

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

October/November 2010

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:3). I pray that this finds you prospering in your relationship with God and everyone else in your life. “Do good unto all men...” (Galatians 6:10).

Apology: Due to unforeseen circumstances the September issue went out nearly a month late, so we decided to postpone and combine the October issue with November. We are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused you.

Home for Health Ministry in Kentucky has been offered a matching grant to help develop their farm. The grant will help them obtain fruit trees, berries, grape vines and supplies for the farm so it can become self-sustaining and feed guests more organic fruits and veggies straight from the garden. Contact SteveandSuzanne@gmail.com.

The Blessed Hope – Jesus is Coming!

by Lynnford Beachy

The Bible speaks of the “blessed hope,” a hope that above other hopes carries a blessing. This hope is the appearing of our Lord Jesus in the clouds to redeem His people. Paul wrote, “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that *blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13).

John spoke of the second coming of Christ and said, “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). The expectation that Christ is coming soon is a necessary element in the Christian

walk. This hope causes you to purify yourself and live righteously in this evil world.

John, one of Christ’s closest disciples, wrote the book of Revelation around 100 AD. In this book Jesus reminded his hearers that He is coming quickly. He said, “*Behold, I come*

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quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:11). Jesus repeated this many times, “*Behold, I come quickly*: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:7). “*Behold, I come quickly*; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). “He which testifieth these things saith, *Surely I come quickly*. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

How Quick is Quickly?

So far it has been nearly 2,000 years since Jesus said He would come quickly. It would seem that “quickly,” when this admonition was first written, was not very quick. Is He still coming quickly? One thing is certain, “quickly” for us today is much quicker than when it was originally written. Paul wrote, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11). Paul became a believer in Jesus Christ sometime after 34 AD and wrote this epistle around 58 AD. After less than 25 years, Paul said that Christ’s return was nearer than when he first believed. Today, nearly 2,000 years have transpired, and it is very certain that it is even much nearer now.

Paul included himself as one who would be alive when Christ returns. He wrote, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that *we which are alive* and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with

the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then *we which are alive* and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

Paul spoke of the benefits of remaining unmarried to serve the Lord without having divided interests and said, “But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, *the time is short*: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none” (1 Corinthians 7:28, 29). Paul said the time is short, and counseled his hearers to consider this fact when contemplating marriage, as if they may not have enough time to carry out all of their future plans.

Paul wrote, “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” (Hebrews 1:1). Paul considered the time in which he was living as the “last days.”

Was Paul a false prophet because he believed and even taught that he was living in the last days and that Jesus Christ was coming very soon? Certainly not! The apostle James had a similar view. He wrote, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it,

until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*" (James 5:7, 8). John also believed Christ was coming soon. He wrote, "Little children, *it is the last time*: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby *we know that it is the last time*" (1 John 2:18). John was confident that he was living in "the last time." Peter was not immune from this understanding. He wrote, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20).

The apostles seem to have been unanimously expecting the Lord to return in their lifetimes. Jesus Himself did not do much to dispel this perception of His disciples. In fact He made some statements that made it sound as if He would return very quickly. He said, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:28). We have no record that Jesus explained these words further, but the next two verses say, "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matthew 17:1, 2). I believe Jesus was referring to this transfiguration experience when He said that some standing there would see him "coming in his kingdom." Later, speaking about John, Jesus said to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come,

what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John 21:22, 23).

God, the Father is fairly secretive about the exact time when His Son will return. According to Jesus, when He was here, He didn't even know when He would be returning. He said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, [neither the son,] but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36 - bracketed words are from Mark 13:32).

We know that it has been nearly 2,000 years, and still Jesus has not returned. Were all of the apostles deluded about how soon Christ would come? Were they just believing things contrary to God's will? Actually, it seems that God wants His people of all ages to expect Jesus to come soon. This is a healthy expectation that helps us to always be ready and eager for the Lord to come.

Do Not Abandon Hope

Jesus said that if one of His servants will "say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers" (Luke 12:46). It is dangerous to abandon the hope of Christ soon return. It can cause people to become lazy in their

Christian experience and begin practicing evil. Peter spoke of “scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:3, 4). We must always maintain an expectation of Christ’s soon return, otherwise we are in danger of losing our faith.

Jesus said, “As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And *knew not until the flood came, and took them all away*; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37-39). Jesus will come at a time when most of the world is not expecting Him. It will be on a day that things seem to be continuing as they were and peace and safety are expected to increase.

Paul wrote, “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4). Most of the world will be surprised by the coming of the Lord, but His people will be looking for and expecting Him to come. They will be watching for the signs of His coming. Of those who do not pay attention to these signs, Jesus said, “O ye hypocrites, ye can discern

the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:3). God has given signs of Christ’s return so we can know certainly that His coming draweth nigh.

Events that Must Take Place Before Christ Returns

Paul taught that Jesus was going to return very soon, but he also cautioned us not to be deceived about it, for there were certain events that had to take place before Christ could come. Speaking of the day of Christ’s return, Paul wrote, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of *perdition* [destruction]; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” (2 Thessalonians 2:2-5).

