THE WORD OF TRUTH

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ALL WHO WILL TO LIVE

In the final words of Paul to Timothy we find the revelation that all who *will* to live devoutly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted. It is well to note that this persecution comes upon those who *want* to live devoutly. Satan does not wait until a devout life in Christ Jesus has become an established fact. He turns his attention to the one in whom the Spirit has created a desire to live devoutly in Christ Jesus. All that is needed is for one to be in earnest in the matter of living devoutly in Christ Jesus and he will be persecuted. Satan will turn such heat upon him that he may wonder why in the world he ever had such a desire.

When God quickens a man to any truth, He creates a desire to live in harmony with that truth. This is the meaning of living devoutly in Christ Jesus. It is living, thinking, acting and worshipping in accord with His revealed Word. But the moment the desire to do this arises in the child of God, it is accompanied by such a wave of persecution that the joy that comes from knowing the truth is engulfed by the sorrows of persecution.

Many who have been made alive to the truth of the Church which is His body have immediately discovered from experience the truth expressed in the words of Christ, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household". This is the worst persecution that one can undergo. No matter how much a man may suffer from the outside, he can bear it more easily if he finds surcease from it all when under his own roof. But when he finds fightings without and fightings within the situation is a bad one indeed.

Again and again we learn of those men who have come to know the truth and have never enjoyed a moment of peace in their homes since then. The wife has determined to take the place of God and dictate to the husband what he shall believe, how he shall worship and when and where he shall serve. Failing to accomplish this, as a rule, these women have become bitter, nagging and contentious.

At times it is just the reverse and the husband seeks to be the supreme arbiter and dictator over the faith of the wife. But whether it is the man or the woman, all who seek to rule over the faith of another have usurped the place of God and they do the work of Satan.

It should be remembered by all whom God has quickened and called into truth that they cannot expect, demand or even ask another to see, accept or walk in truth to which God has not called them. None ever sees the truth as a result of argument or contention. They see it when quickened by God. We were called to peace.

MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

In the fifth chapter of John's gospel we have the record of one who was healed by the Lord Jesus of an infirmity which had afflicted him for thirty-eight years. This miracle took place on the sabbath day. Because of this the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to slay Him since He, in their judgment, had broken the sabbath. His answer to them, at first glance, seems to be a very ordinary statement, but in it is found one of the greatest and most profound truths in the Word of God.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. John 5:17.

If a man should say, "John Smith worked today and I worked", it could mean only that they both worked as it does not indicate that they both worked at the same thing. One may have worked at a machine while the other tilled the soil on a farm. Both worked even though the work was diverse and unrelated.

But in our Lord's statement He did not seek to inform the Jews that He and His Father both worked or even that they both worked at the same thing. He sought to set forth a much deeper and greater truth when He said the Father worked and He worked. By this statement He meant just about the same thing as we do when we speak of two gears working together, one propelled by the other. If two gears are meshed and the one on the drive-shaft moves, the other must move in exact ratio to it. The gear on the drive shaft cannot move apart from moving the other. Both gears are related in such a way that when one works the other must work in harmony.

I fully realize the danger that is present when one uses earthly things to illustrate divine relationships. Some detractor may push the illustration too far, making the whole thing ridiculous.

Nevertheless, I feel that the two gears provide an illustration of the relationship that existed between the Father in heaven and the Son upon the earth. The Father moved in heaven and the Son moved in harmony upon the earth. If the act He performed desecrated the sabbath, then the Father was responsible and the blame and censure should have been directed toward Him.

This truth is confirmed by the words of Christ that immediately followed.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. John 5:19.

These statements set forth in a very definite manner the relationship that existed between the Lord Jesus Christ and the One He confessed to be His God and His Father. While He was upon the earth every act He performed was as act of God. This was so completely true that all who saw His works actually witnessed the works of God.

But this was not only true of his works. It was just as true of His words.

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine (teaching) is not mine, but His that sent me. John 7:16.

I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught me, I speak these things. John 8:28.

For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. John 12:49.

Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak John 12:50.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. John 14:24.

For I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me. John 17:8.

