

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

January 2006

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Colossians 1:2) As we enter a new year we should review our lives, examining ourselves to see if we are in the faith. (2 Corinthians 13:5) We should acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and commit ourselves anew to God. The Lord has put it upon my heart, and the hearts of my family to travel more, holding meetings and visiting some of the brethren scattered abroad. Please note the “Upcoming Meeting” schedule on page 4 to find out if there will be meetings in your area.

## Easter, Sunday and Christmas

by Ellet J. Waggoner

(We are at the end of what is often termed, “the holiday season.” The word *holiday* means “holy day.” What makes a day holy? The Bible says, “And God blessed the seventh day, and **sanctified** [Hebrew: *qadash*—to observe as holy, or to make holy] it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” (Genesis 2:3) The Fourth Commandment says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it **holy** [*qadash*]. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and **hallowed** [*qadash*] it.” (Exodus 20:8-11) God is the only one who can make a day holy, man cannot do this. We cannot keep a day holy that was not made holy by God first. Did God ever make Easter, Sunday or Christmas holy days? Please consider this as you read the following article. *Editor*)

The Roman Church was mostly composed of pagans, and heathen influences surrounded it. Consequently it had no care to conciliate the Jews, but found it expedient to lean towards paganism; and the pagans had a festival which they celebrated in honor of the return of spring, about the time of the vernal equinox. This was adopted by the Church of Rome and the churches which it influenced. The bishop of Rome commanded the Eastern churches to celebrate their spring festival at the same time that he did. They refused. But Jewish influence could not prevail against the great body of pagans, and at the Council of Nice, A. D. 325, the Roman custom was made universal.

Easter was henceforth celebrated by all the churches. The time was fixed, as now, to the first Sunday after the full moon which followed the 21st of March.

Green, in his *History of the English People* (book 1, chapter 1, section 20), says that “Eostre, the god of the dawn or of the spring, lends his name to the Christian festival of the resurrection.” This is true, but not the whole truth. The truth is that Eostre, the heathen god of light, gave not simply the name but the festival itself. The so-called “Christian festival of the resurrection” is nothing else but the old heathen festival. Dr. Schaff is very free to note the adoption of heathen festivals by the church, because he does not think that the practice is to be condemned. He says:

The English *Easter* (Anglo-Saxon *easter*, *eastran*, German *Ostern*) is at all events connected with *East* and sunrise, and is akin to ἠώς [*eos*], *oriens*, aurora. The comparison of sunrise and the natural spring with the new moral creation in the resurrection of Christ, and the transfer of the celebration of Ostara, the old German divinity of the rising, health-bringing light, to the Christian Easter festival, was the easier,

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because all nature is a symbol of spirit, and the heathen myths are dim presentiments and carnal anticipations of Christian truths. (*History of the Christian Church*, volume 2, section 61, note 320)

The word “Easter,” from *Eostre* or *Ostara*, is by some traced to Ishtar, or Astarte, the Assyrian counterpart of Baal, the sun-god, corresponding to the Latin Venus. Sacred eggs were connected with her worship. But whether Easter may or may not be traced to Astarte, with her licentious worship, it is certain that it is nothing but a relic of sun-worship.

All we care for in the above is the admission that Easter is only a relic of nature-worship. We do not accept the suggestion of the identity of Christianity and pagan nature-worship; but we note with sorrow that the pagan worship of the creature rather than the Creator very early corrupted the Christian church. The reader will not fail to note that it was sun-worship, and that alone, that fixed the time of the Easter festival, and that in this concession to heathenism there was a long step taken toward the exaltation of “the venerable day of the sun,”—the weekly sun festival, Sunday.

This spirit of concession to paganism was manifested in the adoption of the heathen festival which now bears the name of Christmas. The following is from Dr. Schaff:

The Christmas festival was probably the Christian transformation or regeneration of a series of kindred heathen festivals—the Saturnalia, Sigillaria, Juvenalia, and Brumalia—which were kept in Rome in the month of December, in commemoration of the golden age of universal freedom and equality, and in honor of the unconquered sun, and which were great holidays, especially for slaves and children. (*History of the Christian Church*, volume 3, section 77)

Let the reader note that it was sun-worship that the church was adopting in joining in the celebration of the winter festival. Dr. Schaff, although he defends the Christmas festival, plainly declares that it was borrowed from the heathen, and that it was in honor of the birthday of the sun, the orb of day, and not the Son of God. He says:

Had the Christmas festival arisen in the period of the persecution, its derivation from these pagan festivals would be refuted by the then reigning abhorrence of everything heathen; but in the Nicene age this rigidity of opposition between the church and the world was in a great measure softened by the general conversion of the heathen. Besides, there lurked in those pagan festivals themselves, in spite of all their sensual abuses, a deep meaning and an adaptation to a real want [this by way of excuse]; they might be called

unconscious prophecies of the Christmas feast. Finally the church Fathers themselves confirm the symbolical reference of the feast of the birth of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, to the birth festival of the unconquered sun, which on the twenty-fifth of December, after the winter solstice, breaks the growing power of darkness and begins anew his heroic career.” (*Ibid.*)

