

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

March 2002

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:3) I pray that you are all doing well. Last month we mentioned that we would be holding some meetings in western Tennessee in February. The meetings went very well. It was a pleasure to meet some of you whom I had only known by name before. Thank you for coming out to the meetings. Please keep in mind our summer camp meetings this year. We will be having a camp meeting here near Welch, West Virginia, from July 2-6. Please plan early to attend. Some of our brethren in Colorado will be having a camp meeting from June 6-15 in Cañon City, Colorado, about one hour southwest of Colorado Springs. We will be giving further information about these camp meetings in upcoming issues of *Present Truth*. If you need more information ahead of time, please give us a call.

Important Practical Lessons on the Sabbath

by Ellet J. Waggoner

(The following article is taken from the fourth chapter of the book “Christ Our Righteousness” by Ellet J. Waggoner. The first several chapters of this book are dedicated to demonstrating the exalted nature and character of our Redeemer, Christ Jesus.
Editor)

It is not merely as a beautiful theory, a mere dogma, that we should consider Christ as God and Creator. Every doctrine of the Bible is for our practical benefit and should be studied for that purpose. Let us first see what relation this doctrine sustains to the central commandment of the law of God. In Genesis 2:1-3 we find these words closing the record of creation, “*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all His work which God created and made.*” The Jewish translation renders the text more literally thus, “Thus were finished the heavens and the earth and all their host. And God had finished on the seventh day His work which He had made,” etc. This is the same that we find in the fourth commandment. (Exodus 20:8-11)

In this we find, what is most natural, that the same Being who created, rested. He who worked six days in creating the earth, rested on the seventh and blessed and sanctified it. But we have already learned that God the Father created the worlds by His Son Jesus Christ and that Christ created everything that has an existence. Therefore

the conclusion is inevitable that Christ rested on that first seventh day at the close of the six days of creation and that He blessed and sanctified it. Thus the seventh day—the Sabbath—is most emphatically the Lord’s day. When Jesus said to the carping Pharisees, “*For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day*” (Matthew 12:8), He declared His lordship of the identical day which they had so scrupulously observed in form, and He did this in words which show that He regarded it as His badge of authority, as demonstrating the fact that He was greater than the temple. Thus the seventh day is the Divinely appointed memorial of creation. It is the most honored of all days, since its especial mission is to bring to mind the creative power of God, which is the one proof to man of His Divinity. And so when Christ said that the Son of Man is Lord *even*

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of the Sabbath day, He claimed a high distinction—nothing less than being the Creator, of whose Divinity that day stands as a memorial.

What shall we say, then, to the suggestion often made, that Christ changed the day of the Sabbath from a day which commemorates completed creation to one which has no such significance? Simply this, that for Christ to change or abolish the Sabbath would be to destroy that which calls to mind His Divinity. If Christ had abolished the Sabbath, He would have undone the work of His own hands and thus have worked against Himself, and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. (Mark 3:24) But Christ *“cannot deny Himself,”* (2 Timothy 2:13) and therefore He did not change one jot of that which He Himself appointed and which, by testifying to His Divinity, shows Him to be worthy of honor above all the gods of the heathen. It would have been as impossible for Christ to change the Sabbath as it would have been to change the fact that He created all things in six days and rested on the seventh.

Again, the oft-repeated declarations that the Lord is Creator are intended as a source of strength. Notice how creation and redemption are connected in the first chapter of Colossians. To get the point fully before us, we will read verses 9-19:

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” (Colossians 1:9-19)

It is not an accident that the wonderful declaration concerning Christ as Creator is connected with the statement that in Him we have redemption. No. When the apostle

makes known his desire that we should be *“strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power,”* he lets us know what that glorious power is. When he tells us about being delivered from the power of darkness, he lets us know something of the power of the Deliverer. It is for our comfort that we are told that the head of the church is the Creator of all things. We are told that he upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3), in order that we may rest in the assurance that

“The Hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard His children well.”

Note the connection of Isaiah 40:26. The chapter presents the wonderful wisdom and power of Christ, in calling all the host of heaven by names and in keeping them all in their places, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, and then inquires, *“Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding.”* (Isaiah 40:27, 28) On the contrary, *“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.”* (Verse 29) His power is, in fact, the ability to create everything from nothing; therefore, He can work wonders through those who have no strength. He can bring strength out of weakness. Surely, then, anything which serves to keep before the mind the creative power of Christ must tend to renew our spiritual strength and courage.

And this is just the design of the Sabbath. Read the ninety-second psalm, which is entitled “A Psalm of the Sabbath-day.” The first four verses are these:

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.” (Psalms 92:1-4)

What has this to do with the Sabbath? Just this: The Sabbath is the memorial of creation. Says the Lord: *“Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.”* (Ezekiel 20:12) The Psalmist kept the Sabbath as God designed that it should be kept—in meditating upon creation and the wondrous power and goodness of God displayed therein. And then, thinking of that, he realized that the God who clothes the lilies with a glory surpassing that of Solomon cares far more for His intelligent creatures, and as he looked at the

heavens, which show the power and glory of God, and realized that they were brought into existence from nothing, the encouraging thought would come to him that this same power would work in him to deliver him from human infirmity. Therefore he was glad, and he triumphed in the work of God's hands. The knowledge of God's power which came to him through a contemplation of creation, filled him with courage, as he realized that the same power was at his disposal, and, grasping that power by faith, he gained victories through it. And this is the design of the Sabbath; it is to bring man to a saving knowledge of God.

The argument, concisely stated, is this: 1. Faith in God is begotten by a knowledge of His power; to distrust Him implies ignorance of His ability to perform His promises; our faith in Him must be in proportion to our real knowledge of His power. 2. An intelligent contemplation of God's creation gives us a true conception of His power, for His eternal power and Godhead are understood by the things which He has made. (Romans 1:20) 3. It is faith that gives victory (1 John 5:4); therefore, since faith comes by learning the power of God from His word and from the things that He has made, we gain the victory or triumph through the works of His hands. The Sabbath, therefore, which is the memorial of creation, is, if properly observed, a source of the Christian's greatest reinforcement in battle.

This is the import of Ezekiel 20:12. *"Moreover, also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them."* That is, knowing that our sanctification is the will of God (1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23, 24), we learn, by means of the Sabbath, properly used, what the power of God is that is exerted for our sanctification. The same power that was put forth to create the worlds is put forth for the sanctification of those who yield themselves to the will of God. Surely this thought, when fully grasped, must bring joy and comfort in God to the earnest soul. In the light of this, we can appreciate the force of Isaiah 58:13, 14:

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a

delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

That is, if the Sabbath is kept according to God's plan, as a memorial of His creative power, as bringing to mind the Divine power that is put forth for the salvation of His people, the soul, triumphing in the work of His hands, must delight itself in the Lord. And so the Sabbath is the grand fulcrum for the lever of faith, which lifts the soul to the heights of God's throne, to hold communion with Him.

To put the matter in few words, it may be stated thus: The eternal power and Godhead of the Lord are revealed in creation. (Romans 1:20) It is the ability to create that measures the power of God. But the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16) Therefore the Gospel simply reveals to us the power which was used to bring the worlds into existence, now exerted for the salvation of men. It is the same power in each case.

In the light of this great truth, there is no room for the controversy about redemption being greater than creation, because redemption is creation. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24.) The power of redemption is the power of creation; the power of God unto salvation is the power which can take human nothingness and make of it that which shall be throughout eternal ages to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. *"Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."* (1 Peter 4:19)

(This article was taken from pages 31-38 of the book entitled "Christ Our Righteousness" by Ellet J. Waggoner. I italicized Bible verses, capitalized some pronouns, and added some verse references that were left out in the original. You can read this entire book on our website at <http://www.presenttruth.info>. Editor)

A Note Regarding the Maintenance of Our Mailing List

The Post Office sends us address corrections, but this process does not always work properly and sometimes it results in someone getting deleted from our mailing without their request even though their address is still valid. Here are some things you can do to help us avoid this problem:

- If you move, please send us your new address.
- If you inadvertently get deleted from our mailing list, please write us and verify your valid address.

We will do what we can to make sure you continue receiving *Present Truth*. We want you to know that if you get deleted from our mailing list without your request, it was not done intentionally, and we would like to continue sending you *Present Truth*. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you.

Bible Answers on the Law and the Sabbath

by Lynnford Beachy

(The following article is taken from a response to some points recently presented to me. I paraphrased the main points that were presented and responded to each one. I pray that you will gain deeper insights into the Sabbath and the issue of the law in the New Testament after reading these points and their Bible answers. Editor)

Point 1:

Your views regarding the seventh-day Sabbath are a misconception of the place of the Old Covenant in the lives of New Testament Christians.

Answer:

Thank you for your thoughts. In order to have a correct understanding of the old covenant we must first gain a Bible definition of what it is. The only verse in the KJV Bible that uses the two words “old” and “covenant” in the same verse is Hebrews 8:13. Let us read the context to get a clearer picture of its meaning.