Paul instructed that there must be a “falling away” first. The Greek word he used here literally means, “apostasy” or “rebellion.” Paul informed us that “the man of sin” who is a leader of apostasy and rebellion against God still had to be revealed before Christ will come. Paul was writing to the Thessalonians, and explained, “when I was yet with you, I told you these things.” The Bible records when Paul was with the Thessalonians in this way, “they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them

out of the scriptures” (Acts 17:1, 2) “The scriptures” in Paul’s day consisted of the Old Testament. When Paul was with the Thessalonians he shared a scripture study on “the man of sin.” There is a particular portion of scripture that speaks directly about the deeds of “the man of sin” and is the most likely passage Paul preached from. Notice what it says,

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule

over many, and shall divide the land for gain” (Daniel 11:36).

The parallels between these two passages are striking! Please notice them at the bottom of this page.

One of the primary features of the man of sin that was yet to be revealed in Paul’s time is that he exalts himself above the true God of heaven and refuses to honor the God of his fathers. Instead he exalts a strange god in His place. More reading in the book of Daniel uncovers who this “man of sin” is. Paul stated that he had not yet been revealed when he wrote his letter to the Thessalonians. Earlier in this chapter it says, “And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (Daniel 11:31, 32).

Here is “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet” that Jesus mentioned in Matthew

Daniel 11

- Does his own will
- “He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god”
- Speaks “marvellous things against the God of gods”
- Does not “regard the God of his fathers”
- In His place he honors “a god whom his fathers knew not”
- He shall honour this god “with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things”
- This god is called a “strange god”

2 Thessalonians 2

- Man of sin
- “Exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped”
- He pretends to be God
- Shows himself that he is God
- Sits in the temple of God

24:15. This power will pollute the sanctuary, take away the daily, and set up the abomination that makes desolate. These events are spoken of in Daniel chapter 8. This chapter begins with a ram that nobody could stand against, and then an he goat appears with a large horn and quickly strikes the ram. The large horn is broken and four horns come out of the ram. Then a “little horn” arises “which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered” (Daniel 8:9-12).

In the book of Daniel beasts represent kingdoms. Chapter seven has four beasts coming up out of the sea, the identity of which are as follows, Babylon, Media Persia, Greece, Rome.

There is no need to be confused regarding the identity of the ram and he goat. The angel Gabriel explained, “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and

Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king [Alexander the Great]. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up” (Daniel 8:20-23).

After Alexander the Great died, his four generals split the Grecian kingdom into four parts. The “little horn” power arises at the latter time of their kingdom. Some have claimed that Antiochus Epiphenes (a descendent of one of Alexander’s successors) is the little horn, but he fails in at least three key areas. 1) The Bible says the little horn waxed “exceeding great” while Alexander the Great was merely “very great.” The little horn was to be greater than Alexander the Great. None of Alexander’s successors were greater than him. 2) The “little horn” arises “at the latter time of their kingdom.” Antiochus arose in about the middle of the kingdom, not at the end. 3) Both Paul and Jesus said that at their time this power was still to come in the future. When they spoke these words Antiochus had been dead for well over a hundred years. There is no way Antiochus could be the “little horn.”

Daniel 8

- He “shall destroy the mighty and the holy people” (Daniel 8:24).
- “He shall magnify himself in his heart... he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes” (Daniel 8:25).

Daniel 7

- He “made war with the saints, and prevailed against them” (Daniel 7:21).
- “He shall speak great words against the most High” (Daniel 7:25).

The “little horn” of Daniel chapter 8 does the same type of things attributed to the “little horn” in Daniel chapter 7.

In Daniel chapter 7 we find that the little horn arises out of the kingdom that overthrows Greece. When we look at history we find that this kingdom is Rome. The little horn portion of Rome is the papal period of Rome. We are still in this period today, where the Roman Catholic Pope is the ruler of Vatican City. It is the smallest country in the world, but also the richest and most influential.

In Daniel chapter 11 we read of this power that it would not “regard the God of his fathers” and would exalt a “strange god” “whom his fathers knew not” instead. When we examine the Catholic Church we find that it has fulfilled this prophecy to the letter. On page 11 (page 16 in some versions) of the book, *Handbook for Today's Catholic*, the Roman Catholic Church admits, “The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, ‘the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’”

The Catholic Church boldly claims the trinity as its own invention. Roman Catholic Graham Greene wrote, “Our opponents sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly stated in scripture.... But the Protestant Churches have themselves accepted such dogmas, as the Trinity, for which there no such

precise authority in the Gospels” (“Assumption of Mary,” *Life Magazine*, October 30, 1950, p. 51).

The trinity is the “strange god” of the little horn, and should be rejected by God’s children. It is an identifying mark of “the man of sin.” It is sad that most protestant churches have accepted this central doctrine of the Catholic Church. (For a through study on the trinity, please contact us and request the book entitled, *God’s Love on Trial*.)

One of the signs of Christ’s return is that the man of sin will be revealed. Paul continued his explanation of the man of sin, “And now ye know what withholdeth [or what is preventing the Lord from coming] that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [prevents] will let [prevent], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8). In Daniel chapter 7 we are told that the little horn will continue all the way up to Christ’s second coming, when he will be destroyed. “I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.... the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end” (Daniel 7:11, 26).