This feast celebrating the birthday of the sun (*dies natalis invicti solis*) “is the feast of the Persian sun-god Mithras, which was formally introduced in Rome under Domitian and Trojan.” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, volume 3, section 77, note 722) This is all that Christmas is, for, as Schaff truly says, “The day and month of the birth of Christ are nowhere stated in the gospel history, and cannot be certainly determined.” (*History of the Christian Church*, volume 3, section 77) But this would not be the case if the Lord had designed that it should be celebrated. The fiction that Christmas is the birthday of Christ was invented by the church in order to conceal the fact that out of wicked compliance with paganism they were celebrating the birth festival of the heathen sun-god. Besides it was very easy for a church that was more than half Christian to fail to distinguish any difference between the Son of God—the Sun of Righteousness—of whom they heard as the Christian Divinity, and the sun which was the center of heathen worship. And, as we have seen, the Neo-Platonism which Clement and Origen foisted upon the church held that there was really no difference between Christianity and paganism. Thus the church Fathers contributed to the confusion.

In such a time, when, as Wylie says, “Instead of reaching forth to what was before, the Christian church permitted herself to be overtaken by the spirit of the ages that lay behind her” (*The History of Protestantism*, volume 1, book 1, chapter 3), when paganism was coming in like a flood, and over-whelming the church, it was inevitable that “the wild solar holiday of all pagan times” should be adopted along with other heathen customs. The logic of events would necessitate this conclusion, even if facts did not warrant it. Sunday was the chief pagan holiday, in honor of the sun-god; the church was modeling its legitimate ceremonies as nearly as possible after the plan of the heathen “mysteries,” and was boldly adopting everything pagan that was in sight; so, as in ancient times the church of God rejected the Sabbath when it joined the heathen in their licentious revels, it could not be otherwise than that when, in the early centuries of the Christian era, it

apostatized to heathenism, it should forsake the Sabbath of the Lord for the day of the sun.

But, as in the case of Christmas, the church found an excuse for adopting Sunday. The Bible calls Christ the “Sun of Righteousness,” and the people could easily be made to think that in celebrating the festival of the sun, they were doing homage to Christ, especially since their knowledge of Christianity came principally through the philosophers, who taught them that Christianity was simply a modification of their old superstition.

In nothing is the church’s conformity to paganism more clearly manifest than in its adoption of Sunday. Tertullian was a voluminous writer for the church against the heathen, yet in his address, *Ad Nationes*, he defends the growing observance of Sunday on the ground that it was nothing more than the heathen themselves did. Thus, after answering the charge that Christians worshiped the cross, by showing that the heathen did likewise (for the figure of a cross was an object of worship by the heathen before the church began to pay idolatrous worship to it), Tertullian proceeds to say:

Others, with greater regard to good manners, it must be confessed, suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray towards the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity. What then? Do you do less than this? Do not many among you, with an affectation of sometimes worshiping the heavenly bodies, likewise, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise? It is you, at all events, who have even admitted the sun into the calendar of the week, and you have selected its day, in preference to the preceding day as the most suitable in the week for either an entire abstinence from the bath, or for its postponement until the evening, or for taking rest and for banqueting. (*Ad Nationes*, book 1, chapter 13)

Here we find not only that Sunday was the chief heathen festival-day, but also that one of the foremost “Fathers” in the church boldly pleaded heathen custom as an excuse for adopting it. If it be said that the fact that the Christians also regarded Sunday as well as the heathen was only a coincidence, and that there must be some Scripture authority for it, we can refer the reader to the light estimation in which the Scriptures were held by those “church Fathers.” Not only may we refer to what has already been quoted from Clement and Origen [earlier in this book], but we may quote Tertullian’s own words to prove that the absence of Scripture authority was not a bar to any practice which the church of the philosophers thought fit to adopt. In

his treatise on *The Chaplet*, he speaks as follows concerning the propriety of wearing the laurel wreath:

How long shall we draw the saw to and fro through this line, when we have an ancient practice, which by anticipation has made for us the state, i.e., of the question? If no passage of Scripture has prescribed it, assuredly custom, which without doubt flowed from tradition, has confirmed it. For how can anything come into use, if it has not first been handed down? Even in pleading tradition, written authority, you say, must be demanded. Let us inquire, therefore, whether tradition, unless it be written, should not be admitted.... To deal with this matter briefly, I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the gospel. [They thought that they could make an improvement on the Lord’s plan.] Then, when we are taken up (as new-born children), we taste first of all a mixture of milk and honey and from that day we refrain from the daily bath for a whole week.... As often as the anniversary comes round, we make offerings for the dead [a heathen custom] as birthday honors. We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord’s day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Easter to Whitsunday. We feel pained should any wine or bread, even though our own, be cast upon the ground. At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign [of the cross].

If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer. (*The Chaplet*, chapters 3, 4)

Here Scripture is disregarded and set at naught for custom; but where appeal was had to custom, it was always a custom originating with the heathen. And now to what we have already read concerning churchly conformity to heathen customs, read the following:

Leo the Great speaks of Christians in Rome, who first worshiped to the rising sun, doing homage to the pagan Apollo, before repairing to the basilica of St. Peter. (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, volume 3, section 74.)