From these passages we learn that every word He spoke was a word of God. All who heard Him heard God, all who saw His works saw the works of God, all who saw Him saw God, and all who believed Him believed God.

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me. John 12:44-45.

Near the close of His ministry our Lord said:

If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. John 14:7.

Here He reveals that to know Him was to know the Father, to see Him was to see the Father. In fact there was no way to know God, except to know the Lord Jesus; there was no way to see the Father, except by seeing His Son; there was no way to have the Father except by having the Son, and he that had the Son had the Father also. The words of our Lord caused Philip to say: 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 then, show us the Father?

It is, therefore, my faith in Jesus Christ, that He was in such peculiar relationship to the Father that every act He performed, every word He said, every work He did were all brought about because the Father acted, the Father spoke and the Father worked.

Truly God was manifesting Himself in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. If I would know God, know what He said, see what He did, become familiar with Him, His works and His ways, then I must look to the One who declared Him and set Him forth. That One was and is the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe that the Son had a will and a mind of His own, just as much as the Father had a will and mind of His own. But I believe that the Son completely surrendered His will and always did the will of the Father.

In view of these great truths, to the correspondent who wrote and declared, "Jesus was as separate from God as you or me", I answer that I reject this idea in its entirety. I believe that He was related to God in such a unique way, that all He heard the Father say, He said; all He saw the Father do, He did. In Him I see the Father. To me He is the visible expression of the invisible God.

But this is only one truth. Glorious as it is, its development will be exceedingly more glorious, as truth is linked up with truth to form a chain.

The Expression

One of the greatest declarations to be found in the Word of God is found in the opening statements of John's gospel.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. John 1:1-2.

This passage is familiar to many, but the **four great declarations** it contains are understood by very few. It is not quoted here as a proof text for any idea that I may be setting forth. It is brought before the reader so that we may examine it, and that the truth it contains may become our possession.

Its opening declaration is, "In the beginning was the Word". The one who meditates may reason as follows: What truth does the Spirit intend to convey to me by this statement? What is a *word? The* is a word; *book* is a word -- why then is Christ called the Word? But, why is *book* a word? Are all combinations of letters words? No, for if I turn the same letters around I have *k-o-o-b*, and that is no word. But why is *b-o-o-k* a word, and *k-o-o-b* not? Because *book* is a symbol representing something else, and it is used when one desires to express what it represents. Therefore, a word is a symbol or expression of thought.

The statement, "In the beginning was the Word", will become much more plain to our minds if we say, "In the beginning was the Expression". This is not offered as a new translation, but merely as a help in understanding this passage. In the beginning and throughout the entire Old Testament period, God was expressing Himself to His creatures and the means of His manifestation or revelation was One who is called the Expression. More on this later.

In the next statement we read "And the Word was with God". It is my conviction that we will come much nearer to the truth here if this is translated, "And the Expression was toward God." This, I believe is the correct rendering of the Greek - pros ton Theon. The word toward (pros) signifies that the Expression was in relationship to God. We express ourselves in all our expressions. I cannot appear before you and, you see someone else. I cannot speak so that you hear another. I cannot but express myself. But the One who is called the Expression was in relationship to God, and He pointed toward God. He did not express Himself at any time in His office as the Expression. Therefore, the truth set forth in the statement, "the Word was with God" is not dealing so much with the nearness of the Expression to God as it is the relationship He bears to the Supreme. He was toward God.

The final statement of verse one is one of the most majestic and impressive that can be found in the sacred Scriptures.

"And the Word was God".

That "the Expression was God" I accept and believe without mental reservation or qualification of any kind. If the Expression were not God, then God has not expressed Himself. If the Expression were someone else beside God, then we are without a manifestation, an expression or a revelation of God. By the very nature of the case, the Expression has to be God.

That "the Expression was God" is, to me, not open to discussion or debate. Being emphatically declared by a simple statement in God's Word it is, to me, a settled matter. To discuss or debate it would be an admission that this is not a settled matter, indicating that the divine declaration could possibly be in error. As to just *how* the Expression was God, or *in what way* He was God may be open to further study or discussion. But that He was and is God, is with me, a settled matter of my faith. I realize this indicates a closed mind on this subject, but it is a mind that has been closed by Scripture.

