

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

June 2004

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2) Well friends, this is the last issue before camp meeting. We are getting ready for you to come, so we certainly hope you can make it. Camp meeting is always a time of rich spiritual food and wonderful fellowship. Every camp meeting I have attended has left me challenged and renewed to continue in the straight and narrow path that leads to everlasting life. As we look around us at the way the world is today, we can see that we need spiritual strength and encouragement more now than ever before. Please do all in your power to attend, and pray that the Lord will open any doors that are keeping you from coming. There are plenty of camp sites available at no cost, and we have lots of good spring water. Please come prepared to camp. Visit www.presenttruth.info/contact.htm for directions and maps, or call us at (304) 732-9204 for more information.

“Lost, and is Found”

by Ellen G. White

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God’s pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe.

In the parable of the prodigal son is presented the Lord’s dealing with those who have once known the Father’s love, but who have allowed the tempter to lead them captive at his will.

“A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country.” (Luke 15:11-13)

This younger son had become weary of the restraint of his father’s house. He thought that his liberty was restricted. His father’s love and care for him were misinterpreted, and he determined to follow the dictates of his own inclination.

The youth acknowledges no obligation to his father, and expresses no gratitude; yet he claims the privilege of a child in sharing his father’s goods. The inheritance that would fall to him at his father’s death he desires to receive now. He is bent on present enjoyment, and cares not for the future.

Having obtained his patrimony, he goes into “a far country,” away from his father’s home. With money in plenty and liberty to do as he likes, he flatters himself that the desire of his heart is reached. There is no one to say, Do not do this, for it will be an injury to yourself; or, Do this, because it is right. Evil companions help him to plunge ever deeper into sin, and he wastes his “substance with riotous living.”

The Bible tells of men who “professing themselves to be wise... became fools” (Romans 1:22); and this is the history of the young man of the parable. The wealth which he has selfishly claimed from his father he squanders upon harlots. The treasure of his young manhood is wasted. The precious years of life, the strength of intellect, the bright visions of youth, the spiritual aspirations—all are consumed in the fires of lust.

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A great famine arises, he begins to be in want, and he joins himself to a citizen of the country, who sends him into the field to feed swine. To a Jew this was the most menial and degrading of employments. The youth who has boasted of his liberty now finds himself a slave. He is in the worst of bondage—"holden with the cords of his sins." (Proverbs 5:22) The glitter and tinsel that enticed him have disappeared, and he feels the burden of his chain. Sitting upon the ground in that desolate and famine-stricken land, with no companions but the swine, he is fain to fill himself with the husks on which the beasts are fed. Of the gay companions who flocked about him in his prosperous days and ate and drank at his expense, there is not one left to befriend him. Where now is his riotous joy? Stilling his conscience, benumbing his sensibilities, he thought himself happy; but now, with money spent, with hunger unsatisfied, with pride humbled, with his moral nature dwarfed, with his will weak and untrustworthy, with his finer feelings seemingly dead, he is the most wretched of mortals.

What a picture here of the sinner's state! Although surrounded with the blessings of His love, there is nothing that the sinner, bent on self-indulgence and sinful pleasure, desires so much as separation from God. Like the ungrateful son, he claims the good things of God as his by right. He takes them as a matter of course, and makes no return of gratitude, renders no service of love. As Cain went out from the presence of the Lord to seek his home; as the prodigal wandered into the "far country," so do sinners seek happiness in forgetfulness of God. (Romans 1:28)

Whatever the appearance may be, every life centered in self is squandered. Whoever attempts to live apart from God is wasting his substance. He is squandering the precious years, squandering the powers of mind and heart and soul, and working to make himself bankrupt for eternity. The man who separates from God that he may serve himself, is the slave of mammon. The mind that God created for the companionship of angels has become degraded to the service of that which is earthly and bestial. This is the end to which self-serving tends.

If you have chosen such a life, you know that you are spending money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which satisfieth not. There come to you hours when you realize your degradation. Alone in the far country you feel your misery, and in despair you cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24) It is the statement of a universal truth which is contained in the prophet's words, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from

the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." (Jeremiah 17:5, 6) God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45); but men have the power to shut themselves away from sunshine and shower. So while the Sun of Righteousness shines, and the showers of grace fall freely for all, we may by separating ourselves from God still "inhabit the parched places in the wilderness."

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness "came to himself." The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (Romans 2:4) A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul. The Lord declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." (Jeremiah 31:3)

Repentance

The son determines to confess his guilt. He will go to his father, saying, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But he adds, showing how stunted is his conception of his father's love, "Make me as one of thy hired servants."

The young man turns from the swineherds and the husks, and sets his face toward home. Trembling with weakness and faint from hunger, he presses eagerly on his way. He has no covering to conceal his rags; but his misery has conquered pride, and he hurries on to beg a servant's place where he was once a child.