When the church not only perpetuated the worship of the heathen gods and goddesses under different forms, but openly worshiped the heathen sun-god Apollo, and even the sun itself, is it at all surprising

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# Upcoming Meetings in Your Area

by Lynnford Beachy

One day “Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.... And he went **confirming** [to strengthen more, to render more firm—*Thayer’s*] the churches.” (Acts 15:36-41) As a result of Paul’s trip, the Bible says, “And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (Acts 16:5)

If there was ever a time when the churches need encouragement and strengthening, it is today. Satan seems to be working overtime to destroy God’s people, “because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Revelation 12:12)

People write or call very often seeking for fellowship with like-minded believers. I recently received an e-mail, and the subject line read, “I need to fellowship with true believers.” Another e-mail read, “Please pray for me to find a fellowship where the brethren are worshiping God in spirit and in truth.” Another e-mail had the title, “I need Encouragement,” and continued by requesting fellowship with like-minded believers. Another man wrote, “Do you know of any other believers in my area?” A woman wrote, “I long to be with other believers...”

This is just a small sample of the the requests for fellowship we receive by phone, letter, and e-mail. There are many dear brothers and sisters around the world who are isolated from other believers and who are in need of fellowship and encouragement.

For several years my wife and I have been considering doing more extensive traveling to visit some of these brethren, and encourage them in their walk with the Lord. We have three young children, so there are challenges involved, but apparently some of the apostles brought their families with them on their missionary journeys. (1 Corinthians 9:5) Our goal is to take a month-long trip, approximately every other month, to visit different regions in the United States, encouraging and strengthening the brethren, with West Virginia as our home-base.

The reason I am bringing all of this to your attention is to let you know of the possibility of holding meetings in your area in the near future. Currently we have plans to make a southern trip in February, covering the states of Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina. Another trip is planned in May to visit New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, the Toronto area, northwestern Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. If you live in any of the above areas and are interested in either attending or hosting meetings in your area, please contact

me for scheduling. I have a cell phone with Cingular, so I have unlimited calling to other Cingular customers at any time at no additional cost, and I have unlimited calling to all others, within the U.S., between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. and all day on Sabbath and Sunday. Please call Smyrna Gospel Ministries, (304) 732-9204, to obtain my new cell-phone number.

We plan to post our schedule and location on our website, [www.presenttruth.info](http://www.presenttruth.info), and in our newsletters so we can maximize the attendance of meetings, and visit as many people as possible in a specific area. I will still be heavily involved in writing and the publishing work, much of which I can do on a laptop from anywhere.

Here is the currently planned itinerary for February and May (more details will be given next month):

- January 28. . . . .** **Roan Mountain, TN**, contact Malcolm McCrillis, 423-772-3161.
- February 3, 4. . . .** **Chattanooga, TN**
- February 10, 11. .** **Jemison, Alabama**, contact Walter Kohler, 334-366-4317.
- February 17, 18. .** **Pensacola, FL**, contact Chaplain Jack VanOrd, 850-458-5549.
- February 22-26 . .** **Florida Camp Meeting**
- March 3, 4 . . . . .** **Charleston, SC**, contact Jerry Zuk, 843-832-2206.
- May 5, 6 . . . . .** **Southern New Jersey**, contact Kevin and Judy Schmidt, 609-390-1574.
- May 10-13 . . . . .** **Southern Maine**, contact Mervin and Rose Marie Shoemaker, 207-892-2338.
- May 15-18 . . . . .** **Upstate New York**, contact Marvin Ford, 315-845-8519
- May 19, 20 . . . . .** **Hamilton, Canada** (near Toronto), contact Paul Falconbridge, 905-561-4071.
- May 26, 27 . . . . .** **Northwestern Pennsylvania**
- June 2, 3 . . . . .** **Cleveland, Ohio**, contact Willis Smith, 216-271-9045.

Between meetings we will be available to visit people in their homes. Check upcoming issues of *Present Truth* (also available at [www.presenttruth.info](http://www.presenttruth.info)) to keep informed about these meetings and others in your area.

