

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

August 2009

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:2). I pray that you are doing well. The West Virginia camp meeting went well. There were a lot of new people there this year, and it was a pleasure to meet new friends and fellowship with the rest of the brethren.

My family and I are in the midst of a trip including visiting and holding meetings. This month we will be in Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, and Arkansas. Please call me at 304-633-5411 if you would like more information.

E-mail Reminder: Let us know if you would like *Present Truth* by e-mail.

Heresies Among You

by Lynnford Beachy

Paul made an astounding statement when he wrote: “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19). It seems strange that Paul would mention heresies among us as something that can have positive results. Heresies are generally considered something to avoid. The *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* defines *heresies* as, “a body of men following their own tenets (sect or party), dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims.”

One English dictionary defines *heresy* as “An opinion or a doctrine at variance with established religious beliefs, especially dissension from or denial of Roman Catholic dogma by a professed believer or baptized church member. b. Adherence to such dissenting opinion

or doctrine” (*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition*).

There is an ever increasing number of heresies going around. As a traveling minister I encounter a large variety of strange teachings, some of which are so strange and unbiblical it is amazing that anyone would believe them.

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We must be able to distinguish between what is truly heretical and what is biblical.

Warning Against False Prophets

Jesus said, “Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:11). Paul warned, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30).

Paul prophesied, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3).

John admonished, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

With all this counsel and warning we can see the necessity of carefully studying the Bible for ourselves, and never taking any man’s word for what is truth. We must demand a plain, “Thus saith the Lord” to support everything we believe as truth.

Study to Shew Thyself Approved

Paul said there *must* be heresies among you, and the reason given is so that “they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19). In another letter Paul explains how a person can be “approved.” He admonished, “Study to shew thyself

approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). To be approved we must diligently study the Bible and rightly divide the word of truth. This implies that there is a wrong way to divide the word of truth, and wrongly dividing it will make us unapproved.

One effect of heresies is that they cause people to study the Bible. This process reveals who is really studying correctly, and who is just blindly following what others are saying. Friends, we need to study for ourselves to not only know the truth but to know for sure that it is truth because we have read it for ourselves.

The book of Acts records one of Paul’s visits where he found some diligent Bible students. “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few” (Acts 17:10-12).

The brethren in Berea heard some new things and received the word with an open mind, but they were not content to take Paul’s word for it. They wanted to know if he was telling the truth so they studied the Bible daily to see if those things were so. They took seriously the counsel, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not

according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).

Paul contrasted these brethren with those in Thessalonica who evidently did not study to see if those things were so. There is a danger in this lazy approach to Bible study, for there are two sides of the ditch we can fall into if we do not study for ourselves. We could be in danger of rejecting the truth because we were not able to recognize it as truth, and were unwilling to study to see if it is truth. We could also blindly accept false doctrines as if they were truth, not realizing that the Bible does not teach those things. There is another danger not as easily noticed. We may accept the truth, but do so only because respected men or women are advocating it. If I came to you and told you the truth about the Bible and you believe it without checking it out for yourself, then your faith in the truth cannot be very strong. All Satan has to do is convince you that my word is not reliable, and then you are likely to reject the truth. Do not take my word for anything. I am just a human like you, subject to mistakes. The greatest theologians in the world, men who are respected for their insights and piety, have been wrong many times.

Studying for ourselves is an essential aspect of our Christian experience. We cannot trust what others say, for many will tell us lies about the Bible. Most of the time these lies are not intentional, they are just repeating what someone told them about the Bible. Yet a lie is dangerous whether it is intentional or not and every teaching requires diligent study so that we can know what is truth.

Paul desired that we come to the full knowledge of Christ “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

Paul said that the reason heresies must exist among us is so that it will cause us to study the Bible. Yet, heresies can have a damaging effect, especially on those who do not study the Bible, for they are in danger of receiving “damnable heresies.”

Peter warned us: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Peter 2:1-3).

We have been warned that false teachers will come among us secretly bringing in damnable heresies. Many shall follow these heresies, and the way of truth will be evil spoken of by those who follow these heresies.

Judging by Numbers

Some people have a tendency to determine the truthfulness of a doctrine based upon the number of people who adhere to it. These often will judge a doctrine untruthful if only a few

believe it and the majority speak against it. Keep in mind that just because many people speak against a message, it is not proof that it is truly a heresy. During the time of the early Christian church, the Christian faith was not widely accepted, and it was considered a heresy. Several Jews confessed to Paul, "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this **sect** [Greek: *hairesis* or "heresies"], we know that every where it is spoken against" (Acts 28:22).