“But now hath he [Jesus Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” (Hebrews 8:6)

Notice that a covenant is established upon promises. A covenant really is a promise or set of promises. I could make a covenant with you that if you pay me a certain sum of money, I will build you a house. That would be a covenant based upon two promises—you promise to pay the money and I promise to build you a house. The writer of Hebrews said that the new covenant was established on better promises than the old covenant.

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.” (Hebrews 8:7)

Here we find that the first covenant had problems. There were faults in the covenant. There were promises made that were not fulfilled, and thus they were faulty promises. Who do you suppose made the faulty promises, God or

the Israelites? Paul makes it clear that the fault was with Israel.

“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” (Hebrews 8:8)

The Jewish nation made faulty promises to God, and thus made the first covenant a faulty covenant. Notice what the Bible says about the first covenant. *“And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”* (Exodus 24:7, 8) Notice that the covenant was based upon promises. God’s promises and the Jewish nation’s promises. God promised many blessings to the Jewish nation, and the Jewish nation promised to be obedient to all that the Lord said. Anyone who promises to do all that the Lord commands is making a faulty promise, because on our own we have no strength to do the Lord’s commands. So God said, in the Old Testament book of Jeremiah, chapter 31, and quoted in Hebrews chapter 8, that He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel.

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.” (Hebrews 8:9)

Notice that God does not make the new covenant according to the covenant He made with Israel, because the Israelites did not continue in His covenant. The Israelites did not keep their end of the bargain. They made faulty promises and did not keep them. The fault was wholly with the Israelites and their promises, and not with God or His promises.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after

those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (Hebrews 8:10)

Here is the Old and New Testament explanation of the new covenant. The new covenant is the Lord putting His laws into the hearts and minds of His people. The moral law that the Jews promised to keep would now be placed in the hearts of God’s people. God said, *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”* (Ezekiel 36:26, 27)

Notice where the promises are in the new covenant. It is not God promising to bless and the people promising to obey. It is God promising to bless and God promising to cause you to obey—He promises to do the work in you Himself, if you will allow Him to do it. The new covenant is based solely upon God’s promises, and therefore must be faultless, for there are no faults in God. God promises, and He performs. He *“is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”* (Jude 1:24) This is the new covenant.

“And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” (Hebrews 8:11)

*“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, **A new covenant**, he hath made **the first old**. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”* (Hebrews 8:12, 13)

Notice it is the old covenant that decayeth and is ready to vanish away, not the law of God. Paul says, *“the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”* (Romans 7:12) He

also said, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31) And again, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." (1 Timothy 1:8) David said, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." (Psalms 19:7) It is certain that there is no fault with God's perfect law, and it could not possibly be the old covenant. The old covenant was based upon the promises of God and the promises of Israel. It was Israel's promises that were faulty, which made the old covenant to be ready to vanish away.

"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." (Hebrews 9:1)

The first covenant had the Levitical priesthood who offered sacrifices and performed ceremonies required by the old covenant. There were many laws relating to the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the sanctuary which are not needed in the new covenant.

Point 2:

Hebrews 7:12 tells us that "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change in the law." Today we live in the New Testament under the law of Christ; not in the Old Testament under the law of Moses.

Answer:

Notice the argument in Hebrews chapter seven. The whole chapter is taken up with arguments proving that Christ is a priest of a much higher order than the Levitical priests. The writer of Hebrews says that since the priesthood was changed there is "of necessity a change in the law." Now, this argument could only be true and hold weight if it had reference to laws relating to the priesthood and their duties. For example, the government has written many laws relating to automobile transportation. If there becomes a new mode of transportation, entirely different than automobile transportation, whereby automobile transportation is completely done away, then there must be "of necessity a change in the law." What law? Laws prohibiting murder? Certainly not! The only laws that

"of necessity" have to be changed are the laws relating to transportation. In like manner, the only laws Paul could possibly be referring to here are laws relating to the priesthood and their duties.

We are living in the New Testament under the law of God and His Christ, and not in the Old Testament under the law of Moses. This is true. The law of Moses is not the first 39 books of the Bible, often called "the Old Testament." Notice how Jesus distinguishes the law of Moses from the rest of the books of the Old Testament. Jesus said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, **and** in the prophets, **and** in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24:44) The "law of Moses" is the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch by the Jews. In the Bible "the law of God" is not to be confused with "the law of Moses." Moses had nothing whatever to do with the writing of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments say nothing of the priesthood, the sacrificial system, or the old covenant. The Ten Commandments were written with God's own finger and were spoken with His own lips from Mount Sinai. God said, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." (Psalms 89:34) God has never broken His covenant; only man has done that. Nor has He ever, or will He ever, change what is gone out of His lips.

God's law is so holy, so pure, and so unchangeable that the only way anyone could be forgiven for breaking His law is if One equal to that law would step in, to suffer the penalty for violating that law, as a substitute for the transgressor. If God could have changed His law, or relaxed its obligations, then Christ would not have had to die for our sins. Paul wrote, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Galatians 3:21) "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:21) The fact that Christ died for our sins proves

conclusively that God's law cannot be changed.

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-19) It is evident that when Jesus said "law" in this text He was referring to the Ten Commandments, for He mentioned the commandments immediately afterward, when explaining His words. He then began expounding upon two of the Ten Commandments. He said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.... Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Matthew 5:21, 27) In Christ's explanation of these commandments He never relaxed their requirements but, on the contrary, he always increased their meaning and importance. Just as prophesied, Christ magnified the law and made it honourable. "The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." (Isaiah 42:21)

Point 3:

Colossians 2:17 refers to "the sabbath days" as "a shadow of things to come."

Answer:

I am glad you pointed out that the sabbath days are "a shadow of things to come." Notice this verse in context:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after **the tradition of men**, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ... Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ... Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (Colossians 2:8, 14, 16, 17, 20-23)

Paul was concerned about men coming to the Colossians and spoiling them "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world." Do you think Paul could possibly have been referring to the seventh-day Sabbath as "the tradition of men," "the rudiments of the world," or "the commandments and doctrines of men?" Certainly not! Paul goes on to say that Christ blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us" by "nailing it to his cross." Is the seventh-day Sabbath, which is the fourth commandment, "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us?" If we say "Yes," we must have some Scriptural basis for making this claim. The Sabbath was never called an "ordinance" nor was it ever said, or could it ever be said, to be "against us." Jesus said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." (Mark 2:27) The Sabbath was made for man's benefit not as a hindrance against him.

Notice the list that Paul gives, which he refers to as "rudiments of the world," "the tradition of men," and "the commandments and doctrines of men." He lists "meat," "drink," "respect of an holyday," "the new moon," and "the sabbath days." Each one in this list, after the death of Christ, are the traditions of men. The Greek word εορτη that was translated here as "holyday" was used 27 times in the New Testament, 26 of which it was translated "feast," such as the feast of passover, unleavened bread, firstfruits, tabernacles, etc. "The sabbath days" here is linked with the feast days, new moons, and meat and drink, proving that it has reference to ceremonial sabbath days of the sacrificial system. The first and last days of the Jewish feasts were called sabbath days. They were distinct and separate from the weekly "Sabbath of the Lord thy God." It is

these sabbaths that were done away with at the death of Christ. Had the Sabbath here been mentioned along with other of the Ten Commandments it would have been clear that it referred to the weekly Sabbath. But the fact that it is mentioned with ceremonial feasts, new moons, and laws regarding meat and drink offerings proves that Paul must have been referring to the ceremonial sabbaths rather than one of the Ten Commandments of the moral law.

Several Bible commentaries point out this fact as well.

