

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q. SELLERS, Editor MAY, 1944

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Table of contents

- To Know God
- Truth From the Scripture
 - Christ in the Scripture
 - The GOD of the Living
- The Editor to His Friends

TO KNOW GOD

Among those who have "tasted" and discovered that God is good there is an ever-present, intense desire to know all that can be known about the One Who is the Supreme. We stifle all desire to enter into the things that are secret for these belong to the Lord; but we do desire to enter into the things that are revealed. These belong to us. We realize that the knowledge of God is the ultimate attainment of the human intellect, and we also know that there is a full-orbed revelation of Him in the Word of God. This reveals to us the One Who is the Divine Word, Who also was made flesh and is set forth as the Son of God. In Him we should see the Father. It is our conviction that God is revealed in Christ. But many have missed this revelation because they are occupied solely with the relationship that Christ bears to them, rather than His relation to the One He acknowledged to be His God and Father. The life of the Son of God upon this earth was God-centered. It did not center in self or man.

The Scriptures were written that we should know God and Christ. The intense longing for this knowledge will always be the highest and holiest desire of the human heart. No matter what heights of knowledge we may attain, there will always be that deep-seated feeling of frustration as long as we lack the true knowledge of God and Christ and give to each the place assigned to them by the Word of God. We cry out with Philip: "**Lord, show us the Father: that is all we need**" **John 14 :8**. And we hear Him say in answer:

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father." **John 14:9.**

It is my intense conviction that the light we need for the day in which we live, and the more difficult future that is before us is a view of the Father. We need to know God as we have never known Him before. This is all we need. This should be our sole desire.

*****8

TRUTH FROM THE SCRIPTURES

(Continued from Vol. 7, No. 4)

This study is a continuation of one that appeared in the previous issue. Its message cannot be understood except by those who read the former article. In this we begin an examination of each one of the ten commandments, keeping in mind that these were the things God expected of the children of Israel as their part of the agreement or covenant. Inasmuch as the reader is expected to study with an open Bible, only the leading statement of each commandment will be given.

1. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.** "Before Me" means "before My face." This is the strongest possible way of saying, "No other God but Me." This was a very reasonable demand. It was neither impossible nor exorbitant. This commandment could be kept. There is nothing about the nature of man that would make it impossible or even especially difficult for him to keep it. If man reveres his Creator, which is the duty of all men, he will have no other God but his Creator. And when God gave Israel her duties under the covenant, this was one of them, This had been the duty of every Israelite before. Now it becomes a feature of the covenant. If they had served another god before Sinai, they would have sinned. If they do it after Sinai, they would both sin and break the covenant.

2. **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.** This was a most reasonable demand. No man can say that this commandment was so strict that observance was impossible. No man could stumble into a sin like this. If he committed it, it was willful and deliberate.

3. **Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.** This command forbids all careless use of the Names of God. However, the exact prohibition here is against using His Name when one knows that it is meaningless and that he has no authority to use it. But, whatever it means, it is a command that can be kept.

4. **Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.** Of all the commandments given, this one was the easiest for an Israelite to keep. All governmental, social and economic life in Israel was arranged in keeping with this commandment. Would anyone dare say that it was impossible for man to rest one day in seven. This commandment was not even a burden - it was a privilege.

5. **Honor thy father and thy mother.** In commanding this, God asked nothing more than what they should do. They were doing this before the law was given. Now it becomes a part of the covenant. If they fail to do it, they will break the covenant.

6. **Thou shalt not kill.** The prohibition here is against murder. It has nothing to do with the judicial taking of life. In later commands they are commanded to put men to death.

7. **Thou shalt not commit adultery.** A man commits adultery if he has sexual relation with a woman who is the wife of another. If neither party is married the sin is fornication and not adultery. This had always been a sin, but after the law was given, it became a principle of the covenant. It is useless to say that this commandment cannot be kept, or that there is any excuse for breaking it.

8. **Thou shalt not steal.** A reasonable demand, to say the least.

9. **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.** In all judicial matters the truth was to be established by the *testimony* of witnesses. False witness is perjury. This command does deal with *lying* in general, but with one particular form of lying

10. **Thou shalt not covet. . . anything that is thy neighbor's.** The word *covet* means "to fix the desire upon." It is akin to the words *lust* and *yearn*. This law protected a man's most precious possessions, and it was a fair and just requirement.

MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE LAW

Now that we have before us the leading features of Exodus 19 and 20, we are ready to consider certain misconceptions that dominate the minds of many when they think of the ten commandments.

The Law No Perfect Transcript

It is often said that "the law is the perfect transcript of the mind of God." A thousand-and-one descriptive phrases such as this have worked out by men in order to give the ten commandments a place and a purpose that God never intended. Men seem to be willing to believe anything anyone says about the law just as long as it is complimentary. But they steadfastly refuse to believe what God has repeatedly revealed concerning these ten commands - that they were the terms of any agreement entered into between God and Israel. See Exodus 34 :28, Deut. 4 :13, 5 :2, 9 :9, 9 :15.

The law is perfect as far as it goes, but it is not a complete transcript of the mind of God. This is clearly stated in **John 1:17 : For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ**

The term "grace and truth" is all-inclusive and stands for the fullness of God. The full force of this statement is seen if we say, Moses gave *something*, but Christ brought *everything*." The height of truth is not found in the law. It is found in the record given of His Son.

No Moral and Ceremonial Law

Scripture demands that we make a distinction between the ten commandments and the judgments that follow them. Nevertheless it is utterly in error to say that the ten commandments are "the moral law" and the balance is "the ceremonial law." Some, having made this false division, go on to say that "the moral law" is binding upon all men while "the ceremonial law" is binding only upon Israel.

The law of Moses was always a unit and man should not put asunder what God has joined together. In Romans 7:7 "thou shalt not covet" is called "the law," and in 1 Corinthians 9:9 "thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn" is called "the law." One of these is found in the so-called "moral law," the other is found in the so-called "ceremonial law," Furthermore, the very highest moral teaching is not found in the ten commandments. It is found in the judgments that follow. See Leviticus 18, 19, and 20.

No Sacrifice for Broken Law

It is commonly believed that when an Israelite broke the "moral law," the ceremonial law instructed him to bring a sacrifice and this atoned for his trespass against the law of God. If those who hold this view will turn to the Word of God they will find that the idea has no basis there.

In Numbers 15 :32-26 we have the record of the man who gathered firewood on the sabbath day. If there had been a sacrifice for a broken law, he would have been permitted to bring it. This man was put to death for his sin. Furthermore, if the Word is further examined it will be found that the death penalty was mandatory in the breaking of these eight commandments.

First commandment - see Exodus 22: 20.

Second commandment-see Deuteronomy 17:1-7.

Third commandment-see Leviticus 24:16.

Fourth commandment - see Exodus 31: 15.

Fifth commandment - see Exodus 21: 17.

Sixth commandment - see Exodus 21: 12.

Seventh commandment - see Leviticus 20: 10.

Ninth commandment - see Deuteronomy 19: 15-21.

The fact that the death penalty was ordered by God if these commandments were broken is sufficient to show that there was no sacrifice for the breaking of these laws.

The Law Could Be Kept

It is constantly affirmed that no one could keep the law and that no one ever kept the law. Those who say this should be ready to point out just which one of the ten commandments could not be kept. In **Luke 1:6** we read of Zacharias and Elizabeth that:

They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and the ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Furthermore we have the testimony of Paul when he said: **Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. Phil. 3:6.**

In view of these statements one is forced to correct his thinking to bring it into harmony with the Word of God if he has the idea that the law could not be kept. Zacharias and Elizabeth kept all of the commandments and ordinances of the law. This is enough to prove that the law could be kept and, by some, was kept.

The Law Was Given to Be Kept

Some, reading the title of this paragraph, will say, "Of course it was - do any teach otherwise?" Strange as it may seem, some do teach that the law was never given to be kept; that it was actually given to be broken. Here is an actual quotation from one who holds this idea.

"It was given to prove that no one could keep it. Beneath the revelation of God's will in it was His intention that it should not be kept, but should accomplish its object through its infraction."

This idea seems to coincide with certain declarations concerning the ministry of the law as stated in Romans, nevertheless, the idea is false, since some did keep the law. Note the word *keep* in Exodus 19:5,20:6, Deuteronomy 4:2,6,40.

The Law Did Not Cover All Sins

It is commonly believed that the law covered all sins, providing a complete guide for man in regard to all things moral and immoral. It is further held that if a man keeps the law he will live a

"pretty good" life. This is in error, since it can be plainly demonstrated that the law touched only a few sins. Furthermore, the reason some people live so ungodly is because they are keeping the ten commandments and not going beyond them.

