

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

November 2009

“Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:2). I pray that you are doing well. 2009 has brought a lot of changes to this world, and should make us realize that the coming of our Lord is very soon. Many of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation have been fulfilled, and soon the Antichrist will exercise its power by enforcing the mark of the beast. I pray that you will prepare to face this crisis by surrendering your life completely to Christ.

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

The Divinity of Christ

by Lynnford Beachy

Jesus Christ is our Saviour, Mediator, High Priest, and our only hope of eternal life. He is the regenerating power that lives within us to transform us into the image of God. Yet, none of these things could be accomplished if He was just an ordinary man like everyone else. All of these things are dependent upon Him being the Son of God. Jesus said that His identity as “the Son of the living God” is the central and most important teaching of His church (Matthew 16:13-18). John told us that the only ones who can overcome the world are those who believe “that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John 5:5).

In the first chapter of Hebrews we are given an exalted view of Christ. We read:

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Young at Heart page 13

The National Sunday Law (Part 13) page 14

by Alonzo T. Jones

The Gospel in Creation (Part 10) page 17

by Ellet J. Waggoner

begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:1-12).

Again and again, the writer of Hebrews affirms that Jesus Christ is so exalted because He is the actual Son of God, the express image of His person. The identity of His divine Father guarantees the divinity of the Son of God. Here, God, the Father, addresses His Son as “God.” This affirms, from the highest authority in the universe, that Jesus Christ is God. Yet, in this amazing declaration, there is a very clear distinction between Jesus and His Father. His Father says to Him, “thy God hath anointed thee...” So, even though Jesus is called “God,” He has a God. This agrees with Paul, where He says that the Father is, “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:17). The Father is called “the only true God” (John 17:3), “the Most High God” (Mark 5:7), “the

only Potentate [the only supreme ruler]” (1 Timothy 6:15), the “one God and Father of all who is above all” (Ephesians 4:6), and it is said several times that “there is none other God but He” (Mark 12:32; See also Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:4; etc.). The Bible is very clear that the “one God” of the Bible is “God, the Father” (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Some may immediately question why the Bible would call Jesus “God,” and at the same time teach that His Father is “the only true God” (John 17:3). This is a very valid concern. When we notice how the Bible uses the word “true” it will shed light on this important question. In Hebrews 8:2 we read about Christ, who is “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Moses was commanded to build a tabernacle according to the pattern showed to him on Mount Sinai. This tabernacle was a replica, a duplicate, of the original tabernacle that God pitched. The Greek word *αληθινης* that was translated true “contrasts realities with their semblances.” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*) The tabernacle on earth was not a false tabernacle, nor was it the original—it was a likeness of the original in heaven. The original tabernacle is distinguished from its likeness by using the word “true.”

With this understanding in mind we realize that Christ is not the original or “true” God—He is “the image of God,” “the image of the invisible God,” “the express image of his person.” (2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3) An image is never the original, but always a likeness or duplication of the original. Christ is the Son of God, and

therefore the express image of His Father. It would be incorrect to say that the Father is the image of His Son, because the Father is the original. In like manner it would be incorrect to refer to Christ as the true or original God, since He is the image of the true God.

Gods

In the Bible, the word “god” has several different meanings. In a very limited sense, even men are called gods. Both the Greek word θεος (*theos*) and the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (*elohim*), which are most often translated “god” are used in reference to men. (See Exodus 7:1; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34.) When the word “god” is used in that sense, then there are hundreds and thousands of gods. Paul said there are many “that are called gods... as there be gods many and lords many” (1 Corinthians 8:5).

In a less limited sense, angels are called gods. David wrote about man, “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [*elohim*]” (Psalms 8:5). The word “angels” in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *elohim*. The way *elohim* is used here it denotes a type of being that is higher than man, but it is still used in a limited sense, and with this definition there would still be many gods.

In reference to Christ, the word “god” is used in a much less limited sense, to denote His nature as being on the same level as His Father—something that cannot be said about any other being in the universe. The Bible says that Christ was “in the form of God” (Philippians 2:6).

But even when the word “god” is used of Christ, it is used in a limited

sense, because Christ has a God who is “the head of Christ,” “above all,” and “greater than” He (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:6; and John 14:28). When the word “God” is used in its absolute and unlimited sense, there is only one person to whom it can apply, and that is God, the Father, alone. Jesus said that His Father is “the only true God” (John 17:3). Paul said, “there is none other God but one... God, the Father” (1 Corinthians 8:4, 6). Of the 1,354 times the word “god” is used in the New Testament, more than 99% of the time it refers exclusively to God, the Father, while it only applies to His Son four times (John 1:1; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:16).

