1:24-28 tells of a three-fold giving up of man by God.

We must take this portion as being the record of certain things that actually occurred. If we do this then all must agree that one time in human history every link that bound the Creator to His creatures was severed. The divorce was absolute and no relationship existed between man and God.

There is too much Bible study that ignores this important truth. And some who admit that Romans 1 is a record of an actual occurrence confuse the matter by failing to recognize the time when it occurred. Those who study divine revelation from beginning to end can find only one place that this can be true. That place is between the tower of Babel and the call of Abraham. It could not have been true before Babel because the Lord came down to see the tower and the city which man was building. It could not have been true after Abraham, for after that time God always had a people for Himself.

It is not only ridiculous but it dishonors the work of Christ to say that this took place at the Cross. There, God was not giving up mankind or severing the world from Himself for it has been revealed:

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:19.

It is plain that this shuts us up to one of two things. At the Cross God was either giving up the world and judging the world for its sins, or He was reconciling the world and imputing sins. Only one of these can be true, for cutting off is the very opposite of reconciliation. We believe and declare that at the Cross God was reconciling the world to Himself. This eliminates the Cross as a probable point where God gave up man and man gave up God. Those who would confuse the matter by placing the events of Romans I: 19-23 at the Cross should honestly face the revelation that God has given concerning what took place at the Cross. If they will do this they will return to Genesis 11 as the point where man completed his giving up of God and God gave up man.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Out of the human race severed from God one man was chosen by God. This marks a new beginning. Much stress has been laid upon the fact that God's covenants to Abraham are wholly gracious and unconditional. This is true. But, since following this out to all its logical conclusions we find many who treat these covenants as if they were meaningless. They would have us believe that in the Old Testament there is no distinction between Abraham's seed and the balance of mankind. They insist that all are equal. that they were born without God and without hope, and only entered into hope and relationship with God when they believed. To prove this they ignore the Old Testament revelation and quote from the book of Romans.

Let us examine once more the promises God made to Abraham and his seed. And, it seems a shame that even the word "seed" should be used by some to create confusion. As used here "seed" means offspring or descendents, nothing more and nothing less.

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I WILL BE THEIR GOD." Gen. 17:7-8.

Now, as to these words two positions are possible. Either God meant what He said, or He did not mean what He said. Believing that God meant what He said, that these promises are unconditional and that they are as good as any promise in the Word of God, we hold without qualification that from Genesis 12 to Acts 28:28 everyone born as a descendant of Abraham was born in covenant relationship to God, born with a claim upon the promises of God, born one of God's children, born into the household of God, born a member of the congregation of God. These things everyone of Abraham's seed possessed' from birth. Such were not born without God and without hope.

The time has come for men to say that they believe God or do not believe God. Let them cease quoting Scripture to try to set aside the promises God made to Abraham's seed. These can never be set aside until God sets them aside. We hold that they became temporarily inoperative at Acts 28:28. They are not now operative. They will again be operative in a future day when God resumes His dealings with His people Israel again.

The Rite of Circumcision

The express command of God required that all of Abraham's seed be circumcised at the age of eight days. This rite is so meaningless to us and so foreign to the walk of the Church which is His body, that some seem to believe it was always meaningless and simply a human ceremony performed by Israel. But we must remember that this rite was divinely given and divinely commanded. Failure to observe this brought serious loss. Let the reader examine Gen. 17:11-14, and in view of the positive revelation given there see how it is impossible for us to believe that the seed of Abraham were born without God and without hope even as men are born today. Were they performing this rite on one who had no relationship to God? Had this child exercised faith and experienced salvation during its eight days on earth? Had it been born again?

In this connection we have been referred to Gal. 5:6 where we are told that circumcision avails nothing. This was written two thousand years after God gave the rite of circumcision. Furthermore, we do not hold that circumcision itself ever availed anything. It did not bring them into the covenant and it did not establish any relationship. It was the symbol of a covenant and relationship into which the child was born.

