

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q. SELLERS, Editor, March 1937

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Table of Contents

- * God's Plan of Salvation
- * The Pentecostal Administration
- * Three Spheres of Future Glory
 - * Things to Come
 - * Notes on I Corinthians
 - * The Church of God
- * Answers to Correspondents
- * The Editor to His Friends

God's Plan of Salvation

Salvation from sin has no connection with anything that impotent man may do for God, but comes as the result of something the omnipotent God does for lost man. Everywhere we go we come in contact with those whose conception of salvation is that it results from a manner of daily life, both moral and religious. Few there are who see salvation as a state wrought in the individual by the creative power of God. Multitudes have conceived their own conditions of salvation, or accepted the conditions stated by others, and having fulfilled these they rest in the false security of self deception concerning their true relationship to God.

The Bible deals with the great questions of sin and salvation, and happy indeed is the one who has turned from the seething, changing mass of human opinion to search out that which is written in the Word of God. On these issues God has spoken faithfully. What He has said must be carefully weighed and personally applied.

All Are Declared Sinners

God in His Word takes up the question of sin and settles it by direct statement, so plain that misunderstanding is not possible. All men are found guilty and there can be no appeal from the divine pronouncement. **"For there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:22-23.**

This verse allows no exception, and does not permit any confusing questions concerning great sinners and small sinners, moral sinners or immoral sinners. All such distinctions have been obliterated, there are no distinctions, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This includes the moral and religious for such are not counted by God as being saved. There is nothing in church membership, ordinances or even entering the preaching profession that will remove a man or woman from this classification of no difference, all sinners. all come short.

Sinners are lost, for the wages of sin is death. One sin makes a sinner, even as one murder makes a murderer. We are sinners by nature, sinners by practice, and have been declared sinners by divine decree. Men are not said to be lost in the sight of their fellowmen, but they are lost in the sight of God, with whom they will finally have to do.

What the Sinner Needs

The Word of God which faithfully declares that all are sinners, just as faithfully declares what the sinner needs. There is much confusion among men in this point and thousands of things are being presented as essential to the sinner's salvation. And it is just here that we need to be clear and stay away from that which only confuses. The question is- "What does a lost sinner need," The answer is-- "The lost sinner needs a SAVIOR," But is this all that he needs-will a Savior alone suffice? Yes, it is all he needs: a Savior alone will suffice. The hungry man needs bread; give it to him and he will be filled. The thirsty man needs water; give it to him and his thirst will be quenched. The sinner needs a Savior; give that to him and he will be saved.

The Savior Needed

The sinner needs a Savior, but it must be a capable, good, and all powerful Savior. And God has provided the very Savior that the sinner needs in the person of His own Son. The Word of God that shows you a sinner and shows that as a sinner you need a Savior, also presents to you the very Savior you need. Jesus Christ is the Savior and saving lost souls is His business. Secure Him as your Savior, place the whole matter of your salvation in His hands, and you will be able to rejoice in real salvation. If He undertakes the work of saving your soul, you will be saved. He has never failed and He will never fail a sinner who has Christ as his Savior is saved. A sinner without the Savior is lost. You can settle the question of your own salvation by answering these questions- Do I have the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior? Do I as a sinner belong to Him? Does He as a Savior belong to me? If the answers are YES you are saved, and if NO you are lost. Let nothing enter in here to cause confusion. If you can just keep things clear, so that God's truth does not become fouled with man's ideas you will have made wonderful progress towards that calm peace and assurance that comes from the knowledge of salvation. Remember you are a sinner, you need a Savior, Jesus Christ is the Savior you need, when He becomes your Savior you are saved.

The word **believe** represents all that a sinner can do and all that a sinner must do in order to be saved. **Faith** is a synonym of the word believe. If I believe in you, I have faith in you. If I have faith in you, I believe in you. Faith is simply believing the record which

God gave of His Son. To add or subtract anything to this sole condition of salvation is most perilous.

As a sinner man is void of all righteousness. God demands righteousness of those whom He would save. Man cannot produce the righteousness which God demands, so God in His infinite love has provided a righteousness.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3:21,22.

Declared Righteous

The word **justify** means to declare righteous. This thought should be read into every occurrence of the word. When God justifies He declares righteous. We are declared righteous freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. See Rom. 3:24.