So, to clarify, there are many gods when the word “god” is used in a limited sense, to include men and angels. When the word “god” is used as an adjective to describe the nature of God, as in the last part of John 1:1, then there are only two divine beings, God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. The Son of God is completely divine by nature because His Father is divine, just as I am completely human, because my parents are human.

When the word “god” is used in its absolute sense, to denote “the most high God,” “the Sovereign of the universe,” or “the only true God,” then there is only one God; God, the Father, beside which there is no God.

Some people, when realizing the overwhelming biblical evidence demonstrating that God, the Father, is “the only true God,” have concluded that it would be improper to call Jesus “God.” To come to this conclusion one must adhere to a very confined definition of the

word “God,” a definition more rigid than the Bible writers used. The biblical record demonstrates a broad meaning for the word “God.” Both men and angels are also called “gods” using the very same Hebrew and Greek words that are used to address the true God of heaven. (See Exodus 7:1; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34.)

We have already read where God, the Father, calls His Son, “God.” We could rest content with this testimony, but there is more.

John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3). Here, John very clearly applies the title “God” to Jesus Christ, here called “the Word.” We know “the Word” has direct reference to Jesus Christ, for in verse 14 we read, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The way John 1:1 is written in the King James Version leaves room for some confusion, for one could conclude that the Word was the same God He was with, for He is said to be with God and God at the same time. Biblical Greek Scholars generally agree that the second time the word “God” is used in John 1:1, it is used as a “qualitative noun” to describe the qualities of “the Word.” Harner says that nouns “with an anarthrous [no article] predicate preceding the verb, are primarily qualitative in meaning” (*The Journal of Biblical Literature*, Philip B. Harner, article “

Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1.”) “The clause could be translated, ‘the same nature as God.’ This would be one way of representing John’s thought, which is, as I understand it, that ho logos [‘the word’], no less than ho theos [‘the God’], had the nature of theos.” (*ibid.*)

John began His gospel by stating that Jesus Christ is divine, and no less divine than His Father. John later sums up his gospel by saying that it was written “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...” (John 20:31). As the actual Son of God, Jesus has, by right of inheritance, the same nature as His Father. Paul wrote, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Colossians 1:19).

We are instructed, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:5-9). Here, Paul contrasts “the form of God,” with “the form of a servant [or man].” God’s form is distinct from the form of man. It is true that man was created in God’s image, and thus resembles God, yet there are distinct differences. Jesus Christ is said to have been in “the form of God” prior to His mission to enter this world as a man. The form of God must

be a divine form, for God is divine. We are told, "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (1 Corinthians 15:39). There is a "kind" of form that is divine, and Jesus Christ has this form, equally with His Father.

Even when Christ became a man He retained His divine status as "the Son of the Most High God." He still received worship by both men and angels. Though He had lost His divine form, He was still divine because of *who* He was, not because of what He was made of. When foretelling Christ's entrance into this world, Isaiah wrote, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Christ is to be called "the mighty God." Even in this appellation, there is a distinction between Him and His Father, for His Father is "the Lord God Almighty" (Revelation 21:22).

Some have become confused because Christ is called, "the everlasting Father." Yet, there is no need for confusion. Jesus Christ is not His own Father, but the Father of "the children whom the LORD [His Father] hath given" to Him. (Please compare Isaiah 8:18 with Hebrews 2:13.) He is called "everlasting" even though His Father "hath given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). This life He received from His Father is everlasting life. Now Jesus is "alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18).

Paul wrote, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). Here again, Jesus Christ is called God. He was manifest in the flesh, and finally "received up into glory."

God revealed, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Christ is called "God with us." In this phrase, Christ could be called "God," or "us," for in coming to this earth He joined Himself to the human race, and became "us." "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

After Jesus was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Romans 6:4), doubting Thomas put his fingers in the nail prints in Christ's hands, and thrust his hand in His side, After doing this, "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). It may be that Thomas was making a general statement about God, the Father, or he could have been addressing Jesus as God. Either way, his statement is remarkable, and it would seem more likely that He addressed Jesus directly as "God." This would be very appropriate, for God, the Father, Himself, addresses Him as "God."

A few verses before Thomas' exclamation we read about Jesus saying to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). Regardless of

whether Thomas was addressing Jesus as God, or not, Jesus taught His disciples that their God (the Father) was His God as well. It is certain that if Thomas was addressing Jesus as God, he was not thinking of Him as the most high God.

Worship

One unique quality of deity is that divine beings are worthy of worship. It is dangerous and sinful to worship anyone but God. There are a few examples of people ignorantly attempting to worship God's servants. Notice the response given whenever this happened: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25, 26). This is the proper response for God's people.

John attempted to worship an angel on two occasions. He wrote, "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Revelation 22:8, 9). At another time John was conversing with an angel, and he wrote, "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). We see from these examples that God's faithful servants, whether human or

angelic, refuse to receive worship from anyone.