Cut Off From the Covenant

Failure to consider all truth will always be a stumbling block. The truth concerning the position of Abraham's seed is vitally related to another truth—they could be cut off from the covenant and lose all that they possessed by being born the seed of Abraham. Note this in the following passages:

"And the uncircumcised man child . . . shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. 17:14.

"Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." Exo. 12:15.

"For, whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation." Exo. 12:19.

"Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Exo. 31:14.

Thus it was that one born in the covenant, born with God as his God, born with a promise of the land, could be cut off from Israel, cut off from the covenant. Failure to circumcise, failure to observe the passover, failure to keep the sabbath, the committing of certain sins resulted in a complete loss of all that the Israelite gained by being Abraham's seed. Such a one might continue to dwell and labor among Israel, but from the moment he was cut off he was never reckoned as a part of the house of Israel by God. Any promise to Israel or to Abraham's seed did not include those cut off from that relationship. An Israelite cut off by God was reckoned as a sinner, as a sheep that had strayed from the fold, as a lost soul. But this condition resulted from his own failure and sin, and was not because he was born without God and without hope. When such a one was converted from the error of his ways he was brought back to the place that he had lost through sin.

The Testimony of Moses

All writers of the Old Testament give witness to the truth of these things. In Exodus we read:

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people." Exo.3:7.

"Bring forth my people the children of Israel." Exo. 3:10.

These words spoken by God to Moses are strong proof that the seed of Abraham were related to God. This relationship was not based on faith or conduct, for Israel in Egypt was unbelieving and idolatrous. It is evident that they were cut off. However, the covenant with Abraham was of such a nature that when God cut off the nation He was bound to seek that nation and restore it to Himself. This God did and Israel was not only redeemed from Egyptian bondage but redeemed from a lost condition. They came out of Egypt under the shed blood of the Passover lamb. By this God restored His people to Himself.

In **Deu. 14:1** Moses says of Israel, **"Ye are the children of the Lord your God."** The Modernist would probably attribute this statement to an excusable patriotism on the part of Moses, the Universalist would probably insist that it was equally true of all living at that time, but we believe it was a divine revelation of the relationship Israel bore to God. They were the children of God. And if we seek the answer to the question "How did they become the children of God?" there is only one answer in the Word. They were children of God because they were born the children of Abraham, they had lived in this covenant, their sins which would have brought judgment has been atoned for by the proper ritual given by God to Israel.

Some insist that they were the children of God because they offered the lamb in Egypt, but these words were not spoken to the generation that came out of Egypt.

Israel and the New Birth

A recent speaker at a popular Bible Conference made the statement "that while there are dispensations in the Word of God, it has always been true at all times that men needed to be born again." The statement brought a chorus of "Amens," but we can challenge anyone to bring one clear passage from the Word of God that made the new birth a divine requirement before the appearance of Christ on earth.

One correspondent insists that since the Lord said to Nicodemus, "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things," that the necessity of the new birth must have been clearly revealed in the Old Testament. This is doctrine based upon inference, for our correspondent cannot show us just where in the Old Testament that the new birth is revealed as a divine requirement. If it were true that God required all men at all times to be born again, then "Ye must be born again" would have been revealed soon after Adam's fall and not four thousand years later. Did God hide some inference in the Old Testament that made the new birth a divine requirement then? Are God's imperatives ever hidden in inferences?

When, in due time, the new birth became a divine imperative for every Israelite it was not hidden in some inference. It was proclaimed in bold, unmistakable language "Ye must be born again."

Further Objections

Another correspondent, a pastor, writes as follows: "If natural birth in Abraham's line constituted them children of God, I am at a loss to understand John 3. Was not Nicodemus of that line? And did not Christ our Lord teach him that he must be born again? When our Lord said, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh,' was not that true of Nicodemus and all Jews as well as Gentiles?"

These objections are sincere and well founded, so we shall consider them.

