

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

April 2001

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:2) Be sure to make plans to come to camp meeting this summer. You will certainly be blessed by it. We are happy to announce that we now have all of our videos available in PAL format for use in many countries overseas. If you would like to order any of these videos, please contact us. I pray this issue will be a great blessing to you.

Individuality in Religion (Part 2)

by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following article is the second in a series of articles that are being printed in *Present Truth*. It is taken from the book entitled, “Individuality in Religion,” by Alonzo T. Jones. There is no printing date on the book, but it was first printed between 1890 and 1923. The book contains information so valuable that I believe every person in the world should read it, especially in light of current events relating to the freedom of religion. I have included chapters 4-7 in this issue of *Present Truth*. The Introduction and the first three chapters were printed in the March 2001 issue of *Present Truth*.
Editor)

Chapter 4

As Related to the Church Itself

We have seen that no monarchical government has any right to enforce or require any religious observance; and that when any such power does so, the right of individuality in religion is supreme, and the monarch’s word must change.

We have found also that no government in which the law is supreme has any right to put into the law of the realm any statute, decree, or provision touching religion; and that when such a thing is done, the right of individuality in religion remains supreme, and innocence before God, and perfect harmlessness before the government, the law, and society, is found in him who disregards such law.

We have found that the church has no right to control the civil power for the execution of her will or the furtherance of her aims; and that when she does so a connection of crowning iniquity is formed, only a Satanic gift is in the possession of such church, and the right of individuality in religion is still supreme and to be freely exercised.

There is yet another combination by means of which domination of man in religion has been sought: this is the *church itself*, within itself—the church as relates to the membership of

the church. And upon this, whether in principle, or in facts of remarkable experience, the Scripture is no less explicit than in any other of the examples given on this subject.

It has been already related how that Israel when delivered from Egypt was first “the church in the wilderness” and afterward in the land of Canaan; and that this same Israel in the days of Christ on earth, though in spirit and substance far short of God’s ideal for them: yet in fact was still the church in direct descent.

The official organization of this church was also still in fact the same in direct descent. The priesthood—the chief priests, and the high priest—in order and in succession, were the direct continuance in succession of the order established by the Lord through Moses in the wilderness. The official council of the church—the Sanhedrim—was also in its idea and form descended from the seventy elders appointed by the Lord through Moses in the wilderness. Thus in the days of Christ on earth, the whole order of Israel,—the priesthood and the great council,—was in form and in fact directly descended from the divine order established by the Lord through Moses in the wilderness; and was just as truly the church in descent from the church in the wilderness.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Camp Meeting Announcement page 10

The Evils of Harry Potter Books page 11
by Lynnford Beachy

Letters from our Readers. page 12

For Our Sake Also page 15
by E. J. Waggoner

And the apostles of the Lord and the original disciples of Jesus were all, without exception, members of that church. They took part equally with others in the services and worship of that church. They went to the temple and into the temple, with all the others to worship at the regular hours; and they taught in the temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:12). And the people were glad to have it so, and the approval of God in great power was upon them all.

But those apostles and disciples had learned something and knew divine truth that the high ones of the church did not know and would not recognize; and knowing this they would tell it. Therefore they preached Jesus and the resurrection, and salvation through Him, and that there is no other way—that very Jesus of whom the official order and organization of the church had “now been the betrayers and murderers.” Therefore this official order and organization of the church assumed the office and prerogative of deciding that those private church-members should neither preach nor teach this truth that they knew to be the truth.

Accordingly the priests and the temple authorities arrested Peter and John and put them in prison, when they had gone up to the temple at the hour of prayer, and the lame man had been healed through faith in the name of Jesus, and Peter had preached to the assembled wondering people. Then the next morning all the official order and organization of the church—the rulers, the seventy elders, the scribes, the priests, and the high priest—gathered together and had Peter and John brought and set in the midst, and demanded of them what authority they had to be preaching: “By what power, and by what name, have you done this?”

Then Peter “filled with the Holy Ghost” made answer. The whole assembly “marveled” at the boldness of these two only common and illiterate members of the church in the presence of that official and august body; “and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.” Peter and John were remanded outside the council, while the council “conferred among themselves.”

In their conference they decided, “Let us straitly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.” Then they called in again Peter and John “and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” But Peter and John answered immediately, “whether it be right in the sight of God, to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.” In that answer so promptly given, it seemed to that assembly that these mere common men and private and illiterate members of the church would actually convey the impression that it was possible for such as they to be taught of God, and to know from God, things that this whole assembly of the highest officials and most learned ones of the church did not know; and that they would pay no attention whatever to the command of the council, but would go right ahead regardless of all that the council might say or do or be. Plainly enough *in the view of the council* such a course could mean only every one for himself, in individual independence that “would overthrow all order and authority.”

Such an answer as that from such persons as those, to such an official and dignified body as this: such an answer from mere common persons to this august assembly: from mere private members of the church to the regular assemblage of that which for ages had been the highest official and divinely appointed order in the organization of the church: could not be considered by those officials as anything less than ardent presumption, and the destruction of all order and organization in the church.

However, the council let them go with further charge under heavy threat that they should so teach no more.

Peter and John being let go went to the company of the other disciples and “reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.” And all the others, instead of being in the least awed or made afraid by it, not only decidedly approved what Peter and John had done, but were so glad of it that “with one accord” they thanked and praised God, asked Him to “behold the threatenings of the

church officials and grant to *all* of the disciples boldness that they may speak thy word.” And God witnessed to their Christian steadfastness, “and the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and *they spake the word of God with boldness.*” “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.”

This open disobedience to the “authority” of the church, this bold “disregard for established order and organization” could not be allowed to go on. Therefore *all* the apostles were next arrested and imprisoned: for “then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, and were filled with indignation, and laid hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.”

But, lo! “*The angel of the Lord* by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning and taught.”

That same morning the high priest and they that were with him “called the council together, and *all the senate of the children of Israel*, and sent to the prison” to have the apostles brought before them to answer for all this “insubordination,” “apostasy” and “opposition to the organized work” of the church. The messengers returned and reported that they found the prison securely closed and the keepers on guard, but there were no prisoners. But while those of the council were wondering what this could mean, there came one saying that the men were “standing in the temple and teaching the people.”

Officers were sent who arrested them all anew and brought them before the council. The high priest demanded of them, “Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.”

The apostles answered as before: “We ought to obey God rather than man. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right

hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel with forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”

At this bold persistence in the forbidden course the council “took counsel to slay them.” From actually murdering the apostles the council was dissuaded by Gamaliel. Nevertheless, the council called in the apostles again, and “had them flogged” and then again “commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”

The apostles departed from the presence of the council. But instead of being either awed or subdued by the council or by what it had done, they were all only glad again to be counted worthy to suffer stripes and whatever other disgrace from the official organization of the church for teaching what they saw and knew to be the truth. And notwithstanding that it was “all the senate of the children of Israel,” that is, all those who composed the official organization of the church that had so treated them and had repeatedly commanded them not to preach at all nor teach the things which they were both preaching and teaching, “never for a single day, either in the temple or in the private houses, did they discontinue teaching or telling the good news of Jesus the Christ.”

Thus by plain facts of remarkable experiences under God it is demonstrated that above all officialdom of priesthood, council and senate of any church, the *right of individuality in religion, in faith, and in teaching*, stands supreme. By this unquestionable Scripture account it is demonstrated that no church assembly or council or senate has any authority or any right to command or call in question any man of even the church’s own membership concerning what he shall teach or preach. [Footnote: “As relates to *conduct*, in matters of ‘trespass’ or ‘fault’ of any member, divine instruction and direction are given to the church precisely how to proceed: and this word is to be faithfully followed in letter and in spirit and in the spirit of meekness to ‘gain’ and to ‘restore’ such an one, never to

judge, to condemn, or to cast off. But as relates to *faith* the church has no divine instruction and therefore no right of procedure—‘not for that we would have dominion over your faith;’ ‘Hast thou faith? have it to thyself’ ‘before God;’ ‘Looking unto *Jesus*, the *Author* and *Finisher* of *Faith*.’”]

