

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q. SELLERS, Editor, MARCH-APRIL, 1945

## VOL. VIII, NO. 2

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## *THE CHURCHES*

In a recent article published under the title of *JESUS ONLY*, it was my privilege to write in behalf of the preeminence and all sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing this I found it necessary to deny certain false and unscriptural claims made by some churches, inasmuch as these claims deny the very preeminence and all-sufficiency of Christ for which I was contending. At the same time I denied certain attributes commonly imputed to the churches by most men, it being my conviction that these attributes belong to Christ alone.

I insisted that to be related to a church does not signify that a man is related to Christ; and since no church has been appointed as mediator between man and Christ, a man can be fully related to Christ wholly apart from being related to any church upon this earth: I denied the idea held by many that to be joined to a church is to be joined to Christ, and repudiated with the strongest words I could muster. the teaching that gives a church a place of essentiality along with Christ in the sinner's redemption and forgiveness.

The reaction to this article brought forth many letters of commendation and some of condemnation. From the letters of condemnation I was made to realize as never before the extent to which men are looking to "the church" for that which can be found only in Christ. Furthermore, I was distressed to find how many there are who profess to be followers of Christ who attribute to a church those glories and prerogatives which should only be attributed to God Himself, His Son or His Word. As an example of this I quote from a letter sent to me by the Pastor of a Lutheran Church.

"To preach the Bible only sounds good, but you will admit, if you have studied history, that the church gave us the Bible. The Bible did not make the church, the church made the Bible. I wish your preaching were not so one sided - that you would also give a few lectures on the need of church membership. You know that there is no salvation outside the church in the strict sense. Christ ordained the ministry and built His church. He gave us the sacraments to use, not to spurn. Woe to such who do!"

I shall not trouble myself to answer these statements. They sink like lead if one attempts to float

them upon the ocean of God's Word. I fully agree that the Bible did not make the churches that we see on every hand today. However; I cannot help expressing surprise that this Pastor who claims to follow in the footsteps of the great reformer would be guilty of repeating these Roman Catholic arguments for the supremacy of the church over and above the Bible. I believe the majority of instructed Lutherans would repudiate these statements, and they are not quoted here as being anything more than the views of one of their clergy. Nevertheless, with this letter came certain leaflets which bear the imprint of Lutheran publishing houses, and these reveal how far this awful drift away from Christ toward the church. has gone. I quote a few statements.

"The Church is God's act and God's gift . . . The Church is the workshop of the Holy Spirit. . . It is in the Church that the Lord Jesus Christ has incarnated Himself by the gift of His Holy Spirit. . . It is in the Holy Christian Church that God daily forgives abundantly all my sins and the sins of all believers. . . Let us exalt the Church. She is our spiritual mother. In our infancy she consecrated us to God in Holy Baptism and received us into her protecting arms. In our childhood she instructed us in the faith and set before us the Way Of Life, At her altar we received the blessing of God and the fellowship at the time of Confirmation, and Were strengthened to take upon ourselves the privileges and responsibilities of our baptism. Through her ministrations we are privileged to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the days of this life are over, and the world counts us dead, she it is that stands in our midst and proclaims, 'I have set 'before thee a door that is open; that no man can shut '."

I make no comment upon these statements, except to say that some of them are the most pious piffle I have ever read. But, even though I am a, rank outsider, since it is my duty to sound the alarm, I would warn the Lutherans that if they do not give due heed, they will discover too late that their clergy has taken God's Christ and God's Word from them and left in their place a human church. This is the new modernism that is far more subtle than the old type which indulged in blatant denials of the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Word. in the new modernism, Christ and the Bible are supplanted by the church.

Most of the letters that condemned my message ignored altogether the fact that I spoke against false claims and assumptions of the churches. It was taken for granted that I opposed all churches and regarded membership in them as being unscriptural.

One correspondent went to great length to prove that church membership is no sin, and another declared triumphantly that if it is wicked to belong to a church then the best Christians of all ages have been the greatest sinners. Since I never said that church membership was a sin and no such thought ever entered my mind, I can only look on with amusement as these champions of the church demolish their own men of straw.