There is an account of someone who received worship in Joshua chapter 5. It says, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so" (Joshua 5:13-15).

Joshua met someone who identified Himself as "the captain of the host of the LORD." This person was not the LORD Himself, but rather His chief Captain. And when Joshua bowed to worship Him, this Captain not only allowed Himself to be worshiped, but commanded Joshua to take off his shoes for he was standing on holy ground. Joshua was told that he was not worshiping sufficiently, but needed to show more respect. The only other time in the Bible when anyone was asked to take their shoes off because they were on holy ground was when Moses was before the burning bush.

So who was this magnificent being who appeared to Joshua? He was not God, the Father, for "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). He identified Himself as the captain of the LORD's host rather than the LORD Himself. The fact that this being allowed

worship, and even demanded more worship, proves that He could not be an angelic Being, nor a mere human. The only person this could be is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is worthy of worship, and even God, the Father commanded His angels to worship His Son. “When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews 1:6). Jesus said, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:22, 23). We are commanded to honour and worship the Son.

Problems in Worship

Jesus gave an important principle about worship when He told a Samaritan woman, “true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23). It is important that we worship God correctly.

One important aspect of worship is praise. Throughout the Bible there are many examples of people worshipping God accompanied by praise and exaltation through spoken words. For example John recorded how worship is conducted in heaven: “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And

every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:11-13).

Here the true worshippers in heaven extol the Lamb by saying that He was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, etc. Notice the clarity of distinction these worshippers make between the Father and the Son. They do not extol praises to the One who sits on the throne by saying that He was slain or died. Nor do they say that the One sitting on the throne received riches. This type of worship would not be true worship, for it would not be “in truth.” Yet, to Christ, the Lamb, they ascribe praise for His death, and state that He is worthy to receive riches, something the Father could not receive, for He already owns everything. The Father said that He “appointed” His Son to be “heir of all things.” An heir receives things from someone else. Jesus testified, “I received of my Father” (Revelation 2:27). It would be improper and untruthful to claim the Father received riches from someone else.

In a desire to show honour and respect to Jesus, many have gone to the extreme of worshipping Him at the expense of the Father. Their songs and praises are filled with confusing terminology, such as “We thank you most high God for coming down to die for us,” or “the immortal God died for our sins,” or similar statements that blur the distinction between the Father and His Son. We are to worship the Son as the Son of God, not as “the most high God.” Notice how the

disciples worshipped Jesus: “Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matthew 14:33). His disciples were not confused about His identity, nor did their worship include confusing and contradictory statements about His identity. They stated plainly that Jesus is the Son of God.

There are a significant number of hymns that contain untruthful statements about the Father and Son. Sometimes we mindlessly repeat these sayings without realizing that we are not speaking the truth. There have been several times that I have been engaged in singing hymns when I must stop myself from speaking the words, for I know they are not true. We should guard against worshipping God or Christ in an untruthful manner.

Examples of Christ Receiving Worship

True worship of the Son of God is not only appropriate but commanded by God, the Father. (See Hebrews 1:7 and John 5:23.)

Here are a few examples of Christ receiving worship from His disciples. In no case was this practice rejected by Christ.

When the wise men came from the East, they asked, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2). “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:11).

A blind man was healed and thrown out of the synagogue for believing in Christ. “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him” (John 9:35-38).

“And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Matthew 8:2).

A Canaanite woman came up to Jesus “and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me” (Matthew 15:25).

“While he spake... unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live” (Matthew 9:18).

“The mother of Zebedee’s children” came to Jesus “with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him” (Matthew 20:20).

After His resurrection Jesus visited with His disciples on several occasions. In His last visit, “he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:50-53).

Matthew’s account says, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some

doubted” (Matthew 28:16, 17). There are still some today who doubt whether Jesus is truly the Son of God, and doubt that they should worship Him as such. It is time to put away our doubts and “honour the Son, even as” we “honour the Father.” Not that we should honour the Son as if He were the Father, for that would bring dishonour to both the Father and the Son. Let us worship “both the Father and the Son” (2 John 1:9) in Spirit and in truth.

Christ's Exalted Relationship to God

To dispel any idea that Jesus was just an ordinary man, Jesus asked the Pharisees, “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” (Matthew 22:42-45). Jesus was elevating the minds of His hearers to see Christ as the divine Son of God, rather than a mere human.

The book of Proverbs declares: “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 ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Proverbs 30:4). Here the divine relationship between the Father and His Son is demonstrated to have existed long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Zechariah recorded an interesting statement from God, where He said, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow,

saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones” (Zechariah 13:7). Here the most high God speaks of someone who is His fellow. This shows that the Son has a unique position as the only person who shares the same classification of being as God, the Father.