Natural birth as one of Abraham's seed brought one into covenant relationship with God. Moses describes this relationship as "children of God." Nicodemus was one of Abraham's seed, and it is true that he needed to be born again. This was because that during the lifetime of Nicodemus the long awaited Messiah appeared and had to be received or rejected. Those Israelites who lived and died before Messiah's appearance were never brought face to face with the necessity of believing that a carpenter's son was their long promised Messiah. But this demand was made upon Nicodemus and all who heard the witness. He must believe that Jesus is the Messiah. If he does he will be born of God (1 John 5-1). If he does not believe, he will lose all that he possessed by being Abraham's seed. No man could be required to believe that Jesus was the Messiah before he appeared on earth, and it was much easier to believe that the Messiah was coming than to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. When Messiah appeared it created a crisis and the Israelite had to believe and hear His words or be destroyed from among the people. Acts 3:22-23.

It is true that every man since Adam has been born of the flesh. However, on this point it is impossible to help those who believe that the word "flesh" always signifies something evil or depraved. Many passages can be quoted to prove that the flesh is related to evil, but just as many passages can be produced to show that no evil can be associated with it.

Matt. 19:5-and they twain shall be one flesh

Matt. 24:22-there should no flesh be saved

Luke 3:6-and all flesh shall see salvation

John 1:14-the Word was made flesh

Rom. 1:3-seed of David according to the flesh

Rom. 9:3-my kinsman according to the flesh

Rom. 9:5-as concerning the flesh after Christ came

2 Cor. 5:16-we have known Christ after the flesh

Gal. 2:20-the life I now live in the flesh

1 Tim. 3:16-God was manifest in the flesh

1 John 4:2-Jesus Christ is come in the flesh

These passages should be sufficient to keep us from reading something evil into it every time we come upon the word flesh.

Our correspondent raises a further question:

"How are we to interpret the words of John the Baptist as recorded in Matt. 3:7-9. Or the words of our Lord to the Jews who based their claims on this very ground of being Abraham's seed as recorded in John 8:33-34."

If we examine Matt. 3 and Luke 3 we discover that these words were spoken to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. These two groups were characterized by pride and unbelief. The multitude of Luke 3:7 had no heart in the matter. It is evident that these words were spoken to men who had been cut off from the covenant, but in their pride and blindness they refused to recognize or admit it. The claim of being Abraham's seed was meaningless for those who had been cut off from the covenant. John fearlessly states their condition before God. When the multitude asked, "What shall we do then," he did not tell them "Ye must be born again." He spoke of those who had two coats giving away one. See Luke 3:10-14.

It seems that the new birth for the individual Israelite became imperative after John said, "This is He." and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This positively identified Jesus as the Messiah. If the saint in Israel believed this he was born again and confirmed in the covenant. If the sinner in Israel believed it he was born again and restored to his place in the covenant. If either refused to believe they were destroyed from among the people.

The words of John 8:33,34 were spoken to Jews that did not know Christ, did not know the Father, servants of sin who refused to believe that Jesus was the I AM.

Our correspondent continues:

"Is it not true, and was it not always true concerning Abraham's seed, 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly' and that circumcision was of the heart and in the spirit. Rom. 2:28-29."

There were always those Jews who to every outward appearance were members of the house of Israel. They traced their descent from Abraham. But God, who looks upon the heart saw them as cut off from His people. In the Old Testament, circumcision was **not** of the heart. See Gen. 17:11. A child of eight days could not put much heart in this matter. But the later life was supposed to demonstrate that the outward sign had an inward counterpart.

Our correspondent says further:

"I am sure that you are aware that total depravity, as you state you believe it to be true of all men since the proclamation .of 2 Cor. 5:14-21, was voiced and owned in both the Psalms and the prophets and that by inspired men of the seed of Abraham. Was it wrong for them to say, 'We are all as an unclean thing' or to pray 'create in me a clean heart?' "

"We are all as an unclean thing" is found in Isa. 64:6. Notice the color this has taken on when considered in the light of the context.

"Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities,

like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, thou are our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity forever: behold, see we beseech thee, we are thy people." Isa. 64:5-9.

These words were spoken of a people whose iniquities had brought them into this awful condition. This does not describe a condition that was the result of birth. Throughout it all their relationship to God is acknowledged.

"Create in me a clean heart" were not the words of a sinner seeking to be saved. These words were spoken by David after he had murdered Uriah, gone in to Bathsheba and had been visited by Nathan the prophet. See Psalm 51. These proof texts refuse to give the testimony for which our correspondent called them into the witness box.

As a final objection our correspondent attempts to make the indictment in Romans 3:9-20 true of all men at all times. This passage is now true of all men without distinction. If any ask how we became that way the answer is, we were born that way: If the description set forth in this passage was true of Abraham's seed before Christ it was true because they became that way, not because they were born that way.

Romans 3:9-20 is a collection of statements from various parts of the Old Testament. When the Old Testament is examined we come face to face with the important truth that when these things were spoken in the Old Testament they were applied only to certain men. In Romans 3 the Spirit of God takes the frightful indictments that were applied to some men in the past and applies them to all men without distinction in the present.

Read Psalm 14, Psalm 5:9, Psalm 140:3, Psalm 10:7, Isa. 59:7-8, Psalm 36:1. Thus it is that Paul, in Romans, places all men on the basis of absolute equality as far as the need of salvation is concerned

"What then? Are we better than, they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and. Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Rom. 3:9.

"That every mouth may be stopped, and *all* the world may become guilty before God." Rom. 3:19,"

Adamic Sin

Another correspondent, a faithful friend of our witness, raises the question of Romans 5:12.

We do not hold that the blessings that came to the seed of Abraham included deliverance from the effects of the fall of Adam. They were subject to sin and to death. In fact, our own transcendent salvation in Christ does not free us from these things. The believer sins and the believer dies.

Our friend continues:

"What must we say of the tabernacle service with its sacrifices and the day of atonement, if every Israelite was not born lost and needed to be saved? What must we say of Isa. 53 ----"All we like sheep have gone astray. Must we revise verse six and say we

have turned some of us to their own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of those who have strayed? What shall we say of Isa. 1:4--'Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.' Their national and covenant position in no wise lessened their need of national repentance and individual salvation. Their national position made possible the salvation of God to the Jews first, but that is all."

Let us consider these objections in order.

The tabernacle service, the sacrifices and the day of atonement were given to a people that God had carried on eagles' wings and brought unto Himself. Exo. 19:4. It was not given as a means of salvation for lost sinners, for it pertained only to redeemed Israel. The day of atonement came once each year. It did not have to do with salvation but with cleansing from sins once each year. If every Israelite was born lost and, needed to be saved, we certainly should be able to point to many instances in the Old Testament where this experience took place. In the Old Testament, the Israelite's relationship to God was always considered to begin at birth. If he was cut off and restored it was not the beginning of relationship but the renewing of one that had been broken. .

Isa. 53 is not universal in its character. This chapter does not stand alone.

"For thus saith the Lord God , MY PEOPLE went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause," Isa. 52:4.

In this passage "my people" is positively identified as Israel. Linking this up with Isa. 53:8 we find the subjects of that chapter.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

"All we like sheep have gone astray" is a testimony concerning Israel. They were in the sheepfold but had wandered from it. **Gentiles are never called sheep.**

Isa.1:4 is explained by its context.

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth *not* know, my people doth not consider." Isa. 1:1-3.

Isa.1:4 was spoken of those who became that way by rebellion and iniquity. They forsook the Lord. They needed to repent, and they needed salvation, and God in grace provided them with a sin bearer as revealed in Isa. 53. .

We have given much space to these questions and objections. The evident sincerity and charity of the letters received prompted us to give them this consideration.