The unfavorable reaction to my message was not unexpected. Many people are looking to and depending on the church for their salvation. Therefore, when one declares that at their very best these things called churches are only organizations of individuals, and that not one of the best of those individuals can save himself, they become greatly agitated. They know that it is the truth, but they just do not want it to be that way. They prefer to think that while it is true that not one of these individuals can save himself, yet when they are brought together in an organization and called a church they have power to save others. Such reasoning is sheer spiritual insanity, and, even though it sets me in opposition to the claims of many churches, I can do nothing else but cry out against it while at the same time I point men to the Lamb of God as the only One Who can take away the sins of the men of this world.

Some correspondents answered my denials of the false claims of the churches by quoting certain Scripture passages in which the word *church* appears, then reminding me that "thus saith the Lord," and calling upon me to bow my stubborn will to the Word of God. The passages quoted ,were: "I

:will build my church," Matt. 16:18, "tell it to the church," Matt. 18:17; "the Lord added to the church," Acts 2:47; "Christ is the head of the church," Eph. 5:21 ; "Christ also loved the church and gave 'Himself for it," Eph. 5:25. By simply quoting these passages in which the word *church* appears, regardless of what these verses say about the church, some who condemned my message feel confident that they have proved membership in a church to be essential to salvation and to a life well pleasing to God. The truth is, every one of these passages stands as a witness against the false claims of the churches

To use Scriptures where the word *church* appears in order to deify human organizations, is the same as if a man should carve an idol out of wood, overlay it with gold, and call it God. Then culling from the Scripture all passages that exhort men to exalt God, fear God, and worship God, apply them to the idol he calls God.

This illustration is not an extreme one. In fact, it is because I see idolatry on every hand in connection with present day attitudes of the ecclesiastical minded toward their churches that I feel the need of speaking so plainly and bluntly in protest. Man, because of his great advancement in learning, has gone far beyond that place where he will regard a stick or a stone as being His God. In view of this, Satan must lead men into idolatry in a more subtle form. He does this by deifying the churches in the eyes of men, making them to be something greater than their individual components, attributing to them the powers that belong only to God and Christ. When the church is given that esteem which belongs only to God, that is idolatry.

### **A Lesson from Isaiah**

In Isaiah 44, the prophet tells of the man who went into the forest and selected a choice tree. He took one part of this tree and used it for fuel so that he could warm himself; the second part he used for cooking a roast, and out of the balance he made a God even a graven image. Having done this, he fell down before it, worshipped it, prayed unto it and said "Deliver me, for thou art my god."

If a crowd of people gather together in the street it becomes a mob, if they come together in a hall they become a lodge, but if they come together under a steeple and behind stained glass windows it is declared to be a church, possessing divine rights and powers and being essential to the salvation of men. **It is not that I object to organization or to membership in an organization. However, I insist that an organization composed of sinners saved by grace is nothing more than an organization of sinners saved by grace.** But for men to imagine that such organizations possess divinely given authority is simply to make an idol out of that which man has created.

### **What Is "The Church"?**

At one point in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, He gave His disciples the most definite instructions concerning the proper course of action to follow if a brother sinned against them.

**Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But, if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matthew 18:15-18.**

Who would dare to question the divine perfection of these instructions, coming as they do from the lips of Our Lord? Yet, if one should attempt to follow this advice step by step he will soon come

up against an insurmountable difficulty. The first step concerning a personal and private conference with the offending brother offers no problem. The second step directing a return visit accompanied by one or two brethren to act as witnesses is also a simple matter. But the third admonition to "tell it to the church in case the offending brother remains obdurate offers an insurmountable difficulty to the one who would be strictly honest in this matter. The sincere man of God would not dare presume that by the term "the church" the Lord meant some organization to which he happens to belong. Neither can he believe that these organizations called churches have the power to bind a matter on earth and have it bound in heaven or to loose a matter on earth and have heaven to concur in that judgment. Furthermore, suppose that the brother does not belong to *your* church? Shall you, then, tell it to *his* church? If not, then which one among the more than four hundred sects and denominations in this country has the right to claim this title and declare they are "the church" that has the right to act in judgment in these matters? Is it possible for a thinking man to adopt the idea that the organization to which you belong is "the church" to you, and the one to which another belongs is "the church" to him?