A few chapters earlier we read, “Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:12). The Branch is Jesus Christ. (See Isaiah 11:1-5.) He is the only being in the universe that is allowed to participate in the counsel of peace, otherwise known as the plan of salvation.

Paul speaks of Christ as “The Lord from heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:47), indicating His divine position in heaven. Jesus said of Himself, “the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day” (Matthew 12:8). Here, Jesus shows His elevated position.

Wishing to show His exalted position, Jesus said, when healing a sick man, “thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the

Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house” (Luke 5:20-24).

Regardless of what a Catholic priest may claim about his abilities to forgive sins, only a divine being has this authority. No man can possibly forgive sins committed against God. Nor can I forgive you for something you did to your father. The injured party must be the one who grants forgiveness. Regarding sins against God, only God can forgive sins.

Paul wrote of Christ, “he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:17). The book of Hebrews tells us that Christ is “upholding all things by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3). Surely, only a divine being could hold “all things” together, and keep the stars and planets in their place.

Jesus Christ is so exalted that He even shares the same name as His Father. The book of Hebrews tells us that Christ is, “so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4). A name obtained by inheritance must be a name shared by both the Father and the Son, such as “Yahweh.”

Notice what the Bible says about when Christ, along with two angels, appeared to Abraham to inform him about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. “And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day” (Genesis 18:1). Notice who appeared to Abraham. He was the LORD. Keep in mind that whenever the word LORD appears in all capital letters in the KJV, the name of God, Yahweh, was used in the

original Hebrew text. After visiting with Abraham, the two angels who accompanied the LORD on this visit continued their journey to Sodom. “And the men [who were actually angels] turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD” (Genesis 18:22). The LORD who appeared to Abraham, and who spoke with him face to face was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We know it was not God, the Father, for He said, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exodus 33:20). The Bible also tells us, “No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18).

Years later, this same divine individual appeared to Moses in a burning bush.

The Angel of the Lord

The Bible says, “And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2). Notice who is said to have appeared to Moses, “the angel of the LORD.” Yet, this was no ordinary angel, for when Moses approached the bush he was told, “Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Exodus 3:5, 6). The Hebrew word מַלְאָכַּךְ (*malawk*) that was translated “angel” means, “messenger.” This word does not always refer to the particular order of being called “angels.” A messenger can be anyone who brings a message on

behalf of someone else. Men are called messengers (angels), as well as Jesus Christ, Himself. He is the chief messenger of God, for “His name is called the Word of God” (Revelation 19:13). He is called “the messenger [angel] of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1).

When Stephen spoke of Moses’ encounter at the bush years later he said, “And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush” (Acts 7:30). This “angel of the Lord” was Jesus Christ Himself who received worship from Moses, and even commanded him to remove his shoes.

On the momentous occasion where Jacob’s name was changed, he “was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day” (Genesis 32:24). Jacob tenaciously held on to this being and finally prevailed. “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Genesis 32:30). This “man” who wrestled with Jacob was no ordinary man, nor was He God, the Father. He was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Yet, Jacob called Him “God.”

Hosea recounts this struggle by saying, “He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us” (Hosea 12:3, 4). Here again, Christ is called, both “God” and “angel [or messenger].”

Christ appeared to Samson’s parents: “But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife.

Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God” (Judges 13:21, 22). Christ is called God several times in the Old Testament Scriptures.

God told Moses, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him” (Exodus 23:20, 21). This “Angel” was Christ, and God said, “my name is in Him.” We have seen that God’s name, “Yahweh” was used by Christ, and of course the title, “God” has been applied to him on several occasions.

The fact that Jesus is “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18) guarantees that His divine nature is on an equality with God. The Jews recognized this connection. “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:17, 18). If Jesus is truly God’s Son, then He could be nothing other than God by nature. There is a law that everything must bring forth “after his kind” (Genesis 1:24). This law is universal in our world. Oak trees produce seeds that always bring forth oak trees. You will never be able to grow a banana tree from an acorn. The same is true with animals and humans we all must produce offspring after our kind. Dogs always produce dogs, cats always produce cats, humans always produce humans. This law was instilled by our

Creator to teach us a lesson. God has a Son, and this very fact proves that His Son is divine just like His Father. Jesus said, "I came out from God" (John 16:27).

Christ Mentioned with God

There are many places in the Bible that Jesus Christ is spoken of alongside of God, inhabiting a position more special and different than any being in the universe. Paul wrote, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7). Over half the books of the New Testament begin in a similar way, showing a special status to Christ alongside God, the Father.