The fourth beast of Daniel 7 has two phases, pagan Rome and papal Rome. The papal power is represented by the little horn. While Paul was writing,

pagan Rome was in power. Paul knew that the little horn had not yet come on the scene, but was to be the next phase of the Roman power to arise. That is why he said the one who is preventing the Lord's return will continue to prevent it until he is taken out of the way and the man of sin is revealed, who will continue to prevent the Lord's return until all that is prophesied of him is fulfilled.

Paul continued describing the man of sin, "Even him, whose coming is after [according to] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:2-12). It is vitally important to receive a love for the truth. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. To love Jesus is to love truth. Without this love, you are in grave danger.

Paganism Merged with Christianity

The "man of sin" has already been revealed now. This is the little horn or Daniel 7 and 8, which is the Roman Catholic Church ruled by the pope. This power is different than all the other kingdoms before it in that it is a union of a "Christian" church with the power of the state. This union was accomplished when the pagan Roman emperor, Constantine, came to power

and decided to merge the religions of his empire into one. He joined paganism with Christianity to form the Roman Catholic Church. The pagan emperors had the official title of "Pontifex Maximus." This title is still held by the Roman Catholic popes today. The pagan idol to Jupiter was taken out of the pagan temple and placed in St. Peter's Basilica with the name "Peter" under it. This idol is still sitting there, but its toes are worn off from the many Catholics who have kissed its feet.

The union of paganism with Christianity resulted in some very unbiblical teachings, such as purgatory, prayers to dead saints, the worship of idols, a man-made priesthood, the idea that God is not a person, but a mysterious union of three persons in one being called the trinity, relics, Sunday worship and laws, the mass, Mary worship, the rosary, the consciousness of the dead, eternal torment, Christmas, Easter, Lent, the sale of indulgences, confessionals, the immaculate conception of Mary, etc.

During pagan Rome's rule Christians were severely persecuted. Many were fed to lions or killed by gladiators in the Coliseum. Yet, this persecution was pale in comparison to what took place after the Catholic Church gained the power of the state. Millions of Christians were tortured and killed during a period so wicked that it is called the Dark Ages. The Bible was banned and burned, along with anyone caught in possession of this sacred book. The Church leaders did not want people reading the Bible for themselves for fear that they would discover that their

teachings were not to be found in the Bible. Christians were gathered up, tortured and burned at the stake for not believing the Church's false doctrines. Jesus never intended for His people to exercise the power of the state to control others. Jesus said, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

Signs of His Coming

One day Jesus surprised His disciples by saying that the temple would one day be destroyed. His disciples asked him when would this take place and what would be the signs of His second coming. Jesus responded, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.... But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be

saved" (Matthew 24:4-9, 13). Luke's account adds "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28).

Notice that Christ's warnings to Christians included the announcement that we will be delivered up to be afflicted and even killed for His name's sake. This warning is contrary to a widely held belief called the secret rapture.

Brethren, if you have been holding ideas about the last days and are not completely sure that they are exactly what the Bible teaches, I strongly appeal to you to lay those preconceived ideas aside and open your Bibles to read for yourselves to see if those things are so.

The Secret Rapture

The secret rapture theory has gained popularity in recent years due to the "Left Behind" series of videos, books, and cassettes that are found in many Bible book stores. There is even a song on the radio about this with a line that says, "You've been left behind." Each of these media are designed to portray the idea that, just before the tribulation, Christ will return secretly to rescue His

people from the hard times ahead. This “secret rapture” theory postulates that all Christians will one day mysteriously disappear, while the wicked are left on the earth. This theory is based on a misunderstanding of what Jesus said in Matthew chapter twenty-four. Jesus prophesied, “Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Matthew 24:40, 41). Many assume from these verses that Jesus was saying that there will be a day when the righteous will be taken to heaven and the wicked will be left here on the earth. However, look at the verses again, and you will see that Jesus did not say who would be taken, nor did He say where they would go.

In order to assume that the righteous are taken to heaven while the wicked are left to go through the tribulation, one would have to ignore the immediate context of Christ’s words. Let us look at the context to get an understanding of what Jesus was talking about. Jesus said,

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Matthew 24:37-41).

Jesus used the story of Noah and the flood as a parallel to what would happen at the second coming of Christ. In Noah’s day the world was deeply involved in their worldly lives, oblivious to what was about to happen. They were like the wicked will be just before the second coming of Christ who say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:4). Jesus said that when the flood came it took them all away. Who did the flood take away, was it the righteous or the wicked? The flood took away the wicked in death. The only ones left were the eight righteous people in the ark. In the story of Noah’s ark, the wicked were taken in death, and the righteous were left alive. Immediately after telling this story Jesus said, “so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Matthew 24:39-41).

The following questions must be asked. Who will be taken? Who will be left? Where will the ones taken go? From the immediate context all these questions have an obvious answer. At Christ’s second coming the wicked will be taken in death, and the righteous will be left standing alive. This scene is described in Revelation chapter six. Here we read, “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And

Where the Wicked are Taken

said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17).

Regarding the coming of the Lord, Malachi wrote, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (Malachi 3:2). Only the righteous will be able to stand when Christ comes. They will be the ones left. Isaiah wrote concerning the coming of the Lord: "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isaiah 24:6). Who will be left? It will be the righteous.

Paul wrote, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). The ones who are left alive will be caught up to be with Christ. These are the righteous.