In his *Emphatic Diaglott*, Benjamin Wilson has inserted in the interlinear the indefinite article (a) before the word *God*, thereby making it to say that the Word "was a God". This has been greatly used by the followers of Charles T. Russell, popularly known as the *Russellites* or *Jehovah's Witnesses*. But, while Wilson did insert the indefinite article in his interlinear translation, yet he did not follow this out in his version, which reads "and the Logos was God". Therefore, let none waste his postage in order to inform me that there is no indefinite article before the word *God* in John 1:1. I know this, and have fully considered it. I also know and have considered that there is no definite article (the) before God in John 1:9, 12, 13 and 18. If an indefinite article is inserted in John 1:1, then it should be inserted before the other four occurrences in this chapter. In view of this, **Wilson's insertion of the indefinite article before the word God in John 1:1 has to be regarded as his interpretation rather than accurate translation.** It appears that he put the indefinite article (a) before God in John 1:1 because he believed that the Word was a God. There is no justification for this in the Greek. If so, then why was it **not** placed before the four other occurrences of *God* in this chapter?

In regard to the declaration "the Expression was' God", there are those who say that this should be translated "and God was the Expression". There can be no serious objection to this since it follows the order of the Greek words; but I do seriously object to it if it is taken to mean anything less than the statement "the Expression was God." I find that I am in agreement with a statement in *The Companion Bible* in regard to this:

"'The Word was God. This is correct. The article designates 'the Word' as the subject. The order of the words has to do only with the emphasis, which is thus placed on the predicate, while 'the Word' is the subject".

Therefore, we learn from John 1:1 that as far back as there is any revelation, the Expression was in existence, the. Expression was in relationship to God, and the Expression was God. As we read on we will discover that the Expression was the One who became flesh and dwelt among us. This is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Invisible God

In order to understand the truth that is set forth in the name "the Word" or "the Expression", we must lay hold of and enter into **two great truths concerning God. First, that He is invisible, second, that He is inaudible.** Scripture gives full testimony to these truths and Jesus Christ spoke simply and directly concerning them. God Absolute cannot be seen, He cannot be heard. He has never been seen, He has never been heard. He never will be seen and never will be heard.

I know many passages that can be brought forth that seem to contradict the invisibility and inaudibility of God. And before my readers send them to me, I will give these passages to them. I refer to such passages as Genesis 26:2; 32:30; Exodus 33:23; Matthew 4:17; 5:8; 17:S; 18:10. These have been fully considered, and after evaluating their testimony, I must still insist that the Scriptures tell us that God is invisible and inaudible.

Colossians 1:15 speaks of God as being "the invisible God". This description is either true or false. I accept this testimony. 1 Timothy 1:17 sets Him forth as being, both incorruptible and invisible. Both of these attributes inhere in His very nature, and they are subject to no change. He will never be corruptible, and He will never be visible.

If we enter into this truth, we will never try to visualize God, that is, we will not attempt to form any mental picture of Him. To do so is to deny His invisibility. Many who are ignorant of God's Word have tried to do this. My investigations show that when they try to visualize God, they form a picture of an old man, with a beard and long flowing garments. Those who do this must realize that they stand with those described in Romans 1:23 who made God "into an image made like to

corruptible man." The image may be only mental, but it is an image just the same. Away with all images of God, save Him who is the Image! Col. 1:15.

There are some who feel that God's invisibility is due to our own disabilities, that it is merely that we cannot see Him at present. But this is not true. Invisibility is one of the essentials of God.

That is why our Lord declared:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. John 1:18.

Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. John 5:37.

When the fact of God's invisibility and inaudibility is received and believed as truth, we are then ready to go on to other truths. And these truths will result in a better understanding and appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Revelation Of God

We have not been left without a revelation. The invisible and inaudible God has revealed or expressed Himself to His creatures. But how has He done this? Did He make Himself visible? Did He speak and was heard? The answer is, No! Long after He had revealed and expressed Himself the Lord Jesus declared that His shape had not been seen and His voice had not been heard. No man has seen or can see Him. No man has heard or can hear Him. How then has He expressed Himself? What means did He use?