## *Florida Camp Meeting—February 22-26*

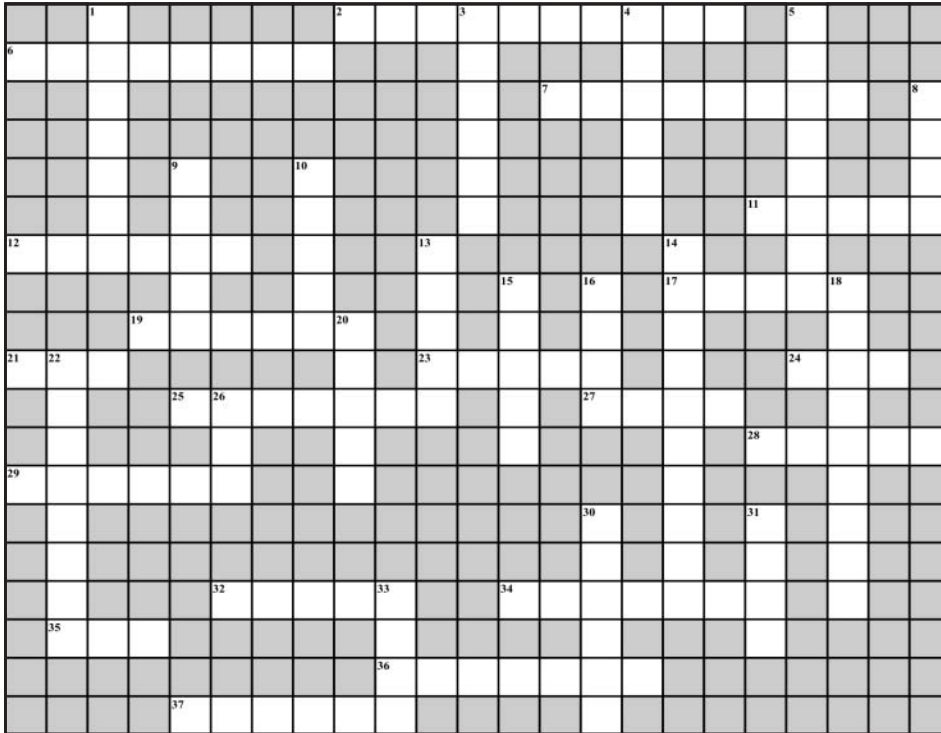
The church in Orlando, Florida, will be hosting a camp meeting, February 22-26, 2006, at the River Forest Campground located in the southeast corner of the Ocala National Forest. All are welcome. Make plans early to

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# 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.

## Recognizing God's Ownership



Answers are on page 12

- God owns the earth, and all who \_\_\_\_\_ therein. Psalms 24:1—**15 Down**
- God owns every \_\_\_\_\_ of the forest. Psalms 50:10—**10 Down**
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of hosts owns all the silver and gold. Haggai 2:8—**27 Across**
- God's kingdom is like the man who \_\_\_\_\_ his goods to his servants care while he was away. Matthew 25:14—**18 Down**
- As God's \_\_\_\_\_ we are to share and understand the mysteries of God. 1 Corinthians 4:1—**6 Across**
- Moth and rust \_\_\_\_\_ the treasures we have upon earth. Matthew 6:19—**25 Across**
- Thieves break through and \_\_\_\_\_ our earthly treasures. Matthew 6:19—**23 Across**
- We are to lay up our treasures in \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 6:19—**29 Across**
- Where your \_\_\_\_\_ is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:21—**5 Down**
- After all God has done for me, what will I \_\_\_\_\_ unto him? Psalms 116:12—**30 Down**

- Bring God an \_\_\_\_\_ and give Him the glory due His name. Psalms 96:8—**22 Down**
  - God requires us to give what we are \_\_\_\_\_ according to what He's given us. Deuteronomy 16:17—**8 Down**
  - If you give to others, it will be \_\_\_\_\_ to you. Luke 6:38—**28 Across**
  - To withhold tithes and offerings is to \_\_\_\_\_ God. Malachi 3:8—**21 Across**
- Note:** Notice that tithes and offerings are two different things.
- God pronounces a \_\_\_\_\_ on those who rob Him. Malachi 3:9—**11 Across**
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ of all things is the Lord's. Leviticus 27:30—**9 Down**
  - Render to \_\_\_\_\_ the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21—**35 Across**
  - Jesus pronounced a woe on the Pharisees, who were exact in tithing, but omitted the weightier matters of the law. These, He said, ought to be done, without leaving the other \_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 23:23—**4 Down**

- All things come from God, and it is of His \_\_\_\_\_ that we give Him. 1 Chronicles 29:14 (last part)—**26 Down**
  - Abraham gave tithes of \_\_\_\_\_ to Melchisedec. Genesis 14:20—**24 Across**
- Note:** Jesus is "made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 6:20) Notice that tithing was practiced by God's people even before the Levitical priesthood came into existence.
- Abraham gave to Melchisedec a \_\_\_\_\_ part of all. Hebrews 7:1, 2—**32 Across**
  - The tenth is \_\_\_\_\_ unto the Lord. Leviticus 27:32—**33 Down**
  - Of all that You give me I will \_\_\_\_\_ give the tenth unto thee. Genesis 28:22—**37 Across**
  - Honour the LORD with the \_\_\_\_\_ fruits of all thine increase. Proverbs 3:9—**13 Down**
  - The tithes of the children of Israel were to be given to the \_\_\_\_\_. Numbers 18:24—**36 Across**
  - I have given all the tenth to the Levites for the service they serve in the \_\_\_\_\_. Numbers 18:21—**14 Down**
  - As the Levites lived off the things of the temple, even so the Lord has \_\_\_\_\_ that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14—**7 Across**
  - Bring ye all the tithes into the \_\_\_\_\_. Malachi 3:10—**2 Across**
  - That there may be meat in the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_. Malachi 3:10—**20 Down**
- Note:** "The house of God... is the church of the living God." (1 Timothy 3:15)
- If we faithfully return to God His tenth, He promises a blessing greater than we have room to \_\_\_\_\_. Malachi 3:10—**1 Down**
  - He will also \_\_\_\_\_ the devourer for our sakes. Malachi 3:11—**3 Down**
  - So shall thy barns be filled with \_\_\_\_\_. Proverbs 3:10—**12 Across**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ that you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Matthew 19:21—**16 Down**