Little did the gay, thoughtless youth, as he went out from his father's gate, dream of the ache and longing left in that father's heart. When he danced and feasted with his wild companions, little did he think of the shadow that had fallen on his home. And now as with weary and painful steps he pursues the homeward way, he knows not that one is watching for his return. But while he is yet "a great way off" the father discerns his form. Love is of

quick sight. Not even the degradation of the years of sin can conceal the son from the father's eyes. He "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck" in a long, clinging, tender embrace.

The father will permit no contemptuous eye to mock at his son's misery and tatters. He takes from his own shoulders the broad, rich mantle, and wraps it around the son's wasted form, and the youth sobs out his repentance, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." The father holds him close to his side, and brings him home. No opportunity is given him to ask a servant's place. He is a son, who shall be honored with the best the house affords, and whom the waiting men and women shall respect and serve.

The father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

In his restless youth the prodigal looked upon his father as stern and severe. How different his conception of him now! So those who are deceived by Satan look upon God as hard and exacting. They regard Him as watching to denounce and condemn, as unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there is a legal excuse for not helping him. His law they regard as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they are glad to escape. But he whose eyes have been opened by the love of Christ will behold God as full of compassion. He does not appear as a tyrannical, relentless being, but as a father longing to embrace his repenting son. The sinner will exclaim with the Psalmist, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:13)

In the parable there is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins," (Isaiah 44:22) "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:34) "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:7) "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." (Jeremiah 50:20)

Acceptance

What assurance here of God's willingness to receive the repenting sinner! Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? And now, your substance spent, your life-plans thwarted, and your hopes dead, do you sit alone and desolate? Now that voice which has long been speaking to your heart but to which you would not listen comes to you distinct and clear, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction." (Micah 2:10) Return to your Father's house. He invites you, saying, "Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee." (Isaiah 44:22)

Do not listen to the enemy's suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better; until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then, you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of Jesus, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37) Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Make the prayer of David your own, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psalm 51:7)

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul.

Your heavenly Father will take from you the garments defiled by sin. In the beautiful parabolic prophecy of Zechariah, the high priest Joshua, standing clothed in filthy garments before the angel of the Lord, represents the sinner. And the word is spoken by the Lord, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.... So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments." (Zechariah 3:4, 5) Even so God will clothe you with "the garments of salvation," and cover you with "the robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10) "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a

dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” (Psalm 68:13)

He will bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love. (Song of Solomon 2:4) “If thou wilt walk in My ways,” He declares, “I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by”—even among the holy angels that surround His throne. (Zechariah 3:7)

“As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” (Isaiah 62:5) “He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17) And heaven and earth shall unite in the Father’s song of rejoicing: “For this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”

The elder brother

Thus far in the Saviour’s parable there is no discordant note to jar the harmony of the scene of joy; but now Christ introduces another element. When the prodigal came home the elder son “was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in.” (Luke 15:25-28) This elder brother has not been sharing in his father’s anxiety and watching for the one that was lost. He shares not, therefore, in the father’s joy at the wanderer’s return. The sounds of rejoicing kindle no gladness in his heart. He inquires of a servant the reason of the festivity, and the answer excites his jealousy. He will not go in to welcome his lost brother. The favor shown the prodigal he regards as an insult to himself.

When the father comes out to remonstrate with him, the pride and malignity of his nature are revealed. He dwells upon his own life in his father’s house as a round of unrequited service, and then places in mean contrast the favor shown to the son just returned. He makes it plain that his own service has been that of a servant rather than a son. When he should have found an abiding joy in his father’s presence, his mind has rested upon the profit to accrue from his circumspect life. His words show that it is for this he has foregone the pleasures of sin. Now if this brother is to share in the father’s gifts, the elder son counts that he himself has been wronged. He grudges his brother the favor shown him. He plainly shows that had he been in the father’s place, he would not have received the prodigal. He does not even acknowledge him as a brother, but coldly speaks of him as “thy son.”

Yet the father deals tenderly with him. “Son,” he says, “thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.” Through all these years of your brother’s outcast life, have you not had the privilege of companionship with me?

Everything that could minister to the happiness of his children was freely theirs. The son need have no question of gift or reward. “All that I have is thine.” You have only to believe my love, and take the gift that is freely bestowed.

One son had for a time cut himself off from the household, not discerning the father’s love. But now he has returned, and the tide of joy sweeps away every disturbing thought. “This thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”

Was the elder brother brought to see his own mean, ungrateful spirit? Did he come to see that though his brother had done wickedly, he was his brother still? Did the elder brother repent of his jealousy and hardheartedness? Concerning this Christ was silent. For the parable was still enacting, and it rested with His hearers to determine what the outcome should be.

