

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

September 2000

“Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” (2 John 3) I pray that you are in good health and prospering in your relationship with God and His Son. My friends, the camp meeting in West Virginia was wonderful! For those of you who were able to make it, I am sure you will agree. And for those of you who were not able to make it, I am sorry for the blessings you missed. However, you can still catch many of the blessings by ordering the cassette tapes. Please read my personal testimony on page 9. This month we are reprinting some letters that were sent to us from a reader of *Present Truth* in Tennessee. We thought these letters would be a blessing to you, as they certainly were for us. He kindly gave us permission to reprint them.

An Insightful Letter Regarding the Sabbath

(The following two articles are letters written by an Amish man in Tennessee to his parents. And the third article is a letter he wrote to the Amish church. The letters were so well written and the explanation of truth so clear that I thought you would also enjoy reading these letters. Very minor grammatical changes were made, and in two instances words were inserted to help clarify the thought. These additions are in brackets in another typeface. I pray you will be blessed by these letters. *Editor*)

I guess I should try to answer your last two letters the best I can. Your letters are very welcome here, even if you don't agree with us in everything.

I wish we could comfort you better, and wish people would understand us better. I believe we should obey our Heavenly Father above anybody else. I believe if we knowingly disobey God in order to obey people, we are putting man above God and loving man more than Christ, which would be idolatry. See what happened to Saul when he feared the people, and obeyed their voice; thereby transgressing the commandment of the Lord. Please read 1 Samuel 15:19-24; Exodus 23:2; Matthew 10:37; John 14:15.

I don't want to judge anybody with this. There may be many people who serve God the best they know with all their heart, even if they see things different than we do. We make many mistakes ourselves. I believe we honor you if we obey God, even if we have to disobey you. If we would disobey God in order to obey you, we would be dishonoring you and God. Read 2 Chronicles 30:7-9; 34:21.

I am so glad you are asking God for help, He is our only strength. We also want to obey you about the Sabbath if you can show us where the Bible says, “Thou shalt not keep the seventh day holy anymore.” And where does it say “you must now keep the first days as the Sabbath instead of the seventh?”

I have not been able to find such texts. I guess you know that the German Bibles don't all read the same about the Sabbath and first day of the week in the New Testament. It's clear to me that Baron Carl Hildebrand changed that in the Martin Luther Bibles which he re-wrote. In front of the large German Bible it says that Carl Hildebrand re-wrote most of the German Martin Luther Bibles, and in front of the large print German New Testament is the story about him doing it.

I believe you are using the Bibles that were re-written by Baron Carl Hildebrand to try to make it look like the Sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday by Christ or the apostles.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- An Additional Letter Regarding the Sabbath page 4**
- Choose With Joshua page 6**
- West Virginia Camp Meeting Report page 8**
by Lynnford Beachy
- Letters From Our Readers page 10**

I believe the beast in Daniel 7:23-25 intended to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. There is a table in front of the large German Bible on page 21 that lays this beast out as the Roman Catholic Papal system. The Catholics themselves say they have changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday.

We have the Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine which shows that they have intended to change God's Ten Commandments. They have done away with the second commandment and divided the tenth in two, so they still have ten commandments.

They have questions and answers in this catechism, and this is what they say about their third commandment.

Q. What is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.

Q. Why did the Catholic Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday, because Christ rose from the dead on a Sunday, and the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles on a Sunday.

Q. By what authority did the Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her.

Q. What does the third commandment command?

A. The third commandment commands us to sanctify Sunday as the Lord's Day.

Q. What does the third commandment forbid?

A. The third commandment forbids (1) The omission of prayer and divine worship; (2) All unnecessary servile work; (3) Whatever hinders the keeping of the Lord's Day holy.

Q. Is the desecration of the Lord's Day a grievous matter?

A. The desecration of the Lord's Day is a grievous matter in itself, though it admits of light matter.

Will we love our Heavenly Father enough to keep all His laws and commandments, or will we choose to keep the laws the way the beast in Daniel 7:23-25 intended to change them? God's commandments do not change. *"The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness."* (Psalms

111:7, 8) *"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* (Malachi 3:6)

I think the Martin Luther Bibles which were re-written by Baron Carl Hildebrand could be very confusing to some people because he put "the first day of the week" in as "the Sabbath or Sabbath" in some places in the New Testament. I have not found any other versions that read that way; not even the Greek and not all the German Bibles. _____ wrote to me one time saying that all the German Bibles that he sells were originally written by Martin Luther but later re-written by three different people. Many people have talked to us saying Jesus or the Apostles have changed the Sabbath. But we have never found such Scripture, or anything to give us an excuse not to keep the seventh-day Sabbath and now keep the first days as the Sabbath.