One writer declares "the church is a divine institution," but carefully avoids in all of his writings giving any indication what he means by the term "the church!". If he would point to something definite as "the church," it would probably be quite easy to prove that the thing he calls "the church" is not a divine institution at all, but purely a human organization. Many others use this term freely in the same vague sense. They act as if its meaning were well understood, but try as we will we cannot discover just what they intend us to understand by "the church." One ecclesiastic says that "the church" should have a seat at the peace table. Just who he means shall have a seat there, I do not know and he does not make it plain.

As the man of honest and fearless mind surveys all things on earth with the help of the light of God's Word, he is impelled to ask if there is anything in existence today that can truthfully be called "the church." If so, then let those who use this term so freely tell us just what it is, where it is, and who are its members.

The one who is familiar with Scripture will know without doubt that there was a divine institution that could be called "the church" in the wilderness through which Israel traveled (Acts 7:38). He will also know that there was "the church" on earth in the days of our Lord (Matthew 18:17), and to this church the believers were added by the Lord on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). This was done wholly apart from any action upon the part of those who were already a part of the church. Furthermore, he will know that in that period covered by the book of Acts that the churches were multiplied (Acts 9:31), and that letters were addressed to the churches in Corinth, Thessalonica, Galatia and other places. And if he is a careful student of the Word, giving due heed to the exhortation to distinguish the things that differ, he will know that after the close of that thirty three year period covered by the book of Acts, no epistle is addressed -to any church. **Note:** Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. In Philippi all the elements were present that in the Acts period would have constituted a church, but they are not addressed as a church. Before the close of the Acts period they would have been addressed as the church of God in Philippi, but since this epistle was written after the close of that period they are addressed as individual saints, bishops and deacons. In Ephesus they are addressed only as saints.

When "the salvation of God" was sent to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28) it brought to them blessings such as they had never dreamed of possessing. However, it did not bring to them the right to be the church of God upon the earth. The unit with which God deals today is not the church, it is the individual.

As the present earthly scene is surveyed, the one who takes his stand upon the Word of God does not hesitate to emphatically assert that there is nothing on earth in existence today that can be called

"the church" in the same sense that this term was used in that period covered by the gospels and the book of Acts. If those who make this assertion are wrong, it should be a simple matter to prove it. Let those who take the opposite view point to something definite and. prove by Scripture that it is "the church."

Even though the term "the church" is in general use, and those who use it do so as if its meaning were generally understood, nevertheless, I am convinced that those who use this term are not doing so in order to reveal their thoughts. If so, then let them clearly define the term, let them substitute descriptive phrases that will make their statements plain, let them explain just what they mean when they speak of the church. Let them say to whom or what a believer is to tell the matter if he should seek to obey the admonition "tell it to the church."

It is well known that when a Catholic uses the term "the church" he is referring to the Roman Catholic Church. This, to him, is "the church" and no one is a part of this except those identified with the Roman church. But this is not "the church" to me, and it probably is not "the church" to any of my readers.

### **The "Protestant Church"**

Others will understand "the church" to be "the Protestant Church," but this is only an empty idea as there is no such thing as "The Protestant Church." This institution is an imaginary one since it has no actual existence. Protestants are divided into more than four hundred warring sects and denominations. And, even if we consider them in their aggregate, they are neither "the church" nor "a divine institution."

Or, we might consider some highly respected and influential branch of the so-called Protestant Church such as the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian or Lutheran denominations. These have an actual existence and a good degree of unity. Are any of these "the church?" Some of their adherents will make this claim and even cite Scripture or historical succession in an attempt to prove it. But when the "proof" is analyzed it amounts to nothing more than their assertion and the assertion of those who are like-minded. Do these great denominations collectively make up "the church"? If so, then by what rule can some denominations be excluded and others included? And when one faces the fact that a denomination is merely a sect that has grown big, strong and influential, one must admit that these collectively do not form "the church."