By the elder son were represented the unrepenting Jews of Christ’s day, and also the Pharisees in every age, who look with contempt upon those whom they regard as publicans and sinners. Because they themselves have not gone to great excesses in vice, they are filled with self-righteousness. Christ met these cavilers on their own ground. Like the elder son in the parable, they had enjoyed special privileges from God. They claimed to be sons in God’s house, but they had the spirit of the hireling. They were working, not from love, but from hope of reward. In their eyes God was an exacting taskmaster. They saw Christ inviting publicans and sinners to receive freely the gift of His grace—the gift which the rabbis hoped to secure only by toil and penance—and they were offended. The prodigal’s return, which filled the Father’s heart with joy, only stirred them to jealousy.

In the parable the father’s remonstrance with the elder son was Heaven’s tender appeal to the Pharisees. “All that I have is thine”—not as wages, but as a gift. Like the prodigal, you can receive it only as the unmerited bestowal of the Father’s love.

Self-righteousness not only leads men to misrepresent God, but makes them coldhearted and critical toward their brethren. The elder son, in his selfishness and jealousy, stood ready to watch his brother, to criticize every action, and to accuse him for the least deficiency. He would detect every mistake, and make the most of every wrong act. Thus he would seek to justify his own unforgiving spirit. Many today are doing the same thing. While

the soul is making its very first struggles against a flood of temptations, they stand by, stubborn, self-willed, complaining, accusing. They may claim to be children of God, but they are acting out the spirit of Satan. By their attitude toward their brethren these accusers place themselves where God cannot give them the light of His countenance.

Many are constantly questioning, “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?” But “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:6-8)

This is the service that God has chosen—“to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke,... and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.” (Isaiah 58:6, 7) When you see yourselves as sinners saved only by the love of your heavenly Father, you will

have tender pity for others who are suffering in sin. You will no longer meet misery and repentance with jealousy and censure. When the ice of selfishness is melted from your hearts, you will be in sympathy with God, and will share His joy in the saving of the lost.

It is true that you claim to be a child of God; but if this claim be true, it is “thy brother” that was “dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” He is bound to you by the closest ties, for God recognizes him as a son. Deny your relationship to him, and you show that you are but a hireling in the household, not a child in the family of God.

Though you will not join in the greeting to the lost, the joy will go on, the restored one will have his place by the Father’s side and in the Father’s work. He that is forgiven much, the same loves much. But you will be in the darkness without. For “he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (1 John 4:8)

(This article was taken from the book entitled, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, chapter 16. Editor)



Report from Kenya

by Pastor Maurice O. Anyango



I am happy to write a report of the meetings that were held in a shopping center between Mbita and Homa-Bay. I can say that this was one of the most successful meetings we’ve held in Kenya. It was well attended with average attendance being about 100 people.

Before we conducted the meetings, we spent three days there with some of the orphans doing preparations and inviting people to come and attend the meetings. This proved to be very, very important because the majority of the people who were invited attended throughout the week. During the invitations, we walked from door to door, prayed for the sick we found in the homes, distributed tracts that we carried with us, and read one or two scriptures from the Bible. Some people told us the problems they had so that we could help them pray. Most of the problems were financial e.g. “Our child is out of school due to lack of school fees, please pray that God may open ways so that we get the fees for our child.” Some of the problems were sickness. We prayed for all the problems. It was as if we were conducting a week of prayer as most churches do here in Africa. We walked from house to house. It was so good to visit people in their homes with the message of God! Our main

aim was simply to invite them and alert them of the meetings. But we did more than just the invitations and it was a real blessing both to us and to the families that we were able to visit.

We started our meetings on Sunday, February 22nd. On that day we introduced people to the topic of the trinity. First of all, we wanted to hear what these people say the trinity is. So we started with the question, “What is the trinity?” We got different answers from the congregation. One person said that it means three who are united to become one and they are all equal. Then I asked, “How many people support that idea.” Only fourteen people raised their hands.

Another person replied that it means, “Three immortal beings who have the same goal towards human beings and they all did creation. They all have the same powers and agree on what each should do.” This answer was rather funny to me. When I asked how many people supported the idea, 21 people raised their hands.

Another person (a Pentecostal pastor) answered that it means, “One eternal being who reveals himself in three different ways. When he came to the world, he revealed himself as the son. When he is away, he wants us to call him the Holy Spirit, because he is ever present but

we cannot see him with our naked eyes. And when we describe him according to where he is now, we call him 'the father.' So they are three i.e. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. But he is just one God." When I asked how many people supported that answer; 48 people raised their hands.

I could see that most people raised their hands, not because they were convinced that was the right answer, but because it was a reply from a pastor whom they felt knows a lot about the Bible. One person even caused laughter when he stood up and said, "I do not know what the trinity is, but I have raised up my hand in support of the pastor's answer because I know that a pastor cannot be wrong in his reply to the question."