In Galatians 5 :19-21 we have a list of seventeen distinct sins, only three of which were prohibited by the law. These three are adultery, idolatry, and murder. The **fourteen sins that are not prohibited by the ten commandments are** fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness and revelings. Not one of these fourteen grievous sins are condemned or prohibited by the ten commandments. A man could commit every one of them and still insist that he had kept the law given at Sinai. Nevertheless, Paul says that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Following this a list of nine things are given as being the fruit of the Spirit and not one of them was commanded by the law. These are joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness and self-control. Concerning these things there is no law. See Galatians 5 :23.

From this it is evident that if man desires rules concerning things that should be or should not be done, he will live a much higher and more moral life if he concentrates upon Galatians 5 rather than Exodus 20. The law touched very few sins. It was not given by God as a moral code. It was the terms of an agreement He entered into with Israel.

Law No Greater Than Its Component Parts

It is generally believed that in some mysterious and unexplainable way that the law is something greater and higher than its component parts; that while the law did not deal with many sins, yet in some mysterious way it covered every conceivable sin, and that even though a man kept the ten commandments to the letter, yet he broke the law. By this arrangement the law is supposed to condemn the very best man.

When God gave the law, He made it plain that He meant exactly what He said and that He said exactly what He meant. They were ordered not to add to the word which He had commanded them, neither to diminish from it. Deut. 4 :2. Later it was all summed up in these words:

What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. Deut. 12 :32.

Christ Did Not End the Law

There is nothing in the Word of God that teaches that Christ made an end of the law. His death made some changes in it, but did not bring it to an end. He became the end of the law *for* righteousness to everyone that believed, but the law was in full force after His death. The Gentiles never came under it, but the believing Jews were zealous for the law throughout the entire Acts period, and Paul made it plain that he had not taught them otherwise. See Acts 21 :18-26. These matters will be fully considered in later studies, in the meantime it should be kept in mind that while the death of Christ dealt with certain aspects of the law, it did not end the law.

The Covenant Broken

The ten commandments are found in Exodus 20. The proposal of the covenant is found in Exodus 19. But in Exodus 18 we find an enlightening incident that took place before the covenant was proposed or the ten commandments were given.

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, advised him to select from among Israel able men **“such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.” Exodus 18 :21.** Moses heeded this advice, doing this very thing. This demonstrates that at least one man out of ten in all Israel was producing, even before they were given, the very morality the ten commandments demanded.

In view of this it should be plain to the most darkened legalistic mind that if men like Abel, Enoch and Abraham pleased God long before the law was given, and, if at least one man out of ten in Israel lived a God fearing, righteous life before the ten commandments were spoken, then a man of today who has faith in Jesus Christ can live a life that is well pleasing to God even though he insists that he is not under and has no relationship to the law God gave to Israel. There is today a high morality that is the fruit of the Spirit and it does not come from keeping the law. We do not have, we cannot have any connection with the terms of the agreement God made with Israel. The law can be kept, and if one does keep it today it will result in a fair morality, but that is the best it can do. It will not give life, it will not redeem, it will not forgive, and it cannot justify. The law given to Israel was in no way related to any of these things.

When God proposed the covenant, Israel accepted the covenant. After this its terms were revealed. This is not strange, since God can be trusted. Man can sign a blank sheet of paper and let God fill it in with full assurance that the terms will be in man's favor. When God revealed the terms of the covenant, they were neither unreasonable nor impossible. They required of Israel nothing more than what the faithful Israelite was already doing.

From Exodus 20 when the covenant was made to Exodus 32 when the covenant was broken about forty-seven days elapsed. During this time the people of Israel abided by the agreement. *They kept the law for forty-seven days.* And if it were kept for forty-seven days, there was no reason why it could not have been kept for forty-seven months, then forty-seven years, and so on in perpetuity. This forty-seven days was the most beautiful period in Israel's history. They had an agreement with God and they were fulfilling the terms of the agreement. Never before had they been in such a favorable position. Before long they would be in reality a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, an holy nation. But when Moses, their leader, remained in the mount for forty days, the people began to fear, their thoughts began to mill about, and they began to mill about, they became panicky, reason gave way to emotions and they demanded that Aaron make them gods. Thus they (1) committed a grievous sin, and (2) broke the first two terms of the agreement.