Our understanding is that the Messiah was crucified on Friday, rested in the tomb over the Sabbath and rose again on Sunday. In Mark 15:42 to 16:6 it looks like He was buried the day before the Sabbath and rose again the day after the Sabbath, and the women bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him on the first day of the week, so they evidently did not keep Sunday holy. Luke 23:54 also shows that He was buried on the preparation day, and the Sabbath drew on. And verse 56 shows that they kept the Sabbath day according to the commandment. Then on the first day of the week the women came with the spices, but He was already risen. John 19:14 shows that Jesus was before Pilate on the preparation day; verse 30, 31 that He died on the preparation day.

Luke 23:54 shows the Sabbath to be the day after the preparation day; then He rose the day after the Sabbath. I don't find anything in John 20:19 that the disciples were assembled for worship or for honoring Christ's resurrection or for honoring a new Sabbath.

In Acts 20:7 there is record of the disciples coming together to break bread and Paul preached to them till midnight. Since this gathering was in the night, it must have been Saturday night, as the days change in the evening. (See Leviticus 23:32) Sunday night would have been the second day of the week.

To my understanding Paul went for a long journey by foot that same day, still being the first day of the week. If Acts 20:7 gives us an excuse to keep Sunday holy, what should we do about the other days mentioned in Acts 2:46, 47 and Acts 1:15?

I don't see any Sunday holiness in 1 Corinthians 16:2 either. I believe Paul was actually telling them to work upon the first day of the week, gathering things for the poor people in Jerusalem.

I agree with you that Jesus was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday and was not seen on Saturday, because He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath. That corresponds with the table in front of the large German Bible on page 26. You wrote that, when Christ established His church, the apostles mostly had congregation on the Sabbath, which I agree, but I don't see any evidence that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday in the Bible. Hebrews chapter 4 still talks about the seventh day and a rest for God's people. Verses 9 and 10 in the Lamsa translation says: "It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath. For he who has entered into his rest also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

If we want to cease from our own works, as God did from His, then we should try to rest on the same day as God did. I believe some laws came to an end, like eye for eye, tooth for tooth, circumcision of the flesh, animal sacrifices, meat or drink offerings, holydays, new moons and yearly sabbaths, some of which were a shadow of Christ.

Taking a complete concordance and carefully reading every verse in the Bible about the weekly Sabbath, I could not see that it was ever to change or come to an end; nor was it a shadow of Christ as it was given before man sinned.

Many people say the fourth commandment has been changed or done away with. But the Saviour said, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matthew 5:17-19) Also read Ecclesiastes 3:14; Revelation 22:18, 19; Deuteronomy 12:32.

Yes, our forefathers kept Sunday for a long time and may have been better in the spirit than we are, because they may not have been aware of the true Bible Sabbath. "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" (James 4:17) Should we now have the forefathers as our guide or the Bible?

Different places in Bible times, people lost some of God's laws for centuries but, when they were shown their mistake, they changed and obeyed God's commandments if they chose to be God's true people. Hezekiah and Josiah are a few examples in the Bible that we should have the Scriptures as our guide and not our forefathers. Read 2 Kings 18:1-7 and 2 Kings chapters 22 and 23. The following are more examples that we should not just follow our forefathers, church, leaders, or our own thoughts,

but we should have God's Word (the Scriptures) as our guide: Jeremiah 3:25; 9:12-25; 13:10, 16, 17; 16:10-13; 17:5-8, 21-27; 18:11, 12, 18.

I believe God is pleased with you, this church and our forefathers, if people do the best they know. But not wanting to know is all different and very dangerous. Read Hosea 4:6; Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 30:9-13.

Are we keeping the Sabbath proper and faithfully if we don't keep the day that God blessed and sanctified and told us to keep it holy? Can anybody reverse the blessing that God has put on the seventh day?

"*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.*" (Numbers 23:19-20) "*For thou blessest, O LORD, and it shall be blessed for ever.* (1 Chronicles 17:27) How do you know that you are not shunning us for keeping God's commandments? Please read John 16:2, 3.

Yes, we realize that our parents, siblings and church feel grieved about us, and that really made it hard for us to make this change. Just to please our own will, we would not have made this change. But because of our love for our Heavenly Father we want to keep all His laws and commandments and try to do all His will. I believe we are very weak in doing all His will and we cannot please Him with our own strength. We need to rely on God for our strength in doing His will. We are probably making mistakes and still don't understand all His laws and commandments that we should keep.

Please show us clearly, out of the Scriptures, that we are sinning to keep the Sabbath on Saturday and we will recant if you can show us that. Where did the church have a true witness to ban us? They of course all voted in agreement to ban us, but did the Scriptures show them that we are in open sin? If so, then please show us clearly from the Bible.