I asked him to tell us why he felt the pastor's reply was right, and he replied, "Because he reads the Bible daily." Then I asked him, "Don't you also read the Bible?" He replied, "Once a week, only when I go to church." People laughed. I asked him why just once a week, even though he has his own Bible. He said that he is too busy throughout the week to get time to sit down and read the Bible. He again said, "As far as the Bible and its explanation is concerned, I leave it to my pastor."

This is where the problem with most Christians is. Many Christians don't read the Bible. They like to work for God. They like the Word of God and they know that it is pure, holy and has life. But they rarely sit to find the truth for themselves. All they believe is what their spiritual leaders tell them.

I started the lesson about the trinity. I realized that it was very important to explain to the congregation where the doctrine of the trinity originated. The tracts that we had distributed really helped people to understand. The tract, "Which God," is brief, but it contains very important explanations. I was happy that people followed the teaching very keenly. The whole day we discussed how the protestant churches borrowed some false teachings from the Catholic Church, such that even though they protested, they still follow some of the Catholic doctrines, which are not biblical. Some of these doctrines are: Sunday keeping instead of Sabbath and the immortality of the dead.

On the second and third day, we taught about who God is. We read from many scriptures. We read the Old and New Testaments and we found that God is one. Not two. Not three. And He is the Father. Quotations from Jesus (John 17:3), Paul (1 Corinthians 8:6), and Moses and from God Himself, speaking to the children of Israel and to the patriarchs and prophets of old, proved that God is one.

On the fourth day, we taught about who Jesus Christ is. All agreed that He is the begotten Son of God. The Scriptures proved everything. All agreed that Jesus is not a second God.


In the evening of the fourth day and morning of the fifth day, we studied about the Holy Spirit. People got it clear that it is the Spirit of God and not a third God. In order to show that she understood the teaching, one woman stood in the congregation and said, "Just as my spirit cannot be another me or a second me, so the spirit of God cannot be another God or a second God or a third God."

On the fifth day, we taught about the sanctuary. We found out that many of them understood the topic very well. It was, however, a new teaching to some people and they requested another Bible study on the topic. We did that in the evening.

On the sixth day, Pastor Nyamora taught about the Sabbath. It was a good topic. We found out that most people accept Saturday to be the Sabbath day of the Lord but they keep Sunday instead. When we asked them the reason, some of them said, "Our parents keep Sunday." One woman said, "My husband forces me to go to church with him and there is no way we can divide our family when it comes to spiritual matters." Some said, "The change was made by the church and so we believe what the church did." Still others said, "It is what the majority of the Christian world has accepted and so I have to keep the day too."

Pastor Nyamora taught how important it is to obey God's Word. Many people accepted the message.

Sabbath was the last day of the meetings. We made a call and five people accepted to be baptized. Because people wanted more Bible study in the afternoon, we postponed the baptism to the next day.

I thank God for the message that was delivered during the meetings. I thank all of you for your prayers and financial support that enabled us to conduct the meetings. May God bless you and be with you. Please pray for the work in Africa as a whole. We are so encouraged with the reports that we read about the expansion of the truth to different parts of our continent, e.g. Ghana. May God richly bless all of you. 

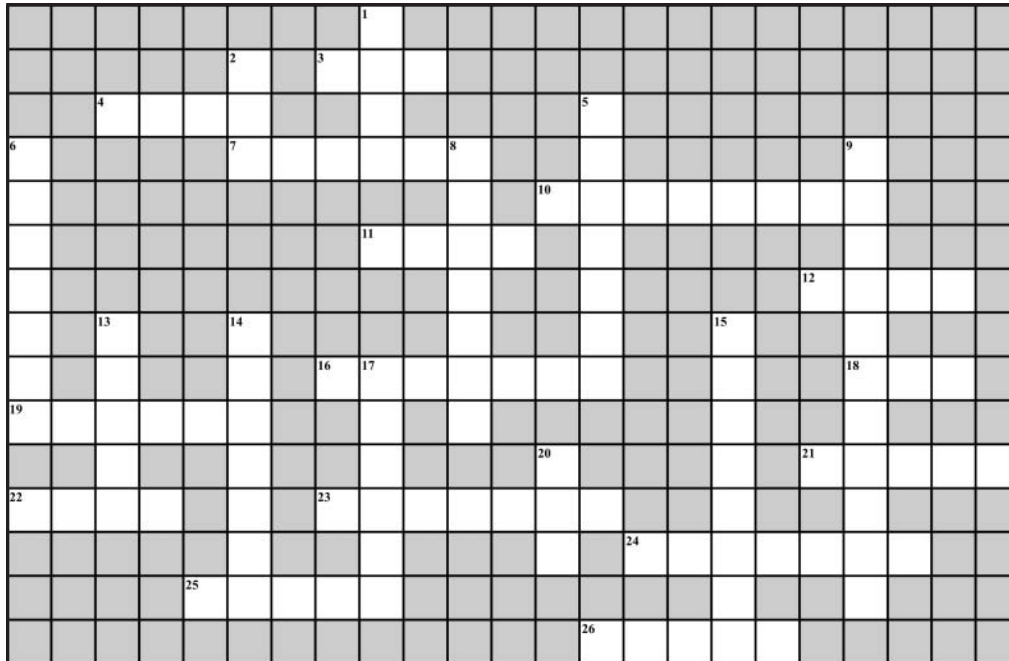
(Pastor Maurice O. Anyango writes from his home in south-western Kenya, where he is the director of an orphanage, and leads out in the ministry work there. Please pray for him, the orphans, and the progress of the work in Africa and around the world.)

