

## **THE TRUTH AND WHAT IT MEANS TO US**

**Discourse by Brother W. Norman Woodworth, of Rutherford, N. J.**

**T**HERE is no doubt, beloved, but that every one of us agrees that this convention has been one of the grandest experiences of our lives; but, on the other hand I wonder how many of us have taken the trouble to analyze the situation sufficiently to know just why we are here, and why our blessing have been so manifold.

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[This discourse proceeded through several pages, then concluded with the following paragraph. Then follows some of his noteworthy personal experiences.]

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Yes, beloved, we have the truth—that which shows us clearly the destiny of men and of nations. It is given to us that we may be its representatives. To us this means that we have a responsibility in making it known to others now, and if faithful in this we will share in the still greater work of blessing all the families of the earth in the Kingdom.

### **MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES**

And now for those experiences about which Brother Wilson told you. In reality they are not so much different than many of you have had, except perhaps they have had more to do with the Society headquarters. For several years I had been connected with the radio work at Brooklyn, and my part of the work brought me in such close touch with all the wonderful fundamentals of the truth that I could not help but see that the plain simplicity of the truth was being more and more ignored by the higher-ups. Many times I was told that I should make the dialogues more up to date. I tried time and time again to prepare a radio dialogue on some of the newer truths, so-called, but I found it impossible to present sufficient scriptural proof to justify talking about them before the public, and after all, beloved, the public is not interested in whether or not those who do not agree with a certain man are serving the devil or not. The more I sought to present the plain, beautiful truths that we learned when we first got the truth, the more wonderful the truth really was to me, and the less interest I had in all the various guesses of man. More and more I realized I was out of place—something like the colored man who decided that while he was in the right church, yet he was in the wrong pew. All Christians are in the Church of Christ, the only true Church, but many times men try to bind us down to their ideas of truth, and then we find it necessary to move, and never before has it been more necessary than now, to take a stand for liberty—the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free.

I always believe in looking before I make a move, so I went to see some of my old friends—friends of years ago—friends who had ceased to walk along in the “Channel.” I wanted to find out if they were still in the Truth. I had been told that every one who left the Society soon went out of the truth. But then we have been told many things. Some have told us that to read the Scripture Studies once a year would keep us in the Truth, yet many who told us this are now saying that if we read the Scripture Studies we are sure to go out of the Truth. So you see, friends, it isn't wise to depend too much on what we are told. As for me, I think it is a wonderful thing to

keep reading the Scripture Studies. From these we received a knowledge of the truth, and this truth is as good and as precious today as it ever was.

Well, to make a long story short, about six weeks after I had made my visit to the friends of the Pastoral Bible Institute (for this is where I made my investigation), the President of the Society received a letter from some one, I don't know who (if I knew who it was I would write a letter of thanks to the person), saying that there were spies working right at Bethel who were going to the camp of the enemy and giving out information, and that I was one of these spies. Friends, the only kind of information I am interested in giving out is the information of the Kingdom; that is the only reason I was staying at Bethel—I thought I had a better opportunity of giving out this information there than anywhere else. When the President received this letter he immediately sent for me and asked me if I really did do such a detestable thing. I told him I had made such a call, but when he insisted as to all the whys and wherefores of it I told him that what I did outside of Bethel was my own business and not his. I mention this, dear friends, that you might thank God the more for your freedom. Well, the President promptly told me that I could no longer remain at Bethel, and that he intended to expose me before the entire Bethel family. Imagine that if you can! Are we living in the dark ages, that an honest Christian must be “exposed” for seeking to know the will of God?

In order to shift the responsibility and possibly with the thought that I might weaken, a meeting was called of the entire board of directors, although one or two were not able to be present. Before this board I had the grand privilege of witnessing to the fact that God has not committed His truth to any man, or to any set of men. Friends, there are hundreds of organizations in the earth that claim a monopoly on the truth, but how silly these claims are. And is such a claim any less silly when made by one who is supposed to know better? Against this very thing we rebelled when we left Babylon, yet thousands of otherwise earnest Christians are permitting themselves to be fooled by it again. They are being fooled because this newest of ecclesiastical systems is called the Lord's Organization, instead of the Lord's Church. But regardless of name, the bondage is the same. You know as well as I do what happened when you tried, in our class, to have the new “truth” proved by the Bible. Friends, this same sentiment of, “Open your mouth and shut your eyes, and I'll give you something to make you wise,” prevails at “headquarters” more than in any of the outside classes. I well remember one instance when a question came up for discussion—a question on which the Watch Tower and the latest book had contradictory answer—that not a single person in the entire Bethel family dared to comment, because no matter which way they answered, they would be out of harmony with what the Judge had written. But I'm getting off my subject.