At one time our sins were upon us. God took them from us and placed them on the Lord Jesus Christ. God did it, and He has so stated in His Word. By faith in Him the righteousness of God has been placed upon us. Thus God sees no sin, and sees us in His righteousness. Therefore He declares that we are righteous. He who as judge once declared us sinners, now as our justifier declares us righteous. He is the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. See Rom. 3:26.

(Continued, Vol. I, No. 11)

The Pentecostal Administration

(Continued from Vol. I, No 9)

Having seen that the commission recorded in Mark 16: 15-18 was the constitution of the Pentecostal Administration, and that it was the principles embodied in this passage which gave that period its peculiar character, a character that is unique in all sacred history; we are now ready to consider certain other great principles that were in force under that administration. These principles also had their part in giving to the Acts period its peculiar character, a character that is not being duplicated, and cannot be duplicated today. In Matthew 16:19 the Lord Jesus Christ made a promise to Peter, which (we believe) became effective at the time of the event recorded in John 20:21-22, and was exercised in full on the day of Pentecost. In Matthew 16:19 the Lord Jesus Christ made a promise to Peter, which (we believe) became effective at the time of the event recorded in John 20:21-22, and was exercised in full on the day of Pentecost. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. 16:19.

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A key, in the Scriptures, is a badge of power or authority. He who has the keys has power to open. Binding and loosing is a Hebrew idiom for exercising authority. Peter alone had the keys, but the power of binding and loosing was given to others, as recorded in Matt. 18:18. This power was effective throughout the entire period covered by the book of Acts, and was exercised by the apostles and elders according to the will of God. It should be noted that He who gave them such marvelous power, gave them grace also to use it aright. They never abused it, and it was used only according to God's will and for His glory.

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This power of binding and loosing is seen many times in the book of Acts. For example let us consider the case of Ananias and Sapphira as recorded in Acts 5.

This man with his wife sold a piece of property, kept back part of the price he received for it, brought the rest of the money to the apostles, representing that he was giving the full amount that he received for the land. But Peter had power which enabled him to read the very heart of Ananias, and he told him that in misrepresenting his gift he had not lied to men but to God. Upon hearing these words Ananias fell down dead. Three hours later his wife came in knowing nothing of what had happened. Peter began to question her, asking if they had sold the land for so much, and she supported her husbands lie.

"Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."

In view of all this we may well ask-Who is this man Peter, who asks such searching questions concerning the amount received from the sale of a piece of property? What right has he to examine others as to whether they gave it all or only part? What power has he to say that death is to visit this woman immediately?

If any man should ask the writer such pointed and personal questions about our affairs, and the amounts we give to the work of the Lord, we would tell them politely, yet firmly, that it did not concern them, and we would suggest that they mind their own business. We would tell them that we answered to no man, only to God and Him alone. And if for our seeming impertinence we were told that a judgment of death was to come upon us, we would smile and answer in blunt American slang-"So what?"

But we would not have answered Peter in such manner, had we lived and believed under that administration of God in effect during the period covered by the book of Acts. For Peter was a man with authority. To him had been committed by Jesus Christ the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever he bound on earth was bound in heaven, and whatever he loosed on earth was loosed in heaven. Therefore, when he stated that judgment of death was to come upon Sapphira we read:

"Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband."

Acts 5:10.

This is a clear example of the use of the power bestowed by the words of Christ in Matt. 16:18. A judgment was loosed upon earth, and heaven concurred. Failure to divide the word of truth has forced Protestant theologians to contend that in Matthew 16:18 the Lord did not really mean what He said. Catholic theologians have contended that the Lord did mean just what He said, and they insist that this power today resides in the

Pope. As far as the Lord meaning exactly what He said is concerned, we take our stand with the Catholics, but we do not believe that this power resided in anyone after that momentous day recorded in Acts 28:28, when Paul announced that the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles.

Another instance of the power of binding and loosing is seen in Acts 15. Certain men had come from Antioch to Judea, and insisted it was necessary that the Gentile believers should be circumcised. This matter caused no small amount of dissension and disputation, but it could not be settled in such manner. It was determined, therefore, to carry the question to those who had authority, and who could speak authoritatively upon it. Thus even the great Apostle Paul recognizes the truth of the words of Christ in Matthew 16. So they sent Paul, Barnabas and certain others to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. When the conference came together, and the matter was laid before the church, Peter spoke first, and he spoke with authority. James is the second speaker, and gives his judgment that the Gentile believers are not to be troubled about this matter. This pleased the apostles and elders with the whole church. An authoritative decree is given:

"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Acts 15:28.