Notice what a few commentaries have to say about this verse:

"Or of the sabbath days. Gr, 'of the sabbaths.' The word *Sabbath* in the Old Testament is applied not only to the seventh day, but to all the days of holy rest that were observed by the Hebrews, and particularly to the beginning and close of their great festivals. There is, doubtless, reference to those days in this place, as the word is used in the plural number, and the apostle does not refer particularly to *the* Sabbath properly so called. There is no evidence, from this passage, that he would teach that there was no obligation to observe *any* holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number —'THE Sabbath'—it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant to teach that that commandment had ceased to be binding, and that a sabbath was no longer to be observed. But the use of the term in the plural number, and the connexion [sic], show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law—and not to the *moral* law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law—no one of the ten commandments—could be spoken of as '*a shadow* of good things to come.' These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal obligation." (*Barnes New Testament Notes* on Colossians 1:16, all emphasis in the original)

"A holy-day—sabbath-days; in the original, a festival—sabbaths. The

days referred to are those required to be observed in the ceremonial law—days associated by God with meats, drinks, and new moons. The passage does not refer to the Sabbath of the moral law, associated with the commands forbidding theft, murder, and adultery. This weekly Sabbath was never against men or contrary to them, but was always for them, and promotive of their highest good. The observance of it caused them to ride upon the high places of the earth, and to possess the heritage of God's people. Isa. 58:13,14; Jer. 17:21-27." (*Family New Testament Notes* on Colossians 1:16)

"The sabbath—Omit 'THE,' which is not in the *Greek* (compare *Note*, see JFB on 'Ga. 4:10'). 'SABBATHS' (not 'the sabbaths') of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles have come to an end with the Jewish services to which they belonged (Le. 23:32, 37-39). The weekly sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days. Le. 23:38 expressly distinguished 'the sabbath of the Lord' from the other sabbaths. A *positive* precept is *right because it is commanded*, and ceases to be obligatory when abrogated; a moral precept is *commanded* eternally, *because it is eternally right*.... the sabbath is still needed and is therefore still linked with the other nine commandments, as obligatory in the spirit, though the letter of the law has been superseded by that higher spirit of love which is the essence of law and Gospel alike (Ro. 13:8-10)." (*Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* on Colossians 1:16, all emphasis in the original)

Point 4:

Only through Christ can we really experience, enjoy, and keep the Sabbath as originally intended by God. The Sabbath, from the point of view of the New Covenant, is no longer signified only by a single day in a week. Now, every day of our Christian walk is a Sabbath day with Christ!

Answer:

It is true that only through Christ can we truly experience and keep the

Sabbath. However, that fact does not remove the obligations of the Sabbath commandment. For example, Jesus said, "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) The only way we can truly keep the seventh commandment is if we have Christ in our heart. By pointing this out, Jesus in no way sought to remove the obligations of the seventh commandment, but rather showed its deeper meaning. Understanding the spiritual meaning of the law in no way removes the physical aspects of the law. Just as it is impossible to keep the spiritual aspect of the seventh commandment while transgressing that law physically, it is impossible to keep the spiritual aspect of the Sabbath commandment while transgressing that law physically. A man could ever so piously profess to keep the spiritual aspect of the second commandment prohibiting idol worship, while at the same time bowing down to idols. No matter how exalted his opinion of his spiritual obedience, the physical aspect of his life proves that he is a transgressor.

If the point stressed in the New Testament is no longer the day of Sabbath, why did Christ and His apostles keep the literal Sabbath day throughout their lives? Why did neither Christ nor His apostles ever indicate that the obligations of the fourth commandment have been relaxed or abrogated? I have heard people tell me that every day is the Sabbath to them. However, this cannot be true for at least three reasons. ❶ To keep the Sabbath a person must cease from physical labors, which cannot be done every day or starvation will be the result. ❷ The commandment says, not only that we must not work on the seventh day but, that we must work on "the six working days." (Ezekiel 46:1; Exodus 20:9) ❸ It is impossible to keep a day holy that has never been made holy to begin with. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." (Genesis 2:3) He

"rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:11) There is only one day of the week which God blessed and made holy. No matter how holy or upright a man may be, it is impossible for him to bless or make a day holy.

When God blesses something that thing changes. When He blessed a field it produced more abundantly, when He blessed a womb, it brought forth children, when He blessed Samson he became strong. God blessed a period of time, the seventh day of the week. That day is different from any other day because it has a blessing upon it, and it was set apart by God and made holy. Man cannot alter that blessing no matter how hard he tries. There is no Scripture in the Bible that indicates that God has removed His blessing from the seventh day of the week, or that He blessed any other day. In order for every day to be the Sabbath, God would have to bless each of the other six days and make them holy, and then command us to keep those days holy. Yet there is no record of such a command or blessing. There is no indication in the Bible that Christ, or any of His apostles, considered any other day to be the Sabbath other than the one God had blessed and made holy, the seventh day of the week.

Point 5:

Some may ask the question, "Since the Sabbath of the Old Testament is a type of the rest found in Christ, why do so many people put an emphasis on Sunday any more than any other day of the week?" The record left to us in the New Testament and in church history shows us that the observance of the first day of the week became common practice since the beginning of the church.

Answer:

This is absolutely not true! There is no record in the New Testament that

the apostles regarded the first day of the week above any other day, nor is this idea demonstrated by church history. To plainly illustrate this fact, please read the following excerpt from the book entitled, *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, by John Nevins Andrews:

"But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down." (Acts 13:14)

By invitation of the rulers of the synagogue, Paul delivered an extended address, proving that Jesus was the Christ. In the course of these remarks he used the following language:-

"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." (Verse 27)

When Paul's discourse was concluded, we read:-

"And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.* Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." (Verses 42-44)

These texts show, 1. That by the term Sabbath in the book of Acts is meant that day on which the Jewish people assembled in the synagogue to listen to the voices of the prophets. 2. That as this discourse was fourteen years after the resurrection of Christ, and the record of it by Luke was some thirty years after that event, it follows that the alleged change of the Sabbath at the resurrection of Christ had not, even after many years, come to the knowledge

* Dr. Bloomfield has the following note on this text: "The words, *eis to metaxn sabb.*, are by many commentators supposed to mean 'on some intermediate week-day.' But that is refuted by verse 44, and the sense expressed in our common version is, no doubt, the true one. It is adopted by the best recent commentators, and confirmed by the ancient versions." *Greek Testament with English notes*, vol. i. p. 521. And Prof. Hacket has a similar note. - *Commentary on Acts*, p. 233.

of either Luke or Paul. 3. That here was a remarkable opportunity to mention the change of the Sabbath, had it been true that the Sabbath had been changed in honor of Christ's resurrection. For when Paul was asked to preach the same words the next Sabbath, he might have answered that the following day was now the proper day for divine worship. And Luke, in placing this incident upon record, could not well avoid the mention of this new day, had it been true that another day had become the Sabbath of the Lord. 4. That as this second meeting pertained almost wholly to Gentiles, it cannot be said in this case that Paul preached upon the Sabbath out of regard to the Jews. On the contrary, the narrative strongly indicates Paul's regard for the Sabbath as the proper day for divine worship. 5. Nor can it be denied that the Sabbath was well understood by the Gentiles in this city, and that they had some degree of regard for it, a fact which will be corroborated by other texts.

Several years after these things, the apostles assembled at Jerusalem to consider the question of circumcision." (Acts 15) "Certain men which came down from Judea," finding the Gentiles uncircumcised, had "taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." Had they found the Gentiles neglecting the Sabbath, unquestionably this would have first called out their rebuke. It is indeed worthy of notice that no dispute at this time existed in the church relative to the observance of the Sabbath; for none was brought before this apostolic assembly. Yet had it been true that the change of the Sabbath was then advocated, or that Paul had taught the Gentiles to neglect the Sabbath, without doubt those who brought up the question of circumcision would have urged that of the Sabbath with even greater earnestness. That the law of Moses, the observance of which was under discussion in this assembly, is not the ten commandments, is evident from several decisive facts. 1. Because that Peter

calls the code under consideration a yoke which neither their fathers nor themselves were able to bear. But James expressly calls that royal law, which, on his own showing, embodies the ten commandments, a law of liberty. 2. Because that this assembly did decide against the authority of the law of Moses; and yet James, who was a member of this body, did some years afterward solemnly enjoin obedience to the commandments, affirming that he who violated one was guilty of all. (Acts 15:10, 28, 29; James 2:8-12) 3. Because the chief feature in the law of Moses as here presented was circumcision. (Verses 1, 5) But circumcision was not in the ten commandments; and were it true that the law of Moses includes these commandments, circumcision would not in that case be a chief feature of that law. 4. Finally, because that the precepts still declared obligatory are not properly either of the ten commandments. These were, first, the prohibition of meats offered to idols; second, of blood; third, of things strangled; and fourth, of fornication. (Verse 29; 21:25) Each of these precepts may be often found in the books of Moses, (Exodus 34:15, 16; Numbers 25:2; Leviticus 17:13, 14; Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17; Genesis 34; Leviticus 19:29) and the first and last ones come under the second and seventh commandments respectively; but neither of these cover but a part of that which is forbidden in either commandment. It is evident, therefore, that the authority of the ten commandments was not under consideration in this assembly, and that the decision of that assembly had no relation to those precepts. For otherwise the apostles released the Gentiles from all obligation to eight of the ten commandments, and from the greater prohibitions contained in the other two.

It is evident that those greatly err who represent the Gentiles as released from the obligation of the Sabbath by this assembly. The question did not come before the apostles on this occasion; a strong

proof that the Gentiles had not been taught to neglect the Sabbath, as they had to omit circumcision, which was the occasion of its being brought before the apostles at Jerusalem. Yet the Sabbath was referred to in this very assembly as an existing institution, and that, too, in connection with the Gentile Christians. Thus when James pronounced sentence upon the question, he used the following language:-

"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." (Acts 15:19-21)

This last fact is given by James as a reason for the course proposed toward the brethren among the Gentiles. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." From this it is apparent that the ancient custom of divine worship upon the Sabbath was not only preserved by the Jewish people and carried with them into every city of the Gentiles, but that the Gentile Christians did attend these meetings. Otherwise the reason assigned by James would lose all its force, as having no application to this case. That they did attend them strongly attests the Sabbath as the day of divine worship with the Gentile churches.