Remember that we are not pushing anybody to do what we are doing. We sometimes feel lonely that nobody agrees with us, which may be good for us. It may help us to realize that we are dust of the earth. I wish we would have explained our beliefs better to the preachers. I will still say, God's blessings are in this church and probably in every church. But that doesn't make it so perfect that we should have a church for our guide instead of the Bible.

We are not perfect either and I would not want anybody to follow us in disobedience to God. If everybody would have just kept what their forefathers taught them, since before the Reformation, we would all be Roman

Catholic. I have never found the Bible saying the Lord's day is the first day of the week.

We love the Amish people and did not want to leave them, but were put out. The Sabbath question has really bothered me for around 2 ½ years before we started keeping it. When I saw in Leviticus 23:32 that God said, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath, that makes me wonder why we don't keep the days from evening to evening.

Then I looked in the dictionary about the days of the week, and it really shocked me that the dictionary says: Saturday is the seventh day of the week.

That got us to search more and more if that is really true. Much more evidence shows that Saturday is the seventh day of the week. The prayers in the *Lust Gärtlein* for each day of the week, the *Handwörter-buch*, *Büchners Hand Concordance*, *Bible Dictionaries*, *Encyclopedias*, *Dr. L. E. Buch*, the calendars, *German calendar* and what I have already mentioned in the Bible and dictionary all agree that Saturday is the seventh day of the week.

We had not planned ahead when we were going to make this change, until we could no longer continue to work on the day that we believe to be the Sabbath, without a very troubled conscience. Please pray for us. Best wishes from son _____.



An Additional Letter Regarding the Sabbath

(The following is an additional letter written by an Amish man to his parents. *Editor*)

I would like to try to write some more of our understanding of the Sabbath. One thing that comes to my mind is that some people have talked to us against keeping the Sabbath on Saturday, saying that Jesus or the apostles or the Holy Spirit has changed the Sabbath to the first day of the week and we are supposed to keep the first day as the Sabbath. But if we show them that the Bible does not say that, most of them have turned around and said, "we don't know which day the seventh day is and we might be keeping the seventh day." In this point they are confused in themselves by saying, "we have to keep the first day," and then turning around and saying, "we might be keeping the seventh day."

Yes, we were not there when God created everything, but we believe that He rested on Saturday. Much evidence shows that Saturday is the seventh day. Why shouldn't we keep the day that we believe to be the seventh day?

Some people may say, "we don't know which day the seventh day is," but many of them probably don't want to know or don't care. Many Amish believe that Jesus was crucified on Friday, so why couldn't they see in the Bible that the next day is the Sabbath? (See Luke 23:50-56.)

Although I believe many Sunday keepers have died that will be in heaven because they did the very best they knew; God has forgiven them.

I believe there is more light about the Sabbath in our days than it was several centuries ago, and I feel God's commandments will still be plainer to everybody before the end of the world, when the government persecutes those described in Revelation 14:12 and 12:17.

We should not just follow the forefathers or a church or leaders, 1 Samuel 12:13-15. They are human and make mistakes, although they may have left us some good examples that we should follow. God's holy Scriptures should be our guide. (Amos 2:4)

I am not saying that it's wrong to be a church member (it would be nice to be one) but it will not help our salvation if we knowingly disobey our Heavenly Father.

I believe there may be many church members who are only following their church and not God, which sadly is a form of idolatry according to 1 Samuel 15:19-24. I hope nobody ever takes me as their infallible guide.

We should have pleasure in keeping God's commandments and laws and not make them a burden to ourselves. It's interesting in Exodus 16:22-30 how God provided a double amount of food on the sixth day and none on the seventh, and told them not to gather any on the seventh day.

I understand the Ten Commandments as God's character or His ways; now to change one of the Ten Commandments, I think man would be attempting to change God's ways and be God Himself. (Daniel 7:23-25; 11:36; Revelation 13:5, 6; 2 Thessalonians 2:4) Jeremiah chapter 44 is really something to study, especially verses 15-29, how they were shown that they are disobeying God because they have not walked in God's law nor in His statutes nor in His testimonies. Verse 25 tells how they made vows and kept their vows to burn incense to the queen of heaven, yet it was sin to keep such a vow and disobey our Heavenly Father, and He punished them for it.

I believe this is showing that if we make a vow with a certain group of people, and if those people will not allow us to keep God's laws and commandments, then we

should break that vow with man and rather obey God. (Ezekiel 20:18-21) *“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.”* (Acts 5:29) *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”* (1 John 3:4) It is sin to transgress the law of God.