Paul said that the man of sin will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming, which will also be true of all the wicked. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Luke's account of Christ's conversation, where He said, "one shall be taken, and the other left," leaves us in no doubt regarding what Jesus was talking about. Jesus said, "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Luke 17:34-37).

The disciples who heard Christ's words wanted a clarification, so they asked Him, "Where, Lord?" Were they asking "Where will they be taken?" or "Where will they be left?" The answer is obvious. They could not be asking where will they be left, because Jesus had plainly told them that the one in a bed will be left in the bed, the one at the grinding mill will be left at the grinding mill, the one in the field will be left in the field. The disciples wanted to know where the ones taken would go. Jesus answered, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Luke 17:37). Here Christ is saying that the ones taken will be taken in death, and their dead bodies will attract flesh-eating birds. We read about this in Revelation: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may

eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Revelation 19:17, 18).

After examining the evidence, we can see that Christ was not talking about a secret rapture when He said, "one shall be taken, and the other left." In fact, if Christ had been referring to such a teaching He would have contradicted His own words that He had spoken a few minutes earlier. He said that the Christians would be here during the tribulation. He said, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9). I doubt anyone could have convinced the true Christians during the Dark Ages, who were tortured to death, that they were going to be raptured before things got difficult. Nor could you convince the Christians in the world today who are, even now, being tortured for their faith in places like Afghanistan, India, China, Saudi Arabia, etc. that they were going to be raptured before things got difficult.

Jesus said, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:20-22). It would be pointless for Jesus to admonish us to pray that our flight be not in the winter nor

on the Sabbath day if we were to be raptured before the tribulation.

Jesus continued, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 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. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:23-28).

Jesus said specifically that if anyone tells you that Christ has come secretly we are not to believe it. He said that His coming would be as the lightning, filling the entire sky so that every eye shall see Him. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7). "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26).

Jesus warned us that there would arise false prophets who would seek to deceive His people on this very subject; and we can see His prophecy fulfilled today. Many false prophets are proclaiming that Christ will come secretly for His people, but Jesus told us when He would come for His people. He said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be

darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29-31).

Final Thoughts

There should be no doubt in our minds regarding this issue. Christ has made it plain. He said, “Behold, I have told you before.” God’s people who are alive on the earth when the tribulation for the world begins will go through the tribulation. Some will be killed. Some of the wicked will be converted during this time. Nearing the end of the tribulation the seven last plagues will be poured out upon the wicked (Revelation 16) while the righteous will be protected from these plagues (Psalm 91:1-16). Immediately following the plagues Christ will come very visibly and the wicked will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. The graves of the righteous will be opened and they will rise to meet the Lord. Then the righteous will be caught up to be with the Lord. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16.)

The popularity of the secret rapture is relatively new. It is not scriptural, and it gives people a false hope that if they are not ready at the secret rapture, perhaps they will be able to get ready before the tribulation is over. Friends,

that is a delusion of the enemy. Jesus said, “believe it not.”


I would like to share a testimony with you regarding this false theory. Several years ago I attended a Bible prophecy meeting that had been advertised in a local newspaper. Being quite interested in Bible prophecy, I decided to attend. It was held in a local church, and the main point of the speaker was that there would be a secret rapture where Christ would secretly come to rapture His people out of the earth. I had studied the Bible on this subject and knew that the idea of the secret rapture was false. However, after hearing the first presentation I was shocked with the reality of how dangerous this teaching is. The speaker distributed a book entitled, *No Guillotine for the Bride*, in which he sought to demonstrate that no true Christians would be here during the tribulation, except the ones who would be converted after the secret rapture.

I was amazed at how appealing and deceptive this theory is. It is appealing to believe that we will never suffer any hardship on this earth, and if we happen to miss out on the rapture, we will always have a second chance during the tribulation. As appealing as this may sound, it is contrary to scripture and a trick of the devil to lull you to sleep. The Bible says, “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:3). Paul wrote, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

I pray that you will be ready to meet the Lord when He visibly returns. There will be no second chances then, for the proclamation will have gone forth, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:11, 12).

There are far too many people who already have the idea that they will put off their conversion until the last minute so they can "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25). Sadly, many people who "

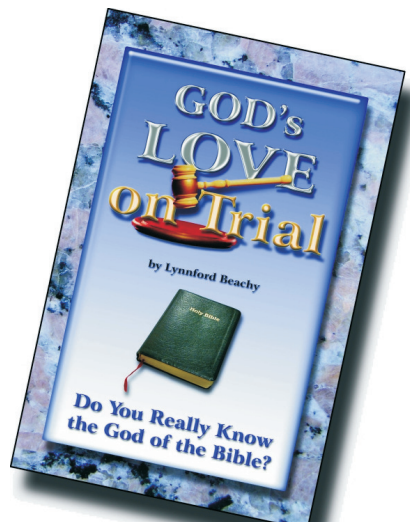
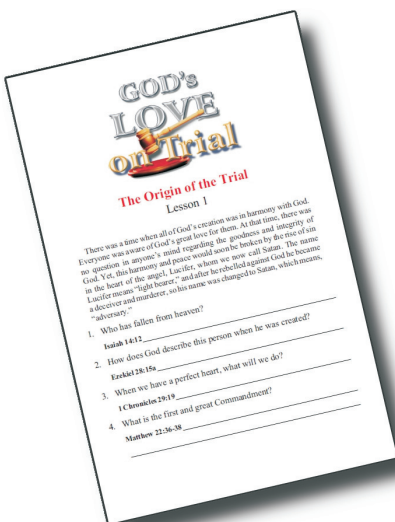
neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3) do so too long, until it is forever too late. Let us not encourage them in their wickedness by giving them a false hope of a second chance after the second coming of Christ, for it will not happen.