The majority of the professed followers of God spoke evil against the Christian faith for many years. We cannot judge a teaching solely because the majority accept it or reject it. Often the truth is not accepted by the majority. Jesus Himself said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

When the Jews accused Paul of bringing in strange doctrines he told the Roman authorities, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). Just because the majority of Christians think that the way you worship God is heresy does not mean that it is heretical. In fact, if you are worshiping God correctly, it is likely that many will call you a heretic. But the only thing that truly matters is what God thinks about it.

Paul's accusers said of him, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a

ringleader of the **sect** [Greek: *heresies*] of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

Even though Paul's message was called a heresy, and was everywhere spoken against, it was vital truth. We cannot judge a doctrine by the number of its adherents.

Judging by Miracles

Some people have a tendency to determine the truthfulness of a doctrine by whether or not miracles attend its preaching. Yet, this is not a sure sign either. Jesus warned, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). Some of the greatest signs and wonders will be performed by false prophets. This is a tool of Satan to convince people to believe false doctrines.

Remember, Satan can perform miracles. The Bible tells us about a beast power that "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast" (Revelation 13:14).

Jesus said that when He comes to save His people from this earth, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23).

Today, there are television evangelists who appear to perform miracles before large crowds. Often these

evangelists touch a person and they fall down on the ground shaking, or they just raise their hand toward a person or group of people and they all fall down shaking. Many people suppose that this means the evangelists are telling the truth. Yet, there is not a single instance of anything like this happening in the Bible. In the Bible when a person was healed they rose to their feet and walked or began to see after being blind, or were visibly healed of leprosy, etc. There is no record of anyone being healed and then falling on the ground shaking.

We cannot judge a doctrine by whether it is attended by miracles, for Satan can perform miracles also.

Judging by Godliness

Many people judge a doctrine's validity by whether those promoting it are godly or not. Support for this method is sometimes drawn from Christ's words, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). Yet, even this method can leave a person mistaken, for Paul warned against, "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Satan's ministers can masquerade as ministers of righteousness, so we can be mistaken if we judge a doctrine true solely because those promoting it appear to be godly people. On the flip

side to this, there are some very ungodly people who believe the truth and even add their voice in support of the truth. Satan himself believes the truth of the singularity of God, yet we cannot trust him. James wrote, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

On one of Paul's journeys a possessed woman followed him saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). This woman was telling the truth about Paul even though she was possessed by a devil. This continued for many days, and finally Paul "turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:18). This possessed woman was teaching the truth, but her proclamation of it was bringing the appearance of harmony between Paul's message and her work of soothsaying. Many times Satan has his agents proclaim the truth so that he can spread lies along with the truth.

So we cannot determine the truthfulness of a doctrine solely based upon whether its promoters are godly or not.

The Only Sure Standard

There is only one sure standard to determine the truthfulness of a doctrine. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Everything must be compared with the Bible by prayer and study. Only then can we be sure that we believe the truth. Prayer is an

important element in our Bible study. When we open the Bible we should ask the Father to guide us by His Spirit so that we can understand what we read. The Father promised to send the Comforter and that “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

A Lesson from My Experience

Early in my Christian experience I was faced with the importance of studying for myself. When I was in the world I thought that there were Christians and non-Christians, and that Christians generally all believed the same things. I was surprised to find out that there are a large variety of beliefs among Christians. At first this revelation troubled me a lot. It left me wondering what I should believe. I realized that if all of these different churches cannot agree, then I cannot trust anyone to tell me the truth. Instead of giving up in disgust, I was driven to study the Bible diligently so that I could know for myself what is truth.

As I look back on this experience I am thankful for it. Without it, I may not have taken the stand to study the Bible so diligently. I can see the truthfulness of Paul’s words, that heresies must be among us so that we will study to show ourselves approved.

A Challenge

Friends, what will heresies do for you? Will you study the Bible for yourself or will you let someone else do your studying for you and hope they have it right? If you decide not to study, who will you choose to follow? Beware, for the Bible says, “For the

leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed” (Isaiah 9:16). We are counseled, “...put ye not confidence in a guide...” (Micah 7:5). “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14).

I pray that you will take Jude’s challenge: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:3, 4).

I would like to leave you with a challenge to study a few things out for yourself, and search the scriptures daily to see if these things are so. The first is a doctrine that has the potential of “denying the Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” I challenge you to study the Bible to find out if the trinity doctrine is true or not. Is God really three persons in one God? The Bible has the answer to this question. I challenge you to find it.


Secondly, I encourage you to study the Bible to see which day is the Sabbath. This has been a key sign of God’s people since He created the Sabbath over 6,000 years ago.

Thirdly, please study the Bible to find out what happens after death. Are the dead still alive somewhere or are they sleeping?