That the ancient Sabbath of the Lord had neither been abrogated nor changed prior to this meeting of the apostles, is strongly attested by the nature of the dispute here adjusted. And the close of their assembly beheld the Bible Sabbath still sacredly enthroned within the citadel of the fourth commandment. After this, in a vision of the night, Paul was called to visit Macedonia. In obedience to this call he came to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia. Thus Luke records the visit:-

“And we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” (Acts 16:12-14)

This does not appear to have been a gathering of Jews, but of Gentiles, who, like Cornelius, were worshipers of the true God. Thus it is seen that the church of the Philippians originated with a pious assembly of Sabbath-keeping Gentiles. And it is likely that Lydia and those employed by her in business, who were evidently observers of the Sabbath, were the means of introducing the gospel into their own city of Thyatira.

“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his manner was,* went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.... And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” (Acts 17:1-4)

Such was the origin of the Thessalonian church. That it was an assembly of Sabbath-keepers at its beginning admits of no doubt. For besides the few Jews who received the gospel through the labors of Paul, there was a great multitude of devout Greeks; that is, of Gentiles who had united themselves with the Jews in the worship of God upon the Sabbath. We have a strong proof of the fact that they continued to observe the Sabbath after their reception of the gospel in the following words of Paul addressed to them as a church of Christ:-

“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 2:14)

The churches in Judea, as we have seen, were observers of the Sabbath of the Lord. The first Thessalonian converts, before they received the gospel, were Sabbath-keepers, and when they became a Christian church they adopted the churches in Judea as their proper examples. And this church was adopted as an example of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. In this number were included the churches of Philippi and of Corinth. Thus writes Paul:-

“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad.” (1 Thessalonians 1:7, 8)

After these things, Paul came to Corinth. Here, he first found Aquila and Priscilla.

“And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent makers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.” (Acts 18:3, 4)

At this place also Paul found Gentiles as well as Jews in attendance upon the worship of God on the Sabbath. The first members of the church at Corinth were therefore observers of the Sabbath at the time when they received the gospel; and, as we have seen, they adopted as their pattern the Sabbath-keeping church of Thessalonica, who in turn patterned after the churches in Judea.

The first churches were founded in the land of Judea. All their members had from childhood been familiar with the law of God, and well

understood the precept, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Besides this precept, all these churches had a peculiar memento of the Sabbath. They knew from our Lord himself that the time was coming when they must all suddenly flee from that land. And in view of this fact, they were to pray that the moment of their sudden flight might not be upon the Sabbath; a prayer which was designed, as we have seen, to preserve the sacredness of the Sabbath. That the churches in Judea were composed of Sabbath-keeping members, admits therefore of no doubt.

Of the churches founded outside the land of Judea, whose origin is given in the book of Acts, nearly all began with Jewish converts. These were Sabbath-keepers when they received the gospel. Among these, the Gentile converts were engrafted. And it is worthy of notice that in a large number of cases, those Gentiles are termed “devout Greeks,” “religious proselytes,” persons that “worshiped God,” that feared God and that “prayed to God always.” (Acts 10:2, 4, 7, 30-35; 13:43; 14:1; 16:13-15; 17:4, 10-12) These Gentiles, at the time of their conversion to the gospel, were, as we have seen, worshipers of God upon the Sabbath with the Jewish people. When James had proposed the kind of letter that should be addressed by the apostles to the Gentile converts, he assigned a reason for its adoption, the force of which can now be appreciated: “For Moses,” said he, “of old time hath in EVERY CITY them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day.” The Sabbatarian character of the apostolic churches is thus clearly shown. (*History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, by John Nevins Andrews, pages 167-174)

The following chapters in this excellent book point out conclusively that the early Christians, for many years

* Paul's manner is exemplified by the following texts, in all of which it would appear that the meetings in question were upon the Sabbath. Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:10,17; 18:19; 19:8

after the death of the apostles, did not regard the first day of the week as anything but a common working day.

Even if church history demonstrated that some early Christians regarded Sunday to be holy, would that be sufficient license to break one of God's commandments? We can find the history of early Christians believing and practicing many things, but does this fact prove that we must follow their example? Certainly not! The Bible is our authority, not church tradition. Jesus asked, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:3) "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

Point 6:

In 2 Corinthians chapter 3 there is a very clear passage directly referring to the Ten Commandments. Paul refers to them as "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." He is saying that while this ministration of death is glorious, the ministration of the New Testament, the New Covenant, exceeds in glory. So this ministration of death, the Ten Commandments, is inferior, and in verse 11 he says that they have been done away with. A very simple and clear message. I am simple enough to accept it for what it says.

Answer:

I am certainly glad that you are willing "to accept it for what it says." Let us read these verses in context, one at a time, to see what they say.

"But if the **ministration** of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away." (2 Corinthians 3:7)

There is no doubt that the phrase "written and engraven in stones" refers to the Ten Commandments. Notice that Paul does not say that that which was "written and engraven in stones" was done away, but he said the "glory was to be done away." Paul said that the "ministration" of the law "was glorious," "which glory was to be done away." It is clear from this verse that Paul was not referring to the Ten Commandments as being "done away." This fact is made even more certain

when we look at other verses written by Paul. The beginning of Romans chapter three is taken up with Paul proving, from the Old Testament, that every man is a sinner in need of a Saviour. He wrote, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19) Here Paul says that "the law" speaks that "all the world may become guilty before God," "that every mouth may be stopped." According to Paul, the law speaks to every man, convicting them of their guilt. A law that has been done away could not possibly convict a man of his guilt. If I am driving down the road at 70 miles per hour in an area where the speed limit used to be 55, but now has been done away, can that abolished law possibly convict me that I am guilty of breaking it? Certainly not! An abolished law is useless, and unable to convict of sin.

Notice how Paul ends Romans chapter three. After explaining how we can be justified of our transgression of the law, he wrote, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31) It would be pointless and ridiculous for Paul to say that we establish an abolished law. Furthermore, he said clearly that we do not make void the law. In other words, the law is still in effect.

This point is brought out even more forcefully by the words of James, when he wrote, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." (James 2:10-12) James was evidently referring to the Ten Commandment law as "the law of liberty" by which we "shall be judged." You can be certain that we will not be judged by a law that has been abolished.

Also notice that James said that if you break the Ten Commandment law you are a "transgressor of the law." John wrote, "Whosoever committeth

sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) If the law has been abolished, it is not possible for anyone to transgress it and, hence, there would be no such thing as sin or sinners, and no need for a Saviour. Certainly nobody could accept such an absurd idea, yet if we make the claim that the law is abolished we have no choice but accept the inescapable conclusion that sin is non-existent and needs no pardon.

Again, Paul wrote, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Romans 7:7) It is certain that Paul is referring to the Ten Commandment law because he quoted the tenth commandment. He goes on to say, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good... I consent unto the law that it is good." (Romans 7:12, 16) It is evident that in 2 Corinthians 3:7 Paul was not referring to the law as being done away, but to the glory that attended Moses' *ministration* of that law. Furthermore, God said that the New Covenant consisted in Him taking that same law and writing it in our hearts. (Hebrews 8:10) As we continue with the remaining verses of second Corinthians chapter three we will see this point brought out more clearly.

"How shall not the **ministration** of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." (2 Corinthians 3:8, 9)

Notice that Paul is referring to the *ministration* of the law as glorious, rather than the law itself.

"For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." (2 Corinthians 3:10, 11)

What is done away? Some mistakenly assume that this refers to the Ten Commandments. However, we have seen that this is not possible. Furthermore, the context clearly refers to Moses' *ministration* as being glorious. It is Moses' *ministration*, and the glory that

attended it, that was done away, not the law itself. Now, the ministration of righteousness exceeds the glory of the ministration of Moses. The same Ten Commandment law is being ministered, but now it is ministered by the Spirit, *“that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:4)

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” (2 Corinthians 3:12, 13)

Notice, Paul said that the veil over Moses' face hid *“that which is abolished.”* What was the veil hiding? Not the Ten Commandment law engraved in the stones which he was holding in his hands, but the glory of Moses' *ministration* of that law. That is what was abolished.

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 3:14)

Now, through Christ, we can read the Old Testament without the veil. The Old Testament becomes a new book to those who understand the mission of Christ. The veil was taken away from the two men who were on the road to Emmaus when Jesus, *“beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”* (Luke 24:27) After they read the Old Testament for the first time without the veil, *“they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”* (Luke 24:32)

When we read the whole passage of second Corinthians chapter three in its full context it is indeed very clear.

Point 7:

We should not find our basis for anything we believe or practice in the Old Testament.