There are those who hold that all true believers in all denominations and sects make up "the church." Many will be shocked when I say that I do not believe this. This idea, to me, is one of last resort. Not being able to find "the church" anywhere else, it is declared to be so mingled in with the false church that only God can distinguish it. I freely admit that the Lord knows those who are His, and these are one in Christ. But these do not form "a church" or "the church," and even if we admit that these are the church, no one could have his cause judged by "all true believers" if he desires to follow the Lord's instructions "tell it to the church."

It is stubborn facts such as these that forces the student of the Word of God to the conclusion that there is no institution or organization on earth today that stands as "a church" or "the church" in the sight of God, and that the unit with which God is dealing today is the individual. His Word was given to men and not to organizations. He provided a Mediator between Himself and man, but none for any organizations. Men, as individuals, can approach Him, but no church as such can make an approach to Him. Individuals may associate with one another for the purpose of service to God and to one another. Collectively they can often do much more than one can do single-handed. Nevertheless, these associations have no standing before God since in the end His dealings are with the individual.

## **The Apostacy of Christendom**

For many centuries the hireling shepherds of the religious world have fed their followers upon a steady diet of something called Christianity, but which, when it is analyzed bears little relationship to the blessed Son of God. What we see on every hand is only the apostacy of Christendom, the popular religion of the western world, centering in institutions called the church. In order to give it importance, its leaders and teachers have not hesitated to give it a place of essentiality along with the Lord Jesus and a place of supremacy over the Word of God. However, it is my conviction that if the Lord Jesus were to appear upon the earth, He would disown and denounce the professing church and enter into fellowship with those individual believers who give Him and Him alone the place of preeminence and all-sufficiency. The majority give Christ **NO** place, the professing church give Him **A** place, a very Jew give Him **THE** place of preeminence and all-sufficiency. I take my place and cast my lot with the few.

## **The Universal Deception**

In Revelation 12:9 there is a statement concerning Satan which credits him with having deceived the whole world, and in Revelation 20:3 he is called the deceiver of nations. If we should attempt to discover just which among the many deceptions of Satan is the one which he has foisted upon the whole world there is only one that fits this description. In every nation and among all people he has foisted upon men the idea that God is represented by buildings which house organizations and that this combination of buildings and organizations reveals God, and that in and among them God is to be found. These buildings may be shrines, temples, mosques, cathedrals or churches and the organizations they hold may bear many different names. Nevertheless, it is generally believed and accepted that these represent God, that they speak for Him and that He is responsible for them. And, worst of all, these organizations make no attempt to dispel this error and correct this superstition. In fact many of them seek to build it up by claiming divinity for their institutions, giving them a place of supremacy over and above the Word of God.

If we should stop any man on the busy streets of London, Chicago or New York and ask him the blunt question "Where can God be found?" he will, unless he has been enlightened by God, direct you to the nearest church, cathedral or synagogue. Men believe that God is revealed in and by these places. He does not know, apart from God's enlightenment, that God is revealed only in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. When the sinner experiences the first trace of divine conviction that tells him something should be done about his sins, he will as a rule in his blindness rush for the nearest church. The church, glad to get another member, takes him in, tells him he is now all right, thus ending the work of the Holy Spirit. If such a man ever comes to the point of full redemption and forgiveness, it will be in spite of the church and not because of it.

The belief among men that the church acts and speaks for God is the cause that has brought about the anti-God and atheistic movement in such countries as Russia and Mexico. The corruption of the dominant churches in these countries and the excesses of the clergy were of such nature that men could do nothing else but turn against them. In their confusion they made the church to be one with God and turned against Him at the same time. Thus Satan had his triumph, his deception reached its fruition, whole nations became anti-God.

Before me, as I write is a letter from one who was formerly a Roman Catholic. He feels that he was flagrantly wronged by that church, and he left Italy in order to free himself from the stigma that its excommunication placed upon him. Not being able to distinguish between God and the churches, he became a bitter enemy of God and Christ. He admits to me that his bitterness caused him to circulate some very blasphemous literature in regard to the virgin birth of Christ. At present there are indications that God may be intervening in his life to redeem him from his sins, errors and confusion. If God should see fit to use me as an instrument to help him, then God forbid that I

should- direct him to a church that might also turn him out if he questions a tradition or practice. I shall do my best to point him to the true God - the God Who is revealed only in and by the Lord Jesus Christ.

