

## DO ALL CHURCHES WORSHIP ONE GOD?

**EXCEPT the way to God is as divided and diverse as church denominations are in the world today, all the churches cannot be worshipping the one true God. This is a very serious matter about which personal opinion and unwillingness to listen to reason in the light of the Scriptures may lead not only to self-deceit but also to fatal consequences. The only authority universally acceptable upon which all Christians are bound to depend for a sure and unmistakable answer to the question at issue, is the Holy Bible.**

Chief Deji Olugunna in an article published in the *Sunday times* (Oct. 10, 1971) expressed the view that Christian denominations can be broadly divided into four groups, namely, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Protestants and Pentecostals. He then stated: "Each of these organizations has its own God and presents him to the world as the best and the only God. There are the God of the Roman Catholics, the God of the Orthodox Church, the God of the Protestants and the God of the Holy Ghost people—four different Gods of their own interpretation of the Holy Bible.

The Chief added: "Surely, there cannot be so many Gods and faiths. This is the headache of man and the tragedy of the whole world. There is no scripture warrant whatsoever for so many Gods and the various gods must be amalgamated if Christian religion is to be real to man."—Page 11.

But in the opinion of Mr. Segun Bucknor (*Sunday Times*, Nov. 14, 1971) "all the Christian sects believe the same God and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God as their Saviour. They differ essentially only in interpretations of the Scripture and their methods of worship".

The idea of some people that all church organizations belong to Jesus Christ and are worshipping the God Almighty is very wrong and misleading. It is not based on knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. It is possible for a person to claim to be a worshipper of God while in actual fact he, knowingly or unknowingly, is engrossed in the service of the devil. For the reason that Jesus Christ was fully aware of this fact he said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. 7: 21.

### Natural Jews

And concerning the natural Jews who purported to be God's worshippers but were not doing His will, St. Paul stated: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God' righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."—Rom. 10: 1-3

Despite the claim of some of the Jews that God was their Father Jesus told them point-blank that they were the children of the devil. There were exchanges of words between him and them thus: "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hat told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me> Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He**

was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”—John 8: 40-44.

Jesus Christ made it abundantly clear that the claims of those natural Jews that they were of God was false. And St. Paul also said: “It is impossible that the word of God should have proved false. For not all descendants of Israel are truly Israel, nor, because they are Abraham’s offspring, are they all his true children; but, in the words of Scripture, “Through the line of Isaac your descendants shall be traced.’ That is to say, it is not those born in the course of nature who are children of God; it is the children born through God’s promise who are reckoned as Abraham’s descendants.”—Rom. 9: 6-8. *New English Bible*.

Even some pagans strongly believe that their idols are media through which they deal with and worship the Almighty God. Their belief which is based on ignorance does not make them worshippers of God. Many of them are good citizens, we have always said quite honestly; but this does not mean they are serving the Almighty God. Idols are the creation of the devil and since they serve them contrary to the commandment of God it is the devil they are worshipping. —Exodus 20: 4-6; Isa. 2: 8,9.

Such were the Athenians, and St. Paul, addressing them, said: “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...**Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:** because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”—Acts 17: 23-31.

## **Hypocrites**

The Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes were sects of the Jews who professed to be worshippers of God. But Jesus Christ in his days on earth exposed their hypocrisy and the falsity or worthlessness of their claims. When he was confronted by the Sadducees on the question of resurrection he told them, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” He gave answers that put them to silence and shame. —Matt 22: 23-33,46

Jesus Christ who was well known for his forthrightness, and in whose personality were flashes of divinity, wit and inspiration, denounced the Pharisees and Scribes as hypocrites. Among other things he said: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”—Matt. 23: 27, 28.

With reference to the Pharisees and the Scribes, Jesus quoted the Almighty God as saying through Isaiah the prophet: “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”—Matt. 15: 7-9.

And when Christ’s disciples informed him that the Pharisees were offended at his utterance, he retorted: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leader of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”—Read Matt. 15: 12-14.