Answer:

I think you would have had a very difficult time trying to convince the

writers of the New Testament of this theory.

Quite contrarily, there are many things we believe and practice which find their basis in the 39 books of the Old Testament. For example, the creation story as given in Genesis chapter one is recorded nowhere in the New Testament. Do we believe it? I certainly do. The story of the fall of Lucifer as recorded in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 is found nowhere in the New Testament. Do we believe it? I certainly do. The prohibition against a man marrying his sister or cousin is nowhere found in the New Testament. Do we obey this prohibition? I certainly do. The instruction to punish children with a rod is nowhere found in the New Testament. Do we believe this counsel? I certainly do. The list goes on and on. There are many good principles that we practice as Christians, which are only found in the Old Testament. Jesus said, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”* (Matthew 5:17) Anything from the first 39 books of the Bible, that has been done away with, is clearly made known in the New Testament; such as the sacrificial system, the Levitical priesthood, the feast days, etc. These are mentioned particularly in the New Testament as having passed away, and there would be no need for them to be mentioned specifically if the entire 39 books of the Old Testament have been made null and void.

Furthermore, if we wish to discard the entire 39 books of the Old Testament we would have to discard much of the writings of the New Testament as well, because much of it is made up of quotations or allusions to the Old Testament. In addition to that, whenever the New Testament mentioned the Scriptures it was specifically referring to the Old Testament, because the New Testament was either not yet written or in the process of being written, and what was written was very scarce, with very few copies to go around.

Notice a few New Testament references to the Scriptures that will give us some understanding of how the New Testament Christians believed concerning the Old Testament Scriptures.

Jesus said, *“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”* (Matthew 22:29) He rebuked the church leaders for not knowing the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus *“opened”* the disciples' *“understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”* (Luke 24:45) Jesus said, *“the scripture cannot be broken.”* (John 10:35) Phillip preached Jesus to the eunuch using the Old Testament Scriptures. *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”* (Acts 8:35) *“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days **reasoned with them out of the scriptures.**”* (Acts 17:2) The Bereans *“were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**”* (Acts 17:11) *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that **we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.**”* (Romans 15:4) *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, **But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.**”* (Romans 16:25, 26)

Paul wrote to Timothy and said *“that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**”*** (2 Timothy 3:15-17) When Paul wrote this He was speaking specifically about the Old Testament.

Based on all the verses we just read, it is extremely evident that none of the apostles had the slightest idea that the Old Testament Scriptures were null and void. To them, that was their Bible, what they used to gain comfort, learn of salvation, learn doctrine,

and convince the gainsayer. I am certain that nobody could have convinced Paul, James, John, or the other disciples that the Old Testament was null and void and that they should not believe or practice anything that was based upon it.

Point 8:

As Christians, we do not have any other gods or graven images, not because the Ten Commandments forbid it, but because the whole concept of false gods is condemned in the New Testament. We do not take the name of the Lord in vain, not because the Ten Commandments forbid it, but because we find all types of profanity strictly forbidden in the New Testament. We honor our parents, not because the Ten Commandments command it, but because we are taught in the New Testament to obey and honor our parents. We do not kill, not because the Ten Commandments forbid it, but because the New Testament warns us against it. We do not commit adultery, not because the Ten Commandments forbid it, but because the New Testament strictly forbids it. We do not steal, not because the Ten Commandments forbid it, but because the New Testament forbids it. We do not bear false witness against our neighbor, not because it is forbidden in the Ten Commandments, but because the New Testament prohibits falsehood. We do not covet, not because the Ten Commandments forbid it, but because the New Testament speaks against it.

Answer:

I noticed you left out one of the Ten Commandments in your commentary. You did not mention the Sabbath commandment. Many people have the idea that Christ abolished the Ten Commandments and reinstated nine of them, all but the Sabbath command. This idea would have some reasonable basis for being accepted if the Bible had recorded that the Ten Commandments have been abolished or any of them reinstated. Many people point out the fact that the fourth commandment is never quoted in the New Testament, attempting to use this as proof that it is not binding upon New Testament

Christians. However, the first three commandments are not quoted in the New Testament either. Many people assume that since New Testament writers quoted six of the Ten Commandments that they somehow reinstated those commandments. However, when these commandments were quoted in the New Testament they were quoted in such a way that it was taken for granted that they were already in force, rather than trying to reinstate them. If merely quoting one of the Ten Commandments reinstates that commandment, then you have the last six commandments being reinstated several times. That would mean that God gave the Ten Commandments originally, then abolished that law, and reinstated it through Christ, then abolished it again, and reinstated it through Paul, then abolished it again and reinstated it through James. This would make God out to be very unsure of what He was doing and full of variability. But the Bible says, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning.”* (James 1:17) There is no record anywhere in the New or Old Testaments that the Ten Commandments have been abolished even once. Therefore it is impossible for any of them to be reinstated.

Jesus gave us one new commandment, which in no way abolished any of the Ten Commandments, but rather magnified them and made them honourable. He said, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”* (John 13:34) Prior to this we were commanded to love one another as we love ourselves. Now we are commanded to love one another as Christ loved us. John wrote, *“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.”* (1 John 2:7) John expressed no hint that he had the idea that the Ten Commandments had been abolished.

Point 9:

If the Ten Commandments are still binding today they need to be observed in the same way. One of the commandments given is “Thou shalt not kill.” But the Israelites went to war with their enemies.

Answer:

The Ten Commandments are still binding, yet their requirements are of a *much higher nature* now that Christ expounded on the law and sent His Spirit to abide in us *“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:4) The Ten Commandments prohibit us from murdering, yet Jesus’ explanation of that law even prohibits us from being angry with our brother. This elevated the law’s requirements rather than relaxing them.

Also, when God said, “Thou shalt not kill,” He used the Hebrew word **רצח** *ratsach* which means, “to murder, slay 1a1) premeditated, 1a2) accidental, 1a3) as avenger, 1a4) slayer (intentional).” (*Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon*) This Hebrew word was used 47 times in the Old Testament. In every case it is used as either premeditated murder, accidental murder or avenging the intentional murder of someone else. It is never used in a case where God commanded Israel to kill their enemies in battle. God was not breaking His own command, or causing His people to break His own command, when He commanded them to kill their enemies in battle. Yet, we are no longer under a theocracy where God directly commands and instructs the government leaders. Christ gave us a deeper meaning of the law, and under the New Testament we are to love our enemies and do good to them that hate us. (Matthew 5:44) This does not abolish the old commandment, but elevates it and makes it honourable.

Point 10:

Some people place too much emphasis on the seventh day of the week, stating that God blessed it and made it holy and commanded us observe it as a memorial to creation. Is the significance of creation more valuable than redemption that we should observe

and keep the sabbath in memory of it? The resurrection day fell on the first day of the week, not on the seventh day. Which is more important in the life of a born-again Christian: creation (memorialized by observing the seventh day), or the resurrection of Christ (memorialized by the fellowshiping of God's people on the first day of the week)?

Answer:

Yes, creation is the most important ability of God for us to realize and remember, not only in the creation of the world, but in the regeneration of an individual. Paul wrote, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17) *"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* (Ephesians 4:24) God's creative ability, displayed in nature, is our assurance that He is able to create in us a clean heart and complete the work He began in us. *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Philippians 1:6)

Paul wrote, *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."* (Romans 1:20) God's eternal power is understood by the things which He has made. The Sabbath was made for man as a time when he could behold the mighty works of God and reflect upon His creative ability. As you look in awe at the vast expanse of a star-filled sky, it instills in your mind the great power that was required to create and maintain this universe. This reminds you that the same power that created these things is working inside you to renew your mind and transform your life. The Sabbath is designed to be a blessing to man, that he can come away to face a new week with renewed strength and vigor to fight the battles ahead. Whether it is the blooming of a flower, the strength of an ocean wave, the rising of the sun, or the forward step in Christian sanctification, it is the same

power manifested throughout. It is through faith in this power that we become changed, and therefore it is altogether imperative that we understand God's power displayed in creation. Notice the reason God gave for giving us the Sabbath in the first place. God said, *"Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them."* (Ezekiel 20:12) The Sabbath is specifically designed to keep before our minds God's creative power; to remind us who it is that is working on our behalf to sanctify us.

Even with all this, we do not keep the seventh-day Sabbath only because it reminds us of God's creation, but because God blessed that day, made it holy, and commanded us to keep it holy by ceasing from work on that day. This is biblical.

The idea that "the fellowshiping of the saints on the first day of each week" memorializes the resurrection of Christ is not biblical in any sense of the word. By what authority can any Christian make this claim? It certainly cannot be based upon the Bible. Tradition could be the only answer; and late-blooming tradition at that, being borrowed from the pagan sun worshippers many years after the death of Christ.