- He who has \_\_\_\_ on the poor is lending to the Lord. Proverbs 19:17—**31 Down**
- It is the Lord who gives the power to get \_\_\_\_\_. Deuteronomy 8:18—**19 Across**

- Let your life be without covetousness and be \_\_\_\_ with what you have. Hebrews 13:5—**34 Across**
- Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these other

things will be \_\_\_\_ unto you. Matthew 6:33—**17 Across** ✍

*The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.—Psalms 24:1*

## WAGGONER ON ROMANS—THE GOSPEL IN PAUL'S GREAT LETTER (PART 6)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

(We are continuing a series of articles commenting on Paul's epistle to the Romans. We pray that they will be a blessing to you. *Editor*)

### THE SIN OF OTHERS IS OUR SIN, TOO

#### Romans 2—Introduction

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Psalms 1:1-2)

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1-6)

Here we have the secret of the understanding of the Bible: study and meditation, coupled with an earnest desire to know the will of God in order to do it. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." (John 7:17) Repetition, review is one of the prime essentials to knowledge of the Bible. Not that any amount of study will compensate for lack of the Holy Spirit's guidance, but that the Holy Spirit witnesses through the word.

**A Look Backward**—In this study of Romans we wish to carry along with us as much as possible of what we learn. We will therefore take a view of the first chapter as a whole. We have found that it is naturally divided somewhat as follows:

Vs. 1-7, the salutation, containing an epitome of the whole gospel.

Vs. 8-15, Paul's personal interest in the Romans, and his sense of obligation to them and to all mankind.

Vs. 16,17, what the gospel is, and what it contains.

Vs. 21-23, the corruption of wisdom.

Vs. 24-32, the result of unthankfulness and of forgetting God.

A careful reading of the chapter shows that the main thought is that God has made himself known to every soul in his creation, and that even the most degraded heathen know that they are guilty and are worthy of death for their wickedness. "Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." (Romans 1:32) So "they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20) This leading thought of the first chapter should be well in mind before beginning the second chapter, for the second is a continuation of the first, and dependent upon it.

#### A Wider View—Romans 2:1-11

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. (Romans 2:1-11)

**Acknowledging Their Guilt**—The truth of the apostle's statement is easy of demonstration concerning the heathen and their deeds, that they know that they are worthy of death. When Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, they were afraid to meet God, and hid themselves. Fear is a necessary accompaniment of guilt, and a



proof of it. "Fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18) "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1) "But the fearful... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire." (Revelation 21:8) If the heathen did not know that they were guilty, they would not expect punishment for murdering or stealing, and would not arm themselves for defense.

**An Unanswerable Charge**—There is wonderful shrewdness in the way that the apostle works up the charge made in the first verse. The first chapter is confined to the heathen. All will agree with the apostle's statement that they are guilty of most abominable wickedness. "They ought to know better," is the almost involuntary exclamation. "They do know better," is the apostle's reply, or, at least, they have a chance to know better, and they do know that they are not doing right. "They are without excuse." Whatever men may think about the responsibility of the heathen, all agree that their practices are to be condemned.

Then comes the crushing rejoinder: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." (Romans 2:1) We are caught, and can not escape. If we know enough to condemn the unrighteous deeds of the heathen, we by that very judgment acknowledge ourselves to be without excuse for our own misdeeds.

**All Alike are Guilty**—"Thou that judgest doest the same things." It is clear enough that anybody who knows enough to condemn evil in another is without excuse for his own sins; but all will not at once see that the one who judges another does the same things. Read, therefore the last verses of the first chapter again, and compare the list of sins with that found in Galatians 5:19-21, and it will be seen that the things which the heathen do, and for which we can readily see that they are guilty, are but the works of the flesh. They are the sins that come "from within, out of the heart of men." (Mark 7:21-23) Whoever is included in the term "man" is subject to just such things. "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works." (Psalm 33:13-15)

**All Are Self-condemned**—Therefore, since all men are alike sharers in one common human nature, it is evident that whosoever in the world condemns another for

any misdeed thereby condemns himself; for the truth is that all have the same evil in them, more or less fully developed; and the fact that they know enough to judge that a thing is wrong, is a declaration that they themselves are worthy of the punishment which they see that the other one deserves.

**Sympathy, Not Condemnation**—The robber often cries out, "Stop thief!" after some other man, in order to direct pursuit away from himself. So people condemn sin in others, in order that it may not be suspected that they are guilty of the same things.

Since all flesh of man is the same, we ought to be filled with humiliation, instead of contempt, when we hear of a gross sin that is committed; for it is really a picture of what is in our own hearts. Instead of saying, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men" (Luke 18:11), we should bear the burden of the erring, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted. Very often the man whose weakness we feel inclined to condemn, has not failed so badly as we should have done if we had been tempted in the same way, and to the same degree.

**Outcry Against Sin**—In the book *Pilgrim's Progress* when Talkative left Faithful to decide upon the subject of their conversation, Faithful proposed this question: "How doth the saving grace of God discover itself when it is in the heart of man?" And then Bunyan proceeds thus:

**Talkative:** I perceive then that our talk must be about the power of things. Well, it is a very good question, and I shall be willing to answer you; and take my answer in brief thus: First, where the grace of God is in the heart, it causeth there a great outcry against sin. Secondly—

**Faithful:** Nay, hold; let us consider of one at once: I think you should rather say, it shows itself by inclining the soul to abhor its sin.