From these words it is plain to see that heaven and earth was concurring. They had bound the matter on earth, and it was bound in heaven. It was settled, and there could be no appeal. Therefore Paul went through the cities, and delivered to the believers the decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

How different it is today. How ridiculous it would be for us to go to Jerusalem (or any other city) for the purpose of settling our controversies. The power to legislate in matters of faith and practice no longer exists. It passed with the dispensational change of Acts 28:28.

Therefore the very fact that a man had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that a group of men had the power of binding and loosing would naturally produce a period unique in character as the period under consideration.

(Continued , Vol. I, No. 11)

THREE SPHERES OF FUTURE GLORY

(Continued from Vol. I, No. 9)

(A study in the word *epouranios*, submitted for prayerful consideration)

In the last article on this subject reference was made to the necessity of making a distinction between the singular and plural of **EPOURANIOS**, especially when that word appears in the dative case. In the Greek the genitive case speaks of the character or source of the matter under consideration, while the dative case marks the location. The dative case is unknown in English, as such, thus an exact illustration is difficult. The following may suffice to simplify the distinction in these two cases. For example, the term "a Florida orange" speaks of the source and character of the fruit, but does not say where the fruit is located. "An orange in Florida" speaks of location, but gives no hint of character.

The first illustrates the genitive and the second the dative case. The genitive does not locate, for the Florida orange may be in Ohio. When a thing is to be located, the dative case is used.

In view of this it is our conviction that when the dative singular of EPOURANIOS is used it locates in a sphere which is above heaven or on heaven: and when the dative plural is used it raises into another sphere which is above heavens or on heavens.

The reader may feel that this distinction is too fine, but if it is then all this talk about verbal inspiration is meaningless. We are convinced that the Greek, who heard or read Paul, caught the distinction at once and without difficulty. Can the reader imagine a legal document which pays no attention to singulars and plurals? Would he say that a deed which speaks of a "lot with the building thereon," is no different from a deed which speaks of a "lot with the buildings thereon"? If he bought a "lot with the buildings thereon," would he insist on the letter "s" being on the word "building," or would he feel this would make him a "hairsplitter"? Does a lawyer give more thought and care to the exact wording of a legal document than God gave to His word? Our answer is, NO.

The dative singular of the Greek word EPOURANIOS will be found just once in the entire New Testament. This one occurrence is highly illuminating. In Hebrews 12:22, EPOURANIOO is used of the present location of the New Jerusalem. This city at the close of the 1000 year Kingdom period, descends from heaven to the earth. Here, and here alone, the dative singular is used. It locates this Jerusalem above heaven, which we believe refers to that sphere immediately above the realm *of* the birds, clouds, and stars. This Jerusalem is located, not above heavens, but above heaven.

The dative plural appears five times in the New Testament, but is never found outside *of* the Ephesian epistle. It is always preceded by the EN TO IS, meaning **in the**. We will examine each reference in order. In **Ephesians 1:3** we read:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the above heavens (en tois enpouraniois) in Christ."

This verse gives the location *of* those blessings which were allotted to "the Church which is His body" These blessings are spiritual, and they are located in the above heavens. If "the Church which is His body" is blessed with Abraham, as were the Gentiles of the Acts period, the dative singular would have been used here. But we are not blessed with Abraham, neither will we be blessed in Abrahamic spheres of blessing, the earth and the heavens. Therefore, the dative plural is used here which raises our sphere of blessing above Abraham's city. It is to this place we will go to enjoy our blessings in their fullness. When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, we will be manifested with Him in glory.

In **Ephesians 1:20** we read:

Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the above heavens (en tois epouraniois).

From this verse we learn that Christ has been seated as Head of "the Church which is His body" in that same sphere where our blessings are located. This sphere is "far above all." If any would dispute this by showing that Christ is seated in the heavens, we would suggest that they complete their studies. To be seated does not speak of physical position. Mr. Roosevelt is seated in Washington as the President, and was seated there as President even while on his recent South American tour. When the Lord Jesus Christ is

seated upon the throne of David (Matt. 25:31), he will be seated in the heavens and in the sphere that is "far above all."