Never give up hope on the Lord's soon return. He will come quickly, just as He said. Do not expect a secret rapture, because it will never happen. Look for the signs of His coming (many are happening around you), and you can see that it is very near. I pray that you will be ready to meet Him in peace when He comes. "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). Maranatha! 

God's Love on Trial Notice

For a thorough study on the only true God of the Bible, and Christ as the Son of God, please contact us and request the book entitled, *God's Love on*

Trial. This book also contains an analysis of historical and current beliefs on this subject, along with their implications. This is a must read for anyone investigating the subject of the trinity. We also have a set of 12 Bible lessons based upon this book. Get yours today!



You May Freely Eat?

by Jim Raymond

(Brother Jim Raymond has been a food scientist for many years, and has agreed to share some of his knowledge with us. *Editor*)

From Farm to Pharm to Farm

People love to tinker. Give a child a toy and watch it become pieces n' parts. Sometimes they manage to put them back together in new and innovative ways. Sometimes not! Adults also find it hard to leave the natural unadulterated. If our hair is straight, we want it curly; if curly, we want it straight. We never seem to be happy with what God has handed us. Food scientists are much like children playing with their toys. I've always assumed that Mr. Potatohead™ was the big favorite amongst food scientists. Mr. Potatohead™ could be the inspiration for an entire industry segment, based on the manufacture of functional variations of the starch part of the lowly potato? I'm not poking fun — it's a very large and important segment of the industry. Ever wonder how many products are wholly or partly based on potatoes? Okay, so you have more pressing concerns. Well, if it ever pops up as a Trivial Pursuit™ question, guess very, very high.

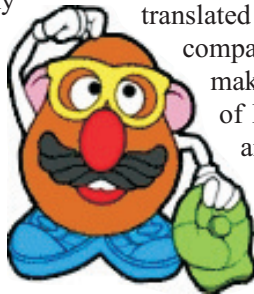
Nowhere is this Mr. Potatohead (take it apart and put it back together differently) phenomenon better illustrated than during an annual IFT Convention and Expo. The IFT (Institute of Food Technologists) is comprised of a conglomeration of food scientists, techno-

logists, marketers, and producers involved in providing additives, ingredients, technology, equipment, marketing and other support services to the food manufacturing industry. Huge numbers, of both attendees and exhibitors, reveals that the food industry is alive and well. There is tremendous optimism and vitality motivating the activities going on behind the scenes of the global food manufacturing industry.

The energizing motives are typified by my all-time favorite IFT lecture. Presented several years ago, this lecture bore the serious (albeit most unromantic) title: The Total Utilization of Fin Fish. The lecturer insists that commercial uses must be found for every bit (piece, part, and goo!) of the fish waste left over from the production of marketable fillets. He wrapped up his lecture with these telling words:

"All of these [fish waste uses] are opportunities that need to be further researched and, more important, translated into real products that help companies and the fish industry make money" (Total Utilization of Fin Fish. IFT Today-Meeting and Expo News, July 14, 2003, p.12).

Personally, I feel that if we are going to kill God's pets just so we can feast on parts of their dead carcasses, we should at least honor the sacrifice by utilizing everything possible. Over the years, I have enjoyed witnessing this lecturer's imperatives come into being. For example: shiny fish scales are



ground up for use as glitter in glittery upscale (pun intended) makeup, a BSE-free (“Mad Cow” disease agent) gelatin is now made from fish bones, and there are unique enzymes “harvested” from the intestinal contents. Hold your nose Mr. Potatohead!

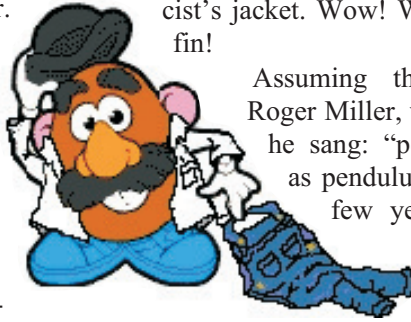
Get ready, because many of our food industry’s processors and manufacturers are gearing up to assault us with a plethora of new foods, ingredients, flavors, colorants, and functional additives derived from unnaturally natural sources. We’ll enjoy laughing at some of these industry jokes, like green ketchup and blue fries.

Not all of the industry activity is focused on “total utilization”, nor on “just for fun” products, but all are interested in growing their markets. The nutraceutical market is growing faster than Jack’s beanstalk, and “everybody” wants a piece of this multibillion dollar action.

In the infancy stage of the Nutraceuticals, producers spent their energy wrenching phytochemicals (antioxidants, plant sterols, and such) from natural food sources, then repackaging them into pills or potions. In its adolescent years, the industry turned attention toward seeking and extracting agents from food sources that have specific pharmacological effects on various diseases. The young adult era is characterized by partnering with those in other technologies, such as genetic modification and agronomy, to produce plants that grow functioning pharmaceutical compounds within their edible parts. The cliché, “Food is medicine”, is now a technical

reality. In this reality, the industry has effectively made the transition from the Farm to the Pharm.