Children and Dogs

There is much that passes for Bible teaching today that is simply an attempt to deny and set aside the plain teaching of the Word of God. There is one group of teachers who feel that every passage that clashes with their opinions is just one more passage to be explained away. The common method is to use one passage to cancel another. Some who recognize a truth in one place proceed to build a wall around it lest its message permeate

and influence their views regarding other portions of Scripture.

The record of our Lord's dealings with the Syrophenician woman as recorded in Matt. 15:21-28 is a passage that reveals truth of major importance. Many who see the truth set forth here treat this passage as material for one sermon. After it is preached they not only file the sermon away but file the truth away as well.

A recent interpretation of this passage that has appeared in several places suggests that the woman was vile and immoral, therefore, she is called a dog while the faithful disciples are called children and sheep. By this interpretation the term "dog" is taken from the Gentiles and given to one woman and the term "sheep" and "children" are taken from Israel and given to the believing disciples. Such interpretation is too puerile to be worthy of refutation.

Throughout the Old Testament the nation of Israel were regarded as sheep. If they strayed they were counted as lost sheep, but their straying did not turn them into dogs. They were regarded as children, and if they left the father's house they were regarded as wandering children. The terms "sheep" and "lost sheep" are applied only to Israel. They were the sheep of His pasture.

"So we thy people and the sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever. Psalm 79:13.

"For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." Psalm 95:7.

"Know ye that the Lord He is God; it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." Psalm 100:3.

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. . . And I will set up one shepherd over them and he shall feed them." Eze. 34:11-23.

When we realize the fullness of the truth expressed in these passages the words of the Lord Jesus spoken in the Gospels come to us with new force and meaning. The twelve disciples were commanded to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6), the Lord Jesus insisted that He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. If John 10 is studied in the light of this it speaks with a new glory. It has been a custom among expositors to parcel this chapter out to Gentiles and the Church. Let us examine a few verses.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." John 10:1

This passage has often been used as a text for gospel messages. These sermons usually follow in the same rut. Various doors are set forth by which men are trying to enter into salvation. These, as a rule, are the doors of church membership, good works, character or ordinances. Then Christ is presented as the door.

When this passage is used in this manner we should ask the speaker if we enter in by the door will we be the shepherd of the sheep? Certainly this is the promise made in the next verse. .

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." John 10:2.

These two passages taken together demonstrate that they have nothing to do with any such thing as sinners entering into the sheepfold by the door Christ Jesus. The sheepfold was Israel as God's nation. Every believer would know this if he did not begin his Bible study with the New Testament. The door into the sheepfold was the exact manner in which Messiah would come as set forth in the prophets. The porter was John the Baptist. The shepherd called his own sheep by name and led them out. This passage holds forth marvelous hope for the sheep, but our hearts cry out for hope for a Gentile dog.

The parable ends at verse six then a new thought begins.

"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me 'Were thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." John 10:7-9.

This passage is better understood when we learn the character of an Eastern sheepfold. It was a circle of stones about eight feet high, three or four feet wide at the base and tapered to about a foot wide at the top. There was one opening, a narrow one, which had neither gate nor door. As the sheep entered in at night the shepherd caused them to pass through his outstretched legs. This made possible the identification and examination of each one, also made possible a quick anointing of any that were injured or torn. At night the shepherd slept in the opening, filling it with his body so that he was literally the door of the sheepfold. Courage was a prime requisite of a good shepherd. He must protect the sheep from robbers and wild beast. Every shepherd carried a club and a crook. The club was for the enemies of the sheep, the crook was for the sheep.

Can the reader imagine what would have happened if a dog or wolf had tried to enter in with the sheep? Can there be a single promise in John 10 for any but the sheep? Some have tried to find hope in verse nine, but they have come to disappointment when they discovered that the word "man" is not in the Greek. No Gentile dog can find any basis of hope here. The word "sheep" excludes us. We must turn from here to some place in the Word where promises are made and a door of hope is opened to the ungodly.