By the inspired record in this case, it is demonstrated that—

1. Just as certainly as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar and the three Hebrews it is divinely shown that no monarch can ever of right command anything pertaining to religion;

2. Just as certainly as in the case of *the law* and government of Media and Persia, it is divinely shown that no government can ever of right make any law touching religion;

3. Just as certainly as in the case of the church of Israel against Christ it is divinely shown that no church officialdom can ever of right use the civil power to make effective her will or to further her aims;

4. Just so certainly in this case of the church of Israel against the apostles and disciples of the Lord, it is also divinely shown that no church, no council, senate or other collection or association of officials or others, can ever of right command any member even of her own communion in anything pertaining to what he shall believe or not believe, or what he shall teach or not teach.

The four cases presented in the Scriptures are perfectly parallel: in every case the power that attempted domination in religion was directly opposed and exposed by *the God of Heaven*, and was thus divinely shown to be absolutely in the wrong; and in each case the right of individuality in religion was divinely demonstrated to be eternally right.

In each of the four cases a distinct principle is involved and illustrated: in the fourth no whit less than in each of the preceding three. As certainly as Nebuchadnezzar was wrong in commanding worship; as certainly as the law of Media and Persia was wrong in prohibiting worship; as certainly as the church of Israel was wrong in using the civil power to execute her will against the Lord

Jesus; so certainly that same church was wrong in prohibiting any member of the church from teaching or preaching the truth which he knew from the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.

And as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar the principle is that no monarch may ever of right do as that monarch did; as in the case of the law of the Medes and Persians the principle is that no law may ever of right be similar to that law; as in the case of the church organization using the civil power against Christ, the principle is that *no church* and no church order or organization or officialdom may ever of right use the civil power in any way whatever; just so in the case of the church of Israel against the apostles, the principle is that *no church*, and no *church order*, or organization or officialdom, may ever of right do in any way similar to what in its officialdom that church did.

No; Gamaliel’s counsel to that church-senate that day was right then and is right forever, and it is divine instruction to every church assembly, council, and senate, forever: “*Let them alone.*” If the preaching or the work be only of man or of human origin it will come to naught of itself. And if it be of God you cannot overthrow it whatever you do: and in that case, in whatever you do to overthrow it you will be found to be only fighting against God. This thing is in the realm of God. It is subject to His jurisdiction alone. Leave it there, and trust Him and serve Him for yourselves; and let others alone to do the same themselves.

This is also plain enough in the plain truth itself. For the Holy Spirit is given to each individual to guide him “into all truth.” The truth of God is infinite and eternal. Therefore it will always be true that there is still an infinity and eternity of truth into which the Christian is to be guided. In the nature of things it is impossible for any other than the infinite and eternal Spirit to guide any one into or in the truth of God. Therefore every soul must be infinitely and eternally free to be guided by the infinite and eternal Spirit into this infinity and eternity of truth.

To say anything else than this is only to limit the truth of God, and limit the mind’s advancement in the knowledge of

truth and of God; and is to put an effectual estoppel upon all possibility of progress. Imagine the condition of mankind and the world today, if the principle espoused by that church of Israel had been recognized and her commands obeyed by the apostles and disciples of the Lord! But the crowning iniquity of saying anything else than this, is that it recognizes, sanctions, and establishes a mere human tribunal in the place of the eternal Spirit, and clothes a clique of sinful men with the prerogative of that infinite and eternal Spirit, as the guide into and in all truth.

Yet as plain as all this is in the simple manifestness of the truth of it, it is deplorably true that from the close of the apostolic period unto this hour, there has not been, and there is not now, a single church “organization” or denomination in the world that has not espoused the identical principle, taken the same position, and done the like thing, as did that Jewish church in the case of the apostles. And today there is not a denomination in the world, even to the very latest one that has risen, in which there is in any way recognized the right and the freedom of each individual member of the denomination to be led of the Spirit of God into truth and to the teaching and preaching of truth that *the denominational officialdom does not know* or chooses not to countenance. And when any member is so led and does teach and preach the truth that he knows by the Spirit and Word of God, immediately the denominational officialdom is awake, and its machinery in motion, and in the very spirit, and in the very way, of the officialdom and machinery of the Jewish church, he is forbidden to teach or preach any more in that name. And if, as did the apostles, he disregards such action and command, and ceases not to teach and to preach Jesus in the truth and the way that he knows, then he, as were the apostles, is persecuted and driven out.

And this is precisely and alone the cause of there being three hundred and sixty-five or more denominations in the world.

But is there never to be any end to this wicked thing? Will the time ever come, or must it *never* come, when there will be

among Christians the recognition of the fundamental Christian principle of the right of individuality and liberty in faith and in guidance into divine truth? Will the time ever come, or must it never come, when there will be a company of Christians in the world who will recognize that the Holy Spirit is the Guide into all truth, that will recognize the right and the liberty of that Spirit to guide, that will recognize the right and the liberty of each Christian to be guided into all truth by that Spirit of truth, and that will recognize the liberty of each Christian to hold, to teach, and to preach any and all truth into which by the Spirit of truth he may be guided?

Isn't it time that such a thing should be? Isn't it time that the Christian principle should be recognized, that such a condition should prevail among Christians? Even the *world* has learned the principle that the monarch and the autocrat must recognize the full and perfect right of individuality and liberty in religion. Even the *world* has learned that *the law* must recognize the full and perfect right of individuality and liberty in religion. Even the *world* has learned that the church must not control *the civil power* to cause her will to prevail, but must recognize the full and perfect right in the field of persuasion, and therefore must recognize the free and perfect right of individuality and liberty. And now must it be that the Church herself will *never* learn that she must recognize the free and perfect right of individuality and liberty in faith, in the Spirit, and in the truth? Isn't it high time that the Christian church should be learning to recognize in its perfect genuineness the fundamental principle of *her own origin and very existence*? And if it must be so that no denomination will ever learn or recognize this fundamental principle of her own origin and existence, then is it not doubly high time that *individual Christians* shall everywhere recognize and practice constantly this fundamental principle of *their* own origin and existence as Christians, as well as the fundamental principle of the origin and existence of the Christian church?

And so it shall be and will be. The God of individuality and of liberty will

not allow that the divine principle and right of individuality and liberty in faith and in truth which He has wrought so wonderfully and so constantly through all these ages to make plain and to maintain shall be forever beaten back and pressed down, unrecognized and misrepresented by the Christian church and by Christian people. No; this truth, this splendid truth, that is the fundamental and the crowning truth in and to the very existence of the Christian church and of Christianity itself—this divine truth will yet win and hold forever its own divine place before the world *and in the church*. For those who espouse this divine and fundamental truth of the Christian religion and church will themselves be now and forever, as in the beginning they were, the true Christian church in the world, and will compose that “glorious Church” which Christ, who gave Himself for the Church, will “sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the word,” in order that at His glorious appearing “He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.”

For upon this whole story of the church of Israel against the apostles, there stands out with transcendent meaning a truth that is worthy of the most solemn consideration by every Christian: this truth is,—

That which until that time had been the true church, called and preserved by the Lord, then and there *ceased to be the true church* at all; and that which this church despised, and forbade, and persecuted, and cast out, *became itself the true church*.

And so it is forever. John 9:34-38.

Chapter 5 As Between Individuals

From the Scriptures it is plain that the divine right of individuality in religion stands supreme in the presence of autocratic monarchy; in the presence of any decree, statute, or law, of any government; in the presence of the church in control of the civil power; and in the

presence of the church itself, even within the membership of the church.