The human being has various ways of expressing himself. His very form is an expression, and when the form is seen the man is seen. I can express myself by simply appearing before you. From then on you know what I look like. I can also express myself by words and deeds. Those who hear my words, hear me.

But God Absolute has no form such as He has given to man. He cannot appear before man so as to be personally visible, neither can He speak to man so as to be audible. If He is seen or heard at all, it must be through a Mediator. Thus the immaterial God makes contact with material man. Far too many think of the Mediator as being the means by which man reaches God. The primary truth is that the Mediator is the means. by which God reaches man. The man Christ Jesus is the Mediator between God and men Never reverse the order of the words.

The truth declared in John 1:1 is that God does have an Expression. This Expression makes Him audible, just as the Image makes Him visible.

My means of expression are my form, word and deeds. God's means of expression is a personality, rightly called, "the Expression". This Expression was in the beginning. He was in relationship to God. He was God. And, to repeat, it was this Expression who was made flesh and dwelt among the men of this world. Yet, even as flesh He remained the true Expression and only Expression of the Father.

It is my faith in Jesus Christ that He is the living revelation and only revelation of the Father. When we see Him, we see the One whom He expresses and represents. He is the Image of the invisible God. He is the Voice of the inaudible God. In Him we see the likeness of God and hear His sayings.

(To Be Continued, Vol. VII, No. 7)

TRUTH FROM THE SCRIPTURES

(Continued from Vol. VII, No. 5)

WE ESTABLISH THE LAW

In 1 Timothy 1:7 we read of those who desire to be teachers of the law. This is in every way a commendable desire. We should be teachers of the law. The law should be taught, the law must be taught. This does not mean that we should get people to memorize the ten commandments, or that we should proclaim some parts of the law. We should be true teachers of the law by setting forth accurately and fully all that the Word says concerning it. Many who have memorized the ten commandments are in total ignorance as to why these commandments were given and the purpose for which they were given.

But many who are ambitious to be teachers of the law do not understand either their own words or what the things are about which they make such confident assertions. I Tim. 1:7. Within the month previous to this writing no less than twenty letters have been received from correspondents who point out to me the words of Christ in John 14:15, where He said "If ye love me keep My commandments." They refer these words to the ten commandments, He being the Jehovah who gave them. Some boldly accuse me of having no love for Christ since I make no attempt to keep the fourth commandment by observing Saturday as the sabbath. I am forced to say in love that these people do not understand their own words and are ignorant of that which they speak so boldly. Do they know, or do they simply ignore, that Christ commanded:

He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Luke 3:11.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away. Matt. 6:42.

Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have and give alms. Luke 12:32-33.

They ignore these direct and specific commandments of Christ, refer His words back to the ten commandments, then vainly believe that they show their love for him by going to church on Saturday instead of some other day. Thus they come within that number censured by Paul when he said that some are ambitious to be teachers of the law but, like the parrot, they are repeating what they have heard, they do not know what they are saying or even what the law is, about which they make such confident assertions.

Having made this assertion Paul goes on to declare:

But we know that the law is good if a man uses it in the way it should be used, knowing this, that law is not laid down for the righteous, but for the lawless and rebellious, the irreverent and sinners, the godless and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, fornicators; so do mites, kidnapers, liars and perjurers. I Timothy 1:8-10 [Resultant Version].

It is because there are such persons that laws must be passed, penalties affixed and judgments executed. But by grace we know that we are not such as are described in this list. This being true, law with its penalties and judgments has no place in the relationship we bear to Christ.

In **Romans 3:31**, Paul both asks and answers an important question concerning the law:

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law

The *faith* spoken of in this passage is not faith in Christ. As a rule when most people come upon the word *faith* in the Bible, they think of nothing else but faith in Christ. It only means this when it is clearly indicated by the context. Faith is taking God at His word and acting, thinking and speaking in accord with it. We do not establish the law by our faith in Christ, but we do establish it when we go to the Word of God, discover for certain what it says about the law, then think, act and speak accordingly. Some seem willing to believe everything about the law except what God has revealed. The truth does not fit in with the doctrinal or denominational systems to which they have attached themselves. And when truth and system clash; most people decide to preserve the system at the expense of truth.