This door of hope we find in the **book of Romans**. There, God reveals that He has established a new way of dealing with lost mankind. It is there that we find the plan of salvation for the present time.

Let us cease forever trying to pass ourselves off as dear lambs that have strayed from the fold. We were never sheep in the fold, we were never sons in the Father's house. Transcendent grace has brought us into a glorious relationship, but it is all new. It is not restoration to a place we lost.

Let us take our place as Gentile dogs, acknowledge that we are without God and without hope. Let the Israelite today acknowledge that the Word of God has now placed him on the same level as the Gentile; that he too is without God and without hope; that he is guilty and lost.

**"Not works of law have we to boast.
By nature ruined, guilty, lost.
Condemned already; but Thy hand
Provided what Thou didst demand
We take the guilty sinners name
The guilty sinners Savior claim."**

CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER

One of the strangest situations manifest in Christian circles today is the case of that group of men who have distinguished themselves by insisting that water baptism has no place in the Church which is His body while at the same time they insist that a service at which bread and wine are served is essential. The strangeness of their case is accentuated by the fact that practically everyone of these men have in times past given positive evidence that they did not believe such a service is for the Church today, They intimated that they were just waiting for the proper time to come when it could be eliminated. Suddenly, almost over night, a radical change of attitude was manifested and sudden declarations were made that the Lord's supper is for the Church today and the practice of this ceremony became the basis of fellowship among men who called themselves Bereans.

Inasmuch as the question had been discussed for a period of several years, it would appear that these men had suddenly discovered the truth concerning it and would set it forth for the help of others, During the few years that have passed since then, we have been amused at their claims to be practicing the truth concerning the so-called Lord's supper, and amazed at their hesitancy to pass the exact truth on to others. Those of this group who have written upon it are lost in a maze of hopeless perplexity, inconsistency and self contradiction. They bring their arguments against baptism, but they must turn around and deny the strength of these arguments lest someone use them against the Lord's supper. The best arguments against their position on the Lord's supper is their own arguments against baptism. They storm eloquently against anyone using the detached words "be baptized everyone of you" (Acts 2:28) as an argument for baptism, but they quote "do this till I come" as an argument for their service of bread and wine. And, worst of all, they quote these words as if they were to be found somewhere in the Word of God.

In their argument for the Lord's supper, confusion and perplexity of thought are evident at every step they take. They suggest that deep truths are hidden in the fact that Melchisedec gave Abraham bread and wine, but they have never yet stated definitely just what they plan to prove from this incident, At times in their arguments it is not plain whether they are contending for it or against it,

In order to demonstrate the truth of their assertions we will quote at length from recent writings of the leader of this group, Mr. J. C. O'Hair, Pastor of North Shore Church of Chicago,

"The great majority of Christians take it for granted that the Lord's Supper is a part of the program of the Christian Church. Very few included in this great majority can give the Scriptural reason as to why, how and when they should gather at this supper, which is called in their denominational creeds, a 'church ordinance.' If the church creed and church officials say the Supper should be served every Sunday morning, or on one Sunday every two months, or irregularly now and then, the church creed" or the church leaders are considered sufficient authority for the time and place of the Supper. Some denominations feel quite sure that God's people should gather every Sunday for the Lord's Supper. They seek to prove, by Revelation 1:10, that the first day of the week is the Lord's day; and they earnestly contend for the Lord's Supper each Lord's day. However, they do not claim that it is unscriptural to gather at the Lord's table at other times. They use Acts 20:7 to prove that Christians should gather on the first day of every week at the Lord's table for the Lord's Supper.