I believe Romans 3:20 and 7:7 are saying that the law shows us what sin is. I understand that if we knowingly transgress only one law we are guilty of them all. (James 2:10, 11) *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”* (James 4:17)

I don't believe we will be saved by keeping God's law, but by grace. (2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 11:6; Ephesians 2:8, 9) But being under grace does not mean that we can now break the law. (Romans 5:20, 21; 6:1, 2, 14-16; 3:31) I don't believe we are accepting God's grace if we knowingly continue breaking His commandments. If we truly love God with all our heart we will try to keep all His laws and commandments and do all His will, no matter what happens to our life. (John 14:15; 15:10; 16:1-3; 1 John 2:3-6; 5:2, 3; Luke 6:20-26; 2 John 6; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Romans 8:38, 39; Matthew 10:32-39)

Are we remembering the Sabbath day, and keeping it holy, if we work on the seventh day? (Exodus 20:8-11)

The seventh day is the only day recorded in the Bible as the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. *“For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”* (Exodus 20:11) To my knowledge, we can rest on another day, but we cannot keep the Sabbath of the Lord on another day. Therefore if we work on the seventh day of the week we are breaking the fourth commandment. God did not say, *“every seventh day”* or *“one day out of seven,”* but He said, *“The seventh day is the Sabbath.”*

Exodus 31:13-18 is really something to think about, how keeping the Lord's Sabbath is a sign between Him and His people, and shall be kept for a perpetual covenant; also read Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

People in Nehemiah's days profaned the Sabbath day; which was not good. (Nehemiah 13:15-22; also Jeremiah 17:21-27; Ezekiel 20:10-25; 22:8, 26; 23:38) I believe God's people will keep the weekly Sabbath after the destruction of this sinful world. Please read Isaiah 66:22, 23. I would be afraid to say Christ or the apostles have changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, without having such Scripture.

Ezekiel 22:28 says, *“And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD,*

when the LORD hath not spoken.” (Also read Ezekiel 13:7.) Malachi 3:6 says, *“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”* (Also read Psalm 89:34—verse 35 in German)

Reading Matthew 12:1-12, and the references to it, I don't see that Jesus changed any of His Father's laws about the Sabbath. The Pharisees had made laws in addition to God's laws, and Jesus was showing them what the Sabbath law really was. The disciples, and also David, and the priests, of course, broke the Pharisees' laws, which were commandments of men, but to my understanding they did not [intentionally and continually] break God's law. I don't believe God ever intended for animals or people to go hungry or thirsty, or not be helped in sickness on the Sabbath day. *“Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.”* (Matthew 12:12)

I believe Jesus intended for His people to keep the Sabbath according to His and the apostles' example to the end of the world. *“But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.”* (Matthew 24:20; also read Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:16, 31; 6:6; 13:10; Acts 13:14, 27, 42-44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4.)

I believe God would say the same thing about Sunday keeping as He did in Jeremiah 32:35: *“Which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination.”* (Jeremiah 32:35)

Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18 talk about God's commandments, laws, His Word, etc., being a sign upon your hand and as frontlets between your eyes. Could it be that we have the mark of the beast in our forehead or in our hand if we keep the commandments of the beast and disobey the commandments of God? Dear friends, please read the Bible for yourself and don't just follow our ideas. We don't want to lead anybody away from God. We are weak human beings and make mistakes. I believe we are living in the last days, which are very dangerous, and it's very important to study the Scriptures prayerfully and search for the will of our Heavenly Father.

I believe we are doing the wrong thing if we just build on ourselves, or other people, or tradition. We should build on God's holy Scriptures. I have tried to write everything out of love and meant everything good. We are weak and I may have written things that I should not have. Please feel free to let us know if you see things that we should not have written, and please show us from the Bible where we are doing wrong.

Let's keep praying for each other. May our Heavenly Father bless you all and lead us all to know His true will. All the best wishes from son _____.

Choose with Joshua

(The following article is a letter written by an Amish man to his church. Editor)

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:14, 15)

We can read on and see how the children of Israel professed to choose with Joshua. Now, are we truly choosing to serve the Almighty God, or are we in some way serving some other god? The majority may profess to serve the Almighty, but the majority will not truly choose to serve Him, according to Scripture.

Many people are serving another god by disobeying the True One and, instead, obeying their particular church, bishop or other leaders; or even the leaders obeying the majority of their people instead of God, like Saul did when he obeyed his people rather than God. Please read 1 Samuel 15:19-24. Some church leaders quote this Scripture to get their members to obey them or the rest of their church, thereby setting themselves and their group in the place of God. Saul actually obeyed his church and disobeyed God; although some of God’s commands he obeyed, but not all.

How easy can we do the same thing as Saul did, without thinking about it; disobeying God in even just one point in order to be popular and well-thought of among our people, thereby falling into idolatry, having our church as our other god?