To any who out of necessity may be led to live for God wholly apart from organized churches, I would say in the words of Paul:

**I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up.**

### **In Conclusion**

The things written in this article have been set forth in public by me on several occasions. From this I am able to anticipate the .one argument that is supposed to shut my mouth and to answer all that I have said. It is usually stated in words about as follows:

"So, you would tear down every church, silence every church bell, stop the music from every organ and have all worship and praise cease. How would you like to live in a city where there are no churches, where the gospel is never preached and God is never worshipped ?"

This argument is supposed to annihilate me, but it is both illogical and foolish. It comes from those who believe that anything called a church is so sacrosanct that it must never be criticized, its claims must never be disputed and its assumptions must never be denied. I would tear down no buildings, silence no bells and stop no music, cause no true worship or praise to cease. But I will always criticize every unscriptural act, deny every false claim and refute every unscriptural assumption made by anything that calls itself a church. It is these things that I write and speak against. It is my conviction that the only way back to God and to His Word is that Jesus Christ must increase in importance until He has the place of preeminence and all-sufficiency. This will never be so long as churches are pressing their false claims upon the children of God. If Christ is to be exalted then men and organizations must surrender all claims to rights, powers and privileges that belong only to Him.

**"He must increase - but I must decrease."**

### **THE END**

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## ***TRUTH FROM THE SCRIPTURES***

**(Continued from Vol. 8, No. 1)**

### **FOUR FUTURE RESURRECTIONS (Continued)**

In the previous study we considered the final resurrection, that one which takes place after the Kingdom eon, and the one that takes place just before the Kingdom eon begins, that is, on the last day of the present evil eon. These resurrections were seen to be a thousand years apart.

The resurrection which takes place on the day before the Kingdom eon begins is the hope of Abraham's seed or descendants. That his seed should possess the land upon which Abraham stood (Genesis 17:18), that his seed should live in it peaceably and securely enjoying the bountiful blessing of God, was the gracious promise God had made to him.

In spite of the claim of many that this. promise was fulfilled in the temporary tenure of Palestine by Israel, an honest examination of this promise will show that it has never yet been fulfilled. **"To Abraham and his seed were the promises made"** is the bold statement of Paul in **Galatians 3:16**.

To give some of Abraham's seed five hundred years removed from him a temporary possession of the land cannot be regarded as a fulfillment of the promise. All who were born of Abraham through Isaac were born with a claim upon this promise. It was not fulfilled in their lives, it could not be fulfilled in their deaths, but it will be fulfilled when they are raised from the dead. God will take them out of their graves and bring them into the land of Israel.

However, among Abraham's faithful descendants there were two distinct hopes. The first was the hope of an earthly country and the second was the hope of a better country, that is, a heavenly country. To possess the first of these hopes one had to be born a descendant of Abraham through Isaac and then be faithful to that covenant into which they were born. The second or higher hope was dependent upon their faith in or response to a higher revelation given to some in Israel by God. Those who possessed this hope were an out-calling out of those called in Israel.

This higher hope is not revealed in the pages of the Old Testament, No one can go to the Old Testament and show from its pages that anyone ever expected to be raised from the dead and enter into heaven or to obtain a heavenly country. But while it is not recorded in the Old Testament, it is revealed in the New Testament that this higher hope became the expectation of certain of the descendants of Abraham who lived before the birth of Christ. This is recorded for our learning in the book of the Hebrews.