**Talkative:** Why, what difference is there between crying out against and abhorring sin?

**Faithful:** O, a great deal! A man may cry out against a sin, of policy; but he can not abhor it but by virtue of a godly antipathy against it. I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit, who can yet abide it well enough in the heart, house, and conversation. Joseph's mistress cried out with a loud voice, as if she had been very chaste; but she would willingly, notwithstanding that, have committed uncleanness with him. (John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, chapter: Talkative)

A keen perception of right and wrong, and a vigorous denunciation of sin, will never justify any man. On the contrary, they only deepen his condemnation. It is a sad fact that too many of the so-called reformers of the

present day seem to think that gospel work consists largely in the denunciation of evil practices. A detective is not a minister of the gospel.

**Judgment According to Truth**—"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things." (Romans 2:2) "Hold," says one, "I am not sure of that." Well, you may very easily assure yourself of it:

- 1) God exists. We are agreed as to that.
- 2) He is the source whence every created thing comes.
- 3) Every creature is absolutely dependent upon him. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28)
- 4) Since all life depends on him, it is evident that the continuation of man's life depends upon his agreement and union with God.
- 5) Therefore God's own character must be the standard of judgment.
- 6) But God himself is truth. "There is no unrighteousness in him." (Psalm 92:15)
- 7) But he has made a revelation of himself and his righteousness to all men. "His righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen." (Psalm 97:2)
- 8) Therefore all men, from the least to the greatest, are without excuse for their sin.
- 9) Then it is plain enough that when God judges all men, without exception, his judgment is according to truth. And earth will be constrained to join with heaven in saying, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." (Revelation 16:5, 7)

**No Escape**—No one need think that he can escape the righteous judgment of God. It is usually the most enlightened who flatter themselves that they shall escape. It is so easy for us to think that our great knowledge of right and wrong will be counted for righteousness, to persuade ourselves that our condemnation of the sins of others will make the Lord believe that we could never be guilty of such things. But that only makes our condemnation the more clear.

The first chapter of Romans knocks all the props from under every man. If the lowest are justly held guilty, there is no escape for the "higher classes." "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret

thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

**God's Goodness Leads to Repentance**—"Despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (Romans 2:4) God is the perfection of purity and holiness; man is altogether sinful. God knows every sin, yet he does not despise the sinner. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:17) Christ said, "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not." (John 12:47)

In everything that he said and did, he was simply representing the Father. God "is long-suffering to usward;" and "the long-suffering of our God is salvation." (2 Peter 3:9, 15) Now it is impossible that one should consider the goodness and long-suffering of God without being humbled and moved to repentance. When we consider how tenderly God bears with us, it is not possible that we should deal harshly with our fellow-men. And if we do not judge, we shall not be judged. (Luke 6:37)

**Repentance Is a Gift**—"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8) "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:30, 31) But it was not to Israel alone that God gave repentance through Christ. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) And so plainly did God make this appear that even the exclusive Jews were forced to exclaim, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18)

**Incentives to Repentance**—The goodness of God leads men to repentance. Therefore the whole earth is full of incentives to repentance, for "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." (Psalm 33:5) "The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy." (Psalm 119:64) God may be known through his works, and "God is love." (1 John 4:8) All creation reveals the love and mercy of God.

And we need not try to improve on the Scriptures, and say that the goodness of God tends to lead men to repentance. The Bible says that it does lead them to repentance, and we may be sure that it is so. Every man is being led toward repentance as surely as God is good. But not all repent. Why? Because they despise the



riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, and break away from the merciful leading of the Lord. But whoever does not resist the Lord, will surely be brought to repentance and salvation.

**Treasuring up Wrath**—In the first chapter we learned that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” (Romans 1:18) Therefore all who sin are treasuring up for themselves wrath. It should be noted that the judgment God is clear. Men receive only what they have worked for. God is not arbitrary. He has not fixed arbitrary decrees, and declared that whoever violates them shall be visited with vengeance. The punishment that will come upon the wicked is the necessary result of their own choice. God is the only source of life.

**His Life is Peace**—Now when men reject him, the only alternative for them is wrath and death. “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” (Proverbs 1:29-32) Trouble and death are bound up in sin; they are what men choose when they refuse the Lord.

**“According to his Deeds”**—Unbelievers often say that it is not just for God to condemn a man simply because he does not believe a certain thing. But he does not do so. Not a word can be found in the Bible about judging a man according to his belief. Everywhere it is said that all will be judged according to their works. “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27) “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Revelation 22:12) He “judgeth according to every man’s work.” (1 Peter 1:17)

The man who says that his work is all right, sets himself up as judge in the place of God, who says that every man is all wrong. God is Judge alone, and he judges strictly according to a man’s work, but a man’s work is decided by his faith. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (John 6:29) It is not for any man to judge himself, and say that his work is all right. It is for him simply to trust the goodness and mercy of the Lord, that his work may be wrought in God.

