

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THOSE TURNING FROM THE CHURCH SHOULD TURN TO JESUS CHRIST

There is in the world today a great multitude of sincere people who after giving it a fair trial have come to the conclusion that they want no part of the religious system that calls itself "the church." They have determined to be free from and live apart from all that travels under this name. They have opted for complete freedom from all organized religion. These are God-fearing men and women who fully believe the Biblical record God has given of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so their emancipation declaration has not been so that they will be free to live irresponsible and hedonistic lives. Their highest desire is to live lives of godliness and righteousness in harmony with God's present purpose toward mankind. Many of these have turned irrevocably to the Lord Jesus Christ and are now finding complete satisfaction in living for Him.

So on every hand we hear of those who are turning away from every form of organized religion that travels under the canopy of the church. They say that "the church" has nothing to offer them that they really want, that it does not fulfill their needs, especially their need for a deeper and more accurate knowledge of the Word of God. They see the church structure as being nothing more than a business, run by professional clergymen, whose aim is to get more members, get more money, get greater influence, and gain more control. As one man sees it: "Certainly no exegetical talents are needed to quickly discover that most Christian activities have no Biblical base. With great sacredness we carry out the ritual of Sunday school, Sunday morning worship, and choir singing accompanied by an instrument better suited for Friday night roller-skating. We talk of membership, pledges, reverends, missionaries, and Wednesday night prayer meetings as though God had sent some extra-Biblical agenda to instruct us how to behave."

As a minister (dispenser) of the Word of God who has no connection with organized religion, I have had much correspondence from priests, pastors, and church-members (some young, others middleaged, and many elderly) who state their present disenchantment with the churches with which they have long been associated. They

say their denominations are trying to lead them down certain political and social-action paths on which they do not wish to travel, and into certain activities with which they do not wish to be involved. They find many of the "program" and "make-work" activities to be puerile and repugnant, saying that these use up valuable time which could be better spent in other ways.

A church member says: "I went to this church because I was told that the minister was a Bible expositor. This was true, and I enjoyed his messages. But before I knew what was happening or had a chance to refuse, I was made president of the men's bowling league, and this was solely because someone had seen me bowling with my grandson at one of the local alleys. They said it was their way of bringing me into the work. I resigned at once, but since then I have been treated with a coldness which I will no longer endure. So I will soon be on the outside. "

"To stir up emotions and create great excitement two or three times a week is the supreme purpose for which my church now exists," a black brother declares. "The minister is expected to serve as a cheer leader to whip up the people, and if enough of them get on an emotional high it is declared to have been a wonderful meeting, one on which God has poured out His Spirit. My family and friends love it, and they try to drag me into it, but I think it is bad, very bad, and I am going to protest against it with my feet. All I want is to worship God and hear His Word in a quiet atmosphere. Never again will I look upon some highly emotional woman stretched out on the floor while the minister stands over her and declares that she has been slain by the Lord. Nonsense! The Lord slew her last Sunday, and I suppose it will happen every week until her act wears thin, then she will take it to some other church where for a while she will become the center of attention. I'm getting out! Now what do I do? Where do I turn? I'm not an agnostic; I am a Christian, a lover of the Lord Jesus."

My answer to these questions is that it may be for him a very rough road and could even be a lonely road, but all he can do is turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Him that he will find the true meeting place between God and man. He will have to work out his own salvation from the difficult position in which he now finds himself, but He will surely find that it is God which worketh in him both to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12, 13).

Ever since the days of the so-called "Church fathers" there has been a multitude of Churchmen who have sought to establish by the process of constant repetition the idea that "Jesus Christ" and the church are a single package and that you cannot have Christ without taking the church. They would have us believe that the churches are the sole dispensators of Christ and that none can receive Him without coming to them. These errors are constantly repeated every year from many pulpits in thousands of messages under the title of "I Believe in the Church."

In these messages they set forth their accolades concerning the church, pronouncing their encomiums as to what they believe the church to be, then calling upon all hearers to think or believe the same as they do about organizations that call themselves churches. They take everything praise-worthy that the Spirit of God has said about the **ekklesias** and apply it to their churches.

The many reasons that are being given as causes for turning away from the churches are too numerous to be examined in detail. It may be that to take anyone of them and segregate it from the rest would make that reason to seem petty and insignificant. But when these are considered in their totality they make up a force that is sweeping many true Christians out of and away from the churches. And the tragedy is that some of these now feel that there is nothing in the future for them but despair and unbelief.

It is my knowledge from personal contacts that there are thousands coming into the United States from countries where the daily lives of the people are dominated by the Roman Catholic system. In this country they find they are free to think, to express their thoughts, to question and to criticize without fear of any of the economic, social, and even family reprisals that were held over their heads in the country from whence they came. Furthermore, they are free from that matriarchy that insists by custom that the mother has the right to dictate all religious matters and practices in the family. Happy in their new-found freedom they begin a search for the real truth concerning God.

However, they are somewhat steeped in the idea that this will be found in another church. So with little or no knowledge of the Word of God, and often by background being enthusiastic, excitable, and emotional (these are often national traits), their search for "the true church" and "the true faith" often ends up in becoming identified with some of the wildest sects on the religious scene today.

The meetings of these groups fill their emotional needs for a time, especially so when some persuasive leader convinces them that excitement, noise, and intense emotional spells are the sure signs of the working of the Holy Spirit. But in the course of time this wears away and the great spiritual yearnings that characterized their lives are as unfulfilled as ever. What a difference there might have been if when they first turned from the church they had turned to Jesus Christ and sought to fill their lives with Him. Why will men seek for a good church, or the true church, or a prophet when it is Jesus Christ that they need?

It is a positive fact that before any man seeks after God, God must have first sought the man. It is the seeking work of God that generates within us the impulse to seek after God. Vitally related to this fact is the truth that the personal Word of God, Jesus

Christ, is the true light that lighteth every man that comes into the world (John 1 :9). In the ever-seeking work of God this light shines into the hearts of men and there is no way of escaping it. It disturbs men, it troubles men, even though they do not understand what is causing their unrest and fears. Men have never known that God was working on them until after they have responded to the light and recognized the results.

Again, I say, it is the quickening work of God that causes men to seek after Him. But, alas, the stratagems of Satan are so deceptive that they never seem to find Him. They are exercised by God, but they go forth in ignorance, fully believing that if God is found, He will be found in some church, or some group, or some meeting. Often they enter into the first church they come across, or attend the first "big meeting" they see advertised. As a rule in the church they will be received for membership, and the fire that God was kindling will be put out by the application of little or much water. In the "big meeting" they will be led to "come forward" where they will meet with some "personal soul-winner" who has condensed the whole process of finding God in Christ to a few simple questions and answers, to which if they answer "Yes" they are told they are saved and advised to join some "good church," read their Bibles, and pray. But even after this their lives are empty, the disturbing light of God still troubles them, for God will never allow anyone to feel satisfied until they find satisfaction in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In all my ministry I have never told anyone to leave his church. However, I will always tell those who are turning away from the church that they should turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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