It should be remembered that to make a golden calf and worship it would have been a gross sin any time during the 2500 years before the ten commandments were given. Law or no law, it was always wrong and never right. If Israel had done this before Sinai it would have been a sin. To do it after Sinai, after the covenant had been proposed and accepted, was more than a sin. It broke the covenant.

My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. Jeremiah 31:32.

There was no principle such as, "If at first you do not succeed, try, try again" in connection with the covenant. Israel had only one chance to fulfill their part of the agreement. They could not try again once they had failed. This is seen from the anger of God, His threat to consume them and the advocacy of Moses. Exodus 32.

When Moses came down from the mount, carrying the two tables of stone, he saw for himself the sin of Israel. Fully realizing that the covenant was broken, he cast the record of the covenant out of his hands and broke them to pieces at the foot of the mount. This took place on the very day that God was to bestow upon them a blessing. Exodus 32 :29. It may have been that on this day God would have declared them to be His peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. It may have been that He even intended to transfer the law from the tables of stone to the fleshly tables of their

hearts. We cannot say for sure what blessing they missed. But no blessing was given. Israel had sinned, and three thousand of them were dead in the camp. Exodus 32 :28.

Moses declared to Israel that they had "sinned a great sin," but said he would go up before the Lord in the hope that some covering for their sin could be found. He knew that they could not begin anew under the covenant; the very record of it lay shattered at the foot of the mount, but it was his hope that some way could be found so that God's wrath could be turned away. His plea upon this occasion is one of the most eloquent in the Bible. He offers himself in their behalf but his offer is refused.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. Exodus 32:33-34.

Thus the judgment is postponed so that from this time on Israel was under the curse of the law. The law was no longer in their favor, it was contrary to them. It was not for them, it was against them. It could never be kept, since it was already broken.

To gain a better understanding of this let us take an illustration of the law of the state against murder. I readily confess that this law is good; it is for me and not against me; it is in my favor and not contrary to me; it protects me and my loved ones. If there were not such a law in this state, I would actively work for the passage of one.

However, this law is dormant so far as I personally am concerned. It is a very strong law but it cannot touch me. It is utterly without strength against me; it is inoperative in my case, for I am no murderer.

But if I commit murder and break this law, it will still be a good law, but it is no longer in my favor. It is now contrary to me. It becomes a living, active thing against me and moves against me in its full strength and penalty. It no longer works for my good, but to my hurt. I am now under its curse and must remain there unless some way can be found to redeem me from it. Since no way of redemption is provided, nothing remains but for me to pay its penalty.

Even so it was with Israel. When God gave the law to Israel it, to them, was holy, just and good. It was *for* them, not *against* them; in their favor, and not contrary to them. By keeping its terms they could receive great reward. But this agreement was of such nature that to violate its terms was also an act of sin, incurring God's wrath. They did violate it, and came under its curse. From Exodus 20 to Exodus 32 Israel was *on top* of the law. When they sinned they came *under* the law. And to be under the law was to be under its curse.

I have used the terms *on top* and *under* here solely for the sake of emphasis by way of contrast. I would further emphasize that to be *under* the law does not mean that the law is applicable to a person. The law of this state against murder *applies* to me. I do not come *under* it until I have broken it. This is the Scriptural meaning of "under the law."

The exact Scriptural distinctions are as follows: being *without* the law, being *in* the law, and being *under* the law.

To be *without the law* was to be among those (the Gentiles) to whom the law did not apply. This does not mean that these had no principles or rules by which they lived. Paul declares this in 1 **Corinthians 9 :21 :**

To them that are without the law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law [Greek - inlawed] to Christ).

Those without the law are not lawless. 'When the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law are a law unto themselves. They show the work of the law written on their hearts. Every Israelite was without the law before Sinai. Even so some showed the work of the law written on their hearts and produced the very righteousness which the law afterward demanded. See Romans 2 :14-15,

To be *in the law* (Rom. 2 :13) was to be among that number (Israel) to whom the law was given at Sinai. This was a blessed state, but it was not for the Gentile,

To be *under the law* was to be a part of that nation (Israel) to whom the law had been given and by them had been broken. To be under the law was to 'be under a curse. This was an undesirable state, and nothing could redeem Israel from this state except the death of Christ.