The first and most important truth to be received and believed concerning the law is that as originally given it was the terms of an agreement or covenant entered into between God and Israel. It was not intended to be a full revelation of the mind of God and it did not cover all sins. In fact it was not regarded as *law* until after it was broken and was imposed upon the people. Strictly speaking a law must set forth a rule or mode of conduct, either demanding or prohibiting, and these must be made obligatory by some sanction which is imposed and enforced for their violation. This being true, even the ten commandments as originally given were not *law* in the strict meaning of that term.

If someone comes to us offering a rich reward for doing certain things, and we accept the offer, this cannot be described as law. And that is exactly what took place when God proposed the covenant to Israel. Here are His words:

Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. Exodus 19:3-6.

There is no hint of *law* in this. All the essential features that characterize a law are missing. Law never promised a reward for those who keep it, and it must always contain a penalty for those who break it. In this proposal of the covenant we find a reward promised, and no penalty is imposed for its violation. Therefore, as originally given, the ten commandments are not *law* at all. They were the terms of an agreement, but they became law when they were given the second time.

In fact the word *law* does not appear in connection with Israel until **Exodus 24:12.** There God speaks of giving Moses 'tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written." The tables of stone contained the ten commandments, the law was that which we now have set forth in Leviticus and the commandments are found mostly in Numbers. But before Moses returned with these things the people "sinned a great sin," and thus came into Israel's history "the transgression" (Dan. 9:24) - something they could never rid themselves of apart from faith in Christ. Some individual Israelites cleared themselves of this during the Acts period, but the clearing of the nation awaits that day of national repentance and faith upon the part of the nation as a whole.

The Second Tables

The fact that the tables of stone were given the second time is almost forgotten by many students.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. Exodus 34:1.

These tables contained the same words. However, the words of the first tables were the terms of an agreement, while the same words on the second tables were law in the strongest meaning of that term.

The full significance of this can be traced out by a careful reading of the book of Deuteronomy. This book is not a repetition of the law or a second giving of the law as many imagine. It is the revelation of the new relationship that the law bears to Israel in view of her great sin and transgression. Here we see that that which had been the terms of an agreement is imposed upon the nation as absolute law.

Before Sinai Israel had been greatly blessed. But after the covenant was broken, the terms of the covenant, and the commandments and judgments that had been given to them for guidance, were imposed upon them as absolute law. They would now be blessed or cursed according to their attitude toward this law. See Deut. 28. This was the condition tinder which they, entered into Palestine. It was blessing if they did, a curse if they did not.

After their great transgression, that high and blessed state promised in Exodus 19:5-6 was no longer obtainable. The very best they can expect if they do keep all His commandments is to be set on high above all nations of the earth. Deut. 28:1.

The final words of Moses in this connection should be carefully read, especially those recorded in **Deuteronomy 30:11-16.**

For this commandment which I commanded thee this day, it is not hidden from thee neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

These statements are sufficient to show that the law was given to be kept and that it could be kept. They had no excuse for not keeping it. These words in Deuteronomy were spoken by Moses of the law. And inasmuch as almost the same words are used of the gospel in Romans 10, it is plain that it was just as possible for Israel to keep the law as it is for us to believe the gospel. Neither of these belong to the realm of the impossible.

To sum up, we see that having broken the covenant it was impossible foe Israel to ever enter into the blessings that the covenant promised until they were redeemed from the curse that their transgression brought upon them. Nevertheless, they continued under the law with blessing or cursing following their keeping or breaking of it.

The New Covenant

It was Israel's appointed destiny to be a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. This was bound up in the absolute agreement that God made with Abraham concerning his seed. The

covenant of Sinai was proposed with a view to bringing about this destiny for Israel, and even though they did not fulfill the terms of the covenant, this could not alter or change God's predetermined purpose for the descendants of Abraham. They will yet reach that goal and they will reach it through keeping the terms of this original agreement. Even when men fail, God abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself.