For more than an hour every possible effort was made to prove that I had gone to the Institute as a spy—as if any one in the “Lord's Organization” would worry about spies! There were of course many things said at that meeting, but I will merely relate concerning the two main points on which I was asked to leave Bethel. I was told that I wouldn't be given the privilege of resigning, which reminded me of the words of the prophet, “Your brethren that hated you and that cast you out said, the Lord be glorified, but he shall appear to your joy and they shall be ashamed.” One of the conditions upon which I could remain at Bethel was this: I must concede that all the

friends outside of the Society were dishonest and hypocrites. In other words, I must be willing to judge my brother. Several times the question was put to me as to my position in this matter and several times I affirmed the fact that the Lord alone is the judge of such matters. Because I refused to judge my brother, I was told that I was in a very dangerous position. How sad it is, dear brethren, that those who profess to serve a God who had made a loving provision whereby all the families of the earth are to be blessed, should find it necessary to transgress so far from the real spirit of Christianity as to be willing to judge and condemn all except, "Me and my wife, my son John and his wife." By my refusal to take such a stand I was myself classed as a traitor and a heretic. The Bethel family have been warned not to speak to me, and—behold what irony—to support this action the words of the Apostle Paul (Romans 16:17,18) are quoted in which he tells us to "Mark those that cause divisions among us, contrary to the doctrines which we have learned, and avoid them." **By all the rules of language, this text could apply to no one else except the Society, for the reason that the Society** folks are the ones who have caused all the divisions; and they have caused them contrary to the doctrines which we have learned—they have refused to tolerate the doctrines which we have learned and proven to be true, and cast out those who dared to stand for the truth. Very forcibly did the Judge remind me that I was not resigning but being put out. I ask you, therefore, Who caused this division?

Another article of the catechism to which I must subscribe in order to remain at Bethel was the one that holds up the Society as the one and only true church, or organization, and that all outside of this were of the devil's organization. I promptly told the judge and his board of directors that such a claim was an insult to God. I want you to know, friends, that I never was a "Channelite." I always looked up the Society merely as an instrument forwarding the Kingdom message—nothing more—and that's all its founder intended it should be. It is only since those "flashes" have been coming from the "temple" that we discovered that the Society was the sole custodian of our spiritual food and general welfare. The idea of the Channel has been worked overtime. It is the same old trick of the devil presented in a new light; and so cunningly has Satan been in drilling the idea into the minds of the friends that it looms up in front of their mental vision as a great veil of superstition which entirely prevents them from using their reason, or even attempting to use it. Let some one in the class dare to ask a question which would seem to cast a doubt as to the correctness of the Watch Tower, and that one is at once looked upon with suspicion. Such, dear friends, is the Christlike effect of the "Channel" doctrine.

Never even in the darkest period of the dark ages did the Catholic Church hold such a grip upon the minds of its subjects.

I am not condemning any of the dear brethren of the Society; I would like to see them all come into the truth again, just as I have done. In this respect I believe the harvest work has just begun. In this respect I believe that the majority of the friends everywhere are very honest and sincere, and while now it may sound to them like sacrilege to hear me speak the way I am, yet later I am sure many of them will see their privilege of taking a stand for the real freedom of the truth. In the meantime let's go on with the Kingdom work; and if others think that the world wants to know who the new man of sin is, or how long Satan remained unconscious when he bumped his

head on a rock when he was cast out of heaven, well let them tell those things to the world, if they can find any one to listen. But as for us, **let us present the plain simple message of the Kingdom**, the message for which there is a famine in the land at the present time.

I suggest, dear friends, that we endeavor to be very kindly disposed toward our brethren in the I. B. S. A. **The truth, you know, is the most wonderful thing in the world**, and they still think that the truth came from the Society. But of course it didn't. The truth came from the Lord through His beloved Son, and the prophets and the apostles. And then, down here at the end of the age, the Lord used our dear Brother Russell to set it in order for us so that we could understand and appreciate it. Today the Society is trying to take the truth from us. And let me say this—say it as one who has recently been freed from bondage—that the rank and file of the friends over the country are unable to prove or even to understand the so-called truth that is being dished out to them. They try to think it is wonderful, because it is new and because it comes from the “Channel,” but as for being able to grasp very much of it, they are unable to do so. How different it is with the real truth! How glad we are for every opportunity to set forth the proof of it, and how plain and clear it is. So may we continue to rejoice in this “Old, Old Story,” and even,

“When in scenes of glory  
We sing the new, new song,  
'Twill be the old, old story  
That we have loved so long.”