In **Ephesians 2:6** we read:

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the above heavens (en tois epouranioIs) in Christ Jesus."

Not only has Christ been seated in the above heavens as Head of the Body, but we have been seated there also. We were taken from the lowest place to be seated in the highest place. Grace could go no lower, and it could raise no higher. The reason for such grace being manifested to ungodly sinners is clearly set forth.

"That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:7.

In **Ephesians 3:10** we read:

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the above heavens (en tois epouraniois) might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

From this verse it is evident that there are two realms in that sphere which is far above all. Here we read of principalities and powers in the above heavens, while we have already seen that Christ has been seated far above all principalities and powers in the above heavens. There the Body is seated with Him and this sets forth the manifold wisdom of God.

In **Ephesians 6:12** we read:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the above heavens (en tois eporanois)."

This verse presents a difficulty, but whenever we come upon a problem in God's Word, we feel it is providential as God would have us seek to solve the problem. We have solved many, and are working on many more. On this verse we have been helped by Mr. C. H. Welch, who in turn seems to have been helped by Dr. E. W. Bullinger. He suggests the following translation.

"For we wrestle not with flesh and blood in the heavenlies, but with principalities, with powers, with spiritual wickednesses who are the rulers of the darkness of this world."

Mr. Welch says:

"We do not wrestle with flesh and blood; neither do we wrestle in the heavenlies. We do wrestle with spiritual wickednesses who are the rulers of the darkness of this world. not of that world that is at the right hand of God. The reader may appreciate a confirmatory passage where a similar division of subject is necessary. As 2 Peter 1:19 stands in the Authorized Version it lends color to the erroneous teaching that the second coming of Christ is not to be understood as a literal future event, but as the 'day star' arising in our hearts. We get the truth by dividing the verse as we divided Eph. 6:12."

Mr. Welch then suggests the following translation of 2 Peter 1:19. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; where-unto ye do well that ye take heed IN YOUR HEARTS, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arises.

This explanation is, to us, very satisfactory. If any should feel that it does not solve the problem, we will be glad to hear from them if they have studied out the matter more thoroughly.

Thus we have examined the five occurrences of the dative plural of EPOURANIOS. We would emphasize again that the dative case locates, that it occurs only once in the singular, and five times in the plural, but never in the dative plural outside of the Ephesian epistle. In view of this Colossians 3:1-4 glows with a new glory.

"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek those things that are above, where, Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died. And your life is hid with Christ In God. When Christ, who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." Col. 3:14 R. V.

(Continued, Vol. I, No. 11)

Note: In the last two articles on this subject, our one desire has been to submit the interpretation to our readers. We will be glad to hear from any who may search out the matter more thoroughly. O. Q. S.

THINGS TO COME, **PERILOUS TIMES**

Inasmuch as the present administration, the Administration of the Mystery, had a definite beginning, a time element is involved. While the time element is only incidental in an administration, yet just as sure as it had its first days it will also have its last days. Thus in 2 Timothy we have these last days referred to by Paul.

"This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come." 2 Tim. 3:1.

The believer who takes God at His word and acts accordingly realizes that periods of peril will be the chief characteristics of the last days of the administration under which we are now living. Thus we will not be disillusioned, disappointed, discouraged or defeated when we see these times of peril come to pass. We do not expect great audiences in a day when men are turning away from the truth. We do not expect men to endure our ministry in a day when men will not endure sound doctrine. We are not expecting perilous times and a great revival at the same time, as so many seem to be doing today. In a certain religious magazine we read as follows:

"Nothing can stop it! A revival is coming. All signs indicate that America will soon again be swept by a great spiritual awakening. The church is on the eve of its greatest period of prosperity. Good times are ahead spiritually and materially. Let the Bridegroom find us ready when He comes."

We refused to be deceived by any such childish prattle. We are inclined to believe that Satan's next great counterfeit will be a religious revival. But this will make the times all the more perilous for the true teachers of the Word.

The perilous times spoken of in 2 Timothy will be characterized by certain features that will be dominant in the lives of men. Men will be selfish or lovers of self, lovers of money, ostentatious or given to pretentious parades, proud, defamers, stubborn to parents, unthankful, unkind, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, uncontrollable, fierce, unfriendly to good men, traitors, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.