When the covenant was first proposed and Israel accepted it, God commended their acceptance by these words:

I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 0 that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever. Deut. 6:28-29.

In this statement God points out their one great weakness. They did not have the right heart in order to keep His covenant. This fact sheds great light on the new Covenant.

The most important reference in connection with the new covenant is found in **Jeremiah 31:31-34.**

Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord.

This records God's promise to make a new covenant with the house of Judah and Israel. No covenant is made, but a promise is given that one will be made. It is further stated that it will not be according to the covenant He made at Sinai. What then will it be? This is answered.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The same covenant which had at the first been written upon the tables of stone will be placed in their inward parts and written upon their hearts. This being true they can do nothing else but keep the law since there will be no motive (heart) to do otherwise

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

This covenant will yet be made with the reunited house of Israel, even as God has said. This promise was ratified in the death of Christ. Among those things that were accomplished in His death was that He shed the blood that inaugurates the new covenant.

The full outflow of the new covenant awaits that day when Israel shall be a restored nation before the Lord. It was in operation during the Acts period so far as the believing Jews were concerned. They were blessed in harmony with the terms of the new covenant. They, as individuals, were redeemed from the curse of the law, the law was written in their hearts, and the righteous ness of the law was fulfilled in them. This made it possible for Peter to say of the believing Jews:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. 1 Peter 2:9.

What was true of the believing remnant in the Acts period will some day be true of the nation of Israel as a whole. Their appointed place and destiny is subject to no alteration.

The believer who is blessed today is not blessed because of any covenant that God made with Abraham. We are not blessed under the terms of the new covenant. We have nothing more to do with the new covenant than we had to do with the old covenant. That great multitude of believers who have been blessed since the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28) are blessed because the death of Christ provided redemption and forgiveness and this was made available without distinction when God's great channel of blessing was turned toward the nations. This channel now brings us blessings which are in no way related to any covenant.

OLIECTIONIC AND ANCINEDO

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: After the law was given did not God withdraw Himself into a thick cloud to show His displeasure because the people had accepted the law?

Answer: This is an idea that is commonly found among those who follow the Darby-Scofield system of interpretation. A careful reading of Exodus 19:9 will show that it is erroneous. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee forever." The words "I come unto thee in a thick cloud" have been wrested and made to teach "I withdraw into a thick cloud."

Question. What is the fate of those who have never heard the gospel?

Answer. They will be raised from the dead, and the life of each one of them will be reviewed at the great white throne. They will be judged according to the God-given light and knowledge they possessed. Some of them will enter into the new heavens and new earth, the rest will die the second death. God will distinguish between those who come within the hearing of the gospel and those who do not. He will judge accordingly. This same principle is seen in those who are within the law and those without the law. See Romans 2:12.

Question. Is there more than one God? Genesis 3:5 seems to indicate that there is.

Answer. A more emphatic passage along this line would be 1 Corinthians 8:5 or John 10:34-35. Satan is the god of this age. 2 Cor. 5:4. While it is true that there are "gods many" yet there is only one Supreme. To us, there is but one God - the Father.

Question. Does God know the date of my death? If so does not this fix the time of my death?

Answer. Apart from careful consideration and without proof, most people believe that God knows in advance the exact moment when each individual will die. If this is true, then the date is fixed by God's knowledge and one cannot die one moment before or after that time. Therefore, all precautions taken to preserve or extend life are in vain.

If an individual life is in some way linked up with God's purposes, then God will choose to know, so that the advent of death cannot conflict with His purposes. But if one's life has no definite bearing upon God's purposes, then God may not choose to know. I am confident that my life has no definite personal bearing upon any of God's great purposes, and I believe that His purposes would have been fulfilled to the letter even if I had never been born.