Editor)

Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies that are based on the "These Last Days" Bible Lessons. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line.

Thoughts on Hell



Answers are on page 12

- God will rain ____ and brimstone upon the wicked. Psalm 11:6—**22 Across**
- The fire will come down from ____ out of heaven. Revelation 20:9—**20 Down**
- This will happen when the thousand years are _____. Revelation 20:7—**6 Down**
- **Note:** For information on the thousand years see the crossword in the October 2003 issue of *Present Truth*.
- The unjust will be punished at the day of _____. 2 Peter 2:9—**15 Down**
- As the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the ____ of this world. Matthew 13:40—**2 Down**
- When the wicked are cast into the fire, there will be ____ and gnashing of teeth. Matthew 13:42—**16 Across**
- The lake of fire is also called the _____. Revelation 21:8 (2 Words)—**9 Down**
- The wicked will go up on the ____ of the earth before they are burned up. Revelation 20:9—**24 Across**
- At that time the heavens and the ____ will also be burned with fire. 2 Peter 3:7—**26 Across**
- The Lord has no ____ in the death of the wicked. Ezekiel 33:11—**10 Across**
- God is not ____ that any should perish. 2 Peter 3:9—**5 Down**
- The fire is prepared for the devil and his _____. Matthew 25:41—**17 Down**
- The ____ will be cast into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:10—**21 Across**
- God will ____ the wicked. Psalm 145:20—**23 Across**
- It is better to lose an eye or a hand, instead of having your whole ____ cast into hell. Matthew 5:29, 30—**12 Across**
- Hell will destroy both the ____ and body. Matthew 10:28—**11 Across**
- God will punish the wicked according to the fruit of their _____. Jeremiah 21:14—**7 Across**
- Those who know God's will and do not do it will receive many _____. Luke 12:47—**14 Down**
- Those who do not know God's will and do not do it will receive ____ stripes. Luke 12:48—**3 Across**
- When the day comes that shall burn as an oven, all that do wickedly shall be _____. Malachi 4:1—**8 Down**
- The day that cometh shall ____ them up. Malachi 4:1—**4 Across**
- Ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be _____. Malachi 4:3—**25 Across**
- The flames will devour them as stubble fully _____. Nahum 1:10—**18 Across**
- **Note:** "The candle of the wicked shall be put out." (Proverbs 24:20)
- They shall be as though they had not _____. Obadiah 16—**1 Down**
- The fire will be so hot that it will ____ Satan and turn him to ashes. Ezekiel 28:18—**19 Across**
- Satan will ____ be any more. Ezekiel 28:19—**13 Down**



Questions and Answers

by Lynnford Beachy



Question: The personality of the Holy Spirit

“Could you explain 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 and 2 Corinthians 13:14. There seems to be a sign-off by the Holy Spirit, possibly.”

Oregon

Answers

Thank you for your question. First Corinthians 12:4-6 says, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” Some have read this passage and concluded that it refers to three separate persons of a trinity god. However, the text does not require such an interpretation. A similar passage is found in Ephesians 4:4-6, which says, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Notice that the one God here is only one Person, the Father, and nobody else. This also agrees with the rest of Paul’s writings on this subject. Earlier in his letter he wrote, “To us there is but one God, the Father.” (1 Corinthians 8:6) Paul knew that there is only one God, the Father, and that His Son is our Lord Jesus Christ. “That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:6)

The context of 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 is talking about the diversity of the members of the church and their gifts, pointing out that there is only one God who designed that it should be so. Verse 13 says, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Paul is pointing out that we are all united by the same “one Spirit” that fills us all and gives each of us different gifts to minister to the body. Whose “one Spirit” is this referring to? Verse 18 says, “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” Notice who is in control here. God, the Father, is the One who gives these gifts to men by His own Holy Spirit. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13) “The Spirit of truth, ... proceedeth from the Father.” (John 15:26) This one Spirit is “the Spirit of your Father” (Matthew 10:20), not a separate person from Him.

Only poor Bible study could conclude that 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 teaches something contrary to the rest of the Bible. Paul did not have a trinity in mind when he wrote this passage. In fact, neither did any other Christian of his day, for

the trinity was not formulated until nearly four hundred years later. (Please read our new book entitled, *God’s Love on Trial* for further details on this point.)