It is important to notice that these are not said to be signs. We have nothing to do with signs, and our hope is not connected with signs. This passage tells us the character of the last days of the present administration, so that we will know what to expect. We are not told that when these things begin to appear that the end is near. No one can say whether these last days will be ten years or one hundred years in length. Neither can anyone say that we are in the last days at the present time. What we are seeing today may not be the complete fulfillment of these statements concerning the character of the last days. We have before us an article on this same subject written by a true teacher of the Word in 1897. He was sure that 2 Tim. 3 was being fulfilled to the letter in his day, forty years ago. This writer pointed out the fact so many people went cycling on Sunday as a proof that the statement concerning "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" was being fulfilled. We wonder what this brother would say if he were alive today, and witnessed the things we see in this pleasure mad world.

In the Word we are not only told of these perilous times, but we are also told of the divine provision that has been made for us in view of them. And it is just here that a multitude of ministers are going astray. They seem to feel that our thoughts and studies should be centered in the things connected with these perilous times. They seem to believe that it is their duty to keep their hearers in a state of seething excitement and fear concerning these things. They have ceased to speak of the things which belong to our peace and have become dispensers of fear. They paint their pictures as black as possible. The newspapers are studied with the most meticulous care for any new scrap of sensational information which can be used in their messages on these times. They become like vultures who are looking for carrion, rather than like eagles who are mounting up to meet the rising sun. Instead of producing a people who stand strong and courageously in the Lord, they are producing a people frightened and worried, whose hearts seem ready to fail them for fear in view of those things which these preachers predict are soon to come upon the earth. Every new crime, strike, riot, tragedy, war, rumor of war and earthquake is just so much grist for the mill of these men who are dispensers of fear. To the present writer this is the most flagrant misconception of the message of the man of God that history has ever witnessed.

However, while strongly expressing our disapprobation of the abuse of the Word in this manner, yet we would not deprecate the fact that the times in which we live are perilous and will become increasingly more perilous as time goes on. But we are men and not mice, and we will face these times as men who know God and have His Word for our guide. In it we will find the provision that has been made for us in view of these perilous times.

There are those who would have us believe that these perilous times call for the entrance of the believer into politics. That we should cast our lot with the least corrupt of the great political systems. Some feel we should carry on a warfare of words against Communism and Bolshevism. Some feel we should write letters to Congressmen urging for or protesting against some piece of legislation. From all this we have been separated, and refuse to have any part with such fleshly works of darkness.

What our course is to be in perilous times is clearly set forth. This will be considered in our next study.

(Concluded in Vol. I, No. 11)

NOTES ON I CORINTHIANS

2:9-10. These two verses should never be separated. It is misleading to quote the first apart from the second. The eye referred to here is the eyes of all mankind viewed as one. The same is true of the ear and the heart. How blessed it is to know that in searching out the deep things of God we are working with the Spirit. Apart from Him we could not understand the simplest things. Through Him we can understand the deepest things. And He is just as willing to lead the ignorant as He is to lead the scholar into truth. He leads any who will be led.

2:11. Man knows and understands the things of man because he is man. The Spirit knows the things of God because He is God.

2:12. We have not received the spirit of this world system, but the Spirit of God. This was in order that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. So why be afraid to study, and why be afraid to search? Some say that it is too deep for them. This may be true, but it is not too deep for the Spirit. He was given to us that we might know, and to lead us into all truth.

2:13. The things revealed to Paul by the Spirit were spoken by him to others. In doing this he did not use words taught by human wisdom, but spake in words taught by the Spirit. There is no stronger argument for verbal inspiration than this statement.

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." is translated by Rotherham as "by spiritual words spiritual things explaining." In 2 Tim. 1:13 the believer is exhorted to hold to the pattern of sound words. This is most important. Much confusion that exists today is the result of loose, unscriptural terms. Too few speak and use the exact language of the Word.

2:14. The natural man is the unsaved man. He maybe learned, moral, eloquent and religious but he cannot know the things of the Spirit of God. Such things are spiritually discerned. The crawling ant can no more enter into the recesses of human experience and thought, than man can enter into and apprehend things divine. There is no mediator between man and the ant, but we of the new creation have the interpretive presence of the Spirit of God.