We were given two institutions to remind us of the death and resurrection of Christ, baptism and the Lord's supper. Jesus said, *"Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."* (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25) This communion service can be done on any day of the week. Paul wrote, *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:3, 4) There is no record anywhere in the Bible that we were instructed to

fellowship "on the first day of each week" to remember Christ's death or His resurrection.


Point 11:

The Christian observes the first day of the week in a different way than the Jews kept the Sabbath in the Old Testament. The first day of the week, called, "The Lord's Day," is a day when saints fellowship together in obedience to the instruction of the writer of Hebrews, where he said: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another." (Hebrews 10:23, 25). The Sabbath is a state of daily Christian walk; The Lord's day is the day when saints fellowship together on the first day of the week.

Answer:

Do you really suppose that the writer of Hebrews had the thought in his mind that Christians should fellowship together on the first day of the week when he wrote Hebrews 10:23, 25? I submit to you that he had no such thought whatsoever, for Sunday keeping had not arisen in the Christian church until many years later.

Is there any proof whatsoever in the Bible that "the Lord's day" is the first day of the week? The term "the Lord's day" is only used once in the Bible, in Revelation 1:10. John wrote, *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."* (Revelation 1:10) There is no indication in the Bible that this term was applied to the first day of the week. In fact the term "first day of the week" is used 8 times in the Bible, 6 of which are used in the gospels for the day of Christ's resurrection. The remaining 2 times it is used do not indicate that it is the Lord's day. In fact the only day of the week that could possibly be referred to as "the Lord's day," is "the seventh day," which "is the sabbath of the LORD thy God." (Exodus 20:10) Jesus also said, *"the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."* (Matthew 12:8) The seventh-day Sabbath is "the Lord's day" according to the Scriptures.

I hope this helps to clarify the issue of the law and the Sabbath in the New Testament. 

Studies in Galatians 1:3-5

by Alonso T. Jones

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Galatians 1:3, 4)

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” Such is the salutation in every epistle by Paul, except that to the Hebrews; and, slightly varied, in both by Peter.

Yet it is not by any means a mere form. These epistles have come to us as the word of God, which they are in truth. This salutation, then, though often repeated—yea, even *because* often repeated—comes to us as the word of God in greeting and full assurance of His favor and peace everlastingly held forth to every soul.

Grace is favor. This word of God, then, extends His favor to every soul who ever reads it or who hears it.

His very name is Gracious—extending grace. His name is only what He *is*. And what He is, He is “*the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*” (Hebrews 13:8) With Him is “*no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” (James 1:17) Therefore by Him grace, boundless favor, is always extended to every soul. Oh, that all would only believe it!

“And peace.” He is the “God of peace.” There is no true peace, but that of God. And “*there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*” (Isaiah 57:21) “*The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest.*” (Isaiah 57:20)

But all the world lieth in wickedness, yet the God of peace speaks peace to every soul. For Christ, the Prince of peace, “our peace,” hath made both God and man one, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, to make in Himself of two—God and man—one new man, so making peace—“*making peace through the blood of his cross.*” (Ephesians 2:14, 15; Colossians 1:20) “*And, having made peace through the blood of his cross,*” (Colossians 1:20) He “*came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh:*” (Ephesians 2:17) peace to you all. Therefore, always and forevermore, His salutation to every soul is, Peace to thee. And all from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ!

Oh, that every one would believe it; so that the peace of God which passeth all understanding could keep his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

“*Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.*” (Colossians 3:15) *Let it; that is all He asks of you. Don’t refuse it and beat it back; let it.*

“*Who gave himself for our SINS.*” (Galatians 1:4) O brother, sister, sinner, whosoever you be, laden with sins

though you be, Christ gave Himself for your *sins*. Let Him have them. He bought them—*your sins*—with the awful price of His crucified self. Let Him have them.

He does not ask you to put all your sins away before you can come to Him and be wholly His. He asks you to come, *sins and all*, and be wholly His, *sins and all*; and He will take away from you, and put away forever, *all your sins*. He gave Himself for you, *sins and all*; He bought you, *sins and all*; let Him have what He bought; let Him have His own; let Him have you, *sins and all*.

He “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.” Notice that to deliver us from this present evil world He gave Himself for our sins. That shows that all that there is of this present evil world to each one of us, is in our sins.

And they were “our sins.” They belonged to us. We were responsible for them. And so far as we were concerned, this present evil world lay in our own personal selves, in our sins. But, bless the Lord, He gave Himself for us, sins and all; He gave Himself for our sins, ourselves and all, and this He did in order that He might deliver us from this present evil world.

Would you like to be delivered from this present evil world? Let Him have yourself, sins and all, which He bought and which therefore by full right belong to Him. Please do not rob Him of what is His own and so still remain in this present evil world when at the same time you would like to be delivered from this present evil world. Please do not commit the additional sin of keeping what does not belong to you.

As they were our sins and He gave Himself for them, it follows plainly enough that He gave Himself to us for our sins. Then when He gave Himself for your sins, your sins became His, and when He gave Himself to you for your sins, He became yours. Let Him have your sins, which are His, and take for them Him, who is yours. Blessed exchange, for in Him you have, as your very own, all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and all “according to the will of God.” Thank the Lord.

Why should there not be to Him “glory forever and ever”? and why should not you and all people say, Amen?

(This article was first printed in the August 29, 1899, issue of *The Review and Herald*. It is also found on pages 118-120 of the book *Lessons on Faith* by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. I italicized Bible verses, capitalized some pronouns, and added some verse references that were left out in the original.

Editor)



Questions and Answers

by Lynnford Beachy



Question:

“I’m wondering if I might be one of the people who’s condemned regardless of what they do. I’ve seen several references to the fact of the Tribe of Dan being omitted from the 12 tribes in Revelation 7:5, and I am wondering if, being of Celtic descent which is likely to be the tribe of Dan, if I might be a condemned person by birthright. Do you have any thoughts on the omission of Dan from the tribes “sealed”?”

“There are also many verses stating or implying that those who God is pleased with are blessed with abundance—stated in different metaphors, and I’m certainly not blessed with abundance, so I do wonder sometimes if I’m just condemned from the get-go.”

California

Answer:

My dear friend, Jesus said, “*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*” (John 6:37) There is no such thing as a person who is condemned regardless of what they do. The Bible says, “*For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if **one died for all**, then were all dead: And that he died for **all**, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15) It also says of Christ that “*he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*” (1 John 2:2)

Christ paid for every sin of every individual who has ever lived, or ever will live, on this earth. It is not God that originated the idea that some are doomed no matter what they do, but this thought proceeds from the father of lies, the devil himself. We can accept Christ’s promise that if we come to Him He will not cast us out, and “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” (1 John 1:9) These promises are not for a select few, but written for all. The Bible says that God’s righteousness is offered “*unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” (Romans 3:22, 23) Don’t hesitate to come to Christ in faith, believing that what He said is true, and trusting that if you confess your sins He will forgive you as promised and accept you as His child.

Regarding the tribe of Dan being omitted from the list of the 144,000 that are sealed. These tribes of Israel mentioned are not literal tribes, for Paul wrote, “*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs*

according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:27-29) The list of the twelve tribes in Revelation 7 are descriptions of characters rather than literal blood lines. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not mentioned, not because of who their parents are, but because the characters they represent are not permitted to enter heaven. If your character matches that of Dan, and you refuse to give your heart to Christ, then you will be lost.

The Bible tells us about the sins of Dan, and if we follow them, we will be guilty of his sins. King Jeroboam set up two golden calves, similar to the one worshiped by the Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai. One calf he set in Bethel, and the other he set in Dan. (1 Kings 12:28-30) These idols remained for many years, causing the downfall of many people. Dan was well known for its false gods. In Amos 8:14 we read, “*They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.*” (1 Kings 12:28) The tribe of Dan worshipped a false god. If you are worshipping a false god, you are as guilty as was the tribe of Dan many years ago. Also, if you worship the true God, and have accepted Christ as your Saviour, even if you are a descendent of Dan, you will not be held responsible for his sins, and you will live forever with Christ. God has promised, “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die. **The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.***” (Ezekiel 18:20)

Regarding the idea that earthly riches proves God’s blessing and earthly poverty proves His disapproval: This could not be further from the truth. This is exactly the misconception the Jews had, and was expressed by the disciples when Jesus said, “*Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*” When His disciples heard this, “*they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*” (Matthew 19:23-26) The disciples thought that if a man was rich it was sure evidence that he was in favor with God, so when Jesus said that a rich man will hardly enter into heaven they thought that would surely exclude the poor. With the parable of the rich man and Lazarus Jesus taught that the poor who are faithful to God are more favored in heaven than the rich who despise God and have no love for their fellow men.