**Immortality and Eternal Life**—God will render eternal life to them who seek for glory and honor and

immortality. Christ “hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2 Timothy 1:10) Life and immortality are two different things. Whoever believes on the Son of God has eternal life. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

We have eternal life as soon as we know the Lord; but we can not have immortality until the Lord comes, at the last day. “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

We are to seek for immortality; that of itself is proof that no man has it now. Since Christ has brought it to light through the gospel, it is evident that immortality can be found in no other way than through the gospel. Therefore those who do not accept the gospel will never have immortality.

**Tribulation and Anguish**—Those who sin are the children of wrath. (Ephesians 2:3) Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are sure to come upon evil doers. But tribulation and anguish will have an end. The fact that none receive immortality except the ones who are Christ’s at his coming, shows that all others will eventually cease to exist. There will be torment in connection with the punishment of the wicked, but the torment, however long it may continue, will come to an end in the utter destruction of the wicked. God’s indignation will come to an end. “For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.” (Isaiah 10:25)

The call is: “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” (Isaiah 16:20, 21) “He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever.” (Psalm 103:9) His anger will cease, not because he will become reconciled to iniquity, but because iniquity will come to an end with its workers.

**“To Every Soul”**—Tribulation and anguish will come upon “every soul of man that doeth evil,” and “glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good.” (Romans 2:9, 10) None will be left out. There is not a soul so poor and ignorant that he will be passed by, nor one so wealthy and learned that he will be allowed to escape. Wealth and position will have no influence in

that court. God has made the revelation of himself so plain that every man has had an opportunity of knowing him. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." Note well that his wrath is revealed against sin. Only those persons will suffer who cling to sin, and will not allow God to take it from them. In the final blotting out of sin, they are necessarily blotted out with it.

**To the Jew First**—This statement is sufficient to show that God is no respecter of persons. Indeed, the apostle states as a necessary conclusion that "there is no respect of persons with God." (Romans 2:11) "First" does not always refer to time. We speak of a man as being the first man in the country, not because there were no men before him, but because he is the chief man. In school a certain one is the first one in his class because he is the best scholar. The Jew is the one who has had the greatest revelation made to him, and therefore it is just that he should be chief in the judgment.

The text shows, however, that God has no special favor to the Jew over other men. If glory, honor, and peace come to the Jew first, so also do indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. The question is not, "What is the man's nationality?" but, "What has he done?" God will render to every man according to his deeds, "for there is no respect of persons with God."

A few words may suffice to bring to mind what we have already studied. The first chapter of Romans may be briefly summed up as setting forth the condition of those who know not God, and the way in which they lost their knowledge, together with the fact that they are wholly without excuse. Then, just as we are ready to hold up our hands in horror at their wickedness, and to launch forth severe condemnation upon them, the apostle turns to us, and shuts our mouths with the stinging words, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

And so the second chapter proceeds to show that all will be subjects of God's righteous judgment, "for there is no respect of persons with God." Thus we are brought to a confirmation of the fact that God is impartial, by a comparison of the two classes in the Judgment.

(To be continued)

(This article was taken from a series of articles printed in *The Signs of the Times* from October, 1895 through September, 1896. Some editing has been done for this publication. Editor)


(Upcoming Meetings, continued from page 4)

attend. For more information please contact Jim or Jerri Raymond by calling (407) 291-9565 or email them at msjerris@bellsouth.net.

**Brazil Trip—March 29-April 19**

Pastor Bob Habenicht and me will be visiting several locations in Brazil during the month of April 2006. There are several brethren there who are very active in spreading the good news about God's love. We are going to help strengthen the churches and hold outreach meetings in several cities. If you know anyone in Brazil who may be benefitted by these meetings, please let us know.


**West Virginia Camp Meeting—June 20-24**

The date for the 2006 West Virginia camp meeting has been set for Tuesday, June 20 through Sabbath, June 24. We have set this date early to help the brethren plan their schedules so as to be able to attend this spiritual highlight of the year. Please begin to plan now to attend and be blessed and a blessing to others. 

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(Easter, Sunday,... continued from page 3)

that they continued the heathen sun-festival, Sunday, along with other festivals?

The watchword of the age seemed to be unity. Cyprian had declared unity to be more essential than orthodoxy. It was not, in general, thought worth while to consider the particulars of any views held by one who differed with "the church." The fact that he was not within "the pale of unity" was sufficient to mark him as a heretic. But the idea of "the church" was that it ought, like the Jewish theocracy, to be identical with the State. The fact that the State was pagan could not long stand in the way, when the ideal became prevalent that there was really no essential difference between Christianity and paganism; and we have already seen how the church was practically demonstrating that identity by adopting all heathen customs. We shall now proceed to show that paganism on its part was apparently approaching Christianity, thus rendering the union the easier, and that when at last the marriage was consummated, the weekly heathen festival of the sun was the bond of union. 

(This article was taken from Ellet J. Waggoner's book, *Sunday: The Origin of its Observance in the Christian Church*, pages 70-79. Some editing has been done for this publication. Editor)

# *Fundamental Principles of Health*

by Curtis Kline

## Nutrition

Nutrition is the study of the relationship between diet and states of health and disease. It is defined as the study of food. Absence of adequate nutrients can cause certain diseases to take hold that can potentially result in death.