Meanwhile, Mr. Potatohead slips off his farm overalls and celebrates his new role by donning his crisp new pharmacist’s jacket. Wow! What a spud-muffin!



Assuming that folk singer, Roger Miller, was correct when he sang: “pendulums swing, as pendulums do”, within a few years we may be swinging away from the pharm back toward the farm. We should do all we can to help this pendulum swing back to fully functional sustainable agriculture — starting with our own back yard gardens.

Already, evidence is growing that suggests phytochemicals are not as effective when removed from their “whole-food” source and, under the right circumstances, may even be harmful. Studies with purified beta-carotene prove that we cannot make such un-researched efficacy or safety assumptions. The physics law, “Every action has an opposing reaction”, may not be a law in the Healthy Food Ingredient field, but it should never be less than a revered proverb reminding us that often reason can be fooled and evidence may reveal that, immaterial of the source, a pharmacological dose has a pharmacological effect — complete with undesirable side-effects.

Another prime example of a “naturally derived” product with potentially horrific public health “side effects” could be fructose. If only a fraction of the current fructose research outcomes

prove to be true (causative), white sugar and perhaps even Aspartame will look like health foods compared to fructose. Again, the “problems” with fructose seem to arise when it is devoid of, or removed from, its fibrous whole-food context and concentrated in crystalline form or as high fructose syrups (corn and agave) and possibly when consumed as juice much over four to eight ounces a day (especially relative to children).

Extensive research trials, mandated for the pharmaceutical industry, ensure that some of the side effects and contraindications are identified before the product is released. This is not so for those naturally derived products marketed as Healthy Food Ingredients or Food Supplements. Based on commonly held reasoning which assumes that naturally occurring food derived substances are either beneficial or benign, this flawed reasoning allows these privileged industries to advantage a giant hole in our regulatory law. So, it’s left up to the manufacturer to decide whether to market a product as a food, food supplement, or a medical food. Only the “medical foods” have to work through any significant efficacy or safety trials.

Food companies make decisions based on marketplace trends and NOT on well juried research and analysis over time. When health or medical research suggests a beneficial substance resides within an edible source, the Healthy Food Ingredients producers start thinking about exploiting it and bringing it to market as either a supplement or a functional food. In this highly competitive industry the first to market is the first to profit. So these types of products are often out of the oven way before the safety

and efficacy science is even half baked. Increasing prevalence of negative “side effects” (including, rising allergies, proliferation of GMO pollen “infection” of healthy “heirloom” crops, etc.) may be the result. Pray for a speedy return of the pendulum.

What will be left as we make the trip from farm to pharm, to farm? No doubt, we can expect a whole list of new medicines and novel delivery systems, a large variety of very interesting “foods”, much more diversity in what we call a meal, continued rising distrust of the food manufacturing, distribution systems, and production-service sectors (relative to safety, wholesomeness, and cost disparities), and a much healthier respect for the truly natural healthfulness of farm-raised foods prepared in simple yet tasty ways.

Though the farming, food, and the pharmaceutical industries will never be the same, we are likely heading toward a deeper realization that to get maximum life-enhancing benefit “out” of the healthy “pharmacy” within foods we need them “in” as naturally whole-food farm-units as practical.

Slipping back into his overalls, Mr. Potatohead shouts: “Hey Dorothy! Wake up! We’re back in Kansas!”

Blessings! JR

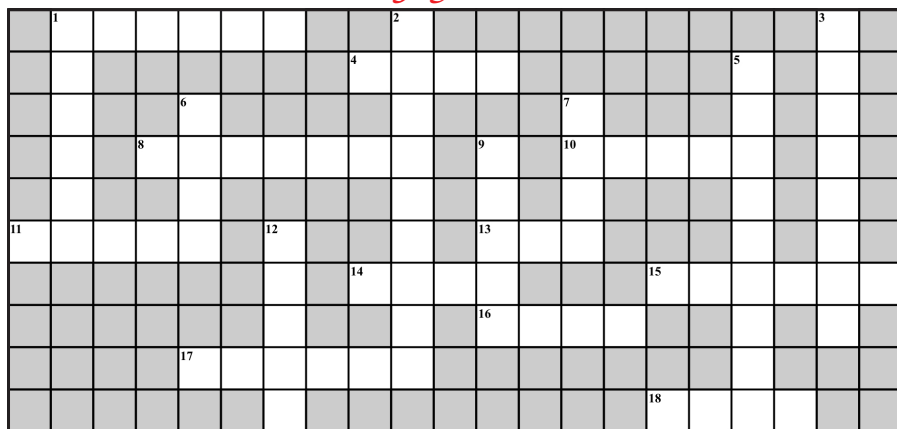


Present Truth

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 Divinity of Christ (Part 5)



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

- When Jacob's name was changed to Israel, he "was left alone; and there ____ a man with him until the breaking of the day." Genesis 32:24—**3 Down**
- "Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God ____ to ____, and my life is preserved." Genesis 32:30—**14 Across**

Note: This "man" who wrestled with Jacob was no ordinary man, 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). Christ is called, both "God" and "angel [or messenger]." ➤ Someone appeared to Samson's parents called "the ____ of the LORD." Judges 13:21—**9 Down**

- After seeing this Person, Samson's father said, "We shall surely die, because we have seen ____." Judges 13:22—**13 Across**
- God told Moses, "Behold, I ____ an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way..." Exodus 23:20—**7 Down**
- God told Moses to "Beware of him, and obey his voice,... for my ____ is in him." Exodus 23:21—**6 Down**

Note: This "Angel" was Christ Jesus, yet He is not an angelic being. As His title "the Word of God" suggests, Jesus is the best messenger to carry God's messages.