There are many examples in the Bible of God’s people who were destitute of earthly riches, but highly favored of God. Jesus said, “*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his*

head.” (Matthew 8:20) Jesus and His disciples were very poor, yet highly favored of God. John the Baptist seemingly had none of this world’s goods, but Jesus said he was the greatest prophet. Elijah was destitute of this world’s goods, forced to sleep in the wilderness, yet he was so highly favored of God that he was one of the two men God took to heaven without seeing death. (2 Kings 2:11) The opposite can also be demonstrated. Many rich men have been some of the most wicked people in the Bible. Earthly riches does not indicate God’s favor, nor does earthly poverty indicate God’s disapproval.

I hope this helps to answer your questions, and I pray that you will believe God’s Word and accept Christ as your Saviour.

Question:

“Do you believe the Father loved us more than the Son? To me it seems like they both love us equally. Could you please explain?”

Tennessee


Answer:

I believe they both love us infinitely more than we will ever comprehend. I believe that the Father revealed more love to us than the Son by giving up His “beloved,” “only begotten,” “holy child.” (Matthew 3:17; John 3:18; Acts 4:27) I am not saying that the Father loves us more, but that the Father revealed more love to us by giving His Son. Two people can each have \$1,000,000, and one can reveal to you all \$1,000,000, while another reveals to you \$900,000. They both have the same amount but you can see more of the money of one person than you can of the other. In a similar way I can see more love on the part of the Father because I can see the immense struggle it would take to willingly give up my own beloved son to die. I see this as even more of a struggle than if I would die myself. I like to think of the story of Abraham and Isaac, when Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac. I believe it was a greater struggle for

Abraham to go through than it was for Isaac, revealing more dedication and love to God on the part of Abraham than on the part of Isaac. That is not to say Isaac was any less dedicated, but that His test was less severe than that of Abraham.

Many parents would give their own life for their child, proving that they value the life of their child above their own life. God loves His Son more than any earthly parent has ever loved their child, yet He gave Him up for us. Paul expressed it this way, “*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*” (Romans 8:32) What Paul is saying here is that if the Father gave up what was most valuable to Him, it proves that He is willing to give up everything for us. For this argument to be true, the Father had to value His Son’s life above His own, therefore making a greater sacrifice by giving up His Son, than if He had given His own life.

It is likely and probable that the Son of God loves us just as much as the Father, yet the Father revealed more of His love to us by giving up His Son, than the Son revealed by dying for our sins. The exceeding love of the Father is the primary focus of Christ and the apostles throughout the New Testament. This is a fact that many people overlook, because of their preconceived ideas that Christ is not really a true Son of God but either playing a role, pretending to be a son, or else that He is the same being as the Father. The trinity doctrine in all its forms, along with the unitarian doctrine, the Muslim teaching, the Jewish teaching, and the teachings of countless other religions, purposely and expressly denies the fact that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, the very foundation upon which Christ said He would build His church. By doing this, the trinity doctrine limits mankind’s perception of the love of God. Thanks be to God that He has not allowed this truth to be completely lost in this world. He has made it plain in His Word if we will only study it. “*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*” (1 John 5:5)

I hope that this helps to answer your questions. 

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

by George McDaniel

(This is the second in a series of health articles that are designed to help you gain a deeper appreciation for God’s amazing handiwork of the human body and a better understanding of how it works and how it can be better maintained by simple methods. George McDaniel is my father-in-law, and has been a registered nurse for many years, which, along with much research, has taught him many useful health principles. I pray that you are being blessed by these articles. *Editor*)

In the previous article we looked at the cell, the basic unit of all living organisms, and saw how amazingly

complex it is. The human body is even more amazing. It is made up of trillions of cells, organized into tissues, organs, and systems under the control of the brain. If damaged, it can repair itself. In fact, it is continuously replacing worn-out cells by the millions every day. If it comes under attack by disease-causing micro-organisms, it can defend itself. It cleanses itself of toxic by-products of cellular metabolism as well as poisons that are inhaled or ingested.

Yet, as amazing as the physical body is, that is only one aspect of the human being. If man were only a living body,

he would be no different from the other animals in the world. There is also a spiritual aspect of humanity. These two aspects are intimately connected. One can't exist without the other. What affects one affects the other. In 3 John verse 2, John writes to his friend, Gaius, saying, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Some people say there are three aspects to humans: body, soul and spirit, but actually there are only the two. Genesis 2:7, telling of the creation of man by God, says: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Here we see that the soul is the combination of physical body and breath of life from God, which is the spirit. The body, without the spirit, is dead. (See James 2:26) The spirit, without the body, has no conscious existence. The brain is the organ through which man has a conscious existence. Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us that when a person dies, the dust returns to the earth, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 says that

animals also have a spirit. They are, after all, living beings. But when they die, their spirit goes downward to the earth while the spirit of man goes upward. Another way to say this is that man's spirit is given by God and returns to Him, while the animal's spirit perishes with the body.

When God created man, He never intended that he should die. God wanted man to live forever, in constant communion with Him; Spirit to spirit. Sin interrupted this communion, but it was restored by the plan of salvation.

In Genesis 3:15, when God gave the promise of a Redeemer to Adam and Eve, He gave them back the ability to decide who they would choose to lead them; whether the Spirit of God or the rebellious spirit of the enemy of God.

I believe an understanding of the dual nature of mankind, along with an understanding of the conflict going on between God and Satan for the loyalty of humans, is helpful in knowing why it is important to keep the physical body in as good a condition of health as possible because of the close relationship that exists between the body and the spirit. What affects one can't help but affect the other. *To be Continued...* ✍️



Letters from our Readers



(Each month we receive letters that help us to know how God's work is progressing throughout the world. Because we think you are interested in this work as well, we are printing some of them for you. If you do not wish your letter to be printed, please let us know when you write. *Editor*)

The Work in Africa

"Satan is trying to discourage us on every side, friends and our own brethren became our enemies, called us names, insult us because of the message. Now is our time of peril. Our only safety is walking in the footsteps of Christ, and wearing his yoke. We must not expect to escape insult and misjudgement. It is our hope that we will not become discouraged. God's hands are on the wheel of his providence, guiding his work to the glory of his name.

"Good News!! On Sabbath 9th Feb, 2002 18 people accepted the message praise be to God. Please remember these people in your daily prayers. As watchmen and light bearers, we won't be silent over the precious message about God and His Son. By God's grace we will light up a fire which will keep on burning till the second coming of Jesus Christ, Amen. Matthew 5:10-12." *Zambia*

"I have come back from the missionary trip at Dar es Salaam and Arusha. There I was with my brethren

Mwambene and Kitomary. We enjoyed very much in our service. I will say like the seventy... returned again with joy saying, 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.' (Luke 10:17)

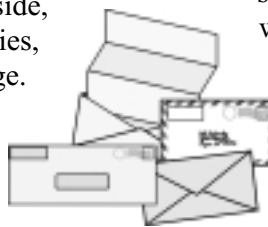
"When I reached home I met several letters from all parts of my mission field with different needs. First, I have called the field officers to come and arrange to make a seminar for church leaders. In that seminar I will be with Brothers Mwambene and Kitomary.

"I am still [waiting] respecting your effort; how can I make my new home." *Tanzania*

(After accepting the truth about God and sharing it with others, Pastor Patrick Katambo, along with his family, has been asked to leave his home which is owned by his former church employer. We are praying that the Lord will provide the small amount of money needed so that Patrick can build a small home on a piece of property he owns. *Editor*)

"As I read *Present Truth* and the needs of Africa, God impressed me to send \$40.00 from my piggy-bank. I'm not working, but I hope this will help. *Puerto Rico*
(Thank you, my dear friend, on the behalf of our brethren in Africa. I pray the Lord will richly bless you in return. *Editor*)

"Once again greetings from Uganda, we had a wonderful moment in this crusade, new experiences were gained. It was quite expensive to hold. But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ he wrought the miracle...



“We started our meetings on the 13th through the 27th of January 2002. Every day God gave us the grace as it is in Jesus Christ. Great interests were aroused in the hearts of many, hearts were touched by the grace of God. As the scripture of promise says ‘the burden of Du’mah. He calls to me out of Seir, watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning comes and also the night, so you will enquire, enquire you: return, come.’ Isaiah 21:11-12.

“Our subjects were, ‘Who is Telling the Truth About God?,’ ‘His Character,’ ‘His Son,’ ‘The Holy Spirit,’ ‘How You Can Avoid Receiving the Mark of the Beast and 666,’ ‘Last Day Events,’ ‘Individuality in Religion,’ ‘The Supreme Gift of God,’ etc. Great opposition was raised against the messages. Churches came together and prayed and fasted that God should strike (plague) us. We were branded as cults. But our heavenly Father saw us through.

“Our hosts, Mr. Isaac and wife, gave their hearts to the loving Jesus. Even others promised to be fellowshiping with us for Mr. Isaac gave us a small piece of land on a temporary basis to raise a tent where Sabbath gatherings will take place. However, some sisters also appeared and they were letting us use their property—semi-permanent building and land. I am informed that Brother Mukhooli wrote to you concerning that burning issue. Friends, we need a good place where people can worship God with great freedom. If there are means, come to our aid, which Brother has told me you have done. Thanks a lot. May our heavenly Father bless and return where you have taken from. Another thanks for your financial support.” *Uganda*

“This is to inform you that for the past few days I was suffering from malaria, but at the moment I have recovered.