Fourthly, in your study, search the Scriptures and rightly divide the word of truth to see if the human soul is immortal, or can it die?

The answers to all of these questions are found in the Bible, and now the ball is in your court. Will you take the challenge and study these things out for yourself? Or will you succumb to peer pressure and take it for granted that the majority must have it right when it comes to these doctrines?

Don't be afraid to stand against the tide with Paul and confess that the way which they call heresy is the way that you worship God.

May God guide and bless you as you consider these things. 

(A New Tract: This article is available as a tract with an attractive cover. We believe this tract will be a valuable tool in sharing the truth with people. They are available for a requested donation of \$20 for 100 tracts.


Editor)

Waldensian Center Announcement

A three-month medical and missionary training course will run July 21 through October 6.

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37). God is calling you! The cause is in desperate need of ministers, Bible workers, medical missionaries, and canvassers. Do you desire to serve Christ but need training and some direction? God asks “...Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8). Are you wanting to respond “Here I am, use me”? Waldensian Center is looking for men/women who will not be bought or sold; men/women

who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men/women who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men/women whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men/women who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. We will be offering an eleven-week gospel and medical missionary training session starting July 21, 2009, and we want you to come and be a part of it with us.

For more information, please see our website at: www.7thdayhome-churchfellowships.com or contact David Sims at 530-294-1115 or 619-851-0953. 

TN Camp Meeting

The Berean Ministries will host a camp meeting at the Roan Mountain State Park in Roan Mt., TN from Tuesday, September 29, through October 3, 2009. For more information call Pastor Malcolm McCrillis at 423-772-3161, or send him an e-mail at John17three@earthlink.net.

SC Evangelistic Series

Seed of Truth Ministries is teaming up with brethren in South Carolina to host an evangelistic series in Anderson, SC in October, 2009. The goal is to reach the community with the gospel of salvation. If anyone can help with any aspect of these meetings call 866-649-7333 or write to seedoftruth@comcast.net.

The National Sunday Law (Part 10)

by Alonzo T. Jones

(The following is a portion of an argument of Alonzo T. Jones before The United States Senate, December 13, 1888, opposing the Blair Bill that promoted a Sunday law. *Editor*)

Mr. Jones: Dr. Crafts went to the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor at Indianapolis last month to get the delegates there to endorse the petition for the passage of this Sunday bill. He has referred to this in his speech here this forenoon, and has made a portion of his speech to them and to the Locomotive Engineers a part of his speech here. A report of his speech at Indianapolis was printed in the Journal of United Labor, the official journal of the Knights of Labor of America, Thursday, Nov. 29, 1888. He said to them there:

"Having carefully read and re-read your 'declaration of principles' and your 'constitution,' and having watched with interest the brave yet conservative shots of your Powderly at intemperance and other great evils, I have found myself so closely in accord with you that I have almost decided to become a Knight of Labor myself. If I do not, it will be only because I believe I can advance your 'principles' better as an outside ally."

The following question was asked by one of the Knights:

"Would it not be the best way to stop Sunday trains to have the Government own and control the railroads altogether, as the Knights advocate?"

Dr. Crafts answered:

"I believe in that. Perhaps the best way to begin the discussion of Government control for seven days per week is to discuss this bill for Government control on one day. If the railroads refuse

the little we now ask, the people will be the more ready to take control altogether."

The Knights of Labor advocate the doctrine that the Government shall take control of all the railroads in the country, and hire the idle men in the country at regular railroad wages, and run the roads, as it now runs the Post-office Department, without reference to the question whether anything is made or lost by the Government. This is what gave rise to the above question. Dr. Crafts proposes to play into their hands by making the bid for their support, that if they will help the Sunday-law workers get Government control of the railroads one day in the week, then the Sunday-law workers will help the Knights to get Government control every day in the week.

Another question that was discussed both there and at the convention of Locomotive Engineers at Richmond, Va., was the following:

"Will not one day's less work per week mean one-seventh less wages?"

The response to this was as follows:

"As much railroad work as is done in seven days can be done in six days, and done better, because of the better condition of the men. And on this ground the engineers would be sustained in demanding, and, if necessary, compelling, the railroad company to so readjust the pay schedule that the men will be paid as much as at present."

That is to say, Dr. Crafts and the Sunday-law workers propose to stand in with the laboring men to compel employers to pay seven days' wages for six days' work. This is made certain by the following petition to the State

legislatures, which is being circulated everywhere with the petition for this bill. I got this at the Chicago convention. Dr. Crafts distributed the petitions by the quantity there, and he is doing the same at the convention now in this city:

“To the State Senate [or House]: The undersigned earnestly petition your honorable body to pass a bill forbidding any one to hire another, or to be hired for more than six days in any week, except in domestic service, and the care of the sick; in order that those whom law or custom permits to work on Sunday may be protected in their right to some other weekly restday, and in their right to a week’s wages for six days’ work.”