No one can prove from the Scriptures that John in Revelation. 1:10 was referring to Sunday or the first day of the week when he said, "**I was in the Spirit on (in) the Lord's day.**" No one can prove from the Scriptures that Christians may not, with God's full sanction, gather for the Lord's Supper on ten or fifty-two Sundays during the year and at any time they choose. This should be settled by the language of **1 Corinthians 11:26; 'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.'**

Just what kind of bread and what kind of wine shall be served at the Lord's Supper and in what manner shall who serve it? These things may trouble honest, earnest, inquiring Christians who want to be sure they are obeying the scriptures. They may, or may not, diligently search the Scriptures for definite information and Divine light. They may just consider the pastor or Bible-teacher final authority and follow him into truth or error; or they may look carefully and prayerfully into God's book and still be uncertain and unconvinced. So many Christians have wondered whether the bread should be leavened or unleavened, whether it should be a whole loaf (1 Corinthians 10:17) or, a broken loaf. Will crackers do? Whether the wine should be red, white or yellow, fermented or unfermented? Should we use one cup or individual cups? Who is scripturally qualified to serve the bread and wine to other Christians? Should clergyman or a reverend preside at the table and give orders to his subordinates? Should we exclude from the table God's children who are not of our sect? Whatever the answers to these questions be, the answers should be Scriptural answers and those who have diligently and prayerfully studied all the light on the subject to be found in the Bible know that some of the questions are not satisfactorily answered." From "The Great Blunder of The Church" pages 28, 29, 30.

In regard to our statement that some of the best arguments against the Lord's supper are the arguments brought by this group against water baptism, we would quote the following from Mr. O'Hair's writings.

"Think of the inconsistency of those who teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians passed with the apostles, and water baptism is the only part of the Acts religious program that has remained with the gospel of grace." Bible Study for Bereans, August 1936, page 55.

Let the reader take out the words "water baptism" here and insert the words "Lord's Supper" and see what the result will be.

It is our desire to discover and set forth the exact and accurate truth concerning the so-called Lord's supper. To this end we would ask Mr. O'Hair a few questions.

1. Do you have Scriptural reasons as to why, how and when Christians should gather at the Lord's supper? Some time ago it was served at your church every three months, later it was changed to every two months. Was this settled by the language of 1 Corinthians 11:26? Or, do your people do it every two months because the church officials are considered sufficient authority for the time of the supper?

2. What kind of bread and wine do you serve? Is it unleavened bread and fermented wine? Or, is it leavened bread and grape juice? Whichever it may be, do you have Scripture for this, or do your people just follow you in their practice?

3. You make use of individual cups. Do you have Scripture for this? By what authority do you do this? Do you know that one of your group has solved the problem by serving it twice on Sunday? At the morning service individual cups are used and the evening service one cup is used.

4. Do you feel that you are Scripturally qualified to serve the bread and wine to others?

5. Inasmuch as the time you serve the Lord's supper in your church is left to human authority, the one who presides is chosen by human authority, those who serve are appointed by human authority, the kind of wine is settled by human judgment, the type of loaf is left to human wisdom, and the manner in which it is served is entirely human, just what is there about it that is divine? Is not the whole thing just so much religion that has no place in the present dispensation of the grace of God?

6. If we admit that the service described in 1 Corinthians 11 is simply the Passover with a new significance given to two elements, would it not be possible to answer everyone of these questions?

7. You insist that we have no more information concerning Sunday Schools and Church services. However, do you conduct these because the Lord said "this do"? You claim to observe the Lord's Supper because of a divine command. Do you have a Sunday School for the same reason?

THE END

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

M. A. R-MASSACHUSETTS. When anyone tells you that the Gentiles of the Acts period were members of the Church, which is His body, take them to Romans 11 and battle it out there with the Word of God. This passage is the complete divine statement of Gentile position during the Acts period. If they say that this refers to nations and not individuals, take them to verse 20 where it says their standing is by faith.

J. H.-ENGLAND. The faith of the average professing Christian is founded upon his baptism, his church-membership and his more or less faithful partaking of bread and wine. When these are touched, he feels the very foundation of his hope is gone. The believer to whom "Christ is . All" does not feel that everything is being taken away when these things are declared to be out of place in the present dispensation.

MORE ABOUT NEW CREATION

A certain housewife sweeps her kitchen every day. Her neighbor does not sweep her kitchen except on Sunday. The one who sweeps her kitchen only on Sunday is the cleaner housekeeper. This is explained by the fact that the one who sweeps her kitchen only on Sunday does not feel that this suffices for the other six days of the week. Therefore, each morning except Sunday she gets down on her knees and with scrubbing brush, soap and hot water gives the linoleum a thorough scrubbing.

Now if some malicious gossip wanted to place this diligent housekeeper in a bad light with her neighbors all she would need to do is circulate the report that she sweeps her kitchen only on Sunday. This would be the truth, but it would not be the whole truth, and a part truth can always do more damage than the blackest lie. .

It has been reported in many quarters that the Editor does not believe in the new birth. That is all that is told. The reporters do not go on to tell that we believe that the new birth is not far reaching enough to fit the needs of those described in Romans 3 and Ephesians 2:11-12. We hold that the new birth was sufficient for prodigal sons and lost sheep, but it will not suffice for those who are neither sheep nor children. We do believe in the absolute necessity of the new Creation and that this is a higher, more far reaching work than the new birth.

It is evident that scrubbing will do all for a floor that sweeping will do, but it also does much more. The new creation includes every essential benefit that would result from the new birth, but it includes much more.

This explains why Paul never relates the new birth to the Gentiles. For Gentile dogs, far more is needed than a new birth. A new creation will alone suffice. Regeneration is not the creation of a new man but the regeneration of the old.

OUR NEW PAMPHLET

With this issue of THE WORD OF TRUTH you will find an announcement of our new pamphlet **"What is the Soul."** It is the result of five years of definitive study and has required one year to write. This explains why we have issued no pamphlets during the past three years as our energy has been given to the production of this one.

The study of this subject was forced upon us. When we were set free from every hindrance to the study of God's Word we realized that it would remain a closed book

until we had settled by personal investigation the question of "What is Man." No superstructure of truth could possibly stand apart from this foundational truth being well established.

Because of the importance of this subject and the far reaching effect of any views we may have upon it, the material in this pamphlet has been so arranged that the reader will be led to form his own conclusions rather than to accept the conclusions of the writer. The entire apparatus of study is given and the reader will have no difficulty in discovering how the writer came to his conclusions.

For some time we have given without price all that we have written. The nature of this pamphlet is such that it could not be produced without setting a price upon it. We would like for every one of our readers to order a copy at once. This will make possible the production of other pamphlets in this series.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****During February and March the Editor is teaching every Tuesday night in Chicago. The hall is located in the Loop at 177 North Clark Street. The class begins at eight o'clock.

****A one-day Bible Conference will be held at The Gospel Fellowship in Grand Rapids on Friday, March 31. Afternoon service at 2 P. M. Elleby, Hazekamp and Sellers will take part. The Fellowship is located on Norwood Ave. where Lake Drive crosses Wealthy Street.

****Mr. Carl Elleby teaches in Rockford, Illinois every Wednesday night at 7:45. Class meets in W. C. T. U. Hall, 102 W. State Street. This is the class formerly taught by the Editor, and Mr. Elleby has carried it on every week without a break since we gave it up.

****Excellent reports come to us concerning the labors of Garret Hazekamp in Muskegon, Michigan. The work there is known as 'The Bible Fellowship and services are held every Sunday in the Michigan Bakery Hall, Pine and Muskegon. Morning Service at 9:30 A. M. Bible School at 10:45. Evening Service at 7:00 P.M. The Thursday night Bible Study is held .in the Woodmen's Hall, Laketon and Mc Illwraith, at 7:45 Mr. Hazekamp broadcasts every Sunday at 3:15 P. M. over station W.KB.Z., 1500 Kilocycles.

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