There is just one other possible relationship—that of *the individual to the individual*. But when it is plain and positive by the word of God that no autocracy, no government of law, no church in control of civil power, and no church within the circle of its own membership, has any authority, jurisdiction, or right, in matters religious in the presence of the supreme and absolute right of the individual, then it is certain that no *individual* can ever have any authority, jurisdiction, or right over another individual in things religious.

Though this is plain in itself it is well to study at least some of the Scriptures on this, as well as on each of the other phases of this subject.

Faith is the gift of God, and to the individual. Jesus Christ is both the Author and the Finisher of faith. This being so, it lies in the nature of things that never by any possibility in righteousness can anybody but Christ have any authority, jurisdiction, or right, respecting the exercise of faith which is the vital element of religion. Christ being both the Author and the Finisher of faith, to Him alone belongs the sole sovereignty and jurisdiction in all things relating to faith and to the exercise of faith, which is religion.

Accordingly the Scriptures say, “Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God.” Rom. 14:22. Faith being the gift of God, and Christ being the Author and the Finisher of it, it is impossible for any one to owe to any but God in Christ any responsibility in matters of faith or the exercise thereof, which is religion. And this is the ground and surety of complete individuality in religion.

Therefore, the word of God stands written to individual believers forever, “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations”: not to judge his doubtful thoughts; not for decisions of doubts; not to “judge him”; not to “despise him”; “for *God hath received him*.” Rom. 14:1-3.

Please let there be noted forever, and forever regarded, that the reason, divinely given, as to why no Christian can ever “dispute” with or “decide” for or

“judge,” or “despise” another, is that “God hath received him.”

“*God hath received him*” therefore, “receive ye” him.

“God hath received him” *upon his faith*, therefore, “receive ye” him *upon his faith*.

Even though he be “weak in the faith,” yet “*God hath received him*”; therefore, even though he be still “weak in the faith,” “receive ye him.”

Even though he be “weak in the faith,” it is “*the faith*” in which he is weak. And in that faith and by that faith he is saved. That faith is the gift of God, given to save the soul; and whosoever is in that faith, even though he be weak, has the salvation of God which is by faith. Of that faith, Jesus Christ is the Author and the Finisher; and whosoever is in that faith has Christ working in him to finish the blessed work of that faith unto the eternal salvation of the soul. That faith, the individual is to hold *unto God* the giver of it, and *in Christ*, the Author and Finisher of it. The faith being the gift of God through Christ, he who has it, has it only *unto God in Christ*; and in that faith his responsibility is solely to God in Christ.

Therefore, “him that is weak in the faith receive YE,... for God hath received HIM.” God being the giver of “the faith” through Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith, the responsibility of every one “in the faith” is to God in Christ. Therefore, “him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations, not for decisions of doubts,” not to “despise him,” not to “judge him”; for, since “God hath received him” “in the faith,” and since “in the faith” he is responsible to God only, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?” Verse 4. This is impossible in righteousness even though he be a *man’s* servant; how much more, when he is God’s servant, received and accepted of God “in the faith?”

Who then, art thou that judgest God’s servant, received of Him “in the faith?” “To his own Master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.” And when “God hath received” “in the faith”

one whom you and I will *not* receive “in the faith,” then, where shall *we* appear? The question is not then between us and him, but between God and us. Our difference is then with God, and we have entered into judgment with God. But when we enter into judgment with God over His having received “in the faith,” one whom we will not receive “in the faith,” then it is certain that we cannot stand in that judgment; because we ourselves are not “in the faith.”

And when God will hold up, and will make to stand “in the faith,” him whom you and I will not receive him, whom you and I will not hold up nor try to make to stand, then that one is altogether safe with God “in the faith.” And even though he be “*weak* in the faith,” yet God is able to hold him up and to make him stand, and “he shall be holden up” and made to stand by God who has received him “in the faith” of which God is the giver, and Christ the Author and Finisher. And as for you and me, in all this matter, “let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

Another item that demonstrates the perfect individuality of man in things religious, follows immediately the words already quoted, thus: “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Verse 5.

This Scripture does not say that all days *are* alike; but only that some “*esteemeth* every day alike.” The Scriptures are perfectly plain upon the truth that all days are *not* alike: that there is a day that God has made peculiarly his own, and for man’s eternal good has set it apart from all other days. That day is “the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

And though this is true by the word of God, yet as to the observance or non-observance of that day the word of the Lord explicitly declares, “Let every man be fully persuaded *in his own mind*.” And in this declaration he has again confirmed the perfect supremacy and absolute right of individuality in religion.

And, by the way, this item touches a matter that is everywhere rife today: the matter of the compulsory observance of

a Sabbath or day of rest. But in all things pertaining to the observance or regarding of a day, the word of God to all people is, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day to the Lord, he doth not regard it." Verse 6.

Any day regarded or observed *not to the Lord* is not truly regarded or observed at all; for then there is nothing in it truly to regard. It is God who has selected, distinguished, and set apart, the day. The observance of the day pertains, therefore, to God; and lies only between God and the individual in faith and conscience. Therefore any observance of a Sabbath or rest day enforced by law, by statute, by police, by court, by prosecution, or by persecution, is, in the first instance, a direct invasion of the province of God and of the realm of faith and conscience in the individual; and in the second instance is not even the observance of the day, and never can be, because it is not of persuasion *in the mind*.

God has appointed his own chosen and sanctified day to be observed; that is true. He calls upon all people to observe it, that is true. But in the observance or regarding of this day, the word of God thus explicitly declares that it is wholly an individual matter: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." And when any man is *not* fully persuaded in his own mind, and therefore does not observe the day to the Lord, his responsibility for this is to God alone, and not to any man, nor to any set of men, nor to any law, or government, or power, on earth.

Following this item there is made an appeal in behalf of the recognition of perfect individuality in religion—this in view of the awful fact of the judgment of Christ and of God. This appeal runs thus: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Verses 10, 11.

Every one of us must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and of God, there to be each judged by *Him*. How

then can it be possible ever in righteousness, that one of us can be called to be judged by another, or by any or all others, in the things of religion? that is, in the things in which we are to answer at the judgment seat of Christ.

No, no. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." And, "He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is *one* Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" James 4:11.

Thus, that there is to be a judgment-seat of Christ and of God where all must appear, each to answer for "the deeds done in the body"—this is one of the mightiest guaranties of perfect individuality in religion, and one of the strongest possible pleas for the recognition of it by every soul always.

Finally, the whole thought and truth of perfect individuality in religion is splendidly summed up, and powerfully emphasized as well as clearly expressed, in the inspired conclusion, —

"So then every one of us shall give account of *HIMSELF* to GOD." Verse 12.

Chapter 6 God and Caesar

In the case of the church of Israel against the members of that church who chose to believe in Christ and to teach the truth concerning Him, the principle is made perfectly plain that no church has any authority, jurisdiction, or right, in, over, or concerning, the faith or the teaching, of any individual member of that very church itself. Acts 4 and 5; 2 Cor. 1:24.

There is another remarkable scripture that not only illustrates this total absence of authority, jurisdiction, or right, of any church, but also makes plain some additional principles of the great truth of religious liberty.

This notable scripture is the one that contains the words of Jesus when the spying Pharisees and Herodians came to Him with their crafty question, "Is it

lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" With the tribute money in His hand, Jesus said: "whose is this image and superscription? they say unto Him, Caesar's. Then saith He unto them, Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Here are revealed two persons—God and Caesar: two powers—the religious and the civil: two authorities—the divine and the human: two jurisdictions—the heavenly and the earthly: and *only two*, to whom, by the divine instruction, is anything due or to be rendered by men.

There is a jurisdiction and an authority, a power and a right, that belong to God. There is also a jurisdiction and an authority, a power and a right, that belong to Caesar.

And these are totally distinct realms. There is that which is Caesar's; this is to be rendered to Caesar, not to God. There is that which is God's; and this is to be rendered to God, not to Caesar. It is to be rendered to God alone and direct. It is not to be rendered to Caesar, nor to God *by* Caesar.