Between the extremes of optimal health and death from starvation or malnutrition, there is an array of disease states that can be caused or alleviated by changes in diet. Deficiencies, excesses and imbalances in the diet can produce negative impacts on health, which may result in diseases such as scurvy, obesity or osteoporosis. Also, excess ingestion of elements that have no apparent role in health (e.g. lead, mercury, PCBs, dioxins) may have toxic and potentially lethal effects depending on dose.

The science of nutrition attempts to understand how and why specific aspects of diet have specific influences on health. (*Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, online at: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition))

Let us take a second to examine a little more closely the above definition of nutrition. Notice that nutrition is a determining factor in the relationship between the state of health and the state of disease.

Let's study closely the relationship between nutrition and disease. The Bible says in Psalm 139:14, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Here we see that the human organism is a wonderful and complicated creation made by God. Although God created the body with the ability to rejuvenate, adapt and repair itself, in His infinite wisdom God also made us dependent on outside elements. This was done as a continual reminder to man of God's great care for us and also that God gave us nature. Another reason God made us dependent on external sustenance is as a continual reminder to man of the fact that we are not God and also a reminder of our continual dependence upon Him. Every breath we take should remind us of God's love and call our attention to His never-ending watch care for not only the just but also the unjust.

In His infinite wisdom, God gave us appetite, not only for our enjoyment, but also to provide us with the fuel to perpetuate life and health in the human organism. In Genesis 1:29 we read, "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Later in Genesis, after the fall of man, we see God adding vegetables and herbs to man's diet for the repair of the body in the

fallen condition. "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field." (Genesis 3:18)


The biblical conclusion is that God provided man fruits, grains, nuts, seeds, vegetables and herbs as the optimal choices to provide life, energy, restoration and repair for our bodies. Never do we find in God's original plan the concept of man living off the flesh of dead animals. We only find this provision after the flood of Noah's day, when there probably was not enough vegetation on earth to provide for man. Also, God put restrictions upon man as to how to prepare the flesh and how it should be eaten. (The eating of blood or fat was prohibited. See Leviticus 3:17; 17:14; Acts 15:20, 29. No hamburgers can be eaten, which contain both fat and blood.) It is no coincidence that man's lifespan plummeted rapidly after the flood.

Now notice also that the Lord provided the original diet in its "natural state." We find this to be a far cry from all the processing and the use of chemicals in food preparation today, not to mention all the cooking, frying, and microwaving. It's also important to note that fruits and vegetables are to be ripened before being picked and eaten. From over a century ago, all the way back to the beginning of time, we find man living more closely to the natural state that God intended. Before modern supermarkets and fast food restaurants, we were responsible to a much greater degree to grow our own food and to provide for ourselves and for our families. Since the inception of the "fast life" and modern conveniences we find this no longer to be the case. It is no coincidence that we find death and disease escalating in paramount proportions. To make matters even worse, instead of reasoning from cause to effect, most of us have been trained to run to the doctors and drug ourselves to death.

God has provided us with bodies which are the temples of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 6:16, 19) We are His, not only by creation, but also by redemption. Let us have the strength and the spiritual insight to allow God to put us in more favorable circumstances for the healing of the body, mind, and soul. Nutrition and health are the study of a lifetime, which will teach us what we should eat, and what we should avoid. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1) Let us learn of nutrition and the way certain



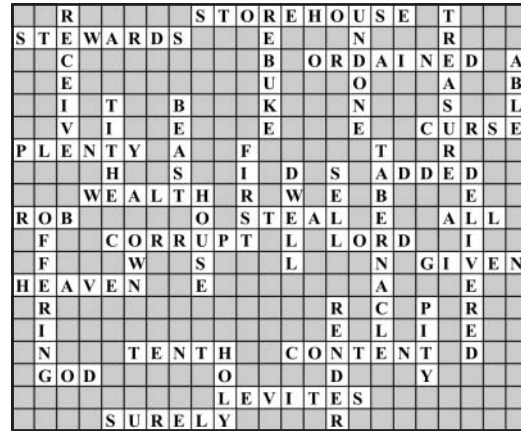
vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and other elements and chemicals interact in the body. All lifestyle changes can be potentially dangerous if not approached with knowledge and wisdom from God. I summon all who call themselves believers to understand that taking care of their bodies is the study of a lifetime. As a result of this I believe God will bless you greatly, not only here, but also in heaven.—Maranatha.

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” (3 John 2) 

(The above article was provided by Curtis Kline, Director of Ministry of Healing and Restoration, Canvas, WV. For more in-depth information he can be contacted at (304) 872-4463 or curkli@yahoo.com. While we believe the principles in this article can be helpful, we are not responsible for any negative effects resulting from the use of remedies or recommendations herein. Use them at your own risk. *Editor*)

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## Answers to Crossword Puzzle on page 5



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**Editor:** Lynnford Beachy, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, West Virginia 24801, phone: (304) 732-9204, fax: (304) 732-7322, e-mail: [newsletter@presenttruth.info](mailto:newsletter@presenttruth.info).

## Smyrna Gospel Ministries

### Present Truth Department

HC 64 Box 128-B  
Welch, West Virginia 24801  
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