You also asked about 2 Corinthians 13:14, which says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **communion** [κοινωνία—*koinonia*] of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” Many suppose that this verse means that God is made up of three persons. However, let’s examine the facts. Who is God in this verse? The only Person referred to as God in this verse is God the Father. Paul obviously did not write this to promote the idea that God is made up of three persons but, instead, that God is only one Person. This agrees with Paul’s earlier letter to the Corinthians, when he wrote, “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” (1 Corinthians 8:6) According to Paul, the “one God” of the Bible is God the Father alone. The “one Lord” is Jesus Christ. If the “one God” is the Father, and the “one Lord” is Jesus Christ in this verse, who is the Holy Spirit? We noticed earlier that it is the Spirit of the Father.

Some say that the term “the communion of the Holy Ghost” proves that the Holy Ghost must be a separate individual from the Father and Son. But Paul also wrote, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the **fellowship** [κοινωνία—*koinonia*] of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” (Philippians 3:10) Here Paul uses the very same Greek word that he used in 2 Corinthians 13:14. He says that he wished to know the fellowship or the communion of His sufferings. To have fellowship means we partake of something. We are to partake of God’s Spirit and the sufferings of Christ.

In 1 John 1:3 John used the same Greek word κοινωνία. John explains to us with whom we are to have fellowship or communion. He says, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our **fellowship** [κοινωνία—*koinonia*] is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3) Surely if John were acquainted with a third god, he would want us to have fellowship with him as well, but there is no mention of another person. John further states, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 9) “Both” means two, and only two.

So we are to have the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and be partakers of the Holy Spirit of God. There is no trinity in this verse.

I hope this helps to answer your questions.



Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

by George McDaniel

Light and darkness in healing methods

Second Kings chapter one tells the experience of Ahaziah, son of Ahab, king of Israel. He suffered a fall that left him severely injured. He then sent messengers to Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, to try to learn whether he would recover.

God sent Elijah to intercept the messengers with a message of His own to give the king, "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?" (2 Kings 1:3) God went on to say that because of this he would not leave the bed he was lying on, but would certainly die.

Ahab was a wicked king. First Kings 16:30 says that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." However, he considered himself also to be a worshiper of the true God of Israel. One indication is the names he gave his son. Ahaziah means "held by Jah," and Jehoram means "exalted by Jehovah." Ahab and his sons combined the worship of the true God with the superstitious beliefs of the pagan nations around them.

We can see a lot of the same thing happening in the world around us today. This has had a significant effect on health care. Interest in pagan religions and medicine is no longer limited to a few discontented radicals. Traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda (the healing arts of ancient India), and Native American medicine have their advocates and practitioners everywhere. Even many orthodox medical doctors are integrating some of these traditions into their practices.

One can see more frequently terms such as "holistic medicine," or "integrative medicine." These practitioners claim to treat the whole person (holistic), not just the part that seems to be sick. They also utilize techniques from orthodox medicine and some of these other areas (integration). Is there anything wrong with this?

Let's start with a few facts: Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Ayurveda, and Native American medicine are the ones with the most influence in America. We don't hear much of tribal African or Polynesian medicine. In these three traditions, the practice of medicine is integrated into the life with the religion of those people. In many cases the priests are the healers. Some other names for these people are "medicine man," "shaman" or "witch doctor." These people intercede with the spirits on behalf of the people. As these traditions have moved into modern-day America, some of these features have been downplayed.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth in the popularity of these ancient traditions is the failure of orthodox western medicine to effect lasting cures with its emphasis on

treating symptoms with pharmaceutical chemicals. There is also the high cost of such treatment. Orthodox medicine has been successful in crisis intervention. I have two young grandchildren who became very ill recently with viral diseases. They might not be alive today if there hadn't been a place they could go to receive IV fluids and oxygen. Where orthodox medicine falls short is in the treatment of chronic, degenerative diseases and diseases of the mind or spirit. It is in these areas that holistic, integrative methods have become popular.

In order to evaluate the appropriateness of any proposed treatment, whether orthodox or holistic, we need to prepare in advance with knowledge. First of all, we need knowledge of our Creator's purpose for us. We need to know who made us, how we are constructed, and what will best keep us in good health. We also need to know what to do for minor illnesses and emergencies. We need to be able to separate facts from propaganda.

The so-called New Age movement has adopted many of the beliefs of holistic medicine. They also reject Christianity and adopt some of the beliefs of eastern religions. At the same time, it seems to me that conservative Christians are more likely to stick with orthodox western medicine with all its problems.

Another reason we are seeing more intrusion of eastern philosophies into America is that we are nearing the end of the conflict between the powers of light and of darkness. Satan is doing all he can to deceive people. He has a deception specifically made for everyone.