**By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Hebrews 11:8-10.**

This passage tells us that Abraham had been promised an earthly country, also that he was called by God to go forth to this country which at some time later he would receive as an allotment. He sojourned in this land that had been promised to him just as if he were a visitor in a foreign country; never attempting to establish a permanent residence, but dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob who were sharers with him of the same promise. Furthermore, it is declared that he looked for the city that has the foundations whose architect and builder is God. From this we learn that Abraham's mind had been turned upward and his hope was changed to a city that could not be upon the earth in the Kingdom eon. Thus it is evident that among those to whom an earthly country and its related blessings had been promised, there was a small group from this company who turned away from this hope because a higher and better hope had been set before them. Among these were the first. to whom the covenant had been given: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It is sheer folly for anyone to look for or to expect that which God has not promised. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at first looked for and expected to possess the land because God had promised it to them. Inasmuch as they knew that death would intervene before the promise was realized, they expected to be raised from the dead and then have the promise fulfilled to them. Later we find that they looked for and expected to possess a heavenly country with a city whose architect and builder was God. This was no idle dream or wish of theirs. They hoped for this because God had promised it to them. There may be no revelation of this promise in the Old Testament records, but the fact that they looked for such a city and that this act is recorded as a work of faith is sufficient to show that they were acting upon a promise that held out to them a higher and better hope than the hope of the original promise. Therefore, we are told of them:

**These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. Hebrews 11:13.**

To die in the faith means that they took God at His word concerning what He had promised them and ordered their lives accordingly until that day when their eyes closed in death. This faith caused them to confess that they were strangers and exiles upon the earth. They died, not having received that which had been promised to them, but they saw it as being far in the future. The full significance of the declaration that they were strangers and exiles on the earth is explained to us by the Holy Spirit.

**For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. Hebrews 11:14.**

Even though they were in the very country that God had promised them, they declare plainly that they are not at home there. They are seeking elsewhere another country. However, since God promised them the earthly country, and since Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had fulfilled all the conditions of the covenant, they could in resurrection, return to, possess; and live in that land.

**And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. Hebrews 11:15.**

This could not refer to the land of Ur of the Chaldes from which Abraham originally came. *From* that land he had been severed forever, and any desire upon his part to return would have demonstrated a total lack of faith in the goodness and wisdom of God. Furthermore, Isaac and Jacob did not come out of that land. The thought here is of the earthly country which they had left or turned their backs upon. Since they had been promised this, they could have had it if they had set their hearts upon it. But, we discover, they have turned their backs upon this and their hearts are on something higher and better.

**But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city. Hebrews 11:16.**

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the first men in the Abrahamic covenant who transferred their faith and hope from an earthly to a heavenly calling, from something good to something better. By so doing they became partakers of an earlier resurrection, therefore a better resurrection. This better resurrection is also set before us in Hebrews.

A list of the Old Testament faithful from Isaac to Samuel and the prophets is found in Hebrews 11:20 to 32. In this record of their mighty deeds of faith, we come upon a startling statement that is highly illuminating.

**Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. Hebrews 11:35.**

Theological systems may have no place in them for this "better resurrection." Denominational creeds may ignore it. But it is positively declared in the Word of God. These saints obtained it, so it is not a myth or fantastic idea.

This "better resurrection" cannot be either one of the two we have considered. It cannot be the resurrection that takes place just before the new heavens and earth are created for no one needs to obtain or secure that resurrection. Even the unjust will be raised in that company. And since this passage deals with faithful saints of Abraham's seed, it cannot refer to that resurrection that takes place the day before the Kingdom eon begins. These saints were already in possession of that resurrection which would give them a place on the millennial earth. They were being tortured because of their faith, and when deliverance was offered to them if they would renounce their faith, they refused in order that they might obtain a better resurrection.

The exact time of this "better resurrection" is fixed in the Word of God. It is declared to be "at the last trump," and this time element alone is sufficient to distinguish it from the resurrection that takes

place on the day before the Kingdom eon begins. In **I Corinthians 15:51-52** we read:

**Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, AT THE LAST TRUMP: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**

It is my belief that spiritual things should be compared with spiritual things, and that the interpretation of every statement in the Word should be sought for within the pages of the Word. The diligent student will know that the only place in the Word of God where one finds a series of trumpets to which "the last trump" can refer is in the book of Revelation. There God's dealings with the earth are set forth under seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials. **Revelation 11:15-19** sets forth certain events that take place when the seventh or last trump is blown. At that moment the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ's, and those awful judgments begin which punish His opposers and purge His kingdom. John, in the Revelation, does not reveal the resurrection and rapture that occurs when the seventh trumpet is blown, but it is revealed by Paul to the Corinthians. This same resurrection and rapture is set forth in **I Thessalonians 4:16-17-18**.