Originally there was, and ultimately there will be, only one realm, only one jurisdiction, only one authority, only one power, only one right—that of God alone. 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

If sin had never entered there would never have been any other realm, nor any other jurisdiction, authority, power, or right, than that of God alone. And even when sin had entered, if the Gospel and been received by each and every individual ever coming into the world, *then* there would never have been any realm or jurisdiction, authority, power, or right, other than that of God alone. Eph. 1:7-10; 1 Col. 1:20-23.

But not all will receive the Gospel; and so not all will recognize the sovereignty, the jurisdiction, the authority, the power, and the right, of God. Not recognizing God's kingdom, will, purpose, and power, which is moral and spiritual, and which makes moral and spiritual all who do recognize it, these then, being sinful, fail to be even civil. Therefore there must be in the world a

jurisdiction and a power that will cause those to be civil who will not be moral. And this is the State, the civil power, Caesar; and this its reason of existence.

In the nature of things there are only the two realms and the two jurisdictions: the moral and the civil, the spiritual and the physical, the eternal and the temporal; the one of God, the other of Caesar. There are these two realms and jurisdictions, and NO MORE. And there simply cannot of right *be* any more. One of these is God's realm and jurisdiction. The other is Caesar's.

And since by the divine word these are the *two*, and these two are the *only* two that there can possibly be, then it follows absolutely and exclusively that to the *church* there is neither kingdom nor dominion, realm nor jurisdiction, nor *is there any place for any*.

It is therefore perfectly plain that without assumption and usurpation no church can ever have any kingdom or dominion, any realm or jurisdiction. The church is not Caesar's; and without assumption and usurpation it is impossible for the church to exercise any of the jurisdiction of Caesar. The realm and jurisdiction of Caesar—the State, the civil power—is wholly of this world. The church with all that is of it, is “not of this world.” It is therefore impossible for the church without assumption and usurpation ever to occupy the realm of Caesar, or to exercise any jurisdiction in the things of Caesar, which things are wholly of this world.

This being so of the church as relates to Caesar, how much more is it true of the church as relates *to God*! The church is not Caesar and cannot be Caesar. Much more the church is not God and cannot be God. And has not Inspiration set forth in such unsparing terms as “the man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” “the mystery of iniquity,” “sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that *he* is *God*,” THAT CHURCH that has thought to be the kingdom and hold the dominion, to occupy the realm and exercise the jurisdiction, *of God*. Is anything other than *that* needed to make perfectly plain the truth that for any church to assume that to *her* it belongs to be the

kingdom and hold the dominion, to occupy the realm and exercise the jurisdiction, *of God*, is the very ultimate of arrogancy, assumption, and usurpation.

But, it is asked, is not the church the kingdom of God?—Yes, it is—*provided* that by the term “the church” is meant only the divine conception of the church as expressed in the divine word—“the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” When only *that* is meant in the use of the words “the church,” then it is indeed the kingdom of God. But when by the “church” is meant some *human* conception, some religious sect or denomination, some earthly “organization,” then it is *not* true of any church ever in this world that it is the kingdom of God.

But suppose that such a thing as that were really the church, and therefore the kingdom of God; even so, it would still be true that in order for such to be indeed the kingdom of God, it could be so only by God's being king there. And where God is king, he is king and Lord of all in all. God is never, and can never be, king in a divided kingdom. He never does, and never can, share His dominion with another. Will any one claim or imply that there can in truth and in fact be a kingdom of God without God's being in truth and in fact king there; and king in all that is there? No, God must be king there or else it is not in truth the kingdom of God. He must be king and Lord of all and in all that is there, or else it is not in truth and in fact the kingdom of God. The realm must be occupied by Him, the jurisdiction must be exercised by Him, the principles must be His, the government must be of Him, the image and superscription must be His, and all this exclusively, or else it is not in truth and in fact the kingdom of God.

The soul and spirit of man, as man is in the world, as the world is, is in *intent* and *by right* the kingdom of God. And so to wicked and unbelieving Pharisees, Jesus said, “the kingdom of God is within you.” But in lost mankind that kingdom is usurped and that realm is occupied by another. The usurper is on the throne. Exercising jurisdiction that enslaves, debases, and destroys. Thus, while in intent and by right the kingdom

is God's, yet in truth and in fact it is not God's but another's. Yet let the lost and enslaved soul only welcome God into that alienated realm to occupy His own place on that usurped throne, and to exercise true jurisdiction there, THEN will that soul and spirit and life, in truth and in fact, as well as in intent and of right, be the kingdom of God. And even then it is the kingdom of God in truth only as God is king in all and over all to that soul. And so it is with the church.

The Church OF GOD is indeed the kingdom of God: it is “the fullness of him that filleth all in all:” it is composed only of those who are His. And He is king and sole ruler in this His kingdom. The jurisdiction in this realm is His alone; the principles of the government, and the authority and the power of the government, are His alone. And every citizen of the kingdom owes allegiance to Him alone: and this direct, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Every inhabitant of that realm is subject to His jurisdiction alone: and this direct, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Every member of this church, which is His kingdom, is inspired and actuated by the principles which are His alone and from Him alone; and is governed by the authority and power of Him alone; and this all direct from Him, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Thus all who are of the Church of God in truth, which is the kingdom of God, render *to God* all that is of the heart, of the soul, of the mind, and of the strength. These also render *to Caesar* the things that are Caesar's—tribute, custom, honor, in his place. Rom. 13:5-7.

Thus again it is perfectly plain and certain that neither between God and Caesar, not yet along with them, is there any *third* person, party, power, realm, or jurisdiction, to whom any man is to render anything. There is no command nor obligation from God to render anything to any kingdom of dominion, to any power or jurisdiction, but that of God and that of Caesar,—*these two only*. There is no image and superscription of *the church*, neither is there place for any.

And this is only to say that without God, and without God in His place as all in all, any church is simply nothing. And

when such church attempts to be something, she is only worse than nothing. And in either case nobody can ever owe anything to any such church.

On the other hand, when the church is truly with God; and when He is truly to her all in all; she is truly of the kingdom of God. And yet even then the kingdom, the dominion, the realm, the jurisdiction, the authority, and the power, are all *God's* NOT *HERS*: so that all that is owed or rendered is *to God*, not to the church. Thus it is strictly and literally true that never in any case is anything owed or to be rendered by anybody to the church, as such.

And thus again it is emphasized that there are just two persons, two realms, two jurisdictions, two authorities, two powers, to whom anybody can really owe or render anything—God and Caesar: these two and no more, and no other.

This requires, therefore, that the church, to be true to her calling and her place in the world, shall be so absolutely devoted to God, so completely swallowed up and lost in God, that only God shall be known or manifested, wherever and in whatsoever she is or is to do.

In the very spirit of Christianity this is certainly true. For this is exactly the calling and attitude of individual Christians in the world—to be so absolutely devoted to God, so completely swallowed up and lost in Him, that only God shall be seen in all that they are: “God manifest in the flesh.” And the church is composed only of individual Christians. Also the church is “the body of Christ;” and Christ is God manifest, to the complete emptying, yea, the very annihilation, of *self*. And this is the mystery of God.

And just here is where the church, both before Christ and after Christ, missed her calling, and her place: she aspired to be something *herself*. It was not enough for her that God should be all in all. It was not enough for her that the kingdom and the dominion, the realm and the jurisdiction, the authority and the power, the word and the faith, should all be God's and only God's. She aspired to kingdom herself; to realm and jurisdiction of her own; to authority that *she* could wield; to a word that *she* could

speak; and to a “faith” that *she* could dictate.

To satisfy this ambition and to make tangible this aspiration, she rejected God and assumed and usurped the kingdom and the dominion, the realm and the jurisdiction, the authority and the power, that belonged to both God and Caesar. And so being herself neither God nor Caesar, but only a self-constituted and self-exalted interloper, her blundering confusion of things only multiplied iniquity and deepened the curse upon the world.