It seems to be very easy for us human beings to tend to have some kind of a visible god rather than the True One who is not visible to us. For example: It can become such a routine or habit for us to confess our failures and sins to a church group and somehow depend on the church or leaders to forgive our sins, thinking that we have to have a human bishop between us and God in order to have our sins forgiven. And finally, and very dangerous, we can even forget to ask our Heavenly Father for forgiveness, who is the only One who can forgive our sins through His Son.

We have one mediator between us and God; not our church leaders, but Jesus Christ. *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”* (1 Timothy 2:5) We should confess our sins and

make things right to whomever we have done wrong, but let us not forget to make things right with God and ask Him for forgiveness.

If we are truly baptized into Christ and keep our baptismal covenant with Him, we will serve and obey Him. But if we are baptized into a certain church group and have made a covenant or vow to obey them, what should we do if the church does not allow us to keep God’s commandments?

Jeremiah 44:23-30 makes it clear that we should break a vow if our vow causes us to do evil and disobey God. We will be punished for keeping a vow to sin. We should read Jeremiah 44 all the way and realize that those words are still for us today, that we could be worshiping other gods as well as they were, although maybe in a different way, breaking one of the other commandments.

The Sabbath is probably one of the most ignored of God’s commandments in our days. And by knowingly disobeying God in one point we are also breaking the first commandment. We have other gods before Him if we obey somebody else above Him. *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* (Romans 6:16)

There are many different ideas among people for not keeping the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) and now keeping the first day (Sunday) as a sabbath. One of the reasons for people not wanting to keep the seventh-day Sabbath (or other commandments) may be described in Hosea 4:6 in Martin Luther’s translation as: *“My people are destroyed, because they do not want to learn.”* Some say their forefathers were very godly people and we should just be satisfied and do what they did. Yes, a lot of our forefathers were very godly people and walked according to the light they had. Some kept commandments and laws that we have lost long ago and we hardly ever hear all that history today. But our forefathers were not perfect and we should not have them as another god; we may have light in areas where they did not have, so we should walk while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us. (John 12:35)

God’s Word should be our guide. There are examples in the Bible that we should not follow our forefathers and tradition in disobedience to God’s law. *“You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shall you testify in a lawsuit so as to pervert justice, in order to side with a multitude which deviates from justice. (Exodus 23:2 — Lamsa’s Translation)*

“*And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.*” (2 Chronicles 30:7, 8)

“*Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.*” (2 Chronicles 34:21)

Hezekiah and Josiah in the Bible were good examples of not following the forefathers in sin. It can be read in 2 Kings 18:1-7 and chapters 22 and 23. “*Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked.*” (Amos 2:4)

“*But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.*” (Ezekiel 20:18-21)

Let us study again what verse 20 says: “*And hallow my sabbaths*” (the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord our God, Exodus 20:8-11, and He never asked anybody to keep any other day as the weekly Sabbath); “*and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.*” What sign is it if we don’t keep God’s Sabbath and keep another day instead, and who is then our God?

Let us all deeply think about it and choose what Joshua did, and do the best we know. “*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*” (James 4:17) Also, let us not put too much emphasis on one commandment and break others. “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*” (James 2:10)

The New Testament also teaches that we should obey God rather than men. “*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*” (Acts 5:29) “*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*” (Matthew 10:37)

Let us see what the Scripture says that we will do if we love God above everything else. “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” (John 14:15) “*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.*” (John 15:10) “*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*” (1 John 5:2, 3) “*And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.*” (2 John 6)

Let us take heed that we do not ban or excommunicate somebody for keeping God’s commandments. For so doing we are going against God (not so much against those people), and putting ourselves in great danger. “*And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*” (Acts 5:38, 39) “*They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*” (John 16:2, 3)

We need to realize also that “*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*” (1 John 3:4) Although we are not saved by keeping the law, the law shows us what sin is. “*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*” (Romans 3:20)


“*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*” (Romans 7:7) We are saved by grace. “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

“*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?... For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are*

not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” (Romans 6:1, 2, 14, 15)

These verses show that we shall not continue in sin (sin is the transgression of the law) because we are under grace. And we shall not break the law, or sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace. Verses 14 and 15 are saying that we shall keep the law: for we are not under the law, but under grace (breaking the law is sin). If we sin (or break the law) we are under the law, and condemned; but if we repent (stop sinning) and ask God for forgiveness, He will cover our sins with Christ’s blood;

then we are no longer under the law but under grace. Christ died for us, to save us from death (the curse of the law). *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”* (Galatians 3:13)

Will we now be thankful enough for the wonderful grace of Christ and love Him enough to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus? Revelation 14:12. Or will we still cling to our old traditions and obey our church above God like Saul did? Let us choose the God which Joshua did. 