2:15. The word "judgeth" here should be discerneth. The test of spirituality is discernment. Not a holy look, a pious tone of voice, somber raiment or zeal for service. The test is discernment. The spiritual man has discernment, but he is not discerned by others. He is not understood, and is usually misunderstood.

2:16. No one knew the mind of the Lord, no one fathomed Him. He was even misunderstood by His disciples. Yet we have by the new creation the mind of Christ. This is our right mind. Those who have not the mind of Christ are spiritually insane.

CHAPTER 3

3:1-4. No matter how difficult 1 Corinthians may appear to the student, the fact remains that it is milk and not meat. Paul had fed them with milk and not with meat for they were not able to bear it. He states in this epistle that they were not yet able to bear it. If there is one epistle that does not contain "the Mystery" that epistle is 1 Corinthians. Yet some have tried to force into it some of the deepest teachings that can be found in the Word of God. This is especially true concerning the twelfth and fifteenth chapters. We hold that in this epistle Paul said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." (See Acts 26:22).

The carnality of the Corinthian saints was manifested by envy, strife and divisions. Their divisions were of that type which chooses a certain man as leader.

3:5-8. Paul and Apollos were nothing but ministers by whom the Corinthians had believed. They had preached Christ, the Corinthians had believed their message concerning Christ, and their faith was in Christ. Thus after preaching the ministers were eliminated. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but the increase was of God. He that planted was nothing, he that watered was nothing. Those who plant and water today do not seem to be able to trust either their seed or their sowing. They feel they must reap the harvest at the close of each message. They do their work but shut God out before He can do His. We do not object to the use of the invitation but we do cry out against the frightful abuse of it seen in every gospel service of today.

Some men attempt to prove the correctness of their position by the fact that souls are apparently saved by their efforts. We have often been asked to explain why souls are saved by the ministry of those whose teaching is notoriously bad. God does not require us to explain anything, but let it be remembered they who plant and those who water are nothing.

3:9-10. Why should men try to crowd into the "we" of verse nine. This plural pronoun refers to Paul and Apollos, two inspired apostles who were authoritative teachers. If we have any place in this verse it is in the "ye" and not with the "we." The word husbandry should be farm. They were God's farm, God's building.

Undeserved favor to Paul had made him a wise master-builder. He had laid in Corinth a foundation which was perfect in every detail. Others were building on this foundation, He warns the workers to take heed how they build thereon,

3:11. The foundation had been laid, and none other could be laid. This foundation was Jesus Christ.

(continued, Vol. I, No. 12)

THE CHURCH OF GOD

In the first chapter of Genesis we find the record of the creation of man. Before we read through many chapters we find that this first pair has multiplied and developed into many nations. From Genesis 1 to Genesis 12, God is dealing with the nations that came out of Adam. At Genesis 12 God makes a new beginning with one man, and from this man He develops a new nation. After Genesis 12, God is no longer dealing with the nations that came out of Adam, but from this point until Acts 28:28 God is dealing with the nation that came out of Abraham. The history of this nation fills the pages of the Word of God. Other nations are mentioned only as they come in contact with the nation of Israel. God became the God of this nation. They became His people. He gave Himself to them as God, and took them to Him as a people. They were never reckoned among the nations. God was the God of Israel, not of Assyria, Babylon or Rome. They had not taken Him as God, but He had taken them, and given Himself to them. He did not do this to any other nation. Even in those periods when He withdrew from them He became the God of heaven, as seen in the book of Daniel. This nation was given sorship, convenants, the law, a divine service, the promises. No other nation was given any of these things. These made up the privileges and prerogatives of Israel. Thus they were lifted above the balance of mankind.

The people of Israel were not only the nation of God, they were also the Church of God. The Hebrew word QAHAL is identical with the Greek word ECCLESIA, and these words are used interchangeably by the Holy Spirit, as a comparison of Psa. 22:22 and Heb. 2:12 will show. No meaning can be attached to one that cannot be attached to the other. If one means Church, the other means Church. However, this is a poor translation, and is used only because it is the popular term. In Nehemiah 13:2 it is stated that no Moabite should come into the congregation of God forever. The word here for congregation is QAHAL. It is ECCLESIA in the Septuagint. The nation of Israel was called a Church by Stephen in Acts 7:38.