And such precisely is the charge that God lays against her in each age and in both testaments. The glory and the beauty, the honor and the dignity, the authority and the power, the sweet influence and divine attractiveness, that all were hers and that were grandly becoming to her, because of *His dwelling with her and being in her*—these all she arrogated TO HERSELF and assumed to be OF HERSELF. Read Ezekiel 16:11-19; Romans 1:7-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-3; Revelation 17:1-6.

When God gave to her the true and divine *faith* that could be “spoken of throughout the whole world,” upon this she assumed that HER faith was to be the faith of the whole world, and so took it upon *herself* to assign and to dictate “the faith” for the whole world, and to maintain that “the faith” which *she* dictated was the true and divine.

When God gave to her his *word* in such perfect purity to speak, that when she should speak it would be even as the voice of God, upon this she exalted herself to the claim that HER voice was the voice of God, and that the word which *she* chose to speak was the word of God *because she* spoke it.

When God gave to her such perfection of *truth* that her very speaking of that truth was to speak with all authority, upon this she assumed for herself that to HER belonged the power; and even the power to compel all men and nations in all the world to be subject to *her* and to obey *her*.

Thus in all things she actually thought it a thing to be grasped and held fast, “a usurpation to be meditated, to be equal with God.” But the time has come

when every person and everything that would be the church or of the church, must never more think it a thing to be seized upon, a usurpation to be meditated, to be equal with God' but must think only of how the church shall empty herself, and make herself of no reputation, and take upon herself the form of a servant, and humble herself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and all this in order that GOD may be made manifest in His own person and Spirit *in her*: and through her to the world.

The time has come when no church should any more call men to herself but to *Christ only*. The time has come when the church herself must be most of all interested in making it manifest that there is no third kingdom, realm, jurisdiction, or power; but only the two—God and Caesar; and when she must ever urge upon all people the divine instruction, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.”

The time has fully come when the church in all things must let only this mind be in her that “was also in Christ Jesus,” that will *not* think it “a thing to be grasped, to be equal with God;” but that will completely empty *herself* in order that *God* may be revealed: the living and true God, and He all in all. He, only King and Lord of all in the church and to the church, and that church “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Long enough have both states and churches usurped the authority of God, and have assumed to resign in the place of God. *Now* the time has fully come when there should be, yea when there *will* be heard *on earth* the grand words of the glorious voices in heaven: “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and was, and is to come; because Thou hast *taken to Thee* thy great power, *and hast reigned*.” Rev. 11:17.

Chapter 7 Recapitulation

We have now traced in the Word of God the principle of the divine right of individuality in religion, as that

principle is applied and illustrated as relates to autocracy, to government of the supremacy and inflexibility of law, to the union of Church and State, to the church itself, and to individuals.

Please let no one think that all this is only a series of studies in ancient history, nor yet that it is a study of principles and Scriptures only as such: though on either ground the study would be amply justified. However, it is nothing of the kind. It is a study of principles which in one phase or another are fully as alive and active today as ever. And the day is yet to be, and that not far distant, when the whole series of illustrations covered in these studies will again be all alive and active, and all at once, as truly and to the like purpose as each was in its place and day.

The day is coming, and it is not far distant, when autocracies, governments of the supremacy and the inflexibility of the law, unions of church and State, and churches as such, will all be standing unitedly, and bent as from one mind, to compel submission and uniformity in religion; and to crush out every suggestion of individuality in religion and every kind of right of it.

It is particularly in view of what is soon to come that these studies have been published. All these things written in the Scriptures were set down there by the Spirit of inspiration, not only for the instruction of all people always, but, *particularly* “for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The mightiest contest and this upon the grandest scale, between the forces of evil and the reign of righteousness that this world’s experience shall ever know, is yet to be. This mightiest conflict is to be in the time when the ends of the world are come. That time is even now at hand. For this reason these lessons from the inspired record are all-important just now.

In view of the mighty pressure from all these sources and by all these forces, that is soon to be put on every individual, it is of the greatest importance that each individual shall know for himself, and know by the surest possible evidence—to know by very certitude itself—just what is his place, his

responsibility, and his right, individually, in the presence of principalities and powers, and before God and with God.

While in these studies of the Scriptures we have discussed each case from the point of view that these powers have no right to assert or exercise any authority or jurisdiction in religion, but that the right of individuality in religion is supreme in the presence of all, the other side is equally true and no less important, even if it be not even more important—that it is incumbent on the individual never to allow any other than God to assert authority or jurisdiction in religion without being openly challenged and absolutely ignored: that in true allegiance to God and perfect loyalty to the right, the divine right of individuality, in religion, shall be maintained. This every individual owes absolutely to God, to the right, and to himself in God and for the right. This principle each individual must maintain or else prove disloyal to God, to himself as a man before God, and to consent that the wrong shall prevail instead of the right: in other words, to consent that the wrong shall be the right.

It is true, as the inspired record shows, that autocracy, as illustrated in King Nebuchadnezzar; that government of the supremacy of law, as illustrated in the Medo-Persian power; that the union of church and State, as illustrated in the Jewish church and the Roman power united against Christ; that the church as such, as illustrated in the church of Israel against the disciples of Christ; has no right to assert authority or jurisdiction in religion. It is equally, and even more emphatically, true, that, to be at all loyal to God and the right, or true to themselves and to their fellow men, the three Hebrew young men, the man Daniel, the Lord Jesus, and the apostles of the Lord, must absolutely disregard every such assertion. In each case God’s dominion was usurped. In each case the right was being completely thrown over, and the wrong established in its place. In such a case and at such a time could any who knew God or cared for the right, sit still and do nothing? Is allegiance to God, nothing? Is loyalty to the right, never to be known? Shall the wrong be

recognized as having only the right to prevail? Shall man never be true—neither true to God nor to the right, neither true to himself nor to his fellow men.

It is true that Nebuchadnezzar was entirely out of his place and did wholly wrong when he attempted to exercise authority in religion; and the story is written to show to all people forever that every autocracy is just as much out of place, and just as far wrong, when it presumes to assert authority in religion. At the same time it is true, and equally important to remember, that the three Hebrew individuals openly and uncompromisingly disregarded that autocratic assertion of authority in religion. And the story is written to teach that all other individuals forever must do as did those three individuals, if these too will be true to God, to the right, to themselves, and to their kind.

It is true that, notwithstanding its principles of supremacy and inflexibility of the law, the Medo-Persian government did wrong when it by its law entered the field of religion; and the story is written to show to all governments and people forever that every government is equally wrong in entering by the law the field of religion. It is equally true, and equally important to remember, that the individual,—Daniel,—did absolutely and uncompromisingly disregard that law; and that the story is written to teach all individuals forever that in all like circumstances they must do as did that individual, if they will honor God and the right and be true to themselves and to their fellow men.

It is true that the Church of Israel did an enormously wicked thing when she allied herself with the civil power in order to make her will effective; and the story of it is written to show to all the world forever that every church commits the like enormity whenever, under any pretext whatever, she seeks to control the civil power to make her will effective. It is equally true, and equally important to recognize and remember, that the One lone Individual Who was the object of this wicked alliance of the church and State, would die under it

(Continued on page 14)



Camp Meeting Announcements

We are currently planning on having a camp meeting, here in Welch, West Virginia, from July 17-21. The first meeting of the convocation will be Tuesday evening the 17th, with the meetings closing out the evening of the 21st.

Some of the scheduled speakers are Allen Stump, Gary Richmond, David Clayton, Howard Williams, Bob Habenicht, and Lynnford Beachy.

Brother Gary Richmond will also have some youth meetings, sharing his insights on God's creation. We are also planning a daily meeting for the small children.