"Under the law" became Israel's condition when they "sinned the great sin" by making a golden calf. The breaking of the tables of stone signified the breaking of the covenant, but this did not end their obligation or cover their sin, God gave the tables again and these were placed in the ark and under the blood sprinkled mercy-seat. Here they remained as a witness of Israel's transgression, her need of redemption from the curse of a broken law, and the ground of redemption - the blood of the lamb of God.

At this point a new relationship to the law began *for* Israel, and a new ministry of the law began *to* Israel. It became a ministration of death, and a ministration of condemnation, It is no longer the terms of an agreement but an inflexible law that must be kept.

It is now "**added on behalf of transgressions till the seed should come.**" Gal. 3 :19. It no longer stood ready to dispense blessings, but to deal with transgressors. Israel was not released from the law, but was kept under the law, shut up to a faith that should later be revealed. The law became their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. Gal. 3 :24.

Israel's situation may be likened somewhat to a boy who has brought home a poor report card from school. His father looks it over, tells him he is not doing so well, and says he is confident that the boy is well able to bring home a good report. In order to encourage the boy he states that while he does not like to reward him for doing what he should, nevertheless, he will give him a five-dollar bill if he brings home a report of good grades next time. The boy is enthusiastic over the promise and agrees to do so. He makes a good show of diligence for a few days but lapses into carelessness again and finishes up with a poorer report than the month before. Seeing this the father becomes angry and says: "Son, I promised to give you five dollars for doing nothing more than what you should do and are well able to do. You have not kept your part of the agreement, so it is ended. However, this does not release you. Your part of the agreement now becomes my law. I now demand of you that you bring home good grades. You will receive no reward if you do, but you will be severely chastized if you do not"

This illustration is weak, but it will help to show Israel's condition from the time they broke the law until they were redeemed from under it by the death of Christ.

(To Be Continued, Vol. VII, No. 6)

CHRIST IN THE SCRIPTURES

By Garret Hazekamp, Muskegon, Michigan

Disillusioned! What an awakening when we have learned that our idols have fallen. Thank God if you have been disillusioned wherein man is concerned; you are thus prepared to regard the Lord as He should be regarded; nothing between! Christ alone to fill our vision. "Let no man glory in men." 1 Cor. 3 :21. "Let not the wise glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty glory in his might, let not the rich glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9 :23-24. To understand and know the Lord is His will. To make Him our object is a certain way to avoid disappointment. Life takes on a new aspect when Christ becomes the motive and the incentive. A Christ-filled life is a purposeful life. He brings satisfaction for He is all sufficient. To "know Him" is our desire, hence we turn to the Word for the realization of that desire.

God's Word Presents Christ

The Word of God introduces us to Christ, Who in turn reveals the Father. **"In the volume of the book it is written of Me, Lo, I come to do Thy will."** Although with the Father, in the form of God, He took the form of a servant. "The Only Begotten of the Father," He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He was buried, but rose again the Conqueror of death. He declared, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death." Rev. 1 :18. He, by Whom all things were made, "made peace through the blood of His cross." Thus a basis was laid, a foundation, assuring the accomplishment of the purpose of God; the purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. In Christ we find the personification of the Divine Plan. He is the beginning and the end; Israel's King, and to the nations "the King of kings and Lord of lords"; the Bridegroom to the Bride; the Head of all principality and power, the Head of the Body the Church. To such a One we bow in adoration, acknowledging Him, "My Lord and my God."

God's Word Lives

The Word of God like a living organism pulsates with life; it is the Word of life. Our Lord becomes the embodiment of that Word. We read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In the "fulness of time" the Word "became flesh"; the Son of God Who also was the Son of man dwelt as man among men. At all times He did those things which pleased the Father, for He came to do His will. Even His enemies could not convict Him of sin, for there was no fault in Him. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He was the living expression of the Father's will. "His name is called, THE WORD OF GOD." Rev. 19 :13.