West Virginia Camp Meeting Report

by Lynnford Beachy

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalms 133:1)

The West Virginia camp meeting was a tremendous blessing for my family and I. And from the reports we have heard from some of those who were able to attend it was a tremendous blessing for them as well. This camp meeting was the largest one we have ever held with over 100 people attending, many of whom I had never met before. I was very thankful for the opportunity to fellowship with our brethren from around the country. For all of us here at Smyrna Gospel Ministries, we would like to thank those of you who came, for being here. It would not have been the same without you.



David Clayton

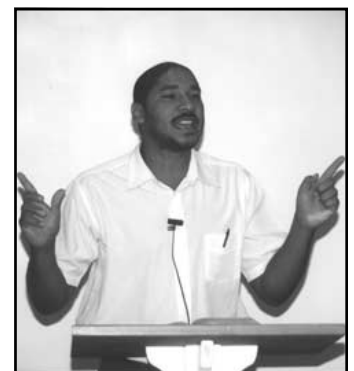
For me, the best thing about this camp meeting was the messages the Lord was pleased to share with us through the speakers. The messages were focused on practical things we can do in our own lives to strengthen our relationship with God. One thing that was impressed upon me was the absolute necessity of our faith being increased. (See 2 Corinthians 10:15.)

Jesus said, *“This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”* (John 6:29) God’s work is to get you to believe—to have more faith.

Our faith is increased by the increase of the Word of God in our lives. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* (Romans 10:17) The more of the Word of God we put in our minds, the more our faith will be increased. The opposite is also true. The more worldly garbage we put in our mind, the more our faith will be diminished. So it is vital to our relationship with God, and our faith, to increase the amount of the Word of God in our lives. Our battle is not a battle against sin, but a battle to maintain our faith and relationship with God. *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.”* (1 Timothy 6:12)



Gary Richmond



Howard Williams



Happy Campers



Speakers



Group Photo

Another things that was impressed upon my mind was the fact that temperance is not a result of struggle and perseverance, but a result of having the Spirit of God. Galatians 5:23 tells us that temperance is a fruit of the Spirit. If you want more temperance in your life, you need more of the Spirit of God. Jesus said, "If ye then, be-



Benjamin Vela

ing evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13) Praise God for His wonderful and free gifts! Temperance is important in the Christian's life for it deals with every aspect of the life. Temperance is "the state or quality of being moderate in action,

speech, or habits; self-control." (World Book Dictionary) This self-control is not a result of your own labors and struggles, but a result of having the Spirit of God. The more of the Spirit of God you have, the more self-control you will naturally have. Jesus said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John



Eager Listeners

6:63) The more of the Word of God you have in you, the more of God's Spirit you have.

These are essential, yet basic, principles that I learned at camp meeting that changed my life. It helped me get my priorities straight and maintain the vital connection with God by spending more time with Him in prayer and the study of His Word. These are some of the things I have learned from camp meeting that have been extremely helpful to me and have resulted, already, in a change in my life for the better. I thank the Lord for this camp meeting. For those of you who were not able to come, I am



Quartet

very sorry that you were not able to get these blessings first hand. However, we have cassette tapes and video tapes of nearly every meeting. If you would like either of these, please contact us and let us know. We will have a list of the titles to the messages in next month's Present Truth and you can decide which ones you would like. Please bear in mind that the videos take us much longer to reproduce so the supply of them is limited, whereas the cassette tapes can be reproduced very quickly.

I suggest that you order some of the cassette tapes from this camp meeting, which will aid you in your spiritual walk with God. I pray that you will do all in your power to attend the next camp meeting wherever it may be held.



Willis Smith



Letters from our Readers



“Please send me a free copy of *America in Prophecy* as stated from your ‘Stand in the Gap Pamphlet.’ Thank you. Jesus loves you and so do I.”

Maryland

“I am interested in attending the above mentioned camp meeting (West Virginia). I have been receiving *Present Truth* for the last one year and have been enjoying New Revelation on the present truth.

“For me to attend, I need an invitation letter present at the port of entry and an air ticket. Where there I would appreciate if you could organize for me speaking schedules and any work at the Ministry for at least ten weeks. My desire is to serve God under your ministry which is the closest to what man need today for a better living and ultimate salvation.”

Kenya

“Thank you for sending me ‘The Truth About God,’ ‘The Reward of the Wicked,’ ‘The Love of God,’ ‘God’s Plan to Save You,’ and ‘What the Bible Says About Hell’ tracts. Please send me some more tracts and a Bible study to the address above....”

“Thank you and may the *Present Truth* be heard and spread all over the world.”

Ohio

“I am impressed of your work done on the true doctrine of the Godhead. I will be interested in reading more other theological researching you are making.”