In an effort to help equip the saints for sharing "the message" we are planning three afternoon seminars.

Brother Willis Smith will conduct a seminar on in-home Bible studies. Brother Ben Vela will be conducting a seminar on medical missionary work. We also have a special brother of much experience and learning who is going to have a seminar on homiletics (the science of preaching).

There is no cost to attend the meetings or to camp here at Smyrna. However, please be on notice: This is a *camp* meeting and interest is already running very high. We expect the attendance to significantly increase over last year's camp meeting. The best camping spaces here at Smyrna will be available on a first come, first served basis. We do not have cabins or rooms available. Smyrna will have some tents and camping supplies for those who do not have and cannot afford to purchase them. However, the supply is limited so if you need to use a tent, camp stove, etc. please request early. Showers with hot and cold water will be available. While there is room for a limited number of RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained.

The closest motel in the area is the Pocahontas Motel (phone number: 304-436-2250). The owner has always been nice and helpful to us in the past. However, it is a small motel and space is limited. Other area accommodations are: Woody's Motel, (304) 732-6540; The Cow Shed, (304) 732-7000; Twin Falls State Park Resort, (304) 294-4000

Meals *will not* be provided. All will need to bring their own food and whatever equipment, such as camp stoves and coolers for the storage and preparation of their food, as they deem necessary. Due to fire safety considerations, no open fires will be allowed. Sister Gina Campbell will be bringing some supplies from her health food store. Gina is very reasonable with her prices. If you would like Gina to bring something specific for you, you may place an order ahead of time by calling her at: (901) 845-5859.

Parents will need to be responsible for their children at *all* times. Parents should not allow their children to roam about outside without supervision while they attend meetings.

Though this is a camp meeting, modest dress will be expected of all who wish to attend. Items such as short pants or short skirts and dresses, tank-top shirts, and clothing with un-Christlike pictures, symbols, or words are not acceptable. We ask those who attend to realize that they are guests and must act accordingly. Those who are not willing to respect the standards of the host church will be asked to leave.

Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, towels, flashlights, toiletries, insect repellent, modest casual and Sabbath clothes.

If you received an attendance reply card, please fill it out and return it if you are interested, so we will know best how to plan for the accommodations necessary.

Please bring a willing heart ready to fellowship, learn God's Word, and be drawn closer to Him.

The main emphasis will be on practical Christian living. Many messages will be shared to help further our experience with God. The camp meeting we held here last year was outstanding. I greatly benefitted by it. I feel sorry for those who missed it because every message was so uplifting. I can guarantee this camp meeting will be even better. If there is any possibility that you can come, I strongly encourage you to do so.

One of the greatest blessings from camp meeting is getting to know others from around the country. You will meet people from many of the states in the USA, and a few countries around the world.

I cannot express to you how valuable it is to come to one of these camp meetings. If you make it here, you will know what I am talking about.

Arizona Camp Meeting

Especially for those living in the western part of the United States, we wish to announce that the Church at Wilhoit is planning their annual camp meeting for May 9-12, 2001. They would love to have you come and join them for Christian fellowship and the Lord's blessings. David Sims and Dr. Coroos will be speaking on witnessing to others about a deeper understanding of God's love, and health in God's last-day people, respectively. Benjamin Vela will be back again to share more of his timely messages. If you need more information, please call Richard Stratton at (520) 442-9278.

Editor

The Evils of Harry Potter Books

by Lynnford Beachy

Almost overnight Joanne K. Rowling's books about a student wizard named Harry Potter have become number one sellers. These books are designed for young children and introduce them to the world of witchcraft and magic.

A *USA Today* report says, "Those needing a hit of magic, morality and mystical worlds can do no better than opening *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the second installment from J.K. Rowling about the young wizard-in-training at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Chamber offers young readers an equal measure of dark wizards, noble mentors, hideous beasts and epic battles of good vs. evil."

<http://www.usatoday.com/life/enter/books/book112.htm>

There are some who are concerned about this new series of children's books. A *Time Magazine* report says, "Reading about wizards and spells and great feats of the imagination has the potential to drive children straight into the waiting arms of the occult. That appears to be the thinking out of Columbia, S.C., where a group of parents and school board administrators are arguing the dangers of the stunningly popular Harry Potter book series. They want the tales of a boy's magical adventures, beloved by hordes of children and parents alike, taken out of their schools. And it's not just South Carolinians who aren't so wild about Harry; parents and school administrators in Georgia and Minnesota have also raised objections to the stories, using words like 'death, hate and evil' to describe their tone."

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,32697,00.html>

Is there legitimate reason for concern about these books? Are the books actually causing young children to enter into the world of witchcraft and wizardry?

In an article entitled, "Potter Fans Turning to Witchcraft" we read, "The Pagan Federation has appointed a youth officer to deal with a flood of inquiries following the success of the Harry Potter books which describe magic and wizardry.

"The federation says the Potter books, by JK Rowling, and TV shows such as Sabrina The Teenage Witch and Buffy The Vampire Slayer, had probably sparked the new flood of interest.

"Media officer Andy Norfolk said: 'In response to the increased queries coming from youngsters we established a youth officer, not to promote paganism, because that would be against pagan ethics, but merely to answer these queries and allow someone to offer advice and information.

"It is quite probably linked to things like Harry Potter, Sabrina The Teenage Witch and Buffy The Vampire Slayer. Every time an article on witchcraft or paganism appears, we had a huge surge in calls, mostly from young girls.'

"Mr. Norfolk said that parents should not be alarmed by their children's sudden interest in magic. 'Paganism is recognised as a valid religion,' he said. 'In no way is it a cult and certainly it offers nothing untoward.'"

http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/dynamic/news/story.html?in_review_id=306029&in_review_text_id=250010

It is very clear that Harry Potter books are leading young children into paganism and witchcraft. The world may recognize paganism as a valid religion, but according to the Bible it is Satan worship. (See 1 Corinthians 1:20 and Deuteronomy 32:16, 17) As Christians, do we want our children practicing paganism and witchcraft? Certainly not! God has expressly forbidden us to have any dealings with witches or wizards.

*"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a **witch**, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a **wizard**, or a necromancer."* (Deuteronomy 18:10, 11) In the Old Testament, if a person became involved in witchcraft they would be put to death. *"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."* (Exodus 22:18)

God has warned us that in the last days these things will increase. *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, **giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.**"* (1 Timothy 4:1)

God has given a multitude of warnings against wizardry and witchcraft. He has even informed us that if we practice these things we will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Paul wrote, *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, **witchcraft**, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**"* (Galatians 5:19-21)

Allowing your child to read Harry Potter books will give them a desire to practice witchcraft, and if they continue they will be forbidden to enter the kingdom of heaven. God forbid that any Christian would allow or support such wickedness. *"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."* (Romans 14:22)

For more information about the evils of Harry Potter books visit the following web sites:

- <http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/Harry&Witchcraft.htm#1>
- http://www.daveandangel.com/CRN/Harry_Potter.html
- <http://www.exposingsatanism.org/harrypotter.htm>



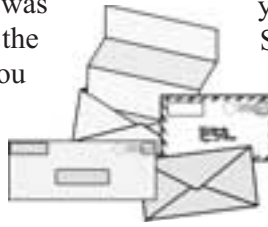
Letters from our Readers



"Thank you for sending the videos. We received them last Sabbath, so the video was still cold when we watched it right away after retrieving it from the mailbox.... You did a wonderful job with the video, very nicely done and we enjoyed the message too."

Minnesota

"Some few months ago I received with thanks a letter that purported to originate from you. The fact that we do not know each other did not bother me, I was overjoyed and encouraged by the message that was contained in your package. Having seriously considered of what was written therein, I decided to write you back. In the first place I thank you for your efforts that led you to secure my name and address; and secondly to express my desire of having more details of yourself and especially of your mission, as a ministry—your central doctrines or statement of faith... Thirdly, to underline the statement from your letter 'God is calling us to reform from every error.' This is my conviction too, and I believe reformation is a continuous process until we attain Christian perfection. For this reason I was really interested in your letter and the few materials you sent me. Lastly, to present my requests as follows: Arrange and visit us here in Tanzania. This is important in order to establish solid contact... Send me other publications from Smyrna Gospel Ministries."