Following is a short list of commonly used techniques and substances used by TCM, Ayurveda and Native American medicine, along with some comments:

1. Herbs - Herbs have formed the basis for the materia medica of all healers for most of human history. Herbs have many beneficial effects on the body, too numerous to mention here. Some herbs can alter brain functioning, and even cause hallucinations. We need to avoid anything that takes away our reasoning ability or otherwise brings harm or puts us in touch with evil spirits.

2. Accupuncture - This comes from TCM and is based on the belief that there are energy meridians in the body that can be strengthened or balanced by accupuncture. I think it should be avoided because of its connection with the religion of ancient China. I can see a parallel here with "going to the god of Ekron" and not to the God of Israel.

3. Applied Kinesiology - Many practitioners use this method, including many Christian doctors. The method can be used to determine if a substance is good for one or harmful. Just hold some in your hand. If it is good for you,

your strength will remain normal. If harmful, your muscles will be weaker. The tester uses the resistance of one's arm to being moved to determine this. Those who use it say it works. More on that argument in the next item.

4. Intuitive diagnosis - Someone using this method doesn't use any biophysical measurements. He doesn't even have to be in the presence of the patient. It can be done over the phone. As he talks to the patient, a picture of the problem comes to his mind. A local doctor that I know has a friend who does this. This man is well-known in the holistic health field. He has a Ph.D. in toxicology and worked at NIH in Maryland before going into TCM and other things. The doctor who uses his services for help in puzzling cases says he has never known him to be wrong. He has found things that were not discovered by lab and x-rays. The local doctor thinks his friend has a gift from God. It works, but how? Some intuitive diagnosticians go into a trance. Can you see the groundwork being laid here for the final battle for men's minds by evil forces?


5. Iridology - This is diagnosis of body problems by changes in the iris of the eye. The practice of iridology is not new. The oldest records available show that a form of iris interpretation was used in central Asia nearly 3,000 years ago. It is more than coincidence that eye chart zones are divided into 96 compartments. The third eye chakra of Ayurveda has 96 divisions. We can see that iridology has roots in Hinduism.

6. Hypnotism - Some people, under hypnosis, have been regressed in time to prior lives. This is obviously unbiblical. Hypnosis is dangerous and shouldn't be used.

7. There are many other things to beware of. Some of these are: mind-altering drugs, meditation that results in a trance state, communication with spirits.

This is a very limited coverage of these things. I will do a more in-depth coverage of these and others in future issues.

One of the major themes of New Age is based on Satan's lie in the Garden of Eden: "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." This theme says that we all have divinity within us and we need to get in touch with that divinity within in order to progress. It claims that God is not some transcendent being out there, He is in each of us and in everything.

Everything we do for our health, physical, mental and spiritual, needs to be judged on its own merit, not on who believes in it or who is promoting it. Before any of us gets involved in anything, stop and think: Where does this lead? Does it lead to Baalzebub, god of Ekron, or to the God of Israel? 

(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. *Editor*)



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 Around the World

"Since I got this message... I have sent this truth about God message to some churches and friends. I am happy to tell you that they have appreciated it very much and they are very much interested. So, please remember me in your prayers." *Tanzania*

"Thank you for all the material sent us. It is the meat we were hungering for and I am excited about it. I feel like shouting, 'Praise the Lord for making you concerned in sharing studies which people most need.' We even received the video tape by David Clayton. It's wonderful! This has caused people who have watched it to have more desire to search the Scriptures and study more. It is the same even with your publications. This has made us to be

moved by His Spirit to photocopy 30 copies of the publication entitled, 'The Truth.'" *Zambia*

"I send you warm greetings in the name of Jesus the soon-coming king. Thank you for your prayers, that the truth about God doctrine is on fire now and finds room among believers.

"We do appreciate your prayers and your support. The work here is progressing, and the truth of God is getting out as we teach and stand for it. For this purpose, Sunday, May 23, 2004, we had a meeting on the truth about God that was arranged there before, for us to meet together and share on this issue because the Sunday-keeping leaders needed to know more about His truth, who are now keeping the Sabbath, and who were very much rooted on this false pagan doctrine of the trinity (the three persons of the trinity).

"Yesterday, they accepted the truth about God doctrine and also one elder from the SDA Church who attended the meeting accepted this truth and confessed that he is going to continue teaching it in his church, and everywhere he

can, whether they like it or not, and that he will not fear them kicking him out because of teaching this message.

"Yesterday, we had a five-hour study clearly and diligently weighing every thought to prove out the opinions given by ourselves.

"Then I, along with my fellow laymen, taught them, and they found no safeguard for this pagan doctrine. They gave up their pre-conceived opinions and found that they had taken for granted the doctrine of the trinity. They gained an understanding that what they believed was a false doctrine.