E-mail Contact

“I just got my old 486 to work enough to get on the net. I had to stop by and say hi. I downloaded all copies of the *Present Truth*. Thanks for your kindness and Christian love for me. I’ll send some money as soon as I can for the Spanish papers. I have been unemployed for over two years. Your brother in Christ.”

South Carolina

“Hallelujah, my new address is _____ Ohio. My old was _____ Ohio. Please change. Thank you!”

Ohio

(Thank you so much for sending us your address correction.)

Editor

“Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you.”

North Carolina

“_____ asked what I knew about the different Bible versions. It seems her church in Australia is much like ours here in America. They see no need to study from the King James Bible when there are many easier versions to read. Wasn’t I thankful for the extra copies I made of your March 1999 study, ‘Which Bible?’ Tomorrow before her flight, Lord willing, I will be there to present her with, among other writings, your March 99 *Present Truth*. May the Lord bless you as you continue in His service.”

Montana

“I am a non-trinitarian, I have recently come across some papers from you. I thank God for the light He has revealed. I truly believe this is a message from God. Within a blink of an eye it should have covered the whole world. In a month or two we will be having our camp meeting. May you provide me with some papers, the hand outs, so that while speaking about this truth papers will be covering the other side.”

Zimbabwe

“This is to inform you that my ministry is very great in need of gospel materials. After I have attended one crusade which _____ held at _____ many people attended and many people accepted Christ; and there he distributed tracts and books and I could be able to read some which interested me like ‘A Time to Choose,’ ‘The Law of God,’ and ‘The Character of God.’ Those materials are very good and educative even ‘The Shelter in the Storm’ which have been helping me in my family even the entire members in my ministry.

“Due to how people are requesting it from me, I went to _____ for more and he said that no more in his hand and therefore I decided to write you directly. Therefore I am appealing to you to send us many copies of your materials. Such as tracts, books, and Bibles for the use within my family, ministry and outreach. Help us in this great task.

“Finally remember brother _____ in your daily prayers. He is working hard to carry the three angels’ messages and Sabbath truth to the whole of the Roman Catholic Parishes in the whole _____ area before the year 2000 and God has been helping him in this message and we are very thankful for such ambition. Please put our name in your Christian mailing list to be receiving your Christian materials. Looking forward to hearing from you.”

Nigeria

(The person referred to in this letter who held the crusade, was passing out some of our literature, and who is dedicated to sharing the truth about the Sabbath to the Catholics, wrote us the following letter two years ago.)

Editor

“This is to inform you that one Ex-rev. father named _____ who has served as a Catholic priest for ten years went out one day for what he read from the ‘Desire of Ages.’ We laughed at him that he is mad, until last three weeks he came to our parish one day where over 25 Reverend fathers and sisters were having a meeting. Then he gave us the following materials: ‘What shall I do to Inherit eternal Life? By Margaret Davis,’ ‘The Change of the Sabbath—Was it by Divine or Human Authority?’ by George Butler, ‘The National Sunday Law’ by Jan Marcussen, ‘Is

the Virgin Mary Dead or Alive?' by Danny Vierra, ... Which nobody can give an answer.

"Since two weeks I have rest in mind. I made up my mind to write you to send me many copies of the above materials. The books are so good to give our Catholics until they change their lifestyle. In your books, the truths with regard to the Word of God have been revealed to me. I, who have been in the Catholic church from 1968 and entered the junior seminary up to date, now know that the authorities in the Catholic church failed to follow the Bible according to God's Divine will. Now friends in Christ, having heard and read all these, should I, because I am a Catholic priest and belong to other societies in the church, like the Claretian Perpetual Mass League in Chicago, USA, continue to lead God's people in darkness? No! No! No! Please, a reverse has to be made as soon as possible in order to recover what has been lost in past years. It was after I studied through the books mentioned above that I came to realize some truths which have been hidden from us (Catholics) since the ages.

"Many thanks to Bro. _____ who gave me the above books free of charge. May God give him long life.... Please friends, I am highly in need of your prayers, because Satan is tempting me much. But I believe that He who saved and delivered me will not allow me to backslide, and I pray that I will be strong and stronger in His Word.

"I have given two sermons in our parish and I preached about the Sabbath of God and the Ten Commandments. This Sunday was great, and it seemed like a farmer went to his farm and cut grasses and heaped them together and put it ablaze! Everywhere was too noisy while so many of them were rushing outside shouting that I had preached heresy! They said that I am mad, also that I drank wine, and I was anathematized and forced out from the parish. I left the parish empty handed but I know and believe that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, will not leave me alone. I don't care what they did to me because the Spirit of God was in control.