That body of people known as the nation of Israel and the Church of God was also called the seed of Abraham. For that is what they were, they were Abraham's descendants. This people was God's out-called ones, and anyone identified with God from Genesis 12 to Acts 28:28 was identified with the seed of Abraham. Any blessing to a man of the nations (a Gentile) had to come in connection with the nation of Israel. The believing Gentile could be blessed with the faithful Israelite, even though the nation as a whole was not blessed.

Therefore a man from the nations was not excluded from being counted among God's people. However to be reckoned among God's people he had to leave his nation, and come into the nation of Israel. .

"Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbath, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, everyone that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine. altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people ." Isa.. 56:3-7.

The Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 is an example of those who came in with Israel. We know he had a copy of the book of Isaiah. And while he was having difficulty in understanding of whom the prophet was speaking in Isa. 53, yet we are sure that he knew Isa. 55 was a promise to him. To describe him as a poor lost soul, without hope and without God is not to speak the truth concerning him.

The door into Israel for a man of the nations was the door of circumcision, by which he took hold of the covenant, and law keeping. Those who entered in this manner were called proselytes. This term, at that time, was one of dignity, and did not have the unsavory meaning that it seems to have today. To the Jew proselytizing was the same as evangelizing is to us. A proselyte was a convert. The Jew delighted to get a man to turn from the nations with their idols to the nation with the true God.

Thus many Gentiles were in the Church of God in the Old Testament. They had entered by the only door open at that time, the door of circumcision and law keeping.

It was to the nation of Israel, the Church of God, the seed of Abraham, that the Lord Jesus Christ came. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. The Church of God He came to was so apostate that when they made a proselyte they made him a child of Gehenna, for nothing but judgment awaited this apostate group. So, a change was made, and as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the sons of God. To Israel belonged the sonship, but that right was then given to those who received Him and believed Him. Thus in God's purposes a separation was made. Those who believed not became "Israel after the flesh" (I Cor. 10:18), those who believed became "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), The Israel of God became a holy nation, a royal priesthood. To them was given the kingdom, with all the spiritual privileges and prerogatives that belonged to Israel.

Just here an illustration may be helpful in showing how the little remnant became the Church of God, while that which had been the Church of God was set aside. .

In a mid-western state a certain church, that had been founded and developed by men who held to the great verities of the Christian faith, became enmeshed in the snare of modernism. A certain pastor had brought it in unawares, won a majority to his point of view, and the true believers were forced to hear each week God's word denied, the deity of Christ scorned, His virgin birth ridiculed in an insidious manner. At last, almost too late, the remnant of true believers awoke to the situation. They protested, but their protests were met by definite plans to exclude them from the church. They knew that the modernists were in the majority so they carried their case to the civil courts. When the case was tried the judge decided that the little remnant was the true church. He set aside the minister, all officers and the majority of the members; and gave to the faithful minority the church building, the parsonage, the name, all moneys, all papers, all rights and privileges. Thus there was no break, nothing new began, but the little remnant began to function as the true church.

This illustration is weak in many points, but will help to illustrate what happened when the Lord Jesus Christ came to His own, the seed of Abraham, the Church of God. He found it apostate, God's word to them had been made void by their traditions, so they refused to hear the one that God had sent. So those who did receive Him were given the kingdom (Luke 12:32), they were constituted a new nation (Matt. 22:43, I Peter 2:8), they were given authority (Matt. 18:18-19), and on the day of Pentecost the little flock was publicly constituted the Church of God by the baptism in the Spirit. From that time all promises, covenants and privileges were vested in the little flock. This became the out-calling of God. From the day of Pentecost until Acts 28:28, everyone saved (Jew or Gentile) were added to this Church of God. No longer did they enter into the nation of Israel, but into the new Israel, the Israel of God.

In the tenth chapter of Acts the Gentiles, or men from out of the nations, were added to the Church of God, and this without circumcision. From this point to the close of Acts, many Gentiles were saved by grace. Some of the Jews which believed insisted that it was necessary that these Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The Jerusalem conference in Acts 15 settled the matter. Gentiles which believed were not to be circumcised. Circumcision would have made them Jews, but these are not to be circumcised. The question of circumcision for Jews was never raised during the entire book of Acts. If so, where? There was one order for Jews which believed, and another order for Gentiles which believed. The Gentiles became partakers of Israel's spiritual things (Rom. 15:27). They received their inheritance among those who were sanctified, that is, the Israel of God (Acts 26:18).