Now a week consists of seven days. A week’s wages for six days’ work is seven days’ wages for six days’ work. This petition asks the legislatures of all the States to pass a law protecting employees in their right to seven days’ wages for six days’ work. No man in this world has any right to seven days’ wages for six days’ work. If he has a right to seven days’ wages for six days’ work, then he has an equal right to six days’ wages for five days’ work; and to five days’ wages for four days’ work; and to four days’ wages for three days’ work; to three days’ wages for two days’ work; to two days’ wages for one day’s work; and to one day’s wages for no work at all. This is precisely what the proposition amounts to. For in proposing to pay seven days’ wages for six days’ work, it does propose to pay one day’s wages for no work. But if a man is entitled to one day’s wages for doing nothing, why stop with one day? Why not go on and pay him full wages every day for doing nothing? It may be thought that I misinterpret the meaning of the petition; that, as it asks that nobody be allowed to hire another for

more than six days of any week, it may mean only that six days are to compose a week; and that it is a week’s wages of six days only that is to be paid for six days’ work. That is not the meaning of the petition. It is not the intention of those who are gaining the support of the Knights of Labor by inventing and circulating the petition.

Dr. George Elliott, pastor of the Foundry Methodist Church in this city, — the church in which this National Sunday Convention is being held, — the church that is now festooned with fourteen million petitions that they haven’t got, — festooned, at least partly, with one seven-million-two-hundred-thousand-times-multiplied Cardinal, — Dr. Elliott, while speaking in favor of this bill this forenoon, was asked by Senator Call these questions:

“Do you propose that Congress shall make provision to pay the people in the employ of the Government who are exempted on Sunday, for Sunday work?”

“Mr. Elliott: I expect you to give them adequate compensation.

“Senator Call: Do you propose that the same amount shall be paid for six days’ work as for seven?”

“Mr. Elliott: I do; for the reason that we believe these employees can do all the work that is to be done in six days. And if they do all the work, they ought to have all the pay.”

There it is in plain, unmistakable words, that they deliberately propose to have laws, state and national, which shall compel employers to pay seven days’ wages for six days’ work. This is sheer Socialism; it is the very essence of Socialism. No wonder they gained the unanimous endorsement of the convention of the Knights of Labor, and of the Locomotive Engineers, and the Socialistic Labor Union of New York City, by proposing to pay them good

wages for doing nothing. I confess that I, too, would support the bill upon such a proposition as that if I looked no further than the money that is in it.

But this is not all. The Knights of Labor not only accept the proposition, but they carry it farther, and logically, too. This principle has been advocated for some time by the Knights of Labor in demanding ten hours' pay for eight hours' work — virtually two hours' pay for doing nothing. The Christian Union and the Catholic Review propose to help the working-men secure their demanded eight-hour law, and then have the working-men help to get the six-day law by forbidding all work on Sunday. Dr. Crafts and Dr. Elliott go a step farther, and propose to secure the support of the working-men by having laws enacted compelling employers to pay them full wages on Sunday for doing nothing. But the Knights of Labor do not propose to stop with this. The same copy of the Journal of United Labor which contained the speech of Dr. Crafts, contained the following in an editorial upon this point:

"Why should not such a law be enacted? All the work now performed each week could easily be accomplished in five days of eight hours each if employment were given to the host of willing idle men who are now walking the streets. It is a crime to force one portion of a community to kill themselves by overwork, while another portion of the same people are suffering from privation and hunger, with no opportunity to labor. The speech of the Rev. Mr. Crafts, published elsewhere, furnishes an abundance of argument as to why such a law should be put in force."

So when the Sunday-law advocates propose to pay a week's wages for six days' work of eight hours each,

because all the work can be done in six days that is now done in seven, then the Knights of Labor propose to have a week's wages for five days' work, because, by employing all the idle men, all the work that is now done in seven days can be done in five. And as Dr. Elliott has said, "If they do all the work, they ought to have all the pay." But if a week's wages are to be paid for five days' work of eight hours each, that is to say, if two days' wages can rightly be paid for no work at all, why should the thing be stopped there? If the Government is to take control of the railroads all the time in order to pay two days' wages for doing nothing, and if the States are to enact laws compelling employers to pay employees two days' wages for doing nothing, then why shall not the Government, both state and national, take possession of everything, and pay the laboring men full wages all the time for doing nothing? For if men have the right to one day's wages for no work, where is the limit to the exercise of that right? The fact of the matter is that there is no limit. If a man is entitled to wages for doing nothing part of the time, he is entitled to wages for doing nothing all the time. And the principle upon which Dr. Crafts and his other Sunday-law conferees gain the support of the working-men to this Sunday bill is nothing at all but the principle of down-right Socialism.