- The Jews sought to ____ Jesus. John 5:18—**4 Across**
- They wanted to do this because they supposed He had broken the _____. John 5:18—**8 Across**
- Also because He said that God was His _____. John 5:18—**15 Across**

- Claiming God as His Father was equivalent to “making himself _____ with God.” John 5:18—**10 Across**

Note: 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. 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).

Listed Alongside of God

Note: There are many places in the Bible where Jesus Christ is spoken of alongside of God.

- Paul wrote, “Grace to you and _____ from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:7—**11 Across**

Note: Over half the books of the New Testament begin in a similar way, showing a special status to Christ.

- Paul explained, “But to us there is but _____, the Father,... and one Lord Jesus Christ,...” 1 Corinthians 8:6 (2 words)—**17 Across**
- John wrote about a multitude that “stood before the throne, and before the _____.” Revelation 7:9—**16 Across**
- These “cried with a loud voice, saying, _____ to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Revelation 7:10—**5 Down**

- John continued, “The Lamb which is in the midst of the _____ shall feed them.” Revelation 7:17—**1 Down**

- Paul wrote, “Christ sitteth on the _____ of God.” Colossians 3:1 (2 words)—**2 Down**


Note: To show the exalted nature of Christ in contrast with the angels, Paul 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 _____ of kings.” Revelation 17:14—**18 Across**

- Jesus said, “ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of _____, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Mark 14:62—**12 Down**

- John saw a vision of the earth made new, and the magnificent city of God, and he said, “I saw no _____ therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the _____ of it.” Revelation 21:22—**1 Across**

Note: 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).

Worshiping God in Spirit and in truth may not be in harmony with the majority of the professed followers of God who worship God incorrectly in ignorance and mystery. “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 worshipers” 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! 

The Waldensian Center Goes Online

by David Sims

We are excited to announce the start of the next session of the Waldensian Center. We have good news for those of you who have wished to attend classes in the past but could not due to work schedules and other responsibilities. We are pleased to announce that we will now offer online, interactive classes through a web conferencing service, using audio/video and interactive devices such as white boards and file sharing.


The Waldensian Center is a modern-day school of the prophets, a Bible college patterned after the Madison School blueprint and operated by an association of home churches called Seventh Day Home Church Fellowships.

Areas of study will include agriculture; perspective drawing; aviation; Bible; bookkeeping; computer science; family; government and law; home arts; health science; history; industrial arts;

language studies, including writing, Greek, Hebrew and Spanish; music; and redemption science. Most of these broad areas of study include an array of subjects.

A partial list of teachers include: Thomas Akens, Raquel Akens, Lynnford Beachy, Todd Brown, Chuck and Lisa Clifford, Onycha Holt, Nader and Natasha Mansour, Malcolm McCrillis, Elaine Nailing, David Sims, Allen Stump, and Glenys Walkom.

There is no age requirement for the online courses. Some courses may require some time on the site. Classes start November 1.

The schedule, course description, registration, updated information, etc., is posted on our website. Please visit us at www.waldensiancenter.org or call us at 530-294-1115. 

Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You (Part 2)

by Charles Fitch

(Charles Fitch was a pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church of Newark, NJ. In 1840 he wrote a series of letters to the headquarters of his church defending his belief in God's power to save us from sin. Here are those letters. *Editor*)

The all-absorbing question with me, then, so far as my own eternal interests are concerned, is this: How shall I become obedient to that high command of the most high God, "Be ye holy for I am holy!" (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:44). I have, I can have, I ought to have no expectation of

dwelling where God dwells – of being an object of His love forever, and a sharer of the eternal blessedness which He only can give, unless I have a character fully assimilated to His – unless I love, with a full and undivided heart, what He loves, and hate what He hates, and all that He hates, with a hatred, full, entire, uniform, perpetual, like His own. There must not be in me an approach to any thought or feeling which is not in perfect, full-hearted and joyous agreement, with everything that God is, and with everything that God does. This

must be my character, or I will never see God's face in peace.

But how shall I come to possess such a character? Every feeling of my heart, in my natural state, is entire opposition to God – there is in me the carnal mind, which is enmity against Him; how shall this hatred be made to give place to adoring, enraptured love? There are in me by nature all the elements of hell. Kindled by the torch of God's deserved wrath, they will burn in an unquenchable fire. How shall I have a nature fit for heaven? I acknowledge my full obligation to cease hating God instantaneously, and to love him at once and forever with a full and undivided heart. "But I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:18-24).

This is my case. Christ has died for my sins. The government of God is ready to set me free – but who shall save me from "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God?" (Hebrews 3:12). With such a heart, influenced by the temptations of the devil, and the allurements of a sinful world, I am just as sure (left to myself) to sin eternally, as Satan is, and must take up my abode with him forever.