God's Word Divides

The first Divine utterance recorded is, "Let there be light." As a result of this command, "Light was." With the voicing of this command, the first step was made toward the introduction of order which was likewise a step from chaos. This command divided the light from the darkness. Many

centuries later our Lord declared, "I am the light of the world." It was a world of darkness into which He came. Those who were the teachers of Israel were in darkness, "blind leaders of the blind." "They knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets." Acts. 13 :27. From these, the wise and the prudent, God was pleased to conceal things which He revealed unto babes. "There was a division because of Him." John 7 :43 ; 9 :16; 10 :19. He, the Light, caused a division. The more one increases in the knowledge of Him, the more pronounced becomes the division. In the measure that Christ fills our lives, so will we be divided from the things of darkness. **"Ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walks as children of light." Eph. 5 :8.**

Christ and the Father

In relationship to the Father, Christ is the "Only Begotten of the Father" in Whom it was pleasing that all fullness should dwell. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He is . "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" and "appointed heir of all things." The Father loved the Son before the foundation (disruption) of the world. So intimate is the relationship between the Father and the Son that the Son could say, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17 :5. When Philip said, "Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? **He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that. I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works sake." **John 14 :8-11.**

Christ and the Saints

"In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." He is our confidence! He Who is One with the Father is the Beloved in Whom we are accepted. We have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins according to I the riches of His grace. He is our Savior and our Lord. He bought us with a price, hence we are to glorify Him. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord:. Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." We are exhorted to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." What grace has been lavished upon us. May some measure of grace be reflected in our daily walk, which should be worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called. Law does not compel us, rather, grace constrains us.

Christ and Sinners

"A friend of publicans and sinners," was the charge made by His enemies. He was indeed the friend of the outcast. Heedless of the murmurings of the self-righteous, He came to call sinners to repentance. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; to be the way whereby sinners might be acceptable in the presence of the Father. He appeared in the likeness of sinful men, although He knew no sin; and on account of sin He was put to death in the flesh; thus sin was judged. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He is the way, the truth, and the life; no man can come to the Father apart from Him. There can be no avoiding Christ. To refuse Christ is to turn away from hope; to choose death rather than life. What is Christ to you?

THE GOD OF THE LIVING

By J. Eustace Mills, Paignton, S. Devon, England

"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." (Mark 12 :26-27.) The Lord spake these words in the course of His refutation of the skepticism of the Sadducees who held that there is no resurrection. His words are, however, frequently taken out from their context, and put forward as supporting the idea that the dead are living. The contrast is irreconcilable. The truth of resurrection is that for the dead to live they must first be raised to life. The traditional thought, on the other hand, is that death is not really death, but translation into higher life. We say "traditional" thought, because it is one of those things handed down from the fathers which many imbibe as a matter of course.

The Sadducees in their test case of the seven brethren and the wife disputed the fact of resurrection, pure and simple, as life from the dead. No suggestion of life prior to, or apart from, resurrection entered into the question. They argued according to what they had been given to understand was the teaching concerning resurrection; thus while they spake of the brothers and woman as having died, they referred to their resurrection as future. What was the deceased's position meanwhile, was not in mind. Being ignorant of the power of God, and of the transformation which shall be theirs who are heirs to the life to come, they sought to make a mock of resurrection on the grounds of incongruities which would arise if, as they conjectured, the human relationships of this life were carried over into the next.

The Lord in reply confirmed what the Sadducees took to be the teaching concerning resurrection by referring to it as future, "For when they shall rise from the dead." (Mark 12 :25.) He said nothing about the dead being alive. As to their test case, that was answered by the fact that the raised enter a new life wherein the marriage relationship does not obtain. Then to establish the truth He declared, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, that they rise: have ye not read- how God spake saying, I am the God of Abraham -". God would not have termed Himself the God of Abraham centuries after Abraham's death if death meant that he was for ever dead and done with. God's very use of Abraham's name as part of a title of Himself was proof that, though Abraham died, that was not his end, and as death was not his end it required one thing - the things the Sadducees scorned - - resurrection.

Traditionalists see in the Lord's reference to these divine titles a totally different idea. They argue that because God termed Himself their God, and He is not the God of the dead but of the living, the patriarchs must needs be alive. That the Lord's use of this Scripture cannot at all bear such a construction is evident from the following example. God called Himself "the God of David", a title similar in every respect to that of "the God of Abraham" at a time when we know, as a matter of revelation, that David still remained dead. The fact that the God of the living termed Himself the God of David did not, therefore, mean that David was alive. The title occurs in the message with which Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father." (2 Kings 20:5.) Jeremiah prophesied after Isaiah, and he showed how David was as then dead in that he spake of his resurrection as future, associating it with the occasion of Israel's coming restoration (Jer. 30 :9). And as late as Pentecost, David was referred to as being dead. **"Let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried - for David is not ascended into the heavens."** (Acts 2 :29-34.)