Tanzania

"I am on your mailing list but did not receive the March issue. Do you have any tapes from your last camp meeting? Also do you have any ordering forms?"

Illinois

(Yes, we have video tapes from our last camp meeting. No, we do not have any order forms, but we have a list of publications along with their suggested donation. Editor)

"Please accept this gift. I have been receiving *Present Truth* for some time and enjoy it. Please put my parents on your mailing list."

North Carolina

"Recently I received a letter offering me an opportunity to receive free Bible courses from Truth Seekers Ministries. Because of the inspiration of the *Present Truth* I would like to receive the Bible courses you offer. Can any of us know too much of God's Truth? Thank you for informing me of the availability of the Bible courses. I look forward to receiving them, studying them, and learning from them."

Michigan

(We have two Bible courses you may wish to receive. One deals with practical Christianity entitled "Christ Our Righteousness." The other deals with last day events and helps prepare us to reject the mark of the beast, entitled "These Last Days." We also have a Spanish Bible course that deals with all the above, entitled "La Biblia Abierta"

(The Open Bible). If you would like to receive any of these Bible courses, please let us know.

Editor)

"Dear Workers for Jesus, Thanks for your labor of love. May God give you abundant blessings and courage to carry on. Keep on keeping on. Hosea 6:3. The reward goes to those who remain to the end... I need some 10 commandment tracts, also 'The Truth About God,' also a tract on Jesus and the Holy Spirit. I have four tract racks and need some good literature to put in them. Whatever you feel would be good, share with me. Thanks. Send the three videos you have; I want to share them also. I would like to go to your camp meeting but it is so far away and our \$\$ are few. God is good and He supplies our needs. We enjoy your papers. Here is some \$\$ to help. No such thing as 'free soup.' Someone has to pay. The more I study and pray the more I love our Father and His Son."

Alabama

"I am presently incarcerated at ____ Jail... I would like to receive the March 2001 issue of *Present Truth*. A friend and brother in Christ, here at ____ shared his copy of *Present Truth* with me and I totally enjoyed it. I would also be interested in any other reading materials that may be available. As well, I would also like to request a free copy of "Who is the God of the Bible?" Thank you and God bless."

New Jersey

"I am writing to say thank you once again for the Bible studies. I really look forward to them every month."

Montana

"Thank you very much for *Present Truth* for March 2001 which I received. I saw some information about Camp Meeting in July 17-21 and I am thinking to attend to this Camp, and [my friend] also would like to come with me... Please send me some more information."

Poland

"I love your web-site, although I don't have very many opportunities to check it out. I have ordered materials from you on several occasions, and will continue to do so."

Florida

"Please send me the booklet 'A Time to Choose.' Use this gift offering where needed. I have really enjoyed all the materials I have received. God bless each one."

California

"I'm very interested in your Bible study and I will like to learn more through your study. Could you please send me The End of Time Bible study ['These Last Days'], your book called 'America in Prophecy,' also *Present Truth* newsletter. If possible I would also like for you to

send these same things to someone very dear to me so we both may study... Would you please help us both in our goal to learn more.”

Ohio

“Could you please place the following person on your newsletter list. She is a pensioner and goes frequently to give out witnessing material on the streets of Melbourne.”

Australia

“Thank you for the newsletter, it’s terrifying what is happening now...time is approaching fast, let’s prepare and give out the 3rd and 4th Angels’ Messages.”

Finland

“I read your newsletter (March) and also some other materials about the trinity. I was very happy to read them because I am also thinking more or less the same way. But I am not yet very clear on that area. So I would like to ask you to send me more materials about God and Jesus, and also about the love of God; if possible those series you wrote about in the newsletter of March; if possible, videotapes.”

Hungary

“In the current issue of *Present Truth* there was a blue reply card and an announcement regarding a Camp Meeting to be held in West Virginia July 17-21. I am afraid there was not enough information, that I saw at least, for one to make a determination about attending.

“Where in West Virginia will it be held? Who will be the main speakers and group/class leaders? Is there a theme of study? What arrangements will there be for youth leaders/groups? What options are available (tent camping, RVs, etc). I probably have more questions than most as I have never attended a camp meeting before.

“I would appreciate any and all information you can share with me and as soon as possible, especially in regard to speakers/leaders. Should I feel I would like to attend, I have to get vacation time approval 2 months in advance.”

Tennessee

(Thank you for your inquiry. I am glad you brought up so many questions. It helps me to know what information people need. Please see our notice on page 15. *Editor*)

“We thanked and blessed His name for publishing the letters, in the *Present Truth* last edition. Thanks for feeding the world with his mighty word and the good news of salvation here in Peru.”

Peru

“I would appreciate a copy of your study that traces the existence and position of the Son in the Old Testament.”

E-mail Contact

(Thank you for your request. If any of you would like this study, entitled “Christ in the Old Testament,” please let me know. *Editor*)

“I cannot express the joy I had to read that a CRUSADE to help spread the sabbath truth in Nigeria is conceived by your ministry.... The issue of this Crusade had been puzzling my heart for sometime since I got the

truth, little did I know that God was reconstructing this need. For the burden I have for the lost souls in Nigeria, We need and welcome CRUSADE here. We pray for whoever the Lord will send from USA for this great mission, we also pray for the necessary finance to meet befitting CRUSADE that will be inspiring.”

Nigeria

(We are considering a trip to several countries in Africa to hold meetings and visit with some of the brethren. If you have any information that may help us along these lines, please let us know. *Editor*)

“We are grateful to learn that while you were planning to visit some African countries, then you received our communication. I believe it is through the working of the Holy Spirit. Praise God!... Concerning your visit and speaking engagements these may be arranged... We thank you for books that you will be sending. Brother ____ and I are looking forward seeing you.”

Tanzania

“I have good news, I got everything ready to travel and it will be in my prayers for the first week of May, so that way I can go visit some congregations in Miami and Oklahoma on my way to camp meeting, now the plane tickets are low fare. It will be \$295.00 round trip so if you feel you can help with some God bless you and provide you with it. Another thing when I get there we can see, how to bring the printing machine here. It won’t be a problem, we have the desire, God does the rest. With the mind of our Jesus Christ we can do anything in Him. Amen! I shared this with some brothers, they enjoyed the news very much. It is a great expectation.... We already sent to the printing shop for 3,000 tracts. Praise the Lord! As we continue with the great commission, Jesus Christ is walking with us. We are diligent in going for the achievement of His plans for salvation for this world.... These warriors don’t sleep and we are in praying support for your congregation and the faithful bond servants of our heavenly Father and His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, our Chief around the world.”

Peru

(The Lord is opening a way to start a printing operation in Peru. Please pray for these dear brothers and sisters and that the Lord will continue to open the doors. *Editor*)

“I am writing to tell you that I do not wish to receive any more copies of *Present Truth*. I never did request to receive any copies. I met ____ and he might have given you my name. Please cancel the order to send me any more copies. As far as I am concerned there is already a present truth and that is the Holy Bible. And the Bible explains itself. It does not need a paper to explain it. Keep the faith and try to let Jesus have complete control of your life.”

Michigan

“May you prosper in your daily undertakings especially in the work of spreading the *Present Truth*. May you

and your family receive abundant blessings from the Lord with the brethren in the faith in your place. 3 John 2 to all of you.... Regarding the book that Smyrna has sent me I enjoyed reading it, learning many things from it especially on the issue of the trinity.... May your camp-meeting be a success and may it bring more souls to the Saviour.”