CORROBORATING TESTIMONY

Genesis 1:1-2 and Isaiah 45:18

We must consider Isaiah 45:18 a little carefully, for not only does it awaken the deepest interest, but forces a series of questions as to the beginning of the earth and indeed much more than that, that only the inspired volume as a whole can answer. In reading Genesis 1:1, 2 for the first time who would not inevitably conclude that God created the earth a chaos, "without form (tohu) and void" - waste and desolate, and out of that chaos fashioned it in six "days" (irrespective of the length of those days) to be a fitting dwelling-place for man? So apparently speaks Genesis, but Isaiah, verse 18 absolutely denies it! Moses seems to say that it was created "without form," or (to use the same Hebrew word) tohu, while Isaiah tells us that it was not created tohu. Is there not then a glaring contradiction between them here? But anyone in the least thoughtful would say, "God surely does not create ruins." Would chaos express His creative power and wisdom? Is there not perfection attached to all His creative acts? Does even a human mechanic - such as a watchmaker - express his skill by a confused jumble of wheels? Surely not! Apart from other Scripture, a thoughtful Jew reading those two verses would say that some stupendous and tragic cataclysm must have occurred to bring the primal perfect creation of the first verse to the ruined or tohu condition of the second.

But centuries pass, and again we see the earth a ruin. Again the restless water of the great deep cover it. Again there is tohu everywhere, save where a little ark floats, bearing within it a family on which all earth's hopes depend. But in this case we know that it was the creature's wickedness, the violence and corruption which filled the earth, that caused the ruin. Inevitably we are led to ask if a similar cause had not intervened between the two first verses of the Bible? But what creature could it be whose wickedness wrought the ruin? Again must centuries pass, generations come and go whilst a divine revelation is gradually unfolding, and when that is completed all uncertainties as to Genesis 1:1, 2 are removed, and we find that indefinite hiatus between these verses to have been filled with a tragedy indeed - a mighty revolt of a pre-Adamite race, headed by one sinister figure now called Satan or Devil, whose mighty crime was his claim to be equal with God his Creator (chap. 14:13). Here then we find the cause of that tohu condition. As in Adam's sin we find the cause of "the creature being made subject to vanity" (Rom. 8:20) - which we may justly call the tohu condition of this creation - so in that mighty creature's rebellion we find the reason for the condition of our earth in Genesis 1:2. Not alone did Lucifer (his first name) then fall, but he brought down with him the whole creation of which he was the head in one cataclysmic crash and ruin! From that we learn this basic truth: the work of the head brings its consequence on all whom, as head, he represents before God. That in its turn leads us to our Lord as the Last Adam who, but His work of right eousness on the cross, brings the infinite benefits of that work on all vitally linked with Him. And as God made this earth a fitting dwelling-place for man as our verse tells us, so has He prepared a dwelling-place for all His people that shall never become tohu v'bohu, waste and desolate, but is incorruptible, undefiled, and its beauties fade never. Selected from Studies in Isaiah by F. C. Jennings.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****The Chicago and Grand Rapids area spring meetings were so satisfactory from every standpoint that it has been already decided to repeat both of these meetings in the fall. It is hoped that by then travel conditions will be greatly improved so that many more friends will be able to attend. The tentative date for the Chicago area meeting is September 24, and for Grand Rapids, October 1. Final announcement will be made at a later date.

****Friends living in and around Rockford, Illinois, are invited to be present at two meetings *to* be held on Sunday, June 18. The Editor will present two special Bible studies. The meeting place is The Faust Hotel, Parlor A, Mezzanine floor. The meetings will be at 3:00 P.M. and 7:30 P.M.

****So many inquire about the progress of the radio ministry that a brief note on this seems to be in order. Through March and April, two hundred and twenty listeners have shown their interest by sending in for the literature. During this same period one hundred and eight who had already received the literature made request to become regular readers of *The Word of Truth*.

****I am somewhat ashamed of the treatment I have had to give so many friends of the witness during the past year. Their letters have remained long unanswered, the answers have been very brief, or only a brief acknowledgment has been sent. I hope that none of my friends has interpreted this as indicating lack of interest or indifference upon my part. I have been led into an enormous amount of work which consumes every moment of my time. At present, my only helper is Mrs. Sellers.

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