Paul explained, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:6). John wrote, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9, 10). John continued, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17). Here, Jesus is said to be in the "midst of the throne." Paul wrote, "Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). This certainly gives Him a high status, for the writer of Hebrews used this fact to show the exalted nature of

Christ in contrast with the angels. He wrote, "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Hebrews 1:13).

The powers of this world "shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). Jesus said, "ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62).

John saw a vision of the earth made new, and the magnificent city of God, and he said, "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22).

Surely, all of these statements about the Son of God would not have been made if He was not divine. Jesus Christ, along with His Father, are worthy to receive our worship and praise. And let this worship be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

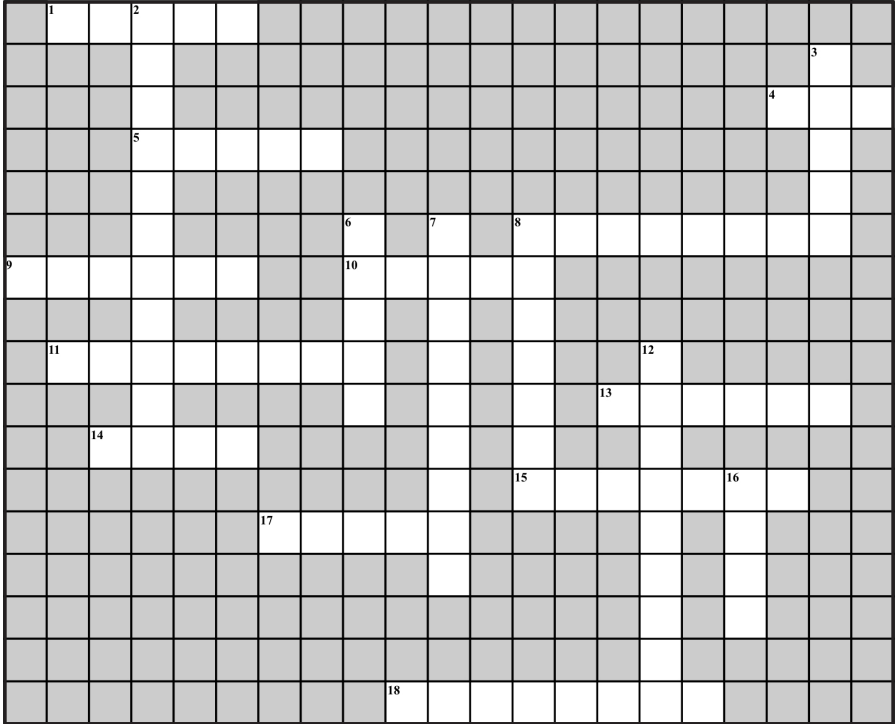
Worshipping God in Spirit and in truth will not be in harmony with the majority of professed followers of God who worship God incorrectly in ignorance and mystery. Paul said, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). To stand with the faithful, "true worshippers" this will have to be your confession as well. But do not fear, you are in good company. Soon God and His Son will be your visible companions throughout all eternity. Maranatha!



Present Truth
Something for the Young at Heart

We would like to give you an interesting and easy way to study the Bible, so we are including a crossword puzzle for you. 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 Thoughts of the Heart



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

- As a man thinketh in his _____, so is he. Proverbs 23:7—**17 Across**
- As we behold, we are changed into the same _____. 2 Corinthians 3:18—**10 Across**
- God's problem with those before the flood was that their thoughts were _____ continually. Genesis 6:5-7—**16 Down**
- The thoughts of the wicked are an _____ to the LORD. Proverbs 15:26—**2 Down**
- The thoughts of the righteous are _____. Proverbs 12:5—**6 Down**
- Paul described love saying that it _____ no evil. 1 Corinthians 13:5—**11 Across**
- God wants the unrighteous man to forsake his _____. Isaiah 55:7—**8 Across**
- Peter told Simon to pray that the thoughts of his heart would be _____. Acts 8:22—**18 Across**

Present Truth

➤ A wicked person does not have _____ in all his thoughts. Psalms 10:4—**4 Across**

Note: It does not say that God is not in some of their thoughts, but He is not in all of their thoughts. The wicked occasionally think about God, but it is not a constant experience. By contrast, the righteous would have God in all of their thoughts.

➤ David asked God to search him and _____ his heart and his thoughts. Psalms 139:23, 24—**14 Across**

➤ Job asked God, “That which I see not _____ thou me.” Job 34:32—**1 Across**

Note: The previous two requests cannot sincerely be made by a half committed Christian.