**For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

There can be no doubt but that I Thessalonians 4 and I Corinthians 15 both refer to the same event. Both passages speak of the rapture and a resurrection and these events are declared to be at the last trump. It will help greatly in the understanding of this if the student will remember that there is in the Word a clear distinction between the *tribulation* and the *indignation*. The first is the time of Israel's chastisement and the second is the time of the Gentiles' punishment. The tribulation begins when "the abomination that makes desolate" seats himself in the holy place. See Matt. 24:15-21 and II Thess. 2:3-4. It continues for 1260 days and ends when the last trump is blown. The indignation begins when the last trump has blown and continues for thirty days.

In summarizing the truth concerning the resurrection it can be said that as to time it takes place at the last trump, which marks the end of the great tribulation or the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. It precedes the resurrection that takes place on the last day of this present evil eon by seventy-five days. This resurrection is designated by R 2, or line number four, on the chart.

As to subjects it will include some of Abraham's descendants who lived in Old Testament times who became partakers of the heavenly calling. It includes the twelve disciples (Judas excepted) of the period covered by the four gospels, and a multitude of believers during the period covered by the book of Acts. However, not all believers in the Acts period were of the heavenly calling. The book of Hebrews, when correctly understood, makes clear the distinction between the believers who were of the earthly hope and those of the heavenly hope. It is my conviction that those reticent believers like Joseph, Nicodemus and the chief rulers (John 12:42) missed the heavenly calling because of their fear of men.

The believing Gentiles of the Acts period were all of the heavenly calling as partakers of Israel's highest blessings. Their hope will be realized in the better resurrection.

This resurrection was the hope of Paul throughout his ministry as recorded between Acts 9 and Acts 28. He declared this in his epistles written during that period. Nevertheless, after the close of the Acts period we discover him seeking to obtain by all means another resurrection. See Philippians 3:11. This passage cannot refer to any of the resurrections we have already considered. It sets before us another resurrection which we shall consider in our next study.

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## *MY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST*

(Continued from Vol. VII, No.8.)

Throughout the pages of the entire Old Testament, we are constantly brought face-to-face with that glorious and majestic being Who bears the name of Jehovah. We hear Him speaking, see Him acting, and witness His mighty works. This may not be fully plain to the readers of the *King James Version* of the Hebrew Scriptures, but it will become exceedingly plain if they will remember that throughout that version *Jehovah* is indicated by the title "LORD" when it is spelled in small capital letters and by "GOD" when it occurs in connection with Adonai. Then we find it written Lord GOD, which means Adonai Jehovah. See 2 Samuel 7:27 and 28 for a clear example of this use of type to make these distinctions. Note carefully the difference between LORD and Lord, GOD and God. LORD is **Jehovah**, Lord is **Adonai**, GOD is **Jehovah** and God is **Elohim**. These distinctions are shown in the *King James Version* by the use of capital and lower-case letters.

When we come into the New Testament this majestic and glorious being has disappeared from view. We do not seem to hear Him speaking nor see Him acting, neither do we witness His mighty works. In His place we find a humble and meek person. He bears the name of Jesus and fills every page of the four gospels. If we look for the mighty, magnificent and glorious Jehovah, with Whom we became so well acquainted in the Old Testament, He seems to have disappeared from view. Now and then we get a glimpse of mighty works that remind us of Him, but the great Jehovah Whom Isaiah saw is nowhere manifest in the four gospels.

And if one should ask what became of Him or why He is not seen, there is an answer in the Word of God. **He has been made flesh**, that is, he has been made a man in this world (**John 1:14**). He dwells among men (John 1:14). He became poor (2 Cor. 8:9). He emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7). He humbled Himself (Phil. 2:8). He took upon Himself the form of a slave (Phil. 2:7). Therefore, if I should seek for the great Jehovah after His entry into this world, I must look for a man Who dwells among men, One "Who is poor, One Who is emptied, One Who is humble, and One Who bears the character of an obedient slave: Knowing these great truths, I find no difficulty whatsoever in recognizing the Lord Jesus Christ as being the mighty Jehovah of the Old Testament.