For the sake of clarity let us remember that a multitude of Jews and a great number of Gentiles believed during the Acts period. Concerning these we ask the following questions. What was the position of these Jews; what was the position of these Gentiles; were they members of the Church of God or members of the Church which is His body? We do not ask about their salvation--that was by grace; we do not ask under whose ministry these were saved whether Paul's or Peter's. We know they were saved, what they were saved from, and now we want to know their calling, or what they were saved to. Were they called in the Church (out-calling) which is His body, or in the Church (out-calling) of God?

Another writer has said: "The word church has no definite meaning unless it is qualified and described. Hence the absolute necessity of qualifying the particular 'ECCLESIA' to which we refer."

To this we agree heartily, and would say that the same is true of the word "body" as used in the New Testament. Thus we must distinguish between that body which was the Church of God, and that body which is the Church which is His body.

Let us go to the word and discover how the word "body" is used there. In 1 Cor. 6:16, we discover that a man joined to a harlot becomes "one body". This is an immoral body, but it demonstrates to us that things brought into vital union by any means becomes a body.

Thus the priesthood in Israel was a body, the nation of Israel was a body, the twelve disciples were a body, the local assembly in Corinth was a body, the Church of God in the Acts period was a body, and the present out-calling of the mystery is a body. Therefore we must not take it for granted when we read of "many members of one body" and, "so we being many are one body in Christ" in Romans 12, that the apostle is

speaking of the Church which is His body, referred to in Ephesians. Rom. 12 follows Rom. 11, and the body of Rom. 12 is described in detail in Rom. 11, and we know Rom. 11 is no description of the church which is His body.

The position of the Jews which believed and the Gentiles which believed during the Acts period can be settled, This will be the subject of our next article.

(Continued, Vol. I, No. 11)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

W. K. C. CANADA;-The article which we published in the October 1936 issue under title of "The Witness of C. H. M.", was taken from "Miscellaneous Writings of C. H. M." Volume 5, published by Loizeaux Brothers. It is the last chapter of "Life and Times of Elijah." You will find it there, just as we printed it. You ask "are you associated with the teachings of the late Dr. E. W. Bullinger"? My answer is-I am not associated with the teaching of any man or group. I am an independent student, writer and teacher. I believe some things that Dr. Bullinger believed. I do not hold same things which he held and taught. You will probably say the same of yourself, if you are acquainted with his teachings.

THE EDITOR-TO HIS FRIENDS

****Two thousand two hundred copies of this issue of THE. WORD OF TRUTH will go into the hands of regular readers. Very few sample copies of this issue are being sent out. Requests are coming in such a steady stream that we are forced to revise our policy in connection with sample copies. We will now send one sample copy to any name sent in by another. This copy will contain a return postal card which will simplify the matter of sending in a personal request.

****Again we state that the price of the magazine is a personal request and a willingness to read it. Some have hesitated to send in their request for fear they will be hounded by constant appeals for money to support it. This is our tenth issue and we have asked no one for a gift for this testimony. We believe that constant appeals for money are a blot upon any witness. We reserve just one right in connection with the finances of this magazine. That is to enclose a financial report and a return envelope with each twelfth issue.

****We spent a very pleasant and profitable Sunday with Mr. Ed. C. Schattschneider at the First Ward Mission in West Allis, Wisconsin, on March 14. We rejoice in the faithfulness and progress of this testimony. Mr. Schattschneider is a teacher in the Milwaukee Vocational Schools and is an authority on the training of those who are physically handicapped.

*****An Opportunity* - - We have a letter from Mlle. Jeanne Bieth of France in which she tells of her plans to translate articles from The Word of Truth into the French language. These will then be printed for distribution in that country, or among French speaking people anywhere. Some of the work of translating is already complete, and the articles are ready for the printer. Mlle. Bieth is a graduate of the Moody Bible Institute, and is now laboring to make known the truth of the Mystery.

Funds are urgently needed for this work, and if any feel led to help, they should send their gifts to us and designate them for the French work. All gifts for this work will be acknowledged by Mlle. Bieth personally, so please allow sufficient time for your gift to be forwarded and for acknowledgment to be returned. We will report in our pages from time to time concerning the progress of this testimony.

End Vol. I, No. 10