➤ Commit thy _____ unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. Proverbs 16:3—**3 Down**

➤ The things which proceed out of the _____ come from the heart and defile a man. Matthew 15:18—**5 Across**

➤ Keep thy heart with all _____; for out of it are the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23—**12 Down**

➤ Cleanse first that which is _____ the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Matthew 23:24-26—**13 Across**

➤ God is able to bring every thought into _____ every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5—**7 Down**

➤ With every temptation God makes sure there is a way to _____. 1 Corinthians 10:13—**9 Across**

➤ God said, “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will _____ thee.” Psalms 50:15—**15 Across**

➤ Jesus Christ is able to succour them that are _____. Hebrews 2:18—**8 Down**



The National Sunday Law (Part 13)

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*)

Senator Blair: This bill proposes that work must not be done to the disturbance of others. This work was done to the disturbance of others.

Mr. Jones: I know that this bill for a national Sunday law proposes that work must not be done “to the disturbance of others,” and in that very phrase lies one of its worst features. The bill declares that no person shall do any work, or “engage in any play, game, or amusement, or recreation, to the disturbance of others, on the first day of the week,

commonly known as the Lord’s day, or during any part thereof.” This leaves it entirely with the other man to say whether that which I do disturbs him; and that is only to make every man’s action on Sunday subject to the whim or caprice of his neighbor. And everybody knows that it requires a very slight thing to disturb one who has a spite or prejudice against you. At the Illinois State Sunday-law convention last month (Nov. 20, 21), Dr. R. O. Post, of Springfield, made a speech on the subject of “Sunday Recreation,” in which he declared as the sum of his whole speech that:

“There is no kind of recreation that is proper or profitable on Sunday, outside of the home or the sanctuary.”

Only let such a law as is embodied in this bill become of force where R. O. Post, D. D., is, and any kind of recreation outside of the home or the sanctuary would be sure to disturb him, and the one engaged in the recreation could be arrested and prosecuted. But it may be argued that no judge or jury would uphold any such prosecution. That is not at all certain, as we shall yet see; but whether or not it is so, it is certain that if your neighbor should say that what you did disturbed him, under such a law as that he could have you arrested, and put to the inconvenience and expense of defending yourself before the court. In 1887, the city of San Francisco, Cal., had an ordinance on another subject that embodied the very principle of this clause of this Sunday bill. It reads thus:

“No person shall in any place indulge in conduct having a tendency to annoy persons passing or being upon the public highway, or upon adjacent premises.”

It is easy to see that the principle of this ordinance is identical with that of the clause in the first section of this bill, which forbids anything “to the disturbance of others.”

While that San Francisco ordinance was in force, a man by the name of Ferdinand Pape was distributing some circulars on the street, which not only had a tendency to annoy, but actually “annoyed” a business man across the street. Pape was arrested. He applied to the Superior Court for a writ of habeas corpus, claiming that the offense charged against him did not constitute a crime, and that the ordinance making such action an offense was invalid and void, because it was unreasonable and uncertain. The report of the case says:

“The writ was made returnable before Judge Sullivan, and argued by Henry Hutton in behalf of the imprisoned

offender. Disposing of the question, the Judge gave quite a lengthy written opinion, in which he passed a somewhat severe criticism upon the absurdity of the contested ordinance, and discharged Pape from custody. Said the Judge:

“If the order be law, enforceable by fine and imprisonment, it is a crime to indulge in any conduct, however innocent and harmless in itself, and however unconsciously done, which has a tendency to annoy other persons. . . . Instances might be multiplied indefinitely in which the most harmless and inoffensive conduct has a tendency to annoy others. If the language of the ordinance defines a criminal offense, it sets a very severe penalty of liberty and property upon conduct lacking in the essential element of criminality.

“But it may be said that courts and juries will not use the instrumentality of this language to set the seal of condemnation on unoffending citizens, and to unjustly deprive them of their liberty and brand them as criminals. The law countenances no such dangerous doctrine, countenances no principle so subversive of liberty, as that the life or liberty of a subject should be made to depend upon the whim or caprice of judge or jury, by exercising a discretion in determining that certain conduct does or does not come within the inhibition of a criminal action. The law should be engraved so plainly and distinctly on the legislative tables that it can be discerned alike by all subjects of the commonwealth, whether judge upon the bench, juror in the box, or prisoner at the bar. Any condition of the law which allows the test of criminality to depend on the whim or caprice of judge or juror, savors of tyranny. The language employed is broad enough to cover conduct which is clearly within the Constitutional rights of the citizen. It designates no border-line which divides the criminal

from the non-criminal conduct. Its terms are too vague and uncertain to lay down a rule of conduct. In my judgment, the portion of the ordinance here involved is uncertain and unreasonable.”

This decision applies with full force to this proposed national Sunday law. Under this law, all that would be necessary to subject any person to a criminal prosecution, would be for him to engage in any sort of play, game, amusement, or recreation on Sunday; because the National Reformers are as much in favor of this Sunday law as is anybody else, and there are many of those rigid National Reformers who would be very much “disturbed” by any amusement or recreation indulged in on Sunday, however innocent it might be in itself. And it is left entirely to the whim or caprice of the “disturbed” one, or of the judge or jury, to say whether the action really has or has not disturbed him.