In spite of these truths, truths that are plain to all who know the Word of God, there are those who contend that since Jesus Christ was a man, He could not be the great Jehovah God of the Old Testament: I answer by declaring that if Christ were not a man, I would reject Him as being Jehovah, for Jehovah became flesh, a man in this world, Therefore His human nature, His poverty, His humility, and His subjection are to me, proofs of His Deity. Strange indeed that the very things that should prove that He is the One who appeared as Jehovah should be used as arguments against it.

Whether He appears as the mighty and glorious Jehovah of the Old Testament or the meek and emptied Jesus of the New Testament, He is the Expression of the invisible and inaudible God. And again I say, if God's Expression is not God, then we do not know God and we have nothing of **God**.

To me, it becomes increasingly evident that many people have a childish, imaginary conception of God and Christ which, as near as I can state it, seems to be an idea that God is one man and that

Christ is another man. I do not accuse them of believing that God is a man, nevertheless, it is plain that when they think of God they think of a man, In fact, many people think of God as being a severe, harsh and vindictive man, and they think of Christ as being tender, gracious and forgiving. By holding such imaginary ideas they erect a barrier that stands between them and the truth, No one knows the true God who thinks of Him as a mighty man possessing the attributes of power, wisdom, omniscience, etc.

God is a being but not a human being. He has never been seen by man and He cannot be seen by man. This. being true, no man can visualize Him. To try to do so is to deny His attribute of invisibility. But God has expressed Himself, and by so doing He became visible through One Who is His Image and audible through One Who is His Expression. The chief title used to declare the truth of God making Himself known is "the Expression" or "the Word." This Expression was the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus of the New Testament. This Expression was in the beginning. He was in relationship to God, since He expressed nothing else and no one else. This Expression was God.

If God is one man and Christ another man, then Christ cannot be God. But if God is an invisible being and Jehovah or Christ is His Expression, then that Expression is God. In fact, the Expression has to be God.

I can declare to all who know me, even to the one person who knows me best, my wife: So far as you are concerned my expressions are me. Your knowledge of me is based wholly upon my appearance, my words, my ways, my acts, my love, or whatever form my expressions may take. I know myself apart from my expressions, but you know me only through my expressions. If you are familiar with my expressions, and those expressions are true, then you know me, for, to you, those expressions are me.

So far as we are concerned God's Expression is Him. Our knowledge of Him must be based wholly upon His Expression. His Expression is a personality. That Expression is true, therefore, Jesus Christ being God's Expression is the true God. None can know God apart from Jesus Christ Who expressed Him. He is the great God and our Savior. This is my faith in Him.

The End

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## ***THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS***

\*\*\*\*\*In order not to delay this issue of *The Word of Truth* any longer it seemed best to send out a sixteen-page issue. This forced the elimination of several articles that were to appear in this number, but these will probably appear in the next magazine sent out. It has been almost impossible to get the mechanical work done. The type is set by one firm and the printing is done by another, and the current situation of too much work and too little help has troubled both plants. Work which they could formerly do in two days time now takes two weeks or even two months. At present there is no way of knowing just how much time is required to get out an issue of this publication.

\*\*\*\*\*The following literature is no longer available: *The Christian in Military Service*, *Water Baptism and the Word of God*, *This Do in Remembrance*, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*, Bound Volumes 1 and 2 of *The Word of Truth*. The larger pamphlets on *The Glory of the One Baptism* and *The Scriptural Position of the Lord's Supper* are available, but the four-page leaflets dealing with these

subjects are out of print.

\*\*\*\*\*Due to difficulties of transportation and too many burdens on the shoulders of the Editor the Grand Rapids and Chicago Area Spring Meeting have been cancelled. We hope to resume these very helpful meetings in the Fall, if the Lord will.

\*\*\*\*\*The article on *THE CHURCHES* that appears in this issue has been reprinted in tract form. It should be used as a companion piece or a follow up of the tract on *JESUS ONLY*. The price on both of these tracts are 6 for .25; 15 for .50; 35 for \$1.00. You may order them assorted as you wish.