It will be wrong to think that there are not the counterparts of the Pharisees in our time. Many of the church denominations in the world are false. And they can be identified by their doctrines and many of worship, which are inconsistent with the truth of the gospel and the tenets of Christianity as contained in the Holy Bible. After the apostolic times, since from about 325 A.D. to this age, certain church leaders in succession have been teaching as doctrines dogmas which they invented from their own hearts contrary to the Scriptures.

### **Doctrines**

Doctrines are the basis of the Christian faith; where the doctrines are untrue the faith is built not on Christ, the Rock, but on sinking sand, and any claim to worship God is bogus. God Himself has said, "But in vain they do worship Me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Whoever does not want to worship in vain must give serious thought to this quoted statement of God and ensure that the doctrines he accepts and believes are not the commandments or traditions of men, or that they are in harmony with the Scriptures.

What scriptural authority or Justification has anyone to teach, believe or practise any of the following?

The doctrine of purgatory

The baptism of infants

The baptism of bells

Baptism by sprinkling or pouring of water

The use of candles "blessed" or not, for devotions.

Mary being the "Mother of Almighty God"!

The ordination of women as prophetesses who see visions or preach from house to house.

The immortality of the soul

The fixing of date (1914, 1939-45, now 1975) for the Battle of Armageddon.

Pouring of libation to ancestors.

These are only a few of unscriptural dogmas and innovations being taught and done in certain church organizations. The truth must be spoken without fear so that the scales of ignorance may fall from the eyes of the people.

Anyone who does not want to remain in darkness or ignorance must be broadminded; he must be prepared to listen to reason and accept facts. It was Disraeli who said, "To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge." (Symbol

Some people say that, because they were brought up or have been long in a certain church organization, they could not for any reason leave it for another. Suppose that church is not preaching the truth, what would they gain in the end if they suffer the loss of their souls? "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man", said King Solomon, "but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. 16: 25

When St. Paul was in the Jewish religion he thought he was right and he savagely persecuted the Christians. But when the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ dawned upon him and he was converted, he confessed his ignorance. Said he: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (human beings): neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus."—Gal. 1: 13-17.

And in his epistle to Timothy he said that he was “before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious”. He added, “But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”—1 Tim. 1: 13.

### **True Worshippers**

It is not safe, therefore, to take things for granted and remain in any church without ascertaining the truth of her doctrines and beliefs. When Jesus Christ engaged a Samaritan woman in a conversation, he told her, “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”—John 4: 22, 23.

Those who worship without knowing what they worship or those who are not true worshippers cannot be said to be serving the same God with the true worshippers. While the false one serve the devil, the true ones worship the Almighty God. “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

No sane person has the pleasure to identify himself with the devil because he (Satan) is known to be the author and the very embodiment of evil. He sometimes deceives some people by appearing to them in dreams or visions or by some other sign as an angel of God. And such people not knowing that Satan is their inspirer do go about to parade themselves as prophets or prophetesses or apostles of Jesus Christ whereas in truth they are reprobates. However, in the end they will get every bit of punishment their evil deeds deserve.

Concerning religious fakes who masquerade as the apostles of Christ, St. Paul wrote: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” And their works being evil, they will be damned. —2 Cor. 11: 13-15; Gal. 1: 8

In certain church groups both men and women claim to have been equally ordained by God to prophesy—some preaching from house to house and others go along the streets with bells in the early hours of the day. There are those who profess to be “divine Healers” and claim to have the power to repel Satan in the name of Jesus Christ. By such bogus claims they, at the instance of the devil, do make disciples of simple folks. Someone was deceived the other day to swallow a wooden cross. Some preach against medical treatment when sick; for believing and obeying the “apostles” or “prophets” who teach these “doctrines” many have died untimely!

The mere fact that one prophesies or does wonders in the name of Christ does not qualify one to be a true worshipper of God or a follower of Jesus. Christ himself said: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”—Matt. 7: 22, 23

In the face of the scriptural facts brought to light in this sermon, it will be very wrong to think or say that all the churches, which are divided on doctrines and method of worship, are worshipping the one true God.