The California decision is, that such a statute “sets a very severe penalty of liberty and property upon conduct lacking in the essential element of criminality.” California courts “countenance no such dangerous doctrine, countenance no principle so subversive of liberty,” or which so “savors of tyranny,” as that which is embodied in these words of this Sunday bill.

Nor is this confined to this particular section; the same principle is found in Section 5. This section provides that if any person works for any other person on Sunday, and receives payment for it at any time, then any person in the wide world, except the parties concerned, can enter suit, and recover the money so paid. If you work for me on Sunday, and I pay you for it, then the first man that finds it out can sue you and get the money. That is what the bill says. When wages are paid for Sunday work, “whether in advance or otherwise, the

same may be recovered back by whoever shall first sue for the same.” Whoever is a universal term. Therefore, this bill deliberately proposes that when any man who is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States, receives payment for work done on Sunday, except for work of necessity or mercy, he may be sued for that money by whoever first learns that he has received it, and that person shall get the money.

So much for this bill as it reads. Now, as to the work for which the Seventh-day observers of Arkansas were prosecuted. It was not to the disturbance of others. Let me state some of the facts, the authentic record of which I have, but it is too voluminous to present in detail.

With two exceptions, all the arrests and prosecutions were of people who observed the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. And in these two exceptions, those who were held for trial were held without bail, — simply on their own recognizance, — and although the testimony was direct and positive, the jury “agreed to disagree,” and the cases were both dismissed; while in every case of a Seventh-day Adventist, the least bail that was accepted was \$110; the most of them were held under bonds for \$250, and some for as high as \$500. There was not a single case dismissed, and in all the cases the complaint was never made that what was done had disturbed the worship or the rest of any one. But the indictments were all for the crime of “Sabbath-breaking” by the performance of labor on Sunday.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 127-131 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 10)

by Ellet J. Waggoner

A LESSON FROM THE GRASS: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:11,12).

God said, “Let it be so,” and it was so. “He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.” And that word liveth and abideth forever. It never loses any of its life and force. The lapse of time does not diminish its power. The word which created all things, upholds all things. Consequently that command, “Let the earth bring forth grass,” is still causing the earth to bring forth grass, and herbs, and trees. If the effect of that word had ceased as soon as it was spoken, then there never would have been any more grass. The grass that was brought forth would have ceased to exist. And especially after the fall of man had brought the curse upon the earth, and death had come not only to man, but to animals and plants; if the word by which the grass was brought forth in the beginning had not been in full force, the earth would speedily have become a barren waste. But that word still lives, and therefore we have the earth clothed with grass, and abundance of fruit for the food of man.

This is not a mere theory, but it is a practical fact. That which is so common a thing as the growth of grass, ceases to call forth our wonder, and we get to thinking that it simply grows of itself

without any interposition on the part of God. Indeed, most people would think that it is beneath the dignity of God to pay any attention to so small a thing as the growing of grass. That is just the reason why so few people derive any practical benefit from their professed faith in God. Their idea of God is of some being far off, who has so much to do with attending to His own affairs of state that He has no time to look after the details of His kingdom. They forget that looking after and caring for His creatures, from the greatest to the smallest, is the especial work of God. They forget that His greatness consists in His ability to manage the most stupendous affairs, and at the same time to pay attention to the smallest details.

Satan is well pleased to have men regard God as one who does not trouble Himself with their small affairs. That is just the charge which he brings against God, and it is only at his suggestion that men have adopted it. Leaving aside the matter of evolution in its most extreme phase, consider for a minute the very common idea that in the beginning God did indeed set the universe in motion; but that He then endowed matter with a certain amount of force, and subjected it to certain definite laws, so that everything should run forever after much the same as a clock that has been wound up and left to itself. With what confidence can one who holds such a view offer prayer? What can he expect to receive? No wonder that people complain that their prayers are not answered. The god that they worship is too far off to hear

their prayers, and too indifferent, or too rigidly circumscribed by the laws which he has laid down, to interfere in their behalf if he should hear. Such a god is not the God of the Bible.

It is not a trivial matter that “the latest deductions of science” have drawn so many professed believers in the Bible to modify their views of the story of creation. The time was when men believed that the Bible means what it says. The men in whom God wrought mightily to the conversion of thousands were men of faith, and their faith was in that divine power that made the heavens and the earth, and in the word which upholds even the smallest things. Their belief and practical application of the fact that God lives, and that everything is within His power, and under His immediate control, was what sustained them to battle with difficulties and dangers; it was the Source of their strength, and the secret of their success.