"We therefore thank God for His truth, as our dear God is always good. Please, we also kindly request your prayers for the meeting we shall have on June 13th, 2004, where we are invited to go and teach the truth as well. After the meeting we shall also get you more information about it. May our correct relationship be with our dear heavenly Father and His only begotten Son. May our dear God bless in our sharing this truth." *Kenya*

"I'm now preparing for a Truth About God seminar in July, since many are now ready. Please pray for us as the work spreads, as we wait to see the salvation the Lord." *Zambia*

Letters from Prisoners

"I am enclosing the two Bible studies which you sent me. More studies should be like these. They do not give 'think so's' or other answers. They simply ask a question and let the Bible, the Word of God, give the answer. I have an NIV version and a King James version and have to use both in order to come to an understanding as the King James does not speak my language. Please continue to send lessons and booklets.

"The information you are sending is just what I have needed. I am receiving answers to my prayers. I have prayed for knowledge, wisdom and understanding of God's Word but I have been like the Ethiopian eunuch; I need help.

"My mind does not work the greatest anymore and my retention is not good. But I seek the truth. The truths which I am learning are not stuck solidly in my mind as yet. Time will help and I do have plenty of that as I am not totally burdened by the outside world. But even in prison there seems to not be enough hours in a day and time does move right along when you are having fun.

"I am enjoying the *Present Truth* newsletters. They are right on the mark and just what I need." *Oregon*

"Let me know if you ever find some pen pals. Please."

Oregon

"I delightfully will love to continue studying the Word of God through your most welcomed Bible correspondence course. I also would love to request for true, devoted

Christian pen pals who would like to correspond with me. Remember this: age, race, religion are unimportant. I just need someone to correspond with on a daily basis." *Texas*
(If you would like to be a pen pal, please contact us and we will put you in touch with a prisoner. *Editor*)

Literature

"Out here in Colorado WE LOVE THIS BOOK!!!!!! [God's Love on Trial] I mailed one on May 17 to a dear friend and brother... He received it on the 19th (record time for the USPS!). He emailed me the morning of the 19th that he had decided to read it that afternoon. He emailed me back about THREE HOURS LATER and said he had not only read it, but had done so much checking and research to make sure that what you said was true, that he hadn't been able to 'relax and enjoy it,' so he was going to go back and start over, so he could do that!... He said he visited the *Present Truth* website and read other material you had written, and thinks you are a 'well-read and knowledgeable author.' Praise the Lord, he wants to take *God's Love* to his LARGE Episcopal church and see if he can get their Bible Institute to do a series of Bible studies on it this fall, to spread the truth to his entire church! This man is well-beloved in that congregation, and I pray that he'll have much success in persuading them to accept the book, and then the truth about God.

"We are presently re-reading the book in our little home-church. We spent ALL of last Sabbath reading the first two chapters and discussing them, then we read the third chapter at our Wednesday prayer/study meeting, and hopefully we're going to continue today. I know I'm highlighting the high points in mine (the only problem being, it's ALL 'high points'!!!), and I think the others are, too. The Lord really guided your writing of this book, and we appreciate it so very much.

"My question this morning, since finding it online at your website, is this: can it be downloaded onto a person's computer, and/or saved to a CD for sharing and mailing to others? I know it's possible with e-books; is this one of those? I would love to be able to email it to people, too. For now, I can send them to your website so they can read it themselves, but I'd love to have it on CD.

"Thank you, and have a truly glorious Sabbath. God bless you!" *Colorado*

(Yes, *God's Love on Trial* is available online for downloading and distributing. You can download it as one html file or in pdf format for printing, either in 8 1/2 X 11 size or A4 size for overseas. Go to the following link: www.presenttruth.info/books/God_on_Trial/Gods_Love_on_Trial.htm, and click FILE, then Save as.... *Editor*)

"Still I'm enjoying the last month's magazine! I need to request you to send me another magazine for the previous

month about 'The REAL Passion of Christ,' there's a certain friend of mine who was also inspired by it and took the one you had sent me so, to cover that gap, I request you by the time you send me the magazine of May make sure that you can endeavor to send me even that of April indicated in the foregoing paragraph.

"I will be pleased by your positive response. May God bless you in your ministry and your family at large."

Rwanda

"I really got a lot out of 'The REAL Passion of Christ' issue. [April 2004] Fantastic! Thank you so much for all the enlightening publications you send me."

Florida

"I have a very good Christian friend who I have tried to tell about the Sabbath, she always has a come-back, like it's legalistic or we are not under the law anymore. I am not very good at explaining or witnessing in this way. I just got the May 2004 issue of *Present Truth* about 'The Two Covenants' and thought of her. Could you mail her this issue please."

North Carolina

"Send back. Please, I don't read them. Stop sending them." [Mailing label removed.]

Unknown Country

(We do not wish to bother people with our literature who do not like to receive it, but we must know your name in order to take it off the mailing list.

Editor)

Answers to Crossword Puzzle on page 7



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