"After they put me out of the parish they went straight and reported me to our Bishop. Friends, Glory be to God!!! I really defended the Word of God by letting him know that we Catholics were in the wrong way. The bishop really burnt, because he loved me and they sponsored me throughout my seminary career. For that they were highly annoyed, but I didn't want to hear it. I continued letting him know the message in the four books I read. They said I have got mad. I laughed at them. I wrote a letter to Pope John II on _____ 1998. He came to Nigeria in March last year. During his visit to Nigeria, many people died on the marching to Onitsha Anambra State. In my letter I told him that he is the man of sin, and the beast written

about in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Revelation 13, and so on. The bishop decided to excommunicate me. My reply to him is Glory be to God, I am a new creature in the Lord Jesus, and I am in the right way.

"I am satisfied with my Redeemer Jesus Christ, no matter now that I am as poor as a church rat. My whole family has forsaken me but God will not forsake me and in Jesus I am rich. Please beloved friends, I am in great need of the new world order newspaper, many boxes of 'What shall I do to Inherit Eternal Life,' many copies of 'The Change of the Sabbath,' many copies of 'The National Sunday Law,' many boxes of inspiration books, Holy Bibles, picture rolls for children, booklets and tracts, and many other materials that will help me to evangelize here in _____ and fetch out a huge number of souls from the papacy and from my co-reverend fathers and sisters. Please help me to thank the Lord for delivering me. Thanks be to God for saving me through His Word!"

Nigeria

(Recently this same man wrote us the following letter.

Editor)

"Greetings to all the saints who are scattered around the globe. May the Lord of glory fill your souls with joy, peace and love from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We at _____ in Nigeria hope and pray that every saint will guard his/her relationship with Jesus jealously and stand confidently in defense of truth though the earth reels or the heavens tauter. We are very near home and it will be most unfortunate for any to lose their souls at the very last hurdle, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.' Proverbs 4 vs. 23. 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' 1 Peter 1 vs.13.

"However, I would like to remind one another of Christ's warning that 'And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' Luke 9 vs. 62. Therefore my brethren of the same faith (Eph. 4:4-5), we should always exhort one another to labour zealously in the Lord's vineyard. Very soon, soon we will be receiving our just recompense for laboring in defense of truth. Oh, how joyful it will be to hear the wondrous words of Jesus to His victorious followers, 'His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' Matthew 25 vs.21.

"The objective of this letter is to encourage all the servants of the Lord to labour very hard for the salvation of souls. Time is so short and it is fast running out for both the Israelite and the gentile. The time for studying the Bible and praying without ceasing is now. Soon, very soon 'the night cometh, when no man can work.' [John 9:4] Dear

Present Truth

saints, children of the living God, how much have you spent and/or are resolving to spend for Jesus? Blessed are those who will expend their energies and material possessions in preparing for eternity! Woe unto those who invest in that which is not spiritual food but is in fact vanity and vexation of the spirit.

“...Do remember us in your daily prayer, for we have not a place for my groups to worship our heavenly Father, while many souls are coming to Christ every day. Pass our request for money and gospel literature for our work to our brothers and sisters there. While we will continue to remember you all in our daily prayer until we reach the land where prayers are no longer a necessity!!!

“Here you see me in the picture [a picture was included with this letter] left hand side with a young man _____ at right hand. This young man has large churches here in Nigeria and in _____ Benin Republic. I stayed four days in his churches and told him and his members in _____ the three angels’ messages and Sabbath truth. They received the message very well. He has changed from Sunday to Sabbath! Glory be to God in the highest. This took place this month. Remember these newly friends in Christ in your daily prayer. We look forward of hearing your message. May God richly bless you as we labour

together for the extension of His kingdom and the salvation of precious souls.”

Nigeria

(If you would like to help send literature, Bibles, or clothing to help these people in Nigeria, please send a donation to us and make it clear that it is to go toward the shipping and cost of literature for Nigeria. We have plenty of clothing at this time, but the shipping cost is very high, so we need money for shipping.

Editor

“It was great seeing you at the camp meeting. For sure; it was the best camp meeting that either of us had ever attended.... Keep up the good work and God bless all of you.”

Illinois

“I just want to say and encourage you all that the camp meeting was absolutely wonderful. The Spirit of the Living God was so fully evident. At times I half expected to hear the great rushing wind and see the flames of fire upon the heads of the congregation. Surely the presence of the Lord filled the place.”

Ohio

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. *Present Truth* is available online at <http://www.present-truth.net>.

Editor: Lynnford Beachy, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801, phone: (304) 732-9204, e-mail: berean@present-truth.net.

Present Truth

HC 64 Box 128-B
Welch, West Virginia 24801
U.S.A.

Address Service Requested

**Bulk Rate
U. S. Postage
PAID
Welch WV
Permit No. 35**