Philippines

“I would like to take your Bible studies.” Oregon

“Thank you for sending the Bible lessons I have completed and returned with this letter. The study of God’s

Word is always a blessing. In your letter you asked if I have any of your books. The only books I have are the ones sent with the Bible lessons. After reading the books you send me, they will be at the disposal of others to read. The Truth is something that needs to be shared with all who are interested in knowing the Truth... It has been almost 26 years since I have last walked the streets a free man. Without God in my life I wasn’t truly free. Now here I am in prison and I am freer than I have ever been in my life. The Father and his Son get all the credit for the miracle performed in my life.”

Michigan

(Individuality in Religion, continued from page 9)

rather than to yield to it or to recognize it in the slightest degree. And this is all written, that every other individual to the world’s end shall be ready under like circumstances to do as did the Lord Jesus, in order to be true to God, true to the truth, true to himself, and true to the human race.

It is true that the church of Israel went out of the right way, and did entirely wrong, when she assumed the authority to decide what the members of that church should or should not believe and teach; and the story of it is written to make plain to all churches and people forever, that every church is just as far from the right way, and equally wrong, when she assumes any authority to decide what any member of the church shall or shall not believe and teach. It is equally true, and just as important to remember, that the individual church-members there openly and uncompromisingly refused to recognize any such authority to any extent or in any degree whatever. And this is written to teach to all church-members forever that they must individually do the like, if they will be true to God, true to Christ, true to the right, true to themselves, and true to mankind.

The three Hebrew young men did right when they refused to recognize any right of autocracy in religion. Daniel did right when he refused to recognize any right of autocracy in religion. Daniel did right when he refused to recognize any right of civil government of law in religion. The Lord Jesus did right when he refused to recognize any right of the

church through the civil power to make effective her will. The apostles and disciples of the Lord Jesus did right when they refused to recognize any right of the church to decide or to dictate what they should or should not believe and teach. In each of these cases God openly and in mighty miraculous power made perfectly plain to all that these individuals were right. By this it is openly demonstrated not only that they were right, but that they were *divinely* right. And in each case the story has been written out that all powers and people forever may know that such course is divinely right. And whosoever will stand with God as did each of these in his place, can know it.


It is these individuals and such as these, who, in their day and from age to age, have kept alive in the world the honor of God, who have kept alive the right in the world, who have kept alive integrity and true manliness in mankind; yea, it is just these and such as these blessed *individuals* who have kept the world itself alive.

It is not autocracies, nor governments of law, nor unions of church and state, nor yet is it even churches as such that have maintained the honor of God, that have held true to the right, and that have preserved the integrity of man. For all history with one voice testifies that all these have done all that they could to undermine and break down all individuality and integrity of man, to obliterate the right, and to shut out God from his own place in men and in the world.

No, it is not these, but the blessed INDIVIDUAL with God and in God; it

is those who have known and maintained the divine right of individuality in religion; it is the Daniels, the Christ, the Pauls, the Wyckliffes, the Luthers, who have stood alone in the world and in the church, and against both the church and the world—it is THESE, who have maintained the honor of God, who have kept alive the knowledge of God, of the right and of the true, and so have kept alive the world.

And now, and for the time to come—when there is being pushed forward among the churches and urged upon the world, denominational, national, international, and world FEDERATION in religion and of religion; when all this is aimed expressly to the one end of asserting by autocracies, by governments of the supremacy and inflexibility of law, by churches allied with and in control of civil power, and by churches of themselves; when all these shall work at once and together to the assertion and exercise of absolute authority in religion—in view of all these, just now, as never before, it is essential to know, to proclaim, and to maintain,

The Divine Right of Individuality in Religion, and Religious Liberty Complete. 

(I pray that you have been blessed by this article. This concludes the first seven chapters of the powerful book, *Individuality in Religion*, by Alonzo T. Jones. The remaining two chapters will appear in next month’s issue of *Present Truth*. Editor)

For Our Sake Also

by E. J. Waggoner

The fourth chapter of Romans is one of the richest in the Bible in the hope and courage which it contains for the Christian. In Abraham we have an example of righteousness by faith and we have set before us the wonderful inheritance promised to those who have the faith of Abraham. And this promise is not limited. The blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles as well as on the Jews; there is none so poor that he may not share it, for *"it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."* (Romans 4:16)

The last clause of the seventeenth verse is worthy of special attention. It contains the secret of the possibility of our success in the Christian life. It says that Abraham believed *"God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."* (Romans 4:17) This marks God's power; it involves creative power. God can call a thing which is not as though it existed. If a man should do that, what would you call it? A lie. If a man should say that a thing is, when it is not, it would be a lie. But God cannot lie. Therefore when God calls those things that be not, as though they were, it is evident that that makes them be. That is, they spring into existence at His word. We have all heard, as an illustration of confidence, the little girl's statement that "if ma says so, it's so if it isn't so." That is exactly the case with God. Before that time spoken of as "in the beginning," there was a dreary waste of absolute nothingness; God spoke, and instantly worlds sprang into being. *"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ... for he spake, and it was; he commanded, and it stood fast."* (Psalm 33:6-9) This is the power which is brought to view in Rom. 4:17. Now let us read on, that we may see the force of this language in this connection. Still speaking of Abraham, the apostle says:

"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:18-22)

Here we learn that Abraham's faith in God, as one who could bring things into existence by His word, was exercised with respect to His being able to create righteousness in a person destitute of it. Those who look at the trial of Abraham's faith as relating simply to the birth of Isaac and ending there, lose all the point and beauty of the sacred record. Isaac was only the one in whom his seed was to be called, and that seed was Christ. (See Galatians 3:16.) When God told Abraham that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed, He was preaching the gospel to him (Galatians 3:8); therefore Abraham's faith in the promise of God was direct faith in Christ as the Saviour of sinners. This was the faith which was counted to him for righteousness.


Now note the strength of that faith. His own body was already virtually dead from age and Sarah was in a like condition. The birth of Isaac from such a pair was nothing less than the bringing of life from the dead. It was a symbol of God's power to quicken to spiritual life those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Abraham hoped against hope. There was no human possibility of the fulfillment of the promise; everything was against it, but his faith grasped and rested upon the unchanging word of God, and His power to create and to make alive. *"And therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness."* Now for the point of it all:

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:23-25)

So Abraham's faith was the same that ours must be, and in the same object. The fact that it is by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ that we have the same righteousness imputed to us that was imputed to Abraham, shows that Abraham's faith was likewise in the death and resurrection of Christ. All the promises of God to Abraham were for us as well as for him. Indeed, we are told in one place that they were specially for our benefit. *"When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself."* *"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we*

might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” (Hebrews 6:13, 17, 18) Our hope, therefore, rests upon God’s promise and oath to Abraham, for that promise to Abraham, confirmed by that oath, contains all the blessings which God can possibly give to man.

But let us make this matter a little more personal before leaving it. Trembling soul, say not that your sins are so many and that you are so weak that there is no hope for you. Christ came to save the lost, and He is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him. You are weak, but He says, *“My strength is made perfect in weakness.”* (2 Corinthians 12:9) And the inspired record tells us of those who *“out of weakness were made strong.”* (Hebrews 11:34) That means that God took their very weakness and turned it into strength. In so doing He demonstrates His power. It is His way of working. For *“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.”* (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

Have the simple faith of Abraham. How did he attain to righteousness? By not considering the deadness and powerlessness of his own body, but by being willing to grant all the glory to God, strong in faith that He could bring all things out of that which was not. You, therefore, in like manner, consider not the weakness of your own body, but the power and grace of our Lord, being assured that the same word which can create a universe and raise the dead can also create in you a clean heart and make you alive unto God. And so you shall be a child of Abraham, even a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 

(The previous article was first printed in the October 13, 1890 issue of the *Signs of the Times*. It is also found on pages 45-48 of the book *Lessons on Faith*, by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. *Editor*)

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