What I need then, what the exigencies of my fallen nature cry out after, with an exceedingly loud and bitter cry, is a Saviour from sin. It avails me nothing that Christ has

atoned for my sins, if I am then cast on my own resources. Holy beings fell before the wiles of that subtle tempter, who, "like a roaring lion, seeks to devour me" (1 Peter 5:8), and my evil heart will surely make me a willing prey. I am eternally damned unless I can find a Saviour from sin.

I shall never save myself from sin. My spiritual foes stand ready to devour me, and my own evil heart will thrust me into the lion's mouth – into the wide open jaws of hell. Help! Help! O help! Is the cry that comes up from my inmost soul. Is there, in the universe of God, any way to save a poor, lost sinner, from his own love of sin? Any way to cleanse his polluted heart, and fill it with holiness – pure, perfect, perpetual holiness; without which such a one can never be received into heaven?

With this inquiry, my dear brother, I approach the Bible. Has God revealed any such thing as a way of salvation from sin? If such a salvation can anywhere be found, it must be in the Bible, and if I cannot find it in the Bible, then every ray of light goes out from the horizon of my soul, and the eternal night of despair shuts in upon me.

I am indeed told that I may be saved from sin at death; but that is the hope of the Universalist. I may be told that the Universalist has never been born again, and that he who has been born again will surely be saved from sin when he leaves the world; but I know of nothing, on which I can safely rest the belief, that death is to be regarded as the means, or the times, of sanctification. I believe that, "as the tree falleth, so it lieth" (Ecclesiastes 11:3), that "there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we go" (Ecclesiastes 9:10); and that if a man leaves the world in his sins, he remains a sinner forever. I believe that this is my only probation, that I must here be saved from sin, or never see God's

face in peace. I believe, therefore, that my everlasting interests are pending on the question, whether God has made provision to save me from sin, before I leave this world. To prevent all misconception, I will here say, that I am very far from believing, that the regenerate man with the remains of sin, is in the same condition with the Universalist who has never been renewed; but that neither has any reason to believe that death will make any change in his character. If there is no salvation from sin before death, I expect to be lost. Here, then, to make the whole subject plain as possible, in the light in which it is apprehended by my own mind, I will make three inquiries.

1. Has God, in the economy of His grace, made provision to save His people from their sins?
2. If such a provision has been made, can Christians avail themselves of it in this life?
3. In what way may the provisions of God's grace become available, to save His people from their sins?

1. Has God, in the economy of His grace, made provision to save His people from their sins?

I find it said to Joseph, by the angel, in relation to the promised Messiah, Matthew 1:21: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus;" (i.e. Saviour) "for He shall save His people from their sins." For this very purpose, then, He is my Saviour, to save me from my sins; and this is just the Saviour that I need.

When John the Baptist pointed out Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). This is what I need, a Saviour to take away my sins. We read also in the Epistle to the Ephesians, that His people were "chosen in Him from before the

foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Ephesians 1:4), that He "loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27).

In the Epistle to Titus, we read that "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:13, 14). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find Christ presented as the Mediator of the New Covenant, which is this – quoted from Jeremiah 31:33 – found in Hebrews 10:16, 17: "I will put My laws into their heart, and in their minds will I write them, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." In the third chapter of the first Epistle of John we find it thus written: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins," i.e. to take away our transgressions of the law, and leave us in a state of obedience. "And in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." (1 John 3:4-6).

Now my dear brother, I believe that Christ came "to save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21); "to make them holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4); "to present them to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27); "to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify

unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14); "to write His law in our hearts" (Hebrews 10:16) and "to take away our sins, that we might abide in Him and sin not." (1 John 3:5, 6). This, therefore, I believe to be the salvation of the gospel – that Christ came, according to the words of the angel to Daniel, "to finish the transgression, and make an end of sins;" as well as to "make reconciliation for the iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24), on the ground of which, we might have deliverance from the punishment which sin deserves. I do find the, most clearly and satisfactorily to my own mind, that God, in the economy of His grace, has made provision to "save His people from their sin." (Matthew 1:21). I hail this salvation, therefore, as a salvation exactly adapted to my necessities as a fallen being, and while I utterly despair of ever saving myself from sin, I hail the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour, manifested to take away my sins, to write His law in my heart, to redeem me from all iniquity, to make me holy and without blame before Him in love, to sanctify and cleanse me with the washing of water by the word, that He may present me to Himself, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

I have found, therefore, the Saviour and the salvation I need, plainly revealed to me in God's word; and on that Saviour I

cast my soul, my being, for time and eternity; in myself, a hopeless, helpless sinner but trusting in a Saviour "in Whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead," and Who has made me "complete in Him" (Colossians 2:9, 10), so that I may expect through His salvation, to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Colossians 4:12). This is the hope of everlasting life, that Christ Jesus my Redeemer will save me from my sins; and in comparison with this hope, the whole material universe is to me of less value than the "small dust of the balance." (Isaiah 40:15). Take away this hope from me, and you blot out the light of my soul, and leave me in the blackness of darkness forever.

I believe, then, that full provision is made in the gospel to save God's people from their sins.

To be Continued...

(This article was taken from pages 4-9 of the book entitled, "Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You," by Charles Fitch.

Editor)

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Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

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