“Tomorrow, the 27th of February, 2002, I will be on my way to Zimbabwe. When I will be in Zimbabwe I will have an opportunity to go and have a three to four days seminar with my family in south Africa in Benoni and the message that I will share with my family while there is, ‘The God of the Bible and His Son,’ ‘Who or what is the holy spirit?’, etc.

“My family in South Africa that I am going to share this message with are very much interested to learn this message. They have even offered to pay for my ticket from Zimbabwe to South Africa to and from.

“After the short seminar with my family in South Africa, I will not hesitate but go back to Zimbabwe and collect the materials and go to Zambia where people are very much interested to learn this message. Please, don’t forget to commit us in your daily prayers. May the Almighty God bless you and the work there.” *Zambia*

Literature

“Please place my name and address on your mailing list for your magazine PRESENT TRUTH. Also if you have a list of literature, send that too.” *Florida*

“I want to commend you for your ministry in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, which includes the TRUTH about God and His only begotten Son. I have received much material from Smyrna and have shared it with our local church. I’m the head deacon of our local SDA church, and the main body of members have now rejected the trinity and have accepted the truth about the Father and Son (including the head elder). (PRAISE THE LORD).

“Today I was confronted by our pastor and we had a discussion for about an hour. At the end of it he promised to study the ‘begottenness of Christ’, if I studied HOW the term begotten got in our Bibles concerning Christ (he seems to think it was a Catholic Conspiracy). I of course promised that I would check into it.

“I would also like to commend you on your stand against the pagan holidays (Christ-mass and Ishtar). It is sad to see the SDA pushing these blasphemes upon it’s members.

“I enjoy the *Present Truth* newsletter, and I believe you will have many of our members contacting you in the near future. Has Smyrna thought about organizing into a church? Just wondering.

“We also enjoyed the videos on the truth about God with you and David Clayton. Excellent.

“I am attaching a sermon that I preached back in December against the compromise of Rome and it’s holidays. I hope you will read it.” *Kentucky*

(Regarding the word *begotten* in our Bibles. No it was not a Catholic conspiracy. If they had their way they would eliminate the word completely as most of the new translations do. In 325 AD there was a controversy regarding the sonship of Christ. Some claimed that Christ was created, others claimed that He was without beginning, while the large majority claimed that He was truly begotten of the Father. The Catholics gained the upper hand by influencing the leader of the council, Constantine, to force all to sign their creed which claimed that Christ was without beginning. However, to try to stay in harmony with Bible terminology they chose to invent a doctrine called “the eternal generation” of the Son of God, claiming that Christ has always been, and will always be, in the process of being begotten. As ridiculous as this sounds many churches believe this today. The reason the Catholics invented this doctrine was to try to avoid the plain Bible statements that say Christ was begotten, while maintaining that He had no beginning. I am sure if the Catholics could have just ignored the word *begotten* they would have rather done so back then, but they had to try to harmonize the two contradictory ideas that Christ was begotten but yet had no beginning. For a thorough study on

this subject, please contact us and request the booklet entitled "The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity."

Smyrna functions as a small local church. We have no desire to form a denomination. However, we do work together with, and help establish other churches. We do not have any hierarchy structure. The church here at Smyrna has no authority over a church in Kentucky. *"one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."* (Matthew 23:8) We believe each church should have a pastor or at least elders. *Editor*

"Please send me the free book on last day events and any other book or material you can send me. This I would appreciate very much." *Kentucky*

"Please remove us from your mailing list. While we enjoy your publication when we get time to read it, we are behind on our reading and have a stack of them that we need to catch up on." *Ohio*

"I Greatly enjoy the Present Truth website, I have learned much from it." *Australia*

"I would like more information on Bible versions. Please send me a free copy of the study entitled, "Which Bible?" I am a *Present Truth* reader." *Kentucky*

"I figure maybe I should respond and tell you thank you for the materials. I really enjoyed 'God's Plan to Save You' (I wish I had a couple more!) and 'Which God?' I was beginning to wonder if I'm the only one who knew such things although I'm still looking here in Missouri! I am enclosing some writings of my own and asking that you place a few people on your mailing list, but you must tell them I recommended it or they'll think it's junk mail!" *Missouri*

"I would like to receive your newsletter by mail." *Vermont*

Bible Lessons

"I just felt that I would write and let you know that I received the beautiful certificate, as well as the new Bible lessons. I want to thank you all. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart and I am so glad to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I sent the beautiful certificate to my mother—she always asks about you all up there each time I call her." *Florida*

The Trinity

"My study on the truth about God is beginning to spark a new look at the Bible from people in my church and from my family. I am beginning to see meaning in much of the Bible where before it was only riddles and disjoint texts. I am reading entire epistles and understanding much of

what I read. I'm reading OT references to God and seeing God working through His Son.

"I am excited about sharing what I have learned with everyone I know. This is a truth like none I have known before. It exposes Satan for the liar he is. I can trust God. God really does love me. Sin really does lead to death, but praise God I am "bought with a price." I am learning my Bible much better than I ever knew it before. I can remember where "that" text is. I am learning that the "mystery of God" is not a mystery concealed but a mystery revealed. I am seeing Jesus all over the Bible. Suddenly I don't have to be an expert to read the Bible or to tell others about it, it just means what it says." *Florida*

"Friends, I'd like to know more about the trinity of God... Indeed I am studying this belief in very deedness. Please tell me also about your church. How is it organized? ...I will be so glad if you could advise about this belief. Thanks for all." *Brasil*

The Work Around the World

(Thanks to the kindness of our heavenly Father, working through the generosity of a fellow believer, the Lord has provided \$2000 to go toward a trip to India to share the truth about God in that country. On behalf of our brethren in India, I would like to publicly thank the Lord and this dear friend for providing such a good start toward this project. I am certain that the Lord will see this through to its completion. The total cost will likely exceed \$5000. Please pray for all the aspects of this trip to be a success that many souls will be won to the kingdom because of it. *Editor*)

"Hello Dear friends, I'm from Portugal and I would like to receive a copy of these precious newsletters, because the most precious thing we need in these final events of world history, it's the truth about God's word." *Portugal*

"Please have *Present Truth* sent regularly. I used to be on the Internet to get them but not anymore..."

"When I was 19 (I am now 24) I had a dream I should start reading the Bible (some Baptist friends had been encouraging me to do this too), and I did and was amazed how different it was to how I thought it would be; I drank it in!

"My boyfriend of then (we are married now) also started reading the Bible and we were both quite excited by it. Finally an answer! True guidelines to living!..."

"[A friend] gave me a copy of *Present Truth* 'Righteousness by Faith.' It was sitting around at home for quite a few weeks and then finally I read it; what a difference it made in my life! Now I knew why I wasn't getting anywhere with leading a true Christian life—what a blessing to find out that God, in His love, knows we can't do this on our own and has provided a way—through His beloved Son. What a burden was lifted off my shoulders. I had now truly found life. A few weeks later I was given the tape by

Present Truth

Lynnford Beachy on 'The Love of God' and it was also a wonderful blessing.

"In the Bible study group I had learned about the Sabbath, State of the Dead, Godhead, Health—but these two important, vital messages had been missing.

"So through your ministry God has shown me these important truths and what a difference it makes in my daily, practical living! Now I also understand why the whole Trinity issue was important. Not having gone to church I had, of course, heard of a 'Trinity' but didn't believe in a God the ____, God the ____, and God the ____, so the truth made sense to me as soon as I heard it and I thought, O.K. But only recently have I realized that the important love of God gets lost in believing in a trinity.

"Dad, who is still 'getting around' to Christianity, (is open to listening but has not truly made up his mind for God) was very impressed by your ministry tapes—perhaps a different reason than you think—the 'duplication is not only permitted, but strongly recommended' part on all your material. He felt it showed you were keen to get the Word out and not treat it as a business. (All other material he has seen has © on it.) So he said to Mum, 'Anything these guys bring out I will sit down and pay attention to!' So your genuine love for the truth has attracted yet another soul.

"I would like to start letter boxing some of your materials around my neighborhood. Do you have any one page tracts that would be good for showing non-Christians God and strengthening the faith of already Christians, like on the love of God or similar? I will pay for them if you could send them, if you have something appropriate for letter boxing in the hundreds or more? So then others could find out about your ministry and the beautiful and vital messages that you present."

Australia

"I was given your *Present Truth* to read, and felt quite inspired to do more to bring the truth about the trinity to peoples attention. Do you have any material that I could get printed here?... I would also like to subscribe to *Present Truth* if I can... Keep up the excellent work, it's great to see people in Africa receiving the truth and spreading it like they are."

Australia

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