There is a point right here that is worthy of the serious consideration of the working-men. These Sunday-law workers profess great sympathy for the laboring men in their struggle with the grinding monopolies, and by Sunday laws they propose to deliver the working-men from the power of these monopolies. But in the place of all these other monopolies, they propose to establish a monopoly of religion, and to

have the Government secure them in the perpetual enjoyment of it. They may talk as much as they please about the grasping, grinding greed of the many kinds of monopolies, and there is truth in it; but of all monopolies, the most greedy, the most grinding, the most oppressive, the most conscienceless the world ever saw or ever can see, is a religious monopoly. When these managers of religious legislation have delivered the working-men from the other monopolies — granting that they can do it — then the important question is, Who will deliver the working-men from the religious monopoly?

Senator Blair: Abolish the law of rest, take it away from the working people, and leave corporations and saloon keepers and everybody at perfect liberty to destroy that twenty-four hours of rest, and lawgivers and law-makers will find out whether or not the people want it, and whether they want those law-makers.

Mr. Jones: There are plenty of ways to help the working-men without establishing a religious monopoly, and enforcing religious observance upon all. There is another point that comes in right here. Those who are asking for the law and those who work for it, are those who compel the people to work on Sunday. In the Illinois State Sunday convention in Chicago last month, it was stated in the first speech made in the

convention, “We remember how that the working-men are compelled to desecrate the Sabbath by the great corporations.” The very next sentence was, “We remember also that the stockholders, the owners of these railroads, are members of the churches, that they sit in the pews and bow their heads in the house of God on the Sabbath day.”

Senator Blair: That is only saying that there are hypocrites in this world. What has that to do with this proposed law?

Mr. Jones: I am coming to that. It has a good deal to do with it. The stockholders who own the railroads act in this way, those men said; and it was stated by a minister in that convention that a railroad president told him that there were more petitions for Sunday trains from preachers than from any other class.

Senator Blair: There are a lot of hypocrites among the preachers, then.

Mr. Jones: Precisely; although you yourself have said it. I confess I have not the heart to dispute it.

Senator Blair: I do not find any fault with that statement. If it is true, it does not touch this question.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 106-113 of the book entitled, *The National Sunday Law*, by Alonzo T. Jones. Some editing was done for this publication. *Editor*)

The Gospel in Creation (Part 7)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

It is plain that if a man is to get righteousness he must get it from outside himself. He must, in fact, be made into another man. He must have life entirely different from his natural life. This is

dimly recognized in the frequently expressed desire to “live a different life.” That is just what everyone needs to do. The trouble is that so many try to live another life with the old life of sin, and

that is impossible. In order for man to live a different life from what he has been living, it is necessary for him to have a different life.

From the text last quoted it is evident where he must get this life. God alone is good. His life is goodness itself. God's life consists in acts of goodness. One's life is just what his ways are, and all God's ways are right. The law of God expresses His ways, for we read, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways" (Psalm 119:1-3). And His ways are as much higher than man's ways as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Now the righteousness of God is a thing that man may have. The Saviour said to His disciples, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). But where are we to seek for it? In Christ, because God has made Him unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). It is in Him that we may be made the righteousness of God. But since God's righteousness is His life, it is impossible for us to have His righteousness without having His life. This life is in Christ, for Christ is God [**Editor's note:** Christ is God, for He is divine like His Father, yet He is distinguished from His Father who is the only true God.], and God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. The only life ever lived on this earth that was perfectly righteous was the life of Christ. His life alone could resist sin.

"Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). The life of Christ is the righteousness of God. It is that which we are to seek.

But man cannot live God's life. Only God can live His own life. It would be the height of presumption for anyone to think that he could live the life of God. The life of God must be manifested in the man, if he has any righteousness, but God Himself must live the life. The apostle Paul expresses it thus: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Note again how easy it is for a man to set himself up as above God. Since righteousness is life, even the life of God, it is evident that for a man to claim that he has life in himself—that he has by nature in himself a principle that cannot by any possibility die—is the same as saying that he has righteousness in himself, and thus again to claim indirectly that he is God. This again is that man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

It was this feeling that kept the Pharisees from accepting Christ. They "trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (Luke 18:9). They professed to believe in eternal life, and searched the Scriptures with that in view; but Jesus sadly said to them "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). Why would they not come to Him, that they might have life? For the reason that they thought they had it in themselves. For righteousness

is life. Christ came to this earth for the sole purpose of giving life to men, for they had forfeited life by sin. He gives His life to us, and that gives us His righteousness. The only reason why anyone will not come to Christ for life is that he thinks that he has it already. Again we repeat, that whoever claims that one may have eternal life without Christ, thereby claims that one may have righteousness without Christ. The two must go together.

Let us read a few familiar texts to impress this fact the more strongly on our minds. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Thou has given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:2, 3). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" John 6:57. This life in the man is the only way of righteousness. We are to be "made the righteousness of God in Him" 2 Corinthians 5:21.

This life is ours by faith, for the just shall live by faith. That does not mean that the life is not real, but that it can be retained only by faith. As the life is received, so must it be retained. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Colossians 2:6). Man does not have

this life in his own right, and within his own power. It is the life of God, and not the life of man. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). It is the life of Jesus manifest in mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:11).

This life is the light of men. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). This life of righteousness is given to men as freely as the light of day. It is as abundant as the light; there is enough for all. A characteristic of light is that it can multiply itself. A single torch may light a thousand other torches, and still have as much light as in the beginning. So it is with the light of Christ's life. With Him is the fountain of life. It comes from Him in abundance. He can give life to every man in the world, if they would all receive it, and still have as much left as in the beginning. He can live in His fullness in every man. Everyone who believes gets the benefit of the entire life of Christ. Christ is not divided.

Those who sit in the shadow of death, which is the shadow that sin casts, may have that shadow dispelled by allowing the light to shine in. That light is to be manifested in its fullness in the church before the end, so that the life of Christ will be manifested before the world as plainly as when Christ was here on earth in person. This will be the standard around which thousands will rally, even as they did on the day of Pentecost. It is this light of Christ's life

of which the prophet speaks in these words:

“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3). All this, and much more than can possibly be expressed by the pen of an uninspired person, is taught us in the simple words, “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

The Second Day - Clouds are the Dust of His Feet

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven” (Genesis 1:6-8).

On first thought it seems as though the work of the second day was very meager; but man’s first thoughts of God’s work are always very limited. Wonderful lessons of hope and comfort are to be learned from this brief record. The work done on this day is often referred to in the Bible as an example of the mighty power of God, and it will be remembered that the power of God is the hope of man.

The book of Job contains some magnificent descriptions of the power and majesty of God. “He stretcheth out

the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them” (Job 26:7, 8). Who can ever tire of watching the clouds in their varying forms? They are a constant source of wonder. And then to think of the wonderful power that is represented by them. Think of the immense quantities of water that they hold, to pour out on the earth at the appointed time! For it is the direct personal power of the Lord that causes it to rain. Science may tell us, in part, what conditions must obtain before rain falls, and may predict its occurrence with considerable accuracy; but this does not disprove the fact that God Himself orders the rain.

There are many things that man has observed in regard to the working of God, and there are many more that might be observed. That is what God wants us to do. “He has made His wonderful works to be remembered” (Psalm 111:4). But He wants us to observe them only for the purpose of seeing Him in them. They who observe the works of God only to attribute them to a goddess called Nature, as though God Himself were not concerned in them, study to no profit whatever. What men call Nature is simply that which is observed of the ways of God. No better definition has ever been given than this, that “the laws of nature are the habits of God.” But after man has exhausted all his skill in observation and calculation concerning the ways of God, still he must remember that “these are but the outskirts of His ways; and how small a whisper do we hear of Him? but the thunder of His power who

can understand?" (Job 26:14, R.V.). It is not possible for finite man to fathom all the ways of the infinite God, and therefore human science at its best is very limited.

We have said that it is the direct, personal power of the Lord that causes the rain. Read the following: "But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth trembleth, and the nations are not able to abide His indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding hath He stretched out the heavens; when He uttereth His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures" (Jeremiah 10:10-13, R.V.).

What is this designed to teach us? Always the power of the word of God. Not only the simple power of the word of the Lord, but the wisdom of God, and the power by which He breathes upon us that word of righteousness. Read again from the book of Job. The twenty-eighth chapter is one of the most perfect and sublime compositions ever known in any language, and from the latter part we quote these words:

"Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We

have heard the fame thereof with our eyes. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then did He see it, and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:20-28).

The psalmist tells us that "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (Psalm 33:5). From everything in nature God designs that we shall learn a lesson concerning Him and His love. God's servants in every age have learned some of these lessons. Especially did those holy men who were moved by the Spirit of God to utter His words see God in His works. But in these days, even as it was among the philosophers of old, men in their own fancied wisdom have not liked to retain God in their knowledge, and so have left Him out of their calculations. Too many, as they study the things of the earth and the heavens, instead of being filled with wonder and praise at the mighty power of God that is therein displayed, become filled with wonder at their own marvelous attainments, until they almost fancy that they have created the things that they have discovered. Men forget that these things existed ages before they were born, and almost imagine that their discovery of them is the bringing of them into existence. They speak with contemptuous

pity of the men who wrote the Bible, as men who lived in an age inferior to ours when “science” had not made any discoveries, and who were simple enough to think that these things which we see, and so readily account for, were the direct workings of God. Well, it is far better to be simple than to have so much wisdom that does not come from God, nor lead to Him.

But let us read the words of one who was no mean scientist; the words of one whose wisdom was the wonder of his day in the whole world. A man to whom God Himself said, “Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee” (1 Kings 3:12). A man of whom the inspired word of God says, “He was wiser than all men... and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom” (1 Kings 4:31-34).

In his proverbs he speaks much of the wonderful works of God, and in one of them he refers directly to the work that was done on the second day of creation week, and connects it with the word of God by which it was accomplished. Thus, “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in His fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the end of the

earth? what is His name, and what is His Son’s name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:4-6). **[Editor’s note:** These words are said to be from “Agur the son of Jakeh” (v. 1) instead of Solomon. Either way, they are inspired by God.]

The rain which God has bound up in His thick clouds, and which His voice—the same voice which speaks peace and righteousness—causes to fall upon the earth, is a pledge to us of God’s willingness to forgive. Listen to the holy boldness of the prophet Jeremiah: “We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against Thee. Do not abhor us, for Thy name’s sake, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory: remember, break not Thy covenant with us. Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not Thou He, O Lord, our God? therefore we will wait upon Thee: for Thou hast made all these things” (Jeremiah 14:20-22). The Lord is the one who causes rain; therefore we will wait upon Him, in confidence that He will not abhor us, even though we have grievously sinned; but that He will for the sake of His own word, pardon our iniquity.

To be Continued...

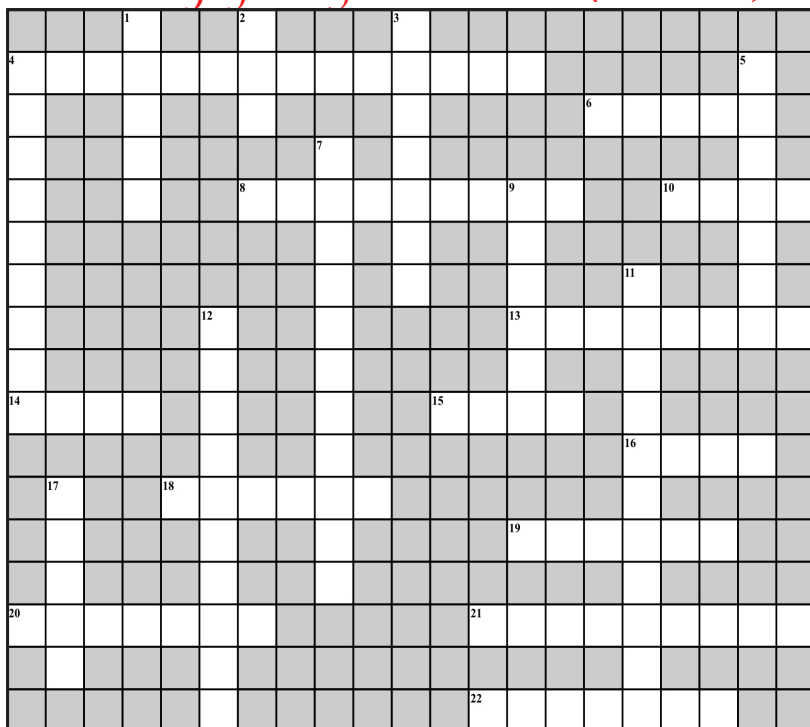
(This article was taken from pages 57-72 of the book entitled, *The Gospel in Creation*, by Ellet J. Waggoner.

Editor)

Present Truth
Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on a series of Bible Lessons written by Lynnford Beachy, entitled, “God’s Love on Trial,” taken from the book by the same title. 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. (The KJV is required.)

The Holy Spirit of God - Part 2 (Lesson 10)



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month’s issue

Note: In the last lesson we learned that the Father promised to send another Comforter, and that this Comforter is the indwelling presence of both the Father and His Son. In this lesson we will gain more insights into this marvelous gift.

- When you are brought before rulers the Spirit of your ____ will speak in you. Matthew 10:18-20—**19 Across**
- Luke records this same conversation saying the ____ will speak in

you. Luke 12:11, 12 (2 words)—**8 Across**

- Note:** When we compare these two passages we find that “the Spirit of your Father” is used interchangeably with “the Holy Ghost.” Therefore, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father. In the original Greek text there is no difference between the terms “Holy Ghost” and “Holy Spirit.”
- The Comforter ____ from the Father. John 15:26—**12 Down**

➤ The Holy Ghost is shed on us through _____. Titus 3:5, 6 (2 words)—**11 Down**

➤ The disciples were told to wait for the _____ of the Father. Acts 1:4—**5 Down**

➤ The disciples would receive _____ when the Holy Ghost would come upon them. Acts 1:8—**6 Across**

➤ After receiving the promise of the Father Jesus _____ this gift upon His disciples. Acts 2:32, 33 (2 words)—**4 Down**

Note: In this process we gain the added benefit of receiving the Spirit of Christ, who was “in all points tempted like as we are,” and is able to help us when we are tempted (Hebrews 4:15; 2:18).

➤ The faithful men of the OT died and they _____ not the promise. Hebrews 11:39—**13 Across**

➤ God provided some _____ thing for us. Hebrews 11:40—**18 Across**

➤ The _____ was in the prophets when they testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ. 1 Peter 1:10, 11 (3 words)—**4 Across**

➤ Because Christ has suffered being _____ He is able to help us when we are in the same trouble. Hebrews 2:18—**22 Across**

Note: Here is something better that is available to us today that could not have been available to the prophets of old. Even though the Spirit of Christ lived in the prophets, Christ had not yet been tempted, and therefore He could not help them in the same way that He can help us now.

➤ God sent His _____ to turn us away from our iniquities. Acts 3:26—**2 Down**

➤ God sent forth the _____ of His Son into our hearts. Galatians 4:6—**9 Down**

➤ The glory the Father gave to His Son was His own _____. John 17:5—**16 Across**

➤ Jesus said that He has _____ us this same glory. John 17:22, 23—**17 Down**

Note: Christ comes to live in us, but He does not come alone, He brings His Father with Him, for His Father dwells in Christ.

➤ John began a letter by wishing that we would receive _____, mercy and peace from the Father and Son. 2 John 1:3—**1 Down**

Note: Here is a small sample of similar greetings: Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2.

➤ Paul charged Timothy before God, Jesus, and the _____. 1 Timothy 5:21 (2 words)—**7 Down**

Note: If Paul believed that God was made up of three separate persons, why do you think he would exclude the Holy Spirit from this charge and even include the angels?

➤ Jesus said that He and His Father bore record to His authenticity citing the passage that says “the _____ of two men is true.” John 8:16-18—**21 Across**

Note: If Jesus knew of another divine person to bare record of Him, it is highly probable that He would have mentioned Him here. Solomon wrote, “Two are better than one... and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

➤ Jesus said, “He that hates me” has “hated _____ me and my Father.” John 15:23, 24—**15 Across**

➤ “The counsel of peace” (or the plan of salvation) “shall be _____ them both.” Zechariah 6:12, 13—**20 Across**

Note: The man whose name is “the Branch” is Christ Jesus (see Isaiah 11:1-5 & Jeremiah 23:5).

Present Truth

- The Lord God Almighty and the _____ are the temple of the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:22—**10 Across**
- It is life eternal to know the only _____ and Jesus Christ. John 17:3 (2 words)—**3 Down**

Note: If the Holy Spirit is a third, separate individual in the Godhead, then it would be just as necessary to know him as it would be to know God, the Father, and His only begotten Son. Yet, here we find that our eternal life does not depend upon knowing any third individual.


- Christ in you is the _____ of glory. Colossians 1:27—**14 Across**

Note: The great blessing of receiving God's Spirit is that it comes to us with the added benefit of the Spirit of God's victorious Son coming into our hearts to help us in our struggle against sin and temptation. Satan would like you to think that Jesus Christ is not in us, but that He sent someone else to take His place. Friends, that is an invention of Satan, specifically designed to take away your hope of glory. Please don't let that happen. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Some Things to Think About:

1. In all the recorded history found in the Bible, there is no record of a

conversation between the Father or the Son with the Holy Spirit even though there are many instances of the Father and Son conversing with each other.

2. We know that the Father loves us because He gave His Son to die for our sins. We know the Son loves us because He died for us. If the Holy Spirit is a third, separate person, how can we know he loves us?
3. The trinity doctrine is never used to convert sinners, but rather trinitarians use what they call heresy to convert sinners. Trinitarians tell sinners that God loves them so much that He gave His Son to die for their sins, yet they do not believe He is really a Son, nor that He could die. 

Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

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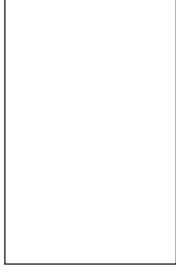
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