But now what a change has taken place! It is a very rare thing to find a minister of the gospel who dares risk his reputation enough to express a belief in the literalness of the story of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. They are afraid that they will be thought “behind the times.” Would to God that there were more men willing to be behind these perilous times, and not afraid to be counted fools for Christ’s sake.

As men have become afraid to believe the word of the Lord, lest they should disagree with that philosophy which is only a legacy handed down from ancient heathenism, the power of the word has not been openly manifested. It has been given too little opportunity. Christians pray for a revival of religion. If they would but revive belief in the simple word of God, and

recognize it as a living thing, and as the source of all life and power, there would be a revival of religion. Let the gospel be preached, not with wisdom of men, but in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; let it be set forth as the living, active word of God, and men will believe, and it will be seen to work effectually in those that believe. (1 Thes- salonians 2:13).

There could be no more sure way to undermine the gospel, and rob it of its power, than the substitution of the teachings of “science falsely so called” for the simple word of God. God has been relegated to the rear and is regarded as afar off. So although many do accept that gospel which is preached to them, and do sincerely wish salvation from sin, evolution, even though they have no conscious belief in it, has so taken the edge off of faith that they are not able to come close to the Lord, to walk and talk with Him, and to make Him an active factor in every affair of life.

But let us note some simple facts that will justify one, even in this scientific age, in believing that the word of the Lord, which in the beginning said, “Let the earth bring forth grass,” is still causing the earth to bring forth grass. Who has not watched the springing forth of the tender blade of grass or corn? Have you not at times passed along by the field of corn, and noticed a tiny blade pushing its way to the surface, in spite of heavy clods of earth? Have you not seen a portion of the baked earth heaved up, and, looking beneath, have seen that it was held up by a tiny spire, so tender that it could not support its own weight if released from its position? The blade had as yet scarcely any color, and was but little more than water, for if you had crushed it in your fingers, there would

Present Truth

have been scarcely anything but moisture on your hand. Yet this tiny thing was pushing away from before a clod of earth ten thousand times its own weight.

Whence comes this power? Is it something that is inherent in the grass? Try it, and see. Take that blade of grass that is full grown. Select a small clod of earth, not half the size of the one that was pushed away from before it when it was crowding its way to the surface of the ground and put it upon the grass. What is the result? Anybody can tell you. The grass is crushed to the ground. It has no power of itself. Test it again. Take that blade that is pushing its way to the surface from beneath that clod, and remove it from the ground. You take it in your fingers and it lops down over the side of your hand. It cannot stand upright. Scarcely anything can be thought of that is weaker. And yet but a few moments before, it was standing erect, and bearing a burden infinitely heavier than itself. Here is a miracle that is wrought hundreds of millions of times every year, and yet there are those who say that the age of miracles is past.

Will any scientist tell what is the source of the marvelous power exhibited in the grass, or in the bursting of the hard shell of the peach stone by the little germ within? There is something there that no microscope can discover,

and no chemical analysis can detect. We can see the manifestation of power, but cannot see the power itself. Skeptics may sneer if they please, but we are content to believe that the power is nothing else than the power of God's word. The word of the Lord said in the beginning, "Let the earth bring forth grass," and the power of that word causes the grass to spring forth in spite of all the clods of earth. There is no power in the grass, but that most feeble instrument is used to exhibit to man the mighty power of God. In that every man may learn a lesson if he will.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 89-97 of the book entitled, *The Gospel in Creation*, by Ellet J. Waggoner. Editor)

										S	P	I	R	I	T	
										E						
										R						
										F	A	T	H	E	R	
										E						
								W	O	C					B	
								I	N	T	H	R	E	E		
							B	A	P	T	I	Z	E		E	L
								N			C	O				
		W			D	E	S	C	E	N	D	I	N	G	O	V
		A				O	S				L	R	E			
C	E	N	T	U	R	I	O	N	S		B	L	O	O	D	D
		E				O					R					
L	I	A	R			F					Y					
						G										
						S	O	N								
						D										

Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

Present Truth is published monthly by *Smyrna Gospel Ministries*. It is sent free upon request. **Duplication of these papers is not only permitted but strongly encouraged, as long as our contact information is retained.** *Present Truth* is available online at www.presenttruth.info.

Note: If you move, please send us your new address. If you inadvertently get deleted from our mailing list, without your request, please write us and verify your valid address.

Editor: Lynnford Beachy, 577 Eden Park Ave, Altamonte Springs, Florida 32714, phone: (304) 633-5411, Florida Office: (407) 291-9565, Smyrna office: (304) 732-9204, fax: (304) 732-7322, e-mail: newsletter@presenttruth.info.

Smyrna Gospel Ministries

Present Truth Department

577 Eden Park Ave

Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

U.S.A.