. Until the end, when death, the last enemy, has been destroyed, the Lord is "Lord - of the dead." (Rom. 14 :9.) In this case the title is that of the Son's, nevertheless, it shows that His own can be dead. The Lord is risen, but until all the redeemed have been raised, some, whose God has been the

living God, must remain dead. The God of Abraham tested Abraham particularly as to his faith towards Himself as the one "Who quickeneth the dead" in the matter of the birth of Isaac (Rom. 4: 17), and again when he was called upon to offer him up (Heb. 11 :19). These were not lessons calculated to teach Abraham that death is the portal to life.

God is God of the living, not by the arbitrary exercise of His power, but by virtue of His purpose in man - the Man, Christ Jesus. **"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15 :21.)** The Lord Jesus is Himself the resurrection and the life; to Him personally all shall one day owe their resurrection. **"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15 :22.)** And, moreover, He is Lord of all, even now, pending the final resurrection, and it is in this connection that He is termed Lord alike of the dead as of the living. **"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living." (Rom. 14:9 R.V.)**

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****Contrary to the opinions of some and the statements of a few, *The Word of Truth* has never been and never will be discontinued to any reader because no money is sent in by them to aid in its support. The only reasons for removing a name from our lists are that the reader requests it to be discontinued, because a reader has moved and sent no change of address, or because of failure to respond when the mailing list is tested. Our complete list has been tested only once in eight years. By doing this all addresses were verified and all readers were eliminated who no longer had any interest in the magazine.

**** I wish to thank everyone who responded to the special appeal for help that went out with the previous issue. The addressing equipment has been delivered and is being used for the first time in sending out this issue. It required about twenty-five hours of labor to address by hand. The work can now be done in less than one hour.

****This issue goes to press in advance of the Chicago and Grand Rapids Area Spring Meetings. Therefore no report of these can appear in this issue.

****Just before the war began tentative plans were almost complete in connection with a two-week intensive *Summer Bible Institute* to be held in Grand Rapids. This was urged upon us by many friends who were anxious to gather with friends of like faith in order to study the Word of God. The war forced postponement, but the plans have not been abandoned. I had hoped that it could be held this summer, but it is now evident that this will not be possible. I spoke of these plans to quite a number, so this announcement of further postponement is made for the information of any who may have been looking forward to this gathering.

****The paragraph above leads me to another matter. The Institute referred to was to be of a popular nature for the benefit of those desiring personal help, but a work of a different nature is being forced upon us. The next and greatest task that lies before those who believe in and stand for the rightly-divided Word is to provide some sort of a school for the purpose of training men for the work of

faithfully and fully proclaiming the Word of God. The need for this is being made plain in many ways. First of all by the numerous small Bible-study fellowships that are springing up over the country. Some of these are earnestly desiring a teacher who can lead and help them in their studies of the Word of God. Then there are men who would like to devote their lives to this work, but who need some special training for this peculiar ministry.

****Already five young men have corresponded with me in regard to the possibility of coming to Grand Rapids after the war in order to study the Bible with a view to teaching it. Three others have talked with me personally about this, but so far I have not dared to encourage any of them.

****Here is a quotation from the letter of another: "If the Lord keeps me through this war, and you can still use me, I would like to accept the invitation you gave me in 1940 to be your apprentice as a Bible teacher. Of course, any such long range plans must be only tentative. Nevertheless, we want you to know what is one of the subjects *of* our prayers and what we are hopefully looking forward to."

****The young man who wrote these lines is a university graduate and is now a Captain in the United States Army. And, while the word "apprentice" was not used by me in the invitation I extended, nevertheless, it reveals the willing spirit of this young man.

These nine young men would make a good beginning, and others would respond at once if a training school could be started. The task is a major one, and it is far beyond my abilities and capacities, but it is not impossible. The building and equipment of *The Gospel Fellowship* would be available for the school. Grand Rapids is not a crowded city, and certain fine old homes are available. One of these could be rented to house all students. About all that would be needed is for God to raise up a small staff of workers and teachers. So, we await -the clear leading of His will in this matter.

****The article on *Christ in the Scriptures* was written by Mr. Garret Haze kamp of Muskegon, Michigan, It will be followed by an article in a later issue on *Christ and the Purpose of the Ages*.

****The study by Mr. J. Eustice Mills on *The God of the Living* was taken from the British publication *Words of Life*. Mr. Mills is well known to our readers as the author of *All Truth and New Testament Ministries*